

English Department
Graduate Course Descriptions - fall 2008

060.607 (H,W) – Reading and Writing in the Romantic Era-Ferguson **T 1-4**

This seminar will focus on major literature of the Romantic era and the systems of transmission through which they were disseminated. We'll read writers like Burke, Wollstonecraft, and Paine on the French Revolution, examine influential anthologies and the reading publics that they were directed toward, read a selection of Wordsworth's poetry including the posthumously published <Prelude> and writings like DeQuincey's that provided advance notice of it before its publication and conclude with prose and poetry of Shelley and Keats. (Limit 8)

060.659 (H,W)–Reading Early Modern Affect (From Humor to Passion)-Daniel **W 1-4**

This course asks what difference the re-introduction of "humor" and "passion" might make into the recent constellation of theoretical writings on feeling, emotion, and affect. How might these philosophical and physiological categories from the intellectual history of early modernity complicate, estrange, or re-organize recent critical accounts of embodiment and psychic life? Tracing a historical transformation from sixteenth century "humors" to seventeenth century "passions", we will consider a range of early modern texts including Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost", Jonson's "Every Man in His Humour", Burton's preface to *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Milton's "L'Allegro and Il Penseroso", Descartes' *The Passions of the Soul* (1649), and Spinoza's *Ethics* (1677) in conjunction with a select group of critical texts on feeling, emotion and affect from Sartre, Paster, Sedgwick, Ngai, Massumi, and Terada. (Limit 8)

060.662 (H,W)- Edwards, Emerson, Thoreau–Cameron **Th 9-12**

We shall examine what “divinity,” “nature,” “Being in general” and “personal identity” differently mean in the writings of Jonathan Edwards, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau (the emphasis will be on the two nineteenth-century American writers); how “the intuitively beheld and immediately felt” (what Edwards called “experiential religion”) are contrastively understood in the writings of the three; and to what end these literary and philosophical writings marginalize persons-- and even evacuate them--from their scrutiny. We shall also examine features of the prose (Edwards’s “rhetoric of sensation”; Emerson’s contradictions; Thoreau’s infatuation with particulars), and the genres in which the three authors write: the sermon, the treatise, the journal entry, the lecture, and the essay. Finally, we shall consider Adorno’s proposition in “The Essay as Form” that discontinuity is essential to the essay, that “the essay rebels against the doctrine, deeply rooted since Plato, that what is transient and ephemeral is unworthy of philosophy.” (Limit 8)

060.672 (H,W)-James Joyce-Mao **Th 1-4**

A seminar covering the oeuvre of James Joyce, including but not limited to *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses*, and parts of *Finnegans Wake*. Substantial readings in other writers and in relevant historiography; substantial attention to the history of Joyce criticism and Joyce’s literary legacies. (Limit 8)

060.696 Journal Club

060.800 Independent Study

Cross listed courses

213.614

PROTO-MODERNIST FICTION, 1890-1914 M. Caplan Limit 15

This course will be a graduate seminar tracing the tentative beginnings of global modernism in late-19th and early-20th century fiction taken from American, Brazilian, French, German, Italian, Hebrew, Norwegian, Russian, and Yiddish sources. Among the topics we will consider are the radical loss of faith in scientific, political, and philosophical narratives of progress and self-improvement at the end of the 19th century; the breakdown of imperial orders and their impact on social relations as well as definitions of the self; the reconfiguration of narrative conventions in response to technological and intellectual innovations such as photography, film, electricity, and the advent of the social sciences; the intensifying predominance of urban life in the formulation of modern culture; and the interrelations among aesthetic trends such as realism, naturalism, symbolism, impressionism, and expressionism in a variety of artistic media of the era. To what extent does the crisis of faith in political, aesthetic, and philosophical certitudes of a previous age result in the liberation of narrative conventions? To what extent do fin-de-siècle writers throughout the Western world participate in a common literary aesthetic? Authors to be considered will include Dovid Bergelson, Yosef Haim Brenner, Anton Chekhov, Édouard Dujardin, Knut Hamsun, Franz Kafka, Machado de Assis, Italo Svevo, and Gertrude Stein. *All readings and discussions conducted in English.*

214.678

ARIOSTO Stephens Limit 15

A study of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* in the context of humanistic culture and of his own literary production in shorter genres. The relation of *Orlando furioso* to the traditions of epic and romance, especially Boiardo and Tasso, will be a major focus.