

**VCU DEPARTMENT
OF ENGLISH**

**GRADUATE
COURSE
DESCRIPTIONS**

Spring 2018

ENGL 500-003**Practicum: Teaching College English**

A course for graduate teaching assistants assigned to teach or shadow UNIV200. The course provides training, instructional support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants working with University College. Does not count toward graduate degrees.

Shimomura**TBA****CRN #: 12265****ENGL 500-004****Practicum: Teaching College English**

A course for graduate teaching assistants assigned to teach or shadow UNIV200. The course provides training, instructional support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants working with University College. Does not count toward graduate degrees.

Abelson**TBA****CRN #: 28476****ENGL/TEDU/LING 552-001****Teaching English as a Second Language****Parkhouse****Online****CRN #: 35599****ENGL 560-901****Studies in British Literature:****Documentary & Critical Editing**

This course trains students to produce and evaluate both (single-witness) documentary editions and (multiple-witness) critical editions. It begins with a series of three group projects: students will work together on a British Virginia edition of a single, printed copy of a play by Aphra Behn; a Folger *EMMO* edition of a unique hand-written poetry anthology; and, finally, a poem that survives in multiple copies in both print and manuscript, using the critical editing methods developed for *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*. For their individual projects, students may work on any texts or periods that they choose. They will each write two evaluative reviews of existing editions, of their choosing: one a documentary edition, the other a critical edition. For their final projects, they will each write two formal proposals for editions that they could produce in the future—again, one based on a single source, and the other based on multiple copies of a text. These proposals should feature sample pages of the editions, as students envision them. Nevertheless, students will only be proposing, not completing, their editions for the course.

Eckhardt**W 7:00-9:40pm****CRN #: 37093****ENGL 606-901****Literary Criticism**

This course explores current approaches to literary studies. The course surveys several disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to texts, drawing on writings by major figures from literary theory, cultural studies, visual studies, and media studies. Some of the approaches we'll cover include deconstruction and post-structuralism, materialism

and Marxism, gender and sexuality studies, postcolonial theory, and studies that focus on race and ethnicity. We'll largely read from theorists and critics themselves, but also some clarifying and summarizing material by others. Critics and theorists we'll read from include Derrida, Spivak, Foucault, Butler, Sedgwick, Williams, Said, Sexton, Ngai, and Lowe. The course is taught by discussion. Evaluation is via course participation and one long seminar paper or two shorter papers.

Columbia

R 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 34029

ENGL 614-901

Cultural Discourses: Authorship and Gender

The concept of a professional “author” is relatively modern, emerging in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries with the development of a commercial literary marketplace, the expansion of a literate populace, and the improved means of reproducing and distributing texts. In this environment, what constituted “authorship” (professional or not) was shifting, unstable, and permeable as writers sought new ways to market themselves and their texts in a literary marketplace. This course will look at how male and female authors navigated the world of publishers and readers, patrons and customers (differently); how they worked to acquire various kinds of material and symbolic currency that shaped the literary and cultural marketplace; and how they balanced the tension between high literary value, reputation, and prestige, and the desire to be popular and commercially successful. The course will work to gain a keen understanding of the dynamics of the marketplace, popular culture, and how “success” and “failure” (themselves relatively new concepts) were defined (and refined). We will be particularly focusing on how profoundly the concept of authorship was shaped by gender, class, and geography. We will be less concerned solely with the “Authors” literary history pronounced canonical (e.g. Pope, Swift, Johnson, Dryden), and more concerned with those writers whose success (or failure) was a bit more contingent—authors writing to stay out of debtors prison, to feed their children, or simply to sustain themselves. They wrote fascinating material (and in turn had amazing things written about them—reputation and celebrity are important) that often defies our expectations of what was read three-hundred years ago.

This course will read texts in multiple genres (prose fiction, poetry, biography, drama) across the scope of what’s called “the long eighteenth century” and also look at the cultural discourse surrounding authorship and the literary marketplace (advertisements, reviews, prefaces, dedications, etc.). In addition to primary texts of the eighteenth century, we will also read secondary material to provide the historical context and theoretical framework for these texts. Authors we will discuss may include but not be limited to Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood, Elizabeth Thomas, Richard Savage, Samuel Johnson, Alexander Pope, Anne Finch, Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Thomas Chatterton, Jonathan Swift, Mary Barber, Laetitia Pilkington, and Mary Shelley. We will likely read more women writers than male because their complicated relationship with

the marketplace more dramatically reveals the tensions of this new literary environment. Course requirements will include short written assignments, an oral presentation, a focused research assignment, and a longer seminar paper. If you have questions about the course, please feel free to e-mail me at cingrass@vcu.edu.

Ingrassia

M 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 36998

ENGL 624-902

Text and Context: Oscar Wilde and His Circle

The writings of Oscar Wilde, like his life, fly in the face of the traditional pieties, challenging us to rethink our understanding of some of the things we hold dearest. But even as he brings his wit and critical intelligence to bear on complex questions of language, culture, sexuality, and social relations, Wilde deflates our attempts to define him. A master of paradox and a self-professed teller of lies, Wilde tells us that “all art is quite useless” and that “in matters of grave importance, style not sincerity is the vital thing.” So how do we grapple with Wilde’s legacy, still poorly understood one hundred years after his death, without becoming one of the serious people he so famously mocked in *The Importance of Being Earnest*?

In this course, we will read Wilde’s writings in the context of the decade, the 1890s, he helped to shape. In the first half of the semester, we will read Wilde’s best-known literary works, as well as one or two that are not so well-known. Our readings will extend across the whole range of Wilde’s writing, taking in poetry, fiction, drama and criticism. In the second half of the semester, we will broaden our focus to include plays, poetry and fiction by other writers of the 1890s, many of whom Wilde helped to inspire, including Shaw, Stoker, Ibsen and a number of so-called New Woman writers, whose careers make an interesting parallel with Wilde’s. If there is time, we’ll also be studying developments in the visual arts with which Wilde was closely involved. In the last week of the semester, we will return to Wilde, whose prison writings, written just before his death in 1900, serve as a poignant capstone to both his own career and the decade he dominated.

Assignments will include a 7-10 page critical **paper**, book reports, researched presentations, and a major researched paper.

Frankel

T 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 34703

ENGL 629-901

Form and Theory of Poetry

This is a course in the study of poetic form, primarily received meters and forms, but also free verse and “open” forms. We will investigate poetic form through readings in our anthologies and in handouts I’ll distribute, through lectures and class discussions, but most importantly through writing poems ourselves--poems in meter, poems in received forms such as sonnets, sestinas, and villanelles, poems in free verse, and poems in other modes such as prose poems, syllabic poems, and accentual meter. By the conclusion of the class, you should have a good understanding of English language

prosody, and a better ability to use that knowledge when writing your own poetry, whether you choose to write it in open forms or in received form. In addition to the poems you will be writing, I will also ask you--during the final weeks of the semester--to give a brief class presentation or short paper on the work of a poet who works in received forms.

Probable Texts:

Strand and Boland, *The Making of the Poem*

Paul Fussell, *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*

Robert Hass, *A Little Book on Form: An Exploration into the Formal Imagination of Poetry*

Wojahn

T 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 36123

ENGL 666-901

Creative Writing: Short Fiction

Fiction writing workshop. Students will produce original short stories for evaluation by their peers.

McCown

R 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 21108

ENGL 667-901

Creative Writing: Poetry

In this graduate workshop in writing poetry, admission is limited to students in the MFA program (or by instructor's permission). Students will write and revise seven poems (or more), which are submitted for workshop discussions, and which at semester's end are submitted in a final portfolio of revised works along with a brief self-evaluation. Students also engage in energetic online discussions covering the assigned readings and related issues in poetics and aesthetics. Students are invited to meet with me at least twice during the semester for individual conferences. Final evaluations are determined primarily by achievements in the poems of the final portfolio, while the quality of both online and in-class discussion participation is also evaluated. Texts will include those by VCU visiting writers (*Look* by Solmaz Sharif) along with new works by contemporary poets, such as *Banana Palace* by Dana Levin, *After the Afterlife* by T.R. Hummer, *The Old Philosopher* by Vi Khi Nao, or *My Private Property* by Mary Ruefle, or others to be determined later.

Donovan

M 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 33801

ENGL 672-901

Writing Nonfiction

Creative nonfiction is a dynamic literary genre whose limits are famously debated and tested. Literary nonfiction really amounts to writing about actual experiences and content (nonfiction) with personality and style (creativity). This workshop focuses on generating creative nonfiction while responding critically to the work of others. Focus is on the art that distinguishes literary nonfiction from other forms of nonfiction writing. As such, we'll discuss the tools available to creative writers, regardless of genre, including language, dialogue, description, scene, structure and form. Because the work

is taken from life, the challenge (and thrill) is to explore those threads of memory, observation, and research that most intrigue you and mine them for their riches. Through the discussion of sample essays, peer review, and your own work, we'll explore the limits and opportunities unique to this genre. The primary focus is on generating new memoirs and essays, while responding to the work of others in a respectful and productive workshop environment.

Livingston

W 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 20496

ENGL 673-001

Teaching Creative Writing

Reserved for select MFA GTAs.

This course is conducted as a student-centered seminar, which addresses all phases of instructions, including curricular design and daily planning, classroom management, and assessment. While this class is primarily designed to prepare students to teach English 295 and Honors 250 and to support them while they are teaching these classes (courses which offer fiction, poetry, and nonfiction instruction to undergraduates), the pedagogical principles and skills covered assure that anyone with a general interest in teaching writing would unquestionably benefit from enrolling.

Graber

R 11:00am-1:00pm

CRN #: 37007

MATX 603-901

Mass Media

Introduces leading theories, concepts, research methods, and scholarship within the field of mass media.

Cheng

T 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 17501

MATX 604-901

Interdisciplinary Workshop

In this course students will gain an understanding of current interdisciplinary theory and practice across media, art, and text. Discussion of readings and examination of real-world examples will provide a foundation for academic and professional careers in today's interdisciplinary digital environment. Workshopping of preliminary dissertation ideas, conference abstracts, teaching portfolios, and professional websites will develop content and skills needed for the MATX e-portfolio and future careers.

Hall

R 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 17499