Summer 2013 Graduate Schedule

Summer I: Tuesday, May 28 - Saturday, July 6
Engl.GA.2916.001: The British Essay Film
Sukhdev Sandhu
Tuesday/Thursday 4:00-6:00pm
The essay film – or cine-essay – has been described as “the most important and popular form of filmmaking since the 1990s”. Availing themselves of the freedoms that Aldous Huxley championed when he described essays as “literary devices for saying almost everything about almost anything”, and drawn to theorist Hans Richter’s call in 1940 for a new kind of documentary that eschewed “beautiful vistas” in favour of forms that could permit “a representation for intellectual content”, filmmakers as diverse as Chris Marker, Jean-Luc Godard, Errol Morris, Jonas Mekas and Trinh T. Minh-ha have used the essay film to fashion some of the most roaming, self-reflexive, politically astute works of cinema in recent decades.

This class, an introduction to the essay film, will highlight the ways in which the form is drawn to the important of process as much as final product; its capaciousness such that it can incorporate elements of travelogue, memoir, reportage and fabulation; its foregrounding of auditory and sonic effects; its relationship to the rise of creative non-fiction. What can literature students learn – in terms of shaping arguments, embracing visuality, utilizing humour – from the essay film? Artists to be studied will include the likes of John Berger, Black Audio Film Collective, Derek Jarman and Adam Curtis.

Summer Session II: Monday, July 8 - Saturday, August 17
Engl.GA.2900.001: The Novel and (in) the World
Toral Gajarawala
Tuesday/Thursday 3:00-5:00pm
How does the contemporary novel construct narrative worlds? And how does it now circulate in the world outside it? This course will consider contemporary fiction from the last decade in light of its putative “worldliness”. We will begin by reading broadly from recent theories of postmodernism, postcolonial studies, world literature and novel theory in order to assess the field of contemporary fiction. We will thus encounter a range of critical concepts and categories that have structured recent debates: “worlding”, “world literature”, “the human rights novel”, “planetarity”, “dystopia”, “hysterical realism” and so forth. We will then move on to consider recent fiction that is invested in transnational dialogue, in the construction of alternative realties, in the revelation of foreign spaces, in their own circulation in the world. Some questions we will ask and attempt to answer: how does the novel create fictional worlds? With what worlds is the novel in dialogue? How does the novel stage the discovery of Other worlds? Some texts we will consider: Joseph O’Neil’s Netherland, Aravind Adiga’s The White Tiger, Tom McCarthy’s Remainder, Zadie Smith’s White Teeth, Ishiguro’s Never Let me Go, Teju Cole’s Open City

Students in this course will be asked to produce one short review essay, an oral presentation and a final research paper. As a collective enterprise, students will also be asked to keep abreast of the most recent discussions of the novel in London Review of Books and New York Review of Books.