V41.0060.001  Major British Writers  
Assumes no prior work in literature. Recommended for English minors and non-majors. Major writers of 19th to 20th centuries, including the romantic poetry of Keats and Shelley, the industrialized British empire celebrated and criticized in the works of Victorian writers like Dickens and Tennyson, to the modernist writers Eliot, Yeats, and Joyce, Woolf, and contemporary writers.

xV41.0125.001  History of Drama and Theatre I  
Examines selected plays central to the development of Western drama, with critical emphasis on a cultural, historical, and theatrical analysis of these works. Includes Greek and Roman drama, medieval drama, French neoclassical drama, and theater of the European Renaissance. Topics will include ritual; the politics of theater; popular performance practices; and the histories of genres, especially tragedy.

xV41.0130.001  Theory of Drama  
Study of major issues in dramatic theory, including the nature of imitation and representation, the relationship of text to performance, the idea of dramatic genres, and the role of the spectator. Each topic is studied historically through analysis of classical texts such as Aristotle’s Poetics. A long section of the course is devoted to 20th-century dramatic theorists, including Brecht, Artaud, and Grotowski. Readings include both plays and theoretical essays.

xV41.0132.001  Drama in Performance  
Combines the study of drama as literary text with the study of theatre as its three-dimensional translation, both theoretically and practically. Drawing on the rich theatrical resources of New York City, approximately 12 plays are seen, covering classical to contemporary and traditional to experimental theatre. On occasion, films or videotapes of plays are used to supplement live performances. Readings include plays and essays in theory and criticism.

V41.0200  Literary Interpretation  
Introduction to the interpretation of literary texts. Teaches the student to talk and write about literature. Through study of the various forms of poetry, the short story, the novel, and the drama, students develop a critical language and approach appropriate to the experience of each work. Required of all English majors.

V41.0210.001  British Literature I  
The course is designed to study the development of English language and literature at selected moments between BEOWULF and Milton’s PARADISE LOST. The fact that the prescribed anthology gives BEOWULF in modern translation (by the poet Seamus Heaney) is a problem, but we will discuss those aspects of the poem that have survived translation. A list of the poems and proses to be read will be given at the first class. Text: NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, eighth edition, volume one, general editor Stephen Greenblatt. Mid-term examination and Final examination on dates to be arranged. Two papers required, due on dates to be decided.

V41.0220.001  British Literature II  
Survey of English literature from the Restoration to the 20th century. Close reading of representative works with attention to the historical, intellectual, and social contexts of the period. Recitation required.
**American Literature I**
A survey of American literature and literary history, from the early colonial period to the eve of the Civil War. The goal is to acquire a grasp of the expanding canon of American literature by reading both established, canonical masterpieces and texts that have been traditionally considered to be marginal. Topics to be considered include: the relation between history and cultural mythology; the rise of “literature” as a discipline unto itself; the meaning of American individualism; the mythology of American exceptionalism; the dialectic of freedom and slavery in American rhetoric; the American obsession with race; the ideology of domesticity and its link to the sentimental; and the nature of the “American Renaissance.” Recitation required. Augst

**American Literature II**
This course surveys American literature since 1865. Though we will consider a broad range of genres (novels, letters, manifestoes, autobiographies, travel narratives, essays, and journals), the focus will be on formally and socially radical work in general and on poetry in particular. Shifting between close readings and historical contextualizations, we will consider authors including Whitman, Dickinson, Stein, James, Du Bois, Hughes, Kerouac, Ginsberg, O’Hara, Baraka and Hejinian in relation to shifting debates about nationalism, religion, science, race, historicism, class, gender and urbanism. Our analysis will frequently return to the politics of form, and to the social, historical and literary contexts that allow form to be understood as having a politics. Shaw

**20th Century African American Literature**
This course surveys African American texts—fiction, essays, poetry, visual culture, and drama—from Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) to contemporary works, such as Danzy Senna’s *Caucasia* (1998). This broad scope will allow us to trace how representations of blackness have shifted over time. We will pay special attention to the interplay between literary and visual culture. Some topics we will consider include: race and American modernity, double-consciousness, passing, the politics of (in)visibility, racialized gender and sexuality, and performances of black “authenticity.”-Williams

**Colloquium: Chaucer**
Colloquium: Chaucer is an introduction to Chaucer's poetry, with particular attention to 'Troilus and Criseyde' and 'The Canterbury Tales'. We will begin with a series of workshops on Chaucer's language, his versification, and some of the more interesting aspects of his style so that it will be possible to read his poetry, not only with pleasure, but closely. We will pay some attention to important trends in the criticism of Chaucer (particularly the insights feminist, psychoanalytic, historicist approaches have brought to his writing of late), as well as the more important cultural facts shaping Chaucer's art (the availability of Continental writings, contemporaneous controversies in and around the church, insurgency, political complacency as well as unrest). Our main task will be to tease out what is particularly 'Chaucerian' in individual works and all the works we read taken together. The pay off will be an enjoyment of Chaucer's writing in exactly those particulars that have made it so lasting.--Cannon

**Shakespeare I**
In this survey of the first half of Shakespeare’s career as a playwright we will consider the relation between the mingled genres of his plays (roughly: festive comedy, history, tragedy) and the social and political conditions that shaped his developing sense of dramatic form. Critical analysis of the plays as both performances and written works will form the fabric of this course; the connection of drama to its culture will be its guiding thread. We will discuss at least nine plays, including: Comedy of Errors, Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, 1 Henry IV, Henry V, Julius Caesar and Hamlet. The requirements include two essays, short writing assignments, a midterm exam, a final exam, and consistent attendance at both lectures and recitations. Recommended course text: The Norton Shakespeare, Second Edition.- Archer

**17th Century English Literature**
Introduction to the prose and poetry of the 17th century—an age of spiritual, scientific, and political crisis. Readings in Jonson, Donne, Bacon, Herbert, Marvell, Milton, Browne, and others
V41. 0445.001 Colloq.: Renaissance Writer
This class will explore selected works and passages of English Renaissance literature (including poetry, prose, drama and poetics). Using close reading, we will examine what these texts say, how they work, and how they may differ in their assumptions and effects from the literary writing of later periods. Prior familiarity with English Renaissance literature and its contexts will NOT be assumed. Course requirements: 3 five-page papers and informed participation in class discussions.-Fleming

V41.0500.001 Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century British Literature: Listening To London
This course has three main goals: i) to introduce students to major literary works of the Restoration and early eighteenth centuries, especially works that can be challenging to read on one's own yet surprisingly enjoyable with a little help; ii) to consider the relationship of print, writing, and oral discourse in this period, especially in London, then the world's largest city; and iii) to introduce NYU students to valuable research resources available to them, ranging from rare (pre-1800!) books to new electronic databases. We will read (and sometimes listen to) a wide range of genres, including fiction, drama, poetry, satire, diaries, and journalism. Considering the ways that literary texts represent oral discourse and sound, we will especially work to reconstruct the "aural topography" of the early modern metropolis. Texts include: Samuel Pepys, Diary; William Wycherley, The Country Wife; Ned Ward, The London Spy; Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, The Tatler and The Spectator; Daniel Defoe, A Journal of the Plague Year; Jonathan Swift, "A Description of a City Shower" and "A Description of the Morning"; John Gay, "Trivia: Or, The Art of Walking the Streets of London" and The Beggar's Opera; Eliza Haywood, Fantomina; Alexander Pope, The Dunciad (selections); and Henry Fielding, The Author's Farce. We will supplement these written texts with visual materials such as William Hogarth's Engravings and audio materials such as recordings of ballads. Two of our class meetings will be held in the Fales Library and Special Collections of Bobst Library, allowing students a rare opportunity to work with three hundred year-old materials.-McDowell

V41.0530.001 English Novel in the 19th Century
The Victorian era is often described as the period of Britain's greatest security, influence, and power. As the center of a world-wide empire and enjoying unrivalled economic prosperity, Victorian England also produced some of the finest examples of literary realism, especially in the form of the novel. Nineteenth-century British novels also reveal fissures in Britain's self-confidence, however, partly by introducing sensational or supernatural features into realistic plots. This course examines novels that interrogate realism through features that belong to darker or more fantastic genres. Spear

V41.0600.001 Modern British and American Poetry
Readings from major modern American, British and Irish poets from the middle of the 19th C to the 1920’s-specifically, from Whitman's Leaves of Grass (1855) to T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land (1922). Poets considered generally include Whitman, Dickinson, Hardy, Hopkins, Yeats, Pound, Stevens, Frost, Williams and Eliot.

V41.0708.001 Post-Colonial Writer: Salman Rushdie
This course will cover the entire body of Salman Rushdie’s fiction, with a focus on his major novels. It will help develop the critical tools with which to read Rushdie, and will contextualize him within the political and cultural milieux in which his work was shaped and received in three continents as well as within the paradigm of ‘postcolonial’ literature. Rushdie ‘belongs’ to different literary milieux: we will therefore ask what it means to identify him, variously, as a sub-continental novelist, as a contemporary British-Asian writer, as a 'Third World' or post-colonial writer, and as an ‘international’ writer. Rushdie's novels, especially the early Midnight's Children and Shame, will be read in terms of the nation, exploring such problems as post-colonial nationhood, national histories, and the ‘allegory’ of nation. The controversy over the publication of Satanic Verses will be considered in some detail, engaging questions like the political and theoretical implications of freedom of speech in the western democracy, censorship and Islamic fundamentalism, and the implied opposition between the two, leading to the larger question of the role of the writer today. Other thematic issues emerging from his work, such as the opposition ‘East, West’, migration, minorities, diaspora, the hybridity of cultures, and violence will also be covered. Finally, since Rushdie's narrative methods and formal techniques
are of particular interest, we will attend to the genres and devices with which his work is associated: magical realism, allegory, epic, postmodern fragmentation, decentredness, alienation, non-linear narrative, the unreliable narrator, autobiography and history, cinema, mimicry, satire, hybridity, ‘translation’, memory.

Assignments and Grading: Attendance and class participation=10 %, Weekly 100-word response papers, or class quiz (10 best): 30%, Mid-term take-home exam (3 questions x 500 words): 30%, Final essay (10 pages, 3000 words): 30%

Class schedule

September 8: Introduction and overview
September 15: Midnight’s Children
September 22: Midnight’s Children
September 29: Shame
October 6: Imaginary Homelands (essays relating to Midnight’s Children in Section I; essays relating to Satanic Verses in Section 12; essays in Section 2, ‘Outside the Whale,’ ‘Home Front,’ ‘The New Empire within Britain’)
October 13: NO CLASSES
October 20: Satanic Verses. MID-TERM EXAM DUE.
October 27: Satanic Verses
November 3: Haroun and the Sea of Stories
November 10: East, West
November 17: CLASS CANCELLED; Individual meetings this week
November 24: Moor’s Last Sigh
November 26: Ground Beneath her Feet (Legislative Monday)
December 1: Shalimar the Clown
December 8: The Enchantress of Florence. FINAL ESSAY DUE

Reading list

- Grimus*
- Midnight's Children
- Shame
- The Jaguar Smile*
- The Satanic Verses
- Haroun and the Sea of Stories
- East, West: Stories
- The Moor's Last Sigh
- The Ground Beneath her Feet
- Fury*
- Shalimar the Clown
- The Enchantress of Florence
- Step Across this Line*

Please note: All texts are required except those marked with an asterisk*, which are optional.

V41.0712.001 Major Texts in Critical Theory

In this course we study key texts in critical theory from Plato to Derrida. Raising theoretical questions is not necessarily inimical to literary art. More than half these theorists are also poets, dramatists, and novelists curious enough about the origin, structure, and purposes of literature to raise such questions themselves.

We begin with Plato’s attack on poets in The Republic. Much subsequent theoretical discussion, from Aristotle and Longinus to Sidney and Shelley, is an attempt to answer Plato, who may have hoped to be refuted.

In the first half of the semester, we focus on four major types of theory: mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and formalist. In the second half, we study twentieth-century critical schools, such as Russian and American
formalism, archetypal criticism, structuralism, psychoanalytic criticism, feminist critical theory, queer theory, reader theory, deconstruction, postmodernism, and historicism. We consider pertinent literary texts in light of theoretical issues.


**V41.0735.001 Readings in Contemporary Literary Theory**
This course will concentrate on the increasingly important effects of the use of the computer and the World Wide Web on and in the study of literature. The course will be practical and implicitly theoretical as well as explicitly theoretical, and will be a distinctly hands-on experience. Some sessions will be divided into presentation and practice, some will be practice alone, and all sessions will be held in a laboratory setting. The course will have an on-line component via a course page in Blackboard that will collect readings, on-line resources and sites, and other materials. Although some attempt will be made to tailor the course to the interests of the students who register for the course, some of the topics to be covered are the following:

- the history of the computer and humanities computing digitization
- text markup and the representation of information
- electronic texts and the humanities
- text-analysis
- literary and linguistic corpora and corpus analysis
- statistical stylistics and authorship attribution
- hypertext and hypertext theory
- electronic publishing and dissemination
- access to and preservation of electronic resources
- copyright and intellectual properties issues
- scholarly resources, archives, and on-line research (Hoover)

**V41.0735.002 Readings in Literary Theory: Balladry, Minstrelsy, Cultural Inquiry**
Ballads are both the oldest popular songs and—as recorded by Johnny Cash, June Tabor, and Peggy Seeger—the latest media phenomenon. Loosely defined as "narrative songs in verse," ballads can be family lore, national or regional inheritance, anonymous songs, literary poems, or objects of scholarly analysis. Ever since the first "ballad revival" in late 18th C. Britain, ballads have provided a crucial hinge between the discourses of "literature" and "history." From antiquarian essays on "national song" to debates over the status of minstrels, balladeering has encouraged its practitioners to think across boundaries—whether generic, national, racial, linguistic, or medial.

Ballads also offer a rich zone for thinking about transatlantic crossings: English and Scottish migration to Appalachia, Wordsworth's "Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman," Alan Lomax's recordings in American prisons, Scottish pubs and London concert halls all suggest the complexities of British-American exchange. Balladry encompasses Robert Burns and Bob Dylan; "minstrelsy" appears variously in Walter Scott and 21st C. comedy.

This colloquium will pursue balladry and minstrelsy as they emerge as areas of inquiry in late 18th C. Britain through the nineteenth and into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the US, via printed ballad collections and recordings. Throughout the colloquium we will be alert to the following issues: the tension between emerging notions of "oral tradition" and "literature," the importance of cultural nationalism in stimulating ballad collecting and constructing ballad canons, the emergence of disciplinary standards for ballad study, the racialization of "minstrelsy," the many cultural, political, and historiographic uses to which balladry and minstrelsy have lent themselves.—McLane
V41.0755.001 Representations of Women
Course description: This course surveys representations of sexual and gender difference in literary and cultural production, focusing especially on texts authored by women. Students will be introduced to theories of gender and sexuality that enable us to consider how literature depicts and engages social relations and, conversely, how our reading practices enact (or transform) social conventions regarding gender difference.- Parikh

V41.0780.001 Introduction to Post-Colonial Studies
What does it mean to be “postcolonial”? How can we understand the mixture of cultures and peoples that seems to define our “globalized” age? The rise of interest in the postcolonial condition has been marked by a body of work that engages questions relating to empire and decolonization and creates new models for the analyses of power, identity, gender, resistance, nation and Diaspora. In this class, we will examine novels, poems, political writings and films from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and their diasporic communities. Theoretical readings will draw from Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, M. K. Ghandi and Ngugi wa Thiong’o, while fictional and cinematic texts will include work by V. S. Naipaul, Bapsi Sidhwa, Raoul Peck, Assia Djebar, Tayeb Salih, Bharati Mukherjee and others. Our aim will be to understand both the ways in which these texts provide new models of analysis and have changed the traditional study of literature in the academy. Requirements: midterm paper and final exam. Prerequisites: Literary Interpretation or equivalent- Watson

V41.0925/0926 Senior Honors Thesis/Colloquium
To complete the honors program, the student must write a thesis under the supervision of a faculty director in this individual tutorial course. The student chooses a topic (normally at the beginning of the senior year) and is guided through the research and writing by weekly conferences with the thesis director. Students enrolled in the thesis course are also expected to attend the non-credit colloquium for thesis-writers (V41.0926). Consult the assistant director of undergraduate studies for honors concerning the selection of a topic and a thesis director. Information about the length, format, and due date of the thesis is available on the department’s website.- Patell

V41.0950.001 Medieval Romance**
Despite their marvelous diversity, a majority of medieval romance plots have at least one thing in common: they entail some kind of contact between a central, courtly world and an “other” world. That other world may be a place in the “real” world, like the exotic east of the tale Floris and Blancheflour, for instance; it may be a supernatural realm, like the underworld of Sir Orfeo or the fairy world of Sir Launfal; it could even be a gorgeous yet vaguely threatening interior world, like the realm inside Lord Bercilak’s castle in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Whatever kind of place it is, the other world of a medieval romance will reflect its central, “ordinary” world in important and revealing ways. In this course we will take a topographical approach to medieval romances, delineating their central worlds as well as their other worlds through an examination of their respective inhabitants, codes of conduct, activities they enable and prohibit, along the boundaries, passageways, and emissaries that run between them. Along the way, we’ll discover the topics these literary places--or topoi--invoke and develop, including notions of selfhood, masculinity, femininity, heterosexuality, nationality, geography, temporality, religion, spirituality, nature, non-human species, and the function and performance of linguistic discourse. Beyond these considerations, we’ll also study both the topography of medieval romance as a genre, taking a look at some of the genres upon which it borders--including hagiography, historiography, allegory, and exemplum--and the topography of the “marketplace” for medieval romances, both in the Middle Ages and today.- Rust

V41.0950.002 (Formerly V41.0315.001) Old English Literature and Culture**
The proposed course is designed for students who are interested in the language, literature and culture of England up to the Norman Conquest of 1066. It will provide solid practice in Old English and close reading of a wide range of Anglo-Saxon texts, while introducing students to the historical backgrounds of northwestern Europe, social practices of early medieval Britain, and the literary tradition and innovations of the Anglo-Saxons.

The course is divided into two parts. In the first, students learn basic grammar and memorize core vocabulary, just as they would while studying a foreign language. There will be weekly quizzes at least for the first several weeks of the course. Students will begin reading Old English passages early on, first with the help of translations and then only with study aids such as a glossary and notes. The instructor will also provide a survey of the history and culture of pre-Conquest England. Potential topics include: the heroic code; conversion and cultural syncretism; the rise of English national identity; monasticism and spirituality; the law and customs of the Anglo-Saxons; the Viking invasions and the Norman Conquest; and hybridity and multilingualism. In the second part, students read poetic texts and related secondary material, while studying more advanced grammar and syntax. There will be a brief introduction to Old English versification before students begin with poems like The Seafarer and The Dream of the Rood. There will be discussions on topics such as oral culture (e.g. how to recite Old English poems), material objects (e.g. the runic inscription on the Ruthwell Cross), women's voice (e.g. elegies and Riddles), and translation (e.g. Ezra Pound’s controversial translation of The Seafarer). The course will end with close reading of one or more passages from Beowulf and students’ performances of Beowulf based on various audio and audio-visual recordings of the poem.

**SPECIAL NOTE: FOR FALL 2008 ONLY- V41.0950.001/V41.0950.002 DO NOT FULFILL THE SENIOR SEMINAR REQUIREMENT OF THE ENGLISH MAJOR.**

V41.0953.001 Topics: 18th C Brit Lit: The Fate of Enlightenment
If you were a student in Britain in the 18th century, you would not have majored in "English Literature" or chosen to study "sociology" or "biology." Back then you would have learned "Natural Philosophy" and "Moral Philosophy." "Enlightenment" is the term we use to point to this change in what we know and how--a shift that took shape within new forms of print: novels, poetry, periodicals, encyclopedias, essays, etc. Now that print has been joined--and altered by--our own new technologies--the electronic and algorithmic technologies of new media and computers--it's time to consider not just the history but the fate of Enlightenment. Will knowledge change now as profoundly as it did back then? If a "Re-Enlightenment" is underway, what roles should we--including those of us in English Departments--play in this transformation? Sign up if you're open to the past (Newton's systems, Johnson's dictionary, Wordsworth's verse, Shelley's novels) AND to the future (take a look at David Deutsch's Fabric of Reality and Sadie Plant's Zeros and Ones).

V41.0953.002 Topics: 18th C Brit Lit: British Women’s Writing
An intensive introduction to British women's writing between Aphra Behn (c. 1640-1689) and Jane Austen (1775-1817). We will read poetry, drama, fiction, satire, and polemical writings, considering issues such as sexuality, courtship, and the institution of marriage; personal liberty vs. familial duty and religious and political allegiances; shifting social hierarchies in an increasingly commercial (vs. traditional agrarian) society; the rise of new genres such as the periodical essay and the domestic novel; and debates concerning women's (and non-elite men's) literacy and education. An important element of the course will be our reflection on the significance of how we access eighteenth-century texts. What difference does it make whether we read these texts on microfilm, in photocopies, in modern paperbacks or textbooks, or in digital form by means of electronic databases such as The Eighteenth-Century Collection Online? Several of our class meetings will be held at the Fales Library and Special Collections of Bobst Library, allowing students a rare opportunity to work with original eighteenth-century materials and to employ this historical evidence in their own oral and written projects.

Sample texts currently under consideration for inclusion: Aphra Behn, The Rover: Or, The Banish'd Cavaliers (1677); Alexander Pope, The Rape of the Lock (1712-1717) and/or Moral Essays: Epistle II. To a Lady (1735); Eliza Haywood, Fantomina; Or, Love in a Maze (1724); Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, selections from The Tatler (1709-11) and The Spectator (1711-14); William Hogarth, Selected Engravings (c. 1740s); Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, selected poetry; Jonathan Swift, selected poetry; Francis Burney, Evelina; Or, the
Thoughtful weekly participation in class discussion is an essential aspect of this seminar. Additional requirements include substantial written work (both short response papers and a longer seminar paper), a class presentation, and one day leading part of class discussion, either individually or in teams. - McDowell

V41.0955.001 Topics: 20th C Brit Lit: Post 1900 Comedy
Humor, as much as fashion or pop music, has long been one of Britain’s most successful exports. This class will look at the work of a wide range of post-1900 whimsicalists, nonsensifiers, satirists and filth-merchants operating in the fields of music hall, radio, cinema, television, literature. In the process we hope to disprove EB White’s famous adage: “Analyzing humor is like dissecting a frog. Few people are interested and the frog dies of it.”- Sandhu

V41.0961.001 Topics: 19th C Literature: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Dorothy Wordsworth, and William Wordsworth: An Inquiry into their Literary Relationship
In this course we read works by Coleridge and the two Wordsworths in pursuing aspects of their intense literary collaboration. Certain works—for instance, Coleridge’s conversation poems and W. Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey,” Coleridge’s “Dejection: An Ode” and W. Wordsworth’s “Ode: Intimations of Immortality,” W. Wordsworth’s The Prelude and Coleridge’s “To William Wordsworth,” and W. Wordsworth’s Preface to Lyrical Ballads and Coleridge’s Biographia Literaria—are clear instances of a fruitful if sometimes painful interchange. But there are many other works by these two poets to consider. Scholars are giving more and more credit to Dorothy Wordsworth in the production of her brother’s poems, and she is of course a writer in her own right as diarist and poet. Her influence on Coleridge has been underestimated. We will explore the dynamics of these relationships in many lights: biographical and psychological, literary, cultural, historical, and theoretical (as, for example, the question of influence). Instead of a short essay and midterm, participants will write four to five reaction papers as prompts for seminar discussion. There will be a term essay of about twelve pages for which a prospectus will be handed in a few weeks in advance. - Lockridge

V41.0970.002 Topics: Critical Theory: The Life and Works of Walter Benjamin
Walter Benjamin was one of the most creative critical thinkers of the twentieth century: living through the final frenzied years of the Weimar Republic in Berlin, he moved to exile in Paris in 1933 after the Nazis came to power, and finally committed suicide while attempting to escape to America in 1940. His work combines Marxism with Jewish Messianism, philosophy and history with intense autobiography, literature with the material world in which it is produced. In this course, we will be looking primarily at the first two volumes of his Selected Writings, which represent his work between the years of 1913 and 1934, the first year of his exile. Among his many varied interests, we will be focusing on his writings on art, the city, film, hashish, literature and story telling, photography, technology, and translation. Young

V41.0972.001 Genre Studies: Virginia Woolf
Major fiction and non-fiction, Bloomsbury context, and historical sources. Class report and term paper. Meisel

V41.0972.002 Genre Studies: American Short Story
The American short story both reveals and transcends the cultural and commercial preoccupations that surround its creation. Once tracking the growth of magazines and inspiring countless how-to manuals, the short story has also achieved the status of a complex art form. From Poe’s definition of the achievement of a “unity of effect” and the revelation of “truth” as the story’s aesthetic goals, to contemporary emphases on unsettling the reader, theories of the form reflect its creative ferment and rich diversity. The authors read will include: William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, William Saroyan, Tillie Olsen, Delmore Schwartz, Zora Neal Hurston, Katharine Anne Porter, Shirley Jackson, Truman Capote, John Cheever, Bernard Malamud, Philip
V41.0973.001 Topics: Are You Reading Now? Novel Media and Narrative Format
What are you doing when you “surf” the Internet, receive text messages, and (dare I say) read graphic novels or hypermedia poetry? The National Endowment for the Humanities has recently declared that you are NOT reading. And yet, even the most unlikely of these formats are being used to compose and disseminate narratives: in Japan, a novel is being distributed by text message; blogs and wikis are virtual sites of collective authorship; and graphic novels and hypermedia fiction offer complex visual-textual formats for structuring narrative. Prophesies about new media and “the fate of reading” are nothing new. Late-18th- and 19th-century critics feared that the novel—in its many different forms—threatened wholesome reading practices. Critics worried that readers would no longer read properly or for the right reasons when writers and publishers introduced new ways of formatting narratives: e.g., the epistolary novel; the serialized or triple-decker novel; or texts designed for “speed reading” in the late 19th century. New media formats (then and now) do not merely change storytelling. They also change the way readers are asked to receive and interpret narratives.

One question could facilitate a reevaluation of these fears: how does media format help form kinds of critical readers? This course will take seriously how the formatting of narrative (its material and organizational features) enables and changes, rather than disables, interpretive practices. To thoughtfully contend with the grimly projected “fate of reading” today, we will read contemporary media forms alongside comparable media forms that emerged in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and consider their reception. At the same time, we will engage in historically and theoretically informed critical reading that observes the very different contexts in which media forms emerge.

Texts by Burney, Dickens, Browning and Stoker will share court with graphic and electronic narratives like Persepolis, Train Man and Ceremony of Innocence. We will take advantage of resources in NYU’s Fales Library and online archives to read a host of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century media in their original formats. Students will learn to utilize electronic archives while also developing critical awareness of how electronic formats and searching mechanisms structure interpretation.

This class will survey developments in North American poetry since 1989. After a brief consideration of Language writing, we will examine a range of new poetic practices that both transform and challenge its terms. We will look, in particular, at how poets have turned to the visual arts and digital culture to develop new aesthetic and political models. Poets will include Lisa Robertson, Christian Bok, Juliana Spahr, Rob Fitterman, Rodrigo Toscano, Kevin Davies, Renee Gladman, K.Silem Mohammed, and Jeff Derksen. Theorists and essayists will include Louis Althusser, Judith Butler, Gorgio Agamben, Rem Koolhaas, Robert Smithson and Mike Kelley. Attendance at several readings will be required.

Prerequisites: V41.0200, V41.0210, V41.0220, V41.0230, or permission of the instructor
Poetry: well-turned lines or well-laid raps? Language at its highest pitch or slack self-expression? The opposite of prose or the opposite of "science" and "philosophy" (cf Wordsworth, Coleridge)? What might happen (poetry) vs. what did happen (history, according to Aristotle)? The "expression of the imagination" (Shelley) or the drivel of barbaric rhymesters (Thomas Love Peacock)? An obsolete art or, as former poet laureate Robert Pinsky has argued, a vital, crucial encounter with the single, embodied voice? An intriguingly elastic category, "poetry" encompasses everything from oral tradition (e.g., the ballad) to literary forms (e.g., sonnet, villanelle, ode) to experimental media (e.g., e-poetry).

Working with an array of materials and media—books, CDs, DVDs, and websites among them—we will survey a variety of possibilities and modes of poetics in English; we will explore how and why "poetry" becomes a contended category in crucial moments of Anglophone poetic production. Among the questions we will explore: how exactly is "poetry" defined and experienced in a given historical-cultural field? What constitutes a "tradition"? How and when do differing medial realizations—oral performance, writing, printing, digitizing—transform our senses of poets, poems, traditions? What is the impact of new media on poetic practice and theory? What do we talk about when we talk about poetry? Our test cases will include: British
romantic poetry, Anglo-Scottish balladry, major modernist poetries, contemporary North American poetries (including "slam," neo-Dada, neo-formal, and experimental modes)-McLane