ENGL-UA 190 Topics in Twentieth Century Literature

(Re)making the Body in American Literature Since World War II

Professor Kristen Tapson

MTW 1:00-3:10 p.m.

This course will examine major works of fiction and poetry written in the period from 1945 to the present. Our touchstone will be the relationship between the body and representation and how literature of this period challenges and/or reinscribes the legacy of Enlightenment dualism as it responds to and alternatively imagines the terms of its historical moment. We will focus on questions pertaining to identity, subject position, the depiction of bodies, and the constraints of genre in the context of both postwar American culture and the social and political movements for equality in the decades that followed.

Topics will include writer-reader interfaces, posthumanism, cyborg theory, science fiction, medicine, life writing, challenges to realism and lyric expression, mobility, war, feminism, and civil rights. We will consider how these topics can help us address questions of how knowledge is embodied in human, animal, and technological forms and how we might rethink concepts of expertise and knowledge in contemporary culture.

Week 1: July 7, 8, 9

Jack Kerouac. *On the Road.*

Selections from the William S. Burroughs Reader


Selected poems by Denise Levertov and Larry Eigner.

Week 2: July 14, 15, 16


Selected poems and essays by Philip Whalen and Gary Snyder.

Week 3: July 21, 22, 23


Lorine Niedecker, selected poems.

Week 4: July 28, 29, 30 Ray Bradbury. “I Sing the Body Electric!”


Kurt Vonnegut. Cat’s Cradle.

Donna Haraway. “A Cyborg Manifesto.”

Sanford Kwinter. “Soft Systems.”

Week 5: August 4, 5, 6 Don DeLillo. White Noise.

John Ashbery, selected poems.


Bernadette Mayer. “Experiments,” selections from The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters

Related texts of critical theory will be considered alongside the primary texts and may include essays by Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, and Karen Barad, among others.

Course Requirements:

1. Class Participation, including an oral presentation. (30%)

2. Two response papers (one-page each). (30%)

3. Final Paper. Requirements TBA. (40%)
ENGL-UA.210: British Literature I: (re)Reading the British Isles

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
1:15-3:25pm  25 West 4th St, Rm C-20

**This syllabus is subject to change at any time.**

**Basic Information:**
Instructor: Carla María Thomas
Office: Rm 210, 244 Greene St.
Office hours: Wednesday, 2:00-4:00pm & by appointment

**Course Description**

Because this course is called “British Literature I,” we will explore the literatures of the British Isles from the early medieval period (ca. 600) to the early modern period (ca. 1650). Thus, “British” does not simply refer to that which is “English,” and we will read early texts from the Irish, Welsh, English, and what we now call Scottish cultures. That is, British literature. These peoples and languages had complex relationships with each other—so complicated that it is often difficult to disentangle them from one another—so we will begin by reading the earliest accounts of this multifaceted group of people. For example, the Venerable Bede, an English monk of the 8th century, discusses the ecclesiastical history of the English people (the *gentii Anglorum*) while Nennius, a Welsh monk of the 9th century, wrote a history of Britain (*Historia Brittonum*) that includes the legendary origins of the Picts, Scots, and Britons, as well as recounts the Anglo-Saxon invasion of the 7th century. Most notably, Nennius’ work was a major influence on the later Arthurian legends.

Typically, this course begins with *Beowulf* and ends with Milton’s *Paradise Lost* by focusing primarily on “English” literature, but, as the paragraph above indicates, we will be doing things a little bit differently. We will read Germanic and Celtic heroic poetry that speaks of war, glory, and exile, and then we will relish the Welsh stories that influenced Middle English Arthurian tales, like the one found in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. We will read *King Lear*, but alongside it, we will also read the medieval legend of King Leir on which Shakespeare bases his tragedy. We will question what makes a text or author “canonical” while reading both canonical and lesser-known works and authors. The point of this course is not for you to know just the big wigs of British (aka English) literature, but also to walk away with a greater understanding—and, hopefully, appreciation—of what “British” meant in the pre-modern past, and still means in our (post)modern present, in all its multicultural and multilingual glory.

*NB:* Many of the medieval texts will be read in translation, though the later Middle English and Early Modern texts will be in edited originals.
Required Texts


**All other readings will be available as PDFs on NYU Classes.**

Course Requirements

**Presentations:** You will be responsible for at least one (1) presentation in this class, which may or may not include a partner. Whether this is a solo and partnered project will depend on course enrollment. On the first day of class, you will sign up to present on the reading(s) of one of the Thursdays (indicated below). This presentation, which should be approximately 20 minutes long, will be both visual and oral, so be prepared to use PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, or any other multimedia that you can think of for your presentation. **You must send me your presentation material by the Monday prior to your Presentation.**

**Papers:** You will be responsible for two (2) papers in this class: a 3-4 page close-reading paper that will be based on your translating a brief passage of Old or Middle English, and a 6-8 page paper drawn from your first paper in which you must make an argument using close-reading analysis and outside research.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will include passage identification and two short essays.

NB: Because your papers cover a medieval text, the final exam will only cover the early modern material.

**Participation:** Participation is **mandatory** in this class due to its small size and the brief amount of time we will have together. Therefore, **attendance is mandatory.** I allow you one absence, no questions asked. I simply ask that you be courteous and inform me ahead of time, if possible. For each additional absence, however, I will deduct 1/3 of a letter grade from your final grade (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B, etc.), unless you provide me with a valid excuse (e.g., death in the family, you’ve just been diagnosed with cancer). Pop quizzes and discussion posts to NYU Classes count towards your participation grade, though I expect you to actively engage in discussion in the classroom as well, not just warm your seat.

**Grade Distribution**

Presentation .......................................................... 10%

Paper 1 .......................................................... 15%
Course Policy

Please see the handout titled “Course Policy.”

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Week 1: Introduction & Warrior Culture**

Tuesday, 5/27:
- Selections from Nennius (PDF), Bede (LM 155-160), Bishop Asser (LM 160-2) and Monmouth (LM 183-9)
- King Alfred’s *Preface* to Saint Gregory’s *Pastoral Care* (LM 162-4)

Thursday, 5/29:
- *Beowulf* (LM 136-85, lines 1-2206)
- *Dream of the Rood* (LM 1148-52)

**Week 2: Warrior Culture, Otherworld, & Arthuriana**

Monday, 6/2:
- *Beowulf* (LM 85-107, lines 2207-3179)
- *The Táin Bó Cuailnge* (LM 1113-33)
- Selections from *Y Gododdin* (PDF)

Tuesday, 6/3:
- *Exile of the Sons of Uisliu* (PDF)
- *The Wanderer* (LM 173-5)
- *The Seafarer* (PDF)
- *The Wife’s Lament* (LM 177-8)
- *Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed* (PDF)
Thursday, 6/5: Student Presentation 1

- *Bricriu’s Feast* (PDF)
- *Culhweh and Olwen* (PDF)
- Marie de France, *Lanval* (LM1 203-17)
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (*SGK*), Part 1 (LM1 222-32)

**Week 3: Arthuriana, the Otherworld, & Courtly Romance Continued**

Monday, 6/9:

- *SGK*, Parts 2 & 3 (LM1 232-65)
- Arthurian selections from Laȝamon’s *Brut* (PDF)

Tuesday, 6/10:

- *SGK*, Part 4 (LM1 266-77)

Thursday, 6/12: Student Presentation 2

- Chaucer, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue” and “Tale,” *CT* (LM1 375-403)

**Paper 1 Due Friday, 6/13, 11:59pm on NYU Classes**

**Week 4: Middle Scots & Transitioning Periods**

Monday, 6/16:

- *Sir Orfeo* (PDF)
  - Suggested Reading: Robert Henryson, *Orpheus and Eurydice* (online: http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/parkinson-henryson-complete-works-orpheus-and-eurydice)
- Selections from Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium* (PDF: pp. 3-9, 27-31, & 371-5)
- William Dunbar, *Done is a Battell* (LM1 577-8) and *In Secret Place This Hyndir Nycht* (LM1 578-9)
- Robert Henryson, *Robene and Makyne* (LM1 580-3)
- John Skelton, *The Bouge of Courte* (LM2 652-64)

Tuesday, 6/17:

- Selection from Laȝamon’s *Brut* (PDF)
Thursday, 6/19: **Student Presentation 3**
- *King Lear*, Acts 3-5 (LM2 1399-1444)

**Week 5: Early Modern Poetry (Courtly, Metaphysical, & Nostalgic)**

Monday, 6/23:
- Christopher Marlowe
  - *Hero and Leander* (LM2 1092-1110)
  - *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love* (PDF)
- Aemilia Lanyer, *The Description of Cookham* (LM2 1086-90)

Tuesday, 6/24:
- Sir Thomas Wyatt (LM2)
  - *Whoso List to Hunt* (668)
    - Companion reading, Petrarch’s Sonnet 190 (669)
  - *They Flee From Me* (702)
- Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (LM2)
  - *The Soote Season* (671)
  - *Alas! So all things do hold their peace!* (671-2)
    - Companion reading, Petrarch’s Sonnet 164 (672)
- William Shakespeare, Sonnets 1, 12, 15, 18, 20, 31, 55, 71, 93, 106, 130, 138, and 144 (LM2 1203-14)

Thursday, 6/26: **Student Presentation 4**
- John Donne (LM2)
  - *The Flea* (1596)
  - *The Ecstasy* (1599-1600)
- George Herbert (LM2)
  - *Easter Wings* (1629)
  - *Jordan (I)* (1631-2)
- Robert Herrick (LM2)
  - *Corinna’s Going A-Maying* (1620-2)
  - *To the Virgins, Make Much of Time* (1622)
- Perspectives: The Civil War, or the Wars of Three Kingdoms (LM2 1678-98)
  - Includes extracts from John Gauden, John Milton, Oliver Cromwell, the Irish poem *John O’Dwyer of the Glenn* (Seán O’Dubhghaill an Ghleanna), and *The Story of Alexander Agnew* (“first man in Scots history publicly to deny the existence of God,” 1696).
**Paper 2 Due Friday, 6/27, 11:59pm on NYU Classes**

**Week 6: John Milton’s Most Epic Protestant Epic**

Monday, 6/30:

Tuesday, 7/1:
- Exam Review

Thursday, 7/3: **Final Exam**
American Literature I: Beginnings to 1860
Instructor: Rachael Wilson Email: rachaelmichelle@nyu.edu
ENGL-UA 230.001 Office: Room 410, 244 Greene st.
Summer 2014: 07/07/14 – 08/16/14

Required Texts:
Herman Melville, Moby-Dick (Norton Edition)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter

Course Description:
This course offers a broad exploration of early American literature, beginning with writings produced in the context of European exploration of the Americas during the 16th and 17th centuries and ending in 1860 with the impending American Civil War. Within this frame, we will consider the way literary production is shaped by particular historical experiences, such as early European “contact” with Native American peoples; European colonization of North America; the myriad conflicts and wars between Native Americans, between Native Americans and European settlers and between Europeans and colonials; the founding of the United States as a sovereign nation; Westward expansion; and slavery. On the other hand, we will also consider how literary production shapes our understanding of this history and creates the conditions for its reception as “American literature.” We will consider, then—along with the many other functions and purposes of literature—its distinctly self-mythologizing tendencies. This course will introduce you to a variety of literary genres and styles that emerged from within the colonial American, early national and antebellum periods. In addition to reading morefamiliar literary objects such as novels, short stories and poems, we will consider other modes of writing at the margins of the literary, including: journals, letters, legal documents, lectures, sermons, speeches, transcribed oral tales and autobiography. Our course will focus on issues relating to immigration and migration, republicanism and democracy, religious communities (Protestants, Puritans, Calvinists, Unitarians), representations of women, slavery and abolitionism. We will read works by Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Frederick Douglass, Edgar Allan Poe, Washington Irving, Phyllis Wheatley, Mary Rowlandson and Jonathan Edwards, as well as by many lesser known writers.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:
Written Assignments: total 50%
1 close reading and analysis (500–600 words or ~2 pages) – 10%
1 short essay (800–1000 words or ~3 pages) – 15%
1 final paper (1700–2000 words, or ~5-6 pages) – 25%
In-class Participation: 10%
Oral Presentation: 10%
Midterm Exam: 10%
Final Exam: 20%
**Attendance Policy:** This is an accelerated course. Due to the fast pacing of this course, it is extremely important that you attend each session and that you keep up with the reading; there will not be room within the 6 weeks to “catch up” at any point. If you have an emergency and must miss a class session, please notify me immediately. Otherwise, I will expect you to attend class and to arrive on time. While each student's grade is determined individually, a rule-of-thumb for attendance is: The first missed class is excusable; the second missed class reduces your participation grade by half; missing three classes results in a zero grade for participation; missing four classes results in failure of the course. **Repeated tardiness will count as absences.**

**In-Class Participation:** Students are expected to have read and annotated the texts in preparation for class and to arrive ready to discuss the texts. If needed, you should prepare questions and mark passages and points for discussion. If you have difficulty participating in class for any reason, please see me.

**Written Assignments:** Due in-class, in hard copy format, stapled in upper-left corner. Follow MLA Guidelines for paper formatting. Paper topics and guidelines will be circulated in class and available through NYU Classes. Late papers will not be accepted unless discussed with me well in advance of the deadline.

**Oral Presentation:** Each student is responsible for delivering a ten-minute oral presentation related to the prepared reading for that class session. The format of the presentation is flexible. You may incorporate images and short video or audio clips. You may attempt to engage your audience with questions and lead into a class discussion. You may talk about the text in relation to specific historical events; you may present on modern and contemporary adaptations of the work; you may relate the work to another work by the same author or to a contemporaneous text; and you may draw on scholarly resources for interpretations of the work. Specific ideas may be discussed with me in advance.

**Mid-term Exam:** In two parts, including keyword definitions and passage identification.

**Final Exam:** The final exam is cumulative and consists in three parts: keyword definitions, passage identifications and a short essay.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Whether written or spoken, **words** and **ideas** that derive from another person must be cited when they appear in your writing. Failure to do so constitutes an act of plagiarism, which will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly for the course. For NYU’s policy on academic integrity please consult: http://www.nyu.edu/about/policiesguidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html

**Electronics and Classroom Etiquette:** Turn off cell phones and other electronics during class. Laptops are not permitted unless you have cleared usage with me. Same goes for tablets and ereaders. Beverages are permitted in class. Un-messy and un-noisy snacks are ok. No banqueting.
Office Hours: Please avail yourself of my office hours (or schedule an appointment) to field questions about the course and course assignments, to discuss ideas, to propose paper topics and to chat about course-related matters.

Week 1: American Renaissance and First Encounters
Tues., July 8 -Herman Melville, Moby-Dick (1851), Etymology, Extracts, Chapters 1-42
Wed., July 9 -Melville, Moby-Dick, Chapters 43-89
Thurs., July 10 -Christopher Columbus, selections from the Letters (1493, 1503/1505)
-Bartolomé de las Casas, from “Devastation of the Indies” (1542-46/1552)
-Cabeza de Vaca, selections from The Relation (1542)
-“First Encounters”: Norton selections, pp. 52-81, Volume A

Week 2: Puritanism
Tues., July 15 -Melville, Moby-Dick, Chapters 90-epilogue
-William Bradford, selections from Of Plymouth Plantation (1630-50/1856)
-John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” (1630-1838)
Introduction and Chapters 1-3 (NYU Classes);
-Winthrop, excerpts from The Journal of John Winthrop (1630-49/1825-26)
-Anne Bradstreet, “The Prologue” (1650); “The Author to Her Book” (1678);
“To My Dear and Loving Husband” (1678); “For Deliverance from a Fever” (1678/1867); “Here Follows Some Verses Upon the Burning of Our House” (1666/1867)
Thurs., July 17
FIRST
ESSAY DUE
-Mary Rowlandson, A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs.
Mary Rowlandson (1682)

Week 3: American Enlightenment and Neoclassicism
Tues., July 22 -Jonathan Edwards, “Personal Narrative” (1765); “A Divine and Supernatural Light” (1733/1734); “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (1741)
-Edward Taylor, from Preparatory Meditations: “Prologue” (c. 1682/1939);
“Meditation 8” (1684/1939); “Meditation 16” (1686/1960); from God’s Determinations: “The Preface” (c.1685/1939); “Huswifery” (17c/1937, 1960);
“Upon a Wasp Chilled with Cold” (17c/1960)
Wed., July 23 -Thomas Jefferson, Introduction, and selection from The Declaration of Independence” (1776), excerpted from the Autobiography (1829)
-Abigail Adams, selections from The Letters
-Benjamin Franklin, The Autobiography, parts one and two (1784/1868)
Thurs., July 24
MIDTERM EXAM
-Phillis Wheatley, Introduction; “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (1773); “To the University of Cambridge” (1773); “On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield” (1770, 1773); “To S.M.” (1773); “To His Excellency General Washington” (1776, 1834); letter to Samson Occom (1774, 1989)
-Philip Freneau, Introduction; “The Wild Honeysuckle” (1786); “The Indian
Burying Ground” (1788)
-William Cullen Bryant, Introduction and “Thanatopsis” (1821)

Week 4: American Gothic, Transcendentalism
Tues., July 29 -Edgar Allan Poe, “The Black Cat” (1843); “The Purloined Letter” (1844);
“The Philosophy of Composition” (1846)
-Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle” (1819); “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (1820)
Wed., July 30 -Frederick Douglass, Introduction and Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (1845)
-Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance” (1841)
-Henry David Thoreau, Walden (1854): Chapters 1-8
Thurs., July 31
SECOND ESSAY DUE

-Thoreau, Walden (1854): Chapters 9-18

Week 5: Sentimentalism, Symbolism
Tues., Aug. 5 -Edgar Allan Poe, Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym (1838)
Wed., Aug. 6 -Harriet Beecher Stowe, from Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852)
Thurs., Aug. 7 -Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown” (1835); “The Birth-Mark” (1843, 1846); “Preface” to The House of Seven Gables (1851)
-Melville, “Hawthorne and His Mosses” (1850)
-Emerson, “The Poet” (1844); “Experience” (1844)

Week 6: Romance, “Free Verse”
Tues., Aug. 12 Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter (1850)
Wed., Aug. 13
FINAL PAPER DUE
-Walt Whitman, Preface to Leaves of Grass (1855); “Song of Myself” (1855, 1881)
-Emily Dickinson, Selections T.B.D.
Thurs., Aug. 14
FINAL EXAM
Final Exam (in class)

General Resources:
In addition to my office hours, which are available to you as a class-specific writing resource, you may also find general writing assistance at the NYU Writing Center:
http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html

Students with disabilities should consult the available resources at the Moses Center, which offers particularized exam accommodations in addition to other services:
http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/students-with-disabilities.html
NYU Student Health Center for physical, mental and emotional health:
The English novel as we understand it today was invented in the eighteenth century. You may already know this, but you’ve probably read very few of these early novels, which both created many of the narrative and descriptive techniques of modern narrative fiction and experimented in ways that were subsequently abandoned. This course will explore both aspects of eighteenth-century novels. What features of novelistic writing were picked up by later authors? And what ones were discarded? In addition to reading and interpreting the important texts from the first century of English novel writing, this course will explore the kinds of fictionality created in the eighteenth century that persist in our modern genres of narrative fiction. In keeping with the methods of the period, we will draw upon other forms of supposition—hypothesis, conjecture, and the rule of false—understood as comparable to the novelistic fiction in the eighteenth century, as ways of imagining alternative histories of the novel.

Required Texts:
Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe (Oxford)
Eliza Haywood, Love in Excess (Broadview)
Samuel Richardson, Pamela (Oxford)
Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy (Oxford)

Course requirements:
1. Attendance (10%)
2. Participation (10%)
3. Passage commentary (5%)
4. Revision exercise (5%)
5. Midterm paper (20%)
6. Midterm reading check (5%)
7. Presentation (5%)
8. Final reading check (5%)
9. Final paper (35%)

Reading Schedule
7/8-10/14 – Week 1
T – Defoe, Robinson Crusoe (1719)
W – Robinson Crusoe (cont.); Ian Watt, “Realism and Novel Form,” The Rise of the Novel
R – Crusoe (cont.); Aphra Behn Oroonoko (1688; selection), Joseph Addison & Steele, The Spectator (1711; selection)

7/15-17/14 – Week 2
T – *Crusoe* (cont.)  
W – Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess* (1719)  
R – Love in Excess (cont.); Ros Ballaster, “Fiction as Seduction,” *Seductive Forms*

7/22-24/14 – Week 3  
T – Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (1740)  
W – *Pamela* (cont.); Michael McKeon, “Richardson and the Domestication of Service”  

7/29-31/14 – Week 4  
T - *Pamela* (cont.) Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler* (1750-2; selections)  
W – *Pamela* (cont.); Catherine Gallagher, “The Rise of Fictionality”  
R – Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (1759)

8/5-7/14 – Week 5  
T – *Tristram* (cont.)  
W – *Tristram* (cont.);  
R – Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote* (1752; selection); Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance* (1785; selection)

8/12-14/14 – Week 6  
T – *Tristram* (cont.); John Bender, “Enlightenment Fiction and the Scientific Hypothesis”  
W – Presentations; Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764; selection)  
R – *Tristram*; Presentations
“The Greeks have borrowed a name for the universe from ornament, on account of the variety of the elements and the beauty of the stars. For it is called among them kosmos…For with the eyes of the flesh we see nothing fairer than the universe.”
- Isidore of Seville (d. 636)

In *Discourse on Method* the 17th-century French philosopher Réne Descartes argues that animals are machines and that if one saw a machine “possessing the organs and outward form of a monkey or some other animal without reason” one would have no way of telling whether this animal was indeed a biological organism or a mechanical automaton. Even if the idea of a mechanical monkey seems a bit silly, Descartes’ argument fits into a longer tradition within Western thought that has aligned the realm of the body, or more broadly the biological and the natural with a deterministic sense of fixity. In this course we will read a range of philosophical texts which attempt to theorize the relation between nature and change, starting with Ancient cosmogonic accounts which explain in various ways the processes through which the universe came into existence and stretching towards contemporary conversations that are engaging the relations between language, textuality, and materiality. While this is not a chronological survey, the course will engage major texts and ideas in critical theory, including semiotics and structuralist analysis, psychoanalytic theory, Marxist, feminist, and queer reading practices, deconstruction, poststructuralism, as well as emerging conversations in “new materialism” and animal studies. Our examination of these critical approaches will be inflected by guiding questions about the relationship between linguistic sign systems and the material world, and, in this way, the course will bring into historical relation old and new material textual practices.

### I. COSMOGONIES OF STASIS AND CHANGE

**Heraclitus** – excerpt from *The Book of Cosmos* Ed. Dennis Danielson  
**Parmenides** – excerpt from *The Book of Cosmos* Ed. Dennis Danielson  
**Lucretius** – excerpt from *De rerum natura* – “Book II: Movement and Shapes of Atoms”  
**Plato** – excerpt from *Timaeus*, excerpt from *Republic* – (from Book X)  
**Creation Stories** – The Iroquois Creation Story, Genesis - Chapters 1-11, Pima Stories of the Beginning of the World  
**Jane Bennett** – excerpts from *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*

### II. SIGNS

**Ferdinand De Saussure** – excerpt from *Course in General Linguistics*  
**Charles Sanders Peirce** – “On the Nature of Signs,” “What is a Sign?”  
**J.L. Austin** – “Performative Utterance”  
**Aristotle** – excerpt from *Poetics*  
**Derrida** – excerpt from *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, excerpt from *Dissemination* – “Plato’s Pharmacy”  
**George Lakoff and Mark Johnson** – *Metaphors We Live By*
III. STRUCTURE AND TEMPORALITY
Roland Barthes – excerpt from *Mythologies*
Henri Bergson – excerpt from *Creative Evolution*
Gilles Deleuze – excerpt from *Bergsonism, and The Logic of Sense*
Jakob von Uexkül – excerpt from *A Foray Into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* – “A Theory of Meaning”

IV. MECHANICAL MONKEYS: BODIES + ANIMALS + MACHINES
Réné Descartes – excerpt from *Discourse on Method*
Sigmund Freud – excerpt from *Civilization and Its Discontents*
Judith Butler – excerpt from *Bodies that Matter*

V. TACTILE ORNAMENTS + SOFT ARCHITECTURES
Karl Marx – excerpt from *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, and from *The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*
Lisa Robertson – *Thinking Space*, excerpts from *Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture*

VI. AFTER NATURE?
Michel Foucault – excerpt from *The Order of Things* – from “The Prose of the World” and “Classifying”
Mel Y. Chen – excerpt from *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*
Christian Bök – *The Xenotext Experiment*
Timothy Morton – excerpt from *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*
Karen Barad – excerpt from *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*
COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will use a multimedia approach to explore the ways in which late medieval mystics and visionaries experienced the divine in and through their bodies and by way of other material encounters. Our conversations will focus on the role of bodies and objects in the experience and expression of desire in the Late Middle Ages. We will seek to understand what “knowing” meant in the context of medieval heterodoxy, erotic mysticism, and sacramental mediation of bodies. Using continental theologians and mystical writers, we will explore the relationships between sacraments and rituals and human bodies attempting to touch the untouchable. We will examine popular enactments of orthodox Christianity through selections of the N-Town pageant plays and follow up with popular medieval literatures from Chaucer, *The Romance of the Rose*, Saints’ legends, and Miracle stories. To these we will add first-hand mystical accounts of visions, ecstasies, and encounters with the transcendent realm in order to stretch the limits of what was knowable in the human body and how. We ask: what constituted mystical knowledge and how was its ecstasy experienced? In the final portion of this course we will translate this question into contemporary contexts by reading Robert Glück’s late twentieth-century novel *Margery Kempe* in which the narrator uses Margery’s own voice and queer mysticism to understand and experience his own same-sex desire.

The course goal is to understand how touching, feeling, and knowing are done through sensible ecstasy in the Late Middle Ages.

REQUIRED TEXTS


[http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/sugano-the-n-town-plays](http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/sugano-the-n-town-plays)
REQUIREMENTS

Fully engaged participation in this course is the most vital component. All students are required to be in attendance every day, having completed the assigned readings and being prepared to begin discussion that day, if asked. Students must bring their books or reading materials to class every day. In the case of The Book of Margery Kempe and Margery Kempe, students must have a hard copy of the book in the stipulated edition and bring it to class daily. Failure to bring a book will count as an absence. In addition to books, students may often be asked to bring computers, tablets or even smart phones to class. On days where such devices will be in use, students are expected to use them judiciously, for the purposes of the class, and to close all texting, messaging, social networking, and e-mail applications or tabs. Any student who is caught or reported to be misusing his or her devices may be subject to taking an absence for that day’s class.

Because of the condensed schedule of a summer course, daily attendance is even more important than it is during a regular semester. Full attendance is expected. In the event that the student must miss a class, he or she needs to do the instructor the courtesy of notifying her, in advance if possible. No more than two absences will be allowed before absences will directly affect the student’s final grade. For each absence over two, 6% of the student’s final grade will be deducted (that is, after final grades are calculated, then 6% per absence will be deducted).

Special visits: the class will be making two special visits to offsite sessions. These sessions are mandatory, and they are only being offered on the given date and time. Students cannot make up these sessions, and failure to attend one of these sessions will result in an automatic drop of 7.5% to the final grade. These sessions and the final exam are not covered by the 2 absence max.
Final grades will be determined by a combination of class participation and preparedness, the weekly timeline project, written work on the Books of Hours project and final paper (including the whole process from topic to thesis to paper), and a final exam made up almost entirely of short answer and multiple choice questions.

**GRADING**

Participation and Preparedness: 40%
Final Paper: 25%
Final Exam: 20%
Book of Hours Project: 10%
Weekly Timeline: 5% (1% x week for 5 weeks)

**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 T May 27 Knowing Medieval Objects**

Hrotsvitha *Dulcitius* (in class)

http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/sugano-the-n-town-plays

**W May 28 Understanding Medieval Art Objects and Images***

Guillame de Lorris *The Romance of the Rose*, “The Garden of Pleasure”
Hildegard of Bingen *Scivias*, Book 3 Vision 2 and Book 1 Vision 3
Genesis 1

**R May 29 Books as Objects***

Christine de Pizan *The Book of the City of Ladies* I.1-8
Geoffrey Chaucer *The Canterbury Tales*, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue” lines
Hugh of Saint Victor *De Sacramentis* II.I
Bernard of Clairvaux “On Conversion” III

John 1

Week 2 T June 3 Knowing in/from/and Human Bodies

Bernard of Clairvaux “On Conversion,” IV and V

“Custody of the Soul” in *Medieval English Prose for Women*

N-Town plays 37 (“Appearance to Mary Magdalene”) and 38 (“Cleophas and Luke, Appearance to Thomas”)

http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/sugano-the-n-town-plays

One section of the “Abbey of the Holy Ghost”

http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101068162328;view=1up;seq=7

W June 4 Visit to the Columbia Rare Books Library

Read the Charter of Christ and the Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost

R June 5 The Power of Bodily Fragments and Proximity: Relics*

2 Kings 13:20-22

Acts 19:11-12

Peter the Venerable Sermon 4 vol.189 1001-03 OR

John of Damascus *Pro Sacris imaginibus, Oratio* 2 Pg 94 col. 7300B

*Oratio* 3 Pg 3 col. 1337C

*The Golden Legend* Saint Agatha and the Miracle of her Relics

Geoffrey Chaucer, the Pardoner in the “General Prologue,” the Prologue to “The Pardoner’s Tale,” the Pardoner’s argument with Harry Bailey (VI.944-55)

Week 3 T June 10 Sacramental Bodies*

N-Town passion plays (2) 29-32
Bernard of Clairvaux “On Consideration” X.23 (V.23?)

Hugh of Saint Victor De Sacramentis, III.VIII.1-2, 7-14 (pp. 304-15)

**W June 11 Miracles and Visions**

N-Town plays 11 “Parliament of Heaven” and 12 “Joseph’s Doubt”

*Miracles of the Virgin:*

“Gaude” (pp 27-39) and “The Little Clerk” (pp 97-106) from

http://books.google.com/books?id=JclHAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

and “The Sick Monk” and “The Prest who lay with a Nonne” transcribed from the Vernon Manuscript

Salutations to Hanna (pp 8-11) and the Members of the Body of the Virgin (pp 236-244) in

http://books.google.com/books?id=_qTFAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=legends+of+our+lady+mary+the+perpetual+virgin+and+her+mother&hl=en&sa=X&ei=DigJU7HPMoqzsQS6rYCAAQ&ved=0CCwQ6wEwAA#v=onepage&q=legends%20of%20our%20lady%20mary%20the%20perpetual%20virgin%20and%20her%20mother&f=false

**R June 12 Mystical Visions and Bodily Ecstasy**


Hildegard of Bingen Vision 6

Angela of Foligno *Memorial* (Le Livre par. 75 pp 156-8)

**Week 4 T June 17 Knowing Through the Other Senses**

Bernard of Clairvaux (?) Sermon 74.II.5-III.8 ??

Bonaventure *The Soul’s Journey Unto God* chapters 1-4, 7, 59-93, 110-116

*Ancrene Wisse* “The Custody of the Senses”

Christina of Markyate on feeling Christ penetrate her
W June 18 **Group Visit to The Cloisters Museum**

R June 19 **Bodily Knowing: Margery Kempe**

_The Book of Margery Kempe_ Proem, Preface and chapters 1-3, 6-8, 13, 17, 20, 22, 28-30, 33, 35-36

[http://college.holycross.edu/projects/kempe/text/kempecap.htm](http://college.holycross.edu/projects/kempe/text/kempecap.htm)

Please use this chapter by chapter summary to keep yourself oriented within the text as we skip around it.

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**Week 5**

T June 24 **Bookish Knowing in the Body: Margery Kempe**


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W June 25 **Knowing One's Own Body and Desires through Margery**

Robert Glück _Margery Kempe_, first 68 pages

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R June 26 **Desiring Margery**

Robert Glück _Margery Kempe_, next 68 pages

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**Week 6**

T July 1 **Finishing Margery**

Robert Glück _Margery Kempe_, last 69 pages

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W July 2 **Knowing Now**

No required readings—in class discussion translating medieval contexts into modernity.

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R July 3 **FINAL EXAM**