DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

GRADUATE SEMINARS

SPRING 2018

503 HISTORIOGRAPHY OF CINEMA, Curry, W 3:00-5:50
same as MACS 504, CWL 504

Learn to be a “detective” into film/cultural history! This graduate seminar, one of two required courses for the UIUC Graduate Minor in Cinema Studies, explores practices and trends in writing the history of cinema and, by extension, other popular audio-visual media. It thereby offers a meta-historical study focused on how film histories have over the past century variously construed and also shaped their object of study, e.g., as an art form, an industry, a technology, a phenomenon of modernity, a cultural artifact, a site of ideological discourse, and/or material expression of national or ethnic character and/or collective social trauma. While initially critically surveying specific dominant approaches to film history (e.g. focusing on directors as auteurs, on movie stars, on national cinemas, on style and genre, and on issues of exhibition and audience response), this semester’s iteration of the seminar will emphasize in our readings particularly transnational and “sub-national” (e.g., “ethnic” film movements) cinema histories, for the construction and impact of such histories is a site of recent fresh and exciting research. We will to some extent set such trans- and sub-national frameworks for writing histories of media texts in direct contrast to a “national” film historiographic approach. Although national film historiography has proven persistent, politically strategic, and often intellectually productive, many media historians now contest that long dominant approach in light not only of current global media dissemination but also, even more compellingly, of the quite early and far-reaching impact of cinema’s worldwide circulation from its beginnings, as we can now readily learn through copious digitized cinema historical archives. Alongside additional selected articles, we’ll read and discuss most of two required books, Looking Past the Screen: Case Studies in American Film History and Method, eds. Jon Lewis and Eric Smoodin (Duke University Press, 2007) and Jacqueline Najuma Stewart, Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity (University of California Press 2005). We will view several shorter films in class but students will also need to watch a couple of (readily available) additional films outside our seminar meetings. Each student will make several written and oral presentations on the readings, films and issues discussed, write a review of a recent academic book in an area of particular interest, explore readily available cinema historical archives (amazing resources on campus and the Internet), and as a final project compile an extensive annotated bibliography that proposes a cogent historiographic approach to an individual topic formulated in relation to either transnational or sub-national ethnic cinema histories (e.g., African American film history). That is: you will not write and submit a polished final long essay (of ca. 20 pages) for the seminar, but instead over the last weeks of the semester propose and research and present a polished annotated filmography and bibliography for such an essay. That “pre-writing” for a substantial essay could form the basis for a conference presentation and/or subsequently drafted essay that you might with further mentoring in a subsequent semester complete and submit for publication (as students in previous seminars making that assignment have very successfully done, as well as seen their book reviews written for class get published!)

524 SEMINAR IN 17TH C LITERATURE, Gray, R 1:00-2:50
TOPIC: History, temporality and seventeenth-century literature

Questions of time and history are currently of pressing concern to early modern scholars. For historians, size perhaps does matter, as the scale of the history that we should take as our object of study has become a matter of intense debate, particularly between “micro-” and “macro” historians. At the same time, memory studies and queer theory have turned our attention to linear temporality and its others, asking how understandings of trauma, the performative nature of historical breaks, diachronic simultaneity, nonreproductive futurity or “the new unhistoricism” could challenge our readings of individual texts and change the larger stories we tell about these texts within literary studies. In this course, we’ll grapple with some of the questions raised by these critical developments, and deploy some of the methods they offer, in large part by focusing them on a number of seventeenth-century poems, plays, and pamphlets that themselves take up questions of historical, political, affective, and divine time, including works by John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Lucy Hutchinson, and Anna Trapnel.

Throughout the course, therefore, we’ll interweave recent theories and debates surrounding time and history with works by our seventeenth-century authors, in this way building two inter-animating and overlapping archives: one largely theoretical/methodological, the other largely literary. Students will be asked to actively contribute to both of these archives, as together we develop our skills in primary and secondary research by using online databases and the Rare Books Library. The course will culminate in a workshop of seminar papers that will take up one of the texts and issues of the course. These papers can be historically specific or they can work inter-historically to pair texts from different periods (and national literatures) in ways that self-consciously question historical periodization and/or historicist method.

527 SEMINAR IN 18TH C LITERATURE, Markley, M 1:00-2:50
TOPIC: Asia and Africa in British Literature, 1660-1820

Throughout the long eighteenth century, Great Britain’s economic status depended as much on its trade to Asia as it did on its exploitative relations with its North American colonies. This seminar will focus on the ways that a wide variety of literary texts—fictional and non-fictional—represented the moral, economic, and political consequences of British imperial and commercial growth. Although there is a good deal of excellent scholarly work on the “triangular” trade in slaves among Africa, England, and its American colonies, this seminar will consider the slave trade in the context of British efforts in South and East Asia to establish—and dominate—commercial networks; we will pay particular attention to the often furious debates over the power of the East India Company both before and after it established its political control over West Bengal.
Drawing on the work of a variety of postcolonial theorists, we will read and discuss some important texts of the period as well as a number of narratives that traditionally have not made it into the canon. If you take this seminar, you will be encouraged to explore projects that resonate beyond the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Those students who are not primarily scholars of the early modern period or eighteenth century should feel free to use this seminar in ways that will further their own interests and research.

Some of the topics we will address include the literature of international commerce and its effects on the literature of the period; reactions to the European slave trade in Africa and the Americas; recent trends in postcolonial criticism, including second-generation postcolonial approaches by Srinivas Aravamudan, Rajani Sudan, Chi-ming Yang, Eugenia Zuroski, and others; and the limitations of British commerical and naval power in in the Pacific and the Far East. Readings will include Apa Behn’s Oroonoko and The Widow Ranter; John Dryden’s Amboyana; Daniel Defoe’s Captain Singleton; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s Turkish Letters; Oladuah Equiano’s Interesting Narrative; poems by Hannah More and Anne Yearsley; and Elizabeth Hamilton’s Letters of a Hindu Rajah; and selections from important historical texts by Peter Heylyn, William Dampier; the Scots merchant Alexander Hamilton; William Bosman; and others.

543 SEMINAR MODERN BRIT LITERATURE, Hansen. T 1:00-2:50

547 SEMINAR EARLIER AMERICAN LIT, Murison. W 3:00-4:50

TOPIC: American Romanticism and the Post-Secular Turn

This seminar explores the vibrant recent debate over secularism, secularization, and the “post-secular.” Long a structuring principle of literary study, the assumption that modernity is marked by an ineluctable move away from religion has been called into question both by geopolitical events and scholars of the humanities and social sciences. This course will introduce students to the major theorists and scholarly discussions currently ongoing about religion and secularism. We will read widely in this interdisciplinary and dynamic field, which has posed urgent questions about secularism in a global context after 9/11, the relation of religion to gender and sexuality, and whether or not we can call our era, as some are doing, “post-secular.” To focus our inquiry, we will concentrate on the period of American Romanticism—from 1820-1865. This period in American culture was marked both by the disestablishment of state churches and the Second Great Awakening; it provoked the creation of new religious communities and the often-violent responses to them; and it experienced the evangelizing of abolitionism that spurred the urgency of such figures as Harriet Beecher Stowe and John Brown. Using key texts from the era—likely including those by Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frederick Douglass, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, David Walker, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Lydia Maria Child—we will explore the contested terms of the field and the history from which our debates about the “secular” emerged.

564 SEMINAR LIT MODES AND GENRES, C. Wright. R 3:00-4:50

TOPIC: The Apocrypha in the Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages the Bible was complemented by a wide range of apocryphal and pseudepigraphical narratives that purported to supply information and back-stories that the Bible left out, such as the fall of Lucifer; the life of Adam and Eve after the Fall; the childhood of Jesus; the Harrowing of Hell; the visions and missions of the apostles; the life and Assumption of Mary; and the fate of souls after death. Despite their non-canonical status, these narratives were widely popular and widely read. Many were translated or adapted in medieval vernacular languages, and they profoundly influenced medieval beliefs, literature, and art. We will read (in modern English translation) some of the most important and influential Jewish and Christian apocrypha, focusing on their medieval transmission and influence as well as on some of their medieval vernacular avatars. Special attention will be paid to the apocrypha in Anglo-Saxon England and Ireland, but we will also be concerned with the apocrypha as a broader global medieval phenomenon in which texts originally written in (or now surviving only in) Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Coptic were translated into Latin and migrated across Europe. There will also be some cross-cultural comparison with the relation of apocrypha to scriptural canon in other medieval religions, notably in Islamic and Buddhist. Reading knowledge of Latin (or any other medieval language) is not required or expected (though it would obviously be an advantage in enabling access to the original texts, opening up research possibilities, and following the secondary scholarship). Seminar papers can deal with any aspect of the original apocryphal writings, with their medieval transmission, translation, adaptation, or influence, or with apocryphal writings in other medieval world religions.

581 SEMINAR LITERARY THEORY, Hassan. W 1:00-2:50

TOPIC: What is World Literature?

This seminar examines the concept of “world literature,” from Goethe’s coinage of the term “Weltliteratur” to the current academic industry, which has boomed since the end of the Cold War, producing conferences, workshops, monographs, and anthologies. What are the theoretical underpinnings of world literature in its various articulations and paradigms? What is considered “world literature” and what is not? Topics of discussion include the role of translation, transnational circuits of exchange and mobility, literary prizes, and the publishing industry, along with the multiple afterlives of older classics such as The Arabian Nights and Shakespeare. The seminar should appeal to students with interest in globalization, postcolonial, and transnational studies, or who would like to acquire a foundation for teaching the world literature courses offered by many English departments across the country.

582 TOPICS RESEARCH AND WRITING, Gallagher. R 1:00-2:50

TOPIC: What are digital rhetorics?

How is reading and writing changing in various digital environments? This course will introduce students to the various theories and debates surrounding the term digital rhetoric through a survey of the field(s). We will touch on augmented reality, social media, physical computing, and
computational rhetoric. The class contains two projects: a taxonomy of digital rhetorics and a final project. This final project can range from a teaching unit on digital writing to a publishable academic article or literature review to a media-rich installation.

583 TOPICS WRITING PEDAGOGY AND DESIGN, Pritchard. W 4:00-5:50
same as CI 566

**TOPIC: Queer Pedagogies in Writing Studies**

This course examines scholarship at the intersections of writing pedagogy and LGBTQ studies to engage, complicate, and contribute to the scholarly conversation called “queer pedagogies.” As we do so, we will keep in mind two guiding questions: What might we identify as the intellectual, political, and cultural work of queer pedagogies in the teaching of writing? What do queer writing pedagogies make possible alongside disciplinary boundaries and boundary crossings of literary, rhetorical, historical, critical race/ethnic, feminist, and LGBTQ studies? The course will begin with a historiography of how writing instruction and LGBTQ studies began to engage one another, with particular emphasis on the challenges posed to the teaching of writing as it engaged the then nascent field of LGBTQ studies in the formative years of this critical conversation. We will then turn to studies focused specifically on teacher and student identity, examining how identity-based experiences inside and outside of writing classrooms impact the intersections of LGBTQ life, culture, and politics in the teaching of writing. After this, the course will move to examine works that have addressed productive tensions in queer pedagogies scholarship, with special attention to texts that help us to interrogate the ways race, class, citizenship, gender, disability, and other identities corroborate and complicate one another as embodied identities, political positions, and cultural formations. Students will be responsible for regular readings, participation in critical class discussions, a short essay, and a final project consisting of a shorter seminar paper and/or designing a course unit wherein they employ queer pedagogies in their own teaching at UIUC, in another school, after-school, or community literacy program setting. The course will conclude with short student presentations about the course units you designed.

584 TOPICS DISCOURSE AND WRITING, Russell. M 3:00-4:50
same as CI 569

**TOPIC: Genre Theories and Histories**

Genre theory has been around for a long time (maybe forever), and it has found a home in a lot of disciplines (literature, linguistics, rhetoric, film, psychology, computer science, and so on). This course considers how theorists from several different fields have approached the study of kinds, classes, and sorts. If genres aren't simply sets of texts similar in form and content, what are they? What does it mean to think of a genre as rhetorical and social, cognitive and coercive? How do genres orchestrate not just cultural productions but cultural expectations and relations? Where do genres come from for that matter? This seminar will be particularly interested in theories of genre that take root in historical perspectives, tracing the development of a single genre--the religious treatise, the architecture notebook, the resume, the dissertation, the anthropological monograph, the pastoral poem, the animal autobiography--over time. How do generic patterns (in form, content, situation, exigence, audience, action) take and then shift shape? What prompts a genre to change and how much can it do so before it becomes a different genre? How do genre histories enrich genre theories? This course is open to graduate students of all disciplines and subfields.

593 PROFESSIONAL SEMINAR COLLEGE TEACHING, Stevens. M 3:00-4:50

**TOPIC: Seminar in Pedagogy and the Teaching of Literature**

This seminar is designed to prepare students from a wide variety of backgrounds teach literature at the undergraduate level. Although our discussions will be framed by readings in pedagogical theory chosen by the students, our emphasis will be on the practical: how to develop effective syllabi; how to teach a variety of genres; how to lead a discussion; how to manage classrooms; how to foster diversity in the classroom; how to bounce back from the pedagogical missteps all of us invariably will make. Together, we will 1) analyze the comparative strengths of different pedagogical strategies in achieving a wide range of curricular goals in the literature classroom; 2) develop persuasive and powerful ways of describing precisely what we do as teachers of literary and cultural studies, as well as why and how we do it; 3) articulate flexible criteria for designing effective syllabi and assignments for different kinds of courses and texts; 4) practice teaching in front of one another; 5) and, by the end of the semester, generate a teaching portfolio suitable as a template for job market materials.