

SPRING 2025

GRADUATE COURSE TOPIC DESCRIPTIONS

ENGL 648 Seminar in Literature and Culture (TH 4:30 – 7:00)

Caribbean Literature and Media

This course introduces students to some of the diverse literature of the Caribbean from the mid-twentieth century to the present and explores its relation to the media that was emerging at the same time. We will look at the ways texts and other media represent the multifaceted social, cultural, and political life of the Caribbean region and explore the development of key theoretical frameworks in the period. Possible authors to be considered: Jamaica Kincaid, George Lamming, Louise Bennett, Edouard Glissant, Frantz Fanon, Derek Walcott, C.L.R. James, Samuel Selvon, Merle Hodge, Edwige Danticat. (Combined with ENGL 448 and AFST 440)

Instructor: Berman

Fulfills: Category B

ENGL 669 Studies in Race and Ethnicity (M 4:30 - 7:00)

Comparative Racialization

Comparative Racialization is the study of various racial formations as relational and mutually constitutive. These social, political, and historical processes whereby racialized groups are created, regulated, and contested in relation to other racialized groups at once reveal the structural inequities of white supremacy, colonialism, and global capitalism while also providing opportunities for alternative coalitions and kinships. In this course, we will enter this critical conversation through contemporary literature that compels us to think about race and ethnicity both nationally and globally. We will be attuned to the intertwined histories of race, class, gender, sexuality, and national identity as we explore various modes of literary analysis. (Combined with ENGL 469)

Instructor: Yoon

Fulfills: Category B

ENGL 631 Seminar in Communication and Technology (M 4:30 - 7:30)

African American Rhetoric

This course introduces students to the field of African American rhetoric, which covers the central debates within African American history and culture. Issues such as segregation vs. integration, class, race and technology, or Black feminism and masculinity will be examined in conjunction with traditional African-American rhetorical themes (such as racial uplift and the African-American Jeremiad) and specific rhetorical practices (call and response, signifying, African American vernacular English, etc.) This course will also discuss current social movements, online networking activity (Black Twitter), and Black popular culture (TV, film, and music) (Combined with ENGL 493.01)

Instructor: Brooks

Fulfills: Category A or B

ENGL 671 Seminar in Communication and Technology (T 4:30 – 7:00)

Minds, Madness, and Power: Rhetorics of Brain and Behavior

Philosopher Roland Barthes wrote that the brain of physicist Albert Einstein became a "mythical object" in the popular imagination as a "machine of genius" (Mythologies 68). While for Einstein the brain signifies intelligence and humanity's dominance over the secrets of nature, the brain is also a symbolic vehicle for collective fears and associated with all kinds of socially deviant behavior. In this course, we will explore from a disability studies perspective the myriad ways that brains have appeared in public discourse: as puzzle and solution, mystery and machine, the source of civilization and of madness. Our readings will consider the brain as a centerpiece of debates about human behavior and intelligence and analyze its history as a scientific and cultural icon. Throughout the course, we will pay particular attention to discourses of behavioral and cognitive deviance as they have materialized in the institutional practices of psychiatry. Discussions and assignments will emphasize the rhetorical-historical processes that have structured current conceptions of the brain and the work of activists who critique the logics and social effects of psychiatry and neuroscience. (Combined with ENGL 493.02)

Instructor: Holladay

Fulfills: Category A

