

English Department
Graduate Course Descriptions
fall 2009

060.636 Philosophical Literary Criticism-During

F 1-4pm

This course will explore important works in which philosophers turn to literary criticism and in which literary critics turn to philosophy. It will be more interested in philosophers as critics than critics as philosophers however. It will also emphasize contemporary works but will include some older ones. Authors to be discussed will include Badiou, Ranciere, Blanchot, De Man, Nietzsche and Heidegger. (Limit 15)

060.643 Idea of Progress-Ferguson

T 1-4pm

We'll examine the rise of the idea of progress by looking at prose and poetic discussions of originality and tradition, modernization and archaism, and development as opposed to mere change. We'll begin with Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and Adorno's "Progress" before reading work by William Godwin, Jeremy Bentham, William Cobbett, Ann Radcliffe *The Romance of the Forest*, Jane Austen *Mansfield Park*, Percy Shelley, and Charles Dickens *Hard Times*. We'll end with a discussion of Gilles Deleuze's argument about the possibility of progress as he presents it in *Difference and Repetition*. (Limit 8)

060.658 Victorian Lyric Poetry and the Passions-Armstrong

Th 1-4pm

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean'. Tennyson's poem of 1847 asks about the meaning of tears, a particularly Victorian question. The lyric that expresses and reflexively investigates affect and passion, and particularly the complexities of sexual love, became one of the dominant forms of this period. Poets took the previous Romantic generation's concern with the emotions in new directions. Beyond the wider intellectual goal of enjoying the huge fund of wonderful lyric poetry in the period, this course has two aims. To explore, firstly, the great range of lyric poetry that actively questions the nature of affect: secondly to consider the ways Victorians theorised the emotions, not only in aesthetic and critical discussions, but in the texts of medicine, psychology, religion and philosophy, ranging from David Hume, G. H. Lewes, John Stuart Mill to William James. Alongside these sophisticated texts we will consider the European tradition, represented by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud. Paying attention to the language and form of poems through close reading, we shall look at poems by Browning, Tennyson, Clough, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Swinburne, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Felicia Hemans, the composite poet (aunt and niece), Michael Field, and the daring agnostic, Eliza Keary. Throughout our concern will be the different models of the passions generated in theory, how poems might look in the light of them, and above all, what is at stake in particular accounts of the emotions. (Limit 8)

060.674 John Ashbery Now-Nealon

W 1-4pm

This course is a survey of the work of John Ashbery, who is ripe for fresh critical consideration. In the earliest phase of his career, he was hailed by critics like Helen Vendler and Harold Bloom as the great inheritor of a visionary and romantic American "tradition"; later, he became the signal example of "postmodern" poetry. But the rise of Language poetry made clear the existence of articulate

poetic traditions in the US other than the one constructed by Bloom and Vendler. And meanwhile, the periodization implicit in the word "postmodern" has begun to fray. So Ashbery has been made to stand for large ideas; how might we read him today, now that those ideas are shifting?

We will read from across the course of his a career, but we will place special emphasis on the period from *The Double Dream of Spring* (1970) to *Flow Chart* (1991). In the first half of the course we will familiarize ourselves with high points in the critical literature (Bloom and Vendler, but also Charles Altieri, Marjorie Perloff, John Shoptaw, John Emil Vincent, and Roger Gilbert, among others). In the second half of the course, we will experiment with non-literary-critical secondary reading, as a way of trying out newer frames for Ashbery's work. (Limit 8)

CROSS-LISTED GRADUATE COURSES

FROM DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN AND ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES:

212.603 Senses of the Imagination in Medieval Thought and Lyric - Nichols

T 9-11am

The inner and outer senses are crucial factors of perception in the Middle Ages. Above them all was the imagination: the dynamic master sense governing mental activity from emotion to language and representation. This course will study the theory of the imagination and its achievements, particularly in lyric poetry, music, and visual arts. (Limit 15)

215.658 Whose Caribbean? Colonialism and Human Bondage - González

Th 11am-1pm

The seminar will explore the Hispanophone and Anglophone cultures of the region with emphasis on literature as a hegemonic practice confronting the legacies of slavery. It will also study authors from outside the region whose work has been imaginatively and politically involved with it. Novels, stories, poems, and essays by Alejo Carpentier, Lydia Cabrera, Nicolás Guillén, Virgilio Piñera, Miguel Barnet, Luis Palés Matos, Mayra Montero, Jean Rhys, Toni Morrison, Derek Walcott, V. S. Naipaul, George Lamming. (Limit 15)