

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Undergraduate Course Descriptions Summer 2020

Session I: May 28 – July 6 *Extended Session: May 28 – July 19,* *Session II: July 8 – August 17*

SUMMER SESSION I

EGL 130.30 CER, STAS Literature, Science & Technology

This course offers an entry point for students interested in the cognitive theory and its application in the humanities. Throughout the course, we will be pairing scientific and theoretical texts that focus on the human mind, with an emphasis on 4e cognition, with neuroscience fiction, literary and genre works that focus on issues of consciousness, the mind, the brain the body, and the self. We will ask ourselves what representing cognition that is embedded, extended, embodied, and enacted might look like. How is cognition represented in literature? What can fiction teach us, through its form and content, about how our minds and the minds of others function? How does literature engage with issues of emotions while evoking our emotional responses? Why do we identify with characters, developing parasocial relationships with them, and how and why does reading literature help us to develop empathy? Where are the intersections of empathy, ethics, and literature?

SESSION I:

FLEX (ONLINE)

J HAUTSCH

EGL 309.30- HFA+ Interdisciplinary Study of Literature

Activism and American Drama

In this course, we will explore how American playwrights from the early twentieth century to the present respond to, engage with, and critique the reform movements and controversies of their times. The course will be divided into four thematic units that will help us to focus our investigations and allow us to see connections across more than a century of American life: The Race Question; The Immigrant Question; The Woman Question; The Queer Question. As the course progresses, the divisions between these units will blur, ultimately giving us a more comprehensive--and interdisciplinary--look at American culture. Throughout the semester, we will strive to make connections between the primary texts (the plays), the historical moments from which they emerged, and today's headlines. Some of the playwrights we will consider include: Susan Glaspell, Eugene O'Neill, Sophie Treadwell, Tennessee Williams, Lorraine Hansberry, Arthur Miller, August Wilson, Edward Albee, Terrence McNally, Paula Vogel, and Lynn Nottage. The primary texts will be supplemented with secondary readings including excerpts from other

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plays/playwrights, literary theory and criticism, historical scholarship, gender and queer theory, theater criticism, and print/audio/video interviews with theater practitioners. Most weeks, students will be expected to read two plays per week in addition to completing required writing assignments. Requirements: active engagement with course lectures; discussion board responses; short papers; final paper/project.

SESSION I FLEX (ONLINE)

B HARTWIG

EGL 320.30- G, HFA+
The Literature of War

Modern and Contemporary Literature

This course focuses on the way that war and trauma have been written about in a variety of narrative forms including fiction, poetry, short stories, memoirs, and essays. Throughout history, the experience of war has fundamentally shaped the ways that people think about themselves, their relationship to those around them, and the meanings of national citizenship. War has also posed challenges of representation, both for those who fought as well as those who did not. This course examines how writers have attempted to convey the stories of modern war in literature and interpret them in terms of changing ideas about national identity. Accompanying our readings about war will be critical essays on trauma theory, as one cannot discuss the horrors of war without attention to the traumas, both individual and collective, that it inflicts upon those who experience it- both directly and peripherally. Assignments will include a midterm and final paper, as well as regular participation in our course discussion forums.

SESSION I

FLEX (ONLINE)

M. BUCKLEY

EXTENDED SUMMER SESSION:

May 28 – July 19

EGL 205.30-I, HFA+ British Literature I

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to and survey of British Literature from *Beowulf* to *Paradise Lost*. My particular approach to this material will combine online lectures covering the literary history of each period we are discussing with assignments consisting of weekly short responses to the readings as well as longer, close readings of key passages from primary texts. Our ultimate goal is to achieve an understanding of the development of British literature, culture, and society by tracing its evolution from the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods through the Renaissance and up to the Restoration.

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EXTENDED SESSION: FLEX (ONLINE) B. KRUMM**EGL 226.30-K, HUM, USA 20th Century American Literature**

This online version of EGL 226: Twentieth-Century American Literature will provide a survey of major works reflecting the regional, ethnic, and traditional interests of American writers, with emphasis on the post-1945 period. We will examine the literature of the twentieth-century alongside its history, moving from an exploration of the literary tradition of modernism in Harlem Renaissance and “lost generation” literature, to the rise of postmodernism against the dual backdrop of the Cold War and the development of late capitalism. Particular attention will be paid to what American Studies scholars would call “coefficients of identity”: gender, race, nationality, class, sexuality, and religion. This survey will highlight texts that respond to and reveal some of these epistemological crises. The texts we study will take various mediums and forms, including short stories, poetry, plays, and a graphic novel. Course requirements include participation in weekly discussion board and Voicethread forums on Blackboard, two 3-2-1-0 write-ups, and one analytical paper. A reliable internet connection and familiarity with online interfaces (such as Blackboard, video conferencing, Google Drive, etc.) are required

EXTENDED SESSION: FLEX (ONLINE) C. DUFFY

EGL 226.30-K, HUM, USA 20TH Century American Literature

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EGL 276.30-B, HUM, DIV
Queer Studies: Lit. & Culture

Feminism: Literature & Cultural Context

This course serves as an entrypoint to queer studies, providing a historical survey of the field as it emerged out of earlier feminist works. Through an examination of literature by or about queer folks, homing in on concepts of gender and sexuality in drama, poetry, and fiction, our course will consider how intersectional representations of queer identity have changed over time, impacted by a network of social, economic, and political influences. Students will study queer themes and issues (beginning with queer studies' emergence in the Academy), including queer studies and feminism, queer identities, queer history, queer futurity, queerness and race, queer representation, and more. Students will read a wide range of literature by queer authors and queer theorists, including Alison Bechdel, Jack Halberstam, Samuel R. Delany, Larry Kramer, José Esteban Muñoz, Maggie Nelson, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Assessments for the course will occur through a number of forms: discussion thread participation, quizzes, blog posts, reading-response papers, and podcast presentations.

EXTENDED SESSION: FLEX (ONLINE) J. HEGGESTAD

Session II: July 8 – August 17

EGL 192.30-B, HUM

Fiction: The Art of the Story

Graphic Memoirs concerning politics of war, race, gender, sexuality (and of late, climate change!) have seen a steady rise in the last couple of decades, following the colossal success of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1991) amongst both academic and non-academic audiences. Recently, comics are also being used to present explicitly auto/ethnographic research as seen in Ebony Flowers's *Hot Comb* (2019) or Thi Bui's *The Best We Could Do* (2017). This course will consider the dual potential of the comic medium: comics as method, as well as comics as literatures of resistance. We will study how comics display an openness to difference, and how this potential of the medium can be used to build tolerance and empathy amongst people from different backgrounds—across ethnic, cultural, gendered borders. We will read a range of comics from different genres, such as queer comics, transnational comics, and disability comics, to expand our understanding of contemporary literature's role in social justice and in extracting marginalized bodies from the fear of Otherness. Assignments will include a guided comics making virtual

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workshop. Some of the texts we shall cover are: Alison Bechdel's *Are You My Mother*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Thi Bui's *The Best We Could Do*, Malik Sajad's *A Boy from Kashmir*, David Small's *Stitches*. **SESSION II:** **FLEX (ONLINE)** **K. SOHINI**

EGL 309.30-J, HFA+
Queer Poetics

Interdisciplinary Study of Literature



”What is it then between us” (Walt Whitman)

From Homer's epic poetry to Andrea Gibson's spoken-word poetry, we will dive into the multifaceted nature of a Queer Poetics. Questions that will be posed include what a Queer form of poetry looks like, how to define the genre of Queer poetry, and whether a Queer aesthetic emanates from the poems we will read throughout the semester. By analyzing different Queer critical approaches, we will examine why an interdisciplinary approach expands our understanding of closely reading Queer poetry. There will be Voice Thread forums for discussions, Zoom one-on-one and/or small group meetings, two close reading poetry papers, and a final research paper.

SESSION II: **FLEX (ONLINE)** **A RIMBY**

EGL 389.30 H, CER, STAS **Science Fiction**

Brains, Bots, Being Human: Old and New Representations of Artificial Intelligence

This course seeks to explore literary and film representations of artificial intelligence in its embodied and disembodied forms. Thinking through the distinctions between the android, the cyborg, and the immaterial virtual AI, bodies whose ambiguous identities as both human-like and human-made challenge the boundaries between human and nonhuman life, we will look at the way in which the intertwining of science, technology and notions of embodiment works to destabilize our traditional understanding of the human as a unified biological and political subject, and of the border between the human and the nonhuman as fixed and impenetrable. Through a close analysis of literary texts by sci-fi authors such as Isaac Asimov, Philip K. Dick and James Tiptree, Jr., and recent film and television such as the *Terminator* series, *Ex Machina* and *Battlestar Galactica*, we will examine the evolution of AI in western fiction as a space for the negotiation of identity, specifically of the ways in which the increasing blurring of the boundaries between organic/artificial, real/simulated works to destabilize what it means to be human. Throughout this course, we will seek to answer the following questions: Who or what counts as human? In what
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ways does artificial intelligence allow us to conceive of alternative forms of nonhuman subjectivity?
But most importantly, is your toaster plotting to kill you?

SESSION II

FLEX (ONLINE)

S SANTOS