

## Amherst College Spring 2010

### **ENGL 01-02 Writing About Literature: Representing Illness (ENGL 200)**

Judith Frank MW 2:00-3:20 PM

This course offers students an opportunity to develop their analytic and writing skills. We will read a variety of literary forms—prose and poetry, novels and essays and drama—and will write frequently and at length about what we read. This semester our readings will focus on the topic of Illness. We will read such authors as Susan Sontag, Anatole Broyard, Sophocles, José Saramago, Mark Doty. Three class hours per week. Open only to first-year and sophomore students. Limited to 12 students.

### **ENGL 01-03 American Renaissance (2<sup>nd</sup> Am Lit)**

Allen Guttman MWF 10:00-10:50 AM

A study of what might be referred to as “classical American literature” or “The Age of Emerson.” The writers studied will be Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, and Dickinson. Among the central questions asked are these: How successful were these writers in their efforts to create a distinctively American language and literature? What was their view of nature and of human nature? How did they dramatize social conflict? In what ways did they affirm or challenge traditional conceptions of gender? The course will pay close attention to the interactions of these writers with one another and will give particular emphasis to Emerson as the figure with whom the others had to come to terms. Limited to 20 students.

### **ENGL 11-01 Twentieth-Century Theater of the Americas (2<sup>nd</sup> Am Lit)**

Jennifer Cayer TTH 11:30 AM-12:50 PM

This course will serve as an introduction to theater, performance art, and cultural politics in the Americas since 1960. We will read and discuss both U.S. and Latin American theater as aesthetic and sociocultural phenomena. We will discuss how identity is performed in the everyday sense and how historical identities, selves, and others have been performed. We will pay particular attention to how theater practitioners and theorists have responded to, adapted, and critiqued European traditions. Topics may include feminism, dictatorship, censorship and self-censorship, exile, experimentation and absurdist theater, queerness and gender, historical revision, and political theater.

### **ENGL 21-01 Writing Poetry I (Upper-level elective)(Writing)**

David Sofield & Richard Wilbur W 2:00-4:30 PM

A first workshop in the writing of poetry. Class members will read and discuss each others' work and will study the elements of prosody: the line, stanza forms, meter, free verse, and more. Open to anyone interested in writing poetry and learning about the rudiments of craft. Writing exercises weekly. Limited enrollment. Preregistration is not allowed. Please consult the Creative Writing Center website for information on admission to this course.

### **ENGL 26-01 Writing Fiction I (Upper-level elective)(Writing)**

Alexander Chee TU 2:00-4:30 PM

A first course in writing fiction. Emphasis will be on experimentation as well as on developing skill and craft. Workshop (discussion) format. Limited enrollment. Preregistration is not allowed. Please consult the Creative Writing Center website for information on admission to this course.

**ENGL 29-01 Imitations (Upper-level elective)(Writing)**

Daniel Hall MW 12:30-1:50 PM

A poetry writing course, but with a strong emphasis on reading. Students will closely examine the work of various poets and periods, then attempt to write plausible imitations of their own, all by way of learning about poetry from the inside, as it were.

**ENGL 32-01 Medieval Love, Sex, Marriage (Brit-lit 1)(Upper-level elective)**

Amanda Walling MWF 10:00-10:50 AM

This course will examine the literary and cultural meanings of love, sexuality, and marriage in the Middle Ages, with a primary focus on late medieval England. We will explore such phenomena as "courtly love," bawdy humor, and the place of romantic love in marriage, while we also consider how various authors use the language and concepts of love to explore deeper questions of power, identity, and literary purpose. We will read and discuss selected texts from the Arthurian tradition and from the works of John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer, as well as assorted religious texts, love poems, comic tales of adultery, and debates about the sinfulness of women. Readings will be in translation or in Middle English (of which no prior knowledge is required).

**ENGL 36-01 Shakespeare (Shakespeare)(Upper-level elective)**

Anston Bosman TTH 10:00-11:20 AM

An exploration of selected comedies, histories, and tragedies, with attention to the problem of genre. We will study Shakespeare on page and stage, and from his time to our own. Two class meetings per week. Limited to 50 students

**ENGL 39-01 Major English Writers II (Brit-Lit 2)(Upper-level elective)**

William Pritchard MW 2:00-3:20 PM

Readings in the poetry and prose of six classic figures from the nineteenth century: Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Byron, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold. Some attention given to Coleridge, Shelley, Browning.

**ENGL 47-01 The Rise of the English Novel (Brit-Lit 2)(Upper-level elective)**

Judith Frank TTH 2:00-3:32 PM

Exploring the relations between literary form and socioeconomic change, this course examines the rise of the novel in England in the context of the rise of capitalism. Topics of discussion will include the novels' portrayals of subjectivity, the representation of female experience, the role of servants in the imaginary worlds of novels by ruling-class authors, and the early novel's affinity for and relation to criminality. Novels by Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, Burney and Edgeworth.

**ENGL 49-01 The Moral Essay (Upper-level elective)**

Robert Townsend MW 8:30-9:50 AM

The moral essay is a genre situated somewhere between literature and philosophy, between stories and sermons. "The essay interests itself in the narration of ideas," one critic writes, "in their unfolding." The moral essay is not about morals *per se* but about manners, about the way people live-and die. We will read essays by Montaigne, Bacon, Emerson, and Simone Weil.

**ENGL 52-01 Caribbean Poetry: The Anglophone Tradition (Upper-level elective)**

C. Ronda Cobham-Sander MW 8:30-9:50 AM

A survey of the work of Anglophone Caribbean poets, alongside readings about the political, cultural and aesthetic traditions that have influenced their work. Readings will include longer

cycles of poems by Derek Walcott and Edward Kamau Brathwaite; dialect and neoclassical poetry from the colonial period, as well as more recent poetry by women writers and performance (“dub”) poets.

**ENGL 62-01 Studies in Nineteenth Century American Literature (2<sup>nd</sup> Am Lit)(Upper-level elective)**

Karen Sanchez-Eppler TU 2:00-5:00 PM

This course will regularly examine, from different historical and theoretical stances, the literary and cultural scene in nineteenth-century America. The goal of the course is to formulate new questions and possibilities for investigating the history and literature of the United States. The topic changes each time the course is taught. The topic for 2010 is EMILY DICKINSON. “Experience is the Angled Road / Preferred against the Mind / By–Paradox–the Mind itself–” she explained in one poem and in this course we will make use of the resources of the town of Amherst to play experience and mind off each other in our efforts to come to terms with her elusive poetry. The course will meet in the Dickinson Homestead, visit the Evergreens (her brother Austen’s house, and a veritable time capsule), make use of Dickinson manuscripts in the College archives, and set her work in the context of other nineteenth-century writers including Helen Hunt Jackson, Walt Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe, and Harriet Jacobs. But as we explore how Dickinson’s poetry responds to her world we will also ask how it can speak to our present. One major project of the course will be to develop exhibits and activities for the Homestead that will help visitors engage with her poems. One class meeting per week. Recommended prerequisite: English 61. Not open to first-year students. Limited to 12 students.

**ENGL 64-01 American Literary Realism & Modernism (2<sup>nd</sup> Am Lit)(Upper-level elective)**

Dale Peterson MW 12:30-1:50 PM

A study of the emergence after the Civil War of works and theories of literary “realism” and of the movement’s transformation into “naturalistic” novels and experimental “modernist” fictions of the early twentieth century. The course concludes with a brief look at a contemporary “postmodern” text. Special attention will be given to changing conceptions and renderings of racial, cultural, and sexual differences. Among the authors likely to be assigned are Howells, James, Twain, Dreiser, Norris, Chopin, Wright, Larsen, Hemingway, Toomer, Faulkner, and DeLillo.

**ENGL 65-01 Multi-ethnic American Literature (2<sup>nd</sup> Am Lit)(Upper-level elective)**

Robert Hayashi TTH 8:30-9:50 AM

Ethnicity. What is it? What does it mean to be Irish American? African American? Jewish American? How does one experience being any one of these? What does literature by “ethnic” authors tell us about identity in America and how ethnicity, in particular, shapes how we tell stories? Moreover, what about the other side of that hyphenated identity–American? What does that mean in an increasingly diverse nation? These are some of the questions that will guide us during the semester as we read and discuss samples of American ethnic literature: poetry, oratory, prose, and memoir. Limited to 30 students.

**ENGL 84-01 Topics in Film Study: Five Contemporary Filmmakers (Upper-level elective)**

John Cameron MW 2:00-3:20 PM

The topic changes each time the course is taught. In spring 2010 the topic will be “Five Contemporary Filmmakers.” The course will study, in some depth, the work and situation of several critically admired contemporary filmmakers, each of whom might be described as a

distinctive stylist of the medium, even as each has no less distinctive roots in their native culture. We will ask in what ways their filmmaking style negotiates between their national and cultural roots and the expectations of a worldwide audience. To be considered will be the work of Wong Kar-Wai (Hong Kong), Hou Hsiao-hsien (Taiwan), Abbas Kiarostami (Iran), Pedro Almodóvar (Spain), and either Claire Denis (France) or Michael Haneke (Austria). Two class meetings and two screenings per week.

### **ENGL 85-01 Proust (Upper-level elective)**

John Cameron TTH 2:00-3:20 PM

A critical reading in English translation of substantial portions of Marcel Proust's great work of fiction and philosophy, *A la Recherche du temps perdu (In Search of Lost Time)*. An extended synopsis of the entire work will be provided. Class discussion and exercises will concentrate on major passages of the work (amounting to roughly half of the whole). Attention will be given to the tradition of critical commentary in English on Proust's work and its place as a document of European modernism. Two class meetings per week. Requisite: Recommend prior study in nineteenth- or early twentieth-century English or French novel. Not recommended for first-year students.

### **ENGL 95-01 Americans in Paris (2<sup>nd</sup> Am Lit)(Upper-level elective)**

Allen Guttman MW 2:00-3:20 PM

The story of American writers, artists, and musicians who lived and worked in Paris can be imagined as a drama in two acts. Act I, set in the 1920s, brings Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein to center stage. Act II, set in the postwar years, belongs mainly to African American writers such as Richard Wright and James Baldwin. Although the spotlight is mainly on the writers, there are important roles for painters (Gerald Murphy), photographers (Man Ray), dancers (Josephine Baker), and musicians (Sidney Bechet). There is also a kind of epilogue in which the French present their view of the Americans in their midst. Foremost among the questions to be asked is this: how did their experience as "exiles abroad" alter and complicate these Americans' sense of their national, racial, sexual, and professional identities? Two class meetings per week.

### **ENGL 95-02 Research Methods in American Culture (2<sup>nd</sup> Am Lit)(Upper-level elective)**

Robert Hayashi TTH 2:00-3:20 PM

This course is designed to provide American Studies majors, as well as others interested in interdisciplinary work, the opportunity and support to produce a major piece of research writing on a topic of their choosing. We will examine a wide range of materials, including photographs, paintings, legal documents, journals, poems, and plays. The course will also introduce students to the variety of methodologies utilized by practitioners in the field of American Studies. The specific focus of the course will be the role of place in American culture. By studying discrete geographic locations--their histories, residents, and cultural representations--students will gain appreciation for interdisciplinary work and the development of American Studies. Requisite: American Studies 11 and 12. Open to juniors and seniors or consent of the instructor. Limited to 15 students. '

### **ENGL 95-03 Modern Short Story Sequences (Upper-level elective)**

Dale Peterson TTH 10:00-11:20 AM

Although little studied as a separate literary form, the book of interlinked short stories is a prominent form of modern fiction. This course will examine a variety of these compositions in an attempt to understand how they achieve their coherence and what kinds of "larger story" they

tell through the unfolding sequence of separate narratives. Works likely to be considered include Hemingway's *In Our Time*, Joyce's *Dubliners*, Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, Jean Toomer's *Cane*, Eudora Welty's *The Golden Apples*, Alice Munro's *The Beggar Maid*, Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, Raymond Carver's *Cathedral*. The course concludes with a significant independent project on a chosen modern (or contemporary) example of the form and its relation to preceding works. Limited to 15 students.