



**Department of English Language and Literature**  
Carleton University  
1812 Dunton Tower  
1125 Colonel By Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1S 5B6  
Phone: (613) 520-2310  
Fax: (613) 520-3544

# Graduate Course Catalogue

**Fall 2009-Winter 2010  
Course Descriptions**

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## Notes

1. This catalogue is a list of proposed courses for the academic year starting September 2009 and is not a substitute for the Graduate Calendar, which should be consulted for all programmatic regulations and requirements.
2. The course descriptions are not formal syllabi, which will be posted on the website in the spring of 2009.
3. The proposed courses for 2009-2010 have not been slotted into the schedule yet, so courses may end up either in Fall 2009 or in Winter 2010. Courses are subject to revision.
4. The summer courses for 2009 are not included in this catalogue.
5. Every course description in the catalogue, with the exception of ENGL 6000: Doctoral Seminar, refers to a half term course. ENGL 6000 covers two terms.

**ENGL 5002: CONTEMPORARY LITERARY THEORY****INSTRUCTOR: B. Johnson****■ TOPIC: “Transgression” ■**

Blood, filth, laughter, violence, sacrifice, madness, eroticism, death: few motifs have proven to be as seductive as transgression for a whole contingent of twentieth-century theorists of literature, culture, and society. Whether one considers Bakhtin’s theorization of carnival, Foucault’s archaeology of madness, or Kristeva’s writing on the literature of abjection, transgression assumes a central role in the articulation of counter-hegemonic strategies of subversion, critique, and social transformation. Yet the injunction to transgress is not without its controversies. What are we to make of its disturbing provocations and obscenities? What is the relation between literature and transgression? Between reason and madness? Between the body and the text? Between politics and form? Between literature and the other arts? And what of transgression’s legacy today? This course examines the poetics and politics of transgression as a conceptual motif in twentieth-century theory, focusing particularly on its appearance at the intersection of psychoanalysis and post-structuralism. We’ll begin by examining the prehistory of post-structuralist discourses of transgression in groundbreaking work by Sade, Nietzsche, Freud, and Bakhtin. Then we will examine the efflorescence of transgression in post-structuralism (as well as the debates it has provoked) through readings of essays by Georges Bataille and Jacques Derrida and major works by Michel Foucault (*Madness and Civilization*) and Julia Kristeva (*Powers of Horror*).

**ENGL 5005: M.A. SEMINAR****INSTRUCTOR: G. Williams****■ TOPIC: “Proseminar: Research, Disciplinarity, and the Profession” ■**

This course provides MA students with a general overview to English Studies in order to facilitate their success at the graduate level. It is a mandatory course in the MA program. Individual classes will address current debates and practices within both the *discipline* and *profession* of English Studies. As a proseminar, the course considers the overarching boundaries of this discipline and elucidates the professional duties carried out by the academic/student. It encourages lively discussion on pragmatic issues affecting students in their studies and their teaching assistantships. It also makes available resources, strategies, and guidance necessary for helping students see their way through and beyond the MA. Three main categories organize the subject matter of weekly meetings: the discipline, the profession, and research methods. Under the first category, the proseminar examines the issues central to English Studies today, traces the history and current state of the discipline, and reviews the latest methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches to literature. Under the second, it assists students in navigating professional matters, for example, grading essays, crafting a proposal for grants, and understanding employment and academic opportunities available to graduates. Finally, under the third category, it points to electronic and print resources and raises strategies integral to conducting research at the graduate level.

**ENGL 5207: EARLY MEDIEVAL STUDIES****INSTRUCTOR: R. Norris****■ TOPIC: “Reading Beowulf” ■**

In Winter 2010, students will have the opportunity to read *Beowulf* in the original Old English. This is a rare and golden prospect, in part a response to the medievalism that is so prominent in contemporary popular culture, and which has in turn increased student demand for classes in medieval literature and language. Reading *Beowulf* is challenging, but the poem rewards its translators with new found linguistic skills, mastery of Old English verse, and intimate familiarity with that most canonical of Anglo-Saxon poems. Reading *Beowulf* at Carleton will be doubly rewarding, as students will also be encouraged to consider the mediating functions of scribe, editor, lexicographer, and critic, through whose work we seek to access the “original” text. Medievalists will be working alongside students who are interested in language, linguistics, poetics, textual transmission and translation, manuscript culture, and medievalism. Many graduate students also find that a translation course offers a welcome change from their usual routine. We will translate from the new fourth edition of Klaeber’s *Beowulf* (Toronto 2008). Knowledge of Old English will be required of all students entering the course. After 1000 years of language change, Anglo-Saxon may at first appear foreign, but with even one term of study, its familiar English forms and structures become obvious. For those who have not studied Old English previously or recently, an introductory language course (ENGL 4105) will be offered in the fall term, and is open to graduate students in English.

**ENGL 5208: MIDDLE-ENGLISH STUDIES****INSTRUCTOR: S. Bly Calkin****■ TOPIC: “The Manuscript Writes Back: Reading Medieval Texts in their Manuscript Contexts” ■**

For years, names, numbers, and modern notions of the unique text have dictated how medieval texts are studied. Print culture’s (and the academy’s) historical preference for named authors of established “literary” reputation has led to the proliferation of Chaucer editions, while costs and notions of a unique authorial text have meant that medieval texts that circulated in very different versions are presented to modern readers as unitary, unique texts (through the conflation of manuscripts or the privileging of one manuscript’s version). This course examines what has been excised from many recent presentations of medieval texts: manuscript context and variation. Eschewing Chaucer, we will read two manuscripts of less widely published material (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 61 and London, British Library, Cotton Nero A. x) and one romance in its multiple versions (*Bevis of Hampton*). Ashmole 61 contains romances, saints’ lives, texts of religious instruction, and courtesy guides, while Cotton Nero A. x presents a romance, biblical poetry, and a dream vision. Questions to explore include: how do these manuscripts craft a reader’s horizon of expectations? What is the effect of juxtaposing material about knights and ladies with religious pieces? How does a manuscript provoke reflection upon certain issues? How do these manuscripts illuminate the claims of the theoretical movement called New Philology? We will then study different versions of *Bevis*, considering such questions as: Does each version craft a distinctive idea of heroism, religious alterity, and/or gender interactions? Do these texts exemplify manuscript *mouvance*? What is the value of variety?

**ENGL5308: RENAISSANCE STUDIES****INSTRUCTOR: D. Beecher****■ TOPIC: “*Paradise Lost* in the Context of Intellectual History” ■**

This seminar will deal with *Paradise Lost* as a work conceived after a lifetime of reading, which prepared the author for his great task. The work is grounded not only in biblical culture, both Judeo as well as Christian, but in the Church fathers and the writers of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as in Renaissance works ranging through all the received topics of that age. Our goal will be to identify as many traditions as possible in working systematically through the text. Milton calls upon multiple traditions both as a poet and as an apologist for the Christian world order, making *Paradise Lost* a contribution to the history of ideas. Our collective concern, then, is a hermeneutical one in relation to this encyclopedic tradition. Each class meeting will be devoted to one of the twelve books. A small delegation of students, in accordance with our numbers, will provide a seriatim *explication* of each book in relation to its intellectual history. In order to explicate the poem's lines, these exercises will provide students with occasions to explore the theological, linguistic, poetic, historical, mythological, biblical, and scientific backgrounds to the poem, including Milton's own writings, such as the divorce tracts or *On Christian Doctrine*. The informing discipline behind all these presentations may variously be described as “intellectual history” or “the history of ideas,” which is more than simple source studies. The choice of topics, from angelology to zoology, is as vast as the poem itself.

**ENGL 5402: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES****INSTRUCTOR: H. Reid****■ TOPIC: “Subscription Lists in the Eighteenth Century and Their Meaning” ■**

This course aims to provide students with the context and nature of subscription lists in order to give students the opportunity to do original research in the field. Initially, students will study the theoretical background to subscription lists as we read selections from Roger Chartier's *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Dodex to Computer* and *The Order of Books: Readers, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*; John Brewer's *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*; and Robert Darnton's famous article, “What is the History of Books?” Then in order to get a handle on understanding the practical nature of subscription lists, we will read P. J. Wallis's “Book Subscription Lists” and selections from Philip Gaskell's *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. After that, students will examine a subscription list of their choice in detail. Some of the topics which seminars may examine include the number of female subscribers, the number of subscribers from the mercantile class, and the number of subscribers from the aristocracy, academia, and the clergy, or other sub groups. A key question that we will ask is how did the subscription list fit into the eighteenth-century publishing industry? Students will present the results of their work and discuss each other's progress and problems. In the end it is hoped that this exercise will provide each student with some original material that can be presented at an academic conference or published as a journal article.

**ENGL 5402: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES****INSTRUCTOR: J. Murray****■ TOPIC: “The Global Eighteenth Century” ■**

In this course we will explore a range of global perspectives on the eighteenth century. Reading texts from a number of genres including travel writing, captivity narrative, autobiography, abolitionist literature, and the novel, we will consider the eighteenth century as a period of restless migration, both free and forced, and of unprecedented movement and circulation of ideas, printed texts, capital, commodities, and identities. From Behn’s sentimental and heroic tale of the enslaved African prince, Oroonoko—a text which was mobilized throughout the eighteenth century to support arguments both for and against the abolition of slavery—to the original guru of self-help, Robinson Crusoe, to *The Female American*—a text many refer to as a female rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe*—we will pursue topics and problematics such as the Atlantic world; British nationalism and the Celtic periphery; imperialism; colonialism; British India and Orientalism; the “noble savage” and myth of “natural man”; teleologies of historical progress and the invention of the primitive; slavery; abolitionism; the late eighteenth-century culture of sentiment and sensibility; and the construction of racialized, sexualized, and gendered identities. Finally, we will also consider the conjunctions and disjunctions between eighteenth-century and twenty-first century understandings of and deployments of the category of the global.

**ENGL 5703: AMERICAN FICTION****INSTRUCTOR: B. Greenspan****■ TOPIC: “Narrative after Print” ■**

As the dominant mode of communication shifted from word of mouth to handwritten scrolls to the printed page, that which we call “literature” also changed. The object of literary study is still evolving, alongside digital techniques for producing, reproducing, disseminating, reading and responding to texts. In this course, we will study the ideological and material contexts of debates over the “end of books” and explore competing claims for the dominance of either printed books or digital texts. What strategies do contemporary fictional narratives use to make sense of information society and how are digital forms of dialogue changing novelistic discourse? Is it still useful to distinguish literary knowledge from other forms of data? How do interactive narratives compare with films, television shows, or video games? In the age of ebooks, chatterbots, and group blogs, who or what controls the reading experience? Weekly seminars will cover a variety of topics, including new media theory, the poetics of interactivity, digital authorship, and intellectual property, archive theory, and network culture. Although most of our primary texts will take the familiar form of printed novels by the likes of Thomas Pynchon, Jeanette Winterson, and Mark Danielewski, we will also explore hypertexts, interactive fictions, and new scholarly technologies hands-on.

**ENGL 5803: CANADIAN FICTION****INSTRUCTOR: S. Jamieson****■ TOPIC: “Wrinkle Nation?: Ideologies of Aging in Contemporary Canadian Fiction” ■**

A recent statement from *The Globe and Mail* demonstrates the way in which the mainstream media constructs Canada’s aging population as an impending social and economic crisis: “Canada is becoming a Wrinkle Nation: already, women over 80 outnumber farmers in Canada by two to one.” In view of this interpretation of the old (old women in particular!) as a drain on the nation’s resources, it is important that we examine and question the formation of our assumptions about our own and others’ aging across the life course. We are all, of course, aging from the moment we are born. This seminar situates fictional texts in the context of other discourses of age such as media reports, advertising, social gerontology, and geriatric medicine, and investigates the ways in which they all participate in an ongoing conversation about aging in Canada. Encouraging you to “read for age” in an engaging selection of novels, short stories, and films, the course will introduce you to the issues, voices, and methodologies of the exciting new field of literary gerontology. A broad range of theoretical readings drawn from fields as diverse as cultural history, gender studies, post-colonial theory, psychoanalysis, genre theory, technocriticism, and popular psychology will invite you to consider the implications of situating age amongst the other forms of difference that animate Canadian literature and culture.

**ENGL 5803: CANADIAN FICTION****INSTRUCTOR: J. Henderson****■ TOPIC: “Reconciling Canada: Historical Injustices and the Contemporary Culture of Redress” ■**

The proliferation of events of confession and contrition for historical injustices in the form of truth and reconciliation commissions and official apologies from nation-states and imperial monarchies in recent decades has provoked one philosopher to speak of repentance and reconciliation as “the ultimate horizon of a new historicity” (Trouillot). The Canadian state has assimilated and domesticated this global trend, fashioning it into a national culture of reconciliation and redress that is contoured by the interplay between the global and the local. This seminar will explore how cultural texts across a range of genres—including novels, drama, film, and internet texts—reconstruct the historical (and often ongoing) injustices that have given rise to calls for redress in the current moment. We will consider the ways such texts perform crucial ideological work by soliciting the imagined community of Canada to respond to its history and re-imagine its present and future. In this context, our discussions will address the following questions: How do cultural texts revise official history? How do they offer commentary on the possibilities and limits of reconciliation? How do they challenge and/or play complicit roles in dominant discourses of national catharsis? What alternative social imaginaries and visions of reckoning with injustice do such cultural texts offer? Our readings and screenings will be supplemented by selected essays from an international body of work on the theory and practice of reconciliation.

**ENGL 5807: SELECTED TOPICS IN CANADIAN LITERATURE****INSTRUCTOR: J. Mason****■ TOPIC: “Transience and the Politics of Mobility in Twentieth-Century Canadian Cultural Texts” ■**

In his recent study of mobility in the nineteenth-century U.S., Mark Simpson develops a useful explanation of the “politics of mobility” as “the contestatory processes that produce different forms of movement, and that invest these forms with social value, cultural purchase, and discriminatory power.” Reading a variety of historical documents and cultural texts together with theorizations of mobility that look to restore its materiality and historical contingency alongside the representations that attend it, we will examine practices and discourses of transience in Canada in the middle years of the twentieth century—a period in which the relation between mobility and the social rights of citizenship were being defined. Considering how transience is put to use in politically strategic ways—how Dorothy Livesay’s Depression-era short stories and poems argue for the existence of a national labour force, for example, or how Carol Bolt’s documentary play *Buffalo Jump* and the musical *Ten Lost Years* function within the anti-imperialist politics of the New Left—questions such as the following ensue: What forms have been used to convey the practice of transience and why? How have the practices and meanings of transience participated in the differential distribution of power in Canada, including the making of classed, gendered, and racialized subjectivities? How can the work of reading the politics of transient mobility inform our thinking about the metaphors of rootedness that are so ubiquitous in Canadian literatures, and how can it challenge metaphors of mobility that have been interpreted as inherently liberatory?

**ENGL 5900: SELECTED TOPIC****INSTRUCTOR: A. Bohm****■ TOPIC: “Literature and the Common” ■**

Whose responsibility is our common literature? Neoconservative theory holds out little hope for the commons, arguing that no one will care or safeguard the common-wealth and hence only private property is viable in a free market society. In this seminar we will examine literature in the context of the debate about the common and the commons. A theoretical orientation is found in Antonio Negri’s *Goodbye to Socialism*: “The common is the network, the series of material goods that enables us to reproduce ourselves and to produce, to move and/or to allow ourselves to be carried from one side of the city to the other, etc. It is the series of things that makes us able to build language (libraries, books, ‘open’ informational technologies, communication instruments as such).” This seminar will attempt to understand literature as a commons, the history of its privatization, and the threats to it in an era of global privatization. Of necessity, the analysis will draw upon various discourses of the commons, including common sense, the common law, the commonwealth, commoners, common-places, and the common good. We will also have to recall the tradition of contempt for the common exemplified by figures such as Plato and Faust.

**ENGL 5901: SELECTED TOPIC****INSTRUCTOR: G. Williams****■ TOPIC: “The Ethics of Fantasy in Psychoanalytic and Cultural Theories of Subjectivity” ■**

With the politicization of the Freudian conceptualization of subjectivity, the imagination and its products have become objects of suspicion, if not disdain, in twentieth-century cultural theory. Freudian psychoanalysis originally assumed fantasy to constitute “primary process” thinking, more characteristic of unconscious and ontogenetically premature mental activity. As much as it breaks with Freudianism in many areas, Lacanian psychoanalysis steps up the attack on the imagination with the notion of the “imaginary,” the delusional yet necessary register in which the subject forms his or her narcissistic identity. It is in the work of Žižek that fantasy reaches its most suspicious form by becoming explicitly aligned with ideology, especially its totalitarian variants. The purpose of this course is to sustain a critique of psychoanalysis’s depiction of fantasy in order to recuperate imaginative activity for political and ethical ends. Seminars will push psychoanalysis hard. Close examination of theoretical writings will ascertain how the imagination and its products are specifically “framed” to be unethical and will strive to uncover moments when a more radical kind of imagination speaks through the text. The exciting but often marginalized work of Cornelius Castoriadis, particularly his *Imaginary Institution of Society*, will guide us through readings by Freud, Lacan, Althusser, Žižek, and Agamben. Castoriadis will give us a powerful model—but by no means the only one—for recuperating fantasy. Overall, the course will be of interest to students who want to rethink the ways in which subjectivity, textuality, and culture can be transformed through the agency of human thought.

**ENGL 5903: ENGLISH AND CULTURAL STUDIES****INSTRUCTOR: P. Walton****■ TOPIC: “Sartorial Spectacles: Clothing, Consumerism, and Cable Televisual Narratives” ■**

“Sartorial Spectacles” will attend to the nexus between clothing and consumerism in representations from cable TV programs. Seminars will explore the ways in which televisual configurations and discursive formations influence the construction of viewers as consumers and contribute to the larger cultural imaginary. Striking examples from cable TV immediately leap to mind: HBO’s *The Sopranos* deliberately played upon the dress code of Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Godfather* to update perceptions of “the mafia”; and in *Sex and the City*, Carrie Bradshaw’s use of the Fendi baguette made the purse the “it” bag (or “must-have bag”) of the year. More broadly speaking, the course will concentrate on how television influences and draws audiences into sartorial concerns through its programming. Focussing on cable television, “Sartorial Spectacles” will consider performance and spectacle in various programs like *Deadwood*, *Entourage*, and *Mad Men*, among others, in order to query how such performances affect and even change cultural assumptions, expectations, and practices. Critical texts on the reading list may include Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann’s *Private Screenings*, Richard Dyer’s *Stars*, Tania Modleski’s *Studies in Entertainment*, Amy Allen’s *This Little Piggy went to Prada*, and Michael Tonello’s *Bringing Home the Birken*.

**ENGL 6000: DOCTORAL SEMINAR****INSTRUCTOR: T. DeCook****■ TOPIC: “The Production of Literature” ■**

As the core course of The Production of Literature PhD, ENGL 6000 orients students to the program’s key issues, surveying some of the last several decades’ most significant studies of the history of the book and cultural theory. Broadly speaking, the course addresses the material (legal, technological, economic) conditions and systems of cultural value and distinction which shape the interrelated activities of literary production, circulation, and reception. In so doing, it reflects general shifts in literary study which go beyond previous assumptions about the stability of literary meaning and the very category of “literature” itself to investigate literature’s historical embeddedness and continually contested status. We will discuss the blind spots as well as the successes of such attempts to transform the study of literature, critically engaging with our readings and the issues and questions they provoke. ENGL 6000 is organized according to several broad topics: attempts to articulate “the history of the book” as a discipline; the institutional construction of “the literary” and literary value; the concept of authorship; the relationship between material form and meaning, including the impact of new media; and theories and histories of reading and audiences. We will consider the interrelatedness of all these topics, and certain questions will inevitably recur: How do the categories of the “literary” and the “non-literary” emerge? How is the relationship between physical form and content understood, and how has this changed? How do we understand authorship, and what is the relationship between authors and their texts?