

Department of English Graduate Course Descriptions, Summer, Fall 2020 Summer A 2020

FIL6138 Studies in Film Noir: Black is the Darkest Color

(post-1800, American) Online

Dr. Tim Donovan

Are you attracted to mystery, intrigue, lust, greed, crime, disillusionment, cynicism, fatalism, tragedy and trauma? If so, good for you! The dire world of film noir is your home.

This course will study the dark yet exceptionally beautiful style and tragic narratives of American film noir and neo-noir. We will study noir's roots in German expressionism, Italian neo-realism, and Depression-Era gangster movies that brought forth some of Hollywood's greatest films of the 1940s and 1950s. In the course, we will also study the pre and post-World War II social and cultural milieu that influences the sensibility of these films during their prime and onward in their contemporary resurgence. The films range in mood from Welles's sinister *Touch of Evil* (1958) to the Coen's absurd *Big Lebowski* (1998).

Finally, students who enjoy hard-boiled and pulp fiction will be drawn to the literary influences of this powerfully affective film genre.

Summer B 2020

AML 6507 Studies in Later American Literature: Modern Environmental Media

(post-1800, American)

Tuesday, Thursday 6:10 or 9:40 (or online if Summer B is cancelled for Summer B classes)

Dr. Bart Welling

Who cares about “green” writing, film, and other genres? These days, it would make more sense to ask who can afford not to care about them. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic has been grabbing all the headlines lately, it's not as if all the long-running local and global ecosocial crises caused by human activities have somehow gone away. Quite the contrary. (The spread of the coronavirus itself constitutes an ecosocial crisis, since the pandemic began thanks to human abuse of wildlife, and it has grown with such terrifying speed thanks to the myriad connectivities of the same petroleum-powered globalized capitalist order that has “infected” the atmosphere and oceans with a dangerously high carbon “fever.”) No matter how successful the countries of the world are in their fight against COVID-19, we will still be living in an era of unprecedented ecological degradation, a steady weakening of the health of the biosphere that threatens the long-term future of human civilization and nonhuman species on every side. Melting glaciers and rising seas. Monster hurricanes and wildfires. Enormous oil spills. Collapsing ocean ecosystems. Mass terrestrial extinctions. Worsening water shortages. Ever-growing mountains of garbage and toxic waste. The ongoing destruction of the world's forests and the transformation of livable grasslands into deserts. And all of these problems are compounded by the fact that the world's human population is projected to keep expanding well into this century.

However, we're also living at a time when new grassroots movements are emerging to deal with

these challenges, and when some of the world's most talented writers and image-makers are doing everything they can to change ordinary consumers' environmental attitudes. Far from merely celebrating rocks and trees, the authors, filmmakers, photographers, and other artists who focus on questions about our place in the biosphere and our relationships with nonhuman beings can challenge our most deeply held assumptions about who we are and how we live. Moreover, they can help us envision a future defined not by scarcity and conflict but by greater abundance for all the world's species and cultures. The tradition that Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) helped usher in has played a major role in the creation of national parks and the preservation of wilderness areas, but it has also participated in key debates on issues that affect the lives of people in the heart of the city. And creators of eco-media increasingly focus on the intersectionality of environmental problems—for example, how global warming is a moral issue as much as (or even more than) it is a technological and political challenge, because the people who have benefited the least from burning fossil fuels are paying the heaviest price for the developed world's petro-prosperity. Practitioners of Earth-oriented humanities scholarship—ecocritics—share eco-artists' concern over the plight of humanity and nonhuman life, and work to illuminate how artists' representations shape audiences' ways of thinking and feeling about our common planetary home.

Environmental writers, image-makers, and critics will continue to light our way as we move (I hope!) towards greener sources of energy, wiser systems of transportation, and cultures centering on sustainability and compassion rather than hyper-consumption and techno-narcissism. In short, if you're interested in literature, film, and other works of art that have the potential to spark profound transformations in how people think, work, eat, shop, build, get around, and even express themselves spiritually, and if you're interested in learning how to analyze environmental media ecocritically, then this class is for you.

Required Book:

Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, second edition (Routledge, 2011).

LIT 5934: Grant Writing

(elective, Concentration in Composition and Rhetoric)

Dr. Jenni Lieberman

Do you know of a community service organization that needs funding? Do you hope to start one of your own? Do you want to fund your own research one day? Grant writing is an important skill that could serve students in myriad professions—including students who want to help nonprofit organizations, students who want to fund their own research, and students who want to give back to their college and their community. We will begin by identifying the research and communication skills necessary to write a successful grant. Over the course of the semester, students will compose and submit grants for funding, gaining invaluable professional experience and potentially leaving an actual impression on their community in the process.

Fall 2020

AML 6506: Early American Literature

The American Gothic
(pre-1800, American)
Dr. Jenni Lieberman

Monday, 6:00-8:45

In America, the literary Gothic dates back to the eighteenth century, but we still avidly read works in this genre today. Edgar Allan Poe is a household name; present-day writers still employ the Gothic to thrill and frighten us. The endurance of this genre raises the questions: what are the historical roots of the Gothic? And how did this originally European invention inflect American literary history?

The Gothic is an important tradition in early American literature—a dark and passionate response to the supposed objectivity of the Enlightenment. In this class, we will explore how writers used this genre to express complicated thoughts about gender, race, memory, spirituality, and science. It gave imprisoned and formerly enslaved writers an idiom for describing the horrors of their mistreatment. In this course, we will read great and haunting works by writers including Charles Brockden Brown, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Jacobs, Austin Reed, and Louisa May Alcott. As we study the conventions of the Gothic, we will also practice the conventions of academic writing: instead of writing conventional seminar papers, we will discuss how to write journal articles.

ENC 6700, Studies in Composition Theory

(elective, Concentration in Composition and Rhetoric)
Dr. James Beasley

Wednesday, 6:00-8:45

In this class we will explore some of the most influential theories of rhetoric by reading primary and secondary texts and apply them to contemporary problems in the teaching of composition. Students completing this course will be able to:

- identify how definitions of rhetoric have changed over time;
- demonstrate that they can critically examine how classical, modern, and postmodern theories of rhetoric have shaped the field of composition;
- and demonstrate that they can utilize rhetorical theory to solve contemporary problems in composition.

ENG 6019 Contemporary Literary Criticism and Theory

(required)
Dr. Sam Kimball

Tuesdays 6:00-8:45

Going back to the 1920s, literary theory in America—influenced by and in conversation both in the United States and in other countries, with other disciplines in the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and, more recently, computer and cognitive sciences—has produced

an astonishing array of “approaches” to thinking critically about the nature of literature and other cultural productions and of their interpretation. These approaches have led to magnificent readings not only of canonical British and American literature but of imaginative works from around the world. They have also informed an expanding horizon of non-literary critiques, including of the narrative and non-narrative features of “texts” in the disciplines mentioned above and countless others.

The array of contemporary theory includes approaches that are typically cross- or multi-disciplinary. Some overlap and converge, others diverge radically from or are antithetical to one another, still others are hybrid frameworks for understanding the objects of their investigations. Collectively, across their dissimilarities and disputes as well as their affiliations and agreements, the multiplicity of approaches can be used to analyze any number of “cultural formations”—literature, myth, sacred narrative, film, art and sculpture, architecture, multi-media productions, music, the history of social institutions (prisons, for example), the history of madness and the sociology of mental illness, the modes of economic production, political structures, administrative procedures, and countless other “discourses,” “domains of knowledge,” and “practices of everyday life.”

In such explanatory endeavors, works of theory can differ in the kinds of questions they ask, the analytic procedures they employ, the information from different disciplines they draw on, how they situate themselves in relation to larger historical and cultural movements, and how immediately and directly useful they are outside of the graduate classroom. Some theory-based approaches are readily accessible, others are difficult, often exceedingly so. Although many rely on the techniques of close reading that are the hallmark of New Criticism, nevertheless the voluminous theory-oriented scholarship of the last 100 years has produced no common methodology that would overarch either the affinities among them or the disparateness of the projects included under the rubric of theory.

Because there is to my knowledge no unifying principle for theory-based approaches to literary studies, let alone to literary and non-literary critique, we will not attempt to survey the complex intellectual history of modern theory. Rather, we will read a selection of studies that demonstrate the analytic power, explanatory value, and cultural significance (ethical, political, economic, and so on) of theory; and that, in addition to reflecting the diversity and reach of theory, provide useful models for how to do theory, for how to theorize, both in the classroom and outside of academia.

Feel free to contact professor Kimball in the Writing Center (4/2505) or by email (skimball@unf.edu) if you would like a copy of his tentative course syllabus (including a provisional listing of texts and course requirements) or have any questions.

FIL 5934 Asian Cinema: East Asian Cinemas

(post-1800, replacement as an international course for either a British or American literature course)

Dr. Nick DeVilliers

Tuesday/Thursday 10:50-1:30

This course examines films from Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mainland China, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, in terms of their reception in both national and transnational contexts. We will

consider aesthetic questions of form, genre, the director as “auteur,” and various New Wave cinematic movements. We will also look critically at matters of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, post-colonialism, and “Orientalism” in each film as a cultural text. Graduate students will read foundational texts in postcolonial theory and East Asian film theory, and will be required to give a short in-class presentation (connected with one of the films screened but sharing the results of additional research), write a short critical response paper on one of the readings, and develop and write a 10-page research paper on a film of your choosing.

LIT 6246 Major Author: William Blake

(pre-1800, post-1800, British)

Thursday 6:00-8:45

Dr. Michael Wiley

This course will focus on William Blake, the poet, engraver, artist, mystic, political theorist, visionary, Londoner, and madman. Blake’s writing and pictorial art exploded the mental, physical, and ideological shackles that contained and constrained readers at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. As we will see, his work still tests – and breaks through – the limits of readers in the twenty-first century.

Graded work will include a midterm essay, a final essay, and an oral or video presentation. This course may satisfy either a pre- or a post-1800 program requirement.