ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Linsly-Chittenden Hall, 203.432.2233
http://english.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
Langdon Hammer

Director of Graduate Studies
Caleb Smith (106a LC, 203.432.2226)


Associate Professors Catherine Nicholson, Anthony Reed, R. John Williams

Assistant Professors Marta Figlerowicz, Benjamin Glaser, Joseph North, Jill Richards, Sunny Xiang

FIELDS OF STUDY
Fields include English language and literature from Old English to the present, American literature, and Anglophone world literature.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Application should be accompanied by scores from the GRE and the GRE “Literature in English” subject test, a personal statement of purpose, and a writing sample of up to twenty pages.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE
In order to fulfill the basic requirements for the program, a student must:

1. Complete twelve courses—six courses with at least one grade of Honors and a maximum of one grade of Pass by July 15 following the first year; at least twelve courses with grades of Honors in at least four of these courses and not more than one Pass by July 15 following the second year. One of these twelve courses must be The Teaching of English (ENGL 990). Courses selected must include one medieval, one early-modern, one eighteenth- and/or nineteenth-century, one twentieth- and/or twenty-first-century.

2. Satisfy the language requirement by the end of the second year. Two languages appropriate to the student’s field of specialization, each to be demonstrated by (a) passing a translation exam administered by a Yale language department or (for languages not tested elsewhere at Yale) by the English department; (b) passing an advanced literature course at Yale (graduate or upper-level undergraduate, with director of graduate studies [DGS] approval); or (c) passing both ENGL 500 and ENGL 501.

3. Pass the oral examination before or as early as possible in the fifth term of residence. The exam consists of questions on five topics, developed by the student in consultation with examiners and subject to approval by the DGS.

4. Submit a dissertation prospectus, normally by January 15 of the third year.

5. Teach a minimum of two terms.


Upon completion of all predissertation requirements, including the prospectus, students are admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. Admission to candidacy must take place by the end of the third year of study.

COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAMS

English and African American Studies
The Department of English Language and Literature also offers, in conjunction with the Department of African American Studies, a combined Ph.D. degree in English Language and Literature and African American Studies. For further details, see African American Studies.

English and Film and Media Studies
The Department of English Language and Literature also offers, in conjunction with the Film and Media Studies Program, a combined Ph.D. degree in English Language and Literature and Film and Media Studies. For further details, see Film and Media Studies.
English and Renaissance Studies

The Department of English Language and Literature also offers, in conjunction with the Renaissance Studies Program, a combined Ph.D. in English Language and Literature and Renaissance Studies. For further details, see Renaissance Studies.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.) Students enrolled in the Ph.D. program may receive the M.A. upon completion of seven courses with at least one grade of Honors and a maximum of one grade of Pass, and the passing of one foreign language.

Terminal Master’s Degree Program Students enrolled in the master’s degree program must complete either seven term courses or six term courses and a special project within the English department (one or two of these courses may be taken in other departments with approval of the DGS). There must be at least one grade of Honors, and there may not be more than one grade of Pass. Students must also demonstrate proficiency in one foreign language (as described under Ph.D. Requirements, above).

COURSES

For expanded course descriptions, please visit the English department website: http://english.yale.edu/courses.

ENGL 500a / LING 500a, Introduction to Old English Language and Literature  Traugott Lawler
The essentials of the language, some prose readings, and close study of several celebrated Old English poems.

ENGL 501b / LING 501b, Beowulf and the Northern Heroic Tradition  Traugott Lawler
A close reading of Beowulf, with some attention to shorter heroic poems.

ENGL 519b, Medieval Manuscripts and Literary Forms  Jessica Brantley
This course investigates the relation between manuscript studies and traditional literary criticism. It includes an introduction to working with medieval manuscripts (no prior experience required) and continues with a series of case studies that ask what thinking about manuscripts can contribute to literary scholarship. Manuscripts to be considered include the Ellesmere Chaucer, the Douce 104 Piers Plowman, the Vernon MS (a devotional miscellany), the Book of Brome (a household miscellany), the York Register (cycle drama), and Cotton Nero A.x. (the Gawain-poet).

ENGL 526a, History and Theory of the Lyric, Medieval and Modern  Langdon Hammer and Ardis Butterfield
Comparative study of lyric poetry in the medieval and modern periods, in French and English, with equal emphasis on theory and practice, in order to explore basic questions in poetics: Is it possible to define lyric poetry across periods? What is lost and gained by doing so? What can contemporary debates in poetics teach us about medieval literature? What can medieval literature contribute to contemporary poetics? Topics include poetry and music, the idea of voice, the relation between lyric and dramatic monologue, and the imaginative possibilities and technical demands of archival research. Theoretical readings focus on the debate between genre theory and historicism in recent criticism, with reference also to sound studies and new formalism. Readings in medieval poetry include troubadour and trouvère poetry, and a selection of anonymous English, French, and Latin songs and graffiti; readings in modern poetry focus on Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, and Susan Howe. All medieval texts are available in translation.

ENGL 546b, Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales and Three Earlier Poems: Discourses of Dissent  Alastair Minnis
A study of The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame, and The Legend of Good Women, in addition to a substantial selection of Canterbury Tales. These texts are related to the “discourses of dissent” current in Chaucer’s day, an age of extreme political, social, and intellectual turmoil.

ENGL 578b, Renaissance Poetry and Poetics  Catherine Nicholson
Between 1500 and 1645, vernacular verse was reinvented—by poets, pedagogues, literary theorists, publishers, and readers—as a self-conscious and self-authorizing national literary tradition. This seminar explores the celebrated achievements, failed experiments, forgotten controversies, and historical accidents that conspired to make rude rhyme newly legible (and audible) as English poetry.

ENGL 588b, Material Texts  Staff
This course focuses on the material culture of reading, writing, and printing from 1400 to 1900 in England and America, although students are welcome to develop their own topics based upon the Beinecke’s collections. We do hands-on research, drawing on the extraordinary collections of manuscripts and printed texts in the Beinecke. The course offers students an opportunity to explore archives and develop publishable projects relevant to their future research. Topics include theories of materiality; fetishism and relics; “persons” and “things”; the bible and the body; authorship and anonymity; writing as a material practice; the manuscript production and circulation of poetry from John Donne to Emily Dickinson; graffiti; letter-writing.

ENGL 600a, Non-Shakespearean Shakespeare  David Kastan
The seminar looks at a number of plays that have been attributed to Shakespeare (on early title pages, in seventeenth-century booksellers’ catalogues, or in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare’s works), almost all of which he is now (generally) thought not to have written. We explore the conditions of play making in early modern England; historical and theoretical accounts of authorship; questions of style (particularly, what might it mean to think of something as “Shakespearean”?); a set of bibliographic concerns about the publishing and printing of playsbooks; the various media in which we engage plays (from the early modern theater to
digital facsimiles of the early texts); and, not least, a miscellaneous group of plays worthy of study in their own right but largely ignored except for the question of authorship.

ENGL 709a / CPLT 882a / RUSS 882a, What Happened to Race, Class, and Gender? Keywords of Recent Critical Theory  Ayesha Ramachandran and Marta Figlerowicz
What did happen to race, class, and gender? This course examines the persistence of older theoretical frameworks such as Marxism or feminism in current critical discourse. It also explores new critical keywords—biopolitics, affect, the Anthropocene, and others—that now help structure theoretical debates in the humanities. Intended as a fast-paced, reading-heavy introduction to recent critical theory, the course will help graduate students in literature acquire a better sense of their field of study and reflect upon the methodologies they will use in their dissertation projects. Readings include the work of older theorists such as Jacques Derrida, Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Donna Haraway, as well as recent ones such as Jasbir Puar, Sianne Ngai, Tiqqun, Paolo Virno, and Dipesh Chakrabarty.

ENGL 717b, Loves of the Plants: Imagining Flora, 1735–1835  Jill Campbell
Study of literary treatments of plant life between Carl Linnaeus and Charles Darwin. Special focus on botany and gender; new systems of classification; the aesthetics of flowers in poetry and the decorative arts; the movement of plants around the globe through imperial trade and settler colonialism; medicinal and commercial uses of plants; and nascent environmentalism. Readings include poems by William Cowper, Erasmus Darwin, William Wordsworth, and Charlotte Smith; prose fiction by Daniel Defoe, Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and Johann Wyss; and samples of reference works and treatises. Opportunities for students to explore related topics through independent research.

ENGL 725b / CPLT 646b, Rise of the European Novel  Katie Trumpener
In the eighteenth century, the novel became a popular literary form in many parts of Europe. Yet now-standard narratives of its “rise” often offer a temporally and linguistically foreshortened view. This seminar examines key early modern novels in a range of European languages, centered on the dialogue between highly influential eighteenth-century British and French novels (Montesquieu, Defoe, Sterne, Diderot, Laclos, Edgeworth). We begin by considering a sixteenth-century Spanish picaresque life history (Lazarillo de Tormes) and Madame de Lafayette’s seventeenth-century secret history of French court intrigue; contemplate a key sentimental Goethe novella; and end with Romantic fiction (an Austen novel, a Kleist novella, Pushkin’s historical novel fragment). These works raise important issues about cultural identity and historical experience, the status of women (including as readers and writers), the nature of society, the vicissitudes of knowledge—and novelistic form. We also examine several major literary-historical accounts of the novel’s generic evolution, audiences, timing, and social function, and historiographical debates about the novel’s rise (contrasting English-language accounts stressing the novel’s putatively British genesis, and alternative accounts sketching a larger European perspective). The course gives special emphasis to the improvisatory, experimental character of early modern novels, as they work to reground fiction in the details and reality of contemporary life. Many epistolary, philosophical, sentimental, and Gothic novels present themselves as collections of “documents”—letters, diaries, travelogues, confessions—carefully assembled, impartially edited, and only incidentally conveying stories as well as information. The seminar explores these novels’ documentary ambitions; their attempt to touch, challenge, and change their readers; and their paradoxical influence on “realist” conventions (from the emergence of omniscient, impersonal narrators to techniques for describing time and place).

ENGL 729a, Literature and Philosophy from Locke to Kant  Jonathan Kramnick
This is a class on epistemology, aesthetics, and literary form. We read major works in empiricism and moral philosophy alongside poetry and fiction in several genres. We ask, for example, how do poetry, fiction, and the visual arts recruit and account for perceptual experience or consider material and natural objects? What happens when the empirical psychology of consciousness or the categories of the sublime, beautiful, and picturesque take narrative or poetic form? What sort of ethical models follow from formal or generic decisions? We focus throughout on how these topics have been discussed across the history of literary studies, and we pay close attention to current debates in the field, including those prompted by new formalisms and materialisms, critical race studies, cognitive literary studies, and the digital humanities. Authors include Locke, Behn, Defoe, Pope, Addison, Hume, Burke, Sterne, Smith, Kant, and Wordsworth.

ENGL 774a, Romantic Poetry  Leslie Brisman
An introduction to the work of Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats, with some attention to Byron and the minor poets of this rich period of poetic innovation and revolutionary spirit.

ENGL 807b, Charles Dickens and George Eliot  Stefanie Markovits
Overview of the works of Charles Dickens and George Eliot through exploration of a series of paired texts that allow perspective on two different approaches to a variety of novelistic modes, including the Bildungsroman, the historical novel, and the political novel.

ENGL 810b, Victorian Poetry  Leslie Brisman
The major Victorian poets, Tennyson and Browning, in the context of the romanticism they inherited and transformed. A selection of other Victorians whose genius or popularity warrants attention, including Morris, the Rossetti, Hardy, Swinburne, Hopkins, and Barrett Browning.

ENGL 830a / HSAR 678a, Portraiture and Character from Hogarth to Woolf  Ruth Yeazell
Case studies in the visual and verbal representation of persons in Anglo-American painting and fiction, with particular attention to novels that themselves include portraits or address relations between the two media. Novelists tentatively to include Henry Fielding, Jane Austen, Henry James, Edith Wharton, Oscar Wilde, and Virginia Woolf. Painters to include William Hogarth, Joshua Reynolds, Thomas
ENGL 833a / AMST 723a, The Nonhuman in Literature and Culture since 1800  Wai Chee Dimock
Nonhuman life forms in fiction and poetry from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first, including plants and animals, "legal persons" such as corporations, large-scale phenomena such as the market and the Internet, war and environmental catastrophes, as well as intelligent machines and extraterrestrial aliens. Authors include Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, Upton Sinclair, Elizabeth Bishop, Louise Erdrich, Richard Powers, Don DeLillo, Cormac McCarthy, Philip K. Dick, Ursula Le Guin, Octavia Butler, Dave Eggers. Theorists include Giorgio Agamben, Jane Bennett, Jacques Derrida, Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Fredric Jameson, Brian Massumi, Timothy Morton.

ENGL 838b / AMST 775b, Performing American Literature  Wai Chee Dimock
A broad selection of short stories, poems, and novels, accompanied by class performances, culminating in a term project with a significant writing component. "Performance" includes a wide range of activities including: staging; making digital films and videos; building websites; game design; and creative use of social media. Readings include poetry by Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Yusef Komunyakaa, and Claudia Rankine; fiction by Herman Melville, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Junot Díaz.

ENGL 866b, Whitman and Dickinson  Michael Warner
Readings in the poetry and prose of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. We study their works, careers, and contexts, including their relation to the nineteenth-century culture of verse—a topic that has been newly invigorated by “historical poetics.” Scholarly understanding of both poets has been revised in recent years in connection with the digitization of their work, so we study the history, development, and design of the Walt Whitman Archive and the Emily Dickinson Archive. We also look at critical debates about both writers, including the long history of comment about their relation to sexuality, gender, and queerness.

ENGL 884a / CPLT 855a, Modernism, Realism, Imperial Crisis  Joseph Cleary
An investigation of the connections between the crises of realism and the historical novel, the emergence of high modernism, magical realism, and various forms of postcolonial historical narrative considered in the wider global context of inter-imperial conflict, anti-imperial struggle, and the restructuring of the world capitalist system. The seminar combines literary readings, critical theory, and contemporary studies on “world literature” to explore ruptures and developments in modern fiction and the politics of empire in Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia.

ENGL 92b / FILM 802b, Studies in Sound and Voice  John Peters
Since the late nineteenth century, human and nonhuman voices have been technically amplified, recorded, distorted, enhanced, synthesized, and measured for purposes of art, science, and politics. This class explores classic and recent books and essays on the media of sound and culture, with a particular focus on the voice. We are guided by two fundamental questions: How do voices get into bodies and bodies into voices? How do media capture something whose existence amounts to vibrations and whose essence involves disappearance? The voice is a key but conflicted site for defining what it means to be a human being. This complex organ or apparatus depends on lungs, brain, vocal tract, emotion, training, and culture. The voice implicates physics and music, communication and culture, anatomy and art. It raises questions about beauty, identity, power, religion, art, poetry, style, culture, race, gender, and age. Animals and machines have voices; so may the stars.

ENGL 933b, Realism  Marc Robinson
A study of European and American dramatic realism, from its beginnings in the 1870s through its radical revision in the twenty-first century. Works by Ibsen, Zola, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Hauptmann, Belasco, and Shaw, as well as Maria Irene Fornés, Franz Xaver Kroetz, Annie Baker, Richard Maxwell, David Levine, and other contemporary figures. Readings in pertinent theory and criticism; discussion of nineteenth- and twentieth-century staging practices; and, when possible, video viewings of important recent productions.

ENGL 949a / AFAM 650a, Afro-Modernisms  Anthony Reed
This course considers key debates, texts, and institutions that have shaped African American culture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Possible topics include the New Negro movement, the Black Arts movement, black internationalism, canon formation, and Afro-futurism.

ENGL 951b / AFAM 563b / AMST 651b, Ralph Ellison in Context  Robert Stepto
This seminar pursues close readings of Ralph Ellison’s essays, short fiction, and novels. The “in context” component of the seminar involves working from the Benson and Sundquist volumes on Ellison to discern a portrait of the modernist African America Ellison investigated, with at least Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Romare Bearden also in view. Texts include Ellison’s Collected Essays, Flying Home and Other Stories, Invisible Man, and Juneteenth; K. Benson, Speaking for You; E. Sundquist, Cultural Contexts for Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man; and A. Nadel, Invisible Criticism: Ralph Ellison and the American Canon.

ENGL 952b / AFAM 743b / AMST 654b, American Artists and the African American Book  Robert Stepto
Visual art in African American books since 1900. Artists include Winold Reiss, Aaron Douglas, E.S. Campbell, Tom Feelings, and the FSA photographers of the 1930s and ’40s. Topics include Harlem Renaissance book art, photography and literature, and children’s books. Research in collections of the Beinecke Library and the Yale Art Gallery is encouraged.

ENGL 972b / FILM 972b, Modernity and the Time of Literature  Robert Williams
This course examines transformations in temporality that occurred in the sciences and arts during the twentieth century. From the arrival of Einsteinian relativity to more contemporary proofs on quantum nonlocality, the question of time in the twentieth century threatened
to overturn some of our oldest assumptions about cause and effect, duration, history, presentness, and futurity. These new temporalities were as scientifically and philosophically vexing as they were ripe with spiritual and aesthetic possibility—a dynamic reflected in the literary and artistic forms that were central to these transformations. Our reading reflects this deeply cross-cultural and interdisciplinary trajectory, including histories of science and technology (Peter Galison, N. Katherine Hayles, David Kaiser), philosophies of time (Heidegger, Bruno Latour, Bernard Stiegler, McLuhan, Luhmann), critical theories of temporal form (Derrida, Adorno, Jameson, Pamela Lee, Kojin Karatani), a wide array of literary texts (William Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon, Ursula K. Le Guin, Tom McCarthy, and others), as well as important cinematic innovations (Jodorowsky, Godard, Kubrick). What is the "time" of literature? of film? How does art transform or reinforce theories of temporal flow? How do new technologies of composition and circulation alter the temporal effects of a given work? What was the "End of History"?

**ENGL 978b, Reading, Attention, and Distraction**  Caleb Smith

Recent efforts to defend and renovate the critical humanities—reparative reading, surface reading, postcritique, and so on—have made a watchword of attention. It is said that the best reading practices are characterized not by the canons they build or by the theories they develop but by the styles of receptivity they cultivate. The study of the arts is coming to be understood as a kind of therapy, the antidote to mass distraction, and as an ethics, a way of becoming more humble and more humane. This seminar explores what is gained and what is lost when criticism takes disciplined attentiveness as its norm. We begin with an overview of contemporary debates about the hermeneutics of suspicion and its alternatives (Sedgwick, Hayles, Best and Marcus, Love, Felski). We move on to piece together a partial genealogy of attentiveness, taking a special interest in questions of secularism and secularity, from classical and medieval spiritual exercises through romanticism and modernism (Benjamin, Weil, Crary, Foucault, Hadot). We conclude with an extended reading of a key text, Henry Thoreau’s *Walden* (1854), drawing from historical and critical sources to consider Thoreau’s ideas about strenuous reading, ascetic self-culture, and an ethics of openness to the world.

**ENGL 980a, Criticism and the Commons**  Joseph North

An introduction to the history of literary criticism and to contemporary debates about “the commons.” Our particular focus is on the ways in which sophisticated thinkers in and around the Anglo-American literary-critical tradition have sought to perceive and articulate the underlying unity of the social order.

**ENGL 982b / WGSS 850b, Sex and Citizenship**  Jill Richards

This course surveys political theories of gender/sexuality through attention to citizenship, the nation-state, rights discourses, civil society, migration, biopolitics, criminality, security, and social death. The course looks to establish a foundational understanding of the conjunctures between liberal governance and the regulation of reproductive, sexual, and family life. At the same time, our wider conceptual arc takes up more recent critical debates on the entanglements of sexual intimacy, race, and national belonging. Textual selections move across a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, history, literature, critical race theory, queer theory, indigenous studies, environmental studies, and law. Key authors include Hobbes, Locke, Marx, Engels, Habermas, Arendt, Foucault, Orlando Patterson, C.B. Macpherson, Wendy Brown, Ann Laura Stoler, Saidiya Hartman, Joan Wallach Scott, Cheryl Harris, Lauren Berlant, Michael Warner, Jasbir Puar, Elizabeth Povinelli, Paul Gilroy, Pheng Cheah, Inderpal Grewal, Frank Wilderson, Salmonishah Tillett, Achille Mbembe, Adriana Petrinya, Lisa Marie Cacho, Mark Rifkin, José Muñoz, Dean Spade, Lisa Lowe, Talal Asad.

**ENGL 987a, What Do Poems Want? The Ekphrastic Moment**  Paul Fry

*Studies of ekphrasis*—covering all literary periods—as an expression of desire for a relation to pictures and other objects that is not satisfied by the objectives of mimesis and form. Secondary literature includes Plato, Aristotle, Lessing, and modern reflections on *ekphrasis* and the orientation of art to things.

**ENGL 990a, The Teaching of English**  Jill Campbell and Margaret Homans

An introduction to the teaching of literature and of writing with attention to the history of the profession and to current issues in higher education such as the corporatization of the university, the role of the state in higher education, and the precarity of the humanities at the present time. Weekly seminars address a series of issues about teaching: guiding classroom discussion; introducing students to various literary genres; addressing race, class, and gender in the teaching of literature; formulating aims and assignments; grading and commenting on written work; lecturing and serving as a teaching assistant; preparing syllabuses and lesson plans.

**ENGL 992a, Advanced Pedagogy**  Heather Kleemann

Training for graduate students teaching introductory expository writing. Students plan a course of their own design on a topic of their own choosing, and they then put theories of writing instruction into practice by teaching a writing seminar. Prerequisite: open only to graduate students teaching ENGL 114.

**ENGL 995a or b, Directed Reading**  Staff

Designed to help fill gaps in students’ programs when there are corresponding gaps in the department’s offerings. By arrangement with faculty and with the approval of the DGS.