ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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

Chair
Jessica Brantley (on leave)

Acting Chair
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Directors of Graduate Studies
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Associate Professors Marta Figlerowicz, Jill Richards, Emily Thornbury, R. John Williams

Assistant Professors Anastasia Eccles, Marcel Elias, Ben Glaser, Jonathan Howard, Elleza Kelley, Naomi Levine, Ernest Mitchell, Priyasha Mukhopadhyay, Joseph North, Sunny Xiang

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

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 course in at least three out of four designated historical periods: medieval, early-modern, eighteenth- and/or nineteenth-century, twentieth- and/or twenty-first-century. Students are also encouraged to take at least one seminar that adds geographic, linguistic, cultural, and/or methodological breadth to their course of study.

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, at the
conclusion of a GSAS Summer Language for Reading course, 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 four 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, since the English department considers teaching an integral part of graduate education. In practice, most students teach between four and six 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 Early Modern Studies**

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

The Department of English Language and Literature also offers, in conjunction with the Department of the History of Art, a combined Ph.D. degree in English Language and Literature and History of Art. The requirements are designed to emphasize the interdisciplinarity of the combined degree program.

**Course work** In years one and two, a student in the combined program will complete sixteen courses: ten seminars in English, including The Teaching of English (ENGL 990) and one course in each of four historical periods (medieval, early modern, eighteenth– and/or nineteenth-century, twentieth– and/or twenty-first century), and six in History of Art, including HSAR 500 and one course outside the student’s core
area. Up to two cross-listed seminars may count toward the number in both units, reducing the total number of courses to fourteen.

**Languages** Two languages pertinent to the student’s field of study, to be determined and by agreement with the advisers and directors of graduate studies. Normally the language requirement will be satisfied by passing a translation exam administered by one of Yale’s language departments. One examination must be passed during the first year of study, the other by the end of the third year.

**Qualifying paper** History of Art requires a qualifying paper in the spring term of the second year. The paper must demonstrate original research, a logical conceptual structure, stylistic lucidity, and the ability to successfully complete a Ph.D. dissertation. The qualifying paper will be evaluated by two professors from History of Art and one professor from English.

**Qualifying examination** Written exam: addressing a question or questions having to do with a broad state-of-the-field or historiographic topic. Three hours, closed book, written by hand or on a non-networked computer. Oral exam: given one week after the written exam, covering six fields, including three in English (question periods of twenty minutes each, covering thirty texts each, representing three distinct fields of literary history) and three in History of Art (twenty-five minutes each, fields to be agreed on in advance with advisers and DGS). Exam lists will be developed by the student in consultation with faculty examiners.

**Teaching** Two years of teaching—one course per term in years three and four—are required: two in English and two in History of Art.

**Prospectus** The dissertation prospectus must be approved by both English and History of Art. The colloquium will take place in the spring term of the third year of study. The committee will include at least one faculty member from each department. As is implied by its title, the colloquium is not an examination, but a meeting during which the student can present ideas to a faculty committee and receive advice from its members. The colloquium should be jointly chaired by the directors of graduate studies of both departments.

**First chapter reading** Students will participate in a first chapter reading (also known as a first chapter conference) normally within a year of advancing to candidacy (spring term of year four). The dissertation committee, including faculty members from both departments, will discuss the progress of the student’s work in a seminar-style format.

**Dissertation defense** The hour-long defense is a serious intellectual conversation between the student and the committee. Present at the defense will be the student’s advisers, committee, and the directors of graduate studies in both English and History of Art; others may be invited to comment after the committee’s questioning is completed.

**English and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies**

The Department of English Language and Literature also offers, in conjunction with the Program in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, a combined Ph.D. in English Language and Literature and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. For further details, see Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.
**MASTER’S DEGREES**

**M.Phil.** Students may declare their intention in the first or second term of the third year to complete an M.Phil. degree instead of the Ph.D. Students must first submit a research proposal and may request a teaching waiver for the term in which they complete the research project, typically in the second term of the third year or the first term of the fourth year. Permission to pursue the M.Phil. *en route* to the Ph.D., without additional research leave, may be granted by special permission of the DGS and the GSAS Dean’s Office.

**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 Special Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree, above).

**COURSES**

**ENGL 500a / LING 500a / MDVL 665a, Old English I**  Emily Thornbury  
The essentials of the language, some prose readings, and close study of several celebrated Old English poems.

**ENGL 521b / CLSS 624b / EMST 621b / HIST 532b / MDVL 621b, Advanced Manuscript Studies**  N. Raymond Clemens  
This course builds on the foundation provided by MDVL 620 by focusing on both regional Latin hands and the vernacular hands that grew from the Latin tradition. The backbone of the course is Middle English paleography (no prior experience needed), but the course surveys French, Italian, Hebrew, and German hands as well. Prerequisite: MDVL 620 or MDVL 571 or equivalent study of Latin paleography strongly suggested.

**ENGL 540a / MDVL 752a, Staging Mysteries: The Legacy of Medieval Biblical Drama, Past and Present**  Carla Neuss  
While *The Phantom of the Opera* holds the honor of the longest-running production on Broadway at thirty-four years, medieval mystery cycles trump it in their annual performances from roughly the eleventh to sixteenth centuries throughout Western Europe. This course traces the development and history of the medieval mystery cycle tradition, in which the biblical narrative was staged for the purpose of the “augmentation of the Catholic faith” in order to lead “common people to devotion and sound doctrine” (Chester Cycle banns). We analyze key episodes from a variety of surviving mystery cycle manuscripts, exploring the devotional and doctrinal purposes of these plays as well as their civic, social, and, at times, subversively political valences. The second half of the course traces the legacy and afterlives of mystery cycle tradition in modern performance. We look at a range of adaptations of mystery cycles as well as modern drama that reinvents the mystery play genre for secular purposes, from the Soviet era *Mystery Bouffe* (1918) to Kanye West’s
operas Mary and Nebuchadnezzar (2019). Through primary and secondary texts, this course explores the following questions: How did theatre emerge from liturgy and Christian ritual? How did medieval theatre embody an encounter with the divine for its audiences? What were the effects and affects that resulted from these religious performances? And how and why does the mystery cycle continue to be reinvented by new theatre practitioners for new audiences around the world?

ENGL 631a / EMST 531a / HIST 958a, Land, Labour, and Slavery from Hobbes to Defoe  Feisal Mohamed
This course considers together several phenomena often considered separately: the conversion of arable land to pasture, which imposed unprecedented hardships on tenant farmers in early modern England; the central place of property in seventeenth-century English formulations of political liberty; the increasing racialization of forced labor in the period; and the tension in the English political imaginary between a mythos of land and of sea. Taken together, these radically refigure the relationship between power, space, and subjectivity. We read foundational works of political theory produced in England’s tumultuous seventeenth century, those of Hobbes, Harrington, Filmer, and Locke. We also explore how transformations of labor and property necessarily exert influence in literature, not only at the level of content but also at that of genre and mode. Along the way, we essay a detailed accounting of England’s efforts to expand its mercantilist activity to the West and East, goaded by rivalry with other European powers, especially Spain and the Netherlands.

ENGL 720a / AFAM 701a / WGSS 720a, Race, Gender, and AI  Fatima El-Tayeb
This course explores the idea of artificial life in art and science. We address the tension between visions of minds without body and bodies without mind, their relation to the quest to identify what makes us human, and the role gender and race have played in this. We look at dominant (scientific, political, economic) models and at their critiques, in particular those from marginalized perspectives, and we explore alternative forms of engaging with new technologies. The course’s main texts are Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus (1818) and Jeanette Winterson’s Frankissstein: A Love Story (2019).

ENGL 721a / EMST 521a, Burke, Revolution, and Empire  David Bromwich
A partial survey of the political writings of Burke in the context of the theory of empire and of revolution. We emphasize his writings on India and France, which reveal a common theme: innovation—sudden change in a way of life—always depends on violence, whether its agents are internal or external to the society. We touch on a wider subject: the birth of modern ideology, from the demand for systematic excuses to justify empire and revolution.

ENGL 722b, Transatlantic Literature, 1688–1818  Jill Campbell
Study of multiple genres in the literatures of Great Britain, North America, and the Caribbean from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century, with twenty-first-century creative and critical works providing a range of contemporary responses. Special focus on the role of literature in advancing and contesting concepts of race and gender as features of identity and systems of power, with attention to the circulation of goods, people, ideas, and literary works among regions. Readings from the long eighteenth century to include works by Aphra Behn, Phillis Wheatley, Samson Occam, Olaudah Equiano, Omar Ibn Said, Leonora Sansay, Maria Edgeworth, and Mary Shelley. Twenty-first-century creative works by Yaa Gyasi, Mary Kathryn Nagle,
Honorée Fanonne Jeffers, and Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abel; with critical selections from Édouard Glissant, Dionne Brand, Christina Sharpe, and Omise’eke Natasha Tinsley.

**ENGL 761a / AFAM 561a / AMST 512a / FREN 561a, Caribbean Literary and Cultural Studies**  
Marlene Daut

This course examines eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writing (in translation, where applicable) by writers from the Anglophone, Francophone, and Hispanophone islands that make up the Caribbean. Haitian independence in 1804 ushered in a vibrant and diverse print culture that included poetry, plays, newspapers, and historical writing. From the pages of *La Gazette Royale d’Hayti* (1811–1820), to the poems of Jean-Baptiste Romane (1807–1858), to the historical writings of Louis-Félix Boisrond-Tonnerre (1776–1806), to the operas of Juste Chanlatte (1766–1828), there arose a distinct nineteenth-century literary culture in Haiti. Beginning with national literary developments in Haiti, this course expands to consider writing from Barbados, Cuba, Trinidad, Jamaica, Antigua, and Bermuda. These writings, both fictional and non-fictional, help us to think about whether and/or how a coherent early Caribbean literary tradition developed across geographical, linguistic, national, and imperial lines.

**ENGL 774a, Romanticism and Anti-Romanticism**  
Leslie Brisman

Romanticism is traditionally conceived as the “great turn inward,” where interest in exploring the complexities and depths of the human mind replaces a focus on heroic action and social interaction. But the great Romantic poets were equally concerned with interpersonal relations and political problems and reform. Some of the great recent criticism of Romantic poets emphasizes the anti-Romantic elements within the great Romantic poems. This course attempts to focus on both. Readings are mostly the work of Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats, with some attention to Byron, Charlotte Smith, Scott, and the minor poets.

**ENGL 809b, The Badness of Victorian Poetry**  
Naomi Levine

This course studies Victorian poetry and its fraught reception in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary criticism. As we examine how the modern discipline of literary studies developed out of and often against Victorian poetics and aesthetics, we attend to key concepts like form, method, judgment, pedagogy, value, period, and canon. Readings may include poems by Tennyson, Barrett Browning, Morris, Swinburne, Toru Dutt, the Rossettis, Pauline Johnson, and Pound; criticism by Germaine de Staël, John Ruskin, Walter Pater, Vernon Lee, Susanne Langer, the New Critics (Richards, Empson, Wellek, Brooks, Wimsatt), and Veronica Forrest-Thomson; and recent work in the history of the discipline and historical poetics. Course texts supplemented by visits (in-person or virtual) to the Yale art museums and the Beinecke archives.

**ENGL 827a / CPLT 554a, Novel Minds: The Representation of Consciousness from Austen to Woolf**  
Ruth Yeazell

Close study of selected novels by Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Virginia Woolf, with particular attention to the representation of consciousness and the development of the free indirect style. Our reading of fiction is supplemented by narrative theory drawn from James, Wayne Booth, Käte Hamburger, Ann Banfield, Gérard Genette, Dorrit Cohn, and others.
ENGL 889a / AFST 889a / CPLT 889a, Postcolonial Ecologies  Cajetan Iheka
This seminar examines the intersections of postcolonialism and ecocriticism as well as the tensions between these conceptual nodes, with readings drawn from across the global South. Topics of discussion include colonialism, development, resource extraction, globalization, ecological degradation, nonhuman agency, and indigenous cosmologies. The course is concerned with the narrative strategies affording the illumination of environmental ideas. We begin by engaging with the questions of postcolonial and world literature and return to these throughout the semester as we read primary texts, drawn from Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia. We consider African ecologies in their complexity from colonial through post-colonial times. In the unit on the Caribbean, we take up the transformations of the landscape from slavery, through colonialism, and the contemporary era. Turning to Asian spaces, the seminar explores changes brought about by modernity and globalization as well as the effects on both humans and nonhumans. Readings include the writings of Zakes Mda, Aminatta Forna, Helon Habila, Derek Walcott, Jamaica Kincaid, Ishimure Michiko, and Amitav Ghosh. The course prepares students to respond to key issues in postcolonial ecocriticism and the environmental humanities, analyze the work of the major thinkers in the fields, and examine literary texts and other cultural productions from a postcolonial perspective. Course participants have the option of selecting from a variety of final projects. Students can craft an original essay that analyzes primary text from a postcolonial and/or ecocritical perspective. Such work should aim at producing new insight on a theoretical concept and/or the cultural text. They can also produce an undergraduate syllabus for a course at the intersection of postcolonialism and environmentalism or write a review essay discussing two recent monographs focused on postcolonial ecocriticism.

ENGL 913a / AFAM 530a, Black Elsewhere(s): Race and Space  Jonathan Howard
The spatial resume of blackness is extensive, spanning land, sea, and outer space. Yet for every where the African Diaspora has been, the stunning witness of an important thread of black study argues that blackness is nowhere at all, defined most unflinchingly as a fundamental exclusion from the world. But where else, if not “the world,” is blackness? Are such black elsewhere(s) livable? And, given environmentalism’s increasingly apocalyptic forecasts about “the world,” how might the careful study of the life of blackness elsewhere yield a viable way out? Guided by these questions, this course takes up the precarious spatial resume of blackness as an opportunity to think about and through long held questions around space: What is space? What is its relation to place? And to what extent are either given or constructed? Along with these questions, we also consider how our experience of space is further informed by race. In three units centered on the ocean, land, and outer space, respectively, we trace a genealogy of black spatiality as that spatial practice comes to be elaborated in literature, theory, and history. Ultimately, through our exploration of black elsewhere(s), we will weigh whether the space and place of blackness, if excluded from the world, discloses a more robust and ecological vision of what we might alternatively call the Earth.

ENGL 919b / FILM 919b, Elemental Media  John Peters
This interdisciplinary seminar explores not only how media represent the environment but also how they sometimes constitute it. The readings and discussions range widely across theoretical approaches, historical periods, natural environments, and literary and artistic genres. The ultimate question is what kinds of intellectual resources and
academic traditions we can mobilize in the name of a habitable planet. This class offers some orientation to media theory generally but more specifically to elemental media theory (also known, without significant difference, as eco-media or environmental media). The dispersive force of eclectic examples will be countered by a conceptual and narrative warp and weft.

**ENGL 934b, Challenges to Realism in Contemporary African Fiction**  
Stephanie Newell
Introduction to experimental African novels that challenge realist and documentary modes of representation. Topics include mythology, gender subversion, politics, the city, migration, and the self. Ways of reading African and postcolonial literature through the lenses of identity, history, and nation.

**ENGL 979a / FREN 668a / HSAR 668a, Ekphrasis and Art Criticism**  
Carol Armstrong
Ekphrasis in its ancient Greek sense refers to the vivid description of an object, animal, person, place, scene, or event undertaken as an exercise in oral rhetoric. In that original context, the practice of ekphrasis was meant to “paint” a picture in the mind of the listener, and thus pointed to both the imagistic capacities of verbal language, and the integral link between the image and the imagination. In the twentieth century, ekphrasis acquired a narrower meaning: poetry addressed to or modeled on works of visual art. While informed by both of those understandings, this seminar considers ekphrasis both more broadly, in terms of genre, and more narrowly, in relation to a partial history of art criticism as a modern form of writing in the anglophone and European worlds, with a focus on the eighteenth through the twentieth century. It treats the different writerly modes now understood to be embraced by the term ekphrasis: not only poetry, but also the prose poem and the novel, as well as the *Salon* and art review. It also touches on such issues as the Renaissance inversion of the phrase *ut pictura poesis*; the competition between the arts of word and image; the presence or absence of illustrations; the modern relations between genres and mediums and the question of mediation; and the address of the different arts to the subjectivity of the reader/spectator. In addition to weekly presentations, a short preliminary paper, and a final research paper, students organize and contribute to a workshop on ekphrasis based on their own ekphrastic exercises, undertaken in the Yale Art Gallery. (Some class time is devoted to those exercises.) This seminar is the second of two (the first is HSAR 667); our hope is that students from both seminars will collaborate on this final event.

**ENGL 990b, The Teaching of English**  
Joseph North and Felisa Baynes-Ross
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 Klemann
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 993a, Prospectus Workshop**  Priyasha Mukhopadhyay
A workshop in which students develop, draft, revise, and present their dissertation prospectuses, open to all third-year Ph.D. students in English.

**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.

**ENGL 996a, Publication Workshop**  Jill Richards and Caleb Smith
A workshop for graduate students revising a seminar paper, dissertation chapter, or other draft for publication in an academic journal. Topics of discussion include the genres and forms of critical writing; mechanics and diplomacy of peer review; techniques and ethics of citation; and how to be a helpful reader of others’ work in progress. Depending on student interest, we may also discuss and/or workshop critical writing for public-facing venues beyond academic journals. Applications, including article drafts, to be reviewed before registration. Assignments include weekly readers’ reports on others’ drafts.

**ENGL 998a and ENGL 999b / CPLT 820a and CPLT 821b, Dissertation Workshop**  Marta Figlerowicz
This workshop gathers biweekly, throughout the academic year, to workshop chapters, articles, and prospectuses. It is intended to foster conversations among advanced graduate students across diverse historical and geographic fields. Permission of the instructor is required.