ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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

Chair
Jessica Brantley

Director of Graduate Studies
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Catherine Nicholson [Sp] (106a LC, 203.432.2226)

Professors Jessica Brantley, Leslie Brisman, David Bromwich, Ardis Butterfield, Jill Campbell, Joe Cleary, Michael Denning, Wai Chee Dimock, Paul Fry (Emeritus), Jacqueline Goldsby, Langdon Hammer, Margaret Homans, Amy Hungerford, David Scott Kastan, Jonathan Kramnick, Lawrence Manley, Stefanie Markovits, Stephanie Newell, John Durham Peters, Caryl Phillips, David Quint, Marc Robinson, John Rogers, Caleb Smith, Peter Stallybrass (Visiting), Robert Stepto (Emeritus), Katie Trumpener, Michael Warner, Ruth Bernard Yeazell

Associate Professors Marta Figlerowicz, Catherine Nicholson, Emily Thornbury, R. John Williams

Assistant Professors Anastasia Eccles, Ben Glaser, Alanna Hickey, Cajetan Iheka, Naomi Levine, Priyasha Mukhopadhyay, 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 General 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 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, Renaissance, eighteenth–nineteenth century, twentieth–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 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 Special Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree, above).

COURSES

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

ENGL 545a / CPLT 582a, Medieval Translation  Ardis Butterfield
Using modern postcolonial as well as medieval theories of translation, memory, and bilingualism we explore how texts are transformed, cited, and reinvented in the medieval period. What happens to language under the pressure of crosslingual reading practices? How can the freedom and inventiveness of medieval poetic practices illuminate modern theories of translation? Texts include material in French, English, Latin, and Italian. Proficiency in any one or more of these languages is welcome, but every effort will be made to use texts available in modern English translation, so as to include as wide a participation as possible in the course.
ENGL 561a, Studies in Seventeenth-Century English Literature  John Rogers
A survey of seventeenth-century poetry and prose, exclusive of Milton. Authors include Bacon, Donne, Hobbes, Herbert, Browne, Crashaw, Marvell, Cavendish, Bunyan, and Dryden.

ENGL 588b, Material Texts  Peter Stallybrass
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 590a / HIST 539a, Materializing the Word: The Book as Object, Technology, Concept, and Event, 1500–1800  David Kastan and Kathryn James
An exploration of various aspects of books as they appeared and were experienced in early modern England. We focus on the material and institutional conditions that enabled, and sometimes inhibited, reading and writing in the period. We also work closely with actual volumes, with the aim of understanding not only the historical conditions shaping the production, circulation, and reception of books (not only printed books) but also what this understanding might contribute to our scholarly reconstructions of the period.

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 756b, The Possibilities of Romanticism: Byron, Shelley, Keats  Paul Fry
Poetry and prose of Byron, Shelley, and Keats with emphasis on both their differences and their common qualities. Special attention is given to the complex interactions of these poets with Wordsworth and Coleridge.

ENGL 809a, 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 to the Yale art museums and the Beinecke archives.

ENGL 847b, Colonial and National: American Literature to 1830  Michael Warner
An introduction to both the primary texts and the current scholarship in the field, including transatlantic and hemispheric perspectives; the public sphere; evangelicalism and the secular; the rise of African American public intellectuals; varieties of pastoral in contexts of settler colonialism; cultural geographies of literary capitals and the backcountry; nationalism; polite letters and popular genres; Native American literacies; the early American novel; and the modern social imaginary. Writers and preachers studied include Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Franklin, Samson Occom, Ukawsaw Groniosaw, Phillis Wheatley, John Marrant, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Judith Sargent Murray, Timothy Dwight, and Charles Brown. The course ends with the generation of Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, and Catharine Sedgwick.

ENGL 885b / AMST 625b, The Transpacific Mid-Century  Sunny Xiang
This course explores Asian American and American Orientalist cultural production during the Cold War through four kinds of middleness: we study a mid-level war waged at mid-century through middlebrow culture both by and about “middleman” minorities. Despite the specificity of this description, we find “the middle” to be baggy, mundane, overwhelming, and often inexorable, as both an object and a method of analysis. Our mid-century historical period has loose and tapering beginnings and ends. Our middlebrow archive consists of non-monumental materials, including out-of-print memoirs, pulp fiction, tourist guidebooks, and advertisements. The mid-level war that we are periodizing often blurs the distinction between wartime and peacetime. The subject produced by Cold War middlebrow culture (the Oriental) seems peripheral to the period’s more iconic figures (the Communist, the Negro, and the Homosexual). In reflecting on the course’s archive, period, and subject of investigation, we have occasion to contemplate our own research methodologies alongside thinkers such as Rey Chow, Saidiya Hartman, Diana Taylor, and Michel Foucault. Our readings also cover topics such as tourism, refugee migration, Chinatown, and the “model minority.” In addition to cultural ephemera, we engage more recognizable Cold War personalities, including Jade Snow Wong, James Michener, William Holden, Epeli Hau`ofa, and Suzie Wong. The course concludes with the publication of Maxine Hong Kingston’s The Woman Warrior in 1976.
ENGL 915a / CPLT 754a, Western and Postcolonial Marxist Cultural Theory  Joseph Cleary

An introduction to classic twentieth-century Western and postcolonial Marxist theorists and texts focusing on historical and intellectual exchange between these critical formations. The course tracks how key Marxian-Hegelian concepts such as capital and class consciousness, reification, commodification, totality, and alienation have been developed across these traditions and considers how these concepts have been used to rethink literary and mass cultural forms and their ongoing transformation in a changing world system. Writers discussed may include G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Georg Lukács, Mikhail Bakhtin, Theodor Adorno, Max Horckheimer, Walter Benjamin, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Toril Moi, C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, Edward Said, Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams, Fredric Jameson, Perry Anderson, Giovanni Arrighi, Pascale Casanova, David Harvey, and Melinda Cooper. The object of the seminar is to provide students with a secure intellectual foundation in these still-developing hermeneutic traditions.

ENGL 928a / CPLT 933a / FILM 751a, British Cinema  Katie Trumpener

Key films and topics in British cinema. Special attention to the provincial origins of British cinema; overlaps between filmic, literary, and visual modernism; attempts to build on the British literary and dramatic tradition; cinema's role in the war effort and in redefining national identity; postwar auteur and experimental filmmaking; "heritage" films and alternative approaches to tradition. Accompanying readings in British film theorists, film sociology (including Mass Observation), and cultural studies accounts of film spectatorship and memories. Films by Mitchell and Kenyon, Maurice Elvey, Anthony Asquith, Len Lye, John Grierson, Alfred Hitchcock, Alberto Cavalcanti, Humphrey Jennings, Michael Powell, Carol Reed, Karel Reisz, Lindsay Anderson, Richard Lester, Peter Watkins, Stanley Kubrick, Laura Mulvey, Ken Loach, Mike Leigh, Terence Davies, Terry Gilliam, Peter Greenaway, Michael Winterbottom, Patrick Keiller, Steve McQueen.

ENGL 946a / AFAM 849a / AMST 844a, Mid-Century African American Literature: New Approaches  Jacqueline Goldsby

After WWII but before the Civil Rights and Black Arts movements of the late 1960s, an extraordinary group of African American writers came of literary age together. Russell Atkins and Bob Kaufman helped cast the shape of concrete poetry. Ralph Ellison and Adrienne Kennedy infused prose fiction and drama with surrealist aesthetics. Gwendolyn Brooks and Margaret Walker reanimated the sonnet, while Robert Hayden and Melvin Tolson reclaimed the epic poem. Chester Himes, Willard Motley, and Ann Petry unabashedly embraced naturalism’s pulp potential. James Baldwin, Marita Bonner, Lorraine Hansberry, and Richard Wright pushed literary language to its limits to render the existential precarity—and possibilities—faced by African Americans in the postwar/atomic age/decolonizing world. Nonetheless, the achievements of this group—which remain considerable and were unprecedented at that time—are understudied in African American and American literary history precisely because these writers are rarely regarded as a cohort (à la the Black Mountain Poets or the Beats). These authors, their aesthetic innovations, and the cultural shifts that made their ascendance possible—the Communist Party’s drive to consolidate its Popular Front; the energies unleashed by middlebrow culture; the rise of decolonization and comparable literary movements in Africa and the Caribbean; the emergence of a more thoroughly capitalized black press and literate black readerships; the rights-depriving politics endemic to Jim Crow segregation and the Cold War's Red Scare; the ascendency of jazz as America’s “classical” music—are focal points of this course. We consider how this generation’s writing evolved the terms and stakes by which African American (and, indeed, American) literature might be understood as “modern” or, in the parlance of post-WWII America, “cool.” Historicized in these ways, we debate (by way of Bourdieu, Jackson, Moten, Edwards, and Sharpe) approaches to naming and periodizing this generation’s place in African American and U.S. literary history.

ENGL 964b / AMST 790b, American Performance in the 1970s  Marc Robinson

An exploration of formally innovative and thematically transgressive art from an uncertain decade. The 1970s are distinguished by their intermediacy, positioned between the forceful dissension of the 1960s and the cool detachment of the 1980s and beyond. In the latter half of the decade, this transitional identity is especially pronounced, as the culture reformed itself in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and the economic crisis in New York and elsewhere. We consider how these shifting energies affected performance, with consideration of drama (Maria Irene Fornés, Adrienne Kennedy, Sam Shepard, Tozake Shange, David Mamet), theater (Robert Wilson, Elizabeth LeCompte, Lee Breuer, Richard Foreman, Meredith Monk), dance (Lucinda Childs, Grand Union, Merce Cunningham), and performance art and other forms (Laurie Anderson, Joan Jonas, Chris Burden, Vito Acconci). Also DRAM 666.

ENGL 97b / FILM 97b, 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 980b, 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 981a / AFAM 775a / AMST 771a, Affect Theory  Tavia Nyong'o
This seminar traces the emergence of affect, sense, feeling, and mood as critical keywords in American studies. Particular attention is paid to the manner in which queer theorists such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Lauren Berlant, Ann Cvetkovich, Heather Love, Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan Flatley, and José Esteban Muñoz developed the concept in what has been called “the affective turn” in queer and feminist aesthetics. The philosophical basis of affect theory in the writings of Spinoza, Heidegger, and Deleuze form the core of the seminar. We also look to an alternate genealogy for affect politics in the writings of Bergson and Deleuze on fabulation. We consider the psychoanalytic take on affect, in particular the object relations school of Klein and Winnicott, and we read critics who contrast affect theory with trauma theory. Marxist contributions to affect theory include readings from Virno (on humor), Hardt and Negri (on affective labor), and Rancière (on the distribution of the sensible). The writings of Jasbir Puar and Brian Massumi on the affective politics of contemporary war, empire, and societies of control are also considered, as are writings by Fred Moten, Saidiya Hartman, and Frank Wilderson on optimism and pessimism as moods/modalities of black studies.

ENGL 982a / WGSS 850a, Sex and Citizenship  Jill Richards
A survey of the ways that gender/sexuality is organized through and against the nation-state, with particular attention to citizenship, rights discourses, and global migration. 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 about the entanglement of sexual intimacy, race, and national belonging during the territorial expansion of empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this reconsideration of the geographies of sexual citizenship, we focus on British, Commonwealth, and postcolonial case studies in the Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, Indian Ocean, and South Pacific. Texts include selections from legal history, travel narratives, life-writing, literature, the history of sexuality, sociology, anthropology, critical race theory, queer theory, and indigenous studies. Works by Mary Prince, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Saidiya Hartman, Mary Seacole, Ann Laura Stoler, Eve Sedgwick, Olive Schreiner, Jasbir Puar, Talal Asad, T.E. Lawrence, Audra Simpson, Glen Sean Coulthard, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Joanne Meyerowitz, Virginia Woolf, Karl Marx, Silvia Federici, Jean Rhys, Mahmood Mamdani, Lauren Berlant, Zoë Wicomb, Michel Foucault, Wendy Brown, Mohsin Hamid, *Wilde v. Queensberry* (1895), *Maud Allan v. Pemberton Billing* (1918).

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 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 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.