

**Department of English and Literary Arts**  
**GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS—Winter 2023**

*\*Course fulfillment follows each description. All graduate-level English courses, except those used to fulfill foundational coursework or literary period requirements, may count for English Elective credit.*

**ENGL 4000 Section 1**  
**CRN 1329**  
**Graduate Colloquium**  
**Hardin, Tayana**  
**Thursdays 4:00 – 5:50**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This colloquium is designed to help 2YR doctoral students chart a collaborative route through their remaining years in the program, including preparation for comprehensive examinations, the dissertation prospectus, funding applications, and beyond. We will also take stock of the ways current and emerging trends in the discipline of English and in the humanities *writ large* inform the doctoral and postdoctoral processes. Graduate scholars should expect a balance of disciplinary professionalization and opportunity for studied, individual program preparation.

*NOTE: This course is required for (and restricted to) second-year PhD students in the Department of English & Literary Arts; counts toward foundational coursework.*

**ENGL 4050 Section 1**  
**CRN 4901**  
**Critical Imagination**  
**Ramke, Bin**  
**Wednesdays 4:00 – 7:40**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** How the imagination can be “critical” is an interesting question: a kind of judgement is implied. Image and judgement—including how an image judges, evaluates itself—are materials out of which art arises. I am asking that each member of the class, instructor included, bring current work and problems into a weekly discussion which itself arises out of the two texts suggested, and out of various handouts, loaned texts, youtube videos and other visual material brought by the instructor or the other class members.

In the end I am going to ask that you make something in response to the discussions and the images encountered. We will spend some time looking at artist books and other physical manifestations of the literary. The “making” can include the extra-linguistic image.

*NOTE: This course is part of the First-Year GTA Professional Development Sequence and is required for (and restricted to) first-year PhD students in the Department of English & Literary Arts; counts toward foundational coursework.*

**ENGL 4150 Section 1****CRN 5367****The Work of a Poem as the Work of a Life: William Langland's *Piers Plowman*****Perry, R.D.****Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00 – 1:50**

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Sometime shortly before 1370, a person we now call “William Langland”—probably a nickname or *nom de plume*—sat down to write a poem, which now goes by the name of *Piers Plowman*. Sometime later (in the late 1370s), having written it, he decided to rewrite it. Then, he rewrote it again, a final revision that seemed to be in process at the time of his death in the late 1380s. We now refer to these different versions of his poem as A, B, and C, but we might think of them together as a single project, the work of writing a poem as the work of writing one's entire life. What Langland is able to produce, by writing and rewriting his poem over roughly twenty years, is a stunningly encyclopedic vision, arguably the most complex single work of the English Middle Ages, rivalled in scope only by his probable acquaintance's work, Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Not only is the poem an attempt to encapsulate an entire life but it is also an attempt to use that life to encapsulate an entire culture. The ambition of such a project is palpable, as Langland explores the abuses of the monarchy and the Church, as well as the promise of the common good and a truly Christian life; the work—quite literally the labor—that concerns the whole of society, as well as the work one must do in one's own mind in order to be a beneficial member of that society; the role that money plays in the world with the rise of a mercantile culture, as well as the question of whether one can be a good Christian in a money economy (spoiler: the answer seems to be “no”); the way that writing allows you to express yourself, and to try to express yourself more fully with each attempt at writing, even as—once the writing leaves your hands—one's writing travels through the world in ways we cannot expect, let alone control; and finally what poetry can teach us about all of these issues, what it means to write a poem that wants to serve as a guide to how one should live in, critique, and appreciate the world. *Piers Plowman* is not only one of the most sophisticated theological statements of late-medieval England but was also an inspiration for the peasants of the Great Revolt as they organized to storm the tower of London and cut off the head of the Archbishop of Canterbury. As we read through such a complex poem over the course of the entire quarter, we will find a great deal of assistance in the excellent body of scholarship on Langland's poem, most notably the brilliant, collected criticism of Anne Middleton, a good portion of which we will also cover during the quarter.

*Fulfills graduate period requirement: Pre-1700 Literature***ENGL 4700 Section 1****CRN 3019****Antebellum American Lit: Poe and the Object****Davis, Clark****Tuesdays 4:00 – 7:40**

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This will be a speculative, exploratory course that attempts to read Poe in relation to the object's role in modernity—as commodity, contested site of memory, talisman of loss, and ultimately locus of the “horror” of alienation. We will spend the first 3-4 weeks reading ancient and modern texts that will help us generate this “open” frame: Virgil's

Fourth Georgic; Emerson's "Experience"; Guy Davenport's "The Geography of Imagination" and "1830"; Walter Benjamin's "Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century," "The Image of Proust," and other selections; a bit of Proust's *Swann's Way*; and Roland Barthes' *Mourning Diary*. In the second part of the course, we will read closely many of Poe's tales ("Ligeia," "Berenice," etc.) some of the poetry (including stranger things like "Al Araaf" and perhaps a bit of *Eureka*), and such essays as "The Philosophy of Furniture" and "The Philosophy of Composition." A presentation and long paper are required.

*Fulfills graduate period requirement: 1700 – 1900 Literature*

## **ENGL 4701 Section 1**

**CRN 5173**

### **The Fictive I: Theories and Forms**

**Cottrell, Patrick**

**Mondays 4:00 – 7:40**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Contemporary works of fiction have become unbound from traditional devices of plot, character, and setting, and more attuned to thinking and feeling. The "fictive I" refers to a narrative technology of thought, presence, and affect that directly engages with a lived experience outside of the fictional world. In this course we will ask questions like, How do writers invent new ways of working with narrative to respond to personal and collective concerns? This course will examine the relationship between fiction and lived experience. It will operate as a discussion-based and generative class offering narrative strategies for writers with critical and creative pathways. Readings may include the work of Maxine Hong Kingston, Forrest Gander, Marie NDiaye, César Aira, Valeria Luiselli, Renee Gladman, W.G. Sebald, Natasha Brown, Noor Naga, and others.

*Fulfills graduate period requirement: This course fulfills the post-1900 graduate literary period requirement OR English elective credit*