

Department of English and Literary Arts  
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS—Fall 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 4001**  
**CRN 1036**  
**Graduate Creative Writing, Poetry**  
**Ramke, Bin**  
**Tuesdays, 4.00 - 7.40 PM**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The Martyr Poets—did not tell—  
But wrought their Pang in syllable—  
That when their mortal name be numb—  
Their mortal fate—encourage Some -

The Martyr Painters—never spoke—  
Bequeathing—rather—to their Work—  
That when their conscious fingers cease—  
Some seek in Art—the Art of Peace—

(Emily Dickinson, 544)

This is a creative writing “workshop” but I prefer to think of it as a seminar in which each of us place our work into conversation with each others’ work. And since language can only mean within context, members of this seminar will present their poems along with a suggestion of context (of the origin of the work, or the sort of context the poem works best within), context which can take any form: prose texts, images, videos, even music, for instance. Or other poems. Or etymologies. I expect we can have two or three such presentation-discussions per session, aiming to allow three such presentations per person for the term.

Additional readings will be provided as needed/assigned via Canvas—which will also serve for distribution of your poems and contexts as you see fit. If you think your work is better served in a different physical presentation (i.e. on paper) feel free to distribute in this way.

Keeping in mind that “martyr” may suggest “witness,” the martyr poets and painters need not necessarily die for their respective arts, but live for them. Certainly live among them. So we will for ten weeks live among poems and other related objects we love and need.

*Fulfills graduate requirement: This course is required of all incoming PhD students who concentrate in Creative Writing: Poetry.*

**ENGL 4011**  
**CRN 3290**  
**Graduate Creative Writing: Fiction**  
**Missaghi, Poupeh**  
**Thursdays 4:00 - 7:40 PM**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In this graduate-level seminar in literary arts, we emphasize on prose and fiction genre variations. The class is conducted as a workshop, asking students to share and discuss in-process creative prose works. As writers, students will produce and present work to others. As readers, they will provide written and oral feedback to their peers. We will also read and analyze examples of contemporary prose pieces and put them in conversation with the works of students in class.

*Fulfills graduate requirement: This course is required of all incoming PhD students who concentrate in Creative Writing: Prose.*

**ENGL 4125**

**CRN 4713**

**Beginning Old English**

**Ellard, Donna Beth**

**Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00 – 1:50 PM**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Beginning Old English is the first of a two-part sequence (Fall: Beginning Old English; Winter: *Beowulf* in Old English) that introduces students to the Old English language so that they can develop proficiency on a basic level. Language learning in this course will focus on understanding and learning simple phrases, limited vocabulary, and basic grammatical structures. All language skills will be practiced: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

This course also introduces students to the history, culture, and literature of early medieval England as a part of the culturally, ethnically, racially, and religiously diverse and interconnected world of Europe, Africa, and Asia. Students will learn similarities and differences in the values, attitudes, and actions of Old English and Modern English speakers as they investigate the histories and cultures of the island of Britain within the early medieval world. Most importantly, students will be exposed to Old English prose and poetic texts in translation and, over the course of the term, begin to read texts about elves, battles, saints, talking onions (!?), and fortune telling in their original, Old English forms.

Because of the intensive nature of the course and the focus on developing all four skills in Old English (reading, writing, listening, speaking, as well as the cultural-global component), students should be prepared to devote a significant amount of time to the course in independent study in addition to class contact hours.

*Fulfills graduate period requirement: pre-1700. Course may also fulfill the TOOL requirement or ENGL elective credit.*

**ENGL 4424**

**CRN 3599**

**Topics in English: 19th Century Literature: 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Outliers**

**Gao, Menglu**

**Mondays 4:00 – 7:40 PM**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** How did nineteenth-century British and Anglophone writers present outlying humans, regions, and thoughts? And how did the outlier as both an identity and an idea contribute to and even shape nineteenth-century literature? We will explore these questions through a range of genres (including outlying genres)—fiction, poetry, essays, autobiography, travel narratives, and journalism. This seminar situates the outlier in three kinds of topics and considers the intersections among them: 1) *individuality*, including abnormality and anti-communitarian process; 2) *collectivity*, such as racial categories, gender roles, labor, and social stratification; 3) *empire-building*, for example, reflections on imperial expansion and representations of migration from and to the imperial periphery. Reading texts by authors such as Jane Austen, Mary Prince, Elizabeth Gaskell, Henry Mayhew, Mary Seacole, Samuel Butler, T. N. Mukharji, and George Eliot, we will examine the outlier both as the founding condition of nineteenth-century literary forms and as a conduit for undisciplining Victorian and nineteenth-century studies today.

*Fulfills graduate period requirement: 1700-1900. Course may also fulfill ENGL elective credit.*

**ENGL 4600**

**CRN 4714**

**Susan Howe & Intermedia / Documentary Poetics**

**Howard, W. Scott**

**Wednesdays 4:00 – 7:40 PM**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course provides an in-depth study of Susan Howe's works from the late-1960s to the present within the contexts of intermedia and documentary poetics. From dazzling book-length sequential poems to spellbinding artist books, studio recordings, and live performances, we will investigate Howe's telepathic transfigurations of archival materials, manuscripts, and soundscapes at the intersections of hybrid forms, visual art, history, philosophy, and cinema. We will encounter a dynamic range of materials in sync with Howe's transhistorical, comparative, and multimedia methods informed by the works and legacies of Emily Dickinson, Anne Hutchinson, Hilma af Klint, Chris Marker, *Maria Sibylla Merian*, C.S. Peirce, and Wallace Stevens among others. Our concern with documentary poetics will place Howe's materials in dialogue with selected works from Nathaniel Mackey, Lorine Niedecker, George Oppen, William Carlos Williams, and C.D. Wright among other writers associated with the Objectivist legacy. Our studies of Howe's artist books will include visual art from Robert Mangold, James Welling, and R. H. Quaytman; archival collages from fabrics and folios, manuscripts and museums; and gallery exhibitions (Portland 2013, New York 2014, Vienna 2018, Berlin 2022). And our studies of sonic arts will include Howe's radio programs at WBAI-Pacifica (c. 1977–1981); her studio recordings and live performances (since 2015) with David Grubbs, sound sculptures with Shannon Ebner (2019), conversations with Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2022), and her most recent musical adaptations. Assignments will include a variety of individual and collaborative works blending creativity and critique. Activities will include site visits (either in-person or via Zoom) to DU Special Collections & Archives; local art installations, readings, galleries, bookshops, and letterpress studios; and conversations (either in-person or via Zoom) with artists & writers, publishers & scholars. As with any transhistorical course, research and/or creative projects may determine the matching time-period designations for our department's graduate curriculum. (Because of the specialized methods and skills that will be integral to our work, this course may also count for the graduate school's so-called tool requirement.) Many of the required materials for this course (including some of the books) will be freely provided via PDFs and electronic resources.

*Fulfills graduate period requirement: Pre-1700 or 1700-1900 or post-1900, depending on research focus; please consult with Prof. Howard. May also fulfill the TOOL requirement or ENGL elective credit.*