

## 2020-2021 SPECIAL TOPICS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### **ENGL 3911/MDST 3010 FDE: Special Topics: *Postcolonial & Diasporic Cinema* – Dr. Kathryn Walton – Web**

Film provides a unique view into the way in which cultures move around the world and impact one another. In this course, students will be introduced to a variety of films from around the world that explore the impacts of colonialism and the nature of diaspora. In the first half of the course we will look specifically at film from a postcolonial perspective. We will consider how filmmakers in former colonies use film to reflect on and critique colonialism. In the second half we will look at examples of films produced by and for diverse diasporic audiences and consider how filmmakers explore the diasporic experience. Over the course of the semester students will get a thorough grounding in theories of postcolonialism and diaspora and will be introduced to a fantastic range of films from around the world. We will look at films in a variety of genres, from different periods in history, and from a variety of nations and consider how filmmakers reflect on such themes as race, culture, imperialism, and identity.

### **ENGL 4010 FDE: Special Topics: *Writing the Pandemic* – Dr. Kathryn Walton – ZOOM delivery**

As COVID-19 sweeps across the world, it infiltrates and fundamentally alters the everyday lives of people and communities everywhere. This course seeks to understand and document some of the material and cultural impact of this pandemic on our community. This course is both a study of the nature of pandemic literature throughout history and a creation of a record of the current pandemic. Students will begin the course by reading accounts of pandemics both fictional and nonfictional from across history: from plagues in medieval England, to scarlet fever in World War One, to Emily St. John Mandel's fictional Georgia Flu in her novel *Station Eleven*. Students will then craft their own pandemic narratives. A variety of assignments will ask students to uncover and recount their own experiences and the experiences of others in the current pandemic using a variety of writing styles and genre. In so doing, students will both learn what it means to imagine and record a global crisis on the scale of a pandemic and also create a community record of COVID-19. The collective work of the students will be compiled at the end of the course in a writing project that reveals the lived experiences of COVID-19 in our communities.

**ENGL/INDI 4012 FDE: Honours Seminar in Indigenous Literatures: *Indigenous Comics & graphic novels*** - Dr. Judith Leggatt – ZOOM delivery

A study of the growing field of Indigenous comics, looking at translations of traditional stories into graphic form, the use of comics as ways of addressing social issues, the connections and differences between writers who work primarily in graphic form and Indigenous writers who have started working in the genre after becoming known in other forms, and new Indigenous techniques that transform the comics genre. Graphic texts will be studied in the context of both comics theory and Indigenous storytelling.

**ENGL 4013 FDE: Honours Seminar in Medieval and Early Modern Literatures: *Translating the Middle Ages*** - Dr. Douglas Hayes – ZOOM delivery

Although the popularity of the Middle Ages (roughly 400 to 1450 CE) as an idealized, romanticized, studied, and re-inscribed period of European history began as early as the 16th century, with its obsession with chivalry and courtly love, and culminated in the vogue for rewritings of medieval culture and texts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from James MacPhearson's "translations" of the poetry of Ossian to the idealized Middle Ages of the Victorian Pre-Raphaelite movement, it was the twentieth century gave rise to the idea of the Middle Ages as an area of academic study and specialized expertise. However, the codifying (and rarifying) of Medieval Studies did not lead to a decline in the popularity of the Middle Ages. Instead, re-inscriptions of medieval literature and culture, from the popular fiction of the medievalists C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien to the dinner theatre of Medieval Times, are more popular than ever. Medieval literary texts have also enjoyed a surge in popularity in recent years, with a number of well-known poets and a popular biographer producing Modern English translations of a number of the central texts of the medieval European literary canon. Our seminar will focus on these 21st-century re-inscriptions of medieval literature with an emphasis not just on the texts themselves but also upon the material and ideological conditions that have led some of today's most well-known poets and popular writers to re-present these texts in Modern English for 21st-century readers. Texts to be studied include Seamus Heaney's translations of *Beowulf* and the poetry of Robert Henryson, Ciaron Carson's translation of the *Tain*, Simon Armitage's translations of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl*, J. R.R. Tolkien's newly posthumously published *Sigurd and Gudrun*, and Peter Ackroyd's 2009 prose retelling of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

**\* ENGL 3011 WA: Special Topics: *Life Writing*** - Dr. Scott Pound – on campus\*

A community service-learning writing course in which students partner with hospice volunteers and their clients to conduct life review exercises and create legacy projects. Students will learn the fundamentals of the memoir genre and work to develop their writing skills on two fronts: by writing a personal memoir and by completing a legacy project for their community client.

**ENGL 3011 WAO: Special Topics in Writing: - TBD – TBD – on campus\***

**ENGL 3810 WDE: Special Topics in Women's Writing: *Contemporary Women's Memoir* – Dr. Holly Morgan – Web**

This course unpacks contemporary women's life writing through the examination of various sub-genres of memoir. Students will be introduced to theories of memory in relation to life-writing, and explore the work of prominent scholars of memoir and autobiography with a focus on the representation and role of gender in the works selected. Together, we will discuss gender-based issues in women's life writing using theoretical materials by feminist and literary scholars.

**ENGL 4010 WA: Honours Seminar: *Public Humanities* - Dr. Scott Pound – on campus\***

"The Humanities" are the academic disciplines that investigate the expressions of the human mind: Anthropology, Philosophy, History, Musicology, Art History, Modern Languages, Linguistics, and Literary Studies foremost among them. The knowledge produced by these disciplines is highly specialized—it is made by academics for academics. Can these self-contained, self-referential, and self-serving disciplines also serve the public good? Can the knowledge produced by universities be made available to the public in a way that is accessible, engaging, and relevant? If so, how?

It is with these questions in mind that contemporary scholars propose "the public humanities" as a way to engage diverse publics in reflecting on the nature of creativity, meaning, memory, authority, judgment, and learning in relation to current conditions of civic and cultural life. In this course, we will trace the origins and development of the disciplinary humanities and then try to extrapolate from them a set of principles and methods that we can use to mount our own public humanities projects.

**ENGL 4010 WAO: Honours Seminar: TBD – TBD – on campus\***

**ENGL 4014 WA – Honours Seminar in 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literature: *Victorian Animalities* - Dr. Monica Flegel – on campus\***

In this course, we will be examining literature of the Victorian period concerned with animal/human relationships and the animal/human divide. Texts such as Anna Sewall's *Black Beauty*, H. G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and L. T. Meade's *Scamp & I* all concern themselves with investigating the boundary between the animal and the human, while also demonstrating the extent to which that boundary is always essentially

unstable. Some broader questions we will therefore concern ourselves with in this course may be: what are the ethics and politics of animal “representation”? To what extent are discussions about animals actually discussions about humanity? Is anthropomorphism wrong, necessary, or a bit of both? And what did the animal other mean for human animals in the Victorian period?

**\* ENGL 4017 WA/WAO - Honours Seminar in Ecocriticism. *Global Environmental Justice Literature* - Dr. Cheryl Lousley – on campus\***

This seminar course examines the diverse ways that contemporary writers and literary studies engage with globalization and the environment as a set of socio-economic, ethical, and political relations of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The course will explore a range of theoretical approaches to ecocriticism, globalization and representation, which will be applied to close readings of twenty-first-century fiction, poetry, and drama from different parts of the world. Themes will include resource wars, climate change, refugees and migration, petrocultures, capitalism, the social distribution of pollution and risk, human-animal relationships, place and localisms, and social and economic inequalities.

**\* Note: Mode of delivery subject to change as courses may be required to be delivered remotely.**