

3rd AND 4th YEAR SPECIAL TOPICS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS 2019-2020

ENGL 3051 WAO: Special Topics in 18th and 19th Century Literatures: *Eighteenth Century Women Writers* (Dr. Alice den Otter)

This course is a study of selected British women who wrote and published from 1700 to 1800. Noting the variances in women's experiences due to class, race, education, and region, we will be examining selected contributions to various poetic and prose genres, exploring shifts from satire to sensibility, classicism to domesticity, and elevated verse to gothic romance.

ENGL 4010 FA: Honours Seminar: *Film Adaptations* (Batia Stolar) [cross-listed with ENGL 5411 FA)

Literary and Cinematic Adaptations When a literary text is adapted for the screen, it is not uncommon to hear objections like "the film is never as good as the book," or, to the contrary, "I don't need to read the book; I watched the film." Such responses to adaptations give us a glimpse into some of the assumptions and expectations readers of literary and cinematic texts carry. There are several theoretical and critical debates about the faithfulness of adaptations to the original text, as well as postmodern critiques that privilege exploring the intertextuality of adaptations. In this course, we will examine various theoretical approaches to adaptations by discussing selected theoretical readings as well as literary texts and their respective film adaptation(s).

ENGL 4010FB: Honours Seminar: *Contemporary Poetry and Poetics* (Dr. Scott Pound)

A seminar focused on the reading and critical discussion of eight recently published poetry collections structured around three sites of critical interest:

- How do poems work and how does one read them? How do we attune ourselves to the sights, sounds, and ideas running through poems? How do diction, syntax, image, and figure contribute to the experience and meaning of poetry? What aspects of language do particular poems exploit to create meanings, sounds, rhythms, and images? How does the language of poems invoke/evoke the real?
- What kind of cultural work do poems perform? What regimes of art, entertainment, science, folklore, ideology, discourse, politics, history, media, identity, etc. do poems engage? What kinds of statement, inquiry, and knowledge are poems particularly suited for? In what ways do poets reconfigure poetic craft with reference to other art forms and media? In what ways do poems challenge us to think about race, class, gender, sexuality, and politics?

- How does one participate in academic conversations about poems? What methods are available to us for reading the text? What aspects of literary history, scholarship, poetics, theory, and criticism have been invoked in existing scholarly conversations about the text? What avenues remain unexplored? What do you have to say about the text? In what ways does the academic apparatus expand and/or exhaust our experience and enjoyment of poetry? How *else* might we treat, use, and enjoy the text?

ENGL 4010WA: Honours Seminar: *Children's Literature and Environmentalism*
(Dr. Chris Parkes)

This course will examine the ways in which children's literature has imagined both the environment and environmentalism from the early twentieth century to the present. It will focus on the ways in which children are often constructed in popular texts as stewards of the environment, as figures whose job it is to protect the natural world. In the process, such texts negotiate the complex relationship of the child to the environment in the modern industrial nation state.

ENGL 4010WB: Honours Seminar: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Dr. Mike Richardson)

This course will allow the students to explore those aspects of the *Buffyverse* which they consider to be important, controversial, culturally significant, and worthy of serious academic investigation. Since *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* finished its initial seven-season television run in 2003, it constitutes a complete text of 144 episodes. As *BtVS* can be seen as a large but single text completed several years ago, this course will not be spoiler free, and it will be assumed that students have already seen the show (or at least a significant amount of it). I will keep a DVD copy of the series in my office in case anyone needs to borrow a disc to refresh their memories or double check details. The textbook(s) should prove helpful in getting you started and/or giving you something to respond to.

ENGL 4013 WAO - Honours Seminar in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: *Magic in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*. (Kathryn Walton)

The medieval and early modern periods are often seen as historical moments when intense fears over magic and the supernatural inspired violent reactions and vicious persecutions; images of witches being burnt or drowned in lakes are as closely associated with the Middle Ages as images of knights jousting. However, magic and the supernatural were not only accepted in the culture of medieval and early modern England but subjects of entertainment and fascination. This course will introduce

students to the many and various ways that magic and the supernatural shape the dominant forms of literature from those periods: from romance texts that feature magic rings, invisibility cloaks, evil sorceresses, and magic swords, to religious texts that depict women, men, and objects endowed with extraordinary supernatural power. Through consideration of the way in which magic, the supernatural, and the occult manifest themselves in medieval and early modern literature, this course will show how closely magic is bound up not only in conceptions of religion and divinity, but also in issues of gender, race, identity, authority, and power. The course will move from Anglo-Saxon charms that seek to banish bothersome elves, to Middle English romances that reanimate the dead, to depictions of fairies and fiends on the early modern stage. Throughout, students will be immersed in the vibrant literary culture surrounding magic in medieval and early modern England and consider where contemporary fascination with magical forms finds its origin.

**ENGL 4014FAO – Honours Seminar in 18th & 19th Century Literatures:
Mary Shelley and the Construction of Gender (Dr. Alice den Otter)**

This course will focus on gender construction in various texts by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, including *Frankenstein*, *Mathilda*, *The Last Man*, and several short stories and essays. Alongside Shelley's texts, we will be reading *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, by Shelley's mother Mary Wollstonecraft, which critiques contemporary gender constructions. We will also be examining a variety of other historical, theoretical, and critical texts examining topics such as femininity, masculinity, performativity, identity politics, normative gender relations, and queer bodies.

ENGL 4017FAO – Honours Seminar in Ecocriticism: *Canadian Environmental Literature* (Dr. Cheryl Lousley)

A critical study of contemporary Canadian writing on environmental themes and their varied aesthetic modes, from nature poetry to speculative fiction. Studied authors could include Don McKay, Michael Winter, Thomas Wharton, Adam Dickinson, Margaret Atwood, Marie Clements, Larissa Lai, Aritha van Herk, and Barbara Gowdy.