

English Department, MA  
Graduate Course Descriptions, Spring 2008

5054: Composition Pedagogy crn: 12748	Professor Heilker	Tuesday 6:00 PM
5074: Digital Humanities crn: 12750 & 12751	Professors Mosser and Radcliffe	Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 PM
5134: Studies in 18 <sup>th</sup> -Century Literature: Genius, Rhetoric & the Foundations of Modern English Studies crn: 16567	Professor Radcliffe	Monday 6:00 PM
5174: 20 <sup>th</sup> -Century Texts: (W)e(a)st or, East in West crn: 12754	Professor Siegle	Monday & Wednesday 4:00 PM
5224: Studies in Early English Authors: Service, Class & Conflict in Shakespeare crn: 16568	Professor Anderson	Tuesday & Thursday 2:00 PM
5314: Genre Studies: The Native American Novel crn: 12755	Professor Salaita	Wednesday 6:00 PM
5334: Special Topics: The Rise of Print Culture in Early Modern England crn: 16569	Professor Colaianne	Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 AM
5614: Visual Rhetoric crn: 16570	Professor George	Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 AM
5034: Practicum for Comp. crn: 12747 crn:12761	5894: Final Examination	
5974: Independent Study* crn: 12763	5994: Research & Thesis crn: 12765	

\*All requests for independent studies (ENGL 5974 must be complete at least a week before the semester begins. You can get the form and directions at [www.english.vt.edu/grad/forms/](http://www.english.vt.edu/grad/forms/) .

**ENGL 5054: Composition Theory  
(Heilker)**

This course offers a respite from the pressures of daily class preparation to reflect on the theoretical assumptions which frequently hover just below the surface of our writing assignments, response techniques, classroom activities, relationships with our students, and so on. This course will also help us come to better appreciate that current writing pedagogy in American higher education did not emerge, Athena-like, full-grown from the brow of Zeus one morning, but rather is the inheritor/executor of an estate that reaches back for almost three millennia to pre-Socratic Greece. Readings, oral presentations, and papers will enable seminar members to acquire a working knowledge of composition theory, how it has evolved over time within specific historical contexts, how it is informed by diverse disciplinary perspectives, and how it is essential for thoughtful and effective teaching. Students will branch out from our core readings and discussions to develop (and present) their expertise in areas of special interest to themselves.

**ENGL 5074: Digital Humanities  
(Mosser [crn 12750] & Radcliffe [crn 12751])**

This course introduces students to the history and critical theory necessary to understand the broad import of digital technology for English Studies and to the knowledge and skills required to critique and produce digital documents. English Studies, like many fields in the humanities, have undergone a rapid transformation in recent years as the field has adjusted, and continues to adapt, to the impacts of digital technology. These changes range from the proliferation of quality online research sources and tools to reformations of basic sub-disciplines in the field (such as textual and editorial studies, linguistics, or composition instruction). Many of our basic modes of work have been substantially altered by the interrelated technologies broadly grouped under the label "digital." This course will also introduce some basic technology used in digital humanities by means of hands-on projects, such as textual editing in XML; graphic design using CSS style sheets; and entering and retrieving information with a database using form pages.

**ENGL 5134: 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Literature: The Pleasures of Reading  
(Radcliffe)**

Introducing the emergent field of "the history of reading," this seminar examines the New Rhetoric founded in 18th century Scotland and its consequences for literature. Among these was the introduction of English as a college subject; we'll read seminal rhetorical works by the very first professors to teach English literature: Adam Smith (*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*), James Beattie (*On Fable and Romance*), and Hugh Blair (*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*). The New Rhetoric was also involved with inventing the idea of creative writing, which established poetry, essay, and novel as the preeminent literary forms. We'll look at how these cultivated a new kind of reader in classic works by Henry Mackenzie, Oliver Goldsmith, Thomas Campbell, and Charles Lamb. Taking St. Clair's *The Reading Nation* as our guide, we'll look at how this development changed the nature of reading and writing in the romantic era, leading to a ten-fold increase in the number of literary works being published and an equivalent increase in the size of the reading public. Course requirements include class presentations and a 15-20 pp. seminar paper.

**English 5174: (W)e(a)st or, East in West  
(Siegle)**

East and west are all mixed up when moderns and postmoderns write in their mother tongue with eastern ideas racing around in their overloaded circuitry. This very

interesting mix is even more interesting when you realize that in an increasingly multi-ethnic society amidst globalization of trade and media, we as readers are also mixed up and a fairly contradictory mess when we try to read anything at all, but especially things from any slice of the culture at all different from what we like to think of as "our own." So this seminar is a study of thinking and writing in the current age, a case history of misrecognitions and crises in construing what we read: we'll build upon the introductory critical theory course while also dipping into the very long tradition of Buddhist philosophy as we confront works from several generations, beginning before the Beats (dean of the San Francisco poetry renaissance Kenneth Rexroth), the Beats (the beat/eco/political/etc poet Gary Snyder and, probably, prose-maker Jack Kerouac), late moderns like Charles Johnson, and writers who have emerged in the last couple of decades including Russian sensation Victor Pelevin, Keith Kachtick, Kate Wheeler and others. You'll write a conference paper/publishable essay and some incremental reflections along the way.

**ENGLISH 5224: STUDIES IN EARLY ENGLISH AUTHORS—SHAKESPEARE  
(Anderson)**

This course will examine several of Shakespeare's plays, concentrating on concepts of service and dramatic representations of masters, mistresses, and servants. We will explore conventional Renaissance ideas about service and whether Shakespeare dramatizes these ideas or subverts them (or both). We will also examine such topics as the ubiquity and importance of servants in this period, service by characters who are not servants, violence directed toward servants, and whether obedience can ever be regarded as villainous and disobedience as virtuous. The plays we will discuss are likely to include *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Henry V*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, and *Twelfth Night*. Evaluation will include a research paper, shorter writing assignments (abstracts, discussion questions), brief oral reports, and class participation.

**English 5314: Genre Studies: The Native American Novel  
(Salaita)**

The Native American Novel will examine the rich history of the novel in various Native literary traditions. We will cover both the early and modern Indian novel and will assess and utilize Native critical methodologies--Red Stick criticism, intellectual sovereignty, communitism, and Indigenism--that arose concurrent with the evolution of the Indian novel. Our primary reading list will be intertribal, that is to say, geographically varied and reflective of the tremendous cultural diversity present within the many national communities that together comprise what most people know merely as Indian Country or Native America. We will attempt to perform what is increasingly becoming a disciplinary ethic in Native Studies: immerse ourselves culturally into course material by inviting Native guests to educate us and by traveling into Indian Country wherever possible. Workload: a presentation, series of short critical analyses, critique of modernity and Indigeneity, and comprehensive seminar paper. Readings: a novel a week average, with substantial research of critical sources expected.

**English 5334 Special Topics in Literature: The Rise of Print Culture in Early Modern England  
(Colaianne)**

Printed books began to appear in northern Europe in the 1450's—in the course of the next two hundred years print culture produced profound changes in habits of mind in all areas of inquiry. The advent of the press ignited and accelerated the Renaissance and the Reformation, and in doing so help to lay the foundations for the Modern Western World.

C.S. Lewis pointed out that Western Europeans "discovered" nearly 90% of the surface of the globe in the sixteenth century. The explorations that brought about these

discoveries began in earnest only after Columbus published an account of his first voyage *simultaneously* in 1493 in the major printing centers of Europe. Similar explosions of interest occurred in other areas of inquiry besides geography and navigation: medicine, anatomy, pharmacology, astronomy and cosmology, engineering, architecture, natural history, and, of course, imaginative literature.

The focus of our work will be the transmission of knowledge and culture through the agency of the book—with particular emphasis on Early Modern literature. We will for example consider the ways in which works like More's *Utopia* and Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly* were translated, imitated, and transmitted.

### **English 5614 Visual Rhetoric (George)**

This seminar is intended to introduce students to the many dimensions of visual rhetoric including issues of graphic design, visual storytelling or reporting (graphic novels, docu-comics, graphic memoirs), visual argument, film, photography, painting, and other forms of visual rhetoric. In addition to some of the classic statements on visual rhetoric and visual theory (i.e., Roland Barthes' "Rhetoric of the Image" and "The Photographic Message"; John Berger, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen; Ellen Lupton on design, W.J.T. Mitchell's *Picture Theory*), we will also read graphic novels and documents (i.e. *Persepolis*, *The 9/11 Commission Report, a Visual Adaptation*), and key texts in graphic design. There will be opportunities for reading, examining, and composing visual texts.