LIT 121-001G Rethinking Literature: Love and Its Discontents
Keith Leonard

There are so many conventions and clichés about love that artists and critics enter that thicket of ideas at their own risk. In this course, we will take that risk because such ostensibly common understandings of love provide a way to investigate how artists imagine these shared ideals differently, and therefore how they approach established storytelling conventions in distinctive ways. In doing so, we will discover some of the discontent, instability, lack of clarity, and false oppositions that complicate any attempt to portray what love is. And we will attend to the many different kinds of stories writers tell to confront these complications. We will “rethink literature” by engaging in an introductory way in the practices of professional literary critics, attempting and adapting three competing interpretative models to our own interests and concerns. In the end, we will grasp and articulate new ways to understand both the beautiful complexity that is love, and the various technical, thematic, and imaginative means by which some of the most powerful authors of the Anglo-American tradition bring all of its complexity vividly to life.

LIT 121-002G Rethinking Literature: the Memoir as Monstrous Personal Chronicle
Tom Ratekin

In this course we will consider the literary memoir, in particular the form that Robert Scholes has called the “monstrous personal chronicle.” We will analyze how these texts blend the documentary and the fictional in order to respond to both the monstrosity of history and the trauma of personal experience. Authors often turn to the memoir when their subject matter is unconventional or transgressive and therefore seemingly unsuitable for the novel. Indeed, we will look at the personal chronicle as a category committed to challenging conventional boundaries through its use of singularity, rawness, and self-reflexivity. Analyzing these texts as a separate genre will improve our understanding of their individual meanings, their social roles, and their cultural contexts. Primary texts include Thomas De Quincy, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*; Bill Clegg, *Portrait of the Addict as a Young Man*; Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*; Art Spiegelman, *Maus*; Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*; Dave Eggers, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*; Virginia Woolf, *A Sketch of the Past*; and Mary Karr, *The Liar’s Club*.

LIT 121-003GH Rethinking Literature: Jane Austen and her World
LIT 121-004G Rethinking Literature: Jane Austen and her World
Fiona Brideoake

This course will explore the works of Jane Austen in the literary and cultural contexts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Throughout the semester, we will undertake close readings of Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*; *Sense and Sensibility*; *Mansfield Park*; *Persuasion*; and her unfinished novel *Sanditon*. We will also discuss Austen adaptations and paratexts including the 1995 Simon Langton/Andrew Davies mini-series of *Pride and Prejudice*; Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (1996); Patricia Rozema’s 1999 film adaptation of *Mansfield Park*; and Austen fan fictions. Situating Austen’s works within the turbulent political and social shifts of her period, we will consider topics including gender and the novel; the public and private spheres; sensibility and sexuality; empire, war, and slavery; and revolution and social change. We will also interrogate Austen’s status as a ‘hypercanonical’ author – a figure whose life and works are subject to insatiable academic and popular enthusiasm – and the various critical approaches through which her works have been considered.

LIT 121-005G Rethinking Literature: Boundary Crossings: Culture/Geography/the Fantastic
Roberta Rubenstein

This course aims to expand students’ literary and cultural understanding through consideration of literary texts written by a range of both western and non-western writers. Students will situate works of the creative
imagination in their appropriate social and historical contexts and will develop critical competence in understanding the defining features of different literary genres. Through the course theme of boundary-crossing—whether cultural, geographic, or fantastic—students will “re-think” realistic modes of writing and explore texts that pivot on unrealistic/fantastic elements. Additional course goals include developing or increasing competence in analyzing formal elements of literary texts through close reading; and 2) developing or increasing competence in written expression through informal and formal writing assignments. Novels may include *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel; *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, Mohsin Hamid; *As I Lay Dying*, William Faulkner. (Additional texts, including short stories and poems, will be announced later.)

**LIT 232.001G: "From Richard III to Hamlet."**
Anita Sherman

This course offers a sampling of masterpieces from the first half of Shakespeare’s career. It looks at Shakespeare as a developing artist, solving problems from one play to the next, even as it situates his work in the political and religious world of his time.

**LIT 250.001: “Film, Literature, and Globalization”**
Jeffrey Middents

This course introduces students to literary and cinematic texts that highlight debates about the various forms of globalization that are shaping our modern world. As a course that meets the General Education “Global and Multi-Cultural Perspectives Area,” it focuses on “habits of thought and feeling that distinguish regions, countries, and cultures from one another” in a comparative and cross cultural perspective. A central concern will be examining the ways that people, images, texts, ideas, and technologies circulate transnationally. In other words, we read films and novels both as texts that tell us about globalization, but also as objects that travel global circuits of consumption. The course will also ground “globalization” historically by exploring the broader context of capitalism and colonialism that has linked the modern world together in a single, yet often unequal market. Close readings of novels and films will enable students to examine the multiple geopolitical connectivities in “global” cultural production, while scholarly essays will help put these debates into context. The goal of the class, then, is not to decide whether globalization is good or bad, or whether it is new or old, homogenizing or liberating. Rather, the aim is to use literature and cinema to examine its multiple consequences for different groups of people: consumers, audiences, filmmakers, writers, readers, immigrants, refugees, and citizens.

**Lit 346 / SISUJ 370 Topics in Film: Film Noir, the Cold War, and the Hollywood Blacklist**
Erik Dussere

This course, co-taught by Cathy Schneider from the School of International Service and Erik Dussere from the Literature Department, will examine film noir in relation to the history and the political movements that shaped American life in the forties and fifties--in particular the American Left and the anticommunist crusades that it inspired at the start of the Cold War. We will then move forward and consider how these issues develop during the decades that have followed, as the New Left emerged in the sixties and we will conclude by considering what noir has to say about the politics of the present--or vice-versa. Central to the course is the history of the Hollywood blacklist, which had a major impact on many of the directors and stars associated with film noir, and to which many noirs respond either directly or indirectly.

**LIT 496/608-001 Studies in Genre: Modern British Drama**
Deborah Payne

Modern British Drama surveys major British playwrights from 1892 to present, focusing on how these artists have given voice to modernist preoccupations through the medium of theatre. We will identify and analyze artistic and intellectual trends in the drama, paying particular attention to cultural and political contexts, such as
colonialism, the two world wars, feminism, and rising class tensions in the wake of economic decline. Stagecraft and performance styles also produced and reflected modernism and will be studied accordingly. Over the course of the semester, we will address questions of how a modernist canon of British drama came to be formed; of the differences between literary and theatrical canons; of the differences between continental and British theatrical modernism; of the persistence of realism and naturalism on the British stage; of the rise of national theatre companies; and of the influence of extra-textual forces (i.e. the reputation of a company or a starring actor) in shaping the reception of plays.

LIT-422 / 622: Advanced Studies in Contemporary Literature: The Dark Room Collective
Keith Leonard

What does freedom look like for contemporary African American artists and intellectuals? To answer this question, this course explores the literary practices and social fortunes of a quasi-separatist African American writers’ group called the Dark Room Collective whose alumni have become some of the most successful contemporary literati of any race, including two Pulitzer-prize winners, several tenure-track professors, and a number of other prestigious editors, critics, and literary fellowship recipients. We will examine how these artists achieved their stature by offering innovative practices of autobiographical self-reflection, nostalgic and anti-nostalgic memory, and musically inflected formal innovation that complicate and reconceive of African American identity. And we will interrogate whether or not and how much these innovative representations of blackness constitute the artistic freedom these writers claim them to be and whether they produce the social freedom they suggest. In other words, we will consider the extent to which their success constitutes proof of their claims to freedom from the limitations of race politics. In the process, we will read some of the best reviewed and most celebrated literature of the 21st century. Writers to include, among others, Thomas Sayers Ellis, Sharan Strange, Major Jackson, Kevin Young, and Natasha Trethewey.

LIT 443/643.002 Advanced Studies in 20th Century Literature: Directions in Modern Fiction
Roberta Rubenstein

During the early twentieth century, unprecedented historical and cultural events and dramatic intellectual changes precipitated a radical break from nineteenth-century assumptions about (among other things) literary form. Students will read novels by several classic Modernist writers—James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner—who experimented with language and style, point of view, characterization, chronology, and narrative structure. We will also consider several contemporary novelists, such as Gabriel García Márquez, whose magical realism was directly influenced by Modernist techniques.

Lit 446/646 Adv Studies in Film: Robots: Imagination, Fiction and Reality
Despina Kakoudaki

This class explores the meanings of robots as cultural figures, tracing their presence in popular culture, science fiction and film, and engaging contemporary research in robotics. Both imaginary and real, robots represent our understanding of futurity and innovation, but they also allow us to question the limits and definitions of humanity. We will study the emergence of robots in literature, theater and cinema, study classic texts such as Metropolis and Blade Runner, trace the evolution of robots in film and television through the 20th and 21st centuries, and expand the conversation to include the humanities, the arts, and the sciences.

LIT 481/681 Interdisciplinary Topics in Literature: Introduction to Urban Culture
David Pike

What is an urban culture? What is a modern city? What is a global city? How do we make sense of them and what is the relationship between them? In this course we will survey the cultures of cities and we will study a variety of critical approaches to those cultures. Texts will be drawn from literature and cinema, as well as architecture, painting and other visual arts, and popular culture. We will supplement primary texts with a
number of critical and theoretical readings; discussions will incorporate close reading, theory, and our own experience as urbanites. The focus in Fall 2014 will be twentieth-century Europe and contemporary Latin America.

**LIT 434/634-001: Revenge Drama and City Comedy: Shakespeare's Contemporaries**  
**Anita Sherman**

Starting with Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, the course will examine classics of revenge drama as well as favorite city comedies by playwrights as diverse as Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton, and others.

**LIT-733-001: Special Topics: The Practice of Diaspora**  
**Keith Leonard**

The study of African American literature and culture has benefited greatly from pursuing intellectual inquiry across national borders, defining blackness in fruitfully complicated ways by following the multidirectional physical and cultural dispersal of Africans throughout the so-called New World. This course takes up and interrogates this scholarly practice of diaspora by focusing on the themes of migration, memory, and absence within diaspora theory, exploring those key terms as they inform and are informed by readings of innovative literary texts by authors from the United States, West Africa, and the Caribbean. Our goal will be to take measure of both the productive claims and the complicating pitfalls of these theories of social and cultural movement. And we will use them to understand the literary and cultural practices of writers of African descent as they cross the Atlantic and the Caribbean to the US metropolis (and back again).