

Winter 2025 English Graduate Seminar Descriptions



CRN	Course Number		Title	Instructor	Location		Times/Days				
54948	ENGL	251	SEM IN BLACK LIT & CLTL STDIES	Baker, Courtney	HMNSS	2212	04:00 PM	06:50 PM	M		
56285	ENGL	269	SEM: AMERICAN LIT TO 1900	Stapely, Emma	HMNSS	2212	03:00 PM	05:50 PM			W
56286	ENGL	278	SEMINAR IN MINORITY DISCOURSE	Berardino, Christopher	HMNSS	2212	03:30 PM	06:20 PM		T	
53482	ENGL	410	SEM ON FELLOWSHIPS	Baker, Courtney	HMNSS	2212	10:00 AM	12:50PM		T	

English 251: Seminar in Black Literature & Cultural Studies
Professor Courtney Baker

This course studies Black cultural studies, focusing on its roots in Black British cultural studies of Stuart Hall and Black American feminist scholarship before discussing more recent forms of Black cultural studies. Topics to be discussed include popular cultural objects (including literature and other media formats), research and pedagogy addressed towards inclusivity and underrepresented subjects, the ethics of research and pedagogy, and generative critiques of “higher” education and disciplinarity. Work for this course will involve reading and developing a substantive final written assignment with a brief mid-quarter prospectus/proposal check-in assignment.

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ENGL 269: Seminar in American Literature to 1900 - Sensuous Literacies
Professor Emma Stapely

Enlightenment accounts of literacy tend to identify it with alphabetic language at an idealized remove from the physical world. For Benjamin Franklin, reading and writing are largely solitary and silent achievements, closely aligned with economic accumulation and self-authorizing freedom. Textuality on this reckoning is a virtual matrix of symbolic processes: one capable of inciting emotional and corporeal responses, but ultimately governed by the supposedly “universal” principles of rationalist self-interest.

In this seminar we will sit with materially engrossed modes of reading and writing in long nineteenth-century American literature that evince the entanglement of textual processes with physical entities and experiences: bodies, plants, machines, spaces, and “things.” Our investigations will be wide-ranging. Does Emily Dickinson’s herbarium help us understand her compositional practices? How might the chemistry of daguerreotypes inform Hawthorne and Douglass’s approaches to the novel? Are cheap quills imbued with what Fred Moten calls “phonic substance” in the manuscript archives of Samson Occom (Mohegan) and Herman Melville? Throughout the quarter, our line of inquiry will be strongly committed to Black and Indigenous counter-theorizations of literacy, and hence to the abolitionist and anticolonial stakes of material, embodied, and place-bound relationships to written language. In addition to those mentioned above, we may read authors such as William Apess (Pequot); Bamewawagezhikaquay, or Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (Ojibwe); Henry “Box” Brown; Olaudah Equiano; Washington Irving; Harriet Jacobs; Edgar Allan Poe; David Walker; and Harriet Wilson.

English 278: Recovering Asian American Literature
Professor Christopher Berardino

Although the term Asian American was coined in 1968, this graduate course will examine seven decades of the Asian American literary archive generated before that watershed year. Surveying Asian American literary and cultural production during the period critic Colleen Lye has provocatively called “the lost years of Asian American history,” this course will consider how writers grappled with the complexities of the Asian American experience against the backdrop of legislated exclusion, internment, and civil rights movements. Discussions will emphasize the evolution of Asian American voices and their vital contributions to American literature. Assignments will include critical essays, presentations, and collaborative discussions. Students will explore works by Sui Sin Far, Sadakichi Hartmann, Mine Okubo, H.T. Tsiang, Carlos Bulosan, and others.

English 410: Seminar on Fellowships
Professor Courtney Baker

This workshop will concentrate on fellowship and grant applications. It intends to demystify the grant application process and how to identify and assess opportunities. It will offer an overview of some of the processes and application requirements as well as provide ample opportunities to workshop grant application elements, including budgets, timelines, and research statements.