

# Summer 2026

## HUNTER COLLEGE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

### GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

*NOTE: This is a document that is tentative and updated frequently, so please continue to check back before registering.*

*ALWAYS CHECK CUNY FIRST FOR ACCURATE CLASS TIMES AND DATES.*

#### **SUMMER SESSION ONE (SIX WEEK)**

**DATES: 5/28/26 - 7/8/26**

ENGL 75857 FICTIONS OF URBAN BLACK LIFE [satisfies African and Asian Diasporic, Indigenous, Latinx, and minority American literature req. for Ad. Ed. track; satisfies Minority or American literature req. for old Ad. Ed. track]

**Section 01:** MW 3:20pm – 6:28pm (Cunningham, Nijah) Class Number: 4222 Mode: In-person

Once seen as a symbol of progress, prosperity, and technological advancement, the U.S. city transformed during the postwar era into an embodiment of vice and degradation. This course examines the visions of urban decline that dominate the popular imagination of the contemporary city and focuses primarily on the pathological conceptions of blackness and black culture that at once maintain such notions of degeneration and provide the rationale for the reform, renewal, and revitalization of the urban. We will discuss novels, poems, music, films, and experimental works alongside sociological studies, articles and speeches by prominent urban planners, and foundational urban design treatises in an effort to interrogate the fictions that endow the city with meaning. Class discussions, writing assignments, and group presentations will explore how constructions of racial difference, gender norms, and (hetero)normative notions of family and kinship continue shape the idea of the city and reproduce racist epistemologies that yoke blackness to criminality, poverty, and moral decay. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which black artists and intellectuals mobilize literary as well as other artistic forms in order illuminate the everyday practices, intimacies, and ways of living that fall under the signs of blight, disorder, and vice within the historical discourse on the postwar U.S. city. Readings will include but are not limited works by authors such as Ann Petry, Richard Wright, Paule Marshall, June Jordan, John Edgar Wideman, and Jesmyn Ward as well as scholars such as Hortense Spillers, Hazel Carby, David Harvey, Jeff Allred, J.T. Roane, and Fred Moten.

**SUMMER SESSION TWO (SEVEN WEEK)**

**DATES: 7/2/26 - 8/18/26**

**ENGL 71054 ADVENTURES IN NEW MATERIALISM**

**Section 01:** MTuWTh 5:45pm – 7:50pm (Bailey, Austin) Class Number: 4446 Mode: In-person

**This course will run for 6 weeks from July 8 to August 18.**

This class constitutes a series of adventurous leaps into the field of new materialism, a theoretical movement spanning multiple disciplines (philosophy, literature, cultural theory, and anthropology, among others). The key paradigmatic shift taken up by new materialism is its radical reconceptualization of matter and materiality. Rather than construing matter as mute, meaningless, and passive (until acted on by human agents), new materialism posits the complex agency and irreducibility of the material, including the incorporeal aspects that surround and suffuse it (language, image, memory, consciousness, etc.).

Our reading this semester will be “adventurous” insofar as we will move fluidly across historical periods, textual genres, and disciplines. Indeed, one benefit of this course will be its interdisciplinary focus on literature and philosophy. In particular, students will have the opportunity to encounter the long-neglected—though recently revitalized—work of French philosopher Henri Bergson, whom William James once called a “magician” and a “marvel.” Other authors include, but are not limited to, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Jane Bennet, Bruno Latour, and Sylvia Wynter, among others. Requirements include one brief presentation and a final research paper.