
Teachers as Scholars 2001-2002
Course Descriptions

With Open Eyes: Contemporary African Literature

Sandra Chait (Program on Africa)

When Africa's colonial period ended, neither social injustice nor social critique came to a halt. The early generation of radical writers who had long fought the colonial oppressor simply sharpened their literary tools and redirected them at the new African ministers who exploited the people they were supposed to serve. Younger writers added their own voices of outrage. Using satire and mythology, realism and modernism, they targeted those who appropriated the means of oppression and control. These literary lions, both male and female, took up such issues as the abuse of power, the persecution of the intelligentsia, religious hypocrisy, and female oppression and emerged as their countries' consciences. In this seminar, participants will read four novels, from four different African countries, each dealing with different neocolonial issues. The seminar will also explore such questions as: does a source or role-model exist within African literature for contemporary social and political criticism? Can we trace links between the early griots and today's African storytellers? What responsibility does the African writer bear for his or her country and people's wellbeing? And, what is the personal and literary price?

The Politics of Standard English

Anne Curzan (English)

What exactly is Standard English? We employ the term as a self-explanatory entity all the time, and yet when asked, we have trouble pinpointing it, settling perhaps for the unsatisfactory "Walter Cronkite's English" or "newspaper English." If Standard English is an abstraction, what does it mean that its consequences are so real? Is language, in fact, a last "back door" to discrimination in the U.S.? In this seminar, we will examine both the historical development of "Standard English" and the present-day ramifications of this accepted standard for the language. We will cover many social, political, pedagogical, and literary issues surrounding Standard English, including bilingual education, attitudes toward dialects, the Ebonics controversy, and the English Only Movement (triggered by the little known fact that the U.S. has no official language). As teachers, scholars, and speakers, we will together explore the relationship of language, identity, and power within our speech communities.

Pacific Northwest History and Literature

John Findlay (History) and **Dan Lambertson** (Humanities Program, Walla Walla College)

This interdisciplinary seminar explores the regional identity of the Pacific Northwest through history and literature. Much of the Pacific Northwest's literature has earned national and international appreciation, and much of the region's history has wide significance. The seminar will address the reasons behind this and discuss what distinguishes the region's literature and rich history, both of which have proved so appealing to residents and non-residents alike. Though we will consider some professional historians and literary critics, the readings and discussions will, for the most part, be from primary sources--the region's fiction, poetry, drama, literary memoir, and the region's most immediate historical records. These historical documents will be read as literary texts, and the selected literature will be studied for what is and is not said about the region's past and present.

Furthermore, the seminar will consider the trustworthiness of these written representations of our past, and examine how changes in literature and historical representations reflect emerging ideas about the Pacific Northwest's identity.

Yeats and Joyce: Study in Contrasts

Hazard Adams (Comparative Literature)

They are the two greatest writers of modern Anglo-Irish literature, perhaps of modern literature in English; yet they were of two generations of writers. One was a poet, the other a novelist. One was Protestant, the other a lapsed Catholic. One returned to Ireland; the other exiled himself yet wrote always about Dublin. Yeats has been taken to task by many in this generation of Irish critics; Joyce has been idealized. Each in his later writings challenged his readers. Recent responses to these two reveal the not so tacit political and social assumptions of many contemporary Irish critics and scholars, but the work of both transcends these issues. In the first session, the subject will be Yeats and his career, with attention to the Collected Poems. In the second session, the subject will be Joyce, with attention to one or two short stories and selected passages from *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* including some discussion of Irish history and mythology.

Japanese American Cultural Landscapes

Gail Dubrow (Urban Design & Planning)

The American public has gained new awareness of Japanese-American history through popular fiction and films such as *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Meanwhile, the nation continues its struggle to come to terms with the meaning of internment for public memory. This seminar is intended to provide a deeper grounding in Japanese-American history, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, through interdisciplinary perspectives drawn from literature, oral history research, and the tangible remains of Japanese-American heritage in the built environment and cultural landscape. This seminar will combine reading and discussion with a field trip to places of significance in Japanese-American heritage.

Art and Religion on The Silk Road

Daniel Waugh (History) and **Cynthia Bogel** (Art History)

The "Silk Road" is a concept embracing two millennia of cultural and economic interactions along many routes across Eurasia. It accounts for an unprecedented exchange of precious goods between nomadic and sedentary cultures. Chinese and later Middle Eastern silk, for example, ended up in Italy, Central Asian horses and Middle Eastern silver and glass went to China, and Chinese designs influenced Persian painting and ceramics. Of particular importance is the transmission of religious beliefs and their artistic embodiment and expression. This seminar will focus on the emergence and spread of two of the most important religions on the Silk Road: Buddhism and Islam, both of which produced a stunning artistic legacy. Session 1 will introduce the Silk Road, and explore how Buddhist art emerged on the fertile soil at the crossroads of Inner Asia. Session 2 will begin with the rise of Islam in the seventh century and explore its artistic impact down to the Timurid era of the fifteenth century. Objects from the permanent collections of the Seattle Art Museum will be among the specific examples to be studied.

Surrealism in Literature and Film

Cynthia Steele (Spanish & Portuguese Studies) and **Steven Shaviro** (English)

Surrealism is one of the most important and influential art movements of the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1920s as a small circle around the French novelist and poet André Breton, the Surrealist movement soon spread throughout Western culture and profoundly affected many of the century's developments in literature, film, and visual art. The Surrealists hoped to renew creativity by liberating the power of the unconscious mind. They saw the unconscious as the source of imagination, wrongly repressed by the hypocritical taboos of mainstream society. In practice, the Surrealist invocation of the unconscious led to art that was characterized by bizarre images, unexpected juxtapositions, and often shockingly direct sexual content. This class will give an historical introduction to Surrealism by looking at some of its key works, as well as providing an overview of the broader Surrealist influence on the culture of Western Europe and North and South America. We will focus especially on the Surrealist filmmaker Luis Buñuel, who made films, from the late 1920s to the early 1970s, in France, Spain, Mexico, and the United States.

Poetry Today

Brian Reed (English)

Literary historians will remember the 1990s for its unprecedented poetic achievements. Throughout the English-speaking world, not only did established names produce major new works, not only did new talents surface, but entirely new forms of verse came to prominence, such as spoken word and e-poetry. This seminar will offer an overview of Poetry Today by exploring several topics that have seized the imagination of contemporary authors: the role of spirituality and beauty in post-Cold War verse; the relationship between lyric poetry and identity politics; the instability of the divisions between poetry, music, and the visual arts in a "multimedia" age; the possible obsolescence of avant-garde shock tactics; the desire to defend the particular and local against "globalization." We will read representative writers not only from the United States but also from Australia, Bermuda, Britain, Canada, Ireland, and South Africa.

A Story of US Slavery: Questions, Debates, Histories

Stephanie Camp (History)

In this seminar we will talk about some of the persistent questions and debates facing students of American slavery, focusing on four themes: Why were Africans enslaved? Was it racism that enabled Europeans to exploit the African slave trade? Was it simply economically convenient? How were Africans enslaved, once in the American colonies; what made their position different from that of indentured servants? From Indians'? Second, how did the enslaved resist bondage? Did their resistance matter? Why and why not? How well did slaveholders' power determine the lives of the people living in bondage? Third, what was life like for different people living in bondage? In particular, historians are learning more and more about how women and men had divergent experiences of slavery. What were some of the differences? Did they alter the fundamental experience of day-to-day life enough to challenge the idea of a slave "community"? Finally, what was the effect of slavery on the concept and realization of American freedom? Slavery and freedom appear to be opposites, but in U.S. history, such has not been the case. One of the newest developments in slavery studies is the pursuit of understanding just how slavery, in fact, help to create American freedom.

History and Memory in Twentieth-Century China

John Christopher Hamm (Asian Languages & Literature) and **Yomi Braester** (Comparative Literature)

History lives through memory, narration, and interpretation, and these mediating acts are played out on a spectrum ranging from the public forums of official historiography, commemoration, and mass culture to more personal realms of judgment and reminiscence. The Burke Museum's display of Cultural Revolution artifacts, *Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times*, and the Seattle Arts and Lectures appearance by Anchee Min, author of the best-selling memoir *Red Azalea*, offer us a unique opportunity to consider the dynamics of historical remembrance in and about twentieth-century China. The two sessions of this seminar will be devoted to two traumatic moments in modern Chinese history: the Boxer Uprising of 1898-1900 and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-1969. We will examine records, representations, and reminiscences of these events, both literary and cinematic, contemporaneous and after-the-fact, in order to reach a deeper understanding not only of "what happened" but also of the processes by which Chinese history has been remembered, shaped, and forgotten.

Love and Power at the Courts of Europe, 1643-1796

Douglas Smith (History)

Europe before the French Revolution was a world dominated by kings and queens claiming absolute power to rule over their subjects as the earthly representatives of the divine. Yet even though the ideology of the day asserted European monarchs' omnipotence, there often arose at the courts of Europe men and women who despite their lack of an official post wielded great power that sometimes eclipsed even that of the sovereign. These royal favorites served their sovereigns not only as advisors, but frequently as lovers too, and their stories shed fascinating light on the nature of power under the Old Regime. This seminar offers an overview of the history of favoritism and examines a few of the most significant ruler-favorite partnerships of the 17th and 18th centuries, including Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin, Louis XV and Madame du Barry, and Queen Caroline Mathilde of Denmark and Count Johann Struensee. Its primary focus will be on the reign of Catherine the Great of Russia, the empress best remembered for her many lovers, who created the most elaborate system of favoritism in all of Europe. Readings will include the recently translated love letters between Catherine and her principal favorite, Prince Grigory Potemkin.