

Special Topics and Author Courses
Department of English
California State University, Long Beach

Fall 2009

English 469—Major English Writers: J. R. R. Tolkien

4 units, MW 2:00 pm to 3:50 pm

Schürer

This class will explore the oeuvre of J.R.R. Tolkien (1893-1972)—his famous novels *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* as well as his mythological writings, his shorter publications, his academic work, and his paintings. In addition, Tolkien's work will be situated in the context of Old and Middle English literature, Norse literature, Christian literature, and the literature of his own time, i.e., the middle of the twentieth century. In looking at Tolkien's oeuvre, we will ask and (at least begin to) answer questions like why his novels were so successful, why his writings should (or should not) count as "good" literature, and what his place in English literature of the twentieth century is. Note: It is highly recommended that students read *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* before the beginning of the semester since there will be little time during the semester for that reading.

English 479—Major American Writers: Louise Erdrich

4 units, MW 10:00 am to 11:50 am

Zitzer-Comfort

This section of English 479 will be an intensive study of Louise Erdrich's North Dakota Saga novels including all of her "reservation" or "Matchimanito" novels and some of her more recent work. We will examine Erdrich's contemporary fiction, poetry and personal narratives while also reading supplementary texts by other American Indian authors. Our studies will include developing the background knowledge and language necessary to discuss and engage in critical studies of Erdrich's work, the larger body of Ojibway literature and the still larger body of American Indian literature. In addition to exploring literary theoretical approaches and controversies, we will also analyze political, historical, and sociocultural contexts surrounding Erdrich's writings. One of the motifs of the course will be the "specific question of categorizing Erdrich as an "American Indian writer," which, of course, raises the general questions of placing ethnic, women's, genre, and other "defined" forms of fiction.

English 488—Rhetoric/Writing Studies: Advanced Argumentation

3 units, TuTh, 12:30-1:45 pm

Williams

In this course, we will examine classical, modern, and postmodern theories of argumentation and apply these theories to specific academic and non-academic texts. We will also practice these theories by both analyzing and producing persuasive texts. These texts will take a variety of forms, combining the textual, visual, and aural; however, we will focus, at the end of the semester, on argument and persuasion in digital culture. We will study the role argumentation plays in networked culture. The goals of the course will be to improve your writing of arguments and to complicate your understanding of the role argumentation plays in both our academic and non-academic lives.

ENGL 489—Major Topics in Literatures Written in English: Ut Pictura Poesis: Art and Literature of the Romantic Period

4 units, TuTh 2:00-3:50 pm

Hotchkiss

This class explores the interrelationships—aesthetic, political, social, and economic—between literature and the visual arts in Britain from the late 1700's to the early 1800's. We read key texts from the period, including selections from Jane Austen, Anna Barbauld, Byron, John Keats, Percy and Mary Shelley, and William Wordsworth—plus, of course, William Blake, whose “texts” thoroughly combine both the visual and verbal. Artists we study include John Constable, Anne Damer, Angelica Kauffmann, Samuel Palmer, and J.M.W. Turner. We read relevant literary and art historical criticism and explore how critical theory has approached this interdisciplinary topic. Course includes a fieldtrip to the Huntington Library and Art Galleries in San Marino.

English 498—Topics in English: Teaching ESL Academic Writing

3 units, MW, 2:00-3:15pm

Hu

This course surveys various basic issues of second-language writing arising in the past thirty years, mostly as they relate to ESL learners enrolled in college. To complement theory is a practical component concentrating on data analysis. Therein actual learners' written products are provided to the class for evaluation, based on which strategies to foster improvements are formulated.

English 498—Topics in English: Poetry and the Self

3units, TuTh, 2:00-3:15pm

Webb

This course centers on the development, clarification, and articulation of a personal esthetic for poetry. It involves the confronting of a wide variety of poetic styles, deciding and evaluating not only what does and does not “work” for you in poetry, but why. Students will read and discuss literary theory as well as contemporary poems written from widely different esthetic positions.

English 683 - Special Topics Seminar: The Places and Spaces of Early English Drama

4 units, MW 3:30-5:20 pm

Kermode

Playing locations, theater history, textual and cultural analysis, visual reception for drama 14th - 17th centuries. Assignments will include literary analysis, performance analysis, reproduction/staging, critical theoretical analysis (comparative and interdisciplinary approaches).

English 683—Special Topics Seminar: Revision and Editing Processes

4 units, MW, 3:30-5:20 pm,

Strahl

This seminar focuses on the two most crucial components of the writing process: revision and editing. Students will research the major professional studies that shed light on how writers “do” revision and editing and how we might teach these components to developing writers. Students will also introspect on and analyze their own composing processes to better understand how to teach writing effectively. The major assignment in this seminar will be a primary research project or case study on the revision/editing strategies of a student writer.