

English Department

Graduate Course Descriptions

Spring 2010

ADVISING NOTE on 9 and 12 units for 700- and 800-level Courses.

The number of units for which you take courses listed as 9, 12 (9 or 12 units) depends on the specific graduate degree program in which you are enrolled. The guidelines below describe policy relevant to each of the programs. Exceptions to these guidelines to accommodate unusual circumstances can be made, but require the approval of your program coordinator: Linda Flower for Rhetoric, Peggy Knapp (PhD) or Kathy Newman (MA) for LCS, and Karen Schnakenberg for MAPW.

For courses listed as “9, 12 units,”

- MAPW students register for 9 units. MAPW students generally register for 4 courses at 9 or 12 units each. No more than 2 12-unit courses recommended in any semester.
- MA in Rhetoric students generally register for 4 courses at 9 units each.
- MA in LCS Students register for 3 courses at 12 units each.
- Ph.D. students register for 3 courses at 12 units each.

Instructors for these courses will adjust the work load according to the number of units for which you're registered.

76-714 **19th Century British Literary and Cultural Studies: Fin de Siecle Gothic**
Instructor: **R. May**
Meetings: **TR 12:00 – 1:20 p.m.**
Units: **12**

From about 1880-1900 England witnesses a re-emergence of Gothic fiction, a mode noted for its excess and lurid depictions of sexuality, death, disease and madness. Themes of disorder and descending darkness characterize such texts as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), *She* (1887), *The Great God Pan* (1890), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), *Dracula* (1897), and *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Each novel picks up long-standing Gothic conventions, infuses them with a marked anxiety that England is entering a dangerous, possibly permanent, decline, and characterizes England as plagued by all kinds of “degenerate” threats both at home and abroad. Period writings related to technology, medicine, the New Woman, criminal anthropology, sexology and imperialism will assist our reading of these texts within their cultural moment.

76-718 Communicating in the Global Marketplace
Instructor: A. Ritivoi
Meetings: TR 12:00 – 1:20 p.m.
Units: 9, 12

In this day and age, some of the most exciting employment opportunities are with multinational and international corporations. But are you prepared for the challenge of working with professionals from all over the world? Even as more people around the globe learn English, specific cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions continue to influence the way in which they communicate. Often there is a whole different worldview behind a foreign accent. The same word or phrase in English might actually carry very distinct connotations for someone whose native language is French, German, Russian, or Japanese. This course is designed as an introduction to international professional communication. We will talk about the way in which culture influences communication, about the job of translators and interpreters, and about specific communicative norms for the global marketplace. We will look at many concrete examples of communication in the international arena and we will have a chance to meet some experienced professionals in this field. The requirements for this course include a fieldtrip and a report, one short paper, and a take home exam.

76-721 Non-Fiction Novel
Instructor: M. Castagnaro
Meetings: MW 12:00 – 1:20 p.m.
Units: 12

This class will examine the rise of the non-fiction novel in twentieth century America. Differing from straightforward non-fiction, the non-fiction novel is characterized by using literary techniques to narrativize real world events. We will begin by examining the origins of this trend with early works like *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* by James Agee and Walker Evans and *Hiroshima* by John Hersey. This course will trace the development of the non-fiction novel through the works of well-known writer-journalists like Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson, Tom Wolfe, and more contemporary works by David Carr and David Eggers. This class will seek to understand the literary and cultural significance of the rise in popularity of this genre. In addition to reading these primary texts, we will also consider a number of critical discussions which debate the origins and significance of this turn in American writing.

76-742 Advanced Gender Studies
Instructor: R. May
Meetings: TR 9:00 – 10:20 a.m.
Units: 12

This class will build on the skills in reading about and understanding gender covered in Introduction to Gender Studies. We will continue to study gender as a fluctuating and problematic category for understanding identity, behavior and community by engaging a variety of texts (academic, fictional, visual, popular) to discuss critical issues including: current usages of the word “feminist,” (who uses it, who refuses it, how and why); feminism and the emergence of and importance of masculinity studies; the fallout of the feminist Sex Wars; arguments for and against sex work and sex workers’ rights; feminists’ ongoing responses to the interplay of pleasure and danger in everyday lived experience and what blogging has to offer gender-rights advocates.

76-756 Patterns of English Usage
Instructor: P. Hopper
Meetings: MWF 10:30 – 11:20 a.m.
Units: 9

What do spoken and written texts consist of? Answers to this question have traditionally been offered under the headings of “style” and “grammar,” and more generally, “rhetoric.” In this course we approach the topic from a somewhat different point of view, that of records of actual speech and writing. That is, we will study as objectively as possible not what speakers and writers “should” do, but what their actual practices are. Our goal will be to examine some of the ways that users of a language arrange and develop their discourse, and thereby to uncover the linguistic resources that speakers and writers habitually draw on. The course will include: practice in transcribing actual conversations; the use of a linguistic corpus; and learning techniques of interpretation and analysis of language data. Readings in the areas of current discourse, text and conversation analysis will be assigned, and students will work on their own projects as they become more skilled. The course should be of interest to students of writing, linguistics, and modern languages. Open to juniors, seniors, and graduate students especially in Master’s degree programs.

76-760 Literary Journalism Workshop
Instructor: J. McCafferty
Meetings: TR 1:30 – 2:50 p.m.
Units: 9

While culture becomes increasingly obsessed with celebrities, contemporary literary journalism is writing that usually focuses on so-called “ordinary” people in various social contexts. The emphasis is to use the journalistic essay to reveal character rooted in and influenced by a particular time and place. Students will be required to do a series of short essays, and one long essay, on subjects of their own choosing. These essays will almost always involve field research; one goal of the course will be to acquaint students with research techniques and methods. This is both a reading and writing intensive course, and will be run usually as a workshop. The class is designed for both the professional writing student and creative writing student.

76-772 Advanced Journalism
Instructor: T. O’Boyle
Meetings: R 6:30 – 9:20 p.m.
Units: 9

This course explores the craft of journalism in the context of the history, traditions and glory of journalistic nonfiction in the United States. It seeks to help you hone your writing and thinking skills as you produce pieces of substance that reflect those traditions and standards. As a published author, foreign correspondent and Pulitzer-Prize winning editor, the instructor has been a foot soldier in print journalism and media management for 30 years. The practical emphasis of the course reflects his extensive and varied background. The course focuses on the four stages necessary to any nonfiction story: idea, concept, reporting and writing. Subjects include how to make news judgments, gather evidence, make word choices, compose stories and interpret events, unpacking the language and vocabulary of the craft of journalism. As part of our exploration of advanced nonfiction styles, we examine the six major genres of journalistic nonfiction: the trend story, the profile, the explanatory, the narrative, the point-of-view and the investigative. We will read, critique, discuss and analyze examples of each genre, and students will produce work of their own in four of the genres. Students are also required to conduct independent research in a topic of their choosing.

In addition, we explore journalism's glorious past and its role in the promotion and maintenance of democracy. The last segment of the course examines the evolution of journalism in the digital age and the impact that is having on the media landscape, particularly print. Students will be given assistance and encouragement as they seek outlets for their writings and connections in the media world that could lead to internships and employment.

76-773 A Topics in Rhetoric: Argument

Instructor: A. Ritivoi

Meetings: TR 1:30 – 2:50 p.m.

Units: 9, 12

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of argument. The session begins with an overview of major theories of (and approaches to) argument, along with short assignments to critically assess their value and relevance to the types of argument about which you, the student, are encouraged to investigate. You will choose a type or genre of argument upon which to focus your research. The argument type can be academic, practical, professional, and so forth, so long as it is understandable using terms and concepts covered by the course. During the second part of the session we will refine our understanding of argument, and you will develop your own approach to argument analysis. The last third of the session will be devoted to producing an original argument of the type you are researching.

76-773 B Topics in Rhetoric: Narrative & Argument

Instructor: D. Kaufer

Meetings: MW 8:30 – 9:50 a.m.

Units: 9, 12

This course investigates information effects basic to the communication professional, generated primarily through structures of narrative and argument. We cover various genres supported by these structures, such as personal narratives, profiles, scenic writing, oral histories, information and instruction writing and policy argument. This course emphasizes both the production and the analysis of writing.

76-774 Software Documentation

Instructor: J. Cirolì, T. De Pellegrin Connelly

Meetings: TR 9:00 – 10:20 a.m.

Units: 9

This course teaches best practices for creating software documentation for both internal audiences (use cases, requirements specifications) and end users (online help, guides, marketing collateral). You will learn the importance quality documentation plays in the success of a product and the user's experience, and the importance of understanding (and meeting) that user's needs. The course emphasizes quality task-oriented writing and focuses on the basic skills needed to educate and guide users, while introducing important industry trends like topic-based authoring, single sourcing and reuse, and DITA. Students will complete a series of short homework assignments and several larger projects to reinforce the principles and provide experience in all phases of creating software documentation, including peer review. Readings and published documentation examples will provide a bridge between theory and practice. No textbook required, but students may be required to purchase necessary software (a DITA editor).

76-778 Literacy: Educational Theory and Community Practice
Instructor: L. Flower
Meetings: TR 1:30 – 2:50 p.m.
Units: 9, 12

Literacy has been called the engine of economic development, the road to social advancement, and the prerequisite for critical abstract thought. But is it? And what should count as literacy: using the discourse of an educated elite or laying down a rap?

Competing theories of what counts as “literacy”—and how to teach it—shape educational policy and workplace training. However, they may ignore some remarkable ways literacy is also used by people in non-elite communities to speak and act for themselves. In this introduction to the interdisciplinary study of literacy—its history, theory, and problems—we will first explore competing theories of what literacy *allows* you to do, how people *learn* to carry off different literate practices, and what schools should *teach*. Then we will turn ideas into action in a hands-on, *community literacy* project, helping urban students use writing to take literate action for themselves.

As mentors, we meet on campus for 8 weeks with teenagers from Pittsburgh’s inner city neighborhoods who are working on the challenging transition from school to work. They earn the opportunity to come to CMU as part of Start On Success (SOS), an innovative internship that helps urban teenagers with hidden learning disabilities negotiate the new demands of work or college. We mentor them through *Decision Makers* (a CMU computer-supported learning project that uses writing as a tool for reflective decision making.) As your SOS Scholar creates a personal Decision Maker’s Journey Book and learns new strategies for writing, planning and decision making, you will see literacy in action and develop your own skills in intercultural collaboration and inquiry. You can visit the Intercultural Inquiry website at <http://english.cmu.edu/research/inquiry/two.html> to see what other community literacy mentors learned in this collaborative inquiry with their teenage partners, and can preview Decision Makers at www.cmu.edu/thinktank.

76-779 Marketing, Public Relations, and Corporate Communications
Instructor: R. Oltmanns
Meetings: MW 4:30 – 5:50 p.m.
Units: 9

The world has become a battleground in the shaping public opinion around millions of competing messages, brands and ideas. In virtually every facet of modern life, public relations and corporate communications are at work to influence attitudes, perceptions and human behavior, shaping and molding the way we think, buy, invest, vote, and participate in a democratic society.

This course, taught by a practicing public relations expert with over 20 years experience in the field, explores public relations, marketing and communications in various organizational settings – business, non-profit, academic, special interest groups— where professional communicators manage relationships with a wide variety of constituencies: customers, investors, employees, local communities, and government agencies. To succeed, communicators must be able to identify and articulate the communication needs of the organizations they represent, develop well-informed strategies for advancing organizational objectives, think and act quickly in high-pressure situations, and write effectively to persuade and bring about desired organizational objectives.

In this course, you’ll learn the fundamentals of professional public relations and corporate communications and the written and oral skills needed by professional communicators in any organization. You’ll learn public relations problem solving, design effective marketing and public relations strategies, and develop skill in the common genres of public relations including press releases, op-ed essays, and communication plans. You’ll also get practice in collaborative planning and problem solving paralleling current business practices. The course is relevant to students

considering communications careers in these areas as well as those interested in developing practical communication skills relevant in all professional settings.

76-780 Messages and Means – Topics in Communication Design
Instructor: S. Ishizaki
Meetings: MW 10:00 – 11:20 a.m.
Units: 9

In this seminar, we will examine communication design from multiple perspectives, including rhetoric, information design, cognitive psychology, philosophy, and design theory. We will read and discuss the significant works that have influenced modern communication design—paying close attention to their impact on today's communication practitioners as well as outstanding opportunities for further research. In addition, we will explore these ideas through small case studies from a variety of contexts—from data visualization to advertising, to product brochures, to public relations to political campaigns. Required assignments include a brief weekly response report to the readings, one short paper, and a final research paper about a topic chosen by students based on their professional or research interests.

This course is primarily designed for students in the Master of Design in Communication Planning and Information Design (CPID) program. It is intended to provide the students with the broad intellectual foundation relevant to their professional field, and to help them prepare for their thesis work. The course is also appropriate for MAPW students who are interested in communication design. Students who are interested in or engaged in advanced research (e.g., MA, Ph.D. in Rhetoric) may also gain insight into research opportunities in communication design.

76-784 Identity, Discourse, and Power
Instructor: J. Andrus
Meetings: MW 1:30 – 2:50 p.m.
Units: 9, 12

In this class, we will explore the productive, dynamic, and fluid relationship between discourse, or language in use, and power. We will consider the ways in which power structures discourse, how discourses mediate power, and perhaps most importantly, the consequences of this back and forth to the individual. We will consider the ways that discourse and power constrain identity choices, and how they become resources for identity construction. The questions central to this course are: What is power? What is discourse? What are the material ramifications of powerful discourses? Why/how are some discourses privileged while are marginalized? and How is identity implicated when a discourse is privileged/marginalized? To begin answering such questions, we will analyze the discourses circulating around two topics: 1) education and technologies of literacy and 2) gender and violence. Though on the surface these two topics may seem to be poles apart, their differences will allow us to tease out the nuances of power, discourse, and identity formation.

Throughout the semester, we will read a number of analyses and theoretical texts that will give us vocabulary and methods to untangle the complex of discourses that structure power and identity in these two sites. As a final project, students will locate an artifact, such as an advertisement, television program, website, university policy, etc. and analyze it in a paper that brings together the three terms of the course.

76-786 **Language & Culture**
Instructor: **W. Marcellino**
Meetings: **TR 9:00 – 10:20 a.m.**
Units: **9, 12**

This course is an examination of language and culture: of what language is, and how we use language to organize ourselves as individuals and groups. We'll examine different theories of language, and ask how these theories are useful for examining and explaining language use. We'll also look for the implications of these theories, and how they support or challenge power arrangements in society. At this intersection of language and power we will analyze different social and cultural aspects of language: how language shapes/is shaped by identity, how language shapes/is shaped by groups, and the linguistic relationship between individuals and group.

To do this we will read theoretical and analytical works, examine case studies, and conduct independent research. Thus the very structure of the course will reflect language assumptions and preferences: you'll be reading and discussing those readings, and you'll be assessed in this class through written research papers (no tests).

76-789 **Rhetorical Grammar**
Instructor: **P. Hopper**
Meetings: **MWF 12:30 – 1:20 p.m.**
Units: **9**

The course is designed for those who will be professionally concerned with writing. It aims to provide a standard framework for identifying and authoritatively discussing the grammatical forms and constructions of Written English that they will be employing in their work. The course will involve some theoretical linguistic study as well as practice in the parsing of sentences, recognition of types of constituents in the sentence, and control of the standard grammatical terminology. The concern throughout is with an explicit understanding of principles of sentence structure, i.e., grammar, as the essential basis of good professional writing and as a prerequisite for informed leadership in professional writing settings.

Class meetings are devoted to explanation, grammatical analysis, and exercises, requiring careful preparation. There will be two major examinations (midterm and final), and two tests, upon which grades will be assessed. Text: Paul Hopper, *A Short Course in Grammar*. Available from the CMU Campus Bookstore.

76-790 **Style**
Instructor: **C. Carlos**
Meetings: **MW 1:30 – 2:50 p.m.**
Units: **9**

In classical rhetoric, "style" is a term that refers not to *what* we write but *how* we write. Yet considerations about how we write--coherence, emphasis, concision, shape, diction, and elegance--can never be fully separated from an understanding of what, why, and for whom we are writing. Ideally, then, far from being an exercise in expressing personal idiosyncrasies, revising style means understanding a set of strategic choices and always weighing these choices in relation to questions such as, "Who is my audience?" and "What is my purpose?" This course will have two main objectives: (1) to help you develop a repertoire of stylistic options and a critical vocabulary for discussing those options, and (2) to give you the opportunity to put this knowledge into practice when revising your own writing and the writing of others.

Two recurring questions for us will be the following: if style depends on both the rhetorical situation of a text and knowledge of specific guidelines, how can we ever say that we have achieved “good” style? Should stylistic rules or practical experience carry more weight in the decisions we make as writers?

76-791 Document Design
Instructor: S. Ishizaki
Meetings: MWF 12:00 – 1:20 p.m.
Units: 12

Today, many professionals are responsible for the visual design of documents. This course provides students who have already learned the foundation of written communication with an opportunity to develop the ability to analyze and create visual-verbal synergy in printed documents. Students will be introduced to the basic concepts and vocabulary, as well as the practical issues of visual communication design through a series of hands-on projects in various rhetorical situations. Assigned readings will complement the projects in exploring document design from historical, theoretical, and technological perspectives. Class discussions and critiquing are an essential part of this course.

Adobe Creative Studio (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator) will be taught in class, and used to create the assigned projects.

76-795 Science Writing
Instructor: M. Roth
Meetings: W 6:30 – 9:20 p.m.
Units: 9

This course will teach students how to write clear, well-organized, compelling articles about science, technology and health topics for a general audience. Students will learn how to conduct research on scientific topics using primary and secondary sources, how to conduct interviews, and how to organize that information in a logical fashion for presentation.

For writing majors, the course will increase their understanding of scientific research and how to describe it accurately and completely to a general audience. For science majors, this course will teach them how to craft fluid, powerful prose so that they can bring their disciplines to life. The course is not intended just for those who want to become science journalists, but for anyone who may have the need to explain technical information to a general audience, whether it is an engineer describing a green building project at a public hearing, a doctor describing the latest research on a disease to a patient advocacy group, or a computer programmer describing new software to his firm’s marketing staff.

Students will get a chance to read several examples of top-notch science writing and interview researchers, but the primary emphasis will be on writing a series of articles -- and rewriting them after they’ve been edited. The articles will range from profiles of scientists to explanations of how something works to explorations of controversies in science. Students should expect to see their writing critiqued in class from time to time, in a process similar to what journalists routinely go through. The goal will be clarity and verve; the ethos will be mutual learning and enjoyment.

76-814 **19th Century British Literary and Cultural Studies: Electrifying the Victorians**
Instructor: **J. Klancher**
Meetings: **TR 1:30 – 2:50 p.m.**
Units: **12**

From Shelley's *Frankenstein* to Darwin's *Origin of Species* and H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, nineteenth-century literary and scientific writers electrified their audiences with narratives of deep time, speculative futures, and powerful evolutionary logics. Print media intensified the impact of these visions then, as the digital media may be doing again today. This course uses traditional print scholarship along with new methods currently emerging in the "digital humanities" to grasp the nineteenth century's matrix of literary, scientific, and visual culture in a range of fiction and nonfiction texts. Two papers and one visual presentation will be required. (No previous experience in "digital humanities," which is an introductory topic in this course, is necessary.)

76-819 **Communication Revolutions & Technologies**
Instructor: **C. Neuwirth**
Meetings: **T 6:30 – 9:20 p.m.**
Units: **9, 12**

What does it mean to be living in today's communication technology "revolution"? In a time when many forms of communication are digitally based, traveling as bits at e-speeds on global computer networks? To begin answering that question, we will examine the origins and historical development of various communication revolutions—from the invention of writing, the printing press, the telegraph, and so forth—to the Internet. The discussions and readings will seek to provide a comprehensive overview of how so-called communication revolutions developed, with discussion of cognitive, social, political, economic and technological aspects. We will attempt to put the development of communication technologies in their historical context: How were new forms of communication received? How were they used? How did they affect communication? How did they influence political and social institutions? We will focus, however, on relating historical developments to current digital communication developments. We will take as case studies several new discursive digital formations: digital books, on-line newspapers, and possibly global non-government organizations (NGOs), such as non-profit environmental activist organizations. Along the way we will ask questions such as "What should a rhetorical theory that takes media into account do?" What are some of the challenges that new digital formations present to traditional rhetorical theories (e.g., How is "ethos" established when speakers are anonymous and globally distributed? How is the "public sphere" constituted when Internet search engines dynamically construct it?) The goal of the seminar is for participants to acquire the concepts needed to read the current research/scholarship on communications technologies with understanding, to apply that research to the analysis of new discursive digital formations, and to be positioned to contribute to that research. Seminar participants will be expected to bring in their own research interests as the course develops.

There will be two major interrelated assignments: a research statement/bibliography and a research essay.

76-820 **Process of Reading and Writing**
Instructor: **L. Flower**
Meetings: **TR 10:30 – 11:50 a.m.**
Units: **12**

This course is an introduction to the thinking, meaning-making process that underlies reading and writing. It asks: what are the social and cognitive processes, what are the conscious and unconscious problem-solving strategies we use: to comprehend and interpret text, to construct and communicate our own meanings, and to project or discover our readers' responses?

In the first half of the course we look at writers and designers as thinkers and problem solvers—facing the challenge of equally creative, meaning-making readers and their own constructive, interpretive processes of comprehension. Understanding (and user-testing for) how readers actually interpret texts is critical to many kinds of writing, from informative websites and PR work, to persuasive applications and powerful arguments.

An introduction to the research and theory on reading and writing as a social/cognitive process lets us explore the *why* behind the *what readers do*. For instance, you will learn how memory networks, cognitive schemas, and meta-knowledge can shape and are shaped by language and discourse as socially constructed mediating tools. At the same time you will develop a portfolio of methods that track the constructive, inferential process of readers' comprehension.

In the second half of the course we turn to you and your own writing as a thinking process engaged in the constant effort to juggle competing goals. You will gain insight into your current problem-solving strategies and develop new ones for doing reader-based writing and design. The final project (which studies your own process on a current writing task) will expand your portfolio of methods into a toolkit of expert strategies for 1) both composing and communication and for 2) user testing and inquiry into the comprehension of real readers that uncovers how others actually interpret what you thought you said.

76-827 **Research Seminar in Rhetoric**
Instructor: **D. Kaufer**
Meetings: **MW 3:00 – 4:20 p.m.**
Units: **9, 12**

This course involves four intertwined strands of inquiry and practice:

An overview of research design and ethics. By means of readings and class discussion, we will explore how knowledge claims are articulated in research in rhetorical studies and what strategies of inquiry lend themselves to defending such claims. We also explore the moral and legal obligations that arise in research about humans.

An introduction to rhetoric research at CMU. Members of the rhetoric faculty will be invited to come and discuss with us how they do their scholarly research. We will read a recent or forthcoming paper by each, along with readings that they've found useful in describing how to do the kind of work they do.

An introduction to professional writing in our field. We will analyze, discuss, and practice genres such as conference paper abstracts, conference presentations, journal articles, and book prospectuses.

Intensive work in the preparation and submission of a conference paper or journal article. Each student will develop an existing project, probably a term research project for another rhetoric or language-study course, into a paper that could be presented at a scholarly conference or, if it has already been presented at a conference, submitted to a journal. By the end of the semester, abstracts or papers will have been submitted, and students will have practiced presenting them.

The course is appropriate for PhD students in Rhetoric and MA/MAPW/MCID students considering graduate programs in Rhetoric or related fields.

76-831 Chaucer
Instructor: P. Knapp
Meetings: MW 1:30 – 2:50 p.m.
Units: 12

We will read most of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and his narrative poem *Troilus and Criseyde* (considered by some the first English novel). Our texts are in Middle English—Chaucer's language is odd-looking, but easily mastered. Most class meetings will consist of discussions that examine these fictions in relation to the social conditions they imply and the tellers' stakes in the telling. While we are discussing the *General Prologue*, I will ask each of you to identify the pilgrim through whose eyes you will read each of the tales; in addition, of course, to seeing from your own 21st - century vantage point. Sometimes "your" pilgrim's reactions will be specified in the dramatic frame begun in the *General Prologue*; sometimes you will have to speculate. In addition to the tales, prologues, and epilogues of the text, we will also be reading brief accounts of 14th-century institutions and traditions (chivalry, fabliaux, marriage, etc.).

Required are near-perfect attendance, steady participation, and three papers. Graduate students will meet for an extra hour a week, read additional materials, and write longer papers.

76-835 20th Century American Literary and Cultural Studies: Highbrow/Lowbrow
Instructor: K. Newman
Meetings: TR 10:30 – 11:50 a.m.
Units: 12

One of the great American tastemakers, Russell Lynes, once said that "the only thing that is more to be guarded against than bad taste is good taste." In this course we will try to understand how taste hierarchies are established and protected by reading theories and secondary works of scholarship that explore the problems of taste, class, culture and hierarchy in the 20th century. Theoretical readings will include selections from Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks*, Adorno, and Bourdieu's *Distinctions*. Secondary works will include Andrew Ross, *No Respect*, Joan Shelley Rubin's *The Making of Middlebrow Culture*, *Weirdo Deluxe: The Wild World of Pop Surrealism & Lowbrow Art*, *Shyon Baumann*, *Hollywood Highbrow: From Entertainment to Art*.

76-839 Film and Media Studies: American Independent Cinema, 1980 – 2004
Instructor: D. Shumway
Meetings: TR 12:00 – 1:20 p.m.
T 7:00 – 9:50 p.m. (screening)
Units: 12

Beginning in 1980 with the surprising box-office success and return on investment of John Sayles's *Return of the Secaucus Seven*, independent filmmakers became increasingly important to the American film industry. Such films filled a niche left open when the studios largely abandoned small-scale comedies and dramas in favor of big-budget, special-effects heavy fantasy franchises such as *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, and *Indiana Jones*. Originally, independent films were defined as those made entirely without support from Hollywood studios, though the studios in some cases made distribution deals for such films after they were produced. The films were made with financing cobbled together by directors, sometimes with money they borrowed on their credit cards. Film festivals, especially Robert Redford's Sundance Festival, became prime markets for independent directors to sell their work to distributors. By early 1990s, however, a new branch of the industry began to emerge, represented most prominently by Miramax. Beginning as a distribution company that acquired films such as Steven Soderbergh's *Sex, Lies, and Video Tape* (1989), Miramax became a

small studio, producing some of the most successful films of the 1990s. In 1993, it became a subsidiary of Disney, and soon after most other major studios formed or acquired “independent” units. At this point, “independent” becomes something like a style, since most films described as independent had some kind of studio backing. Such films, however, were often regarded as among the best produced in America, and they were often well rewarded at Oscar time. In 2004, Disney fired Miramax founders Bob and Harvey Weinstein, and absorbed Miramax, ending its quasi-independent status. That date marks at least the beginning of the end of the independent era. “Independent” films no longer were a reliable source of income, and by 2009, almost all of the studio’s “independent” units have been closed. In this course, we will investigate this history, and we will watch some of best independent films by directors such as Sayles, Soderbergh, Michael Moore, Spike Lee, Susan Seidelman, Julie Dash, Hal Hartley, Jim Jarmusch, Quentin Tarantino, Joel and Ethan Cohen, and Kevin Smith. We may also consider films by directors such as Robert Altman and Woody Allen, who established themselves before the independent era on the margins of Hollywood, and we will watch several big-budget studio blockbusters to provide context.

76-849 20th Century American Literary and Cultural Studies: College Fiction and Films

Instructor: J. Williams, L. Di Prete

Meetings: R 6:30 – 9:20 p.m.

Units: 12

College seems a space apart, before you enter the real world. Accordingly, we don’t think of fiction and film that depicts life in college as all that serious. However, there is a growing tradition of fiction of university life, whether of students or professors. In particular, a great many prominent contemporary writers have written novels set on campuses, and a number of major film directors have turned their lights on university life.

In this course, we will survey the realm of college fiction and film, from F. Scott Fitzgerald to Michael Chabon. We will try to put together its history, distinguish its major types, and diagnose its contemporary representations. We will also look at relevant historical, theoretical, and sociological works that bear on the university. There will be several short papers and one longer final paper.

76-854 Literary and Cultural Theory: Modernity and the Sociology of Culture

Instructor: J. Klancher

Meetings: W 3:00 – 5:50 p.m.

Units: 12

This course explores the meanings of “modernity” as the concept has been used or debated in social and cultural theory. We will read both classic and revisionary accounts of what constitutes modernity, with such related questions as “what is Enlightenment?”; the emergence and “reality” of the mass media; the differentiation of knowledge into disciplinary forms, including modernism in the arts and postmodernism in theory. Readings in Kant, Marx, Weber, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Joan Dejean, Francois Lyotard, Bruno Latour, Niklas Luhmann, Fredric Jameson, and Pascale Casanova.

76-882 **History of Rhetoric**
Instructor: **C. Carlos**
Meetings: **MW 4:30 – 5:50 p.m.**
Units: **9, 12**

We will examine a number of canonical texts in the Western rhetorical tradition, beginning in antiquity with such figures as Gorgias, Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, moving through the Medieval and Renaissance reception of classical texts, and ending with Charles Rollin in the eighteenth century. Some important themes which we will consider include the longstanding tension between rhetoric and philosophy, and the various social and political contexts that produce rhetorical theory.

76-887 **On-Line Information Design**
Instructor: **S. Hagan**
Meetings: **MW 10:30 – 11:50 a.m.**
Units: **9**

76-888 **On-Line Information Design Lab**
Instructor: **TBA**
Meetings: **F 10:30 – 11:50 a.m.**
Units: **3**

Note: Students are required to register for both 76-887 AND 76-888.

This course will introduce you to issues and practices in the design of on-line information. The course has the following interrelated goals:

- Introduce you to the major theories, methodologies, and practices of on-line information design.
- Develop your skills in analyzing and reporting on user needs, and verifying a given design's effectiveness through usability testing.
- Develop the background knowledge you need to succeed in the interdisciplinary world of information design.

Topics for in-class lecture and discussion will include: methods for exploring users' needs and tasks (interviews, observation, and more); characteristics of effective Web site design (organization, navigational design, link labeling, form and search design, visual design); methods and artifacts of iterative design and evaluation of Web sites; methods for evaluating and reporting on a design's usability. The course's primary focus will be on the design of verbal and pictorial information typical of Web sites, though issues in on-line design for other modes, such as sound, and animation, will be touched upon. Special lecture topics may include personalization, Web communities, or on-line help.

These learning goals will be met through the development of a client project, which will be divided into a series of assignments, culminating in the design or redesign of the client's website.

76-892 **Rhetoric and Public Policy**
Instructor: **J. Wynn**
Meetings: **TR 3:00 – 4:20 p.m.**
Units: **9, 12**

In traditional public policy approaches, each step of the policy process from defining a problem to making a case for its solution is assessed in reference to rational models of economic and political actors. This course, however, takes a less conventional *rhetorical* approach to policy analysis which focuses attention on the values, beliefs, and argument structures associated with public issues. Towards this end, we will be studying the theories and analytic methods of both

classical and modern rhetorical scholarship as well as modern public policy theory. Over the course of the semester, we will combine knowledge and techniques from both fields to examine a current issue in American public debate and probe the strengths and weaknesses of rhetorical and non-rhetorical approaches to policy. No previous experience with public policy is necessary for this course. Those with experience are welcome.