# Graduate Courses - Spring 2021

## MFA Workshops/Forms Courses

**ENGL 7001 - Creative Nonfiction & Cultural Criticism
3:00 – 5:50 TH (Online Synchronous)**[**J. Wheeler**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/jwheeler.php)

In this class we'll study and write creative nonfiction with a particular emphasis on writing that walks the line between art and criticism. How can cultural criticism fuse other types of nonfiction writing, including memoir, reportage, travel, and history, to create timeless literature that moves far beyond the hot-take but also confronts directly the most important debates of the day? We'll read cultural critics from the 20th & 21st century--like James Baldwin, Hunter Thompson, Zadie Smith, Maggie Nelson--in order to find the best strategies for writing about culture as means of making literary art.

*Approximate weekly reading load and content*: 3-4 essays per week, including both the writing of peers and assigned readings. You'll also read whatever research you need to complete your creative work.

*Anticipated assignments*: Workshop coursework includes weekly written feedback for peers (amount depends on size of class) and the writing of two original essays of cultural criticism (usually 4-8k words, each).

**ENGL 7007 - Dream Ethnographies: A Notebook**
**Online Asynchronous**
[**L.Glenum**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/lglenum.php)

Poet Edgar Garcia describes the process of writing his collection, *Skins of Columbus: A Dream Ethnography*, as follows: “To explore the burrowing of our colonial myths into real-life experience… the author spent four months reading the journals of Christopher Columbus before sleep. Later, he transformed his dreams into a poetic record of what his memory, in its half-sleep, had forgotten it remembered: the gash, shock, glamor, void, punctuation and spell of origins...” While asleep, Garcia’s mind “sutures displacements, migrations, and restorations into an assemblage of hemispheric becoming.” The resulting text is prismatically complex and, while wildly illuminating, never easy.

Our task this semester will be to steer by Garcia’s lights and embark on the process of creating our own dream ethnographies, as mapped and charted in a single notebook. To do this, you will choose a historical or mytho-historical personage or event whose legends, diaries, or third-person accounts allow for a several month-long immersion and then proceed to write all along the borders of sleeping, logging all entries in your notebook. The emphasis will be on generating text and on allowing fragmentary, hybrid, or speculative forms into the accruing body of the text. The goal is to allow our writerly subjectivity to grow multitudinous, elastic, and feral. In doing so, we will be, as Rodrigo Toscano puts it, “working towards decoding & re-coding multi-metrical conceptions of historical space-time with the intent of reinvigorating political agencies.”

**ENGL 7106 - Forms of Prose Fiction
12:30 - 3:20 W (Online Synchronous)**
[**B. Womer**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/bwomer.php)

I’m proposing a hybrid-forms workshop that will challenge students to interrogate the interplay between genres. Students will read and practice experimental forms such as flash, borrowed, mimetic, speculative, and image/text. With the purpose of developing a chapbook by the end of the semester, in addition to workshopping two longer pieces, students will commit to a conceit the first week and will, for each subsequent class, arrive with a flash piece ready for the miniature workshop with which we’ll begin each class. Creative and critical texts assigned will both defy and embrace traditional elements of fiction, and together the class will appraise the uses and limits of hybridity in the current moment and not-so-distant future.

*Approximate weekly reading load and content*: Twenty pages of critical text plus 50 pages of creative text per week

*Anticipated assignments*: Two flash pieces per week, no more than 750 words each; Two workshop pieces, approximately 3,000-5,000 words (flexible depending upon use of form, images, etc.); Critical essay as part of revision-portfolio final, 1,500 words

## PhD Seminars

**ENGL 7050 - Environment and Enlightenment: Verdure or Verge?
3:30 - 6:20 M (Online Synchronous)**[**K. Cope**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/kcope.php)

Writers, artists, and thinkers of the “long” eighteenth century (circa 1650-1820) discovered and developed the idea of “the environment.” They transformed the intuitive notion of the place that we happen to be into the far more elaborate notion of a complex and changeable domain in which the story of life unfolds. Unlike our own time, which privileges healthy or clean or otherwise ecologically or aesthetically correct environments, the Enlightenment prized possibility, variety, extremity, and deviation. The period is rife with portrayals of life amidst disasters, in faraway places, on the far fringes of the cosmos, as a castaway, in the face of natural disaster, out in the backwoods, during the terror of epidemics, while war or revolution rages, in a manicured landscape, within dungeons or other horrific enclosures, underwater, atop a volcano, underground, in the cold, in the heat, in the dark, at high altitudes, and just about everywhere else.  Moreover, the period especially loved the artificial aspects of what we now regard as “natural.”

This course will use Enlightenment renderings of familiar and extreme, beautiful and alarming environments as windows onto eighteenth-century art, literature, thought, and culture generally. Many of the works considered will be canonical “masterpieces,” with the result that students will emerge qualified to teach or to conduct research in long-eighteenth-century studies, but many other works will emerge from the deep archives of the forgotten Enlightenment or from authors belonging to overlooked, marginalized groups.

*Approximate weekly reading load and content:* The readings for this course will be drawn largely from (free) online sources such as Early English Books Online and Eighteenth-Century Collections Online. Additionally, we shall make use of free online editions when reading popular or canonical texts. Reading will be organized so as not to become burdensome. There may be some weeks in which only a few poems are assigned, although there may be others in which longer works, such as novels, may come under consideration. Estimate: an average of one-hundred standard pages per week.

*Anticipated assignments*: Seminar reports and a final paper. Discussion.

**ENGL 7173 – Southern Studies Now**
**6:30 – 9:20N W (Online Synchronous)**[**K. Henninger**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/khenninger.php)

Building on recent debates at conferences in Vancouver and MLA-Seattle, this course works to assess recent developments in Southern Studies, its objects and methodologies. We'll examine the role and positioning of southerness and "the South" in regional, national and transnational rhetorics, particularly as seen in U.S. literature, film and criticism. Topics will include: From Essentialism to Entanglement; Zombie Memes of Dixie; Disrupting Everyone's Enjoyment; Affect and Engagement; Red States, and the Relevance of Canon (value and ethics). Along the way we will engage critical race theory, ecocriticism, the Plantationocene, Native American Studies, feminist and queer/quare theory, and many special guests.

*Approximate weekly reading load and content*: Typically, a novel and/or critical work a week.

*Anticipated assignments*: Typically: Two 1-page reading responses posted on Moodle, one short paper (conference presentation), one research project (traditional essay or creative option with researched artist statement), one leading class session

**ENGL 7221 – "Restless Flying", a black study in movement**
**3:00 – 5:50 T (Online Synchronous)**[**F. Ife**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/fife.php)

This course offers an in-depth study on movement with an emphasis on air and space. How does air move in space? How do bodies move in air and space? What else moves in air and space? We will consider these questions as we study ways of moving, listening to (and looking at), and talking about movement. We will read critical works on movement by 21st century black studies critics: Saidiya Hartman, R.A. Judy, Nate Mackey, Fred Moten, Ashon Crawley, Sarah Cervenak, and Kevin Quashie. We will engage creative representations of movement in works by contemporary multigenre artists: taisha paggett, JJJJJerome Ellis, Taylor Johnson, Jim Jarmusch, Chihei Hatakeyama, Torkwase Dyson, Kelsey Lu, Ben Lerner, and Jlin. Too, we will engage some works on air and space by French critic and poet Gaston Bachelard. Think of this course as a breathing space.

*Approximate weekly reading load and content*: Readings will vary in length, though anticipate: either a book (of criticism or poetry)/or 2-3 essays each week, accompanied by a brief listening or viewing.

*Anticipated assignments*: reading annotation journal (personal to accompany the readings, do not turn in) + three papers (for submission): two shorter response papers (~4-8 pages), one final comparative criticism paper on movement (~15-20 pages) / yes, creative option available for MFA students (and anyone electing a creative option) for any of the papers.

**ENGL 7222 - Critical Literacies & Social Justice Pedagogy**
**Online Asynchronous**
[**S. Weinstein**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/sweinstein.php)

The structures of US schooling have contributed to many of our widespread social problems. A focus on product over process, on academic tracking as a form of school- and district-wide segregation, and on discipline and punishment have created for many of us confusion about what it actually means to teach and learn. In this course, we will trace the historical efforts that led to this situation as well as the counter-examples that hint to us that our relationships to learning could be radically different. We will also read current work, and explore current efforts, that imagine new ways of learning together for a more just society. Our focus will be on communities that have not historically been well-served by formal education, including Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other communities.

*Approximate weekly reading load and content*: We will generally read one book or several essays a week, though we may take more than one week for a book if it is very long or substantial. Examples of readings include *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy* by Gholdy Muhammad; *We Want to Do More than Survive* by Bettina L. Love, and *Self-Taught: African-American Education in Slavery and Freedom* by Heather Andrea Williams.

*Anticipated assignments*: Required writing will include weekly reading responses of 500-750 words (2-3 pages), a presentation on one of our readings/topics, a project proposal of 5-7 pages, and a seminar paper/project of 15-20 pages (or equivalent).

**ENGL 7541 – Political Rhetoric in Black and White**
**6:30 – 9:20 M (Online Synchronous)**
[**J. Osborne**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/josborne.php)

On any television news program today race takes a central role in conveying messages about the current state of politics in America. You see race on the bodies of protestors and government officials, as well as in the text of chyrons for news organizations. Race becomes the first word shouted at rallies and the last words spoken in campaign speeches. Onlookers can recognize the presence of race in politics, but how do people understand the use of race rhetorically in these situations? This course explores the use of race to persuade audiences in political contexts with the intent to understand the persuasive methods used by rhetors. To accomplish this task, we will survey the past 50 years of political discourses in America, such as campaign speeches, rallies, and social movements, analyzing the rhetoric through rhetorical theories grounded in the postmodern moment we inhabit.

*Approximate weekly reading load and content*: One video and 3 critical essays

*Anticipated assignments*: Moodle, a weekly discussion question, 2 rhetorical analyses (1000 words each), 1 research paper (at least 5000 words) Creative options are possible; the student must propose the creative option

**ENGL 7920: Dissertation Workshop**
**3:30 – 6:20 W (Online Synchronous)**
[**P. Rastogi**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/prastogi.php)

***Permission of Instructor - Must have passed the General Exam (Pass/Fail Grading)***“A good dissertation is a done dissertation!” How many times have you heard that phrase?  Nothing matters more to future success than a finished dissertation. However, a finished dissertation should also be a good dissertation. In this workshop, we will focus on both the quality and the quantity of writing with the aim of writing a dissertation that is not only done but also well done.

The workshop will prioritize writing the dissertation and then organically develop publications and presentations from that material. Students will complete one full dissertation chapter through a series of revisions based on peer and professorial feedback. In the last few weeks of the workshop, we will extract an article for journal publication and/or a conference presentation from the polished chapter that should emerge by then.

*Approximate weekly reading load and content*: Students will read and write comments on 40 pages of their classmates' dissertations every week.

*Anticipated assignments*: Students will share expanded increments of 5, 10, 15, 20, 30-40 pages of their writing with the class. Workshop time will be used to discuss comments on dissertation chapters.

**ENGL 7974 - Textscapes**
**12:00 – 2:50 T (Online Synchronous)**
[**L. Coats**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/lcoats.php)

This course will focus on textual remediations of place in American literature of the long 19th century.  How have texts created and portrayed American environments in works by authors such as Mary Prince, Edgar Allan Poe, John Ledyard, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Charles Chesnutt,? Our investigations will have us engage criticism about genre (we’ll read travel narratives, novel, surveys, stories), book history and circulation (how these texts got their way into manuscript, print, and/or onto screens), and critical race studies and ecocriticism (how the authors represent environmentalisms, nature, belonging, race).  We’ll put our theories of textual representations of place into praxis by remediating textscapes of our own choosing, which will take us into archives (physical and/or digital, depending on coronavirus) and using digital platforms to re-represent the materials we find.

*Approximate weekly reading load and content*: Usually 1-2 critical essays and (part of a) fiction or non-fiction narrative. The length of the narrative will vary widely depending on the readability and density of the work, but usually equivalent to a couple long stories or a short novel.

*Anticipated assignments*: Weekly reading notes, one class presentation, archival assignment, digital assignment,10-12 page (conference-length) seminar paper. Students will likely have the option to do a larger digital and/or archival assignments and shorter paper, or longer paper and smaller assignments, depending on their interests. The digital and archival assignments and paper build on each other.

**ENGL 7983: Middle Eastern Gothic**
**3:30 – 6:20 W (Online Synchronous)**
[**J. Berman**](https://lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/faculty/jberman.php)

This course will focus its attention on works written about the Middle East or by Middle Eastern writers that have classic gothic elements. We will work towards a definition of a Middle Eastern Gothic that distinguishes the form from both English and American versions. This will mean situating the literature we read within Middle Eastern historical frames that include colonialism, Orientalism, Islamophobia, and the War on Terror. One question we will ask: How do the histories of these various Western incursions/interests/obsessions with the Middle East manifest themselves in literary forms of haunting?

*Approximate weekly reading load and content*: A novel a week

*Anticipated assignments*:  One class presentation and a Final paper of 30 pages