Course Descriptions: Fall 2014 Semester

ENGL 595NF: Creative Non-Fiction Prose
Thursday, 4-6:45 p.m., Professor Jack Lopez

This graduate seminar utilizes the craft and process of writing creative nonfiction as a means for students to tell their stories. The production of creative nonfiction is the emphasis of the class. Students will conduct a seminar workshop session in which their own work will be the topic of discussion. We will read and discuss published texts as well.

Assignments and Grades:
Weekly assignments will include readings and writing exercises. Students will create their own essays during the semester, which will be discussed in depth by their peers and the instructor. Students will write a series of mini-essays critiquing published works and student writings.

Basis for Grades:
Creative Nonfiction 50%
Criticism 25%
Participation 25%

ENGL 620AS: Art Spiegelman and the Transformation of Comics
Monday, 7-9:45 p.m., Professor Charles Hatfield

Art Spiegelman is the artist without whom the current academic recognition of comics as a literary and artistic form could not have happened. As creator, historian, editor, teacher, and impresario, he has arguably done more than any other figure to raise the intellectual stature of comics. This seminar will study Spiegelman’s whole career, from his early days in underground comix, to the heady experimentation of Raw (1980-1991), the magazine he co-published and co-edited with Françoise Mouly, to his creation of the seminal graphic memoir *Maus* and all that it has made possible. The course will examine Spiegelman not only as author but also as editor, curator, teacher, mentor, and critic, and will include his recent championing of children’s comics and his turn to performance art and other media. Also, it will critically survey the ever-expanding field of Maus scholarship, and examine works by other artists clearly inspired by Spiegelman, such as Alison Bechdel and Chris Ware. Essentially, this is a course on the evolution of comics into an academically respected art, through the lens of the one artist who has made the greatest difference.

ENGL 620FM: Faulkner and Morrison
Monday, 4-6:45, Professor Sandra Stanley

In this discussion-based class, we will be examining the works of two Nobel Laureates: William Faulkner and Toni Morrison. In their acceptance speeches for the Nobel prize for literature, both writers
expressed their thoughts about the ethical impact that literature has had upon society; and in their works, both writers have unrelentingly explored society's spoken and unspoken mores concerning race, class, and gender. Although Morrison, preferring to be linked with an African American literary tradition, often resists being identified with Faulkner, she, nevertheless, did write a portion of her master’s thesis on Faulkner’s works, and a number of critics have noted Faulkner's influence upon her writings. Using the theories elaborated upon in Graham Allen's *Intertextuality*, we will explore the ways that Morrison has "signified" upon Faulkner's novels, and how we might read Faulkner’s texts through Morrison’s works. Focusing upon criticism concerning race, class, gender and sexuality, we will examine Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury, Light in August, Absalom, Absalom*, and *Go Down, Moses*, and Morrison's *Playing in the Dark, Beloved, Jazz, Paradise*, and *Mercy*.

**ENGL 620JJ: James Joyce**  
Tuesday, 4-6:45 p.m., Professor Beth Wightman

A century after the first publication of his writing, James Joyce remains one of the towering figures of twentieth-century European literature, as admired now as he was by his own contemporaries. T.S. Eliot wrote of *Ulysses*, "I hold this book to be the most important expression which the present age has found; it is a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape." Virginia Woolf claimed that Joyce was "concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain, and in order to preserve it he disregards with complete courage whatever seems to him adventitious... If we want life itself, here surely we have it." Ezra Pound said Joyce "looks without bewilderment on life." Certainly, Joyce has proved bewildering to generations of readers. This course aims to replace that bewilderment with something more like appreciation and awe, by taking CSUN graduate students carefully through much of Joyce's major work. We will read *Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Ulysses* – all of it, and you will be able to boast about successfully negotiating a literary rite of passage.

Course requirements will include short, exploratory writing; an annotated bibliography; participation in a reading group, and a seminar paper of 15-20pp.

**ENGL 630ML: Medieval Literature**  
Wednesday, 4-6:45 p.m., Professor Scott Kleinman

English 630ML will be an atypical course in Fall 2014. The class will be entirely devoted to a single research project which will form a contribution to the Archive of Early Middle English (AEME). Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, AEME seeks to provide digital access to writing produced in England between 1066 and 1350. Our class will focus on creating a digital edition a single manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library Laud Misc. 108, parts of which were written between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Laud Misc. 108 contains one of the earliest collections of texts written entirely in English after the Norman Conquest, including the most popular text of the English Middle Ages, the
South English Legendary, and two early romances much studied in English Departments today. If you want to see the manuscript, you can get a preview at http://tsar192.grid.csun.edu/osdviewer.php. Your work may be devoted to producing other materials for the Archive. In the process, you will gain broad exposure to the language, literature, and culture of medieval England.

This class will also serve as an introduction to the emerging field of Digital Humanities, which involves the reflective and critical use of digital technologies to examine questions traditionally studied in the Humanities. Doing Digital Humanities involves learning skills which have been relatively lost in the study of literature during the last thirty years—the preservation and textual criticism of historical records—and reinvents them for the digital age. It emphasizes collaboration, methodology, and building things over solitary work and theory. It also fosters familiarity with skills and technologies such as project management and coding that are in demand in professions outside of academia.

So this is a class for you if:

+ You have an interest in the language, literature, and culture of the Middle Ages and/or the use of digital technologies to study language, literature, and culture.
+ You are willing to work outside of your comfort zone and learn new technological skills (the class will require coding, but no prior experience is necessary).
+ You like to work collaboratively with your classmates and have a strong sense of responsibility for meeting deadlines.
+ You are highly motivated to conceive, design, and implement projects.
+ You want to be involved in something bigger than a single class and to produce something as part of your education at CSUN that is for more than just a grade.

**ENGL 630SG: The Social Gospel and Modern American Literature**  
Thursday, 4-6:45 p.m., Professor Anthony Dawahare

Christianity is often only associated with a defense of the status quo of American society and conservative politics, yet its history in the U.S. is far more complex and complicated than the foregoing assumption. This course will study a radical tradition of Christianity within American society and, specifically, its impact on modern American writers. This strain of Christianity (or what some scholars term the “Social Gospel” and “Social Christianity”) provided many American writers with a framework within which to understand social problems in the U.S., such as slavery, racism, class oppression, and poverty. It also provided an ethos of social justice and a vision of an egalitarian society. This is not to say that all of the American writers we will study were “Christians;” some, for instance, were atheists who nonetheless found powerful literary language in the English Bible that they adapted to their own literary and political ends. We will see, in fact, that for many American writers, Christianity was inseparable from a broad literary and philosophical tradition on the side of freedom, democracy, and equality. Writers we will study include Walt Whitman, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison,

**ENGL 654: Satire and Social Contract**  
Wednesday, 4-6:45 p.m., Professor Steven Wexler

Satire and Social Contract will examine the rhetorics that underwrite satiric and comedic representations of the ostensible contractual nature of civilized society, the *idea* of the social contract as theorized and problematized by Plato, Machiavelli, Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Tocqueville, Marx, Rawls, and others. These contracts and their contexts (rhetorical, political, and socioeconomic) are laid bare by their role in literature, theater, art, film, and digital media. The course will therefore draw upon popular culture and a number of important satirists to illuminate the limitations and radicalism intrinsic to all publics.