**LIN 6107: History of the English Language**

**Professor Carla Thomas**

*This course counts as an elective and can satisfy the foreign language requirement*

**LIT 6105: Violence and the Spiritual Imagination in Caribbean Literature**

**Professor Stacey Lettman**

This class will focus on literary texts from the Caribbean that speak to the intersections between violence and the spiritual imagination of African slaves and their descendants. While the core of our assigned readings will be literary texts, we’ll take an interdisciplinary approach to include texts from religion, sociology, psychoanalysis, history, music, and film. We will look at the politics of Voodoo, Obeah, Rastafari, and other African-derived spiritual practices in the Caribbean, along with their revolutionary potential in the face of relentless violence, as we’ll see in Aime Cesaire’s *A Tempest* and Alejo Carpentier’s *The Kingdom of This World*. Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* and René Girard’s *Violence and the Sacred* will serve as the theoretical foundations for our understanding of the literary texts. We’ll investigate nineteenth-century colonial perception of African-derived religions in William Earle’s *The Obi, or Three Fingered Jack as* well as revisionist writing from M. Nourbese Philip to contemporary accounts about the neocolonial era from Edwidge Danticat, Marlon James, and others.

This course counts toward the Multicultural & World Literature concentration

**AML 6938: Citizenship in Times of Crisis: Contested Legalities in Latinx Literatures and Cultures**

**Professor José de la Garza Valenzuela**

Following the recent termination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) as a classification, discourses regarding Latinx identity and migration have clustered around the legality and permanence of membership in the nation. Citizenship, as a category of both legal and cultural belonging, has been a persistent theme in cultural production by people of Latinx descent over the past century, ranging from early texts like María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s 1885 novel *The Squatter and the Don* and José Martí’s 1891’s *Our America* to contemporary texts such as Jaime Cortez’s graphic novel *Sexile*, and Salvador Plascencia’s experimental novel *The People of Paper*. Throughout the term, we will interrogate the ways belonging—the lack and/or prospect of it—has animated representations of family, community, and nation in relationship to gender, sexuality, migration, and capital in Latinx literatures. We will then consider how these notions of belonging engage with how citizenship is *legally* imagined by the state and *culturally* imagined by social movements and advocacy groups.  The course will historically range from late 19th century to the present day considering emerging Latinx movements in both the Southwest and the East Coast. The course will then consider writers from both Chicanx/Mexican American cultural and historical traditions, but also authors of central American, Cuban, and Puerto Rican descent.

This course counts toward the Multicultural & World Literature concentration

**LIT 6932: Theory of The Fantastic**

**Professor Thomas Martin**

Was Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings, as one critic suggested, “the last literary masterpiece of the Middle Ages”? Besides being six hundred years out of date (ahem), is there anything else to recommend this literature to modern readers? Are there aspects that make the work unquestionably modern? Or perhaps the work is hopelessly escapist, Luddite, and nostalgic?

Whatever else we say about it, Tolkien’s novel and others like it started a literary revolution. While the canons of realism held strong for many decades, fantasy writers insisted they had something important to say, and readers in the ensuing generations agreed. Professional critics alternately lauded the new literature and resisted, and among the resisters were those who went well beyond the kind of backhanded compliment above. Many relegated it to an inferior class of writing, and it was treated as something of an embarrassment in libraries, bookstores, and academic conferences and curricula.

Meanwhile, the body of literature grew, and along with it grew a well-articulated rationale for the new narrative artform. Literary theorists have been slow to follow suit, for reasons we will explore. At the same time that few theorists set their sights on this literature, fantasy writers themselves accounted for the literature not only in formal and prefatory defenses, but also in fascinating and nuanced ways within the literature itself. This course will explore all these accounts of fantasy literature, from the traditional apologia to the metafantastic, in order to shed light on this living literature that continues to proliferate in our time.

We will read a balance of literature and theory. Representative authors will include LeGuin, Tolkien, and Dunsany. We will read the full complement of theorists and their theories. Assignments will include a book review, story analysis, abstract, and research paper.

*This course counts toward the Science Fiction and Fantasy concentration.*

**ENL 6455: Ghosts of Irish Literature**

**Professor Julieann Ulin**

Writing of conversations he had with the people of Donegal, Ireland in 1936, Ernie O’Malley observed the presence of the dead: “[The people] came back to the subject; spirits, good and bad, left at cockcrow. The dead walked around, there was an acceptance of their presence, no horror and little dread, the wall was thin between their living and their dead.” More popularly, this lack of dread may be seen in a comic song like “Finnegan’s Wake,” where a drop of spilled whisky revives the corpse of the not-quite-dead Tim Finnegan, and in many of the celebratory customs surrounding the Irish wake. This course will investigate the persistence of this permeable boundary in modern and contemporary Irish literature. The range of figures that trouble such divisions include the vampire in Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*, the banshees and changelings of Yeats and Gregory’s folklore collections and plays, the drowned ghost in Synge’s *Riders to the Sea*, the spectre of Michael Fury in James Joyce’s “The Dead,” the chatty corpses of Máirtín Ó Cadhain’s *The Dirty Dust* and the “bog bodies” preserved in Seamus Heaney’s poems. We will consider these haunted texts in their own right as well as how they may register an aesthetic response to colonialism, a “lost” language, violence, and gender and sexual politics that enforced invisibility. In addition to its theoretical focus on the intersection between the Irish gothic and the postcolonial, we will focus on how history may be repressed by external or internal forces and, by contrast, how it might be obsessively remembered, reworked, and resurrected for various ends. Finally, we will examine these texts in light of more recent work by scholars uncovering pasts that have been buried, such as the radical labor and sexual revolutions sublimated by nationalism (Susan Harris), Ireland’s Magdalene Laundries (James Smith), and the Tuam babies case (Catherine Corless). *This class counts toward the Multicultural and World Lit and British Literature concentrations*

**ENG 5018: Literary Criticism 1**

**Professor John Leeds**

This course surveys literary-critical theory from Plato to the 18th century. Together we will study the origins of literary criticism in Greek and Roman rhetoric and philosophy, the impact of biblical and vernacular culture on these classical literary models, and the emergence of literary criticism as a self-sufficient intellectual pursuit in the modern world. Central questions to be discussed are as follows: 1) Is the ability to write poetry an externally-bestowed gift or an acquired skill? 2) Does literature imitate reality or create an alternate reality? 3) Do writers have a responsibility for the moral betterment of their audiences, or not? 4) When and within what limits is literature to be read allegorically? Authors considered will include Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, Augustine, Averroes, Dante, Sidney, Pope, and Johnson.

*This is one of two required courses (you can take either ENG 5018 OR ENG 5019)*