

SPRING 2022
GRADUATE COURSE OFFERINGS
Department of English ▪ Florida Atlantic University

AML 6938.003 | Professor Andrew Furman
Emerson, Fuller, Thoreau

Thursday, 7:10–10:00pm | CRN 19444

Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau were three of the most important writers and thinkers in 19th-century America. Their essays (many of which were fostered during the meetings of their Hedge's Club, or "Transcendental Club," as it would later be referred to) not only laid the groundwork for the progressive intellectual movement of Transcendentalism, but also forged, in no small part, a distinct and viable American identity—and various associated "isms" including individualism, idealism, abolitionism, and feminism—still a nascent concept during their time. Through examining a good portion of their nonfiction writings, and through examining some noteworthy criticism, we will interrogate their unique contributions to America's literary and intellectual culture, and the enduring legacy of their visions.

Historical Period: 1700–1900

ENC 6930.002 | Professor Julia Mason
Cyborg & Posthuman Rhetorics

Wednesday, 4:00–6:50pm | CRN 19087

This course will employ the figure of the cyborg as a metaphor to think through (and beyond) the boundaries (and binaries) of mind/body, material/virtual, self/other, and human/machine. We will explore the implications of postmodern, posthuman, and feminist theories on our evolving understandings of identity, subjectivity, epistemology, embodiment, ethics, and agency.

We will draw on scholarship from Neil Badmington, Donna Haraway, Katherine Hayles, Allucquère Rosanne Stone, and Sherry Turkle (among others) to examine the cyborg subject and posthuman subjectivity at various "life" stages—from production to termination—and all points in between and beyond.

Ultimately, this course will attempt to place "human," into historical, critical, and technocultural context/s, and encourage us to ask questions about what it means to be human, about the distinctions between human and machine, and about the consequences of hybridity.

Concentration: Rhetoric and Composition

ENG 5019.001 | Professor Taylor Hagood
Literary Criticism 2

Tuesday, 4:00–6:50pm | CRN 19617

Major themes and theoretical statements of the 19th and 20th centuries.

ENG 6009.001 | Professor Shelby Johnson
Principles & Problems of Literary Study

Thursday, 4:00–6:50pm | CRN 18692

What is a text? How do we describe it? What are the criteria for deciding what a text is? And what kinds of interpretive practices and research methods do we (and should we) bring to the study of literatures? Questions like these will guide our class conversations and readings this semester, as we critically examine the canons, archives, concepts, reading practices, and research methodologies that underpin literary studies. We will explore these questions by centering our study on a series of case studies in Indigenous autobiography and semi-autobiographical texts: archives, in other words, that center experiential histories and forms of witness that often exceed or are at odds with the research and reading methods we have been trained to think and write within. As we will see, Native textualities frequently illuminate the fraught intersections between literary studies and settler colonialism. Practically, you will be able to use this course to gain research skills through a series of modules designed to introduce you to the tools and methodologies of literary research, the specific resources available at FAU, as well as how to find key journals in your chosen field, calls for papers, and grant applications. In addition to assignments that introduce you to the profession more generally, you will write assessments of digital archives, and either complete a substantial annotated bibliography in your chosen area of critical inquiry or a literature review for your MA thesis or exam. Finally, you will present a conference paper in response to a current call for papers.

ENL 6305.002 | Professor Julieann Ulin
James Joyce

Wednesday, 4:00–6:50pm | CRN 19624

"I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality."

—James Joyce

This course will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the February 2, 1922 publication of James Joyce's "usylesly unreadable" masterpiece *Ulysses* (FW 179.26-27). Serialized in *The Little Review*, seized at U.S. post offices, pirated, and the center of a landmark 1933 U.S. obscenity case, the novel's publication and legal history as recounted in Kevin Birmingham's *The Most Dangerous Book: The Battle for James Joyce's Ulysses* offers a fascinating case study in the history of the novel. My own early edition was discovered hidden in the attic of an Illinois barn and wrapped in newspaper, the pages of its especially scandalous final chapter still uncut. As the many reading groups on *Ulysses* have discovered, working through the modernist novel together alleviates many of the difficulties it presents to the reader. We will read some of Joyce's earlier works and consider the range of critical approaches to which his fiction has been subject over the century. Since we will be studying *Ulysses* in 2022, we will have the chance to take advantage of the many international readings and talks that will mark the centenary as we take our own odyssey through the novel that T.S. Eliot called "the most important expression which the present age has found . . . a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape."

Historical Period: 1900–present

LIT 6932.002 | Professor Timothy Miller

Artificial Intelligence in Literature and Film

Monday, 4:00–6:50pm | CRN 19628

Some of the first artificial beings in literary history appear as early as ancient Greek epic: in Homer's *Iliad*, golden automata assist the god of the forge in his work. This course will explore and interrogate the enduring human fascination with artificial intelligence beginning with early works of fiction such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Karel Capek's 1920 play *R.U.R.*, the latter of which gives us the word "robot." We will then proceed to the so-called "Golden Age" of science fiction in the early to mid-20th century, where we will encounter autonomous androids aplenty, but also massive supercomputers making decisions and predictions using what we would now call "big data." The latter portion of the semester will take up more recent SF texts and films from the past decade that ponder the implications of cutting-edge research in machine learning and neural networks, including Ted Chiang's 2010 novella *The Lifecycle of Software Objects* and Annalee Newitz's 2017 novel *Autonomous*. For instance, Isaac Asimov's classic robot stories -- featuring his famous "Three Laws of Robotics" -- will show us an early framework for ethics in artificial intelligence research, but more contemporary works such as Jennifer Phang's 2015 film *Advantageous* can imagine, without an android in sight, many wider cultural and societal consequences of adopting technological solutions based in AI: hidden artificial intelligence technologies have shaped the world and the narrative situation in which the protagonist finds herself, and have also produced differential impacts on women and people of color. We will meet many antagonistic AIs in these stories and films -- robots in revolt and homicidal computers -- but, as we will see, the question of just what artificial intelligence means for our future and indeed our present is a much more complex one, and requires imaginative answers from thinkers, writers, and readers across disciplines and genres.

Historical Period: 1900–present

Concentration: Science Fiction & Fantasy