

## Fall 2012 Course Descriptions

### **ENGL 5061      Rhetoric Theory Crit**

In this course we will examine rhetorics of fiction from theoretical and historical perspectives and analyze works of fiction along the way, using the terms and methods of analysis from the particular historical periods. We will begin with portions of Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics to distinguish between rhetorical and literary approaches, and we will read in writers like Gorgias and Augustine approaches that blend the two. We will study Kenneth Burke's revision of poetics into rhetoric in essays from Counter-Statement and A Philosophy of Literary Form and then read excerpts from Wayne Booth's The Rhetoric of Fiction. Finally, we will turn to Jeffery Walker's Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity. Each student will select an author and 3-5 works by that author to study throughout the semester. There will be frequent papers and presentations. We will address the following questions: What do we value in fiction? How are rhetorical and literary approaches to fiction similar and different and what are the advantages and disadvantages to each? Are critics and writers either rhetorical or literary? What's left out when approaching literature as rhetoric and/or poetics? How does metaphor intervene in these distinctions? Finally, students will need copies of only Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics, as well as Burke's Counter-Statement and Philosophy of Literary Form. The remaining selections will be distributed as PDFs. Students will collect critical materials on their author and on 3-5 of the author's works by literary, cultural, ideological, and rhetorical critics.

### **ENGL 5310      Early American Literature**

Cultural studies theorist Jean Baudrillard observed that America is "a utopia which has behaved from the beginning as if it were already achieved." Clearly, the esteemed French theorist never read what Cabeza de Vaca, Aphra Behn, William Bradford, or Mary Rowlandson had to say about the "New World." We will probe the question "what constitutes early American literature?" as we study early texts by a Spanish explorer and English subjects. In each text, we will ask, "What kind of 'America' is produced here? What are its values? Does its ideology contain self contradictions? How is this New World understood in relation to the Old World?" Texts include Cabeza de Vaca's Adventures in the Unknown Interior of America, Aphra Behn's Oronooko, William Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation, Thomas Paine's Common Sense, Benjamin Franklin, The Autobiography, Susanna Rowson's Charlotte Temple, Charles Brockden Brown's Wieland, Washington Irving's The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, and Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Hope Leslie, plus additional secondary sources. Requirements: Regular class attendance; intellectually invigorating class discussion—both individually, in small groups, and with in-class writing responses; an oral report; two written responses to reading questions; one "close reading"/literary analysis paper; a take-home midterm essay exam; a short answer final examination, and a final research paper (consisting of a thesis statement/abstract/annotated bibliography turned in two weeks earlier as well as the final paper itself.)