

Spring 2023 ENG 400 Seminar Descriptions

Toni Morrison Seminar: The Trilogy

Cherise Pollard

Toni Morrison is perhaps the most popular contemporary African American woman novelist and cultural critic. Morrison's work has garnered multiple high profile prizes and honors, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, The Nobel Prize for Literature, and The Presidential Medal of Freedom and her novels and criticism are widely taught. The primary focus of this seminar will be Toni Morrison's Trilogy: *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise* (1997). This trilogy is not defined by any shared character or plot line; instead, the connection is thematic. Issues related to American culture, history, memory, spirituality and religion unite these texts. Throughout this seminar, we will ask the following questions: what commentary do these texts make individually and as a group? How might we situate these novels in relation to Morrison's larger body of work, including literary criticism and cultural commentary? How might we position Morrison's late twentieth century work in relation to African American and American literary history?

Sexuality, Identity, and Desire: A Sociolinguistic Approach

Joshua Raclaw

Over the past thirty years, linguists have examined the various ways that language works to construct our understanding of human sexuality. Some key questions within this domain of research have been: How do speakers use language to articulate sexual identities and desires, and how are we socialized into these different linguistic practices throughout the lifespan? How do we use language and discourse to ascribe social meaning to the body? How do speakers from different social and linguistic communities reproduce or resist normative understandings of sexual subjectivities? And how does a focus on language highlight how sexuality intersects in meaningful ways with gendered, racial, national, and religious identities and positionalities? Throughout this seminar course we will examine how researchers in sociolinguistics and other allied disciplines have investigated these and other questions across global communities and contexts.

Environmental Sustainability and the Rhetoric(s) of Science

Justin Rademaekers

Environmental sustainability has proven to be a wicked challenge both as a course of study in higher education and as a practical pursuit for contemporary societies. One significant reason sustainability is so challenging is that it is deeply interdisciplinary and intersectional: requiring engagement and collaborative thinking among academic disciplines and professions in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences. To better understand the challenges surrounding sustainability studies, scholars of language can find fertile ground for inquiry in the rhetorics of

science. Environmental science, economics, and political science, for example, are all discourses of power that converge in the pursuit of sustainability. By interpreting these academic disciplines as discourses of power with distinct rhetorical features, English Studies scholars can identify the communicative and collaborative challenges facing environmental sustainability, and can prepare to play a vital role as knowledge brokers in these vital conversations. You can learn more about environmental rhetoric and the rhetoric of science on Dr. Rademaekers faculty page.

Nineteenth-Century Native American Literature and Print Culture

Carolyn Sorisio

This course focuses on American Indian authors' diverse uses of authorship and print culture in the nineteenth century. To further explore these concepts, we will need to analyze dominant cultural representations of American Indians, US-American Indian relations, US colonialism, and nationalisms. Authors we will study include Black Hawk, William Apess, George Copway, Elias Boudinot, John Rollin Ridge, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, and Zitkala-Sa. Interpreting their works in these contexts allows us to draw upon and question some of the skills, methods, and methodologies you may have encountered in ENG 295 (matters of canonicity, the definition and uses of authorship, textual production and reception, and the importance of historical contexts); ENG 202 (research methods and methodologies); or ENG 296 (post-structural approaches and postcolonial critique).

ENG 499: English Capstone

Ashley Patriarca

- If you joined the English major in *Fall 2021 or later,* you are required to take ENG 499 in your senior year.
- If you joined the English major *before Fall 2021,* you can choose to take ENG 499 in place of one of your ENG 400s. Ask your advisor to add an advising note in your Degree Progress Report when you register!

Are you ready to take your next step?

ENG 499: English Capstone is a chance to look back at everything you've done in your time at West Chester and to look ahead towards your goals for the future.

In this class, you'll create an ePortfolio of your work that shows off what you can do for potential employers or graduate school admissions committees. You'll also have the opportunity to design and complete your own research project based on your interests.