

“‘The comic,’ says Bergson, ‘comes into being just when society and the individual, freed from the worry of self-preservation, begin to regard themselves as works of art.’ With his triumphs fresh and his mind noticeably free, by 1815 the American seemed to regard himself as a work of art, and began that embellished self-portraiture which nations as well as individuals may undertake.”—Constance Rourke

Nineteenth-century American humorist and journalist Joel Chandler Harris once wrote, “It may be said of us [Americans], indeed, that we have a way of living humorously, and are conscious of the fact...and there seems never to have been a day in our history when the American view of things generally was not charged or trimmed with humor.” This course will glean such comic trimmings in US literature written between 1789 and 1865, applying contemporary and modern theories of humor to both literary and “sub-literary” humor productions as we consider the politics of who was laughing at whom, and how, and why. Applying a cultural studies approach, we will perform the literary historical work of contextualizing American comedy in such outlets as periodicals, pamphlets, political cartoons, joke books, comic almanacs, and minstrel performances in addition to more traditional literary forms. Coursework will include response posts, contextual annotations of works of humor, and a seminar paper.

Dr. Mike Sell
M-TR 1:30-4 PM

This course explores the ways videogames can be understood as a form of literature, with particular emphasis on narrative. We’ll pursue this exploration in three ways. First, we’ll look at how videogames tell stories in ways



with videogames is necessary to succeed in this class. Semester projects will include an annotated bibliography, conference-length essay, and an interactive digital narrative composed with the Twine



Dr. Veronica Watson
M-Th 3:45-6:15 pm

This course explores the rich African American literary tradition that examines alternative visions of the future--future worlds that are either worse or better than our present one. Examining texts from the African American science fiction and Afrofuturist traditions, we will investigate desires, imagination, and creative labor that goes into (re)imagining Black futures. From graphic novels, comics, film and television, music videos and literature we will trace utopian and dystopian visions of possible black futures, and consider the personal/political/cultural work those texts do. Taking up Lavender's argument, we will also consider Afrofuturism as a narrative practice that potentially offers new avenues of engagement and analysis for Black literature.

The reading list is still in development, but will likely include the following:

Butler/Duffy, *Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation*
Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*
Clark, *The Black God's Drums*
Coates, *Black*



How we know, what we know, what is important to know, what can be represented, how much those representations can be trusted, and the morality of these pursuits formed the network of questions that gave rise to modern-day science and arts, as well as the “two cultures” proposition. Selections from this inquiry-network’s literary corpus of inquiry, critique, and counter critique will be the focus of our class readings and may include:

- Bacon, Francis Sir. *The Novum Organum* (1620) [Selections].
— . *The New Atlantis* (1627).
Bergerac, Cyrano de. *The Emprie of the Moon* (1657).
Cavendish, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle. *Reflections on a New World called The BLAZING WORLD* (1667).
— . *Poems, and Fancies* (1653, 1664, 1668 eds.) [Atomic Poems].
Defoe, Daniel. *A True Relation of The Apparition of Mrs. Veal* (1710).
— . *Robinson Crusoe* (1710).
Fielding, Henry. *Tom Jones*, “Preface” (1749).
Fontenelle, Bernard le Bovier de. *Entretiens sûr les pluralities des Mondes* (1686).
Gonzales, Domingo [Francis Godwin, Bishop]. *A Voyage to the Moone* (1620).
Hoffman, E. A. “The Sandman” (1816).
Hooke, Robert. *Micrographia* (1665) [Selections].
Milton, John. *Paradise Lost* (1666) [Selections].
Sterne, Laurence. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759) [“The Tristopaedia”]
Swift, Jonathan, Dr. *The Battle of the Books* (1704).
— . *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) [bks 3&4].
Walpole, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).
- Campbell, Mary Baine. *Wonder and Science: Imagining Worlds in Early Modern Europe* (1999).
Dear, Peter. *Revolutionizing the science: European knowledge and its ambitions, 1500-1700* (2001).
— . “Method and the Study of Nature,” Garber, Daniel and Michael Ayers, ed. *Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*. ed. Garber, Daniel and Michael Ayers. (Cambridge 1998).
— . *The Literary Structure of Scientific Argument* (1991).
Merchant, Caroline. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (1980)
McKeon, Michael. *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (1987).
Poovey, Mary. *A History of the Modern Fact* (1998).
Rogers, John. *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton* (1998).
Shapin, Steven. *A Social History of Truth* (1994).
Shapin, Steven and Simon Schaffer. *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* (1985).
Shapiro, Barbara. *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720* (2000).
— . *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England*. (1983).





Tisha Bender. *Discussion-Based Online Teaching to Enhance Student Learning: Theory, Practice, and Assessment*. 2nd ed. Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2012. ISBN: 978-1579227470.

bell hooks. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Routledge, 1994. ISBN: 0-415-90808-6.

Peter Elbow. *Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*. 1981. 2nd ed. Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN: 0-19-512018-3.

Elaine Showalter. *Teaching Literature*. Blackwell Publishing, 2003. ISBN: 0-631-22624-9.

A handful of theoretical articles will be uploaded to D2L for students' free access.