

## **ENGL 676 Critical Approaches to Literature and Composition**

### **Devotion, Idolatry, and Art**

W 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Dr. Michael T. Williamson

What do we discover when we read and respond to literature? How do theories of composition – including theories of literary style, theories of composure (meditation, prayer, daydreaming, etc.), and theories that urge us to synthesize or pull apart the relationship between the human, natural, and divine (or supernatural) world – enable us to understand those discoveries? What strategies can we use as writers, readers, researchers, and teachers to convey those understandings to others? In three units, we will consider these questions across thousands of years of literary work. Unit One will explore Devotion in Literature. We will read Psalms (9th to 4th centuries BCE), Pindaric Victory Odes (5th century BCE – celebrating Olympic Victors), George Herbert's *The Temple* (1633), and selections from Christina Rossetti's poetry. We will also consider the structure of Biblical poetry and compare that structure to other modes of composition. Unit Two will examine the theme of Idolatry in two novels by Charlotte Brontë – the well-known *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853),

Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*

UNIT THREE: ART

Chaim Potok, *My Name is Asher Lev*

Kathleen Norris, *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*

Richard E. Miller, "The Arts of Complicity"

**ENGL 760/860 Teaching College Literature**

**Teaching College Literature with a Student-Centered**

teacher and the student, challenges and rewards of teaching college literature in challenging times, the relationship between instructor's academic freedom, one's class, and



**ENGL 772/872                      Literature**  
**Jane Austen & the Novel of Refusal**  
TH 3:45-6:15 pm  
Dr. Melanie Holm

In Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, her less than dreamy leading man, Henry Tilney declares unchallenged and unbeckoned that "a woman's only power is the power of refusal." The maxim has a certain weight rolling off his tongue in the fictional world of the novel, but how do we take such a line coming from the pen of woman writer—especially if that pen belongs to as prolific, poised, quietly provocative a writer as Jane Austen?

In this course we will read all six of Jane Austen's novels in the order of their publication - *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *Northanger Abbey* (1818, posthumous), and *Persuasion* (1818, posthumous) - alongside selections from her juvenilia and unfinished works to ask questions concerning: what, if anything, she refuses; what the modes of that refusal might be; and what it means both now and then to deem her a "Woman Writer" and/or her work "Female novels." To achieve this end, various critical articles, contextualizing historical readings, excerpts from writers who influenced Austen's work and world, and modern-day adaptations will accompany our reading of the primary texts.

**ENGL 956 Literary Theory for Teachers and Scholarly Writers**  
W 6:30-9:00 pm  
Dr. Mike Sell

This course is a bookend with ENGL 955 History and Theory of Criticism, but focuses on more recent critical-theoretical writings and issues in English Studies and emphasizes both scholarly and pedagogical practice. The central question of the semester is, "Why theorize?" This has always been the subject of contentious debate among scholars and teachers, but it's a question that has taken on the contemporary burden of the ongoing crisis in the humanities and the widespread animus shown towards critical thinking, especially critical thinking about racism, nationalism, and gender/sexuality.

To get a sense of why there is so much contentiousness and to address the contemporary status of theory, we'll think in terms of three conceptual frameworks:

- (1) Theory is a way to address the four fundamental questions of literary study: Why should we read literature? What should we read? How should we read? and Who wrote the text/reads the text/teaches the text?
- (2) Theory is a canon of essays that do "theoretical" things.
- (3) Theory is a set of analytic and ethical guidelines for conceiving and implementing pedagogical practices that can help students engage meaningfully with literary texts.

What theories and writers will we explore? I'll send you a survey a month or so before the semester begins to