

## Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

- ENG 8460      Science & Fiction Before Sci-Fi  
                  Dr. Joseph Drury
- ENG 9520      Writing & Indigeneity  
                  Dr. Kimberly Takahata
- ENG 9730      Staging the Spanish Tragedy  
                  Dr. Alice Dailey
- GWS 8000      Critical Perspectives on Gender  
                  Dr. Travis Foster

ENG 8460 *Science & Fiction Before Sci-Fi*

Dr. Joseph Drury

**CRN 33402**

Thursday 7:30-9:30 pm



An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump by Joseph Wright of Derby

The first science fiction novel is often said to be Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. But what did literary authors have to say about science in the century and a half between the Scientific Revolution and the creation of the world's most famous monster, the period now known as the Enlightenment? In this course, students will read and analyze some of the key philosophical texts that helped establish the distinctive methodology and goals of the new science alongside a range of fictional texts—drama and poetry as well as novels—that explore its social and political implications in a nation with an emerging public sphere and an expanding global empire. While many British authors enthusiastically endorsed the epistemological principles and utopian goals of the Scientific Revolution and sought to incorporate them into the form and content of imaginative works of literature, others mocked natural

philosophers for pursuing useless knowledge, rejected their assumptions about human nature and warned of the alienating consequences of attempting to gain power over nature. Literary texts from the long eighteenth century will be read in conjunction with a range of critical, historical and theoretical readings that will introduce students to contemporary science studies and exciting new directions in the study of science and literature. In addition to *Frankenstein*, primary readings may include *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, poems by Alexander Pope, drama by Thomas Shadwell and Susanna Centlivre, and philosophical texts by Francis Bacon, Margaret Cavendish, and David Hume.

*\*This course fulfills the pre-1800 British/Irish literature requirement*

ENG 9520 *Writing & Indigeneity*

Dr. Kimberly Takahata

**CRN 33406**

Tuesday 5:20-7:20 pm

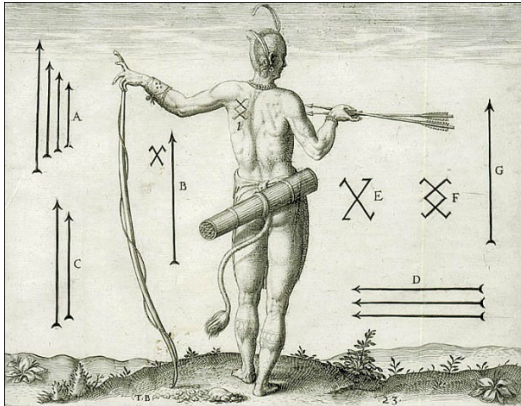


Illustration from Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the Newfound Land of Virginia*

This course examines how literature of the Anglophone colonies sought to clarify what it means to be Indigenous, especially in relationship to colonization. Troubling the divide between Indigenous stories and colonial writing, we will explore the bounds of authorship and textual legibility. Reading reports, natural histories, speeches, autobiographies, and poems, we will pay attention to two primary threads: one, how settlers used writing to codify the category of indigeneity as a tool of colonial power; and two, how Indigenous persons' acts of sovereignty continue to mark colonial texts or use writing to refuse limited definitions of indigeneity. As a result, this class will also explore the progression of natural history and scientific racism as well as citizenship and belonging. Our secondary readings will introduce students to the field of Indigenous Studies and address on-going debates about methodological approaches to colonial texts of the long eighteenth-century Atlantic World.

*\*This course fulfills the pre-1900 American literature requirement (requirement currently suspended)*

ENG 9730 *Staging the Spanish Tragedy*

Dr. Alice Dailey

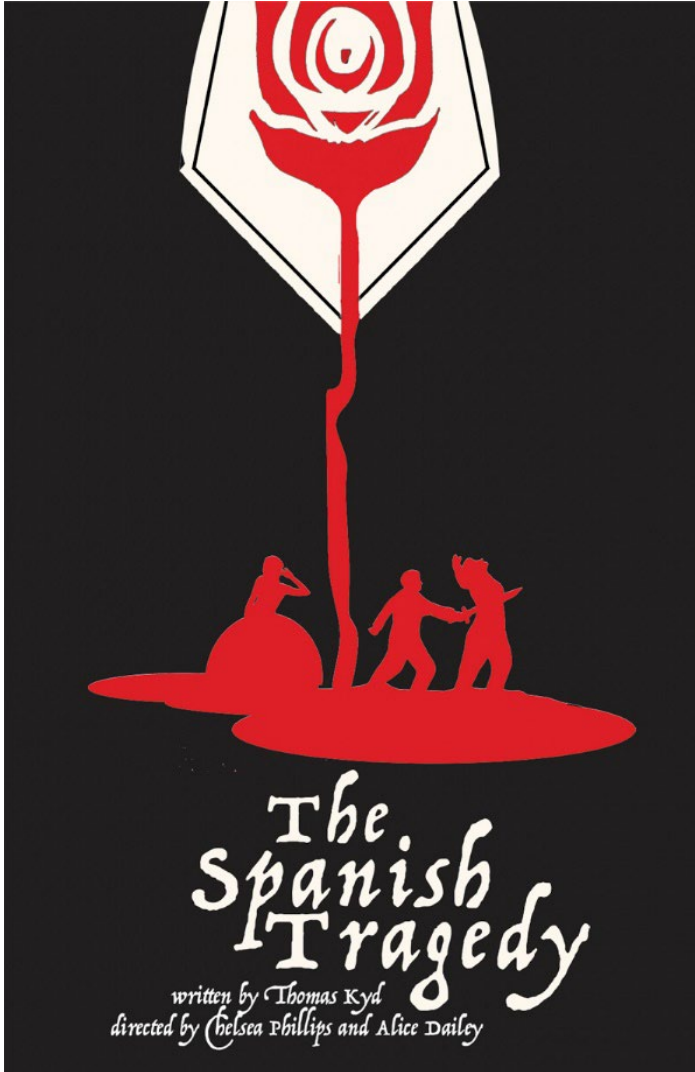
**CRN 33407**

Schedule TBD

*\*This course fulfills the  
pre-1800 British/Irish  
literature requirement*

This course creates an opportunity for students to participate for credit in

Villanova Theater's spring stage production of *The Spanish Tragedy*, co-directed by Dr. Alice Dailey (English) and Dr. Chelsea Phillips (Theater). Written by Thomas Kyd in the 1580s, *The Spanish Tragedy* is a frequently studied precursor to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that shaped the revenge narratives we continue to reproduce in popular media today, but it is rarely staged because of its considerable theatrical demands, including onstage hangings and multiple plays within plays. As collaborators in this project, students will work with professional artists and designers to bring this important revenge tragedy to the stage for what we believe to be its first full production in the United States in over 25 years. Students may contribute as actors (pending casting decisions) or as part of the crew and/or production team. Enrollment will enable students to work directly with our spring guest artist in residence, Mr. René Thornton, Jr., an actor and theater educator who has acted professionally in every play in the Shakespearean canon. The time commitment for the course will be light in January and February but intensive in March and early April and will include evening and weekend rehearsals (which can total up to 24 hours per week), depending on each student's function in the production. In addition to participation in the production, course requirements will include contributing to education workshops for spring ACS sections, working with the production's digital archive, and a comprehensive final paper. Auditions for speaking parts take place on November 16. Please contact Dr. Dailey ([alice.dailey@villanova.edu](mailto:alice.dailey@villanova.edu)) with any questions. Undergraduates should email Dr. Heather Hicks ([heather.hicks@villanova.edu](mailto:heather.hicks@villanova.edu)) to complete registration. Students do not need to be enrolled in the fall "Legacies of Revenge" course to participate.



# The Spanish Tragedy

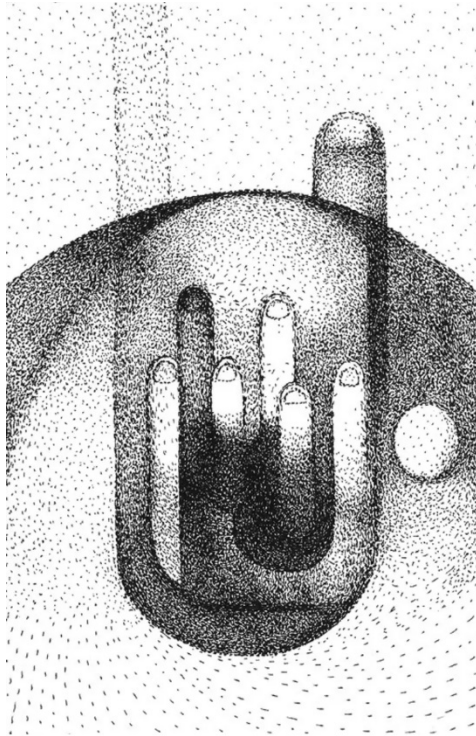
written by Thomas Kyd  
directed by Chelsea Phillips and Alice Dailey

GWS 8000 *Critical Perspectives on Gender*

Dr. Travis Foster

**CRN 33594**

Wednesday 5:20-7:20 pm



Yoko Ono, Watch Piece I

This course explores the enduring concept of “The Personal is Political” in Second Wave feminism, examining its impact on feminist activism, scholarship, and theory. We’ll highlight the historical significance feminists have placed on personal experience and everyday life as catalysts for political change, sources of knowledge production, and platforms for expression. While this perspective has empowered feminist scholarship to propose a more inclusive epistemological approach, it has also subjected feminist interventions to academic skepticism. Additionally, the

individualistic nature of this slogan—rooted in liberal feminist praxis and, some argue, a naïvely singular conceptualization of the self—has raised questions about its effectiveness in achieving lasting and systemic societal change.

Rather than dismissing “The Personal is Political” as anachronism, this course employs it as a critical lens to explore the evolution of feminist theory and its relevance for understanding our contemporary world. We will focus on dissecting the underlying assumptions linking the personal and the political, delving into how feminist theory grapples with issues regarding the self, subjectivity, agency, identity, history, and politics. How do we conceptualize the self, the subject, and their relationships with others? How does subjectivity intersect with power and politics?

Throughout, we will delve into questions such as what constitutes “good” gender and women's studies theorizing, how to identify gender-based oppression, and the intersections of gender with race, sexuality, and other power hierarchies. In so doing, we'll consider whether gender and women's studies theorizing can be a form of activism and how we might best teach theory in gender and women's studies classrooms. Finally, we'll assess the value of cultivating distinct methods for gender and women's studies research and pedagogy, delving into the research methods (and classroom practices) through which scholars have rooted knowledge production in feminist theoretical premises.

Throughout the course, students will:

- Explore feminist theoretical approaches, discerning commonalities and critically examining differences.
- Assess feminist theories rigorously and critically.
- Articulate how feminist theories inform academic research.



- Interrogate the usefulness of feminist methods when applied to research questions seemingly removed from typical GWS questions related to gender, race, and sexuality.
- Apply feminist theories and methods to investigate individual interests and research questions.
- Reflect on the interplay between feminist theory and concepts of subjectivity.
- Recognize the iterative and mutually influential nature of feminist theory, practice, and activism.
- Identify political and ethical dilemmas within feminist theory.
- And contemplate the collaborative essence of feminist theory and practice.

*\*This course automatically counts as an English course, meaning it does not count against students' two allotted courses 'outside the department'*

**ENG 8090: Thesis Direction**

**CRN 33399**

Direction of writing of the thesis, focused research on a narrowly defined question, under supervision of an individual instructor.

**ENG 8092: Field Examination**

**CRN 33400**

A broader exploration of a theme or area of literature than a thesis. The examination comprises a comprehensive statement essay and an oral exam component.

**ENG 9031: Independent Study**

**CRN 33403**

A special project pursued under the direction of an individual professor.

**ENG 9080: Thesis Continuation**

**CRN 33405**

**ENG 8093: Field Exam Continuation**

**CRN 33401**

ENG 9035

Dr. Evan Radcliffe

**CRN 33404**

### **Professional Research Option (PRO)**

This option for second-year graduate students is a three-credit independent study in which students identify one or a cluster of jobs or professions in which an advanced degree in literature is of benefit. In the course of the semester, students will research the career options of interest, identifying one or two fields as the focus of their work. They must generate a research paper that explores the history and future prospects of the field of interest, as well as current information about the requirements of the work, geographical information about centers of activity for the profession, and desirable employers. This research should include at least two meetings with professionals who work in the field. The paper must also analyze how advanced study of literature serves to enhance the students' desirability in the profession in question. As part of their final project, students must develop a cover letter outlining the ways their particular training makes them suitable to work in this field. Students will make their research available to other students in the program by uploading their final project onto a special section of the Graduate English Program blog. Potential fields of research include the following:

E-Book Industry

Teaching

Public relations

Rare book broker

Advertising

Web design

College admissions

Journalism

University administration

Testing industry

Arts administration

Tutoring industry

Library science

Technical writing

ENG 9800

**CRN 33408**

### **Internship in Teaching English**

Second-year graduate students have the option to serve as an intern for a graduate faculty member in an undergraduate English course. Interns will attend all class sessions, confer at least once with each student on their written work, lead two or three class sessions under the supervision of the faculty member, and complete a final project that is either (1) a substantial critical essay concerning the subject matter of the course or (2) a research project concerning trends and issues within college-level pedagogy. The aim of the program is to provide students with teaching and classroom experience. Students may apply to serve as interns by consulting with a faculty member who is teaching in an area of interest, and, if the faculty member is amenable, submitting a one-two page statement, outlining how this course addresses their larger intellectual goals, and what they hope to accomplish as an intern.