

Margo Kolenda-Mason

kolendam@umich.edu

Fall 2020

Office # 3154 Tisch Hall

Office hours: M, W, 12:30-1:30

ENG 6xx (Graduate Level)
Critical Time: Periodization and its Discontents

When we introduce ourselves to other literary scholars, we often primarily self-identify by time period. "I'm a modernist," you might say, as an instinctual response to the ubiquitous "what do you work on?"

This course thinks carefully about the traditional divisions within the field of literary studies into particular temporal eras. Where did these periods come from, we will ask, and what is at stake in our claiming them? How do other scholars resist traditional periodization, and why would they do so in the first place?

The majority of our reading will come from secondary literature. The first half of this course will be spent reading about theory and methodology about our relationship with the past as literary critics. In particular, we will consider controversial approaches to studying the past such as anachronistic and presentist reading practices. The second half of the class will focus on one traditional literary era each week as we evaluate the particular challenges to periodization held by each segment of history. Along the way, we will develop a working knowledge about what issues are unique to particular adjacent periods and what issues are endemic in our field as one that relies on periodization in its hiring practices, coursework, and scholarship.

The goal of this class is for each student to emerge with a clear sense of how they wish to articulate their field of research, the major issues of working within a particular time period, and thoughtful justifications for the start and end dates of their research. Additionally, we will survey a variety of methodological approaches, both with the aim of interpreting scholarship and beginning to formulate your own methodology. This course is designed with a flexible assignment sequence with digital and pedagogically focused options in addition to traditional genres such as the seminar paper.

Through taking this course, you will

- Detect and evaluate the methodological approach toward periodization in a scholarly argument
- Differentiate between historicism, presentism, anachronism, and other literary critical methods
- Articulate your own approach to interacting with your chosen time period
- Identify the main issues in breaking history into defined segments, as well as the issues facing each period of focus
- Craft arguments about secondary literature and literary criticism

Course Materials

- All materials will be available on the course website

Course Assignments:

In this course, you will have the opportunity to set your own assignment sequence-- you choose how you will demonstrate the knowledge and skills you gain in this course. Please choose your assignment options and **email the attached [and linked] assignment contract to me by [end of first week of class]**.

You may change your mind as the semester progresses, but for the in-class presentations must be on the google doc [include link] at least **one week** before your presentation. No more than 2 presentations may occur on any one day, so sign up early!

20 points will come from attendance and participation (10 pts each)—the other 80 can come from any combination of the following assignments

You may complete up to 110 points total—any extra credit will replace an equivalent amount of your lowest graded assignment.

- Lead a discussion on an article in class: 10pts
- Sample assignment for an undergraduate course on periodization: 15 pts
- Close reading essay (5-6 pages): 15 pts
- Academic book review: 20 pts
- Pedagogically-inclined presentation on anthology: 20 pts
- Conference-length paper on own theoretical engagement with periodization: 20 pts
- Digital humanities project: 30 pts
- Annotated bibliography of at least 10 sources: 30 pts
- Seminar paper: 40 pts

Daily Schedule

Week 1—Periodization:

Joel Burges and Amy Elias, *Time: A Vocabulary of the Present*
Raymond Williams. "Literature"

Week 2— Globalization:

Geraldine Heng "The Global Middle Ages"
Walter Cohen *A History of European Literature*

Week 3—Sexuality Studies:

Michel Foucault, *A History of Sexuality*
Jonathan Goldberg and Madhavi Menon: "Queering History"
David Halperin "How to do the History of Male Homosexuality"

Week 4 –Anachronism:

Srinivas Avaramudan. "The Return of Anachronism"
Thomas Greene, "History and Anachronism."
Susan Nakley. "Sovereignty Matters: Anachronism, Chaucer's Britain, and England's Future's Past."

Week 5— Anachronism 2:

Margreta DeGrazia, "Anachronism"
Patricia Clare Ingham. "Amorous Dispossession: Knowledge, Desire, and the Poet's Dead Body."
Maura Nolan "Historicism After Historicism."

Week 6— Presentism:

Robin Osborne. "Classical Presentism."
Evelyn Gajowski. "Beyond Historicism: Presentism, Subjectivity, Politics."
Bristol, Michael. "...And I'm the King of France"

Week 7— Presentism 2:

Evelyn Gajowski. "The Presence of the Past."
Terence Hawkes. *Shakespeare in the Present*.
Jonathan Tallant and David Ingram. "Nefarious Presentism."

Week 8—Classicalism:

Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho*
Sappho lyrics

Week 9—Anonymity:

Ardis Buterfield, "Why Medieval Lyric?"
lyric poems

Week 10—Medievalism:

Kathleen Davis, *Sovereignty and Periodization*
Celia Chazelle, et al. *Why the Middle Ages Matter*
George Edmonson. "Naked Chaucer."

Week 11 —Early Modernism:

Margreta DeGrazia "Soliloquies and Wages"
J. K. Barret, *Untold Futures*

Week 12—Romanticism:

Clifford Siskin, "The Problem with Periodization."
David Perkins, "The Construction of 'The Romantic Movement' As a Literary Classification"

Week 13—Victorian:

Emily Steinlight. "We have Awlawys been Presentist."
Kristen Mahoney, "'the Transition to Modernism': Recent Research on the Victorian/Modernism Divide"
Jessica Feldmen, *Victorian Modernism*

Week 14—Post-Modernism:

Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*
Leonard Orr, "Modernism and the Issue of Periodization"

Attendance Policy

- As this is a discussion based course, it is crucial that you are present to participate in the conversation.
- You may miss two classes without a valid excuse and receive no penalty. After 2 absences, you will lose one point from your final grade for each additional absence. Please let me know as soon as you know that you will miss class and we can determine if it qualifies as an excused absence (the ideal is to have a doctor's note or some sort of documentation).
- Out of respect for your time, we will begin class punctually; I will count three late arrivals (more than 5 minutes) as one absence. If you are coming from another class and getting here on time is an issue, please let me know.

Participation

We learn best when we are actively engaged in a classroom, when we are not just listening, but speaking. This class will be a space where we can try out new ideas and think through some issues together—in order for this to be the most effective, I expect every one of you to contribute to our conversation. Participation can take many forms, including:

- reading a section of the text out loud
- offering a comment or reflection about the readings during class
- posing a question or responding to others' questions
- identifying a passage or section that you find difficult to understand
- sharing an insight from your writing assignment
- posting an observation or question on our online course site
- making links between our discussions and events in the wider world
- listening carefully and respectfully to other students' contributions.

Effective participation also means being an engaged reader, marking up your text and taking notes as you read.

Computer Policy

- I would prefer that you use a print copy for all reading. Research shows that we absorb material better in print and I want you to be able to take notes and mark up your readings. If, for financial or accessibility reasons, an e-book is better, please let me know.
- On select days we may use computers in class—I will alert you of those days ahead of time so that you may prepare. I can provide access to a laptop if you do not have one.
- Cell phones provide a large distraction, both for you and your peers. As such, there will be a no cell phone policy in our space. If I see you using a phone, I will count you as absence for the day. Of course, if there is an emergency situation, just let me know that something is happening and you will be excused.

Late Policy

Any late work will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day that it is late unless you talk with me BEFORE the assignment is due. Late forum posts will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is defined by the University of Michigan as "academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. At a first offense, if it is minor, I will ask you to fix the issue immediately in order to receive a grade (improper formatting of citation). Any major offense (not citing a source, directly copying another's words) or a repeated offense will be treated as a plagiarism case. You will be subject to one of the following consequences:

- You will fail the assignment and may fail the course.
- I will report the incident to the Director of the English Department Writing Program.
- I will also forward your case, with an explanatory letter and all pertinent materials, to the LSA Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.
- The Dean will determine an appropriate penalty, which may involve academic probation and/or community service.
- If you commit plagiarism while you are already on probation for plagiarism, you may be asked to leave the University.

Office Hours

I am always around in my office, 3154 Tisch Hall, during my office hours, M W 12:30-1:130. I welcome you to come and chat with me at any point in your writing and reading process. I am happy to talk through ideas, troubleshoot writing issues, and go over past assignments. If you cannot make it into my office hours, just shoot me an email and I am happy to set up an appointment with you.

Accommodations

- If you have a disability and need an accommodation to participate in this class or to complete course requirements, please ask Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to provide documentation of the accommodations that you need. Then, please share this documentation with me as soon as possible, preferably within the first few weeks of class. I will treat as private and confidential any information that you share.
- If you suspect that you may have a disability and would like to be tested, Services for Students with Disabilities can provide free screenings and referrals to low-cost diagnostic services.
- Here is the contact information for Services for Students with Disabilities:
 - location: G-664 Haven Hall
 - phone: 734-763-3000
 - website: <http://ssd.umich.edu/>
- If you do not have a documented disability but feel like you would benefit from further educational support for other reasons, please contact me. I greatly value inclusivity within

the classroom and will work with you to find strategies and resources to ensure that you get the most out of this class.

Diversity Resources

- This classroom constitutes a community, and in order to have a successful community, it is essential that *all* members of the community feel respected. I'll do my best to run class in a way that allows all voices to equally participate and feel comfortable in our space. If there is ever an instance where you do not feel comfortable or welcome for any reason, I urge you to talk with me about it.
- Here is the contact information for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:
 - <https://odei.umich.edu/>
 - odei-info@umich.edu
 - (734)-764-3982
 - Fleming Administration Building/ 503 Thompson St

Mental Health Resources

- If you experience challenges that negatively affect your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence, difficulty with eating or sleeping, grief/loss, and alcohol or drug problems, the following several confidential services might be helpful:
 - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 734-764-8312
 - Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) 24-Hour Crisis Line: 734-936-3333
 - Psychiatric Emergency Services: 734-996-4747.

Writing Resources

- The Sweetland Center for Writing—located at 1310 North Quad—is an amazing, free resource! If you would like additional feedback or assistance as you're planning, drafting, or revising your writing assignments, you can schedule an individual appointment with a Sweetland faculty member, drop in for a peer-tutoring session, correspond online with a peer tutor, or submit your work online to receive feedback within 72 hours.
- For more information, please visit:
<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/undergraduate>.