New Course Proposal

When completed, this proposal should be submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Studies-Room 634T for consideration by the College Curriculum Committee.

1. Department (s) proposing this course: English

2. Title of the course: Foundations in Literature and the Law

Abbreviated title (up to 20 characters): Found Lit and Law

3. Level of this course:

   ___100 Level   ___200 Level   X 300 Level   ___400 Level

4. Course description as it is to appear in the College bulletin:

   (Write in complete sentences except for prerequisites, hours and credits.)

   This course will give students the tools to think and write effectively about the emerging interdisciplinary field of literature and the law. We will identify and question the basic rules and assumptions of both literature and the law, and examine the ways in which the two disciplines converge and diverge. Topics may include: literature and law as narrative systems; acts of interpretation; the status of facts; literature as a point of resistance to the law; the role of persuasion in law and storytelling; reading law as literature.

5. Has this course been taught on an experimental basis?

   _No

   X Yes: Semester (s) and year (s): Spring 2007

   Teacher (s): Tung

   Enrollment (s): 9

   Prerequisites (s): ENG 102/201 and either LIT 230, 231, 232 or 233

6. Prerequisites:

   • Literature 260, Introduction to Literary Study, and one of the Historical Perspectives Topics courses or
   • Permission of the Chair

7. Number of: class hours 3/week lab hours___ credits 3

8. Brief rationale for the course:

   Approved by College Council, March 19, 2008
All students in the proposed English major will be required to take this introduction to literature and the law. The interdisciplinary correlations between humanities and the law are a growing and vital subfield in literary studies that John Jay students are uniquely situated to explore. In bringing together the disparate perspectives of law, literature, philosophy, and history, this course prepares students for other 300-level courses in Literature and the Law, including LIT 315 (American Literature and the Law) and other electives. The extensive writing component, which necessitates reading and writing across disciplines, will also help prepare students to pursue many other upper-level humanities courses. Through the interdisciplinary outlook of this course students will develop skills for thinking and writing in today’s complex global society, in which problems are multi-dimensional and require more than one disciplinary perspective.

9a. Knowledge and performance objectives of this course: 
(What knowledge will the student be expected to acquire and what conceptual and applied skills will be learned in this course?)

Building on knowledge and skills acquired in Introduction to Literary Study, the student will become conversant with the basic vocabulary and critical issues in the field of literature and the law. Students will be evaluated on their ability to think, read, and write about specific topics suggested by the intersection of law and literature, including:

- legal implications of literary strategies and narratives
- literature as a critique of law
- literature as a discourse of imaginative reconstruction
- rhetoric, story-telling, and interpretation in literature and the law
- the social construction of knowledge and authority
- literature and law as instruments of hegemony

Specifically:

- Students will demonstrate critical interpretation of required readings

At least 10 one-page quizzes may be required; some will be done in class and some at home. Students may be required to rewrite their quizzes, based on instructor (written) and peer feedback (to be exchanged in group work sessions).

- Students will demonstrate a grasp of the interdisciplinary approach to humanities study, specifically of literature and the law

The topics of the quizzes will be controversial questions raised by the readings, which are chosen to provoke thought about counterpointing and/or complementary approaches across disciplines. In addition, classes may start with a team of question-presenters who are responsible for formulating questions based on passages of their choosing from the assigned texts. Thus, students will articulate the perspectives of literature and the law constantly, both verbally and in writing, from a standpoint of active inquiry.

- Progress will be mapped for each student by a portfolio of work and the instructor’s notes on the verbal component.

- Progress will also be mapped by the students’ performances on two rigorous exams
Both the midterm and the final will include a take-home essay (4-5 pages) worth 45% of the exam grade; the in-class portion of both exams will include writing short comments on selected passages, as well as a two-paragraph essay. Thus, students must write continually, both in class and out.

- Finally, the students’ achievements in the course will be measured by a research paper (6-8 pages)

The term paper will entail a research-oriented treatment of a topic that must have an interdisciplinary component, as well as an annotated bibliography of 4 to 6 items.

9b. Indicate learning objectives of this course related to information literacy.
Students will learn to:

- determine the nature and extent of the information needed
- access information effectively, efficiently, and appropriately
- evaluate critically both information and its sources

Specifically:

- Students will learn to use information effectively and responsibly.

They will be expected to consult the Library’s research librarian for help with their research papers.

- Students will learn how to do scholarly research and work.

Students will be expected to explore the Library’s impressive holdings in the area of law and justice; at the beginning of the year, they will be given a short introduction to the resources available for scholarly research (interlibrary loan, use of online databases through the library’s subscriptions, such as JSTOR and MLA, as well as databases intended for undergraduates, such as Twayne’s Author Series and the EbscoHOST Academic Search Premier index). They will be encouraged to take advantage of the premier research resources of New York City, including the main research libraries and the Mid-Manhattan lending library.

- Students will learn how to use and evaluate Internet resources.

Students will learn how to do a preliminary search on the Internet for general information and then how to follow up in a scholarly manner, by verifying the accuracy of information in legitimate scholarly sources.

10. Recommended writing assignments:
(Indicate types of writing assignments and number of pages of each type. Writing assignments should satisfy the College’s requirements for writing across the curriculum.)

- Bi-weekly Quizzes: Students will write 10 one-page essay quizzes (in-class and at home) on topics forming the basis of class discussions.

- Mid-term and Final Exams: The in-class portion of the midterm and final exams will ask for some short answers (30%), but will also include short essays (25%), including definitions of terms, as well as identifications and discussions of short passages covered in class discussions. The take-home portion (45%) of the midterm
and final exams will ask for short essays (4-5 pages) that call upon the student’s ability to apply the terms and methodologies presented in the course to a discussion of the topics and issues raised by the readings, and specifically, to apply an interdisciplinary approach.

- **Final Paper:** A 6-8 page research paper is required, which discusses one of the class topics in a primary fictional or non-fictional text (not read in class) from the perspective of at least one of the four modalities of literature and the law presented in the course; the paper must include the citation of at least 4 secondary sources and an annotated bibliography.

11. Will this course be part of any major (s) or program (s)?
   ____No
   ____Yes. Major or program: English
   What part of the major? (Prerequisite, core, skills, etc.)

   **It is one of the three required core courses in the proposed English major.**

12. Is this course related to other specific courses?
   ____No
   ____Yes. Indicate which course (s) and what the relationship will be (e.g., prerequisite, sequel, etc.).

   **It is an extension of the methodological and historical pedagogy begun in the prerequisite, Introduction to Literary Study, and along with Text and Context, it is part of the 300-level core requirement.**

13. Please meet with a member of the library faculty before answering question 13. The faculty member consulted should sign below. (Contact the library’s curriculum committee representative to identify which library faculty member to meet with).

   Identify and assess the adequacy of the following types of library resources to support this course: databases, books, periodicals. Attach a list of available resources.

   Attach a list of recommended resources that would further support this course. Both lists should be in a standard, recognized bibliographic format, preferably APA format.

   Signature of library faculty member consulted: [Ellen Sexton]________

   **This year the Library significantly increased its English literature, theory, and related print format collections in support of the expanding English Department curriculum.**

   The faculty members proposing to teach this course are providing the Library with lists of the secondary theory-based resources that they intend to incorporate into the research component of their course, in the expectation that the Library will make all reasonable efforts to purchase them.

   **The Library has extensive holdings in law- and justice-related materials, as well as access to many journal titles in the areas of English literature and theory in electronic format. The Library has a number of aggregate full-text journal**
collections, including JSTOR, Project Muse, EbscoHOST Academic Search Premier, and others, as well as access to some important literature indexes, such as the MLA bibliography, and resources targeted to undergraduates, such as Twayne’s Author Series and the Gale Literature Resource Center.

14. Are the current resources (e.g. computer labs, facilities, equipment) adequate to support this course?  **X** Yes

   ____ No

   If not, what resources will be necessary? With whom have these resource needs been discussed?

15. Syllabus: **Attached**

Attach a sample syllabus for this course. It should be based on the College’s model syllabus. The sample syllabus must include a week by week or class by class listing of topics, readings, other assignments, tests, papers due, or other scheduled parts of the course. It must also include proposed texts. It should indicate how much various assignments or tests will count towards final grades. (If this course has been taught on an experimental basis, an actual syllabus may be attached, if suitable.)

16. This section is to be completed by the chair(s) of the department(s) proposing the course.

Name(s) of the Chairperson(s): **Margaret Mikesell Tabb**

Has this proposal been approved at a meeting of the department curriculum committee?

___ No  **X** Yes: Meeting date: 9/25/07

When will this course be taught?

Every semester, starting ____Spring 2008________

One semester each year, starting ________________

Once every two years, starting ________________

How many sections of this course will be offered?  ____one, to begin with_____

Who will be assigned to teach this course?

**Toy-Fung Tung, Andrew Majeske, Veronica Hendrick, Liza Yukins**

Is this proposed course similar to or related to any course or major offered by any other department (s)?

___ No  **X** Yes. What course (s) or major (s) is this course similar or related to?

**Justice Studies Major**

**LIT 315. American Literature and the Law**

Did you consult with department (s) offering similar or related courses or majors?

___ Not applicable  ____No  **X** Yes

If yes, give a short summary of the consultation process and results.

Approved by College Council, March 19, 2008
Justice Studies majors will be encouraged to enroll in this course. *Foundations in Literature and the Law* will satisfy one of the literature requirements toward completion of the B.A. in Justice Studies, Part II, Disciplinary Component.

LIT 315, *American Literature and the Law*, is a more localized and historically specific course. LIT 315 foregrounds thematic elements; *Foundations in Literature and the Law* provides an interdisciplinary introduction to elements of form and content, and to prevailing theories about the intersections of the two disciplines.

Will any course be withdrawn if this course is approved?

[X] No

___ Yes, namely:

Signature (s) of chair of Department (s) proposing this course:

Date: 9/26/07______________

Revised: October 3, 2006
JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE, CUNY
445 W. 59th St., New York NY 10019
SAMPLE SYLLABUS FOR
FOUNDATIONS IN LITERATURE AND THE LAW

Professor: Toy-Fung Tung
Semester: XXXX
Course Code: LIT 3XX
Course Section: 01
Classroom: XXXX
Class times: XXXX
Office: 1263N
Office Hours: one hour prior to class; and by appointment
Contacts: office phone: (212) 237-8705; cell: (646) 456-0993
e-mail: ttung@jjay.cuny.edu

Course Prerequisites: LIT 260, Introduction to Literary Study, and one of the Historical Perspectives Topics courses required in the English Major; OR permission of the Chair.

Course Title: Foundations in Literature and the Law

Course Description: In this course students will be introduced to the relationships between literature and the law at the historical, practical, imaginative, and theoretical levels. The course will focus on the issues and questions raised by an examination of: 1) literary techniques in the law; 2) legal inquiries in literature; 3) how interpretation proceeds in law and literature; and 4) law and literature as discourses/narratives that reflect social aims. Through a selection of fictional and non-fictional texts, we will examine the limits of legal discourse and how literature and law address human and political dilemmas differently. We will ask some important questions. What should we do when the law conflicts with moral or religious values? Can the law be unjust? How does one decide what is just and unjust? What is the difference between law and justice? What is a good law? Can law protect/violate human rights?

Course Objectives: We will read and analyze selected primary texts and interpretative essays from the perspective of the four modalities of literature and law enumerated above. Through class discussions, consistent writing opportunities, and a research paper, students will become familiar with the basic vocabulary and critical issues in the field of literature and the law. Evaluations will be based on the ability to think, read, speak, and write on specific topics suggested by the intersection of law and literature, including:

- legal implications of literary strategies and narratives
- literature as a critique of law
- literature as a discourse of imaginative reconstruction
- rhetoric, story-telling, and interpretation in literature and the law
- the social construction of knowledge and authority
- literature and law as instruments of hegemony

The Writing Center: The Writing Center, located in room 2450 North Hall, is a service that provides free tutoring to students of John Jay. The Center has a staff of trained tutors who work with students to help them become more effective writers, from planning and organizing a paper, to writing and then proofreading it. The Writing Center is a valuable resource for any student of writing, and I encourage you to use it. If you are given a Referral Form to the Writing Center, you must attend to get further instruction on the specific items addressed on the form. This is not
optional. Students whose first language is not English may get additional, specialized assistance from the English Language Support Center.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism, along with cheating, and any unacknowledged use of someone else's work (published or not), violates CUNY policy on academic integrity, and no credit will be given for such submissions. See [http://www1.cuny.edu/portal_ur/content/2004/policies/image/policy.pdf](http://www1.cuny.edu/portal_ur/content/2004/policies/image/policy.pdf). By registering in this course, you are promising to abide by all the requirements stated in this policy. Students in breach of this policy are liable to severe penalty, including disciplinary action. See also pp. 44-5 of the JJC Undergraduate Bulletin for further explanation.

**Class Policies and Requirements:**
You are expected to attend every class. Attendance and participation in class discussions are essential to *passing* this course. *Four* unexcused absences will be tolerated; but if you are absent *more than six times without excuse, your grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a grade (e.g., B- to C+)* and you may be in jeopardy of failing *this course*. Leaving early without legitimate reason will count as a partial absence. Please observe common courtesy in class.

**Blackboard.** The use of Blackboard is essential to this class, as most of the readings will be made available in the “Course Documents” section of the Blackboard site for this class. You must be registered in this course before you can activate your Blackboard account. If you need help activating your Blackboard account, call DoIt at x8200. After that, if you continue to have difficulties, contact Professor Hong, the Blackboard webmaster: rhong@jjay.cuny.edu.

**Your grade will be determined roughly as follows:**
- In-class participation and one-page essay quizzes (8 of 10 will count): 15% of grade
- Midterm Exam (identification and short essays): 25% of grade
- Research paper (6-8 pages): 30% of grade — **Paper topic:** discuss one work (or part) that we read together with another work (or part) that you will read independently; or discuss a work we have read together and relate it to a historical context/situation that raises similar questions (or choose another topic in consultation with me); at least three secondary sources are required, along with footnote citation to them.
- Final Exam (identification and short essays): 30% of grade

**Extra credit opportunities will be offered on exams.**
REQUIRED TEXTS
(*handouts will be provided on Blackboard, noted on assignments as “*On BB”)

Required Books:


Required Articles and Excerpts:

Alighieri, Dante. "Tre donne intorno al cor" and the commentary by his son, Pietro Alighieri
Binder, Guyora, and Robert Weisberg, “Interpretive Crises in American Legal Thought.”
---. “Narrative Criticism of Law.”
Chrétien de Troyes. Excerpt of Lancelot's trial. Lancelot.
King, Martin Luther. “Letter From A Birmingham Jail.”
LaRue, Lewis H. “Telling Stories.”
Levinson, Sanford. “Law as Literature.”
Spivak, Gayatri. “Can the Subaltern Speak?”
Thoreau, Henry David. "Civil Disobedience."
---. “Reading Law and Reading Literature: Law as Language.”
Williams, Patricia. “The Pain of Word Bondage.”

Approved by College Council, March 19, 2008
ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

I. Literature and the Law as Discourses

“I myself do not think law is a humanity. It is a technique of government.”

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<tr>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Bring all four books to class; Note that “*On BB” items are available on Blackboard/Course Documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>*On BB: James Boyd White ”Reading Law and Reading Literature: Law as Language”; Dante's canzone &quot;Tre donne intorno al cor&quot; and the commentary by his son, Pietro Alighieri</td>
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II. Literature and the Law: Storytelling — Fact and Interpretation

“[F]actual’ history necessarily involves making ‘fictions,’ yet it cannot be purely fiction.” James Boyd White, p. 165.

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<th>Readings</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa's Rashômon---MOVIE</td>
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III. Natural Law and Positive Law

“Hence the Philosopher says in his Politics [3.4;1276b30] that 'in the perverted forms of government a good man is a bad citizen, whereas, in the true form, to be a good citizen is the same as being a good man.' And these true forms of government aim at liberty.” Dante Alighieri, Monarchia.

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<th>Readings</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class 7</td>
<td>Sophocles, Antigone, trans. David Grene, ll. 579 to end</td>
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### IV. Law, Society, and the Individual: Civil Disobedience, Trial, and Guilt

“[T]here are two types of laws: there are just and there are unjust laws. I would agree with Saint Augustine that ‘An unjust law is no law at all.’ . . . Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust.” Martin Luther King.

| Class 11 | Maryse Condé, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, part I, pp. 3-86 | Critiquing Law in Literature |
| Class 12 | Maryse Condé, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, part II, pp. 89-179 | Critiquing Law in Literature |
| Class 13 | Maryse Condé, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, “Historical Note,” p. 183 | Critiquing Law in Literature |
| Class 14 | *On BB: Michel Foucault, "Panopticism, “ from Discipline and Punish | Critiquing Law in Literature |
| Class 15 | *On BB: "Chrétien de Troyes, Lancelot's trial from Lancelot; Gottfried von Strassburg, Isolde’s trial from Tristan; François Rabelais, Pentagruel's judgment in the matter between the Lords Kissmyarse and Suckfizzle, from Gargantua and Pentagruel Take-home Midterm Due | Critiquing Law in Literature: oath and judicial combat--Foucault’s Leper Model; judicial investigation/crime--Foucault’s Plague Model |
| Class 16 | In-class Midterm Exam | |

### V. The Dispossessed and Disenfranchised

“[T]he colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as an animal, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform himself into an animal.” Aimé Césaire.

| Class 18 | *On BB: Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” | Literature and Law as Discourses of Power |
| Class 19 | Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham, pp. 31-57 | Literature and Law as Discourses of Power |
| Class 20 | Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham, pp. 57-78 | Literature and Law as Discourses of Power |

Approved by College Council, March 19, 2008
VI. **Rewriting History and the Law: A Fiction More True Than Fact?**

“Yas, suh, I’ve l’arnt all dat in Sunday-school . . . . But it ‘pears ter me dat dis fergitfulniss an’ fergivniss is pretty one-sided. De w’ite folks don’ fergive nothin’ de niggers does.” Charles W. Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition.*

| Class 21 | *On BB: Guyora Binder & Robert Weisberg: “Narrative Criticism of Law” | Law as a Narrative System |
| Class 26 | Charles W. Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition,* chaps. 16-27, pp. 91-153. | Literature and Law as Narrative Systems |
| Class 27 | Charles W. Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition,* chaps. 28-37, pp. 154-213. | Literature and Law as Narrative Systems |
| Class 28 | *On BB: Fyodor Dostoevsky. Book V, "The Grand Inquisitor," [from *The Brothers Karamazov*] Review for In-class Final Exam Take-home Final Due | Summation |

**FINAL EXAMINATION:** Per College Calendar
BIBLIOGRAPHY for Foundations in Literature and the Law


