

ENG 400 SEMINARS

Summer 1:

Case Studies in Historicisms, Dr. Carolyn Sorisio

This seminar builds upon ENG 295, asking how and why we study texts from the past. Beginning with my scholarship on the nineteenth-century American Indian activist Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, we will consider what constitutes a productive historical inquiry; how we summarize and synthesize existing scholarship related to an inquiry; how we identify gaps in the scholarship; and, how we locate and conceptualize an archive for research that produces new knowledge and challenges previous assumptions. Additional case studies will underscore how exciting historical discovery can be, especially as related to the recovery of unknown or neglected authors. It will also allow us to consider the political implications of archival work and archives. You will perform historical research for a final project, based on our case studies, suggested topics, or a text or author you want to study through historical methods. Interested students can learn more about my research at this link: <https://www.wcupa.edu/arts-humanities/english/cSorisio.aspx>.

Summer 2:

Toni Morrison Seminar: The Trilogy, Dr. Cherise Pollard

Toni Morrison is perhaps the most popular contemporary African American woman novelist and cultural critic. Morrison's work has garnered multiple high profile prizes and honors, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, The Nobel Prize for Literature, and The Presidential Medal of Freedom and her novels and criticism are widely taught. The primary focus of this seminar will be Toni Morrison's Trilogy: *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise* (1997). This trilogy is not defined by any shared character or plot line; instead, the connection is thematic. Issues related to American culture, history, memory, spirituality and religion unite these texts.

Throughout this seminar, we will ask the following questions: what commentary do these texts make individually and as a group? How might we situate these novels in relation to Morrison's larger body of work, including literary criticism and cultural commentary? How might we position Morrison's late twentieth century work in relation to African American and American literary history?