

FALL 2023 LITERATURE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

NB: All classes meet in-person unless otherwise specified. Please double-check times and modalities against the university class schedule.

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Literature Theory and Research; Toni Morrison ; Caribbean Literature ; Noir Culture ;
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ENG 218

218: Literature is not a Luxury (Star) MW 1230-1345

The first purpose of this course will be for students to consider their relationships with the writing process, beginning with the moment of “sitting down and turning inward” that author Orhan Pamuk once described, in order to build “a new world with words.” Through our discussion of readings (nonfiction and short narratives) and informal assignments, this class offers a bridge between types and experiences of writing that students, by this point, have often felt to be separate, or even opposed to each other: writing for pleasure v. writing for a grade; writing personally v. writing academically; writing as freedom v. writing as an

exercise in conformity. While practicing essential elements such as clarity, the development of logical structure, and editing, students will also be asked to find their voices, perspectives, and personal pleasure in words to reinvigorate their style and writerly identities. Our readings will range from essays, speeches, and interviews with authors and philosophers, to works of fiction concerned with the main questions of our course: is literature a luxury or is it essential? What definitions of “luxury” and “essentialness” are necessary (not to mention a definition of “literature”) for assessing this question – and why does it matter? Along with informal writing assignments and three essays, the course will culminate with a hybrid assignment of both creative non-fiction (also known as a personal essay) (3-5 pages); a critical reflection on a piece of literature or art of your choice (3-5 pages); and an annotated bibliography of materials that you feel have influenced your sense of human values, judgment, character, sense of taste/humor, and aspirations.

218: Literature is not a Luxury (Kwok) W 1100-1215

Explore how the literary imagination shapes our ways of being in the world. Research and write about self-chosen topics that determine how the study of literature is uniquely suited to intervene in questions of social justice, personal identity, health, and wellness. Through research projects, group presentations, and related activities learn and practice academic success strategies and literary argumentation; develop information literacy; engage with the writing process including peer and faculty feedback, and practice a variety of rhetorical genres, both digital and print. (Course Attributes: E: Lifelong Learning Development)

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LOWER-DIVISION LITERATURE COURSES

250.01: Topics in Literature and Culture: Heroes and Anti-Heroes (Mylander) T 1100-1215

WHAT MAKES A HERO?

Detailed analysis of identity, power, hierarchy, and privilege in a wide range of literary, popular culture, and film texts. Consider what draws you to unlikely and reluctant heroes and see the traditions that your favorite characters draw on. Answer for yourself, what really counts as heroic?

Half of this course will take place online async– that is, you can complete course work on your own schedule online. We will meet just once a week on Tuesdays for lively conversation on the characters, archetypes, and narrative arcs that make you love (or love-to-hate) the stories we’ll be analyzing.

250.02: Topics in Literature and Culture Lyric Poem (Schoerke) MW 1530-1645

What is a lyric poem? What features do lyric poems share with song lyrics? How do poets create meaning and emotional resonance through lyric forms and conventions, especially by weaving together structural elements such as stanza, rhyme, and meter? How and why are pattern and variation, as in music, fundamental components of lyric poetry? We will explore these questions by reading lyrics written by a diverse variety of authors and from a sampling of literary eras, with a special focus on two kinds of lyric, the ballad and the sonnet, that began, respectively, in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and still thrive today.

250.03: Topics in Literature and Culture: Eco-Horror (Soliday) W 0930-1045

Since ancient times, artists have explored the horror of the human encounter with a Nature populated by weird beautiful creatures and strangely sentient landscapes. To what extent is nature *Other* to the human, with its own intentions; and how do close encounters with this Other transform the human? As climate change and species extinction alter our planet, what does eco-horror reveal about our relationship to nature? Texts include fairytales and myths; contemporary fiction by writers such as Jeff VanderMeer (*Annihilation*) and Silvia Moreno-Garcia (*Mexican Gothic*); and landscape painters such as Emily Carr or filmmakers like Alfred Hitchcock.

WRITING IN ENGLISH GWAR

480.01: Writing in English GWAR (Soliday) W 1230-1345

Foundational methods of close reading and precise writing about a diverse range of literary and rhetorical texts in English. Engagement with challenging texts to practice reading, thinking, writing, and revision as intertwined processes. Analysis of social constructions of power and privilege in English-language texts, which are interpreted within relevant generic, historical, or global contexts. Introduction to disciplinary and professional standards for rhetorically effective and responsibly supported writing across a range of genres. Practice reflecting on rhetorical decisions and articulating one's perspective within larger scholarly, professional, or civic conversations. For the junior year. (ABC/NC grading only)

ENG 480.02: Writing in English GWAR (Hanley) Hybrid: T 1400-1515 in person; R 1400–1515 synchronous online

Foundational methods of close reading and precise writing about a diverse range of literary and rhetorical texts in English. Engagement with challenging texts to practice reading, thinking, writing, and revision as intertwined processes. Analysis of social constructions of power and privilege in English-language texts, which are interpreted within relevant generic, historical, or global contexts. Introduction to disciplinary and professional standards for rhetorically effective and responsibly supported writing across a range of genres. Practice reflecting on rhetorical decisions and articulating one's perspective within larger scholarly, professional, or civic conversations. For the junior year. (ABC/NC grading only)

SURVEY COURSES

460: Literature in English to 1800 (Christmas) TR 0930-1045

Reading-intensive introduction to the history of a diversity of texts written in English before 1800, with a focus on identities, politics, and genres -- including life writing, lyric poetry, drama, satire, romance, and more -- emerging from changing ideas about selfhood, community, social order, race, gender, sexuality, nationhood, and sovereignty within an Atlantic world.

461: Literature in English Since 1800 (Green) TR 1530-1645

This is a lecture-discussion class, an introduction to the history and aesthetics of influential global texts written in English since 1800. We launch a survey of crucial and important texts, debates, and literary historical landmarks in the study of literature in English since 1800--politics, genres, and identities (including race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and more) emerging in the global aesthetic movements of romanticism, realism, modernism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism. An important goal is for each student to develop skills in the cogent presentation of written literary analysis on the major themes, texts, debates, and literary historical landmarks, evaluated both for content and quality of composition. Students will apply the major themes and perspectives to their critical interpretation of the literary texts--and discover the relevance and modernity of these vital and dynamic masterpieces. To paraphrase Bette Davis (*All About Eve*, 1950): *Fasten your seat belts, it's going to be a wild (and interesting) ride!*



461: Literature Since 1800 (Schoerke) MW 1700-1815

Reading-intensive introduction to the history of a diversity of texts written in English since 1800, with a focus on politics, genres, and identities—including race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and more—emerging in the Western aesthetic movements of Romanticism, Realism, Modernism, Postmodernism, and Postcolonialism. Course readings will include poetry by William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, T.S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, and Muriel Rukeyser; short fiction by Rebecca Harding Davis, Virginia Woolf, and Ernest Hemingway; and longer works: Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

SHAKESPEARE

583: Shakespeare: Representative Plays (Summit) TR 1230-1345

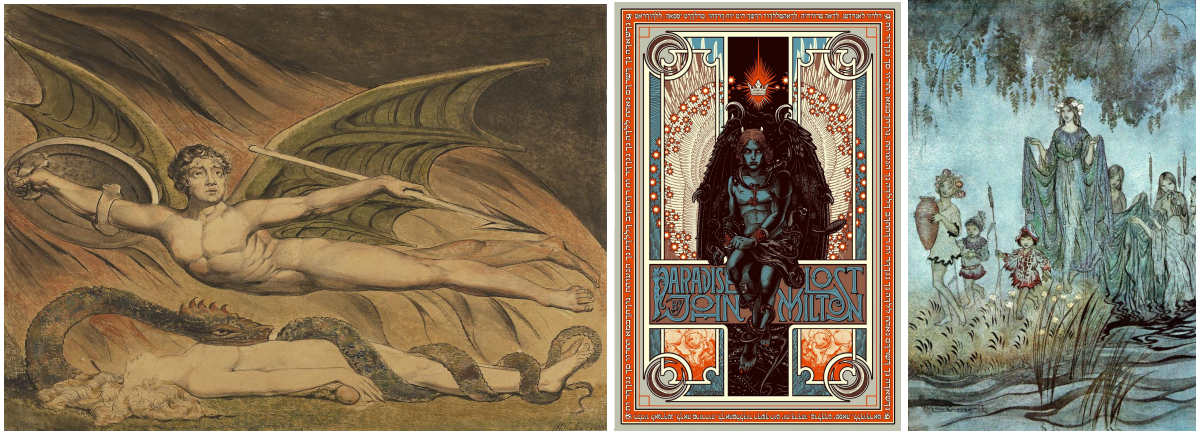
"My relationship . . . to the language of Shakespeare revealed itself as nothing less than my relationship to myself and my past. Under this light, this revelation, both myself and my past began slowly to open, perhaps the way a flower opens at morning."

- James Baldwin, *"Why I Stopped Hating Shakespeare"*

This course takes up James Baldwin's invitation to find in Shakespeare new perspectives on our past and ourselves. Writing at a time when the foundational ideas of the modern world—about self and other, nation and race, colonialism and power—were in formation, Shakespeare opens them to searching analysis in all their complexity. Through close reading and discussion of both texts and recorded performances, we examine how five key plays – a comedy, a history, a tragedy and two “problem” plays – helped both to form and question the Western idea of itself in the wider world.

PRE-1800 LITERATURE COURSES

589: Milton (Mylander) Hybrid: Tuesdays in person 1400-1515; Thursdays on Zoom 1400-1515



Feel like you're languishing? At 52 Milton was blind, in jail for political activism, a widower with 3 children, and he had not written the great work of literature he believed was his life's mission.

Come read *Paradise Lost*, an epic of resilience and grit.

We will read everything from political prose to some of the most famous verse in the English language.

Expect the unexpected: from female heroism to poignant descriptions of loss to the infamous antihero Satan, Milton asks the big questions. Graduate students welcome.

510: The Age of Wit (Christmas) TR 1230-1345

In this course, we will examine a selection of literature produced in Britain during the period 1660-1800, affectionately known as "the long eighteenth century." Since this course is no longer a period survey course, we are free to focus on its titular subject in more detail. "Wit" meant much more than mere cleverness, and so we'll pay attention to what counts as wit while also tracing the various ways wit functions in representative texts from the major literary genres of this period: drama, poetry, and prose fiction. We will approach these texts from a cultural-historical perspective, as we also attempt to understand each text in relation to the social, political, religious, and intellectual ideas circulating at the time. This course does not assume that you have a strong historical background in this era; only that you have a desire to learn about it, and put what you learn to use in your analysis of literary texts.

GLOBAL TEXTS & PRACTICES

640: Global Texts and Practices: Global Short Story (Green) TR 1230-1345

“No human culture is inaccessible to someone who makes the effort to understand, to learn, to inhabit another world.” Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

This course will be a mix of lecture and discussion. We will necessarily talk about the relationship between historical events, different cultural perspectives, and the short story form in global literature in English. Using short stories from a variety of cultures, traditions, perspectives, and literary styles, we will explore the uniqueness of cultural difference as well as the transcendence of general human qualities across cultures, time, and tradition.

THEORY/CRITICISM COURSES

611: Modern Criticism (Clark) MW 1100-1215

Close reading is one of literary studies’ most famous methods. But it is also a starting point for a diverse array of critical methods and practices. In this class, we pair some of the most important frameworks in literary studies with literary texts to explore the historicist, theoretical, and practical ways that literary critique is practiced in the university and beyond. Beginning with foundational areas of critique like New Historicism, Marxism, and Psychoanalysis, we will also explore how Postcolonial studies, queer theory, and Ethnic studies, among others, have made literary studies a key tool for cultural critique, structural analysis, and demystification, but also for literary play that is vital for a cultural and political climate where art is politically, economically, and culturally embattled. As a class, we will explore how the tools of literary analysis can reach outside of the classroom to our broader lives.

602: Literature and Society (Clark) MW 1400-1515

“What’s Queer About Gay Marriage? Radical Themes in Contemporary Queer Fiction, Film, & Criticism”



Should queer people assimilate to U.S. norms or focus on community independence? In this course, we explore how contemporary queer literature and film resists mainstream discourses that encourage LGBT

inclusion within institutions like marriage. In the quest for equal rights, what dimensions of queer life have been erased or minimized? Our course texts trace themes in contemporary activism, including economic marginalization, housing security, trans rights, racial discrimination, and U.S. imperialism through the lens brought by queer critics, activists, and artists. We ask: what worlds do queer theorists and artists imagine beyond the normative institutions and cultures that have been violent to queer life?

Texts may include: Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts*, Imogene Binnie's *Nevada*, Barry Jenkins' *Moonlight*, Sean Baker's *Tangerine*, Tommy Pico's *Nature Poem*, Rabih Alameddine's *The Angel of History*, Luis Negrón's *Mundo Cruel*, Jack Halberstam's *Trans**, and others.

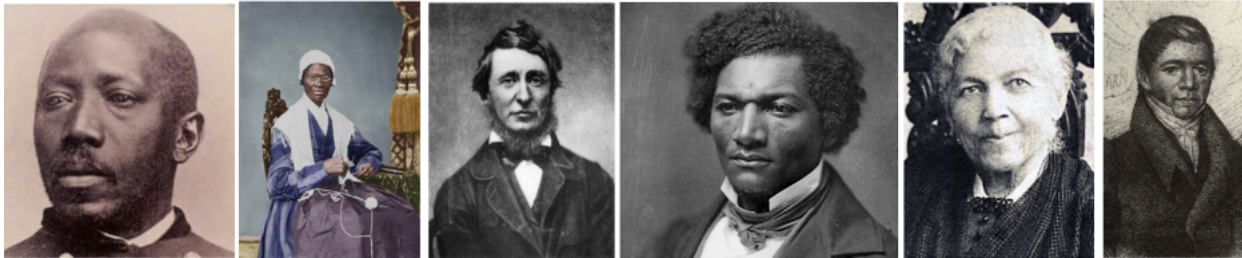
SENIOR SEMINAR

690: Senior Seminar: Literature and Ethics (Star) M 1700-1945

UPPER-DIVISION LITERATURE COURSES

526: Age of the American Renaissance: 1830-1860 (Clark) Tu 1400-1515

Democracy, Limited: Uncovering Voices of Protest in America's Literary Renaissance



Martin Delany

Sojourner Truth

Henry David Thoreau

Frederick Douglass

Harriet Jacobs

William Apess

The American Renaissance is one of the most famous periods in U.S. literary history, producing authors like Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and Herman Melville. It is also a period of intensifying social and civic exclusion. In our class, we recenter attention on authors who criticized U.S. racial and gendered inequality, like David Walker, Sojourner Truth, and William Apess. In tandem, we explore U.S. legal developments, including Supreme Court Case *Dred Scott v. Sanford* and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (ending the Mexican-American War); by pairing literature with U.S. law, we will build a deeper understanding of how literature both perpetuated and critiqued inequalities in U.S. democracy. Our aim is to re-examine the literary contributions of the American Renaissance by reading canonical authors alongside contemporaneous activist writing of women and people of color who were explicitly critical of the U.S. democratic project.

ENG 528: American Literature: 1914-1960 (Hanley) Hybrid: R 1530-1645 in person; R 1530-1645 synchronous online

Stories, drama, and criticism by such authors as Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, Wallace Stevens, Robert Lowell, and Sylvia Plath.

514: Age of Romanticism (Kwok) W 0930-1045

Poetry and prose of Blake, Coleridge, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats.

465: Post-Apocalyptic Science Fiction (Schoerke) MW 1230-1345

This course will investigate the proliferation of post-apocalyptic narratives in U.S. science fiction in the wake of the atomic era. Beginning with stories and novels from the 1940s, '50s, and '60s that envision human survival and the rebuilding of civilization after a nuclear holocaust, the course will examine fictional explorations of, and the corresponding ethical dilemmas raised by, a variety of post-apocalyptic scenarios, all of which reflect cultural anxieties in response to the threat of rapid change. The course will balance dystopian and utopian perspectives to reflect how mid to late twentieth-century science fiction not only engages in far-ranging socio-political critique but also envisions the possibilities for creating a better world.

*This course also fulfills the following GE requirements:

- Environmental Sustainability
- UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities

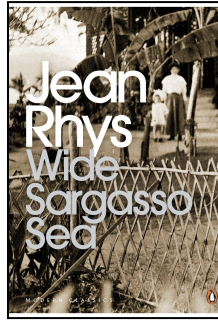
GRADUATE SEMINARS

780: Toni Morrison (Cannon) T 1800 2045

In this course, we will read all 11 novels written by Toni Morrison, the first African American woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Tackling topics such as familial bonds, emotional, sexual, and physical violence, and the effects of white supremacy in Black communities, Morrison tells stories that provoke, shatter, and heal. She reminds us of the power of language and our responsibility to nurture it. As Morrison stated in her 1993 Nobel Lecture: "We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives." Be prepared to read (a lot!), think, write, engage, and feel.



776: Caribbean Literature (De Guzman) W 1600-1845



This seminar introduces graduate students to Anglophone Caribbean literature, with a focus on Caribbean women writers. Readings and discussions will engage with colonial and postcolonial studies, topics such as colorism and sexuality, and the Caribbean's interventions in conceptions of modernity. The seminar will also help participants develop their research and writing skills.

742: Seminar: Studies in Criticism: Noir Culture (Green)T 6-845

Out of the Past and Into the Night: The *Noir* Vision in American Culture

"Is there any way to win?"

"There's a way to lose more slowly."

"I don't want to die!"

"Neither do I, baby, but if I do...I want to die last."

Alienation, violence, erotic obsession, love, betrayal, (justified) paranoia, existential dread, corruption, world weariness, despair, a struggle for redemption—all presented in hard-boiled language, pared-down writing, eerie, shadow-laden lighting, and a milieu of dream-like reality turned nightmare.

This seminar examines the history, issues, and theories of the *noir* vision in American culture as exemplified by literary and mass cultural "hard-boiled" or "pulp" fiction and its interactions with historical, social, political, psychological, and literary-cinematic contexts. We will focus special attention to themes of fragmentation, isolation, paranoia, urbanization, race, gender, and class conflict. From its early roots in Dashiell Hammett, James M. Cain and Raymond Chandler, through the novels of Vera Caspary, Dorothy B. Hughes, Patricia Hardwick, and on to the work of Chester Himes, Walter Mosley; from the films of John Huston, Jacques Tourneur, Howard Hawks, Billy Wilder, Abraham Polonsky, Carl Franklin—we will enter and wander down haunting alleys and byways, where the only faith is the absolute absence of faith, where every decision leads to a dead reckoning.



755: 19th-century Mystery (Hackenberg) M 1600-1845



From the “urban mysteries” phenomenon of the 1840s to the late-century reign of super-detectives such as Sherlock Holmes, stories of mystery rank high among the most popular narratives of the nineteenth century. In this course we will engage a substantial set of primary readings (and, later in the semester, viewings) to examine the cultural, ideological, and economic power of the modern mystery. As we encounter a cross-section of British and American mysteries, we’ll investigate how and why the mystery has become such a seductive narrative and cultural force.

741: Seminar: Literature Theory and Research Methods (Mylander) R 1600-1845 synchronous online

MA: THRIVING NOT SURVIVING

Practice practical skills of research, reading, and revision essential for graduate students. Class curriculum created based on interviews and surveys of graduate students from our program– what they wished they’d known sooner, what they’d been afraid to ask, what assignments had taught them the most, etc. Resource sharing about how to plan, adapt, and make the most of a Masters program designed to challenge you. Expect stimulating research and dense reading in a frank, thoughtful, productive environment designed for everyone to thrive. This course will meet on Zoom: no commuting required.