

LITERATURE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR FALL 2026

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

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Lower-division courses:

ENG 218: Literature is Not a Luxury: Writing for Self and Community, TuTh 11am-12:15pm (Star)

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.

ENG 250: Topics in Literature and Culture: The Vampire Tradition, MW 12:30-1:45pm (Hackenberg)



From Coleridge’s late 18th-century poem “Cristabel” to 21st-c TV shows *True Blood* and *Penny Dreadful*, vampires have titillated, horrified, and thrilled audiences in the English-speaking world with their transfiguring desires and insatiable hungers. This class begins with a brief consideration of the mythic and folkloric world origins of the vampire, and then turns to many of the artful vampire narratives – literary, cinematic, and televisual – that, over the past two centuries, have formed an Anglo-American “vampire tradition.”

ENG 300/CW 501: Graphic Memoir, MW 3:30-4:45pm (Hackenberg)



Graphic memoir is one of the fastest-growing genres today, and this class will explore why graphic memoirs are such a popular and powerful form. What does it mean to tell the true story of a life in an overtly constructed, artful, and serial format? How might the graphic memoir as a hybrid verbal-visual medium be especially useful for shaping memoirs that revel in hybridity: that explore the interwoven stories of children and parents, or include biographies of other people, or trace lives that move around the globe? How might recording moments in one’s life in this graphic way also work to transform one’s life? We will examine the poetics of the genre by investigating both its foundations and some of its most recent examples; then, we will work on mastering the genre by practicing it ourselves.

Writing in English GWAR:**ENG 480 GW: Writing In English: GWAR Seminar, TuTh 9:30am-10:45am (Christmas)**

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)

Pre-1800 Literature Course:**ENG 530: Early Atlantic Migrants and Texts, Tu 2-3:15pm bichronous online (Mylander)**

How can knowing our history equip us for a better future? Explore rare historic life writing, maps, illustrations, and novels – as well as contemporary art and social justice work.

Explore the literature of early British colonialism in the Atlantic world from c. 1600-1725, investigating texts in English about the history of contact and migration, including exchange with First Nations peoples and the early African diaspora. Reexamine popular twenty-first century narratives about the “birth” of the United States, analyzing both colonial marketing and life writing of immigrants themselves. Track exchange among Algonquian peoples and British migrants as well as ask whether we can recover the voices of indigenous Americans in surviving English-language texts. From the British Atlantic to the Black Atlantic, interrogate the foundations of the racial discourses that influence our society to this day by reading both secondary scholarship and rare primary texts.

Upper-division courses:

ENG 450/HUM 450/AMST 410: California Culture, W 4-6:45pm (Clark)

Dynamics of California society, literature, and culture in recent times: world oasis, flawed paradise, lifestyle crucible, and creative milieu. The function of California in American culture and Pacific relations.

ENG 460: Literature in English to 1800, TuTh 12:30-1:45pm (Christmas)

This is a survey course designed to introduce students to a representative selection of literature published in English from the Middle Ages through the Eighteenth Century. Given this chronological breadth, we cannot possibly attain anything like "coverage." However, this course aims to provide students with a broad sense of the literary historical and cultural developments that took place during this period. We will pay particular attention to the following topics throughout the semester: Poetics (focusing on connections between poets, poetic forms, and poetic movements rather than teleological development), the early novel in English, drama in English, transatlanticism, abolition, colonialism, and representations of women and the laboring classes (to name a few). This class will be discussion-based, with some mini-lectures built in on a regular basis.

ENG 461: Literature in English Since 1800, W 4-6:45pm (Cannon)

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 global aesthetic movements of romanticism, realism, modernism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism

ENG 550: Rise of the Novel, Th 6-8:45pm (Star)

The very phrase "The Rise of the Novel" (coined by Ian Watt in 1957) has been used to describe a phenomenon and genre that were revolutionary in 18th-and 19th-century literature, and yet not without casualties and beneficiaries, particularly among women. Among the many roles women played in the novel's origin the one we'll consider in this course is female sexuality. Where would the novel have been without both the desirability

and destructiveness it assigned to women? How else could both pleasure and the policing of it coexist without the promise of eros – with all its risks and rewards? The “rises” and “falls” of women in these novels, and even among female authors, took on a power of their own, influencing the larger morality of English culture and how it both codified and challenged the rules around women’s bodies, social value, and their agency. The five novels we’ll read (*Fantomina*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Evelina*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Adam Bede*) are landmarks in the complex story of women, sex, and how the novel “rose.” Looking at each in their cultural moment, we’ll consider questions of value that the novel form foreground. What do we read as a “progress” and what do we read as a “failure”, especially if an artistic “rise,” like so many others (and even if in the hands of a female author), required subjection, limitation, fear, or harm?

ENG 583: Shakespeare: Representative Plays, TuTh 11am-12:15pm, synchronous online (Mylander)

Active Zoom conversations employing both theatrical and literary modes of analyzing Shakespeare’s living texts. Consider Shakespeare as a global phenomenon, exploring productions from Mexico, India, Turkey, Lithuania, and more. Discover Shakespeare’s genius as an adapter of texts while tracking contemporary adaptations and reinventions of these classics. Complete a central project with linguistic, pedagogical, creative, and professional options; bring your interests and expertise to a unique project. If you decide to join us, expect to contribute to one of the liveliest courses you’ve ever had on Zoom.

Comedy, history, and tragedy all represented. Fulfills the Shakespeare requirement for all concentrations. Non-English-majors welcome!

ENG 600: Theory of Literature, MW 11am-12:15pm (DeGuzman)

Analysis of literature as a symbolic action. Exploration of the recurring motives and concepts which figure in formal appeals, the relationship between literature and rhetoric, and the tactics and grounds of persuasion in literature.

GRADUATE SEMINARS

ENG 741: Seminar: Literature Theory and Research Methods, W 3-5:45pm synchronous online (Mylander)

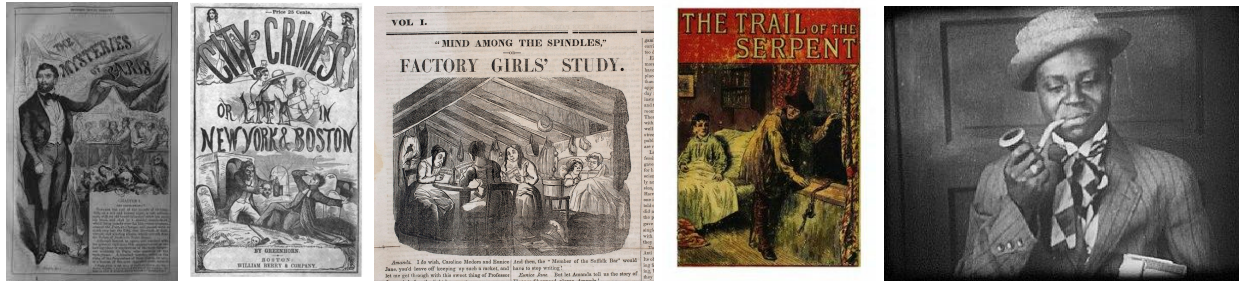
MA: THRIVING NOT SURVIVING

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.

ENG 753: 18th-century Poetry, TuTh 3:30-4:45pm (Christmas)

This course aims to provide a broad – and at times I hope an in-depth – survey of the poetry published in Britain during the long eighteenth century (1660-1800). We will read a wide array of poems by a variety of poets, both male and female, both “canonized” and obscure. The organizing principle for the course is thematic. Each of our meetings will focus on poems connected in some way to a specific theme or topic prominent in this period. We will be interested not only in what poets had to say about these topics in their work, but also how they chose to represent their ideas and feelings in verse. Eighteenth-century poems certainly offer us windows into a “world we have lost,” but they also demand to be treated as poems, and so we will develop a critical discourse about the formal features of these poems as well.

ENG 755: 19th-century Mystery, W 6-8:45pm (Hackenberg)



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.

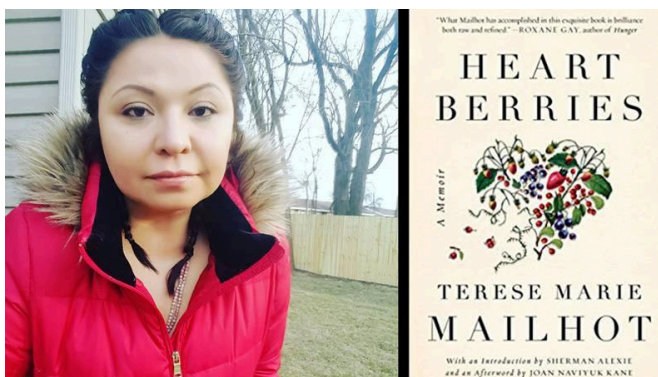
ENG 756: 20th-century English Literature, M 4-6:45pm (DeGuzman)

Examination of topics in 20th century English literature.

ENG 790: American Autobiography, M 5-7:45pm (Cannon)

What assumptions do we make when we read a text that is labeled an autobiography? Often we assume that an autobiography is a true, first-person, written narrative of one person’s life. Despite the fact that readers do tend to enter what Philippe Lejeune famously labeled the autobiographical pact (that is, the reader assumes that the author, narrator, and protagonist of an autobiographical text are one in the same), life narratives are, indeed, constructed texts that are subject to the artistic impulses and imperfect memory of their writers. Our aim as scholars of Life Writing is not to discern whether an event in a memoir “really” happened; rather, it is to explore how autobiographers frame their narratives, how they position themselves in relation to earlier autobiographical and other literary traditions, and how the relationship between narrator and reader becomes, to quote Sidonie Smith and Julia

Watson, an “intersubjective exchange. . . aimed at producing a shared understanding of the meaning of a life.” We will explore how Life Writing is inextricably linked to the American mythologies of rugged individualism and self-invention as well as how members of historically marginalized groups have reconfigured the genre of autobiography for their own purpose.



ENG 803: Teaching Practicum: Literature, Fri 1-3pm synchronous online (DeGuzman)

This course offers graduate students the opportunity to learn about the teaching of literature by assisting professors in running a seminar or lecture course. In addition to the hands-on experience of working closely with a professor as a TO, students participate in a series of workshops designed to introduce them to a variety of pedagogical issues and theories. Students will develop and hone pedagogical skills through professor-led workshops, observation of professors in class, and supervised practice of a variety of pedagogical tasks.

Under the direct guidance of a professor, observing an undergraduate class, students will have the opportunity to learn about:

- Designing lesson plans, breakout discussion sessions and whole-class discussion
- Assessment practices (including assessing undergraduate writing and student progress by practicing evaluating samples of quizzes, papers, and/or exams)*
- Designing a “dream” syllabus

- Crafting a teaching philosophy statement

**Please note: TOs may practice making comments and offering grade suggestions on subsets of assignments but the instructor of record is responsible for all comments and final grades on all assignments.*