

SPRING 2024 LITERATURE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS  
(as of 11/14/23)



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

ENG 218

**ENG 218.01: Literature is not a luxury (De Guzman) TR 1230-1345**

English 218 is a writing and research class primarily designed for students majoring in English. You will learn how to read closely, how to write better, and how the literary imagination shapes your experience of the world. You will select your own specific topics as you make connections between literature and issues of racial justice, health, and well-being. During the first few weeks of the semester, we will read a set of literary texts together—most notably Bay Area poet Janice Lobo Sapigao’s book *microchips for millions* (2016). We will practice asking questions about literature, developing analyses, and describing what we read to audiences beyond the classroom. In the second half of the semester, you will undertake a research project based on a literary text of your choice.

**ENG 218.02: Literature is not a luxury MW 1230-1345 (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.

### LOWER-DIVISION LITERATURE COURSES

#### **ENG 250.01: Topics in Literature and Culture: The Vampire Tradition (Hackenberg) MW 1230-1345**



From Coleridge’s late 18<sup>th</sup>-century poem “Cristabel” to 21<sup>st</sup>-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 250.02: Topics in Literature and Culture: Reading the Landscape (Jones) T 1230-1345**

The novelists, poets, and essayists of this course urge us to see the interconnectedness of all things and to regard literature as a vehicle for this recognition. Indeed, the writers and artists of this course show us the binary thinking at the root of our current ecological crisis and offer ways of seeing people and place that neither romanticizes the natural world nor

regards it as a problem to be solved. Taken together, the materials of this course make the case that literature and art have a distinct role in helping us understand and respond to a world that is increasingly out of balance.

### WRITING IN ENGLISH GVAR

#### **480.01: Writing in English GVAR (Clark) MW 0930-1045**

This GVAR has a special theme tuned to the various ways we write across literary and other disciplines: it considers writing for the public, learning about the law, and bringing literary insights to our writing practices. The history of U.S. racism is written deeply into our laws as much as our social fabric. But does the law have the final say on the shape our race in our society? In this class, we investigate how U.S. literature both critiques and imagines alternate futures to the history of racism that governs U.S. society, past and present. After reading major texts from critical race theory's creators Derrick Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw, we turn to literature: starting from 19<sup>th</sup> century authors like Pauline Hopkins, Sui Sin Far, and Herman Melville to more recent authors like Toni Morrison, Arturo Islas, and Brandon Taylor, we trace how literature critiques the exclusionary history of U.S. law and envisions social worlds beyond the unequal conditions of the present. Across the class, we write across genres, for academic and public audiences, and learn what literary methods bring to other spheres of writing.

#### **480.02: Writing in English GVAR (Jones) T 1400-1515**

Foundational methods of close reading and precise writing. Engagement with difficult texts to practice reading, thinking, and writing as intertwined processes. Practice placing inquiry and interpretation within relevant contexts and conversations, and in reflecting on rhetorical decisions. Introduction to disciplinary and professional standards for rhetorically effective and responsibly supported writing across a range of genres. Majors are advised to take the course during their junior year.

## SURVEY COURSES

### **ENG 460: Literature in English to 1800 (Christmas) TR 1530-1645**

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 (Clark) MW 1530-1645**

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.

## SHAKESPEARE

### **ENG 583: Shakespeare: Representative Plays (Summit) MW 1400-1515**

*“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 COURSE

#### **503: Studies in Medieval Literature: Chaucer’s Women: Faith, Sex and Subversion in the Middle Ages (Summit) MW 1700-1815**

Conventional wisdom associates the Middle Ages with oppression, rigidity, and backwardness-- but medieval women tell a different story. As feminist scholars are showing, the Middle Ages might be seen as a golden age of female creativity and agency when compared to later periods, in which women were subject to many stronger constraints. Focusing on the writings of Chaucer and his female contemporaries, this course revisits the Middle Ages with an eye to the diverse roles, stories and experiences of women. By reviewing medieval literature through a range of canonical, popular and religious writings, we will likewise reconsider the cultural legacy of the Middle Ages in our own age.



### GLOBAL TEXTS & PRACTICES

#### **640.01: Global Texts and Practices: Global Cities (De Guzman) R 1600-1845**

Cities dazzle, concentrate, and attract. But cities also oppress, divide, and repel. This course explores the very concept of “the city,” with particular attention to the topics of globalization, migration, and gentrification. The course will cover literary and visual texts set in cities such as San Francisco, Manila, and London. Ongoing questions we will ask throughout the semester include: Who has “the right to the city”? How can we “read” a

city? What are the difficulties in representing a city? Teaching methods used in this class include interactive lectures, small group activities, and analytical writing exercises.

**640.02: 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 (Kwok) M 0930-1045**

Through a close reading of selected texts in literature and criticism, we will examine how the phenomenon of “literature” and the notion of “literariness” have been defined and characterized in modern times. Among the topics we will be exploring together: the relationships between literature and history, literature and ethics, literature and politics; the ontology of the literary work; the debates over canonization; the polemic over feminist criticism, cultural criticism, and postcolonial criticism; the responsibility of the intellectual as literary scholar, critic, and teacher.

**602: Literature and Society (Clark) MW 1100-1215**

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

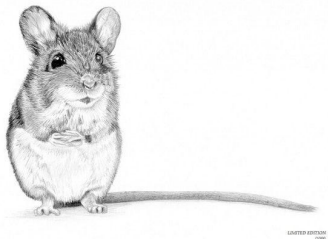


Should queer people assimilate to U.S. norms or focus on community independence? In this course, we explore how contemporary queer literature and film resists mainstream discourses that encourage LGBT inclusion within institutions like marriage. In the quest for equal rights, what dimensions of queer 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*, Imogine 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: Animal Studies and Literature (Stec) T 1600-1845**



The interdisciplinary field of “animal studies” has flourished in the past several decades resulting in thousands of scholarly works that investigate the concept of the “animal,” and the relationship between the human and the non-human animal, from many different perspectives: biological, ethological, philosophical, ethical, legal, spiritual, etc. In this course, we will sample some of the myriad literary works that imagine animal life and that tackle questions pertinent to the relationship between humans and other animals (authors range from H.G. Wells to T.C. Boyle). We will also dip into some of the theoretical work surrounding the issues of: species boundaries; laboratory experiments; animals’ legal “rights”; the use of animals for human food and other products; “bioart”; cloning; and competition between species for earth’s resources. Because our main focus will be on literary works, questions of representation and its limits will be persistent in our

discussions. Any textual animal is necessarily metaphorical. We will, however, be at pains to think deeply about animals as not just metaphors, but as real flesh-and-blood creatures with whom we share the earth and over whom we have considerable power. These literary works will help us to think about the ways we represent animals to ourselves and how those representations connect with numerous systems of economic, social, and “bio” power. Final research project on a topic of your choice within the parameters of our course.

### UPPER-DIVISION LITERATURE COURSES

#### **ENG 514: Age of the Romantics (Kwok) W 1100-1215**

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

#### **ENG 525: Studies in American Literature: Bob Dylan (Green) TR 1530-1645**

Bob Dylan’s career spans well over half a century, culminating in his receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016. In addition to establishing himself as a songwriter, performer, film actor, memoirist, poet, radio DJ, and social commentator, he reflects, in a unique manner, the prevailing cultural issues of our time. Utilizing a variety of literary masks and disposable identities, he remains an artist of continued relevance, expanding and redefining our conception of literature. We will examine trends and conflicts of contemporary culture (war, poverty, race, social change, gender roles, tradition, identity, authenticity, etc.) through the literary work of Bob Dylan (songs, texts, poems, films, memoir, essays).

#### **ENG 580: Individual Authors: The Brontës (Star) MW 1700-1815**

#### **ENG 581: Jane Austen (Christmas) TR 1230-1345**

This course is devoted to an in-depth study of both Austen’s achievement as a novelist and the role(s) her novels and authorial persona continue to play internationally within contemporary popular culture. We will read an example of Austen’s juvenilia (“Love and Freindship” [that’s not a typo]) and her six published novels closely focusing on a wide variety of thematic and aesthetic topics. In addition, we will discuss various modern forms of Austenian adaptation, from feature film scenes to children’s books. Students will also do research on their own topic regarding Austen and popular culture which will be presented at the end of the semester. Written work will include short papers and an end-of-semester critical/creative project.

This course also fulfills the following GE requirements:

- UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities



## ENG 630: Selected Studies: Detective Fiction (Hackenberg) M 1600-1845



G. K. Chesterton once asserted that the detective story “is the earliest and only form of popular literature in which is expressed some sense of the poetry of modern life”; Gertrude Stein even more grandly pronounced the detective story to be “the only really modern novel form that has come into existence.” This course explores the development, poetics, popularity, poetry, and modernity of detective fiction, moving from its modern origins in the 1840s to our own modern present day.

Authors we will read include: the Baroness Orczy, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Raymond Chandler, G.K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie, Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle, Charles Dickens, Sue Grafton, Anna Katherine Green, Dashiell Hammett, Pauline Hopkins, Herman Melville, Michael Ondaajte, Catherine Pirkis, Edgar Allan Poe, Dorothy Sayers, Gertrude Stein, George Thompson, and Metta Fuller Victor.

## GRADUATE SEMINARS

### **ENG 741: Seminar: Literature Theory and Research Methods (Green) T 1800-2045**

Prerequisite: classified graduate status in English literature master's degree program or consent of instructor. Theories of literature and practice in the researched criticism of literature, leading to a major essay involving research. The M.A. Portal Course. How do we make literary distinctions and why? What is literary theory? Who are literary theorists? Is literature a realm unto itself or does it interact with the world and its political/social/cultural institutions? What constitutes "literature"? What is meaning? What is esthetic value? This seminar will explore these and other issues of literary theory through a series of thematic "staged interactions." Our focus will be on applying literary theory to literary texts. And vice versa.

### **762: Twentieth-Century American Literature: Experimental Books (Schoerke) W 1800-2045**

Through a close reading of several important experimental books that combine poetry and prose, the seminar will explore the interrelation between these two genres in 20<sup>th</sup> century American writing. We will try to answer questions such as: Is there such a thing as "prose poetry"? What is genre--and is it obsolete? How and why have modern and post-modern poets incorporated prose techniques into their work? Texts will include William Carlos Williams's *Spring and All*; Marianne Moore's *Observations*; Jean Toomer's *Cane*; W. H. Auden's *The Sea and the Mirror*; Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*; Elizabeth Bishop's *Question of Travel*; Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*; and Tyhimba Jess's *Olio*.

### **780: Individual Authors: Highbrows-Lowbrows (Mylander) T 1700-1945 online synchronous**

## **HIGHBROWS LOWBROWS: POPULAR GENRES & ADAPTATION**

Many assume that the authors and genres that dominate university curriculum in the US today have always been respected. Hasn't the novel, for example, always been recognized as a sophisticated art form? But the literary canon is neither universal, apolitical, nor timeless. Even Shakespeare was once considered "lowbrow" entertainment. This class explores the concept of "popular literature" as it has transformed over time—focusing both on genres sometimes deemed "vulgar" and on popular adaptations of literature.

We will consider how genres that appeal to non-elite audiences—such as young adults, women, etc.—are often critically disparaged. We will explore the power and challenges of

adapting literature into new media, asking if adaptation should rightly be understood as a mode of interpretation.

Expect a wide, perhaps disparate, range of texts. Older texts will often be paired with newer adaptations: you may see Austen, Shakespeare, Dickens, Tolstoy, or McCarthy. Yet many of our central texts will come from the 20th and 21st centuries: from Bhardwaj's *Maqbool* to Oseman's *Heartstopper* to Yu's *Interior Chinatown*. This course will meet online: no commuting required.

### **753: Studies in 18th-century Literature: British Literature and Culture (Christmas) R 1800-2045**

This iteration of ENG 753 will focus on a survey of women writers who published during the long eighteenth century (1660–1800). As print technology expanded, as literacy rates increased, and as the opportunities for careers in letters rose, so too did the number of published women writers in this period. By the mid eighteenth century, women had forged a place for themselves in every major genre, often in the face of overt cultural criticism. These “Amazons of the pen,” as Samuel Johnson affectionately (if also apprehensively) called them, were important foremothers of modern feminism, as acknowledged by later women writers and intellectuals like Virginia Woolf. In our reading of a representative selection of poetry, novels, plays, and philosophical tracts by women writers, we will pay particular attention to issues of gender construction, gendered double standards, and the textual representation of female resistances to patriarchal authority in the period.

### **803: Teaching Practicum (Mylander) F 1230-1515 online synchronous**

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.*