The courses in English provide opportunity for the extensive and intensive study of literature for its aesthetic interest and value and for its historical and general cultural significance. English courses also provide instruction and practice in writing: some in scholarly and critical writing, others in creative writing.

Learning Outcomes – English Major

- **Major-Specific Areas of Knowledge**
  - Upon graduating, English majors will be able to perform sophisticated close readings of literary texts, applying genre-specific literary terminology in demonstrating their understanding of the relationship between form and content. They will be able to demonstrate their familiarity with various approaches to literary studies, to identify the effects of literary allusions, and to investigate the relationship between a text and the culture in which it was written.

- **Accessing Academic Community/Resources**
  - They will be able to make good use of library resources and to read and explore literary texts independently.

- **Critical Thinking**
  - They will have developed sensitivity to literary aesthetics and style and will be able to analyze texts and discourses in a variety of media—written, performed, visual, and oral; they will be able to synthesize a broad range of information bearing upon the interpretation of these discourses.

- **Communication**
  - They will be able to think, speak, and write intelligently about what texts do in their various functions. They will speak and write clearly, confidently, persuasively, and with nuance.

- **Research Experience**
  - They will be capable of writing an extended literary analysis paper supported by primary and secondary research. They will be capable of identifying literary questions, posing an hypothesis about how the question might be answered, and researching the question through the analysis of primary sources and synthesis of secondary sources.

**Distribution:** Courses completed in English apply to the humanities distribution area, with the following exceptions: Humanities or Cultural Pluralism: 245, 246, 270, 376, and other courses as specified below.

Fine Arts: 150, 250, 251, 252, 320, 321, 322, and 389

**Total credit requirements for the English major:** 36

**The English major:**
- 36 Credits
- Required Courses
  - English 290 and 491
One elective at the 100- or 200-level chosen from 176-179, 200, 230-233, 245, 246, 250-252, or 270.

At least three other 200- or 300-level courses meeting specific requirements:
- One early period British literature course, chosen from English 335, 336, 337, 338, 350, or 357.
- One course in American literature, chosen from 347, 348, or 349.
- One course in underrepresented literatures, chosen from 245, 246, 270, 346, 376, or another course identified as counting in this category.

Three electives at the 300- or 400-level:
- One of the electives may, with the written approval of the English Department, be a literature course at the 300-level or higher offered by another department on campus.

- Other notes:
  - No course may satisfy more than one requirement.
  - No more than two Creative Writing courses may be counted toward the major.
  - No more than 12 credits earned in off-campus programs, transfer credits, credits from courses offered by other Whitman departments, or cross-listed courses may be used to satisfy major requirements.
  - Courses used to satisfy requirements in other majors or minors cannot also be used to satisfy requirements in the English major or minor.
  - Strongly recommends two years of foreign language, especially for those considering graduate school.
  - No courses may be taken PDF.

- Senior Requirements:
  - English 491
  - One-hour oral exam
  - Revised seminar paper; graded by two to three faculty.

- Honors:
  - Students do not apply for admission to candidacy for honors.
  - Students must submit a proposal for their thesis or project.
    - Must be submitted within the first six weeks of the two-semester period in which student is eligible.
  - Accumulated at least 87 credits.
  - Completed two semesters of residency at Whitman.
  - Cumulative GPA of at least 3.300 on all credits earned at Whitman College.
  - Major GPA of at least 3.500.
  - Complete a written thesis or research project prepared exclusively for the satisfaction of this program.
  - Earn a grade of at least A- on the honors thesis or project and the honors thesis course.
  - Pass the senior assessment with distinction.
  - Chair of the department will notify the Registrar of students attaining Honors no later than the beginning of week 12 of the semester.
  - An acceptable digital copy of the Honors Thesis must be submitted to Penrose Library no later than Reading Day.

The English minor:
- 20 Credits
- Required Courses
- One elective from
  - 176-179, 200, 230-233, 245, 246, 250-252, 270, or 290
- At least three other 200-or-300-level courses meeting specific requirements
  - One early period British literature course, chosen from English 335, 336, 337, 338, 350, or 357
  - One course in American literature, chosen from 347, 348, or 349
  - One course in underrepresented literatures, chosen from 245, 246, 270, 376, or another course identified as counting in this category
- One elective at the 300-400 level

Other notes
- No course can satisfy more than one requirement
- No PDF courses for minor

The Creative Writing minor:
- 20 Credits
- Required Courses
  - English 150
  - One literature course in English
  - Two courses in one of the following genres
    - English 250 and 320 (Fiction)
    - English 251 and 321 (Poetry)
    - English 252 and 322 (Creative Nonfiction)
- One creative writing elective at the 200 or 300 level

Other notes
- If majoring in English and minoring in Creative Writing, one creative writing and one literature course may count toward both
- No courses may be taken PDF

For courses in expository writing: See Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 170, 210, and 320.

COURSES IN LITERATURE AND THEORY

176 Introduction to Creative Nonfiction
Not offered 2022-23 4 credits
A study of the forms, techniques, and traditions of a shape-shifting genre that can be understood as arising from the long tradition of the “essay.” Creative Nonfiction includes forms as diverse as the lyric essay, memoir, profile, critique, rant, and review; inspired and researched, it is a form that transforms lived experience into literary art. The course will explore the writings of literary essayists from antiquity to the present.

177 Introduction to Poetry
Fall, Spring  A. Gordon, Staff 4 credits
A study of the forms, strategies, voices, and visions of poetry across time. An ever-changing art form related to song, poetry predates literacy; today, through imagery, implication, indirection, and other means, poems continue to offer writers and readers ways to give voice to the ineffable. We will examine how poetic form and content interact, and consider the unique powers and possibilities of poetry’s metaphoric language to address all aspects of life.
178 Introduction to Fiction
Not offered 2022-23  
4 credits
A study of the forms, techniques, and traditions of fiction across time. Fiction has been said to be a means of imaginative escape, a way to gain deeper understanding of the external world, “the lie through which we tell the truth,” and a way to acquire a deep empathy for others. This course will explore the complex power of fiction in a variety of manifestations, from the short story to the novella and the novel.

179 Introduction to Drama
Not offered 2022-23  
4 credits
A study of plays as literary texts, examining the forms and techniques of drama across cultures and time periods. We will consider the dynamics of reading (as opposed to watching) plays and will discuss how dramatic texts are developed and interpreted through performance.

200 Introduction to Literature and the Humanities
4 credits
The study of selected texts in the humanities, with particular attention to literature written in English, offered at the introductory level and designed to fulfill the humanities distribution requirement. These courses are writing intensive (involving at least 18 pages of formal, graded writing assignments and including instruction in academic writing) and involve a substantial amount of reading. Subjects for the section change from semester to semester and year to year in order to provide students with a variety of choices for literary study at the 200-level. Any current offerings follow.

200-A VT: American Horror
Fall  
A. Gordon  
4 credits
What draws us to horror? From haunted houses to slasher films, gothic novels to teen vampire fiction, mindless zombies to maniacal psychopaths, the passion for scary stories has remained an indelible part of American culture, reflecting our anxieties back to us. This course takes a closer look at the tradition of horror in American culture, from 18th-century accounts of the Salem Witch Trials to twenty-first century pandemic films broadcast entirely on Zoom; classic tales by Poe, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Henry James to weird fiction by H. P. Lovecraft and Caitlín Kiernan; mid-century horror by Shirley Jackson and Richard Matheson, to recent masters of the form like Clive Barker, Stephen King, and Carmen Maria Machado. We’ll also watch several films by directors such as John Carpenter and Jordan Peele, complementing these primary texts with theoretical readings on the nature of horror, from the romantic philosophy of the gothic to Freud’s uncanny, Todorov on the fantastic to Kristeva’s abjection. Finally, the course will interrogate canons of taste and art, highbrow and lowbrow, respectable “literary” fiction versus disparaged mass-market genre fiction. When you’re done reading for the night, you might want to leave the light on. May be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major or minor. Distribution area: humanities.

200-B VT: Reading the Anthropocene
Fall  
K. Schlegel  
4 credits
For twenty years, the word “Anthropocene” has emerged as both a catalyzing term and a signifier for an urgent reality. As Robert Macfarlane writes, “[this] new epoch of geological time in which human activity is considered such a powerful influence on the environment, climate, and ecology of the planet…will leave a long-term signature in the strata record. And what a signature it will be.” In this course, we’ll read literature that contends with the signature of human impact on the earth. As we consider how literature shapes our understanding of the Anthropocene, we’ll also consider how the Anthropocene might shape our understanding of literature and literary studies. How does the Anthropocene require—or allow—us to read differently? We’ll read across genres and regularly connect with nature in ways that are accessible to all students. Inspired by the ecology itself and Jedediah Purdy’s idea that, “the Anthropocene future is,
unavoidably, a collective human project,” the course will culminate in a collaborative project devised by the students. Distribution area: humanities.

**200-C VT: Shifting Grounds: Writing, Exile, and Migrancy**

*Spring*  |
*Majumdar*  |
**4 credits**

How do displacement, difference, and transfer mark the work of migrant writers? What kinds of cultural contests, exchange, violence, and absorption do these works portray as products of migration? How do they show people negotiating these processes at times of massive social and technological change? How do the aesthetics of border-crossing writers themselves reflect the conditions of migration? We will address such questions through a study of anxious introspection, contempt, anger, melancholy, and irony, as well as attitudes to cultural confusion and mixture, in works by Joseph Conrad, Elizabeth Bishop, George Lamming, Derek Walcott, Salman Rushdie, Colm Tóibín, Edward Said, and Edwidge Danticat.

Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

**200-D VT: Solving Wicked Problems: Technology, Literature, and the Brain**

*Spring*  |
*Alker*  |
**4 credits**

Wicked problems proliferate everywhere, from climate change to public policy, education, health, discrimination and political polarization; wicked problems are complex, contradictory and dynamic and do not fit tidy disciplinary categories. Technology is often seen as a key source of solutions, but, as we have seen over the last decade, it often brings with it biases, problematic algorithms, and ethical dilemmas. This course posits culture, and literature in particular, as a way to productively study and assess wicked problems and potential technological solutions. Since Mary Shelley penned Frankenstein and The Last Man in the early nineteenth century, literature has invited its readers to think deeply about new technologies, its possibilities and its dangers, enabling readers to model possible scenarios and evaluate risk, to place technology within the context of the human condition. This course will begin with Bram Stoker’s Dracula and its response to technology of the Victorian era and will then move to a plethora of recent literary works that engage with postmodern technology. This course has no prerequisites and invites students interested in all disciplines to participate. Readings will include literary works by such authors as: Charles Dickens, Ian McEwan, Susanna Clark, Patricia Lockwood, and Nnedi Okorafor. During discussions of these texts we will consider a variety of theories about how reading literature increases the imaginative capacity of the brain, and about the relationship between technology, culture, and ethics including concepts from such books as: Sheila Jasanoff's Ethics of Invention, Adam Greenfield's Radical Technologies: the Design of Everyday Life, Safiya Umoja Noble's Algorithms of Oppression, Paul B. Armstrong's How Literature Plays with the Brain, and Shoshana Zuboff's Surveillance Capitalism. May be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major or minor. Distribution area: humanities.

**230 Introduction to Shakespeare: Love, Sex, and Gender**

*Not offered 2022-23*  |
**4 credits**

From Lysander’s “The course of true love never did run smooth!” to Lady Macbeth’s “Come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,” Shakespeare’s plays and poems grapple with erotic love, human sexuality, and the complex workings of gender in human experience. Writing for the English stage during a period when female roles were played by male actors, Shakespeare often explored the ways in which gender is constructed and performed, yet his writings also include archetypes of masculinity and femininity; and he fashions lovers whose passions and desires range from the sublime to the ridiculous. The course will introduce students to college-level study of Shakespeare’s poetry and plays, with particular attention to the themes of love, sex, and gender. May be taken for credit toward the Gender Studies major or minor.
231 Introduction to Shakespeare: Race, Nationality, and Power
Not offered 2022-23  4 credits
“What is my nation? Who talks of my nation?” asks the enraged Irish captain MacMorris, speaking in dialect as he confronts the Welsh captain Fluellen in Shakespeare’s Henry V. Not only in his history plays, but in his comedies, tragedies, and romances, Shakespeare explores both how race, ethnicity, and nationality are constructed and how these concepts shape individual identities and social interactions. Shakespeare not only worked to define what it meant to be “English” in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but helped to shape the English language itself—which only a tiny percentage of the world’s population spoke at the time he wrote his plays—into England’s most powerful global export. The course will introduce students to college-level study of Shakespeare’s poetry and plays, with particular attention to the themes of race, nationality, and power. May be taken for credit toward the Race & Ethnic Studies major or minor.

232 Introduction to Shakespeare: Work, Wealth, and Status
Not offered 2022-23  4 credits
“Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon ’em.” This mock proverb tempts Twelfth Night’s Malvolio to fantasize about social mobility—an ambition met with comic but humiliating ridicule. Across his works, Shakespeare interrogates the social, economic, and gendered structures that stratified early modern communities. He examines various modes of service, leadership, and artistry, including the craft of poetry. Mixing high art with realism and humor, he labors to engage diverse audiences, ranging from those who stand in the yard to those so wealthy that they can pay to sit on the stage. The course will introduce students to college-level study of Shakespeare’s poetry and plays, with particular attention to the themes of work, wealth, and status.

233 Introduction to Shakespeare: Faith, Fate, and Virtue
Not offered 2022-23  4 credits
“Who can control his fate?” Othello asks in his last moments upon the stage, after falling prey to Iago’s manipulations and punishing his wife for imagined sins. Throughout his plays, Shakespeare repeatedly grapples with questions related to belief and power. In tragedy, comedy, and romance, he explores the boundaries between the worldly and the supernatural, as well as the limits of free will. Interweaving politics and religion, ethics and philosophy, Shakespeare’s texts confront audiences with the existential and moral dilemmas that make us human. The course will introduce students to college-level study of Shakespeare’s poetry and plays, with particular attention to the themes of faith, fate, and virtue.

245 Native American Literatures
Fall  Leise  4 credits
A survey of writing by indigenous peoples of the present-day United States. This reading-heavy course will focus its attention on a small number of distinctive indigenous literary traditions, possibly (but not necessarily) including the Iroquois confederacy of the U.S. Northeast and southeastern Canada, the Creek nation of the U.S. Southeast, the Kiowa peoples of the Southwest, and the peoples of the Columbia Plateau. Aside from reading, assignments will include exams and formal essays. May be taken for credit toward the Race & Ethnic Studies major or minor. May be taken for credit toward the major's "Underrepresented Literatures" requirement. This class also fulfills a requirement for Environmental Humanities. Distribution area: humanities or cultural pluralism.

246 Introduction to African American Literature
Not offered 2022-23  4 credits
A study of the forms, techniques, and traditions shared by Black writers in colonial America and the U.S. from the earliest known writing in the Eighteenth Century to the present. Topics will include the way Black writers (especially enslaved and formerly enslaved persons) forged spaces for expression in the American public sphere, debates about the appropriate qualities and purposes of “Negro Literature” in the early 20th century, the innovations and explorations of the Black Arts Movement, and representations of history and identity pertaining to African
Americans in the wake of the Civil Rights Act. Aside from reading, assignments will include exams and formal essays. May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic Studies major or minor. Distribution area: humanities or cultural pluralism.

270 Special Topics in Underrepresented Literatures
4 credits
Courses will cover one area of underrepresented literatures in depth. Any current offerings follow.

290 Approaches to the Study of Literature
Fall, Spring  Fall: Leise, Majumdar; Spring: A. Gordon  4 credits
A course in practical criticism designed to introduce students to some of the approaches that can be used in literary analysis. Distribution area: humanities.

335-341 Studies in British Literature
4 credits
Courses designed to introduce students to the literature and culture of England in each of six literary periods: the Middle Ages (English 336), the Renaissance (English 337), the Restoration and 18th Century (English 338), the Romantic Period (English 339), the Victorian Period (English 340), and 1900-Present (English 341). Also included in this category are courses covering in depth particular topics in pre-Romantic English literature (English 335). The specific focus of each course will vary from year to year. Topics in a particular literary period may be taken a total of two times, but the second will count as an elective. Any current offerings follow.

336 VT: Medieval Literature-Communities and Individuals, Unity and Disunity
Fall  Tipton  4 credits
In this course, we will read a wide range of medieval English literature, especially focusing on the varying forms of community represented within these texts. These communities include early medieval warrior bands, the chivalric knights of the Arthurian legends, religious communities of nuns, monks, and friars, and the professional communities of the late medieval towns, the guilds. A modern stereotype of the Middle Ages is that medieval communities were a totalizing phenomenon, completely encompassing an individual’s identity and experience. This is sometimes offered as a contrast to modern life’s putative lack of community. Somewhat related is the incorrect assumption by some that the Middle Ages was culturally homogenous, recently used in ways that are harmful to our current community/communities. We will examine the literature in order to gain a better and more accurate perspective on community in the Middle Ages and in our own era. We will have fun reading the wonderfully weird literature of the era and we will enjoy the great variety of genres, including prose, poetry, and drama. No experience reading medieval literature is necessary, and we will focus on the opportunities for expanding the skills of close reading and persuasive writing that medieval literature provides. Distribution areas: humanities.

337 VT: Warriors, Queens, and Enchanters: Elizabethan Poetry
Spring  DiPasquale  4 credits
In the poetry of Elizabethan England, as in our own time, imaginative fictions both mirror reality and distort it; poetry is shaped by history but also gives birth to it. Beginning with an exploration of how Queen Elizabeth I represented herself in writings and speeches throughout her reign, we will then turn to late Elizabethan poetry—poems written during the later years of the Virgin queen’s long reign, including pieces by Raleigh, Donne, and the Countess of Pembroke. We’ll focus particularly on Edmund Spenser’s lush epic romance The Faerie Queene. Dedicated to Elizabeth, Spenser’s richly textured tale of knights and sorceresses, monsters and princesses is delightful in its own right. But it’s also a complex moral, historical and religious allegory. To read it is to enter into a magical world of the imagination and, at the same time, to immerse oneself in the realm of Elizabeth. Recommended prerequisite: One 100- or 200-level literature course. Distribution area: humanities.
339 VT: Romantic Poetry: Literary Revolutions  
Fall          Alker          4 credits  
This class will explore the reconstruction of poetic genres by the major Romantic poets (Wordsworth, Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron) in response to literary, cultural, and political revolutions. We will place their work in their historical context, looking at how their poetic theories interact with and resist the works of their literary predecessors, paying particular attention to the representations of the natural and supernatural worlds. The Romantic poets did not write in a void, so we will place the work of the Romantics alongside the diverse voices of many of their contemporaries. The emergent voices with which we will engage will include working-class poetry; regional poetry; the work of women writers; abolitionist poetry; and antiquarian and gothic poetry. Distribution area: humanities.

341 VT: Modernist Deviance and its Legacies  
Fall          Majumdar          4 credits  
As modernism offers several shocks to aesthetic conventions, it also revises moral orthodoxy. We will consider literary revisions of different kinds of propriety, while studying various factors that provoked the condemnation of modernist texts as dangerous or ethically “deviant.” Further, the class will trace the legacies of modernist deviance in contemporary literature, in a film by Terry Gilliam, and in excerpts from British popular music. Distribution area: humanities.

346 African American Historiographic Fiction  
Fall          Leise          4 credits  
Historiography involves examining how facts, people, and events get crafted into narratives, as well as how those stories are interpreted and perpetuated or revised over time. This class will focus on 20th- and 21st-century novels by African American writers that call attention to specific elements of America’s complex history; we will pay particular attention to the ways the selected books reintroduce overlooked figures and under-covered ideas and occurrences, recalling or re-imagining often surprising ways of being in community, of seeing the world, and of living expansively at various points of American history. While there are no prerequisites, some familiarity with African American writing or English 246 is suggested. May be taken for credit toward the major’s “Underrepresented Literatures” requirement. May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic Studies major or minor.

347-349 Studies in American Literature  
4 credits  
One special topics course, ENGL 347, with a topic that will vary every year, will examine one area of American literature in depth. ENGL 348 covers early and middle American literature. ENGL 349 covers rotating Variable Topics on major movements in modern and contemporary American writing in alternating years: one focuses on literary representations of the built environment, and the other considers literature influenced by or addressing Christianity and Christian themes. Topics in a particular literary period may be taken a total of two times, but the second will count as an elective. Any current offerings follow.

347 VT: American Protest Literature  
Spring          A. Gordon          4 credits  
This course examines the long history of American protest literature to ask how literature has promoted social justice in the past and how it might continue to do so in the future. Spanning centuries, we’ll ask a series of fundamental questions: How does literature effect social and political change? How have authors conceived of the activist potential of fiction and poetry? How might literature offer us a history of social movements? To navigate these questions, we’ll read texts by a range of authors from Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry David Thoreau, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman to John Steinbeck, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, and Tony Kushner. Concluding with works like Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen*, Paul Beatty’s *The
Sellout, and hip hop by Kendrick Lamar, Beyoncé, and others, we’ll ask what a literature of resistance might look like in the twenty-first century. Distribution area: humanities.

348 The American Literary Emergence, 1620 - 1920
Fall  A. Gordon  4 credits
Beginning with the pre-Revolutionary texts by those newly arrived to the Atlantic Coast colonies, and including the writings of those already present on the continent, we will study how an “American” literature came into being. As the population boomed and expansion moved westward, the newly formed United States became a national entity and global presence. We will study the development of American individualism, the rise of genres such as the captivity narrative and the slave narrative, and major literary movements such as the shift to realism and naturalism. Authors may include Bradstreet, Emerson, Douglass, Hawthorne, Whitman, Twain, Wharton, James, Dunbar, and many more. Distribution area: humanities.

349 VT: American Literature of the Modern and Contemporary Environment
Spring  Leise  4 credits
A study of select American literary works across genres that consider how humans have influenced and been influenced by changes to our physical environments, as well as how we talk about and name our effects on this planet (i.e., “public works” and “infrastructure”). Topics may include Anglo-normative notions of land “improvement”; the effects of fencing, railroads, and paved streets on communities and nationhood; our dependence on electrification and creation of the electrical grid, especially including river dams; the development of container shipping and the advancement of globalization; and how we live with our trash. In all cases, we will consider how US modifications of the “natural” world affect minoritized populations and peoples, as well as major movements including modernism and postmodernism. Authors may include H.D., Elizabeth Bishop, Ken Kesey, Colson Whitehead, Robert Hohn, Ruth Ozeki, Elizabeth Bradfield, Karen Russell, and others. Distribution area: humanities.

350 Chaucer
Not offered 2022-23  4 credits
A study of medieval England’s most famous, influential, and humorous poet. Course texts will include The Canterbury Tales, Troilus and Criseyde, and select shorter poems. Students will learn to read texts in the original Middle English. May be taken to count toward the major’s “Early Period British Literature” requirement. Distribution area: humanities.

353 Studies In Shakespeare
4 credits
A course on the dramatic and non-dramatic works of William Shakespeare, the course will focus on close reading of the primary texts, with attention to questions arising both from the Early Modern English culture in which they were written and to their cross-cultural significance in later literature, Theater, and film. The course will vary from year to year and will be organized by theme. Any current offerings follow:

353 VT: Magic, Witchcraft, and the Supernatural in Shakespeare’s Plays
Spring  DiPasquale  4 credits
Theatre is a form of magic, and dramatic literature is its book of spells. William Shakespeare was a skilled magician, a sorcerer whose dramatic conjuring continues to entrance readers and audiences. In this course, we will study the rhetorical sleight of hand, dramaturgical illusions, and poetic wizardry underlying such plays as A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Richard III, Macbeth, and The Tempest, as well as elements of magic and the supernatural in those plays. We will approach the study of Shakespeare’s art through 16th-century primary texts on magic and the occult, as well as 20th-21st-century theoretical and critical texts on myth, archetype, and performance theory. Distribution area: humanities.
357 Milton and the Idea of Freedom
Not offered 2022-23 4 credits
The writings of John Milton (1608-1674) played a crucial role in shaping what we now know as Modernity. We will study his poetry and prose, with particular attention to his ground-breaking political treatises and his enormously influential epic *Paradise Lost*.

367 Selected Works by One Author
4 credits
An intensive study of one influential English-language author, designed to include texts from the beginning to the end of that writer’s career. Any current offerings follow.

375 Literary Theory Variable Topics
4 credits
This course introduces students to arguments about the shaping, the effects, and the interpretation of literature. Themes for the course will vary, but among the questions we will consistently examine are the following: Through what kinds of assumptions do we read literature? How do characters in literary texts themselves read? How do these texts interpret what they represent? We will devote approximately equal time to the study of theoretical texts and to reading literary works through theoretical lenses. Any current offerings follow.

375 VT: Shameclosing Eyes: Theories of Unembarrassment
Spring Majumdar 4 credits
The “avid, shameclosing eyes” of a hungry cat in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* reflect the novel’s own appetite for experience and resistance to shame. This course will study such appetite and resistance in works that question logics of propriety. Framing our inquiry with Friedrich Nietzsche’s *The Gay Science* and *On the Genealogy of Morals*, we will consider arguments by Sigmund Freud, Johan Huizinga, Michel Foucault, Adriana Cavarero, Hélène Cixous, Edward Said, Adam Phillips, and Amia Srinivasan. Alongside, we will discuss fiction by Joyce, Lisa McInerney, and Salman Rushdie; movies directed by Preston Sturges and Bruce Robinson; and songs by Marlon Williams. Distribution area: humanities.

376 Studies in Colonial and Anti-Colonial Literature
4 credits
This course will examine texts from former colonies in South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and Australia. We will study how these works negotiate the past and present, and how they explore multiple forms and conditions of colonialism and postcolonialism. The course will discuss works of literature, as well as theoretical and critical texts. Offered annually. May be taken for credit toward the major’s “Underrepresented Literatures” requirement. Any current offerings follow.

376 VT: Solidarity, Success, and Failures in Anti-Colonial Literature
Spring Majumdar 4 credits
This course will study how anti-colonial literature links, and reflects upon, solidarity and “failed” constructions (of architecture, the self, language, transnational friendships, and international communities). We will investigate literary works, as well as theoretical claims from a wide range of anticolonial thinkers, to trace how the mimetic failures depicted in these texts theorize fluctuating notions of postcolonial success, as well as tensions among cosmopolitanism, solidarity, and colonialism. May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic Studies major or minor. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

377 Rhetorical Bodies
Spring McDermott 4 credits
This course examines the rhetorical construction of bodies as well as the ways in which bodies are often used rhetorically. In order to carry out this examination, we will apply a variety of critical rhetorical lenses to written and
visual texts. We will be particularly concerned with the intersections of social factors such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and disability and the ways in which these intersections are written on our bodies. We will read texts by classical and contemporary theorists and authors, such as Hippocrates, Quintilian, Judith Butler, Kenneth Burke, Patricia Hill Collins, Debra Hawhee, and Robert McCruer. This course will be writing intensive. May be taken for credit toward the Gender Studies major or minor or the Race and Ethnic Studies major or minor. May be elected as Rhetoric, Writing & Public Discourse 380.

387 Special Studies
4 credits
Studies of English or American literature and language generally not considered in other courses offered by the department. The specific material will vary from semester to semester. Any current offerings follow.

491 Seminars in English and American Literature
4 credits
Seminars require a substantial amount of writing, a major written project of at least 15 pages involving research in secondary sources, and oral presentations. Topics will vary from semester to semester. Open to junior and senior English majors only. Prerequisite: English 290. Any current offerings follow.

491 VT: The Sonnet
DiPasquale
Fall 4 credits
Short and often anything but sweet, the sonnet is a restrictive form that has challenged poets from the late Middle Ages to the present day. We will explore the ever-evolving sonnet tradition as it is shaped and reshaped by English-language sonneteers across time, space, and culture. We will read critical and theoretical texts on the sonnet form as well as sonnets and sonnet collections by such canonical writers as William Shakespeare, John Donne, John Milton, Charlotte Smith, John Keats, William Wordsworth, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Gwendolyn Brooks, and A. K. Ramanujan, as well as by many contemporary poets, including Rita Dove, Terrance Hayes, Kimberly Johnson, Diane Seuss, and Monica Youn. Prerequisite: English 290. Distribution area: humanities.

COURSES IN CREATIVE WRITING

150 Introductory Creative Writing
Elliott, K. Schlegel, Staff
Fall, Spring 4 credits
The writing of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Experience not necessary, but students should expect to complete weekly exercises, share work aloud, and write responses for peers. In addition, extensive reading and analysis of pieces by established writers in a variety of literary forms.

250 Intermediate Creative Writing – Fiction
Elliott
Fall 4 credits
An intermediate workshop in fiction writing offering students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of fundamental techniques and important works in the genre. Students will write original short stories and experiment with strategies and structures through exercises meant to increase their awareness of, and proficiency in, the elements of fiction. Extensive analysis of peer work and important established models in the genre. Weekly assignments in reading and writing to develop critical and creative faculties. Final portfolio of creative and critical work. Prerequisite: English 150 or consent of instructor.

251 Intermediate Creative Writing – Poetry
Staff
Fall 4 credits
An intermediate workshop in poetry writing, intended to expand knowledge of fundamental techniques, and to familiarize students with many important writers in the genre. Students will have the opportunity to write and revise
poems based on prompts as well as on their own. There will be weekly reading and journal exercises, and extensive analysis of peer work and established models to develop critical and creative faculties. Final portfolio of creative and critical work. \textit{Prerequisite:} English 150 or consent of instructor.

252 \textbf{Intermediate Creative Writing – Nonfiction}  
\textbf{Fall} \quad \textbf{K. Schlegel} \quad 4 \text{ credits}  
An intermediate workshop in creative nonfiction writing, intended to expand knowledge of fundamental techniques, and to familiarize students with many important writers in the genre. Students will write original essays and experiment with strategies and structures through exercises meant to increase their awareness of, and proficiency in, the elements of nonfiction. Extensive analysis of peer work and important established models in the genre. Weekly assignments in reading and writing to develop critical and creative faculties. Final portfolio of creative and critical work. \textit{Prerequisite:} English 150 or consent of instructor.

320 \textbf{Advanced Creative Writing – Fiction}  
\textbf{Spring} \quad \textbf{Elliott} \quad 4 \text{ credits}  
An intensive advanced workshop in fiction. Students will continue to develop their proficiency in fiction writing by reading deeply and analyzing established models, completing exercises, producing drafts of original stories and revisions, participating in discussions of peer work, and giving presentations based on close readings. Final portfolio of creative and critical work, which may include some consideration of where the student’s work fits into a fiction-writing tradition. \textit{Prerequisites:} English 250 or equivalent and consent of instructor.

321 \textbf{Advanced Creative Writing – Poetry}  
\textbf{Spring} \quad \textbf{Staff} \quad 4 \text{ credits}  
An intensive advanced workshop in poetry. Students will have the opportunity to develop proficiency in poetry writing by completing exercises, producing drafts and revisions of poems for peer discussions, reading deeply and analyzing established models, and actively participating in rigorous and constructively critical discussions. Weekly poem assignments, as well as reading and journal exercises. Final portfolio of creative and critical work. \textit{Prerequisites:} English 251 or equivalent and consent of instructor.

322 \textbf{Advanced Creative Writing – Nonfiction}  
\textbf{Spring} \quad \textbf{K. Schlegel} \quad 4 \text{ credits}  
An intensive advanced workshop in “the fourth genre,” creative nonfiction. Students will have the opportunity to experiment with form, to address a range of subjects in weekly creative nonfiction pieces, and to read deeply and analyze established models as well as peer work to develop important critical faculties. Students will be expected to participate actively in rigorous, constructively critical discussions. Weekly exercises, as well as reading and journal assignments. Final portfolio of creative and critical work. \textit{Prerequisites:} English 252, or equivalent, and consent of instructor.

389 \textbf{Special Studies in Craft}  
4 \text{ credits}  
Studies of literary craft not considered in other courses offered by the department, intended for upper-level creative writing students. Active participation in rigorous discussions and intensive workshops expected. Final portfolios of creative and critical works. Specific material will vary from semester to semester. The distribution area is fine arts. \textit{Prerequisites:} English 250, 251, or equivalent, and consent of instructor. Any current offerings follow.

389 VT: \textbf{Extraordinary Visions}  
\textbf{Fall} \quad \textbf{Elliott} \quad 4 \text{ credits}  
This writing-intensive course will focus on the work of writers whose fictions conjure strange worlds and happenings, which, while departing from the conventions of traditional realism, nevertheless deliver important information about the world in which we live. After immersing ourselves in the bizarre fictional
In these worlds the authors have created, we will write original fictions inspired by this immersion. Works by the following authors may be included: Nikolai Gogol, Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Italo Calvino, Kurt Vonnegut, Donald Barthelme, Shirley Jackson, Angela Carter, Ursula K. Le Guin, Haruki Murakami, Steven Millhauser, Aimee Bender, Lydia Davis, George Saunders, Kelly Link, Karen Russell, and others. Prerequisite: English 250, 251, or 252 or equivalent or consent of instructor. Distribution area: fine arts

INDEPENDENT STUDY and THESIS

401, 402 Independent Study
Fall, Spring Staff 1-4 credits
Directed reading and the preparation of written work on topics suggested by the student. The project must be approved by the staff of the department. Thus, the student is expected to submit a written proposal to the intended director of the project prior to registration for the study. The number of students accepted for the work will depend on the availability of the staff. Independent Study may not count as one of the electives fulfilling minimum requirements for the major or minor without prior written approval of the English department. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

496 Creative Thesis
Fall, Spring Staff 4 credits
Designed to further independent projects leading to the preparation of an undergraduate thesis in creative writing. The creative thesis, an option for a student of exceptional ability in creative writing, will be a substantial, accomplished collection of work in a particular genre. Limited to, but not required of, senior English majors. Prerequisite: approval of a proposal submitted to the English department prior to registration by a date designated by the department. For full details, see the English Department Handbook.

497 Thesis
Fall, Spring Staff 4 credits
Designed to further independent research projects leading to the preparation of an undergraduate thesis. The creative thesis, an option for a student of exceptional ability in creative writing, will be a substantial, accomplished collection of work in a particular genre. Limited to, but not required of, senior English majors. Prerequisite: approval of a proposal submitted to the English department prior to registration by a date designated by the department. For full details, see the English Department Handbook.

498 Honors Thesis
Fall, Spring Staff 4 credits
Designed to further independent critical and creative research projects leading to the preparation of an undergraduate thesis. The creative thesis, an option for a student of exceptional ability in creative writing, will be a substantial, accomplished collection of work in a particular genre. Required of and limited to senior honors candidates in English. The candidate will be assigned to an appropriate thesis advisor, depending upon his or her field of interest. Prerequisite: approval of a proposal submitted to the English department prior to registration by a date designated by the department. For full details, see the English Department Handbook.