

# English

*Chair:* Gaurav Majumdar, *Fall 2023*  
*Chair:* Christopher Leise, *Spring 2024*  
Sharon Alker  
Theresa M. DiPasquale  
Scott Elliott  
Adam Gordon  
Jessica Hines

Mary Raschko  
Katrina Roberts  
Kisha Lewellyn Schlegel (on  
sabbatical, 2023-24)  
Rob Schlegel  
Johanna Stoberock

*Affiliated Faculty:*  
Lydia McDermott, Rhetoric, Writing  
and Public Discourse

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, 201, 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 201, 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 P-D-F
- 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 P-D-F 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 P-D-F

**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**

**Spring**

**Stoberock**

**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**

**Spring**

**A. Gordon**

**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****Fall****Staff****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****Fall****Hines****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: The Meaning of Life****Spring****Alker****4 credits**

This course will examine literary works that overtly work to articulate or explore the meaning of life in times of crisis. We will read a series of works centered on characters who seek meaning from a variety of sources - religion, community, moral codes, culture, the intellect, passion, the immediate moment, and even style. We will pay particular attention to works that attempt to find meaning in a postmodern world which resists stable systems of belief. Our exploration will consider the relationship between narrative and meaning, the journey towards enlightenment (or disenchantment), the relationship between memory, imagination, and stories, and the role of humor in producing and rejecting meaning. Distribution area: humanities.

**200-B VT: Rebels, Artists, and Revolutionaries: Queer Literature and the Archive****Spring****Hines****4 credits**

Queer literature is not a new phenomenon. Reconstructing the history of queer literature, however, requires contending with an archive that has been by turns erased, misunderstood, and fractured. This course traces the history of texts written by, for, and about LGBTQIA+ people, studying the history, social contexts, and political implications of queer writing. We will examine a wide range of literary works from the premodern to the modern, including poems, novels, drama, and romances. To contextualize our reading, we will pair our literary study with examinations of the archives of everyday queer life—including trial records, journals, scrapbooks, and zines—in order to better understand not only the social construction of narratives about queerness and queer identity, but what stories queer people have told about themselves. Readings may include works by Carmen Maria Machado, Nella Larsen, Jeanette Winterson, Ali Smith, Marissa Fuentes, John Gower, William Shakespeare, and John Lyly among others. Distribution area: humanities.

**201 Shifting Grounds: Writing, Exile, and Migrancy****Not offered 2023-24****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. May be taken for credit toward the major's "Underrepresented Literatures" requirement.

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

**Not offered 2023-24**

**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 2023-24**

**4 credits**

"What ish 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 Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor.

### **232 Introduction to Shakespeare: Work, Wealth, and Status**

**Fall**

**DiPasquale**

**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**

**Spring**

**Hines**

**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****Not offered 2023-24****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 Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor. May be taken for credit toward the major's "Underrepresented Literatures" requirement.

**246 Introduction to African American Literature****Fall****Leise****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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor.

**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: Alker, Majumdar; Spring: Leise****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.

**335 VT: Brave New Worlds: Travel an Empire in Medieval and Early Modern Literature****Spring****Hines****4 credits**

From fantastical accounts of distant lands in The Travels of John Mandeville to the magical island at the heart of Shakespeare's The Tempest, travel narratives and encounters with distant and different worlds fill Medieval and Early Modern literature. What can these literary encounters tell us about how medieval and Early Modern persons understood the world and their place in it? This course will explore this question through a study of texts ranging from early Irish descriptions of a "Paradise" hidden in the Atlantic to the stories of magic and (mis)adventure detailed in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, from Sir Walter Raleigh's early arguments for settler colonialism to Margaret Cavendish's fantastic tale of adventure and empire in The Blazing World. Distribution area: humanities.

**336 VT: Medieval Sex Ed: Sex, Gender, and Power in Medieval Literature****Fall****Hines****4 credits**

Medieval literature is sex obsessed. From scientific and religious texts seeking to demarcate sexual norms to literary romances and autobiographies that flagrantly challenged those norms, gender, sex, and sexuality critically shaped the medieval literary landscape. This course works to understand medieval literature through a study of sex and gender, exploring both how medieval authors understood these categories as well as how they sought to construct and deconstruct norms. Reading assignments include selections from Old and Middle English literature including romances, saints' lives, riddles, drama, and autobiographies. We'll contextualize these readings by engaging with larger European and Middle Eastern cultural discourses, reading medical treatises, philosophy, and trial records. Subjects addressed include gender stereotypes and ideals, power relations related to sex and gender, and queer identity. Distribution area: humanities.

**337 VT: Studies in Renaissance Literature: Writing Matters**

**Spring** **DiPasquale** **4 credits**

We'll study English Renaissance theories about the literary arts and delve into the social functions of writing in early modern England, taking into account not only the works themselves, but the contexts in which they were presented. We'll consider how these works facilitate pursuit of power or enact forms of submission, instruct readers or mock them, and scorn popular acclaim or seek profit of various kinds. We'll explore how early modern writers articulate their authorial goals in a variety of literary modes. And as we write critical and scholarly essays on Renaissance texts, we'll examine the intellectual, creative, and ethical goals that underlie our work. Distribution area: humanities. *Recommended Prerequisite:* English 290.

**338 VT: Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature: British Drama**

**Fall** **Alker** **4 credits**

The theater was at the center of public taste in eighteenth-century London, but it could also be dangerously subversive. This course will examine eighteenth-century drama as it reflects, and responds to, its contentious historical context. We will explore such topics as drama's response to the English Revolution, the sharp edginess of social comedy, the use of political drama to critique governmental authority, the surprising adaptations of Shakespearean drama, the delicious silliness of satiric dramatic forms, and the emergence of an English operatic form. Writers may include Behn, Congreve, Rowe, Wycherley, Dryden, Cavendish, Addison, Gay, Lillo, and Goldsmith. May be taken for credit toward the Theater major. Distribution area: humanities.

**340 VT: Victorian Literature: Phantoms of Progress**

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

Victorian literature reflects and responds to the technological and industrial progress that strongly marked the era. We will explore a wide variety of cultural responses to rapid social change. We will examine the literary presence of a strong nostalgia for an imagined past, the crystallization of narratives of nationalism and imperialism, and the desire for moral and spiritual certainty. We also will look at disruptive elements in literature, paying particular attention to the use of supernatural or fantastic beings, from Dickens's phantoms to Christina Rossetti's goblins, to challenge and complicate the impulse toward progress. Authors studied may include: Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Christina Rossetti, Charles Kingsley, Lewis Carroll, Thomas Carlyle, Oscar Wilde, Robert Browning, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Edward Lear, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Distribution area: humanities.

**341 VT: Self-Fashioning: Personal Aesthetics in British and Irish Literature**

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

This course will study works that depict selves as constellated effects of received, often unconsciously absorbed history and consciously made personal changes. When such changes are aesthetic ones, how do they signal affiliations, desires, and antagonisms? What kinds of recognition help us to resist whimsical identification? How might self-fashioning sustain and revise aesthetic functions? In what ways does this

revision produce spectacle or concealment? We will address such questions through discussions of fiction by Joyce, Gwendoline Riley, Katherine Mansfield, and Kevin Barry; poetry by Hannah Sullivan, Thom Gunn, and Tony Harrison; debate on identity and identification among Judith Butler, Slavoj Žižek, and Ernesto Laclau; as well as music by David Bowie and the Libertines. Distribution area: humanities.

### **346 African American Historiographic Fiction**

**Not offered 2023-24**

**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 Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity 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.

#### **348 VT: The American Literary Emergence, 1620 - 1920**

**Spring**

**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: Christianity in American Literature, 1900-present**

**Fall**

**Leise**

**4 credits**

A study of select American literary works that consider how Christianity influences American thought, and of how writers embrace, complicate, or contest those legacies. We will pay special attention to how Protestantism informs ideas of inclusivity and "Americanness" across genres. Authors may include W.E.B. Du Bois, William Carlos Williams, F. Scott Fitzgerald, N. Scott Momaday, Flannery O'Connor, Toni Morrison, Ted Chiang, Yaa Gyasi, and others. Distribution area: humanities.

### **350 Chaucer**

**Not offered 2023-24**

**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.



### **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.

### **357 Milton and the Idea of Freedom**

#### **Spring**

#### **DiPasquale**

#### **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: Freedom and Its Challenges in Theory and Literature**

#### **Spring**

#### **Majumdar**

#### **4 credits**

Examining depictions of freedom and critiques of national, gendered, professional, religious, and even linguistic restriction in a wide range of theoretical and literary works, as well as music by Bob Dylan and Fiona Apple, this course will mainly address the following questions: What curbs does the need or call to belong place upon us? Conversely, how is the idea of "absolute freedom" challenged or qualified in literature and theory? What kinds of political or cultural violence do canonical theorizations of freedom rationalize or elide, altogether? What alternatives to such canonical views does the critical pressure of later works offer? 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: Counterpoints: Edward Said's Work and Anti-Colonial Literature**

#### **Spring**

#### **Majumdar**

#### **4 credits**

Edward Said's practice of "contrapuntal" reading unveils various texts' implicit participation in colonial or imperialist discourse and, simultaneously, considers resistance to such discourse. Such reading gives much ballast to anti-colonial literature and theory. This course will focus mainly on the following questions: What is "contrapuntal" reading? How does literature work against and as counterpoint to stated claims or

unacknowledged assumptions? How might literary aesthetics also function as politics? How does anti-colonial literature resist and refine notions of solidarity and universalism? Alongside writings by Said that span his career, we will study works by Kipling, Macaulay, Haggard, Bird, Joyce, Brathwaite, Desai, Spivak, Rushdie, and Dangarembga. May be taken for credit toward the Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major. Distribution area: humanities or cultural pluralism.

### **377 Rhetorical Bodies**

**Not offered 2023-24**

**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 Indigeneity, Race, And Ethnicity Studies major or minor. May be elected as Rhetoric, Writing & Public Discourse 380.

### **387-388 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.

#### **387 VT: Sonnets Past and Present**

**Fall**

**DiPasquale**

**4 credits**

The sonnet (a carefully-structured 14-line poem) and the sonnet sequence (a long form consisting of many sonnets grouped together) have attracted and challenged poets in many languages over the centuries. We will explore the ever-evolving sonnet tradition as it is shaped and re-shaped by English-language sonneteers of three different times and places: 16th-17th-century England, 19th-century Britain, and the United States from the 20th century to the present. We will read critical and theoretical texts on the sonnet form as well as sonnets and sonnet collections by a diverse range of Renaissance, Romantic, Victorian, Modern, and Contemporary writers from William Shakespeare to Christina Rossetti and from Claude McKay to Laurie Ann Guerrero. Distribution area: humanities.

#### **388 ST: Highbrow/Poe-brow: Edgar Allan Poe and Popular Culture**

**Spring**

**A. Gordon**

**4 credits**

Among his many distinctions, scholars hail Edgar Allan Poe as a pioneer of the detective story, an influential practitioner of the science fiction and horror genres, and a key voice in the development of the short story as an art form. Though he earned fame as a poet with works like "The Raven," in his career as a critic he did as much as any other early American writer to shape the direction of American literature. All the while, his romance-laden biography has proven as enduring a source of intrigue as any of his Gothic plots. Over the course of the semester, we'll approach Poe's corpus as an occasion to ask a variety of questions central to the study of literature: What constitutes literary value? How do we navigate distinctions between highbrow and lowbrow taste, popular fiction and academic syllabi, genre fiction and so-called "literary" fiction? How have various critical and theoretical schools drawn upon and refashioned Poe's legacy, from formalism and New Historicism to Marxism and cultural studies? And how might we use Poe's oeuvre to engage questions of race, gender, and class? Readings will include extensive selections from Poe's short stories, poetry, and critical reviews; longer works like *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* and *Eureka*; and works by a range of authors in conversation with Poe such as Arthur Conan Doyle, H. P. Lovecraft, and Mat Johnson. Finally, we'll examine Poe's legacy beyond the classroom in fan fiction, cultures of literary tourism, illustrated editions, as well as film adaptations such as Fellini's *Spirits of the*

Dead and the truly horrifying 2012 Matthew Broderick film *The Raven* as we explore twentieth- and twenty-first century re-appropriations of Poe's works across a range of media. Distribution area: humanities.

#### **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-A Ulysses, Modernism, and Modernity**

**Fall**

**Majumdar**

**4 credits**

This seminar will study James Joyce's *Ulysses* as an important instance of modernity and modernism. Joyce's extraordinary novel provokes a reconsideration of the uniqueness of national literary traditions and national languages, and calls for a combinative, comparatist reading, across linguistic, disciplinary, and geographical borders, all at once. We will examine Joyce's writing as an insistently different form of expression and modernism's foremost novelistic experiment. The class will require a rigorous reading of *Ulysses*, carried out against a backdrop of literary, political, historical, and theoretical considerations. Students will get a sophisticated entry into *Ulysses*, while simultaneously becoming acquainted with prominent issues of modernism. Joyce's text is clearly aware of, and active in, the traditions that modernism transforms. Analyzing how this reconstitution takes place, the class will study how *Ulysses* addresses modernity itself. Further, it will interrogate the political strategies of the novel for Joyce's claims as a postcolonial writer. *Prerequisite:* English 290.

##### **491-B Two Large Richard Powers Novels**

**Fall**

**Leise**

**4 credits**

Since breaking out in 1980s as an encyclopedic literary heavyweight, Richard Powers has earned a reputation for being one of the United States' most consequential novelists. In this section of the English Department's Senior Seminar, we will read two of his longer books: *Gain* (1998) and *The Overstory* (2018). Epic in scope, both narratives are formed by intertwining storylines and inspire readers to see connections among people and the spaces they inhabit in new, often dumbfounding ways. Paying particular attention to Powers's prose style and his meta-realism, students will devise their own research questions; select appropriate secondary sources for class-discussions; deliver an oral presentation on scholarship and another oral presentation on their ongoing research; and write a substantial scholarly essay. *Prerequisite:* English 290.

#### **COURSES IN CREATIVE WRITING**

##### **150 Introductory Creative Writing**

**Fall, Spring**

**Fall: Roberts, R. Schlegel; Spring: Elliott**

**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**

**Fall**

**Elliott**

**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**

**Fall**

**Roberts**

**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. *Prerequisite:* English 150 or consent of instructor.

### **252 Intermediate Creative Writing – Nonfiction**

**Fall**

**Elliott**

**4 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. *Prerequisite:* English 150 or consent of instructor.

### **320 Advanced Creative Writing – Fiction**

**Spring**

**Elliott**

**4 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. *Prerequisite:* English 250 or equivalent and consent of instructor.

### **321 Advanced Creative Writing – Poetry**

**Spring**

**Roberts**

**4 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. *Prerequisites:* English 251 or equivalent and consent of instructor.

### **322 Advanced Creative Writing – Nonfiction**

**Spring**

**Elliott**

**4 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. *Prerequisites:* English 252, or equivalent, and consent of instructor.

### **389 Special Studies in Craft**

**4 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. *Prerequisites:* English 250, 251, or equivalent, and consent of instructor. Any current offerings follow.

### **389 VT: Wunderkammer: The Poet's Journal**

**Fall**

**Roberts**

**4 credits**

Poetry's alchemical transformations occur when images speak across silence – apartment windows alive with life in the night; Intention dancing with Chance. The Poet's Journal, a warehouse for notes, for charged objects of attention, for salvaged trinkets of affection, for prized talismans that spur us into echoing halls of mind and heart, will be central to our method. These "Cabinets of Curiosity," treasuries, miscellanies, and curios of the page provide architectures wherein we'll explore juxtaposition, framing, accumulation, erasure, and mosaic repair to create such things as litanies, acrostics, and centos. We'll gather and build with words, splashing into poetry broadly-defined, verbal and graphic. Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*, Werner's *Nomenclature of Colours*, *The Pillow Book* of Sei Shonogun, and Joseph Cornell's *Apothecaries* are possible guidestars; other mentors may include poets: Jenny Xie, Kiki Petrosino, Simone Muench, Charles Simic, Suzanne Buffam, Jay Hopler, Shelley Jackson. What might you save through writing; how might your writing save us all? *Distribution area:* fine arts. *Prerequisites:* English 250 or 251 or 252 or equivalent or consent of instructor.

## **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*.