Faculty

Mark C. Amodio, Professor of English and Chair
Peter Antelyes, Associate Professor of English
*Heesok Chang, Associate Professor of English
Dean Crawford, Visiting Associate Professor of English
*Robert DeMaria, Jr., Professor of English
Eve Dunbar, Associate Professor of English
Leslie Dunn, Associate Professor of English
Donald Foster, Professor of English
Wendy Graham, Professor of English and Associate Chair
*Hua Hsu, Associate Professor of English
Michael Joyce, Professor of English
Jean Kane, Associate Professor of English
Paul Kane, Professor of English
Dorothy Kim, Assistant Professor of English
*Amitava Kumar, Professor of English
*Kiese Laymon, Associate Professor of English
M Mark, Adjunct Associate Professor of English
Zoltán Márkus, Associate Professor of English
*Molly McGlennen, Associate Professor of English
David Means, Visiting Associate Professor of English
H. Daniel Peck, Emeritus Professor of English
Hiram Perez, Assistant Professor of English
Karen Robertson, Senior Lecturer in English
*Paul Russell, Professor of English
Ralph Sassone, Adjunct Associate Professor of English
*Ronald A. Sharp, Professor of English
Tyrone R. Simpson, II, Associate Professor of English
Patricia Wallace, Professor of English
Susan Zlotnick, Professor of English

For a description of faculty members’ interests see pp 19-20. If you are looking for a senior thesis advisor, this is a good place to start.

*On leave in Fall ’15.
**Requirements for Concentration:**
Requirements for Concentration: A minimum of twelve units, comprising either eleven graded units and an ungraded senior tutorial, or twelve graded units. Four units must be elected at the 300-level, including at minimum one taken in the senior year. No AP credit or course taken NRO may be counted toward the requirements for the major.

**Distribution Requirements:**
Majors are required to take two units of work in literature written before 1800 and one unit of work in literature written before 1900. In other words, majors may fulfill the historical distributional requirement in one of two ways: by taking three courses focused on literature written before 1800, or two courses focused on literature written before 1800 and one course focused on nineteenth-century literature.
They must also take one course that focuses on issues of race, gender, sexuality, or ethnicity. These courses must be taken at either the 200- or 300-level.

**Recommendations:**
English 101 and 170 are strongly recommended as foundational courses, and students are also strongly encouraged to work from the 200- to the 300-level in at least one field of study. Acquaintance with a classical language (Latin or Greek) or with one or more of the languages especially useful for an understanding of the history of English (Old English, German, or French) is useful, as are appropriate courses in philosophy, history, and other literatures.

**Further information:**
Applicants for English 209-210 (Advanced Creative Writing: Narrative), English 211-212 (Advanced Creative Writing: Verse), and English 305-306 (Creative Writing Seminar), must submit samples of their writing before spring break. Applicants for English 203 (Journalism) English 307 (Senior Creative Writing) must submit samples of their writing before pre-registration in the fall. Details about these deadlines will be posted on the bulletin board outside the department office.

**Correlate Sequences in English:**
The department offers seven correlates in English. Race and Ethnicity; Theory, Criticism and Transnational Studies; Poetry and Poetics; Literary Forms; British Literary History; American Literary History and Creative Writing. Further information is in this booklet.
I. Introduction to Literary Study
English Freshman Course Descriptions

101.01  
Ms. Dunbar  
Citizen Girls: Chick Lit and Critical Citizenship
This course focuses on "chick lit," a literary genre often featuring these common plot elements: a young, unmarried, middle class, white woman in an American city who finds herself isolated, disaffected, overly educated, financially overdrawn, emotionally and physically underfed, and perpetually underemployed. From "Sex in the City" and The Devil Wears Prada to The Nanny Diaries and Gossip Girls, many believe that chick lit represents not only the worst of American consumerism, but also participates in the continued deterioration of progressive feminist politics. Focusing on literature, as well as contemporary films, magazines, music, and television shows, we'll examine how the conflict among women's identities, progressive gender politics, and American citizenship gets represented within the framework of the chick lit. Additionally, we'll explore how race, sexuality, class, and geography might intersect to change the narrative concerns of traditional chick lit. In short, this class will have us think critically about contemporary women issues, bodies, and notions of citizenship as they are represented in a variety of women's popular texts.

101.02  
Mr. Foster  
Playwork
Western drama, from Aeschylus through YouTube. Readings may include Sophocles, Medieval mystery plays, William Shakespeare, Eugene O'Neill, Bertolt Brecht, Lillian Hellman, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, Sam Shepard, Christopher Durang, and Sarah Kane. Some performance will be required. Writing will include theater reviews, historical research, literary criticism, and original dramatic scripts.

101.03  
Mr. Peck  
Thoreau in His Time and Ours
(Same as AMST 101 and ENST 101) Henry David Thoreau's influence on American environmental thought, political ideas, and literary culture is enduring. The course examines some of his own writings, including Walden, "Essay on Civil Disobedience," excerpts from his "Indian Notebooks," and from his lifelong Journal. We will also read and write about twenty-first-century works in his tradition, including Cheryl Strayed's book Wild (and the recent film made from it), as well as some contemporary journalism. Twentieth-century writers could include John Muir, John Burroughs (with a field trip to his nearby retreat Slabsides), Ernest Hemingway, Annie Dillard, and Gary Snyder. Photography and landscape painting influenced by Thoreau will also be considered. Thoreau himself was a great prose stylist, and can provide a model for our own writing, including journal writing.

101.04  
Mr. Joyce  
Plesently Healing our Geoglyphy
This course is about healing and writing and the part each plays in the other and takes its name from a line in James Joyce's Finnegans Wake that reads “We may plesently heal Geoglyphy's twentynine ways to say goodbett an wassing seoosoon liv.” (595) The seminar should be of interest to those who think they are thinking of studying healing/arts. "Readings" will encompass varied media and may include Julian Schnabel's film, “The Diving Bell and the Butterfly,” Jason Nelson's digital narrative Dreamaphage, as well as novels, poems and stories such as Thomas Mann's, Magic Mountain, Hélène Cixous Hyperdream, Monique Truong's, Bitter in the Mouth, Rae Armantrout's Versed and William Carlos Williams' Doctor Stories, as well as illness memoirs by Virginia Woolf and Roz Chast, the latter in the form of a graphic novel.
**101.05**  
Ms. Kim  
*MW 12:00-1:15*

**Reading the Romance**  
Romance fiction accounts for over a quarter of all books sold annually with an estimated revenue of 1.37 billion dollars. Though immensely popular, this genre is ignored by both academia and mainstream media. All other genre fictions—mystery, westerns, scifi, fantasy—have a place in the New York Times book review and in the college classroom. Yet, romance remains invisible. This class will consider why and how the genre has become culturally marginalized. What does romance's historical trajectory and contemporary status say about gender, class, race, capitalist culture, and the shape of the literary canon? How did we get from the genre of romance being an important node in English literary production to a popular moneymaker but invisible cultural player? What about the audience? How do these reading communities from the Middle Ages to today impact the genre's shape? We will explore a variety of romance texts in verse, prose, and drama including: *Apollonius of Tyre*, *Lais of Marie de France*, *The Romance of Silence*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *St. Juliana*, the works of Shakespeare, John Donne's poetry, Aphra Behn's *Oronooko*, Jane Austen's *Emma*, E. M. Forster's *A Room with A View*, and popular paperback romances.

**101.06**  
Mr. Markus  
*MR 3:10-4:25*

**What's Love Got To Do With It?**  
This course focuses on representations of love (filial, parental, sexual, etc.) from antiquity to the present. Situating the selected works in their contemporary cultural and historical contexts, the course explores significant differences as well as possible continuities between past and present interpretations and representations of such basic concepts and institutions as gender, family, marriage, filial and marital duties, the private sphere, and sexuality. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* serves as a chronological center for these investigations, but we will also discuss passages from the Bible and selected texts (representing diverse dramatic, epic, and lyric genres) by Euripides, Aristophanes, Ovid, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Emily Brontë, and others. In addition, we will look at various adaptations (musical, theatrical, fine arts) of *Romeo and Juliet* as well as film versions.

**101.07**  
Mr. Crawford  
*TR 10:30-11:45*

**Nature of Narrative**  
This course will examine both fiction and non-fiction works, including short stories, novels, memoirs, and autobiographical essays, in terms of their narrative choices and strategies. Among the questions that we'll consider are the benefits of drawing on personally revealing, even embarrassing material; the differences between lying and storytelling; and the importance of narrative guise or impersonation. Readings will include *Dubliners* by James Joyce, *The Ghost Writer* by Philip Roth, *This Boy's Life* by Tobias Wolfe, *Annie John* by Jamaica Kincaid, *Lying: A Metaphorical Memoir* by Lauren Slater, *Speak, Memory* by Vladimir Nabokov, and shorter works by Raymond Carver, Yukio Mishima, Grace Paley, Tim O'Brien, and Joan Didion.

**101.08**  
Ms. Mark  
*WF 12:00-1:15*

**Deception: Some Truths About Lies.**  
Narratives told by someone who can’t be trusted invite readers to explore the ambiguous border between truths and lies. An author’s perceptions may differ from those of the first-person narrator—the “I”—who tells the story, and that discrepancy opens up intriguing psychological space. “Good readers read the lines, better readers read the spaces,” the novelist John Barth has written. This section of English 101 will analyze both words and spaces—both what is said and what is unspoken or unspeakable. We’ll investigate a rogues’ gallery of unreliable narrators who bring varying degrees of mendacity, self-aggrandizement, and self-deception to the stories they tell. Then, from both literary and neuroscience perspectives, we’ll think about memory, the mind, and the brain. We’ll ask: Are memories always fallible? Are they ever-evolving stories we tell ourselves? Is remembering an act of creation rather than straightforward retrieval of the past? Are we all unreliable narrators? Authors may include Alison Bechdel, James Baldwin, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Lydia Davis, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Ralph Ellison, Kazuo Ishiguro, Jamaica Kincaid, Tim O’Brien, Michael Ondaatje, George Orwell, Oliver Sacks, George Saunders, Charles Simic, Zadie Smith, and Oscar Wilde. Students will write both analytical and imaginative responses to the texts.
101.09
Mr. Means TR 12:00-1:15

**Into the Apocalyptic Landscape**
This course will explore characters caught in the dreamscape of violence and apocalyptic visions that is perhaps unique to American history and culture, from slavery to skinheads to school shootings. We’ll examine the concept--coined by rock critic Greil Marcus--of Old Weird America, a folkloric history that has spawned murder ballads, the music of Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash, and a wide range of literary work, including poetry by Walt Whitman, William Carlos Williams, Lucille Clifton, and Etheridge Knight; stories by Edgar Allan Poe, Joyce Carol Oates, Flannery O’Connor, Christine Schutt, and Denis Johnson. Longer works may include novels by William Faulkner, Gayle Jones, Robert Stone, William Vollmann, Hunter Thompson, and the graphic artist, Lynda Barry.

101.10.
Mr. Schultz TR 1:30-2:45

**Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, Beckett**
Modern and contemporary Irish literature has consistently been distinguished by its movement “beyond the pale.” The Pale was originally the fenced-in territory established around Dublin by the invading English in the medieval period, a border between English civilization and Celtic foreignness. In later usage, the phrase, “beyond the pale” came to have a purely metaphoric meaning; to stand outside the conventional boundaries of law, behavior, or social class. As we examine works by the principle figures of Irish literary modernism we will focus not only on the ways that narrative emerges from its immediate colonial contexts, but also the ways in which literary texts look beyond their present moment, revising models inherited from the past and anticipating future forms of literary expression.

101.11
Mr. Simpson MW 1:30-2:45

**The End(s) of Black Autobiography**
Autobiographical writing has been and remains a preeminent mode of African American expression. It was one of the first intellectual gestures that the formerly enslaved made when they gained literacy. It has fed music practices like the blues and hip-hop. It also may have created the circumstances by which the US could elect its first black president. Over the last three centuries, blacks have used this mode to insinuate themselves into literary modernity and register the often unacknowledged dynamism of their emotional and intellectual lives. This course will explore the aesthetics of black autobiographical narrative--its codes, tropes, and investments--from its beginnings in the 18th century to its most present iterations. If black autobiographical writing involves not only telling a story about a black subject, but also proffering a certain version of black life to its reading audiences, it is important to ascertain the nature of the cultural work that these stories (seek to) accomplish. Among the artists featured in this Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, W.E.B. Dubois, Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Gloria Naylor, Barack Obama, Jasmyn Ward, Chris Rock, Oprah Winfrey, and MK Asante.
I. Introduction to Literary Study

English Freshman Course Descriptions

English 170

Entitled “Approaches to Literary Studies,” English 170 is designed as an introduction to the discipline of literary studies. While each section has a different focus (see description below), they have a common agenda: to explore the concerns and methods of the discipline. Topics range from specific critical approaches and their assumptions to larger questions about meaning-making in literature, criticism, and theory. Assignments will develop skills for research and writing in English, including the use of secondary sources and the critical vocabulary of literary study.

As an introduction to the discipline, English 170 is recommended, but not required, for potential majors. It is open to freshmen and sophomores, and others by permission. Although the ideal sequence of English courses for freshmen interested in majoring in English is English 101 in the Fall and 170 in the Spring, 101 is not a prerequisite for 170. Freshmen with AP English credit may take English 170 in the fall semester. Those freshmen who are not currently enrolled in 101 may choose to take 101 in the b-semester and 170 simultaneously; the English department, though, suggests that freshmen take the opportunity to explore other areas of study before committing to the major. Note that English 170 does not fulfill the Freshman Course requirement.

170.01
Mr. Antelyes
Intro to Literary Studies: CHANGING THE SUBJECT

Questions about the nature of subjectivity have become central to contemporary literary studies. What is the relation between the subject of the work of literature and the subjectivity of the author who produced it? How is that subjectivity constituted by and encoded in literary form? How have specific subjectivities, as well as subjectivity in general, been conceptualized in literary history, criticism, and theory? This course will consider such questions, and their implications for the study of literature generally, by focusing on current areas of contention over the claims of subjectivity, such as gender, sexuality, race, postcoloniality, and postmodernity. Works may include Virginia Woolf’s A Room of One’s Own, Hitchcock’s Vertigo, and Alison Bechdel’s Fun Home (gender and sexuality); Gayl Jones’s Corregidora (race); Nicholson Baker’s The Mezzanine (postmodernity); and Tayeb Salih’s Season of Migration to the North (postcoloniality). In addition to placing these texts in their historical and cultural contexts, we will explore a variety of critical perspectives, including semiotics, feminism, psychoanalysis, and cultural studies.

English 174 - 179 – Special Topics

Courses listed under these numbers are designed to offer to a wide audience a variety of literary subjects that are seldom taught in regularly offered courses. The courses are six weeks in length, and the subjects they cover vary from year to year. Enrollment is unlimited and open to all students. Instructors lecture when the classes are too large for the regular seminar format favored in the English department. Does not satisfy Freshman Course requirement. These courses are ungraded and do not count toward the

174.01
Mr. Kane

Special Topics

Topic for 2015a: Poetry and Philosophy: The Ancient Quarrel. When Plato famously banished poets from his ideal Republic, he spoke of an ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy. That argument has continued, in various forms, down to the present, culminating in Heidegger’s notorious question, ”What are poets for?” This six-week course looks at a number of key texts in this contentious history, along with exemplary poems that illustrate the issues. Writers include Plato, Aristotle, Dante, Shelley, Wordsworth, Wilde, Eliot, Blanchot, Derrida, and others.

No specialized knowledge of poetry or philosophy required.

This class is ungraded.

2nd Six Weeks.
II. Intermediate Studies

205a  
Introductory Creative Writing  
Sections of Introductory Creative Writing are open by application to the department. No writing sample is required, but an application form available in the English department office must be completed prior to the end of the pre-registration period. Spaces in the course are assigned according to the students’ preferences and the priorities indicated in the College Catalogue. All sections are writing intensive, but the focus of the individual sections will vary. See descriptions below.

One 2-hour period and individual conferences with the instructor.

205.02  
Mr. Means T 3:10-5:10  
Introductory Creative Writing  
This course will focus on the writing of narrative forms, in particular the short story. Exercises will be assigned along with close reading of established masters in order to supplement our own attempts at writing. Students will be asked to cross genres from fiction to poetry, although the emphasis will be the short story. A final portfolio of creative work will be required at the end of the semester. Readings might include works by Beckett, Welty, Babel, Chekhov, along with contemporary writers (on the fiction side), and Yates, Williams, and many contemporary poets (on the poetry side).

205.03  
Mr. Crawford TR 3:10-4:25  
Introductory Creative Writing  
This course relies on the critical appreciation of both published work and student work. Paying less attention to the distinctions between literary forms than to effective strategies and solutions, we’ll read such varied poets and prose writers as Bishop, Babel, Bloom, Carver, Cheever, Chekhov, Dickey, Faulkner, Frost, Joyce, Kafka, Lawrence, Levertov, McEwan, Munro, Nabokov, O’Connor, Paley, Sexton, Updike, Welty, and Yeats. Since the course is both a seminar and a workshop, students will be asked to participate in class discussions, as well as to present their own work.

206a  
Introductory Creative Writing  
Study and practice of various forms of prose and poetry. Open to any student who has taken English 205 or an equivalent course. Registration is by draw number as in any other course. Special permission is not required. No application form is required.

Prerequisite: open to students who have taken English 205 or 207.

206.01  
Mr. Joyce R 6:30-8:30  
Introductory Creative Writing  
In this section we will pay special attention to writing as a healing art. We will read and write narratives, poems, and memoirs as well as explore hybrid forms, including non-fictional narratives, multimedia, imagetexts, and so on. The course will be of particular interest to—but not restricted to—those interested in medical professions. In writing about how a “physician enjoys a wonderful opportunity actually to witness the words being born,” the American poet and physician William Carlos Williams spoke of how healers “begin to see that the underlying meaning of all that [patients] want to tell us and have always failed to communicate is the poem, the poem which their lives are being lived to realize.” We will try to approach that poem together here.
207 / 208 a or b Intermediate Creative Writing: Literary Non-Fiction
Development of the student's abilities as a reader and writer of literary nonfiction, with emphasis on longer forms. Assignments may include informal, personal, and lyric essays, travel and nature writing, memoirs.
**Prerequisite for 207:** open to students who have taken English 205 or 206.
**Prerequisite for 208:** open to students who have taken English 207 or by permission of the instructor.
One 2-hour period and individual conferences with the instructor.

209.01
Mr. Sassone
F 1:00-3:00
Advanced Creative Writing: Narrative
This year-long course will develop the student's abilities as a rigorous writer and reader of narrative, with particular emphasis on the short story. Students will be expected to write and revise comprehensively and to participate actively in discussions of peer and published work. The syllabus will be flexible according to the emerging needs of the class, but it will undoubtedly include the work of contemporary narrative writers as well as earlier masters of the form. Frequent conferences with the instructor will be required.
**Deadline for submission of writing samples is the week before spring break. Check with the English office for the exact date of deadline.**
One 2-hour period and individual conferences with the instructor.

211.01
Mr. Kane
R 1:00-3:00
Advanced Creative Writing: Verse
Development of the student's abilities as a writer and reader of poetry. In addition to written poetry, other forms of poetic expressions may be explored, such as performance and spoken word. This is a year-long course.
**Deadline for submission of writing samples is the week before spring break. Check with the English office for the exact date of deadline.**
One 2-hour period and individual conferences with the instructor.

215.01
Ms. Kim
TR 3:10-4:25
Pre Modern Drama before 1800:
Study of selected dramatic texts and their embodiment both on the page and the stage. Authors, critical and theoretical approaches, dramatic genres, historical coverage, and themes may vary from year to year.
**Topic for 2015a: Medieval Drama and Performing The York Cycle.** The York Cycle of plays began after the plague in England devastated the population in 1349. York's medieval streets and its civic guilds produced annual plays that were produced into the 1560s. Thus, they were staged during the time of Shakespeare. This class will examine the documentary artifacts of the York Cycle (its manuscripts, accounts of viewings, production notes, etc.) to think about what it would require for an entire civic community to produce and perform this play on a yearly basis. We will examine all of the York Cycle and think about it not just as a medieval artifact, but about how its dramatic shape can change depending on the historical, political, and religious pressures during the several centuries it was performed. The class will consider the architecture, history, and space of York as a medieval city. We will think about what it means to stage it in relation to civic architecture and space, the construction and use of pageant wagons, the questions of costuming, music, visual Catholic iconography in the British Isles, and how this cycle could be performed even into the Reformation.

217.01
Ms. Graham
TR 10:30-11:45
Literary Theory and Interpretation
English 217 is an introduction to literary theory and related critical practices. Sometimes, literary theory focuses on the history of literary criticism. This is not that course. As an introduction to the foundational criticism and new theories that have revolutionized literary study since 1945, we read classic texts from linguistics, structuralism, formalism, psychoanalysis, historicism, and Marxism as well as cutting-edge theory: deconstruction, post-colonial criticism, culture studies, gay-ethnic-film studies. We read Foucault, Benjamin, Bakhtin, Jakobson, Freud, Lacan, Levi-Strauss, Derrida, Gayle Rubin, Fanon, Said, and many others.
218.01
Mr. Perez

Literature, Gender, and Sexuality
This course considers matters of gender and sexuality in literary texts, criticism, and theory. The focus varies from year to year, and may include study of a historical period, literary movement, or genre; constructions of masculinity and femininity; sexual identities; or representations of gender in relation to race and class.

Topic for 2015a: Queer of Color Critique. (Same as AFRS 218 and WMST 218) "Queer of Color Critique" is a form of cultural criticism modeled on lessons learned from woman of color feminism, poststructuralism, and materialist and other forms of analysis. Among its main contentions, queer of color critique argues that gay liberation often has been defined too narrowly in terms of legal equality and that queer theory too often has universalized from privileged positions of power. Hence, queer of color critique seeks alternative analyses and politics especially attentive to the interdependence of race, gender, sexuality, disability, class, and nation. How are poverty, immigration, policing and massive incarceration, health care, reproductive rights, and collective bargaining queer issues? Throughout the semester, we evaluate what "queer" means and what kind of work it enables. Is it an identity or an anti-identity? A verb, a noun, or an adjective? A heuristic device, a strategy for political mobilization, or perhaps even a kind of literacy?

222/223
Founding of English Literature
These courses, ENGL 222 and ENGL 223, offer an introduction to British literary history through an exploration of texts from the eighth through the seventeenth centuries in their literary and cultural contexts. ENGL 222 begins with Old English literature and continues through the death of Queen Elizabeth I (1603). ENGL 223 begins with the establishment of Great Britain and continues through the British Civil War and Puritan Interregnum to the Restoration. Critical issues may include discourses of difference (race, religion, gender, social class); tribal, ethnic, and national identities; exploration and colonization; textual transmission and the rise of print culture; authorship and authority. Both courses address the formation and evolution of the British literary canon, and its significance for contemporary English studies.

222.01
Mr. Foster

Founding of English Literature
This course, covering the work of long-dead authors with a reputation that cannot be lived down, will feature Britain’s best hits from the get-go to the Heigh-ho!, from Beowulf to the Bard; from hard-axe Anglo-Saxons to hard acts to follow.

227.01
Ms. Dunbar

The Harlem Renaissance and its Precursors:
This course places the Harlem Renaissance in literary historical perspective as it seeks to answer the following questions: In what ways was "The New Negro" new? How did African American writers of the Harlem Renaissance rework earlier literary forms from the sorrow songs to the sermon and the slave narrative? How do the debates that raged during this period over the contours of a black aesthetic trace their origins to the concerns that attended the entry of African Americans into the literary public sphere in the eighteenth century?

228.01
Mr. Simpson

African American Literature, “Vicious Modernism” and Beyond
In the famous phrase of Amiri Baraka, "Harlem is vicious/ Modernism." Beginning with the modernist innovations of African American writers after the Harlem Renaissance, this course ranges from the social protest fiction of the 1940s through the Black Arts Movement to the postmodernist experiments of contemporary African American writers.
Latina and Latino Literature
This literature engages a history of conflict, resistance, and mestizaje. For some understanding of this embattled context, we examine transnational migration, exile, assimilation, bilingualism, and political and economic oppression as these variously affect the means and modes of the texts under consideration. At the same time, we emphasize the invented and hybrid nature of Latina and Latino literary and cultural traditions, and investigate the place of those inventions in the larger framework of American intellectual and literary traditions, on the one hand, and pan-Latinidad, on the other. Authors studied may include Gloria Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros, Junot Díaz, John Leguizamo, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Miguel Piñero, Piri Thomas, and Helena Maria Viramontes.

Old English
Introduction to Old English language and literature.

Middle English Literature:
Studies in post-Conquest medieval literature (1250-1500), drawing on the works of the Gawain-poet, Langland, Chaucer, and others. Genres studied may include lyric, romance, drama, allegory, and dream vision.

Topic for 2015a: Arthurian Literature in Medieval Britain. In 1191, the Glastonbury monks purportedly found the remains of King Arthur and Guenevere. They proceeded to publish their discovery and invited “reliable” witnesses (in the figure of Gerald of Wales) to come and experience the exhumation. The Glastonbury monks could funnel this find into a potentially large money-making venture for the monastery as the future site of an Arthurian pilgrimage. For the Norman royal house, this meant that they could use this find to squash any potential and future Welsh rebellion. Gerald of Wales writes up his account of this momentous exhumation and this is one of the many pieces of Arthurian literature that we will be looking at in this class. This class will consider how Arthurian material becomes part of the political and religious rhetoric used to secure a sense of what constitutes medieval Britain and who should control it.

This class will examine the beginnings and rapid spread of Arthurian materials from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historia Regum Britanniae to Malory’s Le Morte d’Arthur. We will move from historiography and chronicle to romance and lai, in both prose and verse. We will begin in the twelfth century and finish at the end of the fifteenth century with the Winchester Malory and Caxton’s printed version of Malory’s work. We will be reading materials from Latin, Middle Welsh, Anglo-Norman French, Middle Scots, and Middle English texts. Some of the texts we will examine: Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia Regum Britanniae; Laȝamon’s Brut; Marie de France’s Lanval; Chrétien de Troyes’ Yvain, Perceval, Lancelot; Cullhwch and Olwen; The Dream of Rhonabwy; the Welsh Peredur and Ywain; the Welsh Triads; Of Arthur and Merlin, The Stanzaic Morte Arthure; The Alliterative Morte Arthure; Prose Tristan; The Awntyrs of Arther; Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; Lancelot of the Laik and Sir Tristem; and Malory’s Le Morte Darthur.

Not open to students who have taken English 241-242.
Mr. Foster

**Shakespeare**
"Shakespeare," wrote Voltaire, "is a drunken savage with some imagination whose plays please only in London and Canada." "Now we sit through Shakespeare," wrote Oscar Wilde, "in order to recognize the quotations." But here in Po'town, where the plays still please, we shall sift through Shakespeare in order to sharpen our critical pens, our wit, our rhetoric; to hone our skill as close readers, as performers, as observers of culture; and perhaps to ruin our faith, patriotism, complacency, and morals. In this course, kindred spirits of the Bard -- drama majors, English majors, undeclared geniuses, and the occasional drunken savage with some imagination – shall study Shakespeare's great-and-above-average plays, early and late. Course objectives shall further include how to read a script, how to construct a critical argument, and how to write. Not open to students who have taken English 240.

Ms. Kane

**Irish Literatures:**
The course will examine Irish poetry, drama, and fiction in the twentieth century, in light of the unstable location of Irish writing in English. After an introduction to Irish orature, we'll examine the romantic return to Irish myth as a national literary resource in the late nineteenth century. The pastoral "Celtic Revival" stimulated creativity and critique from its inception, fueling Ireland's "sensational re-entrance" into metropolitan literature, as one critic called it. The first part of the course centers on this late colonial era; the second explores the literature of post-colonial (and Northern still colonial) Ireland. Issues of language, gender, religion, class, culture, race, and national origin figure into our examinations of literary issues and the peculiar position of Ireland as a European colony and of "Irish" literature in the twentieth century as both marginal and central to the British canon. Among the authors we'll read are Synge, Yeats, Joyce, McGuckian, Heaney, Friel, and O'Brien.

Field Work
Field work is open by special permission of the associate chair, and is usually offered for one-half unit of credit.
Field Work projects are sponsored by individual faculty members in the department. Students interested in Field Work should see page 30 for further details on the requirements.

Independent Study
Independent Study is open by special permission of the associate chair. Independent Study is intended to supplement (not duplicate) the regular curricular offerings by defining special projects in reading and writing under the direction of an individual faculty member. The prerequisite for Independent Study at the 200- or 300-level is 2 units of 200-level work in English. Application forms for Independent Study are available in the English department office.

Open by permission of the associate chair. 1 unit of credit given only in exceptional cases.

Open by permission of the associate chair. 1 unit of credit given only in exceptional cases.
III. Advanced Courses

Senior Year Requirements

The College requires a special exercise to distinguish the work of the senior year in one’s major. In the English department, that requirement takes the form of English 300, Senior Tutorial, or enrolling in at least one of the four required 300-level courses in the senior year.

Description of English 300: All senior English majors should consider taking this course. The tutorial should reflect and extend the intellectual interests you have developed in your earlier course work. The tutorial itself involves working with an individual faculty member to produce a long paper (approximately 10,000 words or 40 pages). The project may consist of a sustained essay or a series of linked essays, or one of several alternatives, such as primary research in the Special Collections department of the Library, a piece of translation, a work of dramaturgy, or a scholarly edition of a particular work or group of works. Senior projects that are not essays in themselves should be accompanied by a complementary essay. Students admitted to 305-306 (Creative Writing Seminar), must also enroll in English 300 in the a-term, and it follows the special guidelines established in the context of 305-306.

300 a or b
Senior Tutorial
Preparation of a long essay (40 pages) or other independently designed critical project. Each essay is directed by an individual member of the department. Special Permission.

305.01
Ms. Kane M 3:10-6:10
Creative Writing Seminar
Advanced study and practice of various forms of prose and poetry. Open in the senior year to students concentrating in English. Special Permission.
Deadline for submission of writing samples is the week before spring break. Check with the English office for the exact date of deadline.
Students admitted to the Creative Writing Seminar must also enroll in ENGL 300 in the Fall semester.

315.01
Ms. Dunn R 1:00-3:00
Writing for Performance
This course offers advanced study in the relationship between performance and text. Performance in this case is broadly conceived. It can include dramatic performances of plays, as well as storytelling, comic or musical performance, performance art, and poetry. The course may also explore such categories as gender or identity as forms of performance.
Topic for 2015a: Performing Disability. This course explores disability both in and as performance across a range of media. Topics include: the performance of disability in everyday life; disability as metaphor; representations of disability in drama, film, and television; disability arts and culture; and the work of disabled performing artists. Texts include plays from Shakespeare to the present, as well as readings in disability studies, performance studies, feminist and queer theory. A highlight of the course will be a workshop with deaf poet-storyteller Peter Cook and a performance by the Flying Words Project.
Prerequisites: an original writing sample; evidence of successfully completed coursework in dramatic literature; and permission of the instructor.
318.01  
Ms. Robertson  
**Literary Studies in Gender and Sexuality**  
Advanced study of gender and sexuality in literary texts, theory and criticism. The focus will vary from year to year but will include a substantial theoretical or critical component that may draw from a range of approaches, such as feminist theory, queer theory, transgender studies, feminist psychoanalysis, disability studies and critical race theory.  
**Topic for 2015a:**  *Feminist Approaches to the Representation of Rape.* (Same as WMST 318)  
The representation of rape has been central in the Western literary tradition providing a pretext for aggression and revenge since the *Iliad*. These stories, foundational to narratives of the making of political entities, are repeated and recycled in the literary tradition. Yet the subjectivity of the raped woman continues to confound. Her silence seems necessary. This course considers the classical figures of Lucrece, Lavinia, and Philomel and their translation into the English literary tradition in the work of Chaucer and Shakespeare. We then turn to recent feminist work on the representation of rape. Authors may include Alcoff, Higgins and Silver, Walker, and films such as *Thelma & Louise* and *The Accused*.  
Open to Juniors and Seniors with two units of 200-level work in English or by permission of the instructor.

330.01  
Ms. Graham  
**American Modernism**  
Intensive study of modern American literature and culture in the first half of the twentieth century, with special attention to the concept of “modernism” and its relation to other cultural movements during this period. Authors may include Dreiser, Wharton, Cather, Frost, Anderson, Millay, Pound, Stein, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, O’Neill, H.D., Faulkner, Wright, Eliot, Williams, Moore, Stevens, Crane, Yezierska, Toomer, Hughes, Cullen, Brown, Hurston, McKay, Steinbeck, and Dos Passos.

341.01  
Mr. Markus  
**Studies in the Renaissance:**  
Intensive study of selected Renaissance texts and the questions they raise about their context and interpretation.  
**Topic for 2015a:** *Sex and the City in 1600: Gender, Marriage, Family, and Sexuality in Early Modern London.* This course explores everyday life in the rapidly expanding early modern metropolis of London. We pay special attention to religious, social, legal as well as informal control mechanisms that influenced issues of gender, marriage, and sexuality in various layers of London society. We anchor our investigations in a handful of plays (mainly city comedies) by Beaumont, Dekker, Jonson, Marston, Middleton, and Shakespeare, but also discuss ballads, homilies, conduct books, legal and travel narratives, pamphlets and treatises, literary works by female authors, and other literary and non-literary texts.

355.01  
Mr. Kane  
**Modern Poets:**  
Intensive study of selected modern poets, focusing on the period 1900–1945, with attention to longer poems and poetic sequences. Consideration of the development of the poetic career and of poetic movements. May include such poets as Auden, Bishop, Eliot, Frost, Hopkins, Moore, Pound, Stein, Stevens, Williams, and Yeats.
365.01
Ms. Wallace

Selected Author:
Study of the work of a single author. The work may be read in relation to literary predecessors and descendants as well as in relation to the history of the writers’ critical and popular reception. This course alternates from year to year with English 265.

Topic for 2015a: J.D. Salinger and the Craft of Writing. This seminar focuses on Salinger’s development of the craft of writing, from his earliest, never re-published stories (available on course website), to his novel Catcher in the Rye and his later collections Nine Stories, Franny and Zooey, Raise High the Roofbeam Carpenters, and Hapworth 16, 1924. A goal of the seminar is to blend students’ critical experience of reading with their own creative work, exploring use of dialogue, focus on detail, narrative voice and structure in both Salinger and in their own creative writing practice. Among topics the seminar explores are Salinger’s experience in the infantry in World War II as it shaped his writing and his creation of a postwar American family of prodigies, the Glass family. The final segment of the seminar explores Salinger’s influences on a generation of younger writers, such as David Foster Wallace, Jonathan Safran Foer, Amy Bender, and the filmmaker Wes Anderson. Of special interest to creative writing students.

365.02
Mr. Joyce

Selected Author:
Study of the work of a single author. The work may be read in relation to literary predecessors and descendants as well as in relation to the history of the writers’ critical and popular reception. This course alternates from year to year with English 265.

Topic for 2015a: Fanny Howe. “I traveled to the page where scripture meets fiction./The paper slept but the night in me woke up,” begins Fanny Howe’s poem, “A Hymn.” In this seminar we’ll travel through the work of this American poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist, and activist, the author of more than 20 books of poetry and prose, not only in hopes of waking the night in us, but also exploring what she calls “bewilderment as a way of entering the day as much as the work. Bewilderment as a poetics and an ethics.”

380.01
Ms. Dunbar

English Seminar:

Topic for 2015a: The Blues In/And Black. (Same as AFRS 380) The blues makes audible the struggles and the resilience of African Americans. This seminar will explore the relationship and influence of blues music on black literary, cultural, and critical production. We’ll listen to sound recordings and watch videos, as we explore how black artists and scholars make use of blues aesthetics, themes, and even personas to craft their literary worlds and works. We’ll think about the relationship between a musical form and texts, and we’ll let questions of black vernacular tradition, gender, sexuality, urbanization, migration, violence, and love guide us.
Notice to Majors

Students may receive credit toward the major for other courses offered in the programs (when taught or team-taught by members of the department) upon the approval of the curriculum committee. Please consult with the chair if you have questions about a particular course.

AMST 382-01
Ms. Cohen and Ms. Wallace

Documenting America

The demand for documentation, the hunger for authenticity, the urge to share in the experiences of others were widespread in the first half of the twentieth century. A huge world of documentary expression included movies, novels, photographs, art and non-fiction accounts. This course explores the various ways in which some of these artists, photographers, writers and government agencies attempted to create documents of American life between 1900 and 1945. The course examines how such documents fluctuate between utility and aesthetics, between the social document and the artistic image. Among the questions we consider are: in what ways do these works document issues of race and gender that complicate our understanding of American life? How are our understandings of industrialization and consumerism, the Great Depression and World War II, shaped and altered by such works as the photographs of Lewis Hine and Dorothea Lange, the paintings of Jacob Lawrence, the films of Charlie Chaplin, the novels and stories of Chester Himes, William Carlos Williams and Zora Neale Hurston, the non-fictional collaboration of James Agee and Walker Evans.
Courses That Fulfill English Major Requirements  
For Academic Year 2015-2016

**pre-1800  
pre-1900  
Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Requirement Fulfilled</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>215 Pre-Modern Drama before 1800</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>216 Modern Drama</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>217 Literary Theory and Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>218 Literature, Gender, and Sexuality: <em>Black Feminism</em></td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>222/223 Founding of English Literature</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>227 Harlem Renaissance/Precurors</td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228 African American Literature</td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230 Latina and Latino Literature in the U.S.</td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231 Native-American Literature</td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235 Old English</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>236 Beowulf</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237 Chaucer</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238 Middle English Literature</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240 Shakespeare</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>241 Shakespeare</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242 Shakespeare</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251 Topics in Black Literature: <em>Zombies, Monsters &amp; Time Travelers</em></td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253 Topics in American Literature: <em>Narratives of Passing</em></td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>257 The Novel/English after 1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>261 Literatures of Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>315 Studies in Performance: <em>Performing Disability</em></td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>318 Literature Studies in Gender/Sexuality</td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>325 Studies in Genre: <em>The Gothic</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>329 American Literary Realism</td>
<td>pre-1900</td>
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<tr>
<td>330 American Modernism</td>
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<tr>
<td>340 Studies in Medieval Literature</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>341 Studies in the Renaissance</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342 Studies in Shakespeare</td>
<td>pre-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>355 Modern Poets</td>
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<td>362 Text and Image</td>
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<tr>
<td>365-01 Selected Author: <em>J.D. Salinger and the Craft of Writing</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>365-02 Selected Author: <em>Fanny Howe</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>370 Transnational Literature</td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380 The Blues In/And Black</td>
<td>Race, Ethn.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*As course topics change, so do the requirements they fulfill. Therefore, this list is only applicable for the 2015-2016 academic year.*
Correlate Sequences in English

The curriculum in English presents a broad array of courses representing a variety of subjects—literatures from different periods of history and geographical locations, genres, and approaches or methods of study. Given the scope of the discipline, the correlate sequences we offer allow students to tailor their programs to individual interests within the discipline while maintaining a broader understanding of the contexts surrounding that area of focus.

Here are the correlate areas:

1. Race and Ethnicity
2. Theory, Criticism and Transnational Studies
3. Poetry and Poetics
4. Literary Forms
5. British Literary History
6. American Literary History
7. Creative Writing

These correlates are designed to articulate coherent plans of study that build from a foundation in introductory and intermediate courses to great depth and complexity in advanced courses. Students are advised, then, to try to take the courses in sequence, beginning with either English 101 or 170 (or both), moving on to 200-level courses, and concluding with 300-level seminars. Each sequence offers a number of courses from which the students must elect six to complete the sequence.

The correlate sequences are defined, in part, to suggest intellectual compatibilities between literature and other disciplines. Students majoring in Africana Studies or Women’s Studies, for example, will find that the correlate in “Race and Ethnicity” supplements and extends their work in the major. At the same time, because these correlates articulate issues of central interest within the discipline, English majors will discover in them useful guides for developing a sequenced and coherent plan of courses to fulfill the requirements in the major.

Since many of the courses in the English Department are topics courses that change from year to year, we cannot list all the courses that, in any given year, may be applied to correlate sequences. If you wish a special topics course to count towards one of the correlate sequences, you should check with the associate chair to make sure that course is appropriate for the correlate sequence you are pursuing.
Correlate Sequences in English

1. Race and Ethnicity
   * At least one of the following: English 101, 170
   * At least two of the following:
     English 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 251, 252, 261, 262, 275, 277
   * At least one of the following: English 319, 326, 370

2. Theory, Criticism and Transnational Studies
   * At least one of the following: English 101, 170
   * At least one of the following: English 217, 317
   * At least one of the following: English 218, 257, 262, 275, 277
   * At least one of the following: English 331, 362, 369, 370

3. Poetry and Poetics
   * At least one of the following: English 101, 170
   * At least two of the following: English 211-212, 222, 223, 236, 237, 250,
   * At least two of the following: English 315, 345, 352, 353, 355, 356

4. Literary Forms
   * At least one of the following: English 101, 170
   * At least two of the following:
   * At least two of the following: English 315, 317, 329, 342, 345, 352, 353, 355, 356

5. British Literary History
   * At least one of the following: English 101, 170
   * English 222 and 223
   * At least one of the following:
   * At least one of the following: English 256, 260, 261, 262
   * At least one of the following: English 324, 340, 341, 342, 345, 350, 351, 352, 353

6. American Literary History
   * At least one of the following: English 101, 170
   * At least one of the following: English 225, 226
   * At least one of the following: English 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 251, 252
   * At least two of the following: English 326, 328, 329, 330, 331

7. Creative Writing
   * At least one of the following: English 101, 170
   * At least two literary courses in the genre or genres of focus
   * At least three of the following: 203, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209-10, 211-12, 307
   * At least one course in the correlate must be at the 300 level
The following list of the English department faculty suggests its range and vitality, and it reveals hidden talents and interests. Members of the department have described themselves in terms of their intellectual interests—the subjects they study and teach and the areas in which they have directed tutorials and guided independent studies. Please consult this list when you are selecting an advisor, a tutor, or looking for a faculty member to sponsor Independent Study or Field Work.

**Mark C. Amodio:** Primary interests: Old and Middle English poetry and prose; oral theory; history of English language; literary theory; linguistics. Secondary interests: Old Norse language and literature; Renaissance drama and poetry; Milton, Orwell; film and literature.

**Peter Antelyes:** American literature, Jewish Studies, comics and graphics novels, film, and music.

*Heesok Chang:* Twentieth-century British and Irish literature; literary modernism; critical theory; rhetoric; media and visual studies.

**Dean Crawford:** Fiction, modern and contemporary; autobiography; travel narratives and literary journalism; narrative writing.

*Robert DeMaria, Jr.*: Milton; Seventeenth-century literature; Eighteenth-century literature; history of media; history of language; lexicography; biography.

**Eve Dunbar:** Nineteenth-and twentieth-century African American literature; Women writers of color; Science-fiction cinema.

**Leslie Dunn:** Early modern literature, including Shakespeare and women writers; feminist literary and cultural studies; literature and music; literature and medicine.

**Donald Foster:** Literature of the early modern period, dramatic and non-dramatic, especially Shakespeare; all periods of English and American drama; writing for performance; and journalism.

**Wendy Graham:** American Literature; American Culture, emphasizing issues of gender and sexual nonconformity as well as the relationship between fiction and the emerging social sciences (psychology, anthropology, museology, sociology, biophysics); Literary Decadence, Pre-Raphaelitism, and the notion of “sister arts”; literary and critical theory; African-American literature.

*Hua Hsu:* Transpacific/Asian American literature; 20th Century American literature and culture; literary transnationalism; philosophies of race and ethnicity; American historical fiction; protest literature; autobiography and genre; film and music criticism.

**Michael Joyce:** Hypertext fiction; media studies; modern literature; theory.

**Jean Kane:** Post-colonial literatures; modern and contemporary British literature; imperial discourse; women’s studies; creative writing.

**Paul Kane:** American and British literature; poetry; literature and the environment; Australian and other post-colonial literatures; literary theory and criticism.

**Dorothy Kim:** Old English, Middle English, history of the book, medieval Celtic literature, medieval Scandinavian literature, romance, medieval Arthurian tradition, medieval manuscripts, literature and music, literature and visual culture, women writers, devotional literature, literacy, multilingualism, multiculturalism, border culture.
*Amitava Kumar:* Reportage; essay-form, both in prose and film; literatures describing the global movement of goods and people; memory-work.


M Mark: Twentieth-century literature; contemporary literature; postcolonial literature; modern South Asian literature; modern Irish literature; literary modernism; drama; literature and film. Creative writing: fiction and literary nonfiction.

Zoltán Márkus: Early modern literature, especially drama; Shakespeare studies; European drama; cultural, literary, and performance theory.


David Means: Creative writing; fiction and poetry; modern fiction.

Hiram Perez: Immigration and Diaspora, Critical Race Theory, Latina/o Literature, African American Literature, Asian American Literature, Feminism, Queer Studies, Film, Popular Culture, Psychoanalysis.

Karen Robertson: Renaissance drama, including Shakespeare, feminist studies; creative writing. Independents have included creative writing, contemporary women writers, Virginia Woolf, feminist theorists in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

*Paul Russell:* Twentieth and Twenty-first century prose fiction, especially Joyce, Woolf and Nabokov; Dickens; Queer Studies; Mormons.

Ralph Sassone: Creative writing; twentieth-century literature; contemporary fiction and literary nonfiction.

*Ronald Sharp:* Romanticism; critical theory; Australian literature; contemporary poetry; the literature of friendship.

Tyrone Simpson, II: Literary Urbanism; Twentieth-Century American Literature; Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century African American Literature; Twentieth-Century Urban American Studies; Critical Race Theory, Critical Geography, American Cultural Studies, and Film Studies.

Patricia Wallace: Twentieth-century poetry and prose; contemporary American literature, including minority writers; poetic theory; feminist studies; American Culture, multidisciplinary approaches to literature and creative writing.

Susan Zlotnick: Victorian studies; gender studies; the novel; working-class literature; the intersections of history and literature; independent projects welcome.

*On leave in Fall ‘15.*
Frequently Asked Questions

Area Requirements

Does English 226 (American Literature, 1865-1925) count as a pre-1900 course?
No. Although the course covers material from the latter half of the nineteenth century, it deals substantially with literary modernism. English 225 (American Literature, Origins to pre-1900) does satisfy the pre-1900 requirement.

Can area requirements be covered by courses taken JYA or during summer session?
Yes, with approval from the associate chair. In order to receive approval, make an appointment with the associate chair; bring with you a course description from the university catalogue and a copy of the syllabus.

Credit Questions

I received an AP credit in English. Does this count towards my English major?
No. Your AP English credit does not count as 1 of the 12 credits you need to complete the English major. However, it does count towards your total college credits (1 of 34 needed to graduate).

My English JYA credits appear in my transcript as ungraded work. Will they count towards the major, even though the departmental requirements state that 11 of the 12 required units must be graded units?
Yes. As long as your JYA credits are approved English credits, they will count towards your English major.

What about English credits taken over the summer at another institution? Do they also transfer as ungraded work; do they count towards my major?
Yes. But this work must be approved by the associate chair of the department. In order to get approval make an appointment to see the associate chair; be sure to bring the catalogue course description and a copy of the syllabus.

Can any of the English credits I have earned at other schools, either JYA or during summer session, count as a 300-level credit?
Generally speaking, no. However, the associate chair will take into consideration certain cases where the student can demonstrate that the coursework in question was comparable to that undertaken in a 300-level English class at Vassar.

Can a Vassar course I have taken outside of the English department count towards my major?
Yes, under the following circumstances:

(1) You can count any course that has been cross-listed with the English department or if it has been approved by the associate chair to count as an English credit. The quickest way to find out if such a course will count towards your major is to ask the instructor, since she or he is responsible for petitioning the department for such approval.

(2) The department will accept one literature course from other departments or programs toward the English major. Please note that these courses will not count toward any of the English department’s distribution requirements.
Before declaring my English major, I NRO’d an English course. I did well in the class and received a letter grade for it on my transcript. Can this course count towards the major?

Unfortunately, no. Even if you received an “A” for the course, the non-recorded option counts towards the quota of your allowable nongraded units. Your transcript may show a letter grade for the course, but our records will indicate it was elected as NRO.

**Independent Study and Field Work**

**How do I apply for English 298 (Independent Study), 399 (Senior Independent Study), or 290 (Field Work)?**

Permission to elect Independent Study and Field Work is granted by the associate chair, but you first must find a faculty sponsor. If you wish to do 298, 399, or 290 and you don’t know who would be an appropriate sponsor, consult the associate chair first. Occasionally, a request for Independent Study or Field Work requires permission of the chair after consultation with the associate chair.

**What kinds of Field Work will the department sponsor to oversee?**

The project must fall clearly within the scope of our concerns as an English Department. Projects involving a student’s work in television, radio, or advertising, for example, are best referred to either the American Culture Program or the Department of Sociology (which offer courses in those fields).

You are required to submit a written proposal. The proposal should address the relevance of the project to your work as an English major (or work in English courses) as well as outline clearly and specifically your duties on the job.

**Is there a Creative Writing Program at Vassar?**

While there is not a separate program for creative writing within the Vassar English Department, we offer an array of creative writing courses. Students usually begin with English 205: Introductory Creative Writing, which may be taken in either “a” or “b” semester. This course serves as an introduction to the writing of both fiction and poetry. English 206, also offered in both “a” and “b” semesters, is open to students who have taken 205. One section of 206 is usually designated as a “poetry” section for those students who wish to work exclusively in that form.

The department has two year-long creative writing courses, English 209-210, Advanced Creative Writing: Narrative, and English 211-212, Advanced Creative Writing: Verse, that are open to both majors and non-majors. Students who wish to be considered for these courses must submit a writing portfolio a week before spring break in the semester before the courses begin. Please check with the English department for the exact due date. A portfolio should consist of 15 to 20 pages of fiction or 6 to 8 poems.

These courses are not available to Freshmen.

A writing portfolio is also required for students wishing to take English 305-306 the year-long Creative Writing Seminar. This course is limited to senior English Majors, and entails the writing of a Senior Thesis—a collection of poems, short stories or a novel.

Independent study in creative writing is also available for sophomores, juniors, and seniors, subject to the ordinary rules for independent study in the English department.

All of our creative writing courses include study of established authors as well as in-class consideration of student work.

Vassar sends many graduates on to MFA Programs in Creative Writing. Recent graduates have studied at the Iowa Writers Workshop, Columbia, NYU, University of Montana, University of Massachusetts, Washington University, University of Wisconsin, University of Texas, Brooklyn College and University of Arkansas. Notable writers who have attended Vassar include Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elizabeth Bishop, Muriel Rukeyser, Mary Oliver, Jane Smiley, Erica Funkhauser, Elizabeth Spires, Carole Maso, Keith Scribner, Curtis Sittenfeld, Adam Ross, Amber Dermont, Jesse Ball, Aimee Friedmann, Joe Hill, and Owen King.
Planning Your Senior Year

Students should begin planning their senior year well in advance. As a part of this process, there are a number of questions you should ask yourself. For example: How do my various courses connect with each other? What is my trajectory through the major and how might the senior year serve as a capstone for it? Do I want to write a thesis? If so, what kind of preparation do I need? Do I want to apply for the Creative Writing Seminar or the Senior Writing Seminar? If so, what preparation do I need? Are there ways in which my interests outside of the department connect to my work in my major? The department encourages English majors to think imaginatively about these and similar questions and to seek advice from their major advisers as well as their course instructors.

If you decide to enroll in English 300 and write a critical thesis, you should make sure that you have adequately prepared yourself for undertaking an original research project. Take coursework in your chosen field before you write the thesis. Consider how your JYA experience, or courses taken in other departments might support/anticipate the work you want to do on your thesis. In the semester before you write the thesis, talk to both your major and thesis advisor about the kind of work you might be able to undertake independently over the summer or during winter break.

If you choose, in lieu of English 300 you can enroll in a 300-level seminar during your senior year. While the department hopes that students will sample the rich diversity of its offerings, the department also strongly encourages students to work up from the 200-level to the 300-level in at least one field.

Students wishing to apply for any of the senior writing courses should prepare themselves by taking the writing courses offered at the 200-level.
A term deadlines:

All students writing a critical senior thesis during a-term must meet two departmental deadlines: the first for a working title, due **September 23, 2015**, and the second for the final draft of the thesis, due **December 16, 2015**.

Within the first three weeks of the term in which you are writing the thesis, but no later than **September 23, 2015**, you must submit to the department office a typed sheet of paper with the following information: your name, your email, your thesis advisor, and the working title of your thesis. The working title should indicate both the author(s)/text(s) that are your focus and the approach you will be taking to those materials. This information will be distributed among the faculty and senior thesis writers.

Students and their individual advisors are responsible for determining interim deadlines for the drafting of the thesis. Some advisors ask that you submit a few pages each week; others may request that you submit completed chapters or sections during the semester. Below is one possible template for interim deadlines. This template is intended to serve as a useful model rather than a requirement. Whatever you do, be sure to have a discussion with your advisor early in the thesis process about interim deadlines so that you know what your thesis advisor expects.

**Model Template for Interim Deadlines:**

**September 23, 2015**  
A three-page abstract, with an attached bibliography, is due to the thesis advisor. In the abstract, the student must state: the project’s primary and secondary texts, the principle questions, the structure (i.e., chapters), and the methodologies and/or critical approaches he or she will take.

**October 7, 2015**  
Draft of significant section of the thesis is due, approximately 15-20 pages. Comments will be returned by the advisor the week after October break.

**November 11, 2015**  
Draft of second half of the thesis is due, approximately 15-20 pages.
B term deadlines:

All students writing a critical senior thesis during b-term must meet two departmental deadlines: the first for a working title, due **February 10, 2016**, and the second for the final draft of the thesis, due **May 10, 2016**.

Within the first three weeks of the term in which you are writing the thesis, but no later than **February 10, 2016**, you must submit to the department office a typed sheet of paper with the following information: your name, your email, your thesis advisor, and the working title of your thesis. The working title should indicate both the author(s)/text(s) that are your focus and the approach you will be taking to those materials. This information will be distributed among the faculty and senior thesis writers.

Students and their individual advisors are responsible for determining interim deadlines for the drafting of the thesis. Some advisors ask that you submit a few pages each week; others may request that you submit completed chapters or sections during the semester. Below is one possible template for interim deadlines. This template is intended to serve as a useful model rather than a requirement. Whatever you do, be sure to have a discussion with your advisor early in the thesis process about interim deadlines so that you know what your thesis advisor expects.

**Model Template for Interim Deadlines:**

**February 10, 2016**
A three-page abstract, with an attached bibliography, is due to the thesis advisor. In the abstract, the student must state: the project’s primary and secondary texts, the principle questions, the structure (i.e., chapters), and the methodologies and/or critical approaches he or she will take.

**March 2, 2016**
Draft of significant section of the thesis is due, approximately 15-20 pages. Comments will be returned by the advisor the week after Spring break.

**April 13, 2016**
Draft of second half of the thesis is due, approximately 15-20 pages.
Creative Work in the Senior Year

What exactly is the Creative Writing Seminar (English 305-06)?

The Creative Writing Seminar is a liberal arts course in reading and writing like all other courses in the department; it is not solely a “writing workshop.” Reading is drawn for the most part from the twentieth century to provide examples of various types of writing: fiction, poetry, and nonfiction outside of literary criticism. Class time is divided between discussion of this reading and discussion of student writing. The instructor of the course is also the supervisor of each student’s senior tutorial (English 300). In other words, once you are registered in English 305-306, you do not have to seek out a separate tutorial advisor. The creative work you do for the course will count toward your senior tutorial. But in addition to creative work for the tutorial, students will be expected to write critical papers for the course. You likely know already that admission to the Creative Writing Seminar is highly competitive (see below) and that many fine writers have gone on from Vassar to graduate schools and successful writing careers without taking English 305-306.

Who can take Creative Writing Seminar and how can I apply?

This course is open only to senior English majors. To be considered for admission to English 305-306 (Creative Writing Seminar), you need to submit two copies of samples of your writing to the English department office before spring break (see the bulletin board outside the department office for the exact date). Try to submit samples of the kind of writing that you think you may want to concentrate on in your senior project. However it is more important that you submit writing that you feel best shows your abilities than to predict what you will write in the Creative Writing Seminar. If you are interested in writing fiction, you should submit one or two completed stories; if poetry, a number of poems; if literary nonfiction, an extended prose piece, and so on. You may also wish to submit a variety of pieces (poetry and prose). You should not submit traditional critical essays (papers), although papers that veer toward literary nonfiction are a possibility. Feel free to use samples of writing you have done for other courses; that is, you need not write something new for this process. A committee of at least three faculty members reads the submissions and selects the members of this course. The course instructor is not necessarily a member of the committee. The names of students selected for English 305-306 will be posted outside the English Office. Enrollment is limited to twelve students.

Are there other options for creative theses?

Under special circumstances seniors may undertake creative work, including a linked creative and analytical piece or a work of literary non-fiction, after careful discussion with a prospective advisor and permission of the chair. These projects may not normally take the form of creative writing of the sort undertaken in Creative Writing Seminar (English 305-306). Usually senior projects with a creative component are accompanied by a complementary essay or introduction.

What is the senior writing seminar?

The senior writing seminar is at present a one-term course open to English majors, students pursuing the creative writing correlate, and a limited number of non-majors who have taken one or more of the 200-level writing courses. To be considered for admission, you need to submit samples before pre-registration in the fall.

What other creative writing courses are open to seniors?

All the 200-level writing courses are open to seniors with the following understandings: Introductory Creative Writing 205-206 and Intermediate Creating Writing, 207, are open by special permission, to sophomores, juniors, and seniors, in order of their draw numbers, with priority given to English majors. English 208 is open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have successfully completed either 205 or 207. See the section “Registration for Introductory Creative Writing,” elsewhere here for more information.
Rumors and Queries

Do professors in the department keep secret grade books?

Some do and some don’t. But even if a professor keeps a private entry of grades for papers, exams, oral reports, participation, and so forth, it functions more as a memory aid than an official record. Since your final grade will be determined by your performance over the course of the semester—taking into account factors like effort and improvement—the professor’s written comments on papers probably provide a more accurate index of how you are doing.

Why don’t professors in the English department put grades on papers?

This long-standing practice in the English department is based on the theory that an English course is a conversation. The conversation takes place in class among students and teachers; it takes place in conferences and e-mail; and it takes place in the dialogue between a student’s paper and a teacher’s response. The placement of a grade on the paper puts an end to this part of the conversation. A student paper is not an exam but is rather an opportunity for the student to speak on a particular subject. The instructor’s response is not a grade, but it is an informed response to what the student has said.

Why doesn’t the department offer courses on literature in translation?

Because we are an English department, not a comparative literature department, foreign literatures in translation fall outside of our field. We do not prohibit some translations from being taught in our regular course offerings. On the contrary, several of us use translations in our classes in order to ramify historical and cultural understandings of the literature in question.

Whom should one ask about graduate study in English?

The chair of the department and the associate chair are available by appointment to discuss graduate school plans and applications for post-graduate grants.
Guidelines for Requesting Letters of Recommendation

Every academic year, members of the English department write hundreds of letters of recommendation for students and former students. This is, of course, a part of their work as teachers and mentors, and students should not be shy about asking for recommendations. However, faculty members take considerable time on the task; write in detail and make every effort to present a candidate in the best possible light. They write different letters, of course, for each individual, and they write letters designed for a variety of applications, including graduate school, law school, medical school, summer fellowships, traveling fellowships, study abroad programs, prizes, employment prospects, and internships. Students, therefore, should do what they can to give faculty the time and information needed to write successfully on their behalf. Here are some guidelines, adapted from those issued to undergraduates at Harvard:

* Give at least three, preferably four or more, weeks notice for any request. Even if you know that the instructor has a letter already on file, do not assume that it can be changed and quickly printed. Letters may need significant revision best to fit a particular purpose.

* Include a written statement of the due date and whether it is a postmark or a receipt date.

* Provide a written description of the purpose of the letter and/or a copy of instructions intended for the person writing. If there are multiple letters for different purposes, provide a description for each (e.g., graduate school, law school, traveling fellowship).

* Make sure to provide the instructor with your statement of purpose or letter of intent for each application. This statement is crucial to the success of your application, and it is essential for your instructor to read it when writing on your behalf. If your instructor is willing to work with you on the statement, you should certainly take advantage of the opportunity.

* Offer to provide copies of class papers and of any other papers directly relevant.

* Fill out any forms as completely as you can. Do not expect the person writing for you to fill out any information that you yourself know.

* Offer to provide a copy of your transcript (an unofficial one is fine) and a CV.

* Offer to have an individual conference about the reasons for your application(s). At the very least, explain these reasons either by including a written statement or by including a draft of your project or statement of purpose submitted with your application.

* Include fully addressed envelopes for each letter and affix sufficient postage.

* Make certain to fill out any waiver request, either yes or no. This is easily missed.

* Do not email requests for letters along with attachments. Print out everything and give or send all materials to the person whom you are asking to write for you. In other words, don’t expect the person writing for you to print out your work or to visit a web site (unless strictly required by the party receiving the letter).

* Never assume that a letter can be faxed or e-mailed at the last minute. This puts unacceptable constraints on the person writing on your behalf.