

## The English Department Spring 2019

### Faculty

- Mark C. Amodio**, Professor of English and Chair  
**Peter Antelyes**, Associate Professor of English
- \* **Heesok Chang**, Associate Professor of English
- Robert DeMaria, Jr.**, Professor of English  
**Eve Dunbar**, Associate Professor of English  
**Leslie Dunn**, Associate Professor of English  
**Wendy Graham**, Professor of English and Associate Chair  
**Hua Hsu**, Associate Professor of English  
**Michael Joyce**, Professor of English  
**Jean Kane**, Professor of English  
**Paul Kane**, Professor of English  
**Amitava Kumar**, 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  
**Hiram Perez**, Associate Professor of English
- \* **Paul Russell**, Professor of English
  - \* **Ralph Sassone**, Adjunct Associate Professor of English
- Erin Sweany**, Mellon Post-doctoral Fellow in English  
**Tyrone R. Simpson, II**, Associate 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 Spring '19.*

**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. Majors may fulfill the historical distribution 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.

Majors 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.

**N.B.: EFFECTIVE Fall 2019, the Requirements for Concentration will be as follows:**

A minimum of ten graded units plus 1.5 units of ungraded Intensive work. Three units must be elected at the 300-level, including at minimum of one taken in the senior year. No AP credit or course taken NRO may be counted toward the requirements for the major.

**Distribution Requirements effective Fall 2019:**

Majors are required to take two units of work in literature written before 1800 and one unit of work in literature written before 1900. Majors may fulfill the historical distribution 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. Majors must also take one course that focuses on issues of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, or disability. These courses must be taken at either the 200- or 300-level.

One credit of Intensive work can count towards the fulfillment of one distribution requirement.

English majors who are members of the classes of 2020 and 2021 will be able to fulfill their major requirements in one of two ways:

- 1) They may elect to take 10 graded units plus 1.5 units of Intensives  
or
- 2) They may elect to take 11 graded units plus .5 units of Intensives.

The distribution requirements and minimum number of units at the 300-level will be the same for all classes.

**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 203 (New Journalisms), English 209 (Advanced Creative Writing: Narrative), English 211 (Advanced Creative Writing: Verse), English 304 (Creative Writing Seminar), and English 305-306 (Creative Writing Seminar), must submit samples of their writing before pre-registration; please check with the Department office for the exact date of the deadline.

**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 on these correlates can be found below.

# 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 descriptions 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 first-year students and sophomores, and others by permission. Although the ideal sequence of English courses for first-year students interested in majoring in English is English 101 in the Fall and 170 in the Spring, 101 is not a prerequisite for 170. First-year students wishing to take English 170 in the fall semester must have AP English credit. The English department does not recommend that students take 101 and 170 during the same semester. Note that English 170 does not fulfill the Freshman Course requirement.

### 170.52

Mr. Antelyes

MW 12:00-1:15

#### Approaches to Literary Studies

#### Topic for 2019b: *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 *Rear Window*, 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.

### 170.53

Ms. Kane

TR 12:00-1:15

#### Approaches to Literary Studies

#### Topic for 2019b: *Journeys of Transformation*

The course investigates the journey as a representation of fundamental change. Not only a plot of movement through space, the journey acts as a figure for transformation in or disruption of physical, emotional, and spiritual states of being, in individuals and groups. We will focus on the status and function of the journey as a determinant of bodily character, identity, genre, plot, and history. Each unit will also address a philosophical framework, an interpretive issue, or an analytical practice important to literature as a discipline. Students will develop their skills through class discussion, short, directed assignments, and longer essays, including a research essay and an annotated bibliography. Primary texts will include Christine de Pisan’s allegory *City of Women*, the verse romance *Gawain and the Green Knight*, Art Spiegelman’s graphic memoir *Maus*, Edgar Rice Burroughs’ original pulp *Tarzan*, Colson Whitehead’s recent novel *The Intuitionist*, selections from Harriet Jacobs’ memoir *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, and Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

ENGL 170 is *not* a writing intensive class, in that we will not focus on student writing during class time. The class *does* require college-level grammatical and writing abilities, and a desire to delve into theories of interpretation about texts.

### **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. These courses do not satisfy the First-year Writing Seminar requirement. These courses are ungraded and **do not** count toward the major. They may be repeated.

#### **174.51**

Mr. Kane

TR 10:30-11:45

**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.

The class is ungraded. 2<sup>nd</sup> Six Weeks.

## II. Intermediate Studies

### 203.51

Mr. Hsu

MW 1:30-2:45

#### **These American Lives: New Journalisms**

(Same as AMST 203) This course examines the various forms of journalism that report on the diverse complexity of contemporary American lives. In a plain sense, this course is an investigation into American society. But the main emphasis of the course is on acquiring a sense of the different models of writing, especially in longform writing, that have defined and changed the norms of reportage in our culture. Students are encouraged to practice the basics of journalistic craft and to interrogate the role of journalists as intellectuals (or vice versa).

### 205

#### **Introductory Creative Writing**

Study and practice of various forms of prose and poetry. Reading and writing assignments may include prose fiction, journals, poetry, drama, and essays. Not open to first-year students in the fall semester.

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

### 205.51

Ms. Mark

W 1:00-3:00

#### **Introductory Creative Writing**

Students in this course will read and write narratives in a number of modes. Though we'll focus on short fiction and the elements of its composition (characterization, plot, structure, point of view, dialogue, voice, style, and so forth), we'll also explore the increasingly permeable boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, prose and poetry. This section of Introductory Creative Writing is both a seminar and a workshop: students will read the work of experienced practitioners, analyze what they've read, and apply what they've learned to their own work. Readings may include works by Ashbery, Baldwin, Bambara, Barth, Barthelme, Beattie, Bishop, Bloom, Borges, Calvino, Carey, Carson, Chekhov, Cortázar, Edson, Erdrich, Faulkner, Hughes, Jen, Joyce, Kafka, Kincaid, Lahiri, Mullen, Munro, Nabokov, O'Connor, Packer, Paley, Saunders, Simic, Trevor, Wallace, Winterson, Wolff, and Woolf. Frequent conferences.

**This section is open only to first-year students.**

### 205.52

Ms. McGlennen

F 1:00-3:00

#### **Introductory Creative Writing**

With the use of in-class exercises, longer writing projects, journals, and frequent conferences with the instructor, we develop our abilities as intelligent readers/listeners and writers of poetry and other short forms. The final project will be a collection of your work. We use a number of writing prompts/exercises in order to steer our creative expression. We also study the work of a number of writers as models, inspiration, and for discussion purposes.

### 206.51

Mr. Joyce

M 6:30-8:30

#### **Introductory Creative Writing**

**Topic for 2019b: *Healing*.** 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.

**Prerequisite(s): open to any student who has taken English 205.**

**209.51**

Mr. Means

T 3:10-5:10

**Advanced Creative Writing: Narrative**

Development of the student's abilities as a writer and reader of narrative, with particular emphasis on the short story. **Topic for 2019b: *Constructing Fiction*.** In this class you'll hone your skills as fiction writers, reinforcing the basic elements—sustained, authentic voice, point of view, vibrant characters, setting, and plot—necessary to create vivid narrative. You'll be free to explore a wide range of styles—from writing prose that “feels” close to memoir/non-fiction, to writing in more traditional short story modes. Students will be expected to draft stories, participate in a workshop, and revise with care. We'll form a cohesive, comfortable, deeply respectful, coherent, useful classroom environment in which we'll critique new work in a constructive, supportive manner. Weekly exercise and readings will be assigned. Reading may include: Samuel Beckett, Ben Lerner, Anton Chekhov, Grace Paley, ZZ Packer, Lorrie Moore, Langston Hughes, James Joyce, Isaac Babel, Gish Jen, Katherine Mansfield, George Saunders, Alice Munro, Mary Gaitskill, Lucia Berlin, Lydia Davis, Danielle Evans, Gayle Jones, Julio Cortazar, Haruki Murakami, Flannery O'Connor, John Edgar Wideman, Franz Kafka, to name a few. *Special permission.*

**Writing samples are due before pre-registration. Check with the English office for the exact date of the deadline.**

\*ENGLISH 209 is no longer a year-long course but is now being offered as a semester-long course for Fall and Spring semester.

**211.51**

Mr. Kane

T 1:00-3:00

**Advanced Creative Writing: Verse**

This course aims to develop and enhance the student's abilities as a writer and reader of poetry. Particular attention will be paid to poetic form and the resources of verse.

*Special permission.*

**Writing samples are due before pre-registration. Check with the English office for the exact date of the deadline.**

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

**214.51**

Mr. Schultz

TR 10:30-11:45

**Process, Prose, Pedagogy**

An exploration of the intersections among language, form, genre, and medium, this course aims to deepen our appreciation for and understanding of multimodal authorship. To do so, we will focus our critical gaze upon one of the more experimental periods of textual production: literary modernism. Together, we will consider selections of poetry, short fiction, the novel, woodcut narratives, autobiography, letters, manifestos, essays, and film produced by a diverse range of authors such as Mina Loy and Djuna Barnes, Mu Shiying and Mikhail Bulgakov, Max Ernst and Zora Neale Hurston—as well as more canonical figures like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Samuel Beckett. Our discussions will center on the ways in which writing emerges from its immediate historical contexts, and also how genre and medium look beyond their present moment, revising models inherited from the past and anticipating future forms of expression. Ultimately, this course will help us to better analyze and construct arguments about distinct types of texts through the sustained practice of close critical reading and recursive writing, and to sharpen our ability to facilitate dialogue about complex ideas and various modes of communication. Students who take Media Studies/ENGL 214 will be given preference for Writing Center employment; it is not, however, a pre-requisite for employment..

**218.51**

Ms. Dunn

TR 12:00-1:15

**Literature, Gender, and Sexuality**

(Same as WMST 218) **Topic for 2019b: *Gender, Sexuality, Disability*.** This course examines the intersecting categories of disability and gender, both in social constructions of disability and in the lived experiences of disabled people. We explore how disability is gendered, and how it intersects with race, class, and sexuality in both historical and contemporary contexts. We examine representations of disability, and the self-representations of disabled people, in a variety of literary forms and media, including poetry, essays, memoirs, comics, photography, film, and performance pieces. We also attend to our own changing understandings of disability as the course progresses. Disability in this course is defined broadly, to include all the ways in which bodies and minds are construed as different from medical or cultural norms.

**222.51**

Mr. Markus

TR 3:10-4:25

**Early British Literature**

This course offers an introduction to British literary history, beginning with Old and Middle English literature and continuing through the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the establishment of Great Britain, the British Civil War, the Puritan Interregnum, and the Restoration. Topics 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; and the formation and evolution of the British literary canon. Authors, genres, critical and theoretical approaches, historical coverage, and themes may vary from year to year.

**Topic for 2019b: *From Grendel's Mother to The Country Wife: Introduction to Early British Literature and Culture*.** This is a thematically organized “issues and methods” course grafted onto a chronologically structured survey course of early British literature and culture. Its double goal is to develop skills for understanding early texts as well as to familiarize the students with a representative selection of works from the Middle Ages through the late 1600s. We explore a great variety of genres and media, including canonical works such as *Beowulf* and medieval plays as well as works by Chaucer, Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton, but we also attend to less well-known authors, many of them women, through whose writings we can achieve a more nuanced and complex understanding of the times. By paying special attention to correlations between literature and other discourses, as well as to issues of cultural identity and difference based on citizenship, class, ethnicity, gender, geography, nationality, race, and religion, we engage early British literature and culture in ways that are productive to the understanding of our own culture as well.

**228.51**

Mr. Simpson

MW 1:30-2:45

**African American Literature**

(Same as AFRS 228) **Topic for 2019b: *Black Modernism and Beyond: On Ghosts, Mystics, And Prophets*.** What is African American Literature? Can writing be black? What makes it so? Is there a one-to-one or one-to-some correlation between identity and literary practices? Beginning with the modernist innovations of African American writers after the Harlem Renaissance, this course ranges from the social protest fiction of the 1940s and 50s through the Black Arts Movement and postmodernist experiments of contemporary African American writers. In giving our attention to the aforementioned questions, we will cover the debates that have informed African American literary production, particularly the tensions that aesthetic and political imperatives have brought to bear on black imaginative writing. Our readings this term will also explore the idea of the past (signaled by the presence of ghosts and mystics) as well as that of the future (signaled by the presence of mystics and prophets). We will explore why time travel—both backward and forward—is a prominent narrative feature in black fiction. William Melvin Kelley, Lorraine Hansberry, Robert Hayden, Anna Deveare Smith, and Jamaica Kincaid are among the writers we will engage.

**229.51**

Mr. Hsu

MW 12:00-1:15

**Asian American Literature**

This course considers such topics as memory, identity, liminality, community, and cultural and familial inheritance within Asian-American literary traditions. May consider Asian-American literature in relation to other ethnic literatures.

**236.51**

Mr. Amodio

MW 10:30-11:45

**Beowulf**

Intensive study of the early English epic in the original language.

**Prerequisite: English 235, demonstrated knowledge of Old English, or permission of the instructor.**

**237.51**

Ms. Sweany

MW 12:00-1:15

**Medieval Literature**

This course serves as an introduction to medieval literature, with a focus on Middle English literatures (c. 1066-1550). Students will become familiar with the linguistic and stylistic features of Middle English, and will read a variety of texts from the period. Special topics for the course will vary from year to year; examples of topics include: Arthurian literature, Chaucer, the Chaucerian tradition, women's writing in the Middle Ages, transnational/comparative medieval literatures (including French and Italian), medieval "autobiography," the alliterative tradition, Piers Plowman and the Piers tradition, dream visions, fifteenth century literature and the bridge to the "early modern," literature and heresy, gender and sexuality in the Middle Ages, and medieval mystical writing. Students will engage throughout with the process of establishing English as a "literary" language; authorial identity; the grounding of English literary tradition; and the role of translation and adaptation in medieval writing. The course will also prepare students who might wish to pursue work in medieval literature at the 300 level, and/or pursue a senior thesis in the period.

**Topic for 2019b: *Arthur Through the (Middle) Ages*.** The figure of a heroic warrior named Arthur originated in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. You know about King Arthur *today* because as a popular figure he has been continually rewritten from the Middle Ages all the way into the 21<sup>st</sup> century to serve shifting cultural, political, literary, and artistic tastes and purposes. In this class we will read some of the earliest narratives of King Arthur (Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* and *The Life of Merlin*), and then follow the character and his ever-growing and shifting court as he moves through medieval literature. This will allow us to explore the literary themes, forms, and conventions of the English Middle Ages more broadly. Some of the texts we will read include (but are not limited to): Laȝamon's *Brut*, Marie de France's *Lanval*, Geoffrey Chaucer's "Wife of Bath's Tale" from *The Canterbury Tales*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Sir Thomas Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, and Gerald of Wales's *The Tomb of King Arthur*. Finally, this class will consider how Arthur appears in contemporary popular culture and what his medieval literary history brings to his representation in modern media. We will watch at least two films: *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and Guy Ritchie's *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* (a movie that *The Guardian* termed an "epic fail").

**240.51**

Ms. Dunn

MW 1:30-2:45

**Shakespeare:**

Study of some representative comedies, histories, and tragedies.

*Shakespeare Through Performance.* The first half of the semester will focus on early modern theatrical conditions and practices. We will explore the playtexts as scripts for performance through workshops on speaking verse, staging scenes, and rehearsing "in parts" as early modern acting companies did. We'll learn to read printed texts for imbedded stage directions, and to imagine them bodied forth on the stages for which Shakespeare wrote. And we'll place plays in their historical and cultural contexts in order to better understand their resonance for early modern audiences. In the second half of the semester, the emphasis will shift to contemporary contexts and modes of performance, including theater, television, and film, and to performances as acts of interpretation.

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



**242.51**

Mr. Markus

TR 10:30-11:45

**Shakespeare**

(Same as DRAM 242) As the second half of our yearlong study of Shakespeare, this course focuses on representations of affect and “love” (filial, parental, sexual, etc.) in five Shakespeare plays written after 1600: *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*. By situating these plays in the cultural and historical contexts in which they were written and performed, we will be able to appreciate significant differences as well as intriguing continuities between early 17<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century interpretations and representations regarding such basic concepts and institutions as gender, family, filial and marital duties, marriage, the “private sphere,” sexuality, etc. Moreover, by examining these plays in production both on the stage and on the screen, we explore their current meanings and cultural significance. To attain this second aim, we will view and discuss stage productions as well as several film adaptations of our plays, and stage a part of *All's Well That Ends Well* and/or *King Lear*.

Not open to students who have taken English 240.

Year-long course 241-242.

**247.51**

Mr. DeMaria

MW 1:30-2:45

**Eighteenth Century British Novels**

The novel was one of the great literary inventions of the eighteenth century. It emerged gradually from the older genre of romance, fueled by societal and technological changes that expanded the potential readership for many kinds of popular publications, including travel narratives, newspapers, celebrity letters and memoirs, self-help books, and biography. Those kindred genres are often visible in the works that eventually led to the fully realized novel of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The works of the great innovators in this genre show how the novel gradually came into its own. Authors may include Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Mackenzie, Walpole, Burney, and Austen.

**249.51**

Ms. Graham

TR 10:30-11:45

**Victorian Literature: Culture and Anarchy**

Study of Victorian culture through the critical prose, poetry, and novels of the period. This course explores the strategies of nineteenth-century writers who struggled to find meaning and order in a changing world. It focuses on the tensions between traditional and emergent values (pressure of modernization) exemplified by religious uncertainty in the wake of evolutionary theory, industrialization and labor, colonialism, the woman question, homosexuality and aestheticism, paying particular attention to the relationship between literary and social discourses. We will consider the role of literacy and the burgeoning periodical press in democratizing the Victorian public sphere. Authors include nonfiction prose writers such as Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, and Pater, as well as fiction writers such as Charles Dickens, Emily Bronte, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and Oscar Wilde. We will read an autobiographical pamphlet by Florence Nightingale and a memoir by Edmund Gosse.

**251.51**

Ms. Dunbar

TR 130- 2:45

**Topics in Black Literatures**

This course considers Black literatures in all their richness and diversity. The focus changes from year to year, and may include study of a historical period, literary movement, or genre. The course may take a comparative, diasporic approach or may examine a single national or regional literature.

(Same as AFRS 251) **Topic for 2019b: *Afrofuturism and the Speculative in African American Literature***. While many believe African American literature is bound by the generic and political expectations of American literary realism, Black Americans have lived and imagined the “un-real” from the moment of their enslavement in the Americas. This course considers how Black creatives have used and continue to use the genres of speculative fiction/afrofuturism/sci-fi to critique forms of racial difference and imagine alternatives to the here-and-now of the American experience. Over the semester, we explore

narratives that feature time travel, texts that craft racial utopias only to plot their deterioration, and tales of monsters and zombies to explore key themes associated with Black speculative fiction and Black literary production. Questions of genre, its limits and expectations, are also central to this course. This course may include writings by Octavia Butler, Kiese Laymon, Victor LaValle, Colson Whitehead, and others.

### 253.51

Mr. Perez

TR 12:00-1:15

#### **Topics in American Literatures**

The specific focus of the course varies each year, and may center on a literary movement (e.g., Transcendentalism, the Beats, the Black Mountain School), a single work and its milieu (e.g., *Moby-Dick* and the American novel, *Call It Sleep* and the rise of ethnic modernism); a historical period (e.g., the Great Awakening, the Civil War), a region (e.g., Southern literature, the literature of the West), or a genre (e.g., the sentimental-domestic novel, American satire, the literature of travel/migration, American autobiography, traditions of reportage, American environmentalist writing).

(Same as AFRS 253) **Topic for 2019b: *Narratives of Passing*.** The phrase “passing for white,” peculiar to American English, first appears in advertisements for the return of runaway slaves. Abolitionist fiction later adopts the phenomenon of racial passing (together with the figure of the “white slave”) as a major literary theme. African American writers such as William Wells Brown and William Craft incorporated stories of passing in their antislavery writing and the theme continued to enjoy great currency in African American literature in the postbellum era as well as during the Harlem Renaissance. In this class, we examine the prevalence of this theme in African American literature of these periods, the possible reasons for the waning interest in this theme following the Harlem Renaissance, and its reemergence in recent years. In order to begin to understand the role of passing in the American imagination, we look to examples of passing and the treatment of miscegenation in literature, film, and the law. We consider the qualities that characterize what Valerie Smith identifies as the “classic passing narrative” and determine how each of the texts we examine conforms to, reinvents, and/or writes against that classic narrative. Some of the themes considered include betrayal, secrecy, lying, masquerade, visibility/invisibility, and memory. We also examine how the literature of passing challenges or redefines notions of family, American mobility and success, and the convention of the “self-made man.”

### 262.51

Mr. Kumar

TR 10:30-11:45

#### **Postcolonial Literature:**

This course will grapple with the contemporary moment in postcolonial writing. Our readings will include short stories like Hanif Kureishi’s “My Son, the Fanatic,” Zadie Smith’s “Embassy of Cambodia,” Tiphonie Yanique’s “How to Escape from a Leper Colony,” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s “Cell One,” and Jhumpa Lahiri’s “Brotherly Love.” Also, a taste of poetry, from Derek Walcott to Warsan Shire. Two plays: Ayad Akhtar’s *Disgraced* and Rajiv Joseph’s *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*. Also, three novels: Kamel Daoud, *The Mersault Investigation*, Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*, and Sunjeev Sahota’s *The Year of the Runaways*.

### 265.52

Ms. Zlotnick

TR 10:30-11:45

#### **Selected Author:**

**Topic for 2019b: *Jane Austen*.** Over the last two decades, Jane Austen has emerged as the most popular of the great nineteenth-century British novelists. Her novels have been adapted and rewritten by contemporary authors, and they’ve been translated into films and mini-series. Austen’s presence on the web has been formidable as well, from the *Republic of Pemberley* to the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. While this course investigates our current investment in Austen through an examination of a variety of modern adaptations, it also places Austen back into her original literary and historical contexts. It considers her contributions to the development of literary realism as well as her status as a transitional novelist who wrote on the cusp of modernity. Readings include *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*.

**286.51**

Ms. McGlennen

TR 3:10-4:25

**Indigenous Women's Decolonial Narratives**

(Same as AMST/WMST 286) In their article "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," Aleut scholar Eve Tuck and Ethnic Studies scholar K. Wayne Yang warn that "the metaphorization of decolonization makes possible a set of evasions, or settler moves to innocence, that problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity." As an approach to wrestle with this warning, our class examines the ways in which Indigenous women (from primarily Native North American nations) imagine and safeguard Indigenous futures in light of settler colonial efforts to deny and erase *indians*. How do Indigenous women imagine anti- and decolonial narratives toward critical sovereignty and autonomous resistance? How does the creative labor of Indigenous women – through prose and poetry, art, and film – destabilize the persistent colonial formations that are gendered, racialized, and genocidal. Indigenous women artists, scholars, theorists, and activists provide our course with its materials, and include: Louise Erdrich, Layli Longsoldier, Marcie Rendon, Debra Barker, Eve Tuck, Renya Ramirez, Dian Million, Mishuana Goeman, Shan Goshorn, Sarah Sense, Hulleah Tsinnahjinnie, Annie Pootoogook, Shelley Niro, Arigon Starr, Matika Wilbur, Bethany Yellowtail, and others.

**290 a or b.****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.

**298 a or b.**

(1/2 Unit)

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

**399 a or b.**

(1/2 Unit)

**Senior Independent Work**

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 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 critical 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, a work of fiction, a collection of poems, or a scholarly edition of a particular work or group of works.

#### **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.*

#### **304.51**

Mr. Joyce

R 6:30-8:30

#### **Creative Writing Seminar**

An advanced writing seminar welcoming non-majors, accommodating the multiple approaches, genres, forms and interests that represent the diversity of a contemporary writing life with special attention to how to foster and sustain a writing life after graduation. Participants present seminar sessions, prompts, and readings. *Special Permission.*

**Open to juniors and seniors in all departments with permission of the instructor.**

**Writing samples are due before pre-registration. Check with the English office for the exact date of the deadline.**

#### **306.51**

Mr. Kumar

T 3:10-5:10

#### **Senior Creative Writing Seminar**

Advanced study and practice of various forms of prose and poetry. Open to students from all majors. *Special Permission.*

**This is the second half of a year-long course and is open only to those currently enrolled in English 305.**

#### **315.51**

Ms. Dunn

T 3:10-5:10

#### **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 2019b: *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.

**320.51**

Ms. Kane

W 1:00-3:00

**Studies in Literary Traditions**

This course examines various literary traditions. The materials may cross historical, national and linguistic boundaries, and may investigate how a specific myth, literary form, idea, or figure (e.g., Pygmalion, romance, the epic, the fall of man, Caliban) has been constructed, disputed, reinvented and transformed. Topics vary from year to year.

**Topic for 2019b: *Telling it Slant*.** How do past stories lure contemporary imaginations? The course presents canonical works that have been translated, adapted, or rewritten by authors who approach them sideways. Be prepared to read deeply and to discover alterity where you may not expect it. Our readings will likely include the first translation of the *Odyssey* into English by a woman, Emily Watson, as well as the *Penelopiad*, a novel by Margaret Atwood; *1001 Nights*, with contextualization of its early European translations by scholar Marina Warner and a recent retelling in English by Hanan al-Shaykh; Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and a Caribbean rewriting, *Windward Heights*, by Maryse Condé, originally in French; and selections from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, set next to Kafka's "Metamorphosis" and A. Ignosi Barrett's Nigerian *Blackass*.

**326.51**

Mr. Perez

T 3:10-5:10

**Challenging Ethnicity**

R 3:10-5:10 Film Screening

An exploration of literary and artistic engagements with ethnicity. Contents and approaches vary from year to year.

(Same as AFRS 326) **Topic for 2019b: *Racial Melodrama*.** Often dismissed as escapist, predictable, lowbrow or exploitative, melodrama has also been recuperated by several contemporary critics as a key site for the rupture and transformation of mainstream values. Film scholar Linda Williams argues that melodrama constitutes "a major force of moral reasoning in American mass culture," shaping the nation's racial imaginary. The conventions of melodrama originate from popular theater, but its success has relied largely on its remarkable adaptability across various media, including print, motion pictures, radio, and television. This course investigates the lasting impact of such fictions as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Fannie Hurst's *Imitation of Life*, the romanticized legend of John Smith's encounter with Pocahontas, and John Luther Long's *Madame Butterfly*. What precisely is melodrama? If not a genre, is it (as critics diversely argue) a mode, symbolic structure, or a sensibility? What do we make of the international success of melodramatic forms and texts such as the telenovela and Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain*? How do we understand melodrama's special resonance historically among disfranchised classes? How and to what ends do the pleasures of suffering authenticate particular collective identities (women, the working-class, queers, blacks, and group formations yet to be named)? What relationships between identity, affect and consumption does melodrama reveal?

**330.51**

Ms. Graham

T 1:00-3:00

**American Modernism**

American Modernism pivots between high culture (stylistically spare, muscular in attitude) and popular fiction (mawkish, sentimental) to understand the stakes in gendering literary modernism. In academia, Fitzgerald, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Eliot, Pound, and Hemingway anchor the male modernist masthead; screenwriters and novelists, Fanny Hurst, Olive Higgins Prouty, and Anita Loos, the popular canon. Men penned 'tearjerkers', stories that lent themselves to filmic adaptation for a mass audience; yet, only women were disparaged as authors of melodramas and romance fiction. Examining the gendered meanings of nostalgia, consumption, celebrity, this course further challenges the notion of an exclusively male 'avant-garde' (a military term designating an advanced guard of culture) through an exploration of lesbian modernism: H.D., Gertrude Stein, Djuna Barnes.

**340.51**

Ms. Sweany

M 3:10-5:10

**Studies in Medieval Literature**

Intensive study of selected medieval texts and the questions they raise about their context and interpretation. Issues addressed may include the social and political dynamics, literary traditions, symbolic discourses, and individual authorial voices shaping literary works in this era. Discussion of these issues may draw on both historical and aesthetic approaches, and both medieval and modern theories of rhetoric, reference, and text-formation.

**Topic in 2019b: *Medieval in the Flesh*.** Bodies and flesh are sites of dialogue and debate in medieval literature. These debates can be literal, such as the soul and body dialogue tradition in which disembodied souls engage with their decomposing corpses. Bodies in medieval texts refuse to stay dead, in the traditional sense, for a variety of reasons; and undead corpses bear witness to and demand action from the living, sometimes pointing to crimes and other times demonstrating the veracity of Christian belief. More often, these debates are metaphorical, such as women religious ascetics negotiating their places in largely patriarchal social and religious hierarchies through deprivations of their flesh and representations of encounters with divine flesh. Medical texts treat flesh and skin as sites of health mediation, even for afflictions that we would regard as internal. Parchment, the material of books of the western European Middle Ages, is itself non-human animal skin employed by humans in communication across geographic and temporal distance.

This class will explore the literary and cultural functions of bodies, flesh, and bodily remains in primarily Old and Middle English texts, but also the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century material engagements with medieval fleshy (and formerly fleshy) remains. Some of the texts we will read include (but are not limited to): *The Dream of the Rood*, Old English riddles and medical charms, *The Tale of St. Swithun*, *St. Erkenwald*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*, Chaucer's "Prioress' Tale," and the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*. While Old English texts will be read in translation, students will have the opportunity to improve their Middle English proficiency with a variety of Middle English dialects.

**345.51**

Mr. DeMaria

M 4:00-6:00

**Milton**

Study of John Milton's career as a poet and polemicist, with particular attention to *Paradise Lost*.

**351.51**

Ms. Zlotnick

W 1:00-3:00

**Studies in Nineteenth-century British Literature**

Study of a major author (e.g., Coleridge, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde) or a group of authors (the Brontes, the Pre-Raphaelite poets and painters) or a topical issue (representations of poverty; literary decadence; domestic angels and fallen women; transformations of myth in Romantic and Victorian literature) or a major genre (elegy, epic, autobiography).

**Topic for 2019b: *The Gothic*.** This course explores the development and the evolution of the Gothic novel in Britain from the mid-eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. We begin with Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis, three of the most important practitioners of the eighteenth-century Gothic novel, before moving to nineteenth-century adaptations and transformations of the Gothic form. Students read a wide variety of texts, including *The Castle of Otranto*, *A Sicilian Romance*, *The Monk*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Woman in White*, and *Dracula*, as well as some of the key theorists of the Gothic. The course addresses different aspects of Gothic writing (e.g., female Gothic, economic Gothic, alien Gothic, urban Gothic) in order to consider how the Gothic's mad, monstrous and ghostly representations serve as a critique and counterpoint to dominant ideologies of gender, race, nation and class.



## 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.**

### **JWST 350.51**

Mr. Antelyes

T 3:10-5:10

#### **Confronting Modernity**

**Topic for 2019b:** *Jews, Comics, and Graphic Novels*. An in-depth exploration of the contributions of Jewish writers and artists to the field of comics and graphics novels from historical, regional, and topical perspectives. Issues and texts may include: **Jews, Assimilation, Aniconism, and the Comics:** the Jewish creation of the American superhero (Superman, Funnyman, and the Golem); **Reading/Writing in Jewish:** satire from a Jewish eye (Jules Feiffer's *Voice* comics); **Gender:** Second Wave feminism and the rise of the Jewish woman's graphic novel (Aline Kominsky's *Love that Bunch* and Diane Noomin's *Didi Glitz*), contemporary women's graphic art (Keren Katz's "My Skeleton Week," Liana Finck's *A Bintel Brief*, and Vanessa Davis's *Make Me a Woman*); **History:** reimagining the great migration (Leela Corman's *Unterzakhn*), comics and the Holocaust (Spiegelman's *Maus*); **Place:** the graphic novel from and in Israel (Rutu Modan's *The Property* and Miriam Libicki's *Jobnik!*), Jewish comics and urban nostalgia (Ben Katchor's *Julius Knipl, Real Estate Photographer*), Jews in Europe and Northern Africa (Joann Sfar's *The Rabbi's Cat*). Materials also include criticism and theory from media and comics studies, among other approaches. Peter Antelyes.

## Courses That Fulfill English Major Requirements For Academic Year 2018-2019

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

<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Requirement Fulfilled</u>
213 The English Language	
217 Literary Criticism & Theory	
218 Literature, Gender, and Sexuality	Race, Ethn.
219 Queer of Color Critique	Race, Ethn.
222 Early British Literature	pre-1800
226 American Literature 1865-1925	Race, Ethn.
227 Harlem Renaissance/Precursors	Race, Ethn.
228 African American Literature	Race, Ethn.
229 Asian American Literature	Race, Ethn.
230 Latina and Latino Literature in the U.S.	Race, Ethn.
235 Old English	pre-1800
236 <i>Beowulf</i>	pre-1800
237 Medieval Literature	pre-1800
240 Shakespeare	pre-1800
241 Shakespeare	pre-1800
242 Shakespeare	pre-1800
245 The Enlightenment	pre-1800
247 Eighteenth Century British Novels	pre-1800
249 Victorian Literature	pre-1900
251 Topics in Black Literatures	Race, Ethn.
253 Topics in American Literature	
255 Nineteenth-Century British Novels	pre-1900
256 Modern British and Irish Literatures	
257 The Novel/English after 1945	
262 Post-Colonial Literatures	
265 Select Author: Jane Austen	Race, Ethn.,pre-1900
281 The Comics Course	
283 Special Study	
286 Indigenous Women's Decolonial Narratives	Race, Ethn.,pre-1900
315 Studies in Performance: Writing for Performance	
319 Race and Its Metaphors	Race, Ethn.
320 Studies in Literary Traditions	
326 Racial Melodrama	Race, Ethn.
328 Literature American Renaissance	pre-1900
330 American Modernism	Race, Ethn.
340 Studies in Medieval Literature	pre-1800
342 Studies in Shakespeare	pre-1800
345 Milton	pre-1800
351 Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature	pre-1900
355 Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Poets	
365 Selected Author: Virginia Woolf	
365 Selected Author: Samuel Johnson and Johnsonians	pre-1800
370 Transnational Literature	Race, Ethn.
385 Then Whose Negro Are You? On the Art and Politics of James Baldwin	Race, Ethn.

\*As course topics change, so do the requirements they fulfill. Therefore, this list is only applicable for the 2018-2019 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:  
English 207, 209-210, 211-212, 215, 216, 217, 240, 241-242, 247, 250, 255, 256, 257
- \* 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, 222 and 223
- \* At least one of the following:  
English 215, 235, 236, 237, 238, 240, 241-242, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 255
- \* 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
- \* At least three of the following: 203, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211, 304, 305-306
- \* At least one course in the correlate must be at the 300 level

## The Faculty

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:** Old and Middle English poetry and prose; oral theory; history of the English language; literary theory; linguistics; 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Molly McGlennen:** Native American literature, Native American Women and Feminisms, Native American Urban Experience, Native American literary theory, Ojibwe literature and identity, Contemporary Ethnic poetry, Poetry writing.

**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.

\* **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.

**Tyrone Simpson, II:** Urban literature, cities and ghettoization, autobiography, critical theory, cultures of US imperialism.

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

\*On leave in Spring '19.

## 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 pre-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-recording 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 should 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 and is a prerequisite for English 206, also usually offered in both A and B semesters, is open to students who have taken 205. One section of 206 may be 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 prior to the beginning of pre-registration; please check with the English office for the exact due date. A portfolio should consist of 15 to 20 pages of fiction or 6 to 8 poems.

Creative writing courses are not open to first-year students in the Fall semester.

A writing portfolio is also required admission to the following creative writing courses: 203, 209, 211, 304, and 305-306. Please check with the English office for the exact due date. This course is open only to seniors.

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, and English majors may elect to undertake a creative thesis.

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, Miranda Beverly-Whitmore, 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 or creative thesis, you should make sure that you have adequately prepared yourself for undertaking the 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.

## English 300: The Thesis

### 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 26, 2018**, and the second for the final draft of the thesis, due **December 19, 2018**.

Within the first three weeks of the term in which you are writing the thesis, but no later than **September 26, 2018**, 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.

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. 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.

### 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 13, 2019**, and the second for the final draft of the thesis, due **May 7, 2019**.

Within the first three weeks of the term in which you are writing the thesis, but no later than **February 13, 2019**, 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.

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. 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.



## **Creative Work in the Senior Year**

### **What exactly is the Senior 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.

### **Who can take the Senior Creative Writing Seminar and how can I apply?**

This course is open only to seniors from all majors. To be considered for admission to English 305-306, you need to submit two copies of samples of your writing; please check with the English 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. The names of students selected for English 305-306 will be posted outside the English Office. Enrollment is limited to twelve students.

### **What is the senior Creative Writing Seminar?**

The Creative Writing Seminar is a one-term course open to juniors and seniors from all majors. To be considered for admission, you need to submit samples before pre-registration.

### **What other creative writing courses are open to seniors?**

All the 200-level writing courses are open to seniors. Seniors may also elect to write a creative thesis (English 300).

## **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 will provide an 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.

### **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.