

# The English Department

## Fall 2018

### 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

**Dorothy Kim**, Assistant 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

**Robert Smith**, Visiting Lecturer of English, University of Exeter

**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 Fall '18.*

**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.

**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 (Advanced Creative Writing: Narrative), English 211 (Advanced Creative Writing: Verse), 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.

Applicants for English 203 (Journalism) and English 304 (Creative Writing Seminar) must submit samples of their writing before pre-registration in the Fall; 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**

#### **101.01**

Mr. Chang

WF 12:00-1:15

#### **Literature and Evil**

ENGL 101: Literature and Evil

“Literature is not innocent,” says Georges Bataille. Authentic aesthetic experience knows something of evil. It does not edify or console; it quickens and unsettles. We will study literary, philosophical, and cinematic texts that explore the various faces of evil – from the romantic to the banal, the irrational to the utterly unmotivated. Readings include: *The White Devil*, *Othello*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Blood Meridian*, *The Dark Knight Returns*, as well as some Baudelaire, Nietzsche, Kafka, Bataille, and Arendt.

#### **101.02**

Mr. DeMaria

TR 10:30-11:45

#### **What is a Classic?**

Why are some works of literature called classics? Which works are these? Do they have common traits? How is it that they have endured while other works have been largely forgotten? Are all classics related in some way to the original classics of Greek and Latin literature? How old does a work have to be to achieve the stature of a classic? Can there be modern or even contemporary classics? Through reading and discussion of poetry and prose works often thought of as classics, this class will investigate these and other questions. Authors will include some of the following: Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Johnson, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Charles Dickens, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, D. H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Nabokov, Flannery O’Connor, Joseph Heller, James Baldwin, Seamus Heaney, Elizabeth Bishop, Toni Morrison, Zadie Smith.

#### **101.03**

Ms. Dunbar

TR 3:10-4:25

#### **Troubling Girlhood**

From early-American witch trials to contemporary stories detailing the “dangers” of high school life or illuminating the power of teenage romantic love when it becomes entangled with political activism, this course explores narratives focused on the public and private lives of young women. The aim of the course is to write through and “trouble” (challenge and struggle over) our cultural assumptions regarding those who are gendered “girls” in the US. Using literary fiction, YA novels, short stories, memoir, and visual texts, we’ll consider how various identity categories challenge and shift the meaning of “girlhood” in the United States. Students enrolled in this course will develop an academic writing practice, and learn to participate in and lead a college classroom discussion.

#### **101.04**

Mr. Hsu

MW 12:00-1:15

#### **Sounds American: Pop Music, Identity & Imagination**

This is a course about the pop musical imagination, or what new possibilities, a catchy song, a groundbreaking album, or a brilliant artist compels us to envision. We’ll approach this question thematically (rather than historically) and engage a range of texts—songs and albums; fiction and poetry; essays and memoirs; cultural histories and academic monographs; music videos and cultural theory—that bring the vast terrain that is the American soundscape into focus. Our considerations will draw from the perspective of the listener, the fan, the critic, from the Jazz Age to the present. In other words, we will try and interrogate what it means to engage with music in the present day. How have portable devices or streaming services altered our relationship to music? How does pop music provide a surface upon which we debate questions of political identity, authenticity, and self-determination? What visions of independence or freedom emerge when we engage with pop culture seriously, and with scrutiny? Possible readings include Hari Kunzru’s *White Tears*, Rebecca Dubrow’s history of portable stereos, Patti Smith’s punk memoir of seventies New York.

**101.05**

Mr. Joyce

MR 3:10-4:25

**W(h)ither The Body**

Current technologies only put into stark contrast almost a century in which the body has become a site of contestation: commercial, political, sexual, medial, artistic, and philosophical. Various literatures, some of them electronic (e.g., digital literature, virtual & augmented reality, computer games) have engaged (some say joined with) nanotechnology, genetic engineering, etc. to contest for the body, with some thinkers making radical claims that the body will disappear or merge with technology, or that it has already done so. Posthumanist, feminist, ludologist, media, and cyber theorists have all contributed to this polylogue. Thus “readings” will encompass varied media and may include Tom Tykwer’s film “3” (Drei) and the original *Bioshock* game, as well as novels and poems such as Bennett Sims, *A Questionable Shape*, Nicole Brossard’s *Picture Theory*, and Steven Hall’s *The Raw Shark Texts*.

**101.06**

Mr. Kumar

TR 10:30-11:45

**The Essay Form**

The high-school essay trapped in the Darth Vader facemask called the topic sentence. And the immobile drapery of the five-paragraph costume armor. This is an exaggeration, of course, but to write in more imaginative ways let us examine the experiments in prose undertaken by essayists of the past hundred years or so: George Orwell writing about shooting an elephant, James Baldwin on his father’s death and race riots, Jorge Luis Borges on his “modest blindness,” Susan Sontag looking at photographs, Joan Didion bidding goodbye to New York, Adrienne Rich recalling the strands that make up her identity. Also, Geoff Dyer on sex and hotels, Lydia Davis on “Foucault and pencil,” David Shields on the lyric essay, Jenny Boully on the body, Eliot Weinberger on what he heard about Iraq, and David Foster Wallace on anything. We will write brief essays (one to two pages) for each class and two longer essays (about eight pages in length).

**101.07**

Mr. Hill

MR 3:10-4:30

**Allegories of the Self**

This seminar offers students intensive practice in close reading and interpretive writing and conversation through the examination of symbolic worlds inscribed in various media, including original works in Vassar collections, with a focus on the development of allegorical narrative in classical and Medieval textual sources and Medieval and Renaissance art. Our consideration of allegories as knowledge systems will introduce students to the formulation of liberal arts education in the medieval schools, as well as to the culture of libraries and the organization of knowledge. Each member of the class will be asked to present an allegorical reading of a modern work selecting from narratives of literary authors such as Kafka and Orwell to works of painting and sculpture by artists such as Thomas Cole, Frida Kahlo and Kara Walker, to fantasy and science fiction film, television series, and game environments. The course will thus serve to familiarize you with conventions of meaning in creative works in various media expressly composed to be interpreted, introduce you to the foundations, culture, and tools of higher education, and also function as a practicum for improving your skills with written and spoken language.

**101.08**

Mr. Markus

TR 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, Shelley, 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.

**101.09**

Mr. Perez

TR 12:00-1:15

**The Instruction of Citizenship**

Emma Lazarus's celebrated poem, "The New Colossus," identifies the Statue of Liberty as the "Mother of Exiles" welcoming the world's "wretched" and "tempest-tost." However, the popular definition of the United States as a "nation of immigrants" repeatedly comes into crisis when the state faces the arrival of new groups. This course examines how literature by first- and second-generation Americans brings to light conditions that either bind or divide us as communities. Beginning with but not limited to scenes of classroom instruction (literal and metaphorical), we consider at what sites the instructing of citizenship takes place and what it means to be "naturalized" as an American. We also interrogate citizenship as a model of political inclusion. Some guiding questions for us: What do we gain or lose with assimilation? How is "cultural citizenship" different from formal, legal citizenship? How does immigrant writing respond to or disrupt abstract notions of American citizenship? What is at stake in the language we use to describe displaced people(s): exiles, refugees, migrants, immigrants, asylees, etc...? What might popular culture teach us about citizenship?

**101.10**

Mr. Simpson

MW 10:30-11:45

**The Ends 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 eighteenth 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.

**101.11**

Ms. Zlotnick

MWF 10:30-11:20

**Jane Eyres**

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* tells the story of a heated romance between a "poor, obscure, plain" governess and a Byronic landowner with a Gothic past. Published pseudonymously in 1847, the novel was a literary sensation as well as a bestseller, even though Brontë's rebellious heroine upended nineteenth-century notions of propriety and femininity. While popular in its day, *Jane Eyre* has also had a hypnotic hold on subsequent generations of writers, who have revised and re-imagined Brontë's text in order to contest its representations of love, madness, colonialism, Englishness, feminism, and education. In this first-year seminar, we will explore *Jane Eyre*'s complicated relationship with its literary descendants and ask fundamental questions about literary influence, canon formation, narration, and women's writing. In addition to *Jane Eyre*, readings may include Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. We will also screen different film adaptations of *Jane Eyre* in addition to Hitchcock's *Rebecca*.

**101.12**

Ms. Mark

WF 1:30-2:45

**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.

### **101.13**

Mr. Means

TR 12:00-1:15

#### **Beneath 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 opiate addiction 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, and Etheridge Knight; stories by Edgar Allan Poe, Joyce Carol Oates, Herman Melville, Flannery O'Connor, and Denis Johnson. Longer works may include novels by William Faulkner, Gayle Jones, William Vollmann, Hunter Thompson, and the graphic artist, Lynda Barry.

### **101.14**

Mr. Smith

TR 10:30-11:45

#### **The Fiction of Faith**

Some of the more controversial novels of the past century have depicted striking attitudes of religious belief. A faith in God (or the crucial lack of it) can trouble a novel's protagonist, drive the plot, and reveal the broader cultural norms of its readership. This course will investigate the ways in which works of fiction are uniquely capable of exploring questions of faith—and how, in turn, religious standpoints can be encountered, and sometimes publicly challenged, by particular fictional treatments. Selected texts and their respective spiritual frameworks will include: *Three Daughters of Eve* by Elif Safak (Islam), *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by Aranduhati Roy (Hinduism), *Brighton Rock* by Graham Greene (Catholicism), *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson (Protestantism), *Only Yesterday* by S.Y. Agnon (Judaism), *The Temple of the Wild Geese* by Tsutomu Mizukami (Buddhism), *Native Son* by Richard Wright (Existentialism), and *Quarantine* by Jim Crace (Atheism).

# I. Introduction to Literary Study

## 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 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 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.

### 170.01

Ms. Graham

TR 9:00-10:15

#### Approaches to Literary Studies

**Topic for 2018a: The Bad and The Beautiful: Literary Decadence at the *Fin de siècle*.**

This course examines the relationship between literary works redefining gender and sexuality through their depiction of androgynous hero/ines, femmes fatales, and outré sexual practices and the ‘invention of the homosexual’ at the close of the nineteenth century. The course will detail the legal and social constraints on sexual difference that frustrated writers’ efforts to affirm same-sex passion, which Oscar Wilde called “the love that dare not speak its name.” The coded nature of homoerotic themes in texts will encourage close reading of works that reward literary scrutiny as well as polemical interpretation. The course will employ psychoanalysis and queer theory to address the male aesthete’s quandary: homophobia and misogyny encourage him to align himself with the privileged Victorian male through his vilification of women (as tasteless and insatiable consumers of objects and men), at the same time, he is drawn to the feminine. Theorists consulted: Foucault, Lacan, Butler, Barthes, Deleuze, Sedgwick, Felski. Authors read: Flaubert, Balzac, Poe, Sacher-Masoch, Wilde, Swinburne, Pater, James, Bataille. Wherever possible, we will try to draw connections between the nineteenth century and our own embattled times.

## 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 Freshman Course requirement. These courses are ungraded and **do not** count toward the major. They may be repeated.

### 174.01

Mr. Kane

TR 10:30-11:45

#### Poetry and Philosophy

**Topic for 2018a: 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. 1<sup>st</sup> Six Weeks.

## II. Intermediate Studies

### 205a

#### **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 freshmen in the fall semester.

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

### 205.01

Mr. Joyce

M 6:30-8:30

#### **Introductory Creative Writing**

In this section we will pay special attention to poetic writing, including narrative poems and hybrid poetic forms, such as multimedia, imagetexts, and so on. The course is, however, not restricted solely to those interested in writing poetry and we will welcome (and benefit from) the contributions of those interested in narrative and dramatic writing as well as transgressive, experimental, and lyrical forms of writing that verge upon the graphical, kinetic, and performative.

### 205.02

Mr. Joyce

R 6:30-8:30

#### **Introductory Creative Writing**

In this section we will pay special attention to the idea of translation, whether translation as traditionally understood, i.e., between languages, as well as works that translate language into hybrid forms including multimedia, sound, imagetexts, and so on. Everyone will attempt at least one translation of each kind, although you will not have to be fluent in your second language or an accomplished media person or a visual or sound artist to take part.

### 205.03

Ms. Mark

R 4:00-6:00

#### **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.

### 205.04

Mr. Smith

T 3:10-5:10

#### **Introductory Creative Writing**

In this section we will focus on the short story. In a supportive workshop environment, we will discuss recently published short fiction, engage in creative writing exercises, address key elements of craft, and offer peer feedback. Stories will not be limited to traditional narrative styles to encourage innovations in form, including prose poetry. Special emphasis will be placed on characterization, language, narrative voice, and the rigorous revisions often necessary to achieve what Edgar Allen Poe describes as 'unified effect.'

**205.05**

Mr. Smith

R 3:10-5:10

**Introductory Creative Writing**

In this section we will focus on the short story. In a supportive workshop environment, we will discuss recently published short fiction, engage in creative writing exercises, address key elements of craft, and offer peer feedback. Stories will not be limited to traditional narrative styles to encourage innovations in form, including prose poetry. Special emphasis will be placed on characterization, language, narrative voice, and the rigorous revisions often necessary to achieve what Edgar Allen Poe describes as ‘unified effect.’

**209.01**

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 2018a: *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 yearlong course but is now being offered as a semester-long course for Fall and Spring semester.

**217.01**

Ms. Kane

TR 12:00-1:15

**Literary Theory and Interpretation**

A study of various critical theories and practices ranging from antiquity to the present day.

**Topic for 2018a: *Knowledge, representation, and power*.** This course introduces literary criticism and theory through tracing several dominant strains of thought about Western representation from antiquity to the present day. We will focus particularly on theories of truth and representation; of subjectivity; and of linguistic systems of signification and knowledge production. The last two sections of the course highlight the role of power. We will investigate formalism, psychoanalytic criticism, Marxist criticism, feminist criticism, poststructuralist theory and postcolonial critique.

**226.01**

Ms. Graham

TR 1:30-2:45

**American Literature, 1865-1925**

Study of the major developments in American literature and culture from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Literary movements such as realism, naturalism, regionalism, and modernism are examined, as well as literatures of ethnicity, race, and gender. Works studied are drawn from such authors as Twain, Howells, James, Jewett, Chestnutt, Chopin, Crane, London, Harte, DuBois, Gilman, Adams, Wharton, Dreiser, Pound, Eliot, Stein, Yeziarska, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, O’Neill, Frost, H. D., and Toomer.

**227.01**

Ms. Dunbar

TR 12:00-1:15

**The Harlem Renaissance and its Precursors**

(Same as AFRS 227) 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?

**230.01**

Mr. Perez

TR 3:10-4:25

**Latina and Latino Literature**

(Same as LALS 230) Students and instructor will collaborate to identify and dialogue with the growing but still disputed archive of “Latinx Literature.” The category “Latinx” presents us then with our first challenge: exactly what demographic does “Latinx” isolate (or create)? How does it differ from the categories “Hispanic,” “Chicanx,” “Raza,” “Mestizx,” or “Boricua,” to name only a few alternatives, and how should these differences inform our critical reading practices? When and where does Latinx literature originate? Together, we will work to identify what formal and thematic continuities might characterize a Latinx literary heritage. Some of those commonalities include border crossing or displacement, the tension between political and cultural citizenship, code-switching, indigeneity, contested and/or shifting racial formations, queer sexualities, gender politics, discourses of hybridity, generational conflict, and an ambivalent sense of loss (differently articulated as trauma, nostalgia, forgetting, mourning, nationalism, or assimilation).

**235.01**

Mr. Amodio

MW 10:30-11:45

**Old English**

(Same as MRST 235) Introduction to Old English language and literature.

**241.01**

Mr. Markus

TR 10:30-11:45

**Shakespeare:**

(Same as [DRAM 241](#)) As the first half of our yearlong exploration of Shakespeare, this course offers an introduction to Shakespeare studies through the discussion of five plays from the first half of Shakespeare’s writing career: *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Henry V*, and *Hamlet*. 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. Moreover, by examining these plays in production both on the stage and on the screen, we also focus on their current meanings and cultural significance. We view and discuss a stage production as well as several film adaptations of our plays and organize staged readings of selected scenes.

Not open to students who have taken [ENGL 240](#).

Yearlong course 241-[ENGL 242](#).

**245.01**

Mr. DeMaria

TR 3:10-4:25

**The Enlightenment**

Study of poetry, intellectual prose, and drama of importance in Great Britain in the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century. Famous Enlightenment philosophers include John Locke, Isaac Newton, Voltaire, David Hume, and Adam Smith. Focus, however, will be on the great literary writers of the period: including John Dryden, Aphra Behn, Jonathan Swift, Anne Finch, William Congreve, Joseph Addison, Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Samuel Johnson, Mary Leapor, William Cowper, James Boswell, and Olaudah Equiano.

**253.01**

Mr. Kane

TR 1:30-2:45

**Topics in American Literature**

(Same as ENST 253) 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).

**Topic for 2018a: *American Environmentalism: Literature & Ecology*.** This course examines the development of environmental literature, from the classic “nature writing” of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the emergence of contemporary ecological texts and various theories of ecocriticism. Readings will draw from multiple disciplines and feature a wide range of writers, such as Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Edward Abbey, Leslie Silko, Terry Tempest Williams, Bill McKibben and others. Some local field trips included.

**255.01**

Ms. Zlotnick

TR 10:30-11:45

**Nineteenth-Century British Novels**

The nineteenth century was a preeminent age for novel writing in Great Britain, and in one semester we cannot acquaint ourselves with all the great books, or all the major novelists, of the period. Instead, the aim of this course is to learn how to read a nineteenth-century British novel by familiarizing ourselves with the conventional plots of the period (i.e., the marriage plot, the inheritance plot), its common literary idioms (such as realism, melodrama and the Gothic) as well as some characteristic forms (the bildungsroman, the fictional autobiography) and central preoccupations (domesticity, industrialism, urbanization, imperialism, social mobility and class relations). We will also focus on careful reading and writing through weekly quizzes and numerous short writing assignments. Finally, this course introduces students to secondary literature, in anticipation of the work carried out in 300-level English courses. Readings vary but will include novels by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.

**256.01**

Ms. Kane

MW 12:00-1:15

**Modern British and Irish Literature**

British and Irish Literature from the first half of the twentieth century. The mix and focus of genres, topics and authors varies depending on the instructor. However, the period in question covers such writers as Joseph Conrad, W. B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Vera Brittain, Samuel Beckett, George Orwell, and Graham Greene.

**Topic for 2018a: *Phenomenal Flesh*.** High modernist writers are particularly taken with the relation of perception and consciousness to lived experience. Their work shows close kinship with phenomenological philosophy, which explores the flesh as the medium of material existence. The course will bring questions of the flesh as central attributes of particular groups to bear on these paradigms. We will attend to the subtexts of gender, sexuality, desire, race, class, religion, nation, and ability. Our reading may include novels such as Conrad’s *Lord Jim*, Forster’s *A Passage to India*, Ford’s *The Good Soldier*, Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Samuel Beckett’s *Murphy*; poems by W. B. Yeats, Wilfrid Owen, and T. S. Eliot; and some theory.

**257.01**

Mr. Chang

TR 12:00-1:15

**The Novel in English after 1945**

The novel in English as it has developed in Africa, America, Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, Great Britain, India, Ireland, and elsewhere.

**280.01**

Mr. Antelyes

MW 12:00-1:15

**The Comics Course**

(Same as MEDS 281) An exploration of topics in comics history, theory, aesthetics, and politics. Subjects and texts may include: women's diary comics (Julie Doucet's *My New York Diary* and Gabrielle Bell's *July 2011*), conflict comics (Joe Sacco's *Safe Area Gorazde*), graphic horror and representation (Charles Burns's *Black Hole*), race and representation (Jennings' and Duffy's *The Hole: Consumer Culture, Volume 1*), genre and gender (*Wonder Woman* from origins to contemporary permutations), meta-comics (Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan*), comics and the culture of children (Schulz's *Peanuts*, Jansson's *Moomin*, and Barry's *Marlys*), comics and sexuality (Carol Swain's *Gast*, Bisco Hatori's *Ouran High School Social Club*), disability comics (the Oracle series, Matt Fraction's *Hawkeye*, and Allie Brosch's "Hyperbole and a Half"), and comics and silence (Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*). Readings also include materials in comics studies, media studies, and literary studies.

**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.*

#### 305.01

Mr. Kumar

T 3:10-5:10

##### Senior Creative Writing Seminar

Study and practice of various forms of prose and poetry for experienced creative writers. Open to seniors in all departments. *Special Permission.*

**Writing samples are due before pre-registration. Check with the English office for the exact date of the deadline. Yearlong course ENGL 305-ENGL 306.**

#### 319.01

Ms. Dunbar

W 1:00-3:00

##### Race and its Metaphors

(Same as [AFRS 319](#)) Re-examinations of canonical literature in order to discover how race is either explicitly addressed by or implicitly enabling to the texts. Does racial difference, whether or not overtly expressed, prove a useful literary tool? The focus of the course varies from year to year.

**Topic for 2018a: *Blacks and Blues: Blues as Metaphor in African American Literature.***

Ralph Ellison wrote of the blues that it is "an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one's aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain, and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by squeezing from it a near-tragic, near-comic lyricism." This course takes the blues as a metaphor and follows it through canonical African American writing to consider multiple themes: black sonics, black vernacular traditions, sexuality and freedom, social critique, joy, pain, and futurities of blackness. Students interested in this course need not have a musical background, but interest in the links between sound and black literature will be expected.

#### 328.01

Mr. Antelyes

T 3:10-5:10

##### Literature of the American Renaissance

Intensive study of major works by American writers of the mid-nineteenth century. Authors may include: Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, Douglass, Fuller, Stowe, Delany, Wilson, Melville, Whitman, and Dickinson. In addition to placing the works in historical and cultural context, focusing on the role of such institutions as slavery and such social movements as transcendentalism, the course also examines the notion of the American Renaissance itself.

**342.01**

Mr. Markus

W 1:00-3:00

**Studies in Shakespeare**

(Same as DRAM 342) Advanced study of Shakespeare's work and its cultural significance in various contexts from his time to today.

**Topic for 2018a: *Shakespeare Today*.** This course seeks answers to the question of what Shakespeare means in our contemporary culture. What is "Shakespeare" and, for that matter, what is "culture" today? How dead is the author if he is called Shakespeare? How has Shakespeare been made, rediscovered, and reinvented? The exceeding (and frequently uncritical) appreciation of Genius Shakespeare has been variously described as "Bardolatry," "Shakespeare cult," "Shakespeare fetish," and "Shakespeare myth." Our aim is to examine the genealogy and the current effects of Shakespeare's distinguished cultural status. We begin by clarifying a few theoretical issues and exploring how this cultural icon has been constructed from Shakespeare's time to the present, after which we focus on specific Shakespeare plays contrasting their cultural significance and possible meanings in Shakespeare's time with their significance and meanings today. Four Shakespeare plays are at the center of our investigations: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*. In this second part of the course, we pay special attention to stage, film, and digital adaptations as well as other cultural appropriations of these plays.

**355.01**

Mr. Kane

T 3:00-5:00

**Twentieth- and Twenty-first Century Poetry**

Intensive study of selected Anglophone poets. The course may focus on particular eras, schools, topics, and theories of prosody, with consideration of identity groups or locations.

**365.01**

Mr. Chang

R 3:10-5:10

**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.

**Topic for 2018a: Select Author: *Virginia Woolf*.**

Virginia Woolf seems more like our contemporary than any other British modernist. A scathing and often hilarious critic of patriarchy, her writing is free of the vexing misogyny that dates the work of her male counterparts. She treats women's quotidian experiences - their travails, but also their pleasures - as subjects of universal artistic concern. Her detailed explorations of the flux of consciousness and the intricate nature of memory continue to resonate in our confessional culture. But so to do her queer attempts to get beyond both the dreary offices of gender and the pondering of one's own uniqueness. Against the grain of her reputation as a chronicler of the inner life, her writing focuses the mundane object-world in new and unfamiliar ways and probes the elusive nature of our social tie, our being-in-common. Like Freud, she tried in her late work to imagine what a civilized society might look like in an era of unprecedented barbarity, when appeals to collective existence were being marshaled under the banners of jingoism, imperialism, militarism, and fascism. Perhaps her most urgent lesson for us, however, is neither strictly "personal" nor "political": Woolf made powerful pleas for our right to privacy and anonymity, for the freedom to think about nothing in particular and to do so without interruption in a room of one's own. On the other hand, no one did more than she to invent her readership and to secure her afterlife as a literary celebrity: no reading of Woolf is quite separable from the life and the legend, the fallacy and the figment, of the author. In addition to reading her novels, we sample her short fiction, essays, memoirs, diaries, and letters.

**370.01**

Ms. McGlennen

R 3:10-5:10

**Transnational Literature**

This course focuses on literary works and cultural networks that cross the borders of the nation-state. Such border-crossings raise questions concerning vexed phenomena such as globalization, exile, diaspora, and migration-forced and voluntary. Collectively, these phenomena deeply influence the development of transnational cultural identities and practices. Specific topics studied in the course vary from year to year and

may include global cities and cosmopolitanisms; the black Atlantic; border theory; the discourses of travel and tourism; global economy and trade; or international terrorism and war.

**Topic for 2018a: *Indigenous Transnationalisms*.** This course focuses on the ways in which transnational studies has become a more helpful tool in unpacking particular critical questions that both American Studies and literary/cultural criticism produce. In many ways, transnational literatures and visual culture continue to serve as a means to subvert dominant narratives of the nation-state as a static and stable territory. Many contemporary North American Indigenous writers and artists – across colonial and tribal borders alike – utilize their work to more accurately reflect the global flow of Indigenous peoples, ideas, texts, and products etc. and call into question the geo-political boundaries of colonial nation-states. Indigenous transnationalism as a theoretical position demonstrates how some Native American/First Nation/Indio literatures and visual culture produce a mobilizing force of shared cultural and political alliances across nationalistic lines while remaining steadfast to tribally-specific and inter-tribal identities and citizenships. In this way, many Indigenous artists are critiquing national identity and imperialism, and radically challenging the histories, geographies, and contemporary social relations that define the U.S., Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean.

### **385.01**

Mr. Simpson

M 3:10-6:10

#### **English Seminar**

**Topic for 2018a: *Then Whose Negro Are You?: On the Art and Politics of James Baldwin*.** When interviewers sought out some sense of James Baldwin’s ambition, the artist often responded, “I want to be an honest man and a good writer.” The forces constellated around Baldwin’s career made this hardly a simple declaration. The issue of becoming a writer was an arduous task in itself, so much so that Baldwin felt he had to leave the United States, particularly his adored Harlem, to do so. Getting in the way of his artistry was the nation’s troubled negotiation with its own soul: the US was trying to figure out what it wanted to be – an apartheid state? An nuclear dreadnought? A den of prudish homophobes? An imperial power? A beloved community? A city on the Hill? This course looks at all things Baldwin, or at least as many things as we can cover in a four month period. It certainly indulges his greatest hits – his essays, *Notes of A Native Son*; his novel, *Giovanni’s Room*; his play, *Blues for Mr. Charlie’s* – and several other writings both published and unpublished. It does so with an eye toward understanding Baldwin’s circulation as a celebrated author and a public intellectual both in the mid-twentieth century and the present day.

### **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.**

## 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	
222 Early British Literature	pre-1800
226 American Literature 1865-1925	pre-1900
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
240 Shakespeare	pre-1800
241 Shakespeare	pre-1800
242 Shakespeare	pre-1800
245 The Enlightenment	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	
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 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 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.

**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.

**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 Fall '18.

## 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-semester Freshmen.

A writing portfolio is also required for students wishing to take English 305-306 the year-long Creative Writing Seminar; please check with the English office for the exact due date. This course is open only to senior English Majors.

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 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 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; 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 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.

### **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.