

# The English Department Spring 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  
**Katie Gemmill**, Mellon Post-doctoral Fellow in 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
  - Sebastian Langdell**, Visiting Assistant Professor of English
  - \* **Kiese Laymon**, Associate Professor of English
  - M Mark**, Adjunct Associate Professor of English
  - Zoltán Márkus**, Associate Professor of English
  - Molly McGlennen**, Associate Professor of English
  - David Means**, Visiting Associate Professor of English
  - \* **Hiram Perez**, Associate Professor of English
  - \* **Karen Robertson**, Senior Lecturer in English
  - \* **Paul Russell**, Professor of English
  - Ralph Sassone**, Adjunct Associate Professor of English
  - Tyrone R. Simpson, II**, Associate Professor of English
  - Susan Zlotnick**, Professor of English

*For a description of faculty members' interests see pp 17-18. If you are looking for a senior thesis advisor, this is a good place to start.*

- \* *On leave in Spring '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 in the Spring; please check with the Department office for the exact date of the deadline. Applicants for English 203 (Journalism) and English 307 (Senior Creative Writing) 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 in this booklet.

## I. Introduction to Literary Study English Freshman Course Descriptions

### 101.51

Mr. Kane

TR 1:30-2:45

#### **Reading Australia**

Postcolonial cultures are often divided into two types: indigenous and settler, according to the circumstances of colonization and subsequent history. This course will examine one of the settler cultures, Australia, through the lens of its literature, as it has developed since the nation's origins as a British penal colony. The focus, however, will be mainly on modern and contemporary literature, which has developed with extraordinary vitality in recent decades. In addition to exploring the dynamics of this new Australian literature, we will consider the impact of British and American influences, and the unique situation of Aboriginal culture in Australia. In placing it in the broad context of globalized writing in the 21st century, we seek to understand Australia's ongoing contribution to anglophone literature. Authors may include Peter Carey, Helen Garner, David Malouf, Gwen Harwood, Alice Pung, Les Murray, Alex Miller and others.

### 101.52

Mr. Márkus

MR 3:10-4:25

#### **What's Love Got To Do With It?**

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

### 101.53

Mr. Simpson

TR 1:30-2:45

#### **The End(s) of Black Autobiography**

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

## I. Introduction to Literary Study

### English 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.

### 170.51

Mr. Chang

TR 12:00-1:15

#### **Introduction to Literary Studies: Tools for Reading**

This course introduces you to basic tools and concepts useful for literary analysis. Hopefully these will serve you well in more advanced courses. We begin with theoretical accounts of the nature of the linguistic sign, the specificity of literary texts (what constitutes “literariness”?), and how subjectivity is created by language. We apply this cutlery to various poems, including Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. Next we tackle the ancient but peculiarly living topic of imitation (or mimesis); readings here include Plato, Oscar Wilde, Henry James, Raymond Carver, René Girard, and Eve Sedgwick. In the following section we examine how autobiographical readings of literary texts seem to have made a canny comeback fifty years after Roland Barthes declared the author “dead.” As our proof text we consider Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* as a grafting into fictional form of her private life (a “bios” she continually wrote and wrote down in memoirs, diaries, and letters). From there we move to a formal study of narrative. We acquire useful terms for discussing how narrative fiction works (“plot” vs. “story,” “free indirect discourse,” “reality effect,” “focalization,” to name a few). In our last segment we treat the question of genre. After reviewing various classifications of literary “kinds,” we focus specifically on the Western – a genre whose conventions and constraints are highly prescribed. Our case text here is Cormac McCarthy’s genre-busting *Blood Meridian or The Evening Redness in the West*.

### 170.52

Ms. Graham

TR 10:30-11:45

#### **Introduction to Literary Studies:**

#### **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.

## II. Intermediate Studies

**203.51** (Same as AMST 203)

Mr. Kumar

TR 10:30-11:45

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

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).

**205b**

### **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.

**205.52**

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 discussion purposes.

**205.53**

Mr. Langdell

R 1:00-3:00

### **Introductory Creative Writing**

This course serves as an introduction to fiction writing. Students will explore voice, dialogue, plot, movement, tone, natural description, and other elements of the craft. An emphasis will be placed on exploring the interplay between fiction and other written forms – such as poetry and nonfiction – and examining the peculiar place of fiction. As we develop our own work, we will study a range of inventive short fiction – from Jennifer Egan, Stuart Dybek, Junot Diaz, Denis Johnson, ZZ Packer, and others.

**205.54**

Mr. Sassone

F 10:30-12:30

### **Introductory Creative Writing**

This course will develop the student's abilities as a rigorous writer and reader of creative prose, with a particular emphasis on short fiction. Students will be expected to produce short exercises, stories, and comprehensive revisions and to participate actively in discussions of peer and published work. The syllabus will be flexible according to the emerging needs of the class. Frequent conferences with the instructor will be required.

**206.51**

Mr. Joyce

M 6:30-8:30

### **Introductory Creative Writing**

**Topic for 2017/18b: *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.**

### **208 Intermediate Creative Writing: Literary Non-Fiction**

Development of the student's abilities as a reader and writer of literary nonfiction. Assignments may include informal, personal, and lyric essays, travel and nature writing, memoirs.

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

#### **208.51**

Ms. Mark

R 3:10-5:10

#### **Literary Non-Fiction: The Informal Essay**

Samuel Johnson called the essay "a loose sally of the mind," and at first glance his barb seems accurately aimed. The word derives from the French *essai*—attempt, search for knowledge—and informal essays do indeed come in many shapes and styles. Yet at their core is the voice of a narrator who engages readers and inspires trust. This semblance of truth-telling—the art of persuasion—often depends on skillful deployment of a range of writing strategies, many of them associated with fiction or poetry. What makes literary nonfiction credible? What makes it compelling? When imagination jostles memory, what varieties of creative combustion result? In this course we'll consider the art and craft behind illusions of artlessness. Students will write essays in a number of keys—reminiscence, meditation, intellectual seduction, cultural criticism and reportage, literary encounters with travel and food, lyric experiments, even the occasional rant—and read experienced practitioners of all these forms: Sherman Alexie, James Baldwin, Max Beerbohm, Anne Carson, John D'Agata, Lydia Davis, Joan Didion, Annie Dillard, Scott Fitzgerald, Amitav Ghosh, Jamaica Kincaid, Jhumpa Lahiri, Michel de Montaigne, George Orwell, Plutarch, Claudia Rankine, Seneca, David Shields, Zadie Smith, David Foster Wallace, Virginia Woolf, and Dr. Johnson himself. Class time will be divided between seminar discussions of assigned texts and workshop sessions focused on students' work.

#### **Frequent conferences.**

**Prerequisite(s): open to students who have taken English 205 or English 207, or by permission of the instructor.**

#### **210.51**

Mr. Sassone

F 1:00-3:00

#### **Advanced Creative Writing: Narrative**

This year-long course will develop the student's abilities as a rigorous writer and reader of narrative, with particular emphasis on the short story. Students will be expected to write and revise comprehensively and to participate actively in discussions of peer and published work. The syllabus will be flexible according to the emerging needs of the class, but it will undoubtedly include the work of contemporary narrative writers as well as earlier masters of the form. Frequent conferences with the instructor will be required.

**This is the second half of a year-long course and is open only to those currently enrolled in English 209.**

#### **213.51**

Mr. DeMaria

MW 10:30-11:45

#### **The English Language**

Study of the history of English from the fifth century to the present, with special attention to the role of literature in effecting as well as reflecting linguistic change. Treatment of peculiarly literary matters, such as poetic diction, and attention to broader linguistic matters, such as phonology, comparative philology, semantics, and the relationship between language and experience.

#### **214.51 (Same as MEDS 214)**

Mr. Schultz

TR 10:30-11:45

#### **Process, Prose, Pedagogy**

This course introduces the theoretical and practical underpinnings of writing and teaching writing. Students interrogate writing's place in the academy, discuss writing process from inception to revision, and share their own writing and writing practices. The course offers an occasion to reflect on and strengthen the students' own analytical and imaginative writing and heighten the ability to talk with others about theirs. Students are asked to offer sustained critical attention to issues of where knowledge resides and how it is shared, to interrogate the sources of students' and teachers' authority, to explore their own education as writers, to consider the possibilities of peer-to-peer and collaborative learning, and to give and receive constructive criticism. Texts may include Roland Barthes' *The Death of the Author*, Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and Stephen King's *On Writing*, as well as handbooks on peer consulting.

**Prerequisite(s): Freshman Writing Seminar. Students who successfully complete this class are eligible to interview for employment as consultants in the Writing Center.**

**215.51** (Same as WMST 215)

Ms. Dunn

TR 1:30-2:45

**Pre-Modern Drama Before 1800**

Study of selected dramatic texts and their embodiment both on the page and the stage. Authors, critical and theoretical approaches, dramatic genres, historical coverage, and themes may vary from year to year.

**Topic for 2017/18b:** *Gender Transgression on the Early Modern Stage*. This course explores the theatre as a site for representing challenges to the gendered social order of early modern England. Our subjects include cross-dressers, disobedient wives, scolds, witches, husband-murderers, incestuous siblings, and characters whose erotic desires cross boundaries of both gender and class. Our approaches to the plays will be varied: we will situate them in their historical and cultural contexts, examine their structure and language, and read them through the lenses of contemporary theory and criticism. Throughout the semester we'll pay special attention to the plays *as plays*, learning to read them as scripts for performance, watching videos, and occasionally performing scenes ourselves.

**217.51**

Ms. Kim

MW 10:30-11:45

**Literary Theory and Interpretation**

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

**Topic for 2017/18b:** *Race, Social Justice, and the Digital Humanities: Theory and Methods*. This is an introductory DH methods class for humanities research that keeps race, social justice, and inclusivity as cornerstones in its pedagogy. The traditional divides witnessed in the tech world will only be replicated in a DH course without attention to race, social justice, gender, sexuality, disability, etc. This class will show how, through an interdisciplinary, intersectional, and critical race theory framework, both race and social justice are at the center of the digital humanities as it pertains to literary and historical archives, mapping, games, new media, and multimodality. The course will pay special attention to queer theory, critical ethnic studies, postcolonial theory, WOC/Black feminism, Indigenous studies, and disability studies as they currently help to reshape digital humanities theoretical methods and praxis.

**223.51** (Same as MRST 223)

Mr. Markus

TR 10:30-11:45

**The Founding of English Literature**

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

**Topic for 2017/18b:** *From the Faerie Queene to The Country Wife: Introduction to Early Modern Literature and Culture*. This is a thematically organized "issues and methods" course grafted onto a chronologically structured survey course of early modern literature and culture. Its double goal is to develop skills for understanding early modern texts (both the language and the culture) as well as to familiarize students with a representative selection of works from the mid-1500s through the late 1600s. With this two-pronged approach, we will acquire an informed appreciation of the early modern period that may well serve as the basis for pursuing more specialized courses in this field. We explore a great variety of genres and media, including canonical authors such as 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 modern literature and culture in ways that are productive to the understanding of our own culture as well.

**Please note that ENGL 222 is not a prerequisite for this course; it is open to all students, including freshmen.**

**228.51** (Same as AFRS 228 and DRAM 228)

Mr. Simpson and Ms. Tucker

TR 10:30-11:45

**African American Literature**

R 4:00-6:00

**Topic for 2017/18b:** *From the Page to the Stage: Turning Black Literature to Black Drama*. This course explores the dramatic possibilities of 20th century canonical black literature by means of critical reading, critical writing, and critical performance. Students examine key novels in their historical context paying attention to the criticism and theory that have shaped their reception. They then attempt to transform parts of these texts into scenes as informed by past and

present theories of performance and theatre making. Their work culminates in a public performance of the pieces they have conceived.

**231.51** (Same as AMST 231)

Ms. McGlennen

TR 3:10-4:25

**Native American Literature**

This course examines Indigenous North American literatures from a Native American Studies perspective. Native American literature is particularly vast and diverse, representing over 500 Indigenous nations in the northern hemisphere and written/spoken in both Indigenous languages and languages of conquest (English, Spanish, French). Because of this range of writing and spoken stories, our goals for the class are to complicate our understanding of “texts,” to examine the origins of and evolution of tribal literatures (fiction, poetry, non fiction, graphic novel, etc.), and to comprehend the varied theoretical debates and frameworks that have created and nurtured a robust field of Native American literary criticism. A Native American Studies framework positions the literature as the creative work of Native peoples on behalf of their respective Nations or communities and complicated by the on-going legacy of colonialism. Authors include William Apess, Luther Standing Bear, Pauline Johnson, Mourning Dove, Gerald Vizenor, N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Silko, Louise Erdrich, Wendy Rose, Thomas King, Beth Brant, Kimberly Blaeser, and Richard Van Camp, among other Native theorists, spoken word artists, filmmakers, and artists.

**236.51**

Mr. Amodio

MW 10:30-11:45

**Beowulf**

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

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

**238.51**

Ms. Kim

TR 12:00-1:15

**Middle English Literature**

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

**Topic for 2017/18b: Medieval Travel Writing.** Examining medieval travel literature from the Old English period to the early exploration accounts of sixteenth-century explorers in the New World, this class will consider how the area of medieval travel writing exposes how race is framed in relation to gender, disability, multifaith encounters, critical animal studies, and thick mapping. We will look at pilgrimage accounts to Rome and Jerusalem, the Old English *Wonders of the East*, Alexander romances, medieval *mappa mundi* including the *Hereford World Map*, medieval bestiaries, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, crusader romances including Beves of Hamtoun, King Horn, and Richard Coer de Lion, the letter of Prester John, and the *Siege of Jerusalem*. We will examine what “global Middle Ages” means in examining the travel writing of the Mediterranean from the point of views of Jewish and Muslim writers. In this class, we will think about bodily wonders: troglodytes, giants, “monsters,” fabulous beasts, and dragons. We will also think about how these texts develop imaginary or historical encounters with divergent bodies: fairies, elves, green children, Saracens, Jews, demons, Ethiopians. We will encounter some cannibalism, interfaith and interracial marriages, miracles both religious and political, and the early constructions of race that becomes the background behind Western Europe’s “contact” with the New World. Along with a regular research paper for the class, students will work on creating a small DH project to think through medieval and digital mapping. We will use Story Maps by Ersi (free online) as well as google maps to consider the stakes of critical cartography.

**248.51**

Ms. Gemmill

TR 1:30-2:45

**The Age of Romanticism: Revolution and Rebellion**

This course surveys the literature of the Romantic period through the lens of revolution and rebellion, both of which characterize this period in British history in a number of ways. Across the English Channel, French civilians were overthrowing their monarchy; revolutions in science and technology were catapulting Europe into the industrial era; English poets were rebelling against what they perceived to be the antiquated poetic forms of the eighteenth century; and prose writers were producing some of the original human rights manifestos, calling for women’s empowerment and the abolition of the British slave trade. Paying close attention to these historical and political contexts, we will examine how writers of the period mobilized the concept of revolution in their literary works and used it as an impetus for experimentation, on both thematic and formal levels. Surveyed poets include William Blake, Helen Maria Williams, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Mary Robinson, William Cowper, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley and John Keats; fiction writers include Jane Austen, Mary Shelley and John Polidori; and prose writers include Edmund Burke, Thomas De Quincey, Mary Prince and Mary Wollstonecraft.

**249.51**

Ms. Graham

TR 1:30-2:45

**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** (Same as AFRS 251)

Ms. Dunbar

TR 12:00-1:15

**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.

**Topic for 2017/18b:** *Monsters, Zombies and Time Travelers in African American Fiction.* 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 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.

**256.51**

Mr. Chang

TR 3:10-4:25

**Modern British/Irish Novels**

Significant twentieth-century novels from Great Britain and Ireland.

**Prerequisite(s): AP credit or one unit of Freshman English.**

**265.51**

Ms. Dunbar

TR 3:10-4:25

**Selected Author:** *Octavia Butler.* In 2000 Octavia Butler told the *New York Times* why she began writing science fiction: “When I began writing science fiction, when I began reading, heck, I wasn’t in any of this stuff I read. The only black people you found were occasional characters or characters who were so feeble-witted that they couldn’t manage anything, anyway. I wrote myself in, since I’m me and I’m here and I’m writing.” Anomalous and iconoclastic as an African American woman writing science fiction, Octavia Butler would go on to produce dozens of novels and short stories exploring and exposing the most dubious and disturbing elements of American culture. In this course students work through a selection of Butler’s oeuvre, as well as select secondary and theoretical material to make sense of the possibilities that Butler imagined for her readers. Gender, race, sexuality, class, justice, environmental and societal destruction, history and hope are among the many themes explored.

**265.51**

Ms. Zlotnick

TR 3:10-4:25

**Selected Author:** *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*.

**281.51** (Same as MEDS 281)

Mr. Antelyes

MW 12:00-1:15

**The Comics Course**

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*, and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*), 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.

**282.51**

Ms. Kim

MW 1:30-2:45

**The History of Mediascapes: Critical Maker Culture**

This class takes as its jumping off point the point made in *Colonial Mediascapes* and the work of Arjun Appadurai's "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" and his definition of "mediascape," "the second of the five "scapes"... an elementary framework for understanding the new phenomenon of information distribution in "a world in which both points of departure and points of arrival are in cultural flux..." (Germaine Warkentin, "Dead Metaphor or Working Model?", *Colonial Mediascapes*, 49). This class will decolonize book history and "maker culture." In particular, we will consider issue of race, gender, disability, neurodiversity, sexuality in working and making an alternative history of the book that includes the khipu, the girdle book, the wampum, pamphlets, zines, and wearable media technology. This is also a media maker class in which you will be asked to scrape vellum, try your hand at papermaking, sew, knot, and solder circuits, and tackle an Arduino kit.

**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 of the four required 300-level courses during 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.*

#### 306.51

Mr. Means

T 3:10-5:10

##### Creative Writing Seminar

Advanced study and practice of various forms of prose and poetry. Open in the senior year to students concentrating in English. *Special Permission.*

**This is the second half of a year-long course and is open only to those currently enrolled in English 306.**

#### 307.51

Mr. Joyce

R 6:30-9:30

##### Senior Creative Writing

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

#### 320.51

Mr. Kane

T 4:00-6:00

##### 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 2017/18b: *Transatlantic Romanticism: Ecology & the Sublime.*** This course looks at nineteenth-century British and American romanticism from the dual perspective of the sublime (in mind and nature) and the environment (as it intersects with issues of democracy and pluralism). These two seemingly contradictory impulses are part of a larger movement that could be thought of as *radical*, in the original sense of 'forming the root,' in establishing modern British and American culture. Readings include works by William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Clare, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Walt Whitman, William James, W.E.B. Du Bois and others. One or two field trips to local sites are included.

#### 330.51

Mr. Antelyes

T 3:10-5:10

##### American Modernism

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

**340.51**

Mr. Langdell

T 1:00-3:00

**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 for 2017/18b:** *Conversations with the Dead*. Stephen Greenblatt opens a seminal work on Shakespeare by voicing his “desire to speak with the dead.” It’s a familiar desire for literary critics: to connect with authors long dead, to open up a current, a connection through still-living language. This course explores both this critical impulse and works of literature that enact the actual practice of speaking with the dead. We’ll explore Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and Dante’s interactions with the “shades” of dead friends, mentors, and enemies; a range of medieval writing, including works by Chaucer, Julian of Norwich, and Christine de Pizan; adaptations of the Orpheus myth; and works within the medieval *Danse Macabre* (Dance of Death) tradition. We’ll also explore excerpts from a twentieth-century epic poem crafted from transcripts of Ouija board sessions (James Merrill’s *The Changing Light at Sandover*), criticism from Harold Bloom and Oscar Wilde, poetry by Mary Jo Bang, and contemporary fiction by George Saunders and Toni Morrison. We’ll trace a current of influence and resonance among these authors, and see how different ages imagine different means of crossing over, conversing, and connecting.

**341.51** (Same as MRST 341)

Mr. Markus

W 1:00-3:00

**Studies in Renaissance**

Intensive study of selected Renaissance texts and the questions they raise about their context and interpretation.

**Topic for 2017/18b:** *Sex and the City in 1600: Gender, Marriage, Family, and Sexuality in Early Modern London*. This course explores everyday life in the rapidly expanding early modern metropolis of London. We pay special attention to religious, social, legal as well as informal control mechanisms that influenced issues of gender, marriage, and sexuality in various layers of London society. We anchor our investigations in a handful of plays (mainly city comedies) by Beaumont, Dekker, Jonson, Marston, Middleton, and Shakespeare, but also discuss ballads, homilies, conduct books, legal and travel narratives, pamphlets and treatises, literary works by female authors, and other literary and non-literary texts.

**342.51**

Ms. Dunn

W 1:00-3:00

**Studies in Shakespeare**

Advanced study of Shakespeare’s work and its cultural significance in various contexts from his time to today.

**Topic for 2017/18b:** *Shakespeare and Disability*. Shakespeare’s characters exhibit a wide range of what would today be called disabilities, from physical and sensory impairments (spinal deformity, amputated limbs, blindness), to neurological disorders (epilepsy) to cognitive difference (“foolish wits,” madness). This seminar explores the performance of disability in Shakespeare’s plays, focusing on points of contact between pre-modern and contemporary understandings of human variability. In addition to studying selected plays through the lens of disability studies, we consider how the work of disabled actors and directors is challenging contemporary audiences to think “differently” about both disability and Shakespeare.

**365.51**

Mr. DeMaria

T 1:00-3:00

**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 writer’s critical and popular reception. This course alternates from year to year with ENGL 265.

**Topic for 2017/18b:** *Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), Life Writing, and the Life of Writing*. This course examines the life and works of Samuel Johnson, poet, playwright, lexicographer, biographer, critic, journalist, translator, scholar, philosopher, and hack writer. In addition to studying Johnson’s works, this course explores this writer’s great influence on British literary culture, visible, for example, in the writings of Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, and Samuel Beckett.

**370.51**

Mr. Kumar

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 2017/18b:** *The World, In Short*. This course in transnational literatures will approach the world through a reading of novellas. We don't have clarity on what constitutes a novella: a tale longer than a short-story and shorter than a novel. So, on one end we have the Canadian writer Alice Munro's *The Bear Came Over the Mountain* or James Joyce's *The Dead* and, on the other, Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen* or Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. (Having said that, I should mention that I have also cheated a bit and have thrown into the mix a couple of novels. Maybe the longest of them can be read over the Spring break. On the list are a few novellas that are read the world over and, perhaps as a proof of this, are available free online. I should add that as this is a course which looks outward at the rest of the world, we won't read *The Old Man and the Sea* or *Miss Lonelyhearts*, staples on most lists of novellas.) We will be reading a couple hundred pages each week and we will write, apart from very brief book reports, two papers 5-7 pp. in length. Here is the complete list which will be winnowed down but not by much: Anton Chekhov, *Ward No. 6*; Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*; Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*; James Joyce, *The Dead*; Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*; Penelope Fitzgerald, *The Blue Flower*; Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*; Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*; Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*; Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*; Albert Camus, *The Stranger*; Marguerite Duras, *The Lover*; Nawaal El Saadawi, *Woman at Point Zero*; Nadine Gordimer, *The Late Bourgeois World*; J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*; U.R. Ananthamurthy, *Samskara*; Anita Desai, *The Artist of Disappearance*; Alice Munro, *The Bear Came Over the Mountain*; Tove Jansson, *The True Deceiver*; Banana Yoshimoto, *Kitchen*; Ge Fei, *The Invisibility Cloak*; Jean-Christophe Valtat, *03*; Han Kang, *The Vegetarian*.

**380.51**

Mr. Simpson

W 12:00-3:00

**English Seminar**

**Topic for 2017/18b:** *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? A 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 a four moth 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 2017-2018

**pre-1800**

**pre-1900**

**Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality**

<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Requirement Fulfilled</u>
213 The English Language	pre-1800
214 Process, Prose, Pedagogy	
215 Pre-Modern Drama before 1800	Race, Ethn., pre-1800
217 Literary Theory and Interpretation	Race, Ethn.
218 Literature, Gender, and Sexuality	Race, Ethn.
222/223 Founding of English Literature	pre-1800
225 American Literature 1630-1865	pre-1900
227 Harlem Renaissance/Precursors	Race, Ethn.
228 African American Literature	Race, Ethn.
230 Latina and Latino Literature in the U.S.	Race, Ethn.
231 Native-American Literature	Race, Ethn.
235 Old English	pre-1800
236 <i>Beowulf</i>	pre-1800
237 Chaucer	pre-1800
238 Middle English Literature	Race, Ethn., pre-1800
240 Shakespeare	pre-1800
248 The Age of Romanticism	pre-1900
249 Victorian Literature	pre-1900
251 Topics in Black Literature	Race, Ethn.
255 Nineteenth Century British Novels	pre-1900
256 Modern British/Irish Novels	
265-51 Select Author: Octavia Butler	Race, Ethn.
265-52 Select Author: Jane Austen	Race, Ethn., pre-1900
277 Crossings: Literature Without Borders	Race, Ethn.
280 Modernism, Sexuality, Science	Race, Ethn.
281 The Comics Course	
282 The History of Mediascapes: Critical Maker Culture	Race, Ethn., pre-1800
315 Studies in Performance: Writing for Performance	
317 Studies in Literary Theory	
318 Literary Studies: Gender/Sexuality	Race, Ethn.
319 Race and Its Metaphors	Race, Ethn.
320 Studies in Literary Traditions	
326 Racial Melodrama	Race, Ethn.
329 American Literary Realism	pre-1900
330 American Modernism	
331 Postmodern American Literature	
340 Studies in Medieval Literature	pre-1800
341 Studies in the Renaissance	pre-1800
342 Studies in Shakespeare	Race, Ethn., pre-1800
351 Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature	pre-1900
352 Romantic Poets: Rebels with a Cause	pre-1900
365 Selected Author: Samuel Johnson and Johnsonians	pre-1800
370 Transnational Literature	Race, Ethn.
380 Then Whose Negro Are You? On the Art and Politics of James Baldwin	Race, Ethn.
382 Global and Refugee <i>Canterbury Tales</i>	Race, Ethn., pre-1800

\*As course topics change, so do the requirements they fulfill. Therefore, this list is only applicable for the 2017-2018 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.

**Katie Gemmill:** Eighteenth-century literature and Romanticism; the theory and history of the novel; book history and textual studies; queer critical approaches and the history of sexuality.

**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.

**Sebastian J. Langdell:** Medieval literature; creative writing; modern and contemporary fiction; autofiction and autobiography; identity and sexuality in contemporary American literature; later medieval literature and the 'Chaucerian' tradition; medieval religious writing; intersections between heresy, religious reform, and English literary tradition; gender and sexuality in the medieval period; theories of authorship and poetic authority; medieval autobiography/self-writing; Middle English responses to Dante and Christine de Pizan; transnational and comparative medieval literatures.

**\*Kiese Laymon:** Fiction, expository writing, African-American literature, Southern literature, gender studies. Very interested in close textual analysis of film, oral traditions and hip hop culture and music.

**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.

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

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

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

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

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

\*On leave in Spring '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 20, 2017**, and the second for the final draft of the thesis, due **December 13, 2017**.

Within the first three weeks of the term in which you are writing the thesis, but no later than **September 20, 2017**, 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 7, 2018**, and the second for the final draft of the thesis, due **May 8, 2018**.

Within the first three weeks of the term in which you are writing the thesis, but no later than **February 7, 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.

## **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.