ENGL1080 - Literature Core
Fall 2016

ENGL1080.01 Literature Core: The Art of Science
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
Scientific discovery has been a literary inspiration from the Newtonian poetry of the eighteenth century to modern science fiction. Literature, in turn, has showcased the imaginative possibilities, limitations, and pitfalls of science. In this course, we will consider how art and science have historically depended on one another, and how together they have influenced our cultural values, our beliefs about truth and knowledge, and even our perceptions of reality. The reading list includes works by Francis Bacon, Alexander Pope, Mary Shelley, Karel Čapek, Ian McEwan, and Octavia Butler, among others.
Rebekah Mitsein

ENGL1080.02 Literature Core: Stories from the Outside
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
In this Literature and Society section, we’ll be exploring a variety of texts (plays, short stories, novels) that deal with the theme of being an outsider. What happens when someone doesn’t fit the categories that make most everyone else comfortable? How do racial, class and gender norms get enforced, and how do they exclude and isolate? What if you’re a seventeenth-century African man who marries a white Venetian woman? Or a nineteenth-century wife who doesn’t especially like being a mother? Or a Vietnam Vet trying to feel at home again? Texts will likely include: Shakespeare’s Othello, Kate Chopin’s The Awakening, Tim O’Brien’s The Things They Carried and James Dickey’s Deliverance.
Caroline Bicks

ENGL1080.03 Literature Core: Alienation as Literary Motif
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
This is a close-reading of literature course. Certain themes, alienation, for instance, or the role of women in society will be stressed, and examined. Narrative strategies, points of view, characterization, are discussed as well, as will the connection between literature and society as a whole; matters of aesthetics are also emphasized. Readings may include Madame Bovary, All the King’s Men, Where I’m Calling From (Raymond Carver). There are quizzes, hourly exams and three 7 page essays.
George O’Har

ENGL1080.04 Literature Core: The American Idea
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
In this course, we will examine definitions of America as mediated through several genres: poetry, fiction, essay, and film. From wide open spaces to a cold-water flat, the notion of individual exceptionalism to the obligation to serve a collective good, we will interrogate the many ways literature has grappled with the ongoing struggle to define this place that is, in many ways, still an ideal. Texts will include poems by Whitman, Dickinson, Hughes, and Ginsberg; fiction by Millhauser, Morrison, Danticat, Alexie and Lahiri, non-fiction by David Foster Wallace, and films directed by Orson Welles, Robert Altman, and Paul Thomas Anderson.
Sue Roberts
ENGL1080.05  Literature Core: Literary Destinies  T TH 1:30
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
In this class we will study a variety of forms and genres, from poetry to film. This section of Literature Core explores the idea of literary destinies. We will consider fairytale tropes and traditional concepts of destiny as exhibited in, for instance, the figure of the ordinary child revealed to be royal; and we will think more broadly about the ways that expectations set up for us by literary patterns, and generic forms, shape the ways that we read. Texts which may be covered include: the novels *Oscar and Lucinda* by Peter Carey, *Un Lun Dun*, by China Mieville and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte; fairytales and their modern retellings and adaptations; and a variety of superhero comics.

*Rowena Clarke*

ENGL1080.06  Literature Core: Not with a bang but a whimper  M W F 10
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
Literature and the Apocalypse in contemporary tv, film, and literature, we are fascinated by stories of the apocalypse. From *The Walking Dead* to *The Last Man on Earth*, *Oryx and Crake* to *Zone One*, these stories of disaster, social collapse, and survival seem to enthral us. Yet such stories are not new. In this course, we will be investigating texts from a variety of historical periods and in a variety of literary forms that share an interest in imagining the apocalypse and its aftermath. We will wrestle with questions concerning how and why we tell these stories and how historical, cultural, and artistic context impact representations of the apocalypse. Potential authors include: W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Shakespeare, Colson Whitehead, Cormac McCarthy, and Octavia Butler.

*Kristin Imre*

ENGL1080.07  Literature Core:  M W F 8
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
Students in this course will deeply examine works from the sixteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries in which the creators consider the dark side of artistic creation. These works are like funhouse mirrors, portraits of the artist as conman, conspirator, shady deity, mad king, perpetrator of the perfect crime. Shakespeare’s "Richard III," Suzan-Lori Parks’s "Topdog/Underdog," Alfred Hitchcock’s "Vertigo," Herman Melville’s "Benito Cereno," and the poetry of Emily Dickinson are among the classic works that take this strange turn. The class is discussion based, but students will write short responses to the literature. There is a final exam.

*John Anderson*
ENGL1080.08 Literature Core: Coming of Age
M W F 10
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
In this section of Lit Core, we will study "bildungsroman", or literature that concerns "coming of age", the passage from childhood to adulthood. We will consider works across time and place that reveal insights into their specific contexts, as well as our own. Texts include Othello, Great Expectations, the short stories of Flannery O'Connor, Drown and Salvage the Bones. We will use small and large group discussion, as well as formal (two longer papers) and informal writing assignments as a way to share responses to texts and to generate our own ideas. There is a midterm, final exam, and an informal student presentation. I value your thoughts and encourage you to bring them to class each meeting.
Treseanne Ainsworth

ENGL1080.09 Literature Core: Love and Other Difficulties
M W F 11
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
In the classical era and up to the Renaissance, love was considered an appropriate topic for study, even academic study. The assumption was that just because we all have feelings, that does not mean we know how to love, or to love well, and that therefore we need to study it, discuss it, practice, in order to become better at it. This class will study various theories and practices of love via readings in Plato, Goethe, Eugene O'Neill and others, in order to learn how it's done.
Thomas Kaplan-Maxfield

ENGL1080.10 Literature Core: Building Literary Homes
T TH 9
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
In this class we will study a variety of forms and genres, such as poetry, drama, the novel, the graphic novel, and film. This section of Literature Core is focused around the concepts of home and habitation, broadly understood. We will not only explore the depiction of homes and houses in literature, as well as more abstract questions of belonging and nationality, but we will also think about categories like national literatures and generic labels as conceptual structures that ‘house’ texts. Texts that may be covered include: the novels Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte, Mildred Pierce by James M. Cain, and Home by Toni Morrison, the poetry of Emily Dickinson, as well as a small selection of haunted house films.
Rowena Clarke

ENGL1080.11 Literature Core: Crossing Borders
M W F 9
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
“Crossing Borders” is a college-level introductory course in literature. We will study literary texts and films that deal with experiences of border crossing. In this course, we will take “borders” to mean not only spatial or geopolitical boundaries (e.g. between towns, states, countries, continents), but also boundaries based on social and cultural categories (gender, social class, race, ethnicity, etc.). We will be interested in the ways texts represent these borders and the people who inhabit these spaces and transgress these borders. How do literary texts and films creatively depict borders and border
crossing? How do these texts imagine the way these borders shape peoples’ understanding of themselves, others, and the world? How do these texts imaginatively represent how people negotiate, transgress, and transform these borders?

Alex Puente

ENGL1080.12 Literature Core: Love and Other Difficulties M W F 9
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
Description: In the classical era and up to the Renaissance, love was considered an appropriate topic for study, even academic study. The assumption was that just because we all have feelings, that does not mean we know how to love, or to love well, and that therefore we need to study it, discuss it, practice, in order to become better at it. This class will study various theories and practices of love via readings in Plato, Goethe, Eugene O’Neill and others, in order to learn how it’s done.

Thomas Kaplan-Maxfield

ENGL1080.13 Literature Core: Living Traditions T TH 3
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
This literature core course will study how pairs of authors have dealt with the same “timeless” genres, subjects and themes, and how those various elements have evolved over time. Works to be read are Edward Bellamy’s Looking Backward and Marge Piercy’s Woman of the Edge of Time, Beowulf and John Gardner’s Grendel. Mark Twain’s Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Jack Kerouac’s On the Road, James Weldon Johnson’s Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man and Richard Wright’s Native Son, and The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin and Maxine Hong Kingston’s Woman Warrior.

Philip O’Leary

ENGL1080.14 Literature Core: Immigrant Narratives M W F 10
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
Explores the theme of immigration in American literature, with a focus on contemporary novels and films. The course begins by exploring two "classic" immigrant narratives: Anzia Yezierska’s autobiographical novel Bread Givers and Shaun Tan’s graphic novel The Arrival. From there we take up texts that revise, challenge, and re-write the genre’s conventions. We watch Francis Ford Coppola’s film The Godfather Part II and read Chang-rae Lee’s A Gesture Life and Junot Diaz’s Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao. We conclude with a pair of texts that examine the link between immigrants and terrorists: Mohsin Hamid’s novel The Reluctant Fundamentalist and Janet Reitman's Rolling Stone article about the Boston Marathon bombers. Assignments include 1-2 quizzes, 2 five-page papers, a final exam.

Christina Klein
This section of Literature Core focuses on various stories and their adaptations in order to explore how writers of various literary genres, cultures, and historical periods have addressed themes that endure in human experience. In addition, this course aims to develop students’ close-reading abilities and analytical writing skills.

Deanna Danforth

This course provides an introduction to literary study by looking at how Zen (Chan) Buddhism has been represented, understood, and expressed through various forms of literature over the past 1400 years. We will read works translated from Chinese and Japanese as well as works originally written in English. Literary genres will include haiku and other poetic forms, travel memoirs, short stories, and at least one novel. We will also consider the Zen koan as a literary form. No previous knowledge of Buddhism is required or expected.

Alan Richardson

With a focus on the gothic novel, this class explores the appeal of the supernatural in literature and film. Authors in the gothic genre may include Horace Walpole, Emily Bronte, Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, and Edgar Allan Poe. Other works may include Mark Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, and Jim Jarmusch's 2013 film, *Only Lovers Left Alive*.

Allison Cotti-Lowell

Literature and the Apocalypse in contemporary TV, film, and literature, we are fascinated by stories of the apocalypse. From *The Walking Dead* to *The Last Man on Earth*, *Oryx and Crake* to *Zone One*, these stories of disaster, social collapse, and survival seem to enthral us. Yet such stories are not new. In this course, we will be investigating texts from a variety of historical periods and in a variety of literary forms that share an interest in imagining the apocalypse and its aftermath. We will wrestle with questions concerning how and why we tell these stories and how historical, cultural, and artistic context impact representations of the apocalypse. Potential authors include: W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Shakespeare, Colson Whitehead, Cormac McCarthy, and Octavia Butler.

Kristin Imre
ENGL1080.19 Literature Core: Alienation as Literary Motif  
T TH 10:30  
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement  
This is a close-reading of literature course. Certain themes, alienation, for instance, or the role of women in society will be stressed, and examined. Narrative strategies, points of view, characterization, are discussed as well, as will the connection between literature and society as a whole; matters of aesthetics are also emphasized. Readings may include Madame Bovary, All the King’s Men, Where I’m Calling From (Raymond Carver). There are quizzes, hourly exams and three 7 page essays.  
George O’Har

ENGL1080.20 Literature Core: Literary as Testimony  
T TH 12  
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement  
This section of Literature Core will explore how literary texts bear witness to historical events and address social issues. Through the study of poetry, fiction, drama, and memoir, we will examine how writers have used a variety of literary genres and forms to transform traumatic memories and the experiences of displacement and oppression into art. Topics include slavery, the Vietnam War, the Holocaust, and 9/11. Texts may include Herman Melville's Benito Cereno, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Toni Morrison's Beloved, Tim O'Brien's The Things They Carried, David Henry Hwang's M. Butterfly, Art Spiegelman's Maus, and Jonathan Safran Foer's Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close.  
Lori Harrison-Kahan

ENGL1080.21 Literature Core: Twisted Tales  
T TH 12  
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement  
Exploring "Twisted" Structures, Behaviors, Themes  
In this course we will explore "twists" in literature (fiction, primarily)—twists of plot (that surprise us), themes (that challenge us), and structures (orderly structures and those that are unexpectedly ordered). Sometimes, the "twists" are multiple, and we will take special care to note thematic and moral implications as well as the structural designs of "twisted tales." The course aims to help you: enhance your understanding of literature's meanings and structures; amplify your skills of analysis; expand your role in discussion; increase your skill and fluidity as a writer.  
Eileen Donovan-Kranz

ENGL1080.23 Literature Core: Authority and Obedience: From Plato to Kurt Vonnegut  
M W F 1  
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement  
Through works by such authors as Plato, Aeschylus, Freud, Alan Ginsberg and Kurt Vonnegut, this course engages with fundamental questions of human existence. How do we live a good life? What is the meaning of human suffering? Why do we obey evil authority? How can we deal with the crass commodification of modern life? Readings from literary, philosophical, psychological and sociological texts help us explore these questions.  
James Wallace
ENGL1080.24 Literature Core: Untimely Figures  T TH 4:30
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
This section of Literature Core will focus on the theme of the “untimely” in literary and philosophical texts. From Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* to Agamben’s “contemporary,” from Freud’s “nachträglich” to Woolf’s “moments of being,” we will explore the ways in which different thinkers engage with the “out-of-jointness” of time and the stakes of such an engagement. Is there an ethics of untimeliness, for instance? A relation between the disjointure of time and justice? What of the relation between time and violence? Between time and trope? Working at the intersection of philosophy and literature, we will think critically in this course about the urgency of the untimely in its various manifestations. Literary texts may include Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Wordsworth’s “Lucy” poems, and Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*. Philosophical texts may include Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*, Freud’s case history of the “Wolf Man,” and Agamben’s “What is the Contemporary?”

*Nell Wasserstrom*

---

ENGL1080.25 Literature Core: The Artist in the Modern World  M W F 1
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
What does an author look like and where does he or she fit in the modern world? Writers have long given us portraits of people like themselves as they navigate the trials and pleasures of becoming an artist. This course will examine British, Irish, and American fiction responding to the development of artists and their role in society over the last century. We will explore critical reflections on authorship and discuss topics such as writing, publishing, the book trade, censorship, and literary movements. We will be reading works from James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, David Mitchell, David Foster Wallace, Ben Lerner and others.

*Andrew Kuhn*

---

ENGL1080.26 Literature Core: Relationship of philosophy and art  T TH 1:30
Satisfies Literature Core Requirement
This section of Literary Themes will focus on the relationship of philosophy and art. In the first week, we will discuss the question “What is art?” and spend some time on writing about it. Looking at the philosophy/art intersection from the vantage point of philosophy, we will take up Martin Heidegger. As a follow-up activity to this phase of the course, students will visit the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (in October), to think about painting in Heideggerian philosophical terms. Students will be asked to locate a particular painting that can be interpreted philosophically, and a one-page informal essay will grow out of that experience. For the rest of the semester, we will concentrate on at least one short story (by Henry James), modern novels, and a contemporary film (or two), bringing in more philosophy as well as some psychoanalytic theory to enrich our interpretations. Several formal, thesis-driven essays will be required; writing well will be one of our primary concerns.

*Frances Restuccia*