Coming of Age

ENGL1080.01 Coming of Age  MWF 9
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

Meaning and the Criminal Mastermind

ENGL1080.02 Meaning and the Criminal Mastermind  MWF 10
This course takes a single ambitious recent novel (by Thomas Pynchon, for example, or David Mitchell, or Jennifer Egan) and reads it across the whole semester, interrupted by shorter works (from the whole range of English literature: perhaps Shakespeare, Dickinson, Tony Kushner, Tracy K. Smith) that can be seen as sources for or comments upon the big novel. Students will write four critical essays that explore the relationships among these works, and there will be a final exam aimed at making sense of it all.

John Anderson

Crossing Borders

ENGL1080.03 Crossing Borders  MWF 1
“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

Pretty Little Liars: Silence, Secrets, and Fiction

ENGL1080.04 Pretty Little Liars: Silence, Secrets, and Fiction  MWF 11
We most often associate the word fiction with literary works–novels, short stories, and plays–or with other forms of entertainment that engage in imaginative storytelling–movies, television shows, and live performances. Works of fiction are dependent on imagination, invention, and deception. In other words, fiction is a lie, and works of fiction deploy lies and liars in various ways and to various ends. For example, a writer must use fabrications in order to create a believable and engaging world for the reader to enter, but secrets and lies can also work to build tension between characters or to create mystery and heighten suspense within a narrative. In this course, we will be looking at some of literature’s “pretty little liars”: from Roseanne Clear in Sebastian Barry’s *The Secret Scripture* to just about everyone in Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. We will analyze and discuss the various lies on the page–from big lies to lies of omission–and assess the role of truth and falsehood in the stories we tell.

Megan Crotty
ENGL1080.05 Modernist Art: Literature, Painting, Film  T TH 3
This section of Literary Themes focuses on the formal complexity in relation to dominant motifs of modernist art, in literature (Gide, Proust, Mann, Woolf), painting (Van Gogh, Picasso, Matisse, Klee, Dali), and film (Bergman, Fellini, Godard). We will read various definitions of “modernism,” to discern what unites these twentieth-century genres. Psychoanalytic writing (Freud) and philosophy (Heidegger, Benjamin) that developed during the modernist era will also be studied. At least three analytical essays will be assigned; writing itself will be a primary focus. Students will visit the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, to make the experience of modern art real.
Frances Restuccia

ENGL1080.07 Personal Insight in English Literature   T TH 9
Literature is often concerned with understanding the individual in context, in the context of her/his personal experience or in social, political or cultural context. Very often such understanding crystallizes in a moment of insight, when elements come together and a new pattern emerges. Such insight can be experienced by a character within a novel, for example, or it can be one experienced by the reader about the character. Literary insight may also furnish the reader with the capacity for greater insight in her/his own experience. The course will explore these issues through various literary genres – novels, short stories, poetry – and techniques of literary analysis.
James Murphy

ENGL1080.08 Traditions/Counter-traditions   T TH 10:30
This course considers what happens when so-called classic texts are re-visionsed by people from different times and cultures. We will investigate how historical context and culture inform each required reading, as well as how the cultural capital accrued by texts that form “the literary canon” shape the imaginations of writers who engage them. Required readings include: William Shakespeare’s “The Tempest”/Aimé Césaire’s “A Tempest;” Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre/Jean Rhys’s Wide Sargasso Sea; Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights/Maryse Condé’s Windward Heights; Dante’s Inferno/Gloria Naylor’s Linden Hills, Grimm Fairy Tales/Nalo Hopkinson short stories. Students will read, analyze, discuss, and write about the assigned works.
Rhonda Frederick

ENGL1080.09 Self-Help, Self-Making   MWF 2
This section of literature core, “‘Self-Help,’ Self-Making,” looks at the history of the idea of the ‘self-made man’ (or woman). We read some of the literature of ‘self-help’ (the term is a 19th-century invention) from the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as novels, short stories, essays, and memoirs that both endorse and are skeptical of the notion that one can create oneself anew independent of upbringing or inheritance. Some of the authors we will read include Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Smiles, D.H. Lawrence, George Eliot, Frederick Douglass, and Joan Didion.
James Najarian

ENGL1080.10 Literature of Service   MWF 3
Through close examination of literary works that take service as a topic, this course explores the ethical and political considerations that service implies. Some questions we consider include: What is the relationship of art to service? How does service shape the self? How do gender, class, race, and religion shape the experience of service? How does service mediate the relationship of individuals to communities? We will look at texts that explore service in relation to religion, work, war, and society. Authors include John Milton, George Bernard Shaw, Charlotte Brontë, Jamaica Kincaid, Tracy Kidder, Phil Klay, Ben Fountain, and Kazuo Ishiguro.
Aeron Hunt
ENGL1080.11  **Rule Breakers**  T TH 10:30
This section of the Lit Core will examine the issue of "Rule Breakers"
We will be looking at literature that deals with the act of breaking the rules and the social and moral consequences that result from rule breaking. And we will be looking at the way this is done in various literary forms.
We have to begin with some key questions:
Why and how, do societies create rules?
Who enforces the rules and how are they enforced?
Why do people decide to break rules?
What are the social consequences of breaking rules?
What are the individual consequences for the rule breaker?
Do men and women deal with rules and rule breaking differently?
Bonnie Rudner

ENGL1080.12  **Literature as Testimony**  T TH 9
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, autobiography, and graphic narrative, 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 Holocaust, and 9/11.
Lori Harrison-Kahan

ENGL1080.13  **Alienation as Literary Motif**  T TH 3
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

ENGL1080.14  **Meaning and the Criminal Mastermind**  MWF 12
This course takes a single ambitious recent novel (by Thomas Pynchon, for example, or David Mitchell, or Jennifer Egan) and reads it across the whole semester, interrupted by shorter works (from the whole range of English literature; perhaps Shakespeare, Dickinson, Tony Kushner, Tracy K. Smith) that can be seen as sources for or comments upon the big novel. Students will write four critical essays that explore the relationships among these works, and there will be a final exam aimed at making sense of it all.
John Anderson

ENGL1080.15  **Alienation as Literary Motif**  T TH 10:30
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
ENGL1080.16 Literature and Politics from *Julius Caesar* to *Game of Thrones*
MWF 10

In this course, we will explore the fundamentals of textual interpretation and literary analysis by reading a diverse array of texts—from novels, poems, and dramas to works of philosophy, science fiction, and film—dealing with the issues and problems that reside at the heart of collective existence. We will read works spanning across various time periods and genres, some highly “literary” and others considered more “popular,” in an effort to develop a critical awareness of how textual elements such as language, imagery, character, plot, and genre are used to construct meaning. But we will also learn to draw connections between specific works of literature and their historical contexts and to consider the perspectives that each text offers on larger questions about political life that have long concerned writers (and readers!) of literature, including: what makes political life necessary? How are political ideas informed by conceptions of humankind, and vice versa? How are these conceptions conveyed in written texts? What do literary texts allow us to understand about political life that works of history or philosophy might not? Readings will include works by Shakespeare, Machiavelli, Frederick Douglass, Herman Melville, Margaret Atwood, and Ursula K. Le Guin (among others) as well as films/visual media such as Christopher Nolan’s *The Dark Night* and HBO’s *Game of Thrones*.

*Scott Reznick*

ENGL1080.17 *Love and Other Difficulties*  
MWF 10

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*

ENGL1080.18 *Island Fiction*  
MWF 2

This course ponders the significance of islands, literal and figurative, in the human condition and in the human imagination. Starting with Thomas More’s *Utopia*, we will move through some early travel narratives, fictional utopian and dystopian island experiments, and we will finish with some offshoots of the “island genre” that may include JG Ballard’s *High Rise* or stories about space exploration.

*Allison Cotti-Lowell*

ENGL1080.19 *Education and its Discontents*  
T TH 1:30

What does it mean to be educated—as opposed to merely knowledgeable? How do our educational institutions damage as well as develop us? We will explore how writers use various literary forms to explore the promise and pitfalls of formal education. Our texts will include novels, short fiction, plays, and at least one film. There will be two papers; a final; several "pop" quizzes; and a group presentation. This course includes graphic content and language and presumes class participation.

*Andrew Sofer*
ENGL1080.20 The Problem of Pleasure MWF 1
This section of Literature Core will focus on the concept of pleasure. The experience of pleasure—as literature, poetry, and psychoanalytic theory have shown—is never without its opposite: unpleasure. Taking this idea that there is no such thing as “pure” pleasure as our starting point, this course will focus on the various ways in which thinkers have explored the “problem” of pleasure in their work. What is the relation between pleasure and pain, for instance? Between pleasure and time? Between pleasure and repetition? How is pleasure captured in aesthetic representation, or conceptualized in philosophical texts? The problem of pleasure will inevitably lead us to questions of desire, love, and the erotic, as well as how these concepts shape issues of race, power, gender, and sexuality. Focusing on detailed textual readings, we will also ask questions about how pleasure and its correlates are figured in the texts we read—that is, how is the text “thinking” pleasure through its formal features (rhetorical figures, style, structure, etc.)?
Nell Wasserstrom

ENGL1080.21 Memory and Forgetting T TH 1:30
This literature core course will explore the theme of memory in fiction, poetry, essays and film: the manipulation of time in stream of consciousness and in flashbacks, the way that trauma or deep emotion can “freeze” moments in our minds to which we recur again and again, the exquisite pleasure of nostalgia as well as the liberating numbness of amnesia. We will read works from a range of historical periods with attention to neuroscientific theories of memory, Freudian notions of repressed memory, and the role of photography in the creation of memory. Authors may include Wordsworth, W. B. Yeats, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Julian Barnes, among others.
Clare Dunsford

ENGL1080.22 Food Fights: Dietary Politics in Literature T TH 1:30
Food unites us, but it also drives us apart. At the same time that what we eat connects us to our communities and histories, disparities in food access, differing dietary values, and problems in the infrastructure surrounding food production and consumption have catalyzed major conflicts across history. In this course, we will study how literary works register and attempt to mediate these tensions, considering the aesthetic and social practices that characterize food writing, examining traditional literary genres like poetry, prose fiction, essays, graphic novels, and film, as well as genres specific to food writing, such as cookbooks and recipe blogs. Additionally, we will use our investigations of this material to consider the role of food in our own community, through a series of field trips which may include going to a farmers’ market, visiting a local farm, and touring the inner workings of BC dining services.
Andrea Crow

ENGL1080.23 Serial, Series, Adaptation MWF 9
This class looks at how stories are told through time and refashioned over time, from the Victorian serial novel to contemporary television to retellings and adaptations. What stories do we keep telling, and why? How does a story keep us coming back for more? As we investigate these questions, we will think about form (serialized novel, television, novel-in-Twitter), genre (detective fiction, fairy tale), character, and adaptation. In addition to using class readings as a way to examine literary form, we will consider questions of gender, history, and culture. Texts may include works by Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, Angela Carter, Anne Sexton, and Kamila Shamsie, television episodes, and critical essays.
Lauren Wilwerding
This course provides an introduction to literary studies by considering the relationship between literature, the self, and nature. Through poems, essays, novels, and travel-writing, we will analyze the interactions and influences between physical spaces – those outdoors and the "natural" world – and the inner spaces of writers, their texts, and their characters. How has nature shaped writing throughout its history? How has it influenced poets, authors, playwrights, essayists? How does wilderness play a part in narratives, fictional or not? This course investigates the divide between the human and nonhuman world, stretching from Lucretius to modern day conceptions of the “Anthropocene.”

*Emma Hammack*