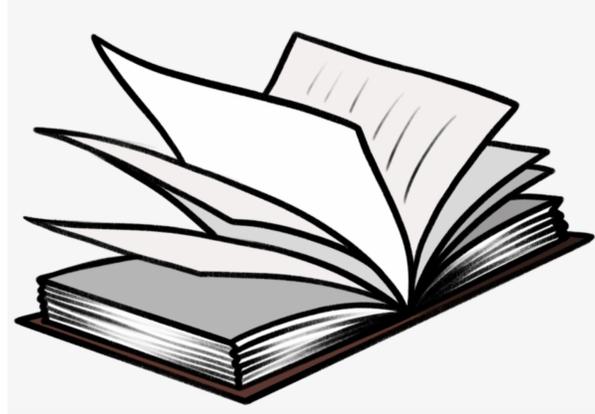


Literature Core Sections

Spring 2023



Monday, Wednesday, Friday Sections:

ENGL 1080.05
Department

Title

MWF 10

ENGL1080.07

Other Stories

MWF 10

What is it like to be a rock, a tree, or a whale? Can such beings teach us to better care for the Earth and one another? In this course, we will examine literary representations of the non-human. We will begin by looking at folktales from Africa and North America to ask how they contrast with the explicitly anthropocentric (or human-centered) myths of Western civilization. We will then move to contemporary fiction, poetry, and science-writing that examines the question of 'speaking for' the non-human as well as how stories and storytelling mediate social life. Authors will include Richard Powers, Leslie Marmon Silko, Tracy K. Smith, and others.

Aaron Dell

ENGL1080.21

Reading Nature

MWF 10

This course provides an introduction to literary studies by considering the relationship between the human animal, its creative artifacts, and nature. As we ask "What is Nature?" Our course also investigates the physical effects the outdoors or wild spaces have upon the human mind and body as represented in literature; are we different in

cities than we are in “the wild?” How have writers written about themselves and others in relation to their environment? Using novels, poems, essays, and travel narratives, this Lit Core section explores the various attitudes towards and uses of Nature across several centuries and continents. Although we will be focusing on literary texts, you will be able to export the analytical and close reading skills to your major field of study.

Emma Hammack

ENGL1080.06

Reading Nature

MWF 11

This course provides an introduction to literary studies by considering the relationship between the human animal, its creative artifacts, and nature. As we ask “What is Nature?” Our course also investigates the physical effects the outdoors or wild spaces have upon the human mind and body as represented in literature; are we different in cities than we are in “the wild?” How have writers written about themselves and others in relation to their environment? Using novels, poems, essays, and travel narratives, this Lit Core section explores the various attitudes towards and uses of Nature across several centuries and continents. Although we will be focusing on literary texts, you will be able to export the analytical and close reading skills to your major field of study.

Emma Hammack

ENGL1080.11

Mining Memory

MWF 11

This course will look at the role of memory in literature and how it manifests itself in the characters and speakers of various poems, stories, essays and pieces of memoir. If memory has been compromised by trauma, age, sickness, sadness and other maladies, how does it affect matters of verisimilitude? From children to criminals, drunkards, vagrants, the destitute, we’ll study how memory, unreliable or not, either disfigures or heightens a plethora of narratives.

Elizabeth Kirschner

ENGL1080.19

Uncanny Climates

MWF 11

The term “natural disaster” presents a paradox: environmental catastrophes are both a natural phenomenon and a disastrous divergence from the norm. For this reason, climate change is often experienced as uncanny, or seemingly familiar in its strangeness. This course explores the relationship between humans and nature by reading texts that imagine natural disasters of all kinds. Beginning with the Mount Tambora volcanic eruption of 1815 that inspired Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Lord Byron’s “Darkness,” we will read works that pinpoint the moment when the divide between humans and nature breaks down. Given the temporality and scale of climate

change, it also presents a challenge to the imagination. For this reason, we will consider Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones* as novels and Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* and Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite* as films that explore how climate change already intersects with the everyday.

Kelly Gray

ENGL1080.08

Title

MWF 12

ENGL1080.20

Literature of Fear

MWF 12

This class explores the experience of horror in literature: what scares us and why. We will read a combination of older and newer, classic and popular works. Attention will be paid to issues of race, gender, and social marginalization. How have marginalized groups been depicted by others in literature? How do authors from marginalized groups use the genre to respond to their marginalization? What issues do authors from marginalized groups address in their work? Authors we may encounter include Mary Shelley, Toni Morrison, Victor LaValle, and H.P. Lovecraft. We may also explore the topics in other forms, including horror films or graphic novels.

Kenneth Haley

ENGL1080.33

Castaways and Cannibals

MWF 12

Most people haven't read Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*, but almost everyone can recognize its influence on the past 300 years of Western culture. Stories in which a stranded person or group of people must find a way to survive in a hostile wilderness (sometimes called Robinsonades) have fascinated readers for millennia and are still being told today. Often, these protagonists are menaced by the specter of cannibalism, either from their fellow castaways or the "savage" Other lurking in the wilds. What is it about this premise that we find so compelling? What do these stories say about how we think about ourselves and others or about nature and civilization? In addition to Daniel Defoe, authors for this course may include Unca Eliza Winkfield, Herman Melville, Edgar Allen Poe, J.M. Barrie, Agatha Christie, William Golding, J. M. Coetzee, and Andy Weir. We will also view television and film works like *Lost*, *Castaway*, and *Yellow Jackets*.

Sabina Sullivan

ENGL1080.35

Other Stories

MWF 12

What is it like to be a rock, a tree, or a whale? Can such beings teach us to better care for the Earth and one another? In this course, we will examine literary representations of the non-human. We will begin by looking at folktales from Africa and North America to ask how they contrast with the explicitly anthropocentric (or human-centered) myths of Western civilization. We will then move to contemporary fiction, poetry, and

science-writing that examines the question of ‘speaking for’ the non-human as well as how stories and storytelling mediate social life. Authors will include Richard Powers, Leslie Marmon Silko, Tracy K. Smith, and others.

Aaron Dell

ENGL1080.32

Beasts and Boundaries

MWF 12

Central to all human/animal relationships is the vexed question of precisely what “animal” means, which is inseparably linked to the question of what “human” means. This course will interrogate the blurry and problematic boundaries between human and non-human animals by examining the treatment of animals in literature, and the philosophical and cultural formations that accompany it. Works will include Aristotle On Animals, poems by John Donne, Mary Oliver, and Emily Dickinson, Franz Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*, Karen Joy Fowler’s *We are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, and Wes Anderson’s *Isle of Dogs*. We will also read sources and analogues that reveal the attitudes toward animals in different times and places, disagreements over the portrayal and treatment of animals in literature and life, and the different cultural work that animals have done in the literary and artistic realms. Throughout the course, we will link the theme of animal representation with large literary and social questions such as genre, audience, language change, class, race, and religion.

Robert Stanton

ENGL1080.10

Castaways and Cannibals

MWF 1

Most people haven't read Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*, but almost everyone can recognize its influence on the past 300 years of Western culture. Stories in which a stranded person or group of people must find a way to survive in a hostile wilderness (sometimes called Robinsonades) have fascinated readers for millennia and are still being told today. Often, these protagonists are menaced by the specter of cannibalism, either from their fellow castaways or the “savage” Other lurking in the wilds. What is it about this premise that we find so compelling? What do these stories say about how we think about ourselves and others or about nature and civilization? In addition to Daniel Defoe, authors for this course may include Unca Eliza Winkfield, Herman Melville, Edgar Allen Poe, J.M. Barrie, Agatha Christie, William Golding, J. M. Coetzee, and Andy Weir. We will also view television and film works like *Lost*, *Castaway*, and *Yellow Jackets*.

Sabina Sullivan

ENGL1080.26

The Art of Knowledge

MWF 1

The search for knowledge has inspired all kinds of literature, from Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Man* to Erasmus Darwin’s poems about plant love. Works including the Newtonian poetry of the eighteenth century and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* have

showcased the imaginative possibilities, limitations, and pitfalls of inquiry. In this course, we will consider how art and knowledge have historically depended on one another, and how together they have influenced our beliefs about truth, our cultural values, and even our perceptions of reality. What does it mean to know or understand something? Why are we driven to decode the world around us? How do we make sense of the world within us? When we are faced with conflicting truths, what path do we follow and why? Other readings include a novel in which nothing is concluded, the dystopian play that gave us the word “robot,” and an Afro-gothic newspaper serial.

Rebekah Mitsein

ENGL1080.29

Crossing Borders

MWF 2

“Crossing Borders” is a college-level introductory course in literature. We will study literary texts of different genres—short fiction, novels, drama, 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? Texts may include Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, Nella Larsen’s *Passing*, Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*, Valeria Luiselli’s *Lost Children Archive*, among others.

Alex Puente

ENGL1080.34

Literature of Social Justice

MWF 2

Students in this course will explore literature written by and/or about those persons in our society who are, in some sense, marginalized. Students will be asked to challenge their own conventions and personal viewpoints on human society, and to think about equality and social justice in their own lives. We will explore several categories of marginalization, including race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and body and ability, as well as intersectional identities, and consider how literature can contribute to social justice, humanization, and real societal change. Authors may include Toni Morrison, Roxane Gay, Alison Bechdel, John Okada, Claudia Rankine, Tommy Orange, and more.

Julia Woodward

ENGL1080.09

Title

MWF 3

Department

ENGL1080.25 *Modernism in Revolt: Literature as a Political Act* MWF 3

How could a painting with nothing but smears and splatters be a political manifesto? How could a novel that recreates the experience of our individual dreams say something about modern capitalism? These questions point to the central inquiry of our class: how might literature with little to no (or bad!) political content be revealed as having a radical form of politics buried within it? Our class will not so much be concerned with novels or poems that have obvious political agendas. We will rather consider how a number of literary genres, styles and historical movements have their own hidden or “unconscious” politics. We will engage in a practice of reading literature that can reveal the often invisible social tensions (capitalism, racism, imperialism) lurking beneath the individual poem or novel, the work of 19th century impressionism or late 20th century science fiction novel.

Matthew Mersky

Tuesday, Thursday Sections:

ENGL1080.01 *Literary Experiments* T,Th 9

Any piece of art is an experiment. In this class, we will explore how literature works by looking at strange and innovative texts across a variety of genres: novels, short stories, graphic novels, films, plays, poems, and collage-like blends. Through our encounters with absurd theatrical props, time-bending illustrations, ghostly voices, and modern mythologies, we will consider the playful and profound ways that literature offers us for seeing the world in a new light. Students will also have the chance to engage with these texts creatively by re-applying their stylistic experiments to their own lives. Authors covered may include Anne Carson, Claudia Rankine, George Saunders, Virginia Woolf, Suzan-Lori Parks, Samuel Beckett, and Richard McGuire.

Ben Paul

ENGL1080.12 *The Fiction of Adulthood* T, Th 9

Growing up and aging are sources of great anxiety for many people. Self-conscious millennial adults—major consumers of animated movies and toys today—have invented terms like “kidult” and “adulthood” to express their reluctance towards growing up. This hyper-focus on growing up, and on the continual process of aging, is nothing new in culture, however. Works of literature have taken the experience of growing up and moving through life’s stages as some of their main themes. In this course, we will read a wide range of works of literature that all deal, in different ways, with the experience of

growing and/or aging. We will consider: How is growing up and aging represented in literature of different periods? What happens to characters when they are done growing up? What role, if any, do older people play in literature? Has literature, in any way, formed our modern anxiety towards aging? We will read texts by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Elizabeth Gaskell, Virginia Woolf, and watch modern media such as *Groundhog Day* and *Squid Game*.

Pyunghwa Lee

ENGL1080.14

What Money Can Buy

T,Th 9

We shall raise a series of questions about the economy, human values, and the power of the market over all aspects of contemporary social, moral, and political life. How does the economy shape our lives and our capabilities in ways we don't always recognize? How do market forces affect our power to make choices about the kinds of lives we wish to lead and our means of securing happiness? What is "human capital?" Is the "sharing (gig) economy" all good? What are the consequences of an outsize financial sector? How does the current economic system affect our environment, and the health of the planet? What resources do the humanities and the discipline of economics offer for an understanding of human nature and social responsibility, and how can we assess the limits and strengths of their conflicting definitions, ways of conceptualizing problems, and the solutions they offer?

Kalpana Seshadri

ENGL1080.31

Rule Breakers

T,Th 9

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

ENGL1080.13

Lock Her Up

T,Th 10:30

Society has always tried to silence and contain troublesome women. To prevent such characters from disrupting the normal order of things. Different charges have been levied against those women; they have been executed as witches, hidden behind lace curtains, and locked up in attics and "insane asylums." In this class, we will look at representations of madwomen (and some men) in literature and think about how their stories interact with the birth and evolution of the clinic (or asylum, or madhouse) in

ENGL1080.02**Modernist Novels****T,Th 12**

This section of Literary Themes will concentrate on four modernist British novels—*A Room with A View* (E.M. Forster), *Mrs. Dalloway* (Virginia Woolf), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (D.H. Lawrence), and *The End of the Affair* (Graham Greene). A fifth, more contemporary novel, Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, will continue the themes of desire versus love, the failure of romantic relations, and the philosophical implications of that failure. Providing a philosophical context for our discussions of the novels, we will read Freud, Foucault, Badiou, and Žižek. Three analytical papers will be required.

Frances Restuccia**ENGL1080.04****Title****T,Th 12*****Margaret Summerfield*****ENGL1080.22****Literature, Society, and the Margins****T,Th 1:30**

What does it mean to be part of a community, a society, a nation? And what does it mean to be excluded, to be on the margins of such a collective in one way or another? This section of Literature Core will explore the dynamic between these interrelated questions. We will ask: how do literary works imagine society? And how do they figure individuals' relation to that society? As we pursue these themes, we will explore various literary genres—novels, short stories, drama, poetry, essays—and techniques of literary analysis. Texts to be studied include Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Patrick McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass*, Tara Westover, *Educated*, and Jamie O'Neill, *What I (Don't) Know About Autism*.

Marjorie Howes**ENGL1080.15****Writing the Self in America****T,Th 12**

How has writing been used as a tool to explore individual and group identity? Where is the boundary between fiction and nonfiction, and how does writing about one's life engage the often faulty processes of memory? Focusing on the American context, this section of Literature Core will address first-person life writing from a range of time periods, author subject positions, and subgenres (including memoir, autobiography, the slave narrative, the personal essay, graphic memoir, and online writing.) As a point of comparison, we will also read some fictional stories written in the first-person voice. As an introductory literature course, our focus throughout will be on addressing the many things that literature can *do*—its capacity to move, challenge, and inspire us. Likely authors include Benjamin Franklin, Frederick Douglass, Susanna Kaysen, Maxine Hong Kingston, Dina Nayeri, and Alison Bechdel.

Jean Franzino

ENGL1080.16 **Literary Explorations of Self and Other** **T,Th 12**

Drawing from a variety of forms and traditions, this course investigates the self as a construction of culture; that is, of history, biology, language, and cosmos. Beginning with Daniel Defoe's 1719 *Robinson Crusoe* and two 20th century novels that deconstruct it (Coetzee's *Foe* and Tournier's *Friday, or the Other Island*) as well as three poems (two from Derek Walcott, one from Elizabeth Bishop), we will then explore self-representation in Dostoevsky's groundbreaking modernist anti-novel *Notes from Underground* (1864), its 'continuation' in Camus's *The Stranger* (1942) and its unmaking in Kamal Daoud's 2013 *The Meursault Investigation*. We will thus encounter a variety of cultures and eras in conscious dialogue with its selves and its others. The course will end with two great short story writers who approached the self, other and writing from almost polar opposite points: Anton Chekhov and Flannery O'Connor.

Thomas Epstein

ENGL1080.18 **Lock Her Up** **T,Th 1:30**

Society has always tried to silence and contain troublesome women. To prevent such characters from disrupting the normal order of things. Different charges have been levied against those women; they have been executed as witches, hidden behind lace curtains, and locked up in attics and "insane asylums." In this class, we will look at representations of madwomen (and some men) in literature and think about how their stories interact with the birth and evolution of the clinic (or asylum, or madhouse) in Western society. Possible texts include *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, *The Secret Scripture* by Sebastian Barry, "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gillman, *Ten Days in a Madhouse* by Nellie Bly, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, and *Madness and Civilization* by Michel Foucault. There may also be an opportunity to visit a local site connected to the advent of psychology right here in Massachusetts.

Megan Crotty

ENGL1080.03 **Writing the Self in America** **T, Th 3**

How has writing been used as a tool to explore individual and group identity? Where is the boundary between fiction and nonfiction, and how does writing about one's life engage the often faulty processes of memory? Focusing on the American context, this section of Literature Core will address first-person life writing from a range of time periods, author subject positions, and subgenres (including memoir, autobiography, the slave narrative, the personal essay, graphic memoir, and online writing.) As a point of comparison, we will also read some fictional stories written in the first-person voice. As an introductory literature course, our focus throughout will be on addressing the many things that literature can *do*—its capacity to move, challenge, and inspire us. Likely authors include Benjamin Franklin, Frederick Douglass, Susanna Kaysen, Maxine Hong Kingston, Dina Nayeri, and Alison Bechdel.

Jean Franzino

ENGL1080.24

Title

T,Th 3

Thomas Kaplan-Maxfield

ENGL1080.27

Imagine Your Future

T,Th 4:30

Let's imagine. How did they once, and how do we now, imagine the future? It's hardly any wonder that some of the most weird, most frightening, most awe-inspiring writing (think sci-fi, space-fiction, fantasy, utopias) emerges from our enduring fascination with that unanswerable question. This course's exploration in novels, graphic novels, film, and plays, begins with the science fiction of H.G. Wells and of Fritz Lang; it'll move on to the absurdity of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, the utopias of Ursula K. Le Guin, and the dystopian horrors imagined by Kazuo Ishiguro and Margaret Atwood. But we'll also actively try to imagine our own futures: underlying and informing our fictional readings will be the startling predictions of historian, philosopher, and futurologist Yuval Harari in *Homo Deus*. Active participation is expected.

Joe Nugent

Satisfies the Cultural Diversity Core Requirement

ENGL1184.01

Literature, Testimony, Justice

T, Th 3

This section of Literature Core explores how literary texts bear witness to historical events and address social issues in order to engage with questions of difference and justice. Through the study of poetry, fiction, drama, and autobiography, we will examine how writers have used a variety of literary genres and forms to expose inequality and injustice; to call for justice, solidarity, and inclusion; and to transform experiences of trauma, displacement, difference, and oppression into art. Part of this course is devoted to considering how Black American writers, from Frederick Douglass to Toni Morrison, have used literature to testify to the history of slavery and its legacies in the United States. We will also read literary works that address Indigenous history, class and gender inequality, LGBTQ rights, illness and dis/ability, and religious persecution.

Lori Harrison-Kahan