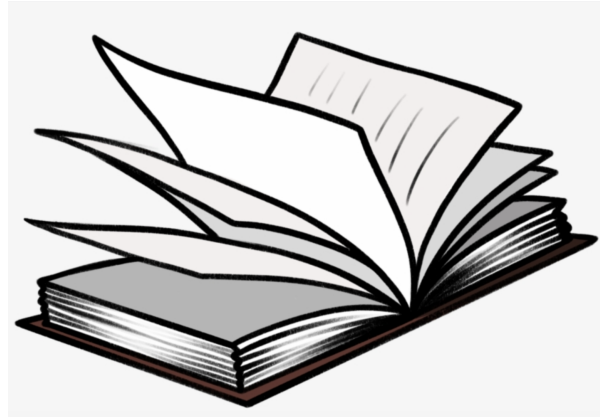


Literature Core Sections

Spring 2024



ENGL 1080.01

Philosophy and Literature

T,Th 10:30

This section of Lit Core will introduce students to major problems at the crossroads of philosophy and literature. We will raise questions such as: Why would a writer whose aims are philosophical decide to produce a work of literature? Why would a writer whose aims are literary make use of philosophical ideas, motifs, and vocabulary? What, in general, can literary forms achieve that non-literary forms cannot? Can literature improve its readers morally? Can it teach them something? Or does literature's value depend on a refusal to provide easy answers? Our objects of study will span literature, film, and philosophical theories of art. The authors we'll discuss may include Plato, Locke, Wordsworth, Keats, Dickinson, Kafka, Coetzee, and Thomas Nagel.

Lehman

ENGL 1080.02

Families: Functional and Dysfunctional

T, Th 9

This section examines literature and film about families of diverse identities and backgrounds. How does the family mold our identity? How does a functional or dysfunctional family shape our understandings of race, class, nationality, and sexuality? How can a family reaffirm larger institutions or state structures? We will explore a range of genres and media including poetry, novels, films, and TV shows, as well as community publications and scholarship. Possible texts include Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Jacqueline Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming*, and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*.

Allen

ENGL 1080.03

TBD

MWF 11

Dept.

ENGL 1080.04

Love, Obsession, Delusion

T, Th 10:30

What is love, and can it go too far? Can you love someone *too* much? Can artificial intelligence love, and can we *be in love* with artificial intelligence? This course subscribes to the idea that literature can illuminate the big questions of life and aid us in navigating the worlds we inhabit. We will explore different aspects of love—including romantic, platonic, familial, and unrequited—to investigate the thin line between love, obsession, and delusion. By studying texts from various time periods and regions, we will gain insight into the cultural and historical influences on the portrayal of love and develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of human feelings and motivations. Potential texts include Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*, and Spike Jonze's movie *Her*.

Petracca

ENGL 1080.05

Wizard of Oz & Settler Colonialism

T,Th 1:30

This course turns to the Wizard of Oz story—its origins and retellings—to explore the concept of settler colonialism as a formative aspect of American culture. Weaving together several versions of this “American fairytale” with essays that theorize the conceptual framework of “settler colonialism”—we will consider the many ways this simple story absorbs, elaborates, and participates in this formative & ongoing cultural process.

We will consider the story's direct ties to indigenous land dispossession: L. Frank Baum, the author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, was neighbor to the Standing Rock reservation in the years he was developing the storyworld for his book series. When Sitting Bull died, Baum baldly expressed racist views in a newspaper editorial—in what ways does his worldview shape his books for children? How are concepts of indigeneity and of a changing Lakotan culture interpellated in Oz? Beyond Baum, we will study several versions of the Oz story—the MGM film with Judy Garland, *Wicked* (both novel and Broadway show), and *The Wiz*—and consider the manifold ways authors and artists reappropriate the plot and characters of Oz to intervene in and expand American culture. We'll also consider more indirect connections and resonances between these two sets of texts (the yellow brick road & infrastructures of settlement and control; fantastical representations of water & water rights; witches & witch trials in both worlds)—ultimately, to sharpen our understanding of this important concept and to take stock of the far-ranging cultural work of Oz.

Pottroff

ENGL 1080.06**The Teller and the Tale****T,Th 12**

Stories rule our lives. But how are stories shaped into effective literary narrative? This course examines the relationship between story and narrative, or tale and teller. We will analyze various kinds of narratives including poetry, speculative fiction, slave narrative, graphic memoir, short fiction, contemporary drama, and film. By the end of the course, you should have an increased appreciation for literary techniques, together with some fresh conceptual tools to enhance future reading.

Sofer**ENGL 1080.07****The American Experiment****T,Th 9**

American literature is defined by its commitment to experimentation. Walt Whitman turned his paper sideways, to capture the breadth of American experience. Henry James and Edgar Allan Poe revolutionized what we think of as “ghost stories.” James Weldon Johnson questioned the line between poetry and music. And Emily Dickinson made mischief with rhymes that matched, but only on a slant. Although these authors in many ways found tradition insufficient, their work reflects intimate knowledge of and experience with older forms and with the work of their colleagues abroad. This course explores the American literary idiom as a conversation (and sometimes a debate) among passionate and informed artists, across cultures, eras, and genres. Authors include Primo Levi, Ross Gay, Nella Larsen, Brenda Peynado, Danez Smith, Kate Chopin, Cathy Park Hong, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, William Shakespeare, and more.

Adair**ENGL 1080.08****The American Experiment****T,Th 10:30**

American literature is defined by its commitment to experimentation. Walt Whitman turned his paper sideways, to capture the breadth of American experience. Henry James and Edgar Allan Poe revolutionized what we think of as “ghost stories.” James Weldon Johnson questioned the line between poetry and music. And Emily Dickinson made mischief with rhymes that matched, but only on a slant. Although these authors in many ways found tradition insufficient, their work reflects intimate knowledge of and experience with older forms and with the work of their colleagues abroad. This course explores the American literary idiom as a conversation (and sometimes a debate) among passionate and informed artists, across cultures, eras, and genres. Authors include Primo Levi, Ross Gay, Nella Larsen, Brenda Peynado, Danez Smith, Kate Chopin, Cathy Park Hong, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, William Shakespeare, and more.

Adair**ENGL 1080.09****Literature of the Fantastic****T,Th 12**

This course will examine literature that explores themes of “the fantastic.” We’ll consider that term rather generally, and use it to frame our discussions of William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* and other novels, plays, poems and short stories. Ultimately, this exploration will lead us to questions about why writers use invented or skewed realities to explore political, social, cultural or theological issues, and whether these texts’ fantastic nature might even allow writers to reach “truths” that are otherwise unattainable.

Boucher

ENGL 1080.10

Writing the Self in America

MWF 2

How has literary nonfiction been used as a tool for exploring one’s role in the world? 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. We will also read a bit of first-person fiction and poetry as points of comparison.) We will consider such questions as the porous boundary between fiction and nonfiction, the subjective nature of memory, and the possibilities and limitations of life writing as a political tool. 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—and on our ability to communicate these effects in written work and discussion. Possible authors include Benjamin Franklin, Frederick Douglass, Maxine Hong Kingston, Susanna Kaysen, and Alison Bechdel.

Franzino

ENGL 1080.11

The Love Class

T,Th 12

This is a literature class in which we will read about and discuss various ideas of love as imagined and practiced through the ages. Unlike today, in past ages there was a tradition of considering love as a proper subject for academic study. Our goal is to revive that tradition by first considering love as something one does not naturally know how to do well, and therefore that one needs to study in order to become better at it. Thus our subject by definition connects the theoretical (ideas of love) with the practical (how to love). In addition to reading and class discussions, you will write papers analyzing works and ideas that we read. One of the primary goals of this course is to learn how to analyze and write about literature, which we’ll talk more about in detail.

Kaplan-Maxfield

ENGL 1080.12**The Love Class****T,Th 3**

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Kaplan-Maxfield**ENGL 1080.13****Experiments in Literary World Building****MWF 3**

What are the rules that authors, poets, artists, and filmmakers follow when inventing fictional worlds, if any? What might happen to these worlds when these rules are broken? In this class, we examine world-building in novels, film, and poetry to understand how worlds are constructed, explored, and sometimes unraveled. What elements do writers use to construct intricate literary realities? As we learn about fictional worlds, we will also look closely at how imagined worlds are reliant on our world to understand what literary world-building might teach us about our reality and the ways in which it is constructed. Texts and films for this course address world-building that ranges from the construction of an alternate reality to the exploration of everyday life and will include work by writers like N.K. Jemisin, Solmaz Sharif, Vivek Shanbhag, and more.

Vachali**ENGL 1080.14****Monsters, Martians, Machines, and Mammals****T,Th 1:30**

At a moment when Artificial Intelligence can churn out endless streams of writing quickly and efficiently, what are the human (or humane) purposes in reading literature and writing responses to it? Can reading about characters not considered human help us understand the value and limitations of being human? This class will explore these questions by reading a range of genres (novels, short story, essay, film, and poetry) exploring characters and subjects that have been considered less than or not human, in order to ponder what it means to be human. In fiction this includes monsters, clones, extra-terrestrials, and sentient machines. In our earthly world, questions about humanity have been asked about enslaved people, women, groups considered enemies, children, and animals. When someone or something is considered not human or not fully human,

what kinds of actions and treatments can be justified? When speculative fiction explores sentient machines and creatures that complicate questions of what makes something human, how does that help us reflect on what we value and how we want to live?

Writing in the course will include a critical essay, shorter writing projects, and a final creative project. Readings will include Octavia Butler's *Dawn*, Kazuo Ishiguro *Never Let Me Go*, and Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

Mathieu

ENGL 1080.15

The Lyric Impulse

MWF 11

In this course we will examine two literary genres: poetry and memoir, as well as some contemporary musical artists, to understand the lyric impulse— what makes a person want to express his or her life on the page (or in the recording studio). The motives are not always clear, possibly not even relevant, but examining these texts for an understanding of the artistic, psychological, and even spiritual dimensions of the work will help us see the relevance and endurance of these forms, as well as their social and possible political implications. We'll read the work of a variety of American poets, both living and dead; books by poets Marie Howe, Allen Ginsberg, Edward Hirsch, Matthew Olzmann, and Ocean Vuong; and memoirs by Art Spiegelman, Lucy Grealy, Natasha Trethewey, and Jon Krakauer, with additional memoir excerpts by St. Augustine and American writer Ta-Nehisi Coates. Musical artists include Bruce Springsteen, Taylor Swift, Joni Mitchell, Kendrick Lamar, and The Clash.

Roberts

ENGL 1080.16

The Lyric Impulse

MWF 1

In this course we will examine two literary genres: poetry and memoir, as well as some contemporary musical artists, to understand the lyric impulse— what makes a person want to express his or her life on the page (or in the recording studio). The motives are not always clear, possibly not even relevant, but examining these texts for an understanding of the artistic, psychological, and even spiritual dimensions of the work will help us see the relevance and endurance of these forms, as well as their social and possible political implications. We'll read the work of a variety of American poets, both living and dead; books by poets Marie Howe, Allen Ginsberg, Edward Hirsch, Matthew Olzmann, and Ocean Vuong; and memoirs by Art Spiegelman, Lucy Grealy, Natasha Trethewey, and Jon Krakauer, with additional memoir excerpts by St. Augustine and American writer Ta-Nehisi Coates. Musical artists include Bruce Springsteen, Taylor Swift, Joni Mitchell, Kendrick Lamar, and The Clash.

Roberts

ENGL 1080.17 Literary Explorations of Self and Other T,Th 10:30

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.

Epstein

ENGL 1080.18 Haunted Houses MWF 11

We all know the basics when it comes to tales of haunted houses. Crumbling mansions, damsels in distress, ghosts, monsters, riddles, and heroes; these are all recognizable elements of the genre. But how did these elements become so entrenched in this type of storytelling, and what do they represent? How do such stories reflect the social and political circumstances of the present? We will address such questions together by looking at a range of authors and storytellers from the 16th century to the present. Potential texts include Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Silvia Moreno-Garcia's *Mexican Gothic*, and a selection of contemporary short stories and films. There will also be an opportunity (not a requirement) to go to Salem, Massachusetts in order to confront the realities of the Salem witch trials and explore the connections between 17th century Salem and the political realities of Miller's time.

Crotty

ENGL 1080.19 Literature of Fear MWF 1

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, Victor LaValle, Nalo Hopkinson, Angela Carter, and H.P. Lovecraft. We will also explore the topics in other forms, including films or graphic novels.

Haley

ENGL 1080.20

TBD

MWF 10

Course description

Dept.

ENGL 1080.21

American Kinship

MWF 12

People say that 'blood is thicker than water,' but is it really? This course starts with an exploration of family ties and goes on to explore a variety of other bonds that can be just as enduring and profound. Taking American literature as our foundation, we will consider "kinship" as the intense bonds forged with friends, community, nature, and religion. How has kinship been represented, negotiated, and challenged in different historical periods and cultural contexts? Possible texts including William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, Toni Morrison's *Sula*, and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*. We will also explore art forms beyond literature, such as Jennie Livingston's documentary *Paris Is Burning* about queer New York in the 1990s. Together we will uncover how different kinships can shape individual and collective identities, and investigate the impact these relationships can have on society as a whole.

Woolsey

ENGL 1080.22

Imagine What's Out There....

T,Th 3

The future is going to be even weirder than the present. Some of the most strange, most frightening, most awe-inspiring writing (think sci-fi, space-fiction, fantasy, utopias) emerges from our enduring fascination with the unanswerable questions about what's in store for us all. This course's exploration through novels, graphic novels, poetry, and film, begins with the science fiction of H.G. Wells and of Fritz Lang; it'll move on to the absurdity of *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, the utopias of Ursula K. Le Guin, and the dystopian horrors imagined by Kazuo Ishiguro and Margaret Atwood. And we'll peek through our fingers at what tomorrow could bring: informing our fictional readings will be the startling predictions of historian, philosopher, and futurologist Yuval Harari. Active participation is expected

Nugent

ENGL 1080.23

Philosophical Novels, Plays, and Films

T,Th 4:30

This course will focus on literary works that include a philosophical dimension. We will read mainly modern or modernist novels, by authors such as Camus, Lispector, Kundera, Cusk, and Kang. Their complex narratives tend to contain main characters unsure of their identity and even their existence, figures who inhabit worlds in which conventionality has lost its hold on behavior. These novels pose questions such as: is life absurd or meaningful? do charged interrelations with others push back against the notion that life is empty? what are the conditions for actually grasping that one is having an experience? is there an immutable truth in the universe, or is truth what one creates for oneself? is human life superior to other forms of life, such as animals or even plants? which is better, lightness or weight? what is true art? does it capture reality or the unreal? We will put the novels into relation with plays, films, and philosophical as well as psychoanalytic texts that seem to complement them and illuminate their philosophical claims. Three papers will be required; writing will be one of our major emphases.

Restuccia

ENGL 1080.24

Uncanny Climates

T,Th 9

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. Texts we might read include 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.

Gray

ENGL 1080.25

Rule Breakers

T,Th 12

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

ENGL 1080.26

TBD

T,Th 3

Course description

Dept.

ENGL 1080.27

Women, Men, and War

MWF 1

While warfare is often characterized as a masculine endeavor, women have always participated in armed conflicts. How have men and women experienced war differently? Why does state violence bring issues of gender to the forefront of social debates? This course explores the great variety of male, female, and non-binary characters who have been involved in war since the 16th century: foot soldiers and generals, a monarch defending their crown, and refugees fleeing war-ravaged nations. It will do so through a broad range of texts, including drama, the novel, short stories, memoir, and photography. Possible authors and texts include Shakespeare, Phyllis Wheatley, and Madeline Miller.

Glasgow

ENGL 1080.28

Writing the Self in America

MWF 12

How has literary nonfiction been used as a tool for exploring one's role in the world? 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. We will also read a bit of first-person fiction and poetry as points of comparison.) We will consider such questions as the porous boundary between fiction and nonfiction, the subjective nature of memory, and the possibilities and limitations of life writing as a political tool. 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—and on our ability to communicate these effects in written work and discussion. Possible authors include Benjamin Franklin, Frederick Douglass, Maxine Hong Kingston, Susanna Kaysen, and Alison Bechdel.

Franzino

ENGL 1080.29

TBD

MWF 12

Course description

Dept.

ENGL 1080.30 Experiments in Literary World Building MWF 12

What are the rules that authors, poets, artists, and filmmakers follow when inventing fictional worlds, if any? What might happen to these worlds when these rules are broken? In this class, we examine world-building in novels, film, and poetry to understand how worlds are constructed, explored, and sometimes unraveled. What elements do writers use to construct intricate literary realities? As we learn about fictional worlds, we will also look closely at how imagined worlds are reliant on our world to understand what literary world-building might teach us about our reality and the ways in which it is constructed. Texts and films for this course address world-building that ranges from the construction of an alternate reality to the exploration of everyday life and will include work by writers like N.K. Jemisin, Solmaz Sharif, Vivek Shanbhag, and more.

Vachali

ENGL 1080.34 Title: TBA T,Th 4:30

Description

Yargo