

## Fall 2023 Literature Course Descriptions

### **ENGL 2130: Imaginative Literature: Climate Fiction (CRN: 30496)**

Prof. Eric Morrow  
MWF 9:00-9:50

As the climate crisis evolves, what can we anticipate happening to both natural and human systems? What will be the consequences of human alterations of the biosphere? These questions aren't easily answered because of the profound uncertainty surrounding our climate future, but it is this uncertainty that provides a fertile space for creative endeavor as artists in this sub-genre imagine a myriad of human and social outcomes often grounded in science-based research and speculations.

In this class, students will explore works from the various genres of non-fiction, fiction, poetry and film through primarily a reader-response literary framework. Emphasis will be placed on students making strong text-to-world, text-to-text, text-to-self connections as well as the careful analysis, interpretation and assessment of literary texts in fundamental ways. Also, other related contextual topics like eco-horror, eco-anxiety, solastalgia and various climate change and environmentalism concepts relevant to the topic will be addressed.

### **ENGL 2200: Literature and Culture (CRN: 30498)**

Prof. Jodi Corser  
MWF 1:00-1:50

This GE Humanities course explores literature as a form of cultural expression by and about diverse cultural groups. Students engage in the critical process of literary analysis by connecting both foundational and contemporary literary texts to a variety of culture issues. In this class, students will read various genres of literature, including fiction, memoir, graphic novel, film, poetry, and short stories all based around the idea of survival. What does it take to survive? What are the costs of survival?

Classes will be in discussion format, encouraging participation from students. Grades will be based on group projects and presentations, individual writing, and class participation.

Required texts (list in progress): Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, Clementine Wamariya's *The Girl Who Smiled Beads*, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Albert Camus' *The Stranger*. Short stories by Zadie Smith and Kazuo Ishiguro.

**ENGL 2400: Introduction to Literary Studies (CRN:30500)**

Prof. Marc Farrior  
TuTh 2:30-3:45

In this course, you will learn to conduct literary analysis with an emphasis on form, which in fiction includes elements such as setting, plot, character, and theme. This formal analysis, referred to as “close reading,” is fundamental to the critical study of literature and to the craft of creative writing. Also fundamental is an understanding of genre. Literary works follow, and oftentimes resist or reinvent, generic conventions. We will discuss and analyze literary works in each of the three major genres: poetry, fiction, and drama. You will become familiar with the conventions of these genres and with the related terminology.

**ENGL 2700: Introduction to Critical Theory (CRN: 30501)**

Dr. Julie McCown  
MWF 1:00-1:50

An introductory course in the reading and application of literary theory, which provides a survey of major critical and methodological approaches. This course is designed to introduce English majors and potential majors to critical theory and how it can be applied to the study of literature. In this course we will study several influential schools of critical theory, learning how they developed in response to each other. You will practice applying the various critical theories to primary texts, both in class discussion and by writing papers through the lens of a specific theory.

Required Texts: Robert Dale Parker, *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies*; Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games*; Liz W Faber, *The Computer's Voice: From Star Trek to Siri*

**ENGL 3210: American Literature I (CRN: 30505)**

Dr. Julie McCown  
MWF 3:00-3:50

Although the short story does not originate with American literature, early American writers were instrumental in developing the short story into the key literary genre it is today. This course will survey pre-Civil War American literature through the lens of the short story. We will read a selection of short stories (roughly one a week) – these stories will include at least one you’ve heard of before and many that will be brand new to you! Authors we will read include Nathaniel Hawthorne, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, Victor Sejour, Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, Samuel Knapp, and Louisa May Alcott.

**ENGL 3220: American Literature III** (CRN: 30506)

Dr. Nicole Dib  
MWF 1:00-1:50

This course surveys American literature from 1945 to the present, and is structured chronologically as well as thematically. We will study representative works of American literature from culturally, socially, and ethnically diverse writers, with a focus on fiction and through a range of genres including novels, plays, comics, poems, and short stories. Together we will consider how literature reflects and shapes the experiences of Americans from the mid-twentieth-century to the present, and we will study the political and social movements of the times alongside the literature. We will also think about how different genres and styles of literature depict social struggles, and how fiction in particular has been a way to resist social inequities and imagine new ways of being in the world. Texts may include Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Patricia Highsmith's *The Price of Salt*, James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Julie Otsuka's *When the Emperor was Divine*, Louise Erdrich's *The Round House*, Victor LaValle and Dietrich Smith's *Destroyer*.

**ENGL 3235: British Literature II** (CRN: 30507)

Dr. Jessica Tvordi  
MWF 9:00-9:50

A study of British literature from the Jacobean through the Romantic era. Readings will include both canonical and non-canonical works. This section will pay particular attention to the still neglected women writers who made significant contributions to the development of literature during this historical period, including but not limited to Amelia Lanyer, Lady Mary Wroth, Aphra Behn, Lady Mary Chudleigh, Charlotte Smith, and Dorothy Wordsworth.

**ENGL 3270: World Literature: Narrative Reliability** (CRN: 30508)

Dr. Nicole Dib  
MWF 12:00-12:50

Whose story is it, anyway? This special topics course on world literature focuses on narrative reliability, unreliability, instability, and otherwise decidedly not-straightforward stories from authors, comics artists, and filmmakers working in the non-Western tradition. We will explore how fictional texts can offer new perspectives on questions of accuracy and authenticity, and we will pay attention to how these works diverge from the American or European literary traditions. Literature and film have been mediums through which storytellers have played with the idea that the narrator is always trustworthy: what happens to our reading experience when we can't take their stories' reliability for granted? And why is it so important to consider multiple perspectives in storytelling more broadly? Works may include Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, Albert Camus' *The Stranger*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Tatsuki Fujimoto's *Goodbye Eri*, and J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*.

**ENGL 4110: Lit. Genres: American Gothic** (CRN: 30512)

Dr. Kyle Bishop  
MWF 10:00-10:50

This course will provide students with an in-depth survey of the primary authors and works in the American Gothic literary tradition. Using a variety of critical texts as contexts and analytical lenses, students will read and study such novels as Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, along with short stories by Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Edith Wharton, and H.P. Lovecraft. Students will participate in and occasionally lead seminar discussions, write informal response papers, and create a conference-style presentation and 12-15-page professional analytical paper.

**ENGL 4310: Major Authors: Joyce and Woolf** (CRN: 30516)

Dr. Ryan Siemers  
MWF 3:00-3:50

This course focuses on James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, two giants of literary modernism, who revitalized fiction in the wake of WWI by pioneering narrative techniques such as stream-of-consciousness prose to represent the messiness of human thought. Their project, as Woolf put it, was to "record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall." With the help of Joyce and Woolf, we will learn to better understand human interconnectedness by exploring the individual mind. Texts by Joyce may include the short-story collection *Dubliners*, the semi-autobiographical novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and the experimental novel *Ulysses*; texts by Woolf may include the essay *A Room of One's Own* and the novels *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. Students will help choose the supplemental reading by selecting and presenting on critical essays.

**ENGL 4320: Queer Shakespeare** (CRN: 30517)

Dr. Jessica Tvordi  
MWF 11:00-11:50

In this course we will consider what is queer about the texts of William Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The objectives of this class are threefold: 1) to develop an understanding of sex, gender, and desire in the early modern period; 2) to explore the history of queer studies as it pertains to Shakespeare and his contemporaries; 3) and to consider whether a queer person or anyone challenging heteronormativity and gender reinforcements, particularly within the confines of the increasingly anti-queer state of the 21st century, can find a space for themselves in reading and viewing Shakespeare's plays. Beginning with the queerest of the early modern plays—Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*—we'll go on to consider a range of Shakespeare's plays, including *Richard II*, *As You Like It*, and *Troilus and Cressida*. Additional Shakespeare

plays will be chosen in consultation with students, and group presentations on Shakespeare and his contemporaries will further supplement our reading.

**ENGL 4510: Topics in Literature: Confessional Novels** (CRN: 30518)

Dr. Ryan Siemers

TuTh 2:30-3:45

Because the novel is the newest major literary form and fundamentally modern, most literary historians see it as essentially secular. In this course, we'll explore an alternative possibility: that the novel depends on ritual confession (that is, the sacrament of penance) for its plot structures and its depictions of character psychology throughout its history. We'll begin with Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722), whose heroine confesses in a London prison before being transported to Virginia to find an earthly reward to match her spiritual redemption. We'll move to Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853), the first novel to describe confession in biological terms (that is, to *secularize* confession) years before Freud wrote on the subject. Lastly, we'll consider the series of texts from Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* (1864) to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) to Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Sympathizer* (2015). For Dostoevsky, confession in a secular context threatens to go on forever, but for Ellison and Nguyen, secular confession holds out the possibility of recognition and authentic self-representation. Like the return of the repressed or a zombie invasion, confession won't stay dead. So strap in for some revisionist history of the novel!