

Fall 2022 Literature Course Descriptions

ENGL 2130: Post-Apocalypse: Feast & Famine (CRN: 30478)

Prof. Marc Farrior
MWF 4:00-4:50

This course will explore intersections of food and the post-apocalyptic tale. As a class, we will investigate how food and hunger impact survival, cultural preservation, and social recovery. Part of our study will be dedicated to discussions and readings focused on defining what exactly is post-apocalyptic fiction and how it fits in with what we know about, and imagine as, surviving the end of the world. To begin the course, we will decide on a selection of short stories and novel excerpts from an array of genres that include science-fiction, horror, speculative, gothic, and others. By the end of the semester we will have explored the communal repercussions of foraging, feasting, and famine as central to the plot, and take into consideration how these fictions reflect or forecast our own lives as we experience an ever-complicated future of farming, hunting, sustainability, and tradition.

ENGL 2200: LGBTQ Literature (CRN: 30479)

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

This course offers an overview of LGBTQ literature, ranging from foundational works of queer literature like James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* and Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle* to recent works like Malinda Lo's award-winning novel *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* and Janelle Monáe's visual album *Dirty Computer*. We will read and discuss a variety of literary texts that explore the identities and experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community and how those texts represent a distinct literary and cultural tradition. In the process, we will discuss LGBTQIA+ history, narratives, and identity formations and how categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality intersect in myriad and nuanced ways.

Required Texts: Meg-John Barker, *Queer: A Graphic History*; James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room*; Rita Mae Brown, *Rubyfruit Jungle*; Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*; Jordy Rosenberg, *Confessions of the Fox*; Malinda Lo, *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*; other readings will be provided on Canvas

ENGL 2400: Introduction to Literary Studies (CRN: 30481)

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

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: 30482)

Dr. Nozomi Irei

TuTh 11:30-12:45

An introductory course in the reading and application of literary theory, which provides a survey of major critical methodological approaches. This course is designed to train students how to navigate and engage with critical and theoretical works that are foundational to the study of literature and the humanities today. We will start with a very brief overview of the philosophical tradition—this is crucial to an understanding of the development of Western thought and, therefore, the current concepts of “theory.” The course will then highlight a variety of works that are significant in shaping different theories and movements. In order to facilitate engagement with these readings, we will read Kafka's short story, “The Metamorphosis” to “test out” and explore various theoretical approaches. In addition, the course will provide an opportunity to explore the theories in conjunction with other literary works (e.g., Homer's *Odyssey*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*) and a variety of other kinds of texts: poems, cinematic texts, paintings (e.g., “Las Meninas”). We will study the specificity of philosophy, theory, criticism, literature, poetry, and visual texts—noting their differences and intricate relationships. Various assumptions will be questioned, including the usual definitions of terms such as language, art, culture, and literature. Different values and points of view will be discussed with due respect at all times.

ENGL 3210: American Literature I (CRN: 30488)

Dr. Julie McCown

MWF 10:00-10:50

A survey of American literature from its roots to the Civil War. Unlike a more traditional survey that moves through dozens of writers at a rapid pace, this course focuses on just thirteen of those writers. Readings will include both canonical and non-canonical works, as well as texts that might fall outside of traditional notions of what counts as “Literature.” We will read poetry, novels, short stories, autobiographies, essays, and even an early American almanac. Particular attention will be paid to the development of distinctly American voices and identities, including the development of American gothic fiction (Charles Brockden Brown, Victor Sejour, and Washington Irving), the American novel (Hannah Webster Foster and Fanny Fern), American poetry (Anne Bradstreet, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson), and the experiences and testimony of Black and Indigenous Americans (Benjamin Banneker, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, and Harriet Jacobs).

ENGL 3220: American Literature III (CRN: 30489)

Dr. Nicole Dib
MWF 3:00-3:50

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: 30492)

Dr. Jessica Tvordi
TuTh 8:30-9:45

A study of British literature from the Jacobean through the Romantic era. Readings will include both canonical and non-canonical works.

ENGL 3270: World Literature: Story-Telling (CRN: 30493)

Dr. Nozomi Irei
TuTh 1:00-2:15

A variable topics study of non-Western literatures, which may include African, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Middle Eastern, Aztec and other texts in translation, with significant emphases on one of these literatures.

We often hear of how everyone has a “story” to tell. However, what might that really mean, e.g., how is a “story” different from a raw chronicling of “events” or “experiences”? This course will study the various kinds of storytelling and their developments, expanding our scope beyond the transition from oral narratives to written text. For instance, we will examine the move from tradition being the “authority” in narrative to the *histor* as “investigator”—rather than mere chronicler—lending “authority” to the narrative (Kellogg and Scholes 242). We will investigate how different narrative forms present stories and how this is tied *dynamically* to the concept of literary genres and modes—even to the postmodern concept of the impossibility of telling stories, as Blanchot suggests. We will look to Kellogg and Scholes’ foundational study, *The Nature of Narrative*, as a guide to read texts from a variety of historical and cultural contexts; and mediums. Some questions we will consider: How

might stories become subsumed into “literature”? In most “western” cultures, concepts of the self and “I” often remain unquestioned, but what happens to storytelling in a culture or language where the “I” of the storyteller or the characters does not necessarily coincide with a narrative agent or subject? Some texts we may consider: Abe’s *Woman in the Dunes* or Mishima’s *Five Modern Noh Plays*; Akutagawa’s “In a Grove” and/or “Rashomon”; García Márquez’s “I only came to use the phone”; Gogol’s *Petersburg Tales*; *Ramayana* (selections); Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*; Silko’s *Ceremony*; Soyinka’s *The Strong Breed*; *Sunjata*; *A Thousand and One Nights* (selections) Wu’s *The Journey to the West* (selections); Zeami’s *Atsumori*.

ENGL 4110: Lit. Genres: Speculative Fiction (CRN: 30501)

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

This course dives into the world of speculative fiction, an umbrella term (that is sometimes contested) for a grouping of genres that includes science fiction, fantasy, and dystopic fiction. We will think about how fiction invites possibilities for imagining new worlds—both inviting and otherwise—and how literature has been a space to grapple with the ethical issues linked to technology, human and environmental relationships, life and death, racism, identity, and other topics. We will pay particular attention to the genre cues of speculative fiction, and together we will both define and negotiate the expectations for fiction that speculates on what is possible in our world and outside of it. Texts may include Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*, Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun*, Octavia Butler’s *Kindred*, Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Rebecca Roanhorse’s *Trail of Lightning*, and others.

ENGL 4310: Major Authors: Joyce and Woolf (CRN: 30513)

Dr. Ryan Siemers
MWF 2:00-2:50

This course focuses on two giants of literary modernism, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Born eight days apart in 1882 and dying in 1941, Joyce and Woolf revitalized fiction by pioneering narrative techniques such as stream-of-consciousness prose to better represent human psychology. Their project, as Woolf put it, was to “record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall.” This narrative delving into the mind did not collapse into solipsism, however, for both Joyce and Woolf saw the particular as containing the universal. To get closer to an individual mind, in other words, is to better understand human interconnectedness and life in general. Finding the universal in the particular seems especially relevant in our own isolating times. Texts may include *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by Joyce, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Orlando* by Woolf, and supplemental readings—such as *Eminent Victorians*, an unflattering account of some of the heroes of the prior generation; and *The Long Week-End*, a social history of the interwar period published just after the outbreak of World War II—to place Joyce and Woolf in their cultural milieu.

ENGL 4320: Shakespeare: Race & Religion (CRN: 30514)

Dr. Jessica Tvordi
TuTh 10:00-11:15

This course will explore Shakespeare scholar Kim F. Hall's claim "that early modern race thinking is entangled with religious culture." Looking at some key works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, we will explore how they represented the relationship between European Christians and Moors, Jews, Muslims, and other marginalized subjects. Required Shakespeare plays are *Titus Andronicus*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*, and non-Shakespearean works may include Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and King James VI's poem "The Lepanto." All primary texts are set in the Mediterranean, where conflicts between Christians, Muslims, and Jews were especially heightened in the sixteenth century. Additional readings will include early modern religious commentaries and travel narratives, Shakespeare criticism, and theoretical texts on race and colonialization.

Course Requirements: critical responses to assigned readings, a group presentation, and a final essay with research (which will include a proposal, an Annotated Bibliography, an outline, and a draft).

ENGL 4510: Early African American Literature: Beginnings to Harlem Renaissance (CRN: 30518)

Dr. Julie McCown
MWF 12:00-12:50

An in-depth study of early African American Literature from its beginnings to the Harlem Renaissance. We will focus on the development of a distinctive literary tradition of African American writings, paying particular attention to the concept of Signifyin(g), as theorized by Henry Louis Gates in his landmark work *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism*. In addition to reading Gates's book as a starting point, we will read a range of texts, both oral and written, across multiple genres (including poetry, short story, essay, narrative, and novel) to highlight and analyze the recurring figures, tropes, and themes of early African American literature.

Required Texts: Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism*; Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*; William Wells Brown, *Clotel*; Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*; George Schyler, *Black No More*; other readings will be provided on Canvas