

YC Department of English

Fall 2023 Course Offerings

Our courses invite students to deepen their writing, reading, and critical thinking skills. We welcome interested students from all majors to join our community. Majors may choose between the Creative Writing and Literary Studies tracks.

If you're wondering which Fall 2023 English courses are right for you or have questions about the English major or minor or the Writing minor, contact the Chair of the English Department, Professor Paula Geyh: geyh@yu.edu. For information about the Media Studies minor, contact Professor Elizabeth Stewart: estewart@yu.edu.

Course requirements for the major and our minors can be found on the [YC English website](#).

Creative Writing

These classes count towards the Creative Writing concentration and the Creative Writing minor. English majors in the Literary Studies concentration may count as many as two of these courses, and English minors may count one. The prerequisite for these classes is FYWR 1020.

ENG 1680 WRITING FOR THE WORKPLACE: TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

T/R 4:30 – 5:45

PROFESSOR DAVID PURETZ

This course aims to develop the skills and qualities necessary for successful communication in the workplace, focusing on digital and cross-platform communication. Collaborative writing and group projects make up a significant portion of the class, preparing students for the frequent and varied



communication required of today's professionals. Additionally, students will explore the many dimensions of artificial intelligence (AI) and its impact on organizations, industries, and society. The course will investigate how to apply AI technologies to work tasks relevant across industries while examining the societal implications of AI in areas such as labor, privacy, ethics, and regulation.

Students will undertake a range of assignments including an interview report, a field report, and a literature review. Students will collaborate on a final team project that involves crafting a proposal, composing a technical report, and delivering an oral presentation. Students will also develop a website via Google Sites to showcase their portfolio of technical writing. This course provides a comprehensive exploration of communication and technology in the workplace, preparing students for success in today's rapidly evolving professional world.

ENG 1800 WRITING/READING POETRY (INTC)

M/W 3:00 – 4:15

PROFESSOR BRIAN TRIMBOLI

Writing/Reading Poetry is for writers from all backgrounds, and all skill levels, who are



interested in poetry and its far-reaching implications. This course will help writers develop an appreciation of contemporary poetry, as well as their own poetic voice, and will provide a space to explore the different impacts of poetic language. We will pursue influence and understanding from the great contemporary poets of the world, and will examine how regions and cultures shape, and are shaped by, poetry. Writers will work towards a portfolio of their own poetry, and be reading the work of Yehuda Amichai, Wislawa Szymborska, Breyten Breytenbach, Kofi Awoonor, as well as many others.

Literature & Film Electives

Pre-requisite: FYWR or FYWR (H). Literary Studies students take eight of these electives, and Creative Writing students take at least three, in addition to the Advanced Seminar (Fall) and Colloquium (Spring).

ENG 2059 CRIME FICTION

M/W 3:00 - 4:15

PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART

We will look at the genre of the “crime story,” or “detective story,” in short story, novel, and film, characterized by the narrative structure of the criminal enigma, the logical/psychological/emotional prediction-and-investigation, the interrogation (the forensic and psychological methods used to elicit a confession and/or admission of guilt), and the denouement/resolution (or lack thereof).

Topics include: 1. *The Classics*; 2. *Moral/Criminal Guilt*; 3. *Crime and the Unconscious*; 4. *Crime and Psychopathy*; 5. *The femme fatale and*



Misogyny; 6. *Postmodern Crime Story – Crime and WWII*; 7. *Paedophobia (Hatred and Fear of Children)*; 8. *Crime and Politics*.

Authors include: Poe, Doyle, Hammett, Chandler, McEwan, Highsmith, Brathwaite

Films include: *Joker*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *Night of the Hunter*, *Chinatown*, *M. Butterfly*, *The Fall*, *Strangers on a Train*.

ENG 2612 AMERICAN GREATS: LITERATURE AND ART FROM 1865 TO THE PRESENT

M/W 4:30 – 5:45

PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH

This course provides a broad historical survey of great (aka “canonical”) works of



American literature from 1865 to the present. We will study the fiction and poetry within their historical contexts and in relation to the ideas, themes, and stylistic conventions of the intellectual and aesthetic movements of realism/naturalism, modernism, and postmodernism. As part of our explorations of those movements, we’ll be looking at the work of key artists in conjunction with the texts. Readings will include

Whitman, “Leaves of Grass”; Dickinson, selected poems; Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*; Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*; Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*; Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*; selected Modernist poetry (Eliot, Stevens, Williams, Moore); Hammett, “The Girl with the Silver Eyes”; Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; Ellison, “Flying Home”; Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*; Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*; and Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Art will include the works of Americans and Europeans who influenced them: the Hudson River School (Cole, Durand, Church, Cole), Audubon, Sargent, the Ashcan School (Shinn, Sloan), Riis, Picasso, Duchamp, Stella, Munch, Schiele, Boccioni, Hartley, Kandinsky, Demuth, Motley, Lawrence, Hopper, Weegee, Abstract Expressionism (Pollock, Newman, Rothko, Rauschenberg), Pop Art (Warhol, Lichtenstein), and Postmodernism (Paik, Holzer, Kruger, Sherman, Basquiat, and Koons).

ENG 3005.261 ADVANCED SEMINAR

M 6:00-8:30

PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH



This course explores the kinds of thinking and writing associated with literary and cultural studies, from traditional academic projects to more creative writing endeavors. Designed for all students in both the literary studies and creative writing tracks, the course is meant to build on the work you have already done in English 2010 Interpreting Texts, while preparing you for the

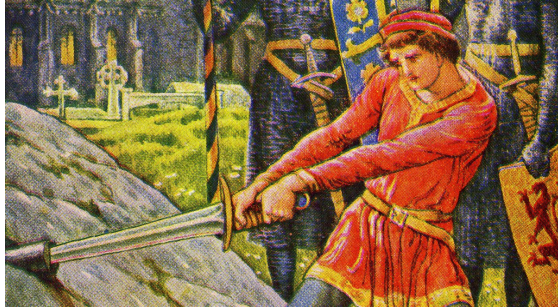
student-led Senior Colloquium in your final Spring semester. You should therefore sign up for this course in the Fall semester before the Spring in which you plan to take the colloquium. It is advisable to take the seminar earlier if you intend on a January graduation, rather than taking it in your final Fall semester. Thus, anyone planning to graduate by January 2025 should sign up for Fall 2023.

Our focus this semester will be on frameworks for thinking about constructions of gendered subjectivity, from canonical texts to popular culture. We'll read selections from Virginia Woolf, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Dashiell Hammett, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Toni Morrison, Marilynne Robinson, Jamaica Kincaid, Tim O'Brien, Sherman Alexie, and Alison Bechdel, alongside contemporary films. Writing exercises throughout the semester will culminate in a final paper or a creative project, and students will each have a chance to lead their own discussions in preparation for the colloquium.

ENG 3024 KING ARTHUR AND THE IDEA OF ENGLAND

T/R 3:00-4:15

PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY



This course is a study of some key moments in the legend of King Arthur, perhaps England's most celebrated and enigmatic folk hero.

Readings drawn from early sources (medieval and early modern) will be supplemented with consideration of the legend in contemporary

film (*Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, dir. Terry Jones and Terry Gilliam, 1975) and literature (*The Tragedy of Arthur*, by Arthur Phillips, 2011). Topics include political disaster and dissolution; English national identity and its mythical origins; emotion, ethical conduct, and self-regulation; courtly love and the chivalric code; the earthly and the spiritual; social change and transformation; and the reception of Arthurian texts and cultural symbols in later periods. No prior background in early English literature or Arthurian material is assumed. Requirements include regular postings to an on-line discussion forum, short critical response papers, and a collaborative multimedia project, together with at least one excursion to the Cloisters, the medieval branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Core Courses

English majors and minors may count up to two Core courses towards their requirements.

ENG 1001H BOOKS ON BOOKS, FILMS ON FILMS (INTC)

F 10 – 12:15

PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH

Counts towards the Media Studies Minor and the INTC requirement.



What do literature and film tell us about themselves and each other? What are the elemental forms and structures of literary and filmic narrative? What approaches might one use for the analysis of literature and film? How is reading a novel different from “reading” a film? By addressing these questions, this course will help students to develop a deeper understanding of how narrative literature and film work.

This introduction to the interpretation of literature and film will begin by considering the relationship between truth and fiction, and some ideas about what “art” is and does. We’ll examine the roles of readers, film viewers, authors, directors, and critics. We’ll explore the forms and structures of literary and cinematic storytelling, and how these elements come together to produce meaning. Finally, we’ll briefly survey various approaches used by scholars and critics to analyze literature and film.

Course texts will include Calvino, *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler* and Zusak, *The Book Thief*. Films will include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Sherlock Jr.*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, *Stranger than Fiction*, *Singin’ in the Rain*, and *Cinema Paradiso*. Critical texts will include Plato, *The Republic*; Wilde, “The Decay of Lying”; Wellek & Warren, “The

Nature and Modes of Narrative Fiction”; Lynn, *Texts and Contexts*; Rushdie, *The Wizard of Oz*; and Spadoni, *A Pocket Guide to Analyzing Film*.

ENG 1002 DIASPORA LITERATURE (COWC)

M/W 4:30 – 5:45

PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART

Counts toward the COWC requirement.

This course explores literature about diaspora: “diaspora” as the abandonment of home, whether voluntary or enforced, and a search for a new home, new opportunities, and new beginnings, even as the home of the past lingers in the imagination, in memory, and in desire.



The massive and often chaotic displacements of peoples seeking refuge from violence, famine, and persecution in their homelands or opportunities for economic survival in an increasingly globalized and politically turbulent world. The twentieth century, the century of totalitarianism and genocide, had already seen seismic shifts in populations fleeing ethnic cleansing, political persecution, and specific events such as WWI and WWII, the Holocaust, African decolonization, the Indian partition, various regime changes, and nation-building. Literature and film in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have recorded the histories and fictionalizations of such diasporic experiences. The two oldest and far-reaching global diasporas have been the Jewish and the African diasporas. Both were painful, both produced flowering cultural expression, and both continue to develop, centuries later, to this day.

Texts: Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Henry Louis Gates, *Black in Latin America* (documentary); Christopher Guldbrandsen, *Stealing Africa: Why Poverty?* (documentary), Haitian filmmaker Raoul Peck, *Lumumba* (film), *Sometimes in April* (film) and *I Am Not Your Negro* (documentary), Australia’s Peter Weir, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (film), W. G. Sebald, *The Emigrants* (Germans, Jews, US), Austrian Jewish writer and journalist Joseph Roth, *The Wandering Jews*, Czech Jewish writer

Franz Kafka, "Josephine, the Singer, or: the Mouse Folk," Israeli Kafkaesque writer S.Y. Agnon, *The Parable and Its Lesson*.

**ENGL 1023H AUTHORSHIP: PLATO TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
(CUOT)**

F 10:00-12:30

PROFESSOR LAUREN FITZGERALD

For incoming freshmen Honors students. Counts toward the CUOT requirement.



This course explores a topic that you might be surprised to learn will come up frequently in your work as a college student, representations of *authorship* over the last ~2500 years. From a historical perspective, and because depictions of this process have changed significantly over the centuries, we'll

consider how famous authors have described where ideas for writing come from: Is it divine inspiration? The world around them? Imitation of previous authors? Hard work and craftsmanship? An expression of who we are? Collaborations with others? We'll also address more recent perspectives on who gets to be called an author: For instance, why is there a debate about whether Shakespeare authored his works? Are women writers part of the authorial tradition? What about college students? Most important, we'll look at why this topic matters to you, right now. Ever wonder why, as a student, you must produce original writing, usually on your own, when the writing that people do on the job and/or the internet can be anonymous, collaborative, imitative, and even, strictly speaking, plagiarized? We'll tackle this question too and raise many others about the far-reaching topic of authorship.

ENG 1026 FACE-TO-FACE:

COMPLEX MODERN IDENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY FILM (COWC)

M/W 6:45 - 8:00

PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART

Counts towards the Media Studies minor and the COWC requirement.



The basis of identity is to a large extent visual, and images are the bricks and mortar of what we eventually come to think of as subjectivity on the whole and cultural identity more broadly speaking. As Aristotle claimed, we learn to become ourselves by idealizing and imitating what we see on the stage—for us, the film screen—in front of us and we become ourselves by imitating our own ideals, thereby overcoming other possible iterations of

ourselves. This is a course about subjectivity, the social order in which it emerges, ideology, and power. It explores the role cinematic images play in our own unconscious formation. While the course pays attention to both cognition and affect in our reception of film, it will emphasize the study of affect in cinematic identification, projection, and enjoyment.

In its new variant, the course's main themes are: subjectivity, technology, power, and horror. Theory to be studied: Aristotle, Lacan, Hegel, Žižek, Mulvey. Films to be studied: *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, *The Truman Show*, *Psycho*, *Get Out!*, *Alien*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *The Virgin Suicides*, *Vertigo*, *The Dark Knight*, *Caché*, *Parasite*.

ENG/ 1035 THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST (CUOT)

T/R 1:30-2:45

PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY

Counts toward the CUOT requirement



In this interdisciplinary humanities course, we will explore a wide range of material that locates and authorizes itself in relation to a past both real and imagined, with the goal of examining the assumptions we bring to our own textual and historical practices. Some questions we will ask are: What are the uses of “antiquity”? How do texts and their readers negotiate the imperatives of remembrance and reinvention? To what extent can tradition be assimilated to the present in meaningful ways, and which modes of reading and interpretation emerge within the scope of this process? Specific case studies will focus on questions such as the status of “historical” fiction, the “discovery” of ancient religious writings, the survival of Greek and Roman mythology into later periods, the vogue among some early English writers for invented genealogies, and the various controversies in recent years surrounding US Civil War monuments. If time permits, we may extend our analyses of these texts and topics to include the founding documents of Yeshiva University itself. Requirements: Informed discussion and participation, short writing assignments, a critical essay, a collaborative presentation, and at least one excursion to a NYC museum, archive, or historical site.

ENG 4930H SHAKESPEARE AND THE BIBLE

T/R 6:45 - 8:00

PROFESSOR SHAINA TRAPEDO



Shakespeare's deep familiarity with the bible is apparent in over one-thousand references throughout the plays that made him one of the most popular writers of the Elizabethan stage. And while his impact on the development of the Western literary tradition is undoubted, scholars continue to ask *why* the bard saturated his dramatic scripts with scripture.

Sixteenth-century London was fascinated with reading and interpreting the bible, and the emerging entertainment industry often competed with public sermons for audiences. Recognizing that the post-Reformation patrons of London's public theaters also occupied parish pews, we will examine a selection of plays that adopt/adapt biblical verses and narratives to understand how they activated the collective consciousness of their audience and amplified the work's artistic objectives. While biblical allusions are present in all of Shakespeare's works, we'll narrow our focus to *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Henry V*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, and select poems. Situating the plays in their early modern context, students will gain a deeper understanding of literary history, Shakespeare's craft, and to what extent his timeless texts are the product of the biblical reading practices of his day. Taught under the auspices of the English department and the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, this course will feature occasional guest lectures by affiliated humanities faculty.

Visit <http://www.yu.edu/yeshiva-college/ug/english/> to find out more about the YC English Department and its faculty and the English major and minor. Visit <https://www.yu.edu/yeshiva-college/ug/writing> to learn about the Creative Writing minor—and for links to the Creative Writing minor and the Media Studies minors' webpages.