

YC Department of English Fall 2019 Course Offerings

If you're wondering which Fall 2019 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, Dr. Lauren Fitzgerald fitzger@yu.edu. For information about the Media Studies Minor contact Dr. Rachel Mesch mesch@yu.edu. They would be happy to speak with you.

REQUIRED FOR ENGLISH MAJORS

Both Literary Studies & Creative Writing
concentrations

ENG 4001 Senior Colloquium
Sec 261 W 6:00 - 8:30
Professor Rachel Mesch



The revised Colloquium will be a 3-credit course for both Literary Studies and Creative Writing students, taking place in online and face-to-face sessions in a single semester. Each of the sessions will focus on a work of literature and at least one modern refashioning of it, whether through film, fiction, graphic novel, or another art form. Students will respond to these works through a variety of prompts that will elicit both traditional literary analysis and other forms of creative expression over the course of the semester. Students will also be responsible for leading discussion in at least one session. At the end of the semester, students will submit a written paper that they will then present to faculty examiners in a discussion in which they will be asked to reflect more synthetically on the work of the Colloquium. As with the other writing prompts, they will have a variety of options for the form that this final paper takes, from traditional literary analysis to other forms of creative writing.

Required of all English majors with senior standing. **English majors graduating in Jan 2020; May 2020; Sept 2020; and Jan 2021 must register for this class.**

CREATIVE WRITING

Count towards the English Major Creative Writing concentration and the Creative Writing minor. English majors in the Literary Studies concentration may take as many as two, and English minors may count one. Pre-requisite: FYWR 1020/H

ENG 1721 Introduction to Creative Writing **Sec 241 M/W 4:30 - 5:45** **Professor Brian Trimboli**



This course is for writers from all backgrounds and all skill levels. The course will encourage writers to sharpen their communication skills through exploration of the three major genres within creative writing. We will read, and write, fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction, in order to better understand reader-based writing through precision and voice. Writers in this course will start with the basic elements of short fiction and work their way towards producing short non-fiction, as well as poetry. In addition, we will be reading authors such as Italo Calvino, Barry Yourgrau, Margaret Atwood, Haruki Murakami, Louise Gluck, and Yusef Komunyakaa, in order to better understand the genres' trajectories and contemporary standing. This course will provide the space to develop your own writerly voice, as well as how you might explore that voice within different mediums, and might be especially interesting for those studying Philosophy, as well as English or Writing Studies

ENG 1724 Writing Creative Non-Fiction **Sec 461 W 6:45 – 9:15** **Professor Liesl Schwabe**

In this advanced creative writing workshop, we will be reading and writing from life, considering the introspection, innovation, and honesty required of effective non-fiction writers. Engaging with lived experience through written stories can deepen our understanding of history, connect us with fellow humans around the world, and foster self-reflection. Though we will not be exclusively



writing memoir, students will be encouraged to pull from their own experience and to establish the circumstances of their own perspectives – to learn from their own writing and to allow outside readers to do the same. The first half of the semester will focus primarily on reading, as students gain both familiarity and fluency with different forms and possibilities of the genre. Initially, students will also be responsible for brief, exploratory writing assignments to try their hand at these same styles and to develop basic skills of narration and description. The second half of the semester will focus on the development and revision of student work in a supportive and inclusive workshop setting. Successful completion of the course will require curiosity, the willingness to read and write consistently, the thoughtfulness to respond to your classmates' work, and the determination to revise toward a polish, final project. Other than First Year Writing, no previous creative writing experience is required. Readings will include, but are not limited to, works by James Baldwin, Joan Didion, David Foster Wallace, Roxanne Gay, Amit Chaudhuri, Jhumpa Lahiri, Hilton Als, and Phillip Lopate.

LITERATURE & FILM

Count towards the Literary Studies and Creative Writing concentrations in the English major and towards the English minor. Pre-requisite: FYWR 1020/H

ENG 2805 Science Fiction (W-I)

Sec 331 T/R 3:00-4:15

Professor Elizabeth Stewart



Science fiction feeds intellectual, spiritual, and emotional intensities relating to time, space, the nature and fate of the universe and human life itself. For decades, if not centuries, the genre has channeled our most powerful desires and fears, enabled us to think big about the nature of life and death, cosmic selfhood and absolute novelty and difference (“There is

much that is still unknown under the sun”) and to do so in relation to increasingly more rapid evolutions in science and technology. Science and technology themselves have always held the potential to bring about both untold suffering and the sometimes benign, other times malignant, perfecting of human life—even, they claimed, everlasting life. Science Fiction has articulated particular yearnings: for what is completely Other, for access to the vastness of space and the universe, for flight into oblivion, and for radical transformation. More soberly, Science fiction has held out to us the hidden dangers science and technology pose to life as we know it unless we are also able to comprehend and guide it. SF literature and film gives us the time and space to contemplate where science and technology have brought us, where it tries to compel us, where we might direct it to go; at the same time it has released us out into spaces we can only dream of accessing.

The course will move from “hard” SF, such as that of Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke, through the religious, gnostic, and mystical SF of Stanislav Lem and Philip K. Dick; from the Cold War SF greats, such as Bradbury (“There Will Come Soft Rains”) and Walter Miller, and the Soviet Strugatsky Brothers and their post-apocalyptic SF as well as Bulychov’s multiverses, to the “speculative” and “New Wave” (experimentalist) movement (“What if...?”) of Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle* and the work of Margaret Atwood, such as *The Handmaid’s Tale*, of Harlan Ellison and James Tiptree, Jr. and several others; these will be followed by the “Cyberpunk” of the 1980s and 1990s, where high tech combines with social breakdown and decay in the works of William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, and Greg Bear, and finally the SF beginning to come out of experimental styles of women and people of color from the 1990s on, such as Octavia Butler and Samuel Delany, as well as “crossover” works like Vonnegut’s and Don DeLillo’s works. Most of the readings will be short stories. Films: *Arrival* (2016), *Children of Men* (2006), *Solaris* (1972), *Under the Skin* (2014). Requirements: seminar-style class participation, short response postings, medium-length essay, final exam.

Fulfills the Writing-Intensive requirement.

ENG 2964 Art of Film: 1968 – present
Section 341 TR 4:30 – 6:30 pm
Professor Paula Geyh

This course will introduce students to the basics of analyzing and writing about film through an exploration of American films of the past 50 years. We’ll focus primarily on the close reading of elements of mise-en-scène (everything up there on the screen)



and editing, playing particular attention to how they come together to produce meaning. We'll discuss film genres and their conventions, and several theoretical approaches to analyzing film. The course is organized so that we screen the films in class one day a week and analyze them on the other day.

Texts for the class will be Barsam & Monahan's *Looking at Movies* and Elsaesser & Hauger, *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*.

Films will include *Juno*, *The Shining*, *Grand Budapest Hotel*, *Chinatown*, *The Lego Movie*, *The Usual Suspects*, *Do the Right Thing*, *Days of Heaven*, *Annie Hall*, *I'm Not There*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*, and *Boyhood*.

Counts towards the Media Studies Minor.

ENG 3042 Milton and Religion

Sec 231 M/W 3:00-4:15

Professor David Lavinsky; Rabbi Dov Lerner (Straus Center)



This class explores the life and work of John Milton (1608-74), with special attention to *Paradise Lost*, the greatest biblical epic in English. Informed by Milton's knowledge of several languages (including Hebrew) and his study of exegetical tradition (including Midrash), *Paradise Lost* reprises the biblical account of creation and human sin on a vast imaginative scale. We will locate Milton's vivid adaptation of sacred texts and commentary at the interface of two major cultural frameworks, both crucial to the study of English literary history more generally: 1., seventeenth-century religious politics, notably the English civil war and the execution of Charles I (which Milton applauded); and, 2., efforts to fashion a literary idiom grounded in the power and poetry of biblical writing. Key topics will

include the development of Christian Hebraism (that is, the systematic study by Christians of Hebrew grammar, texts, and scholarship), the literary use of rabbinical sources, and the impact of English biblical translation in the era of print. Some consideration will also be given to the critical and philosophical questions surrounding Milton's unforgettable—some would say heroic—characterization of Satan, a rebel against the divine will; as one astute reader of *Paradise Lost* would later claim, its author was “of the devil's par-

ty without knowing it.” We will approach these concerns through secondary readings intended for a broad student audience. No experience with Milton or early modern literature is expected, and introductory tutorials will cover matters such as poetic form and meaning. This course will be taught collaboratively, under the auspices of both the English department and the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, with occasional guest lectures by affiliated humanities faculty. Requirements include short critical essays, regular postings to an online discussion forum, a collaborative final project or presentation of some kind, and at least one class trip to a New York City museum or archive to examine early editions of Milton’s work.

Cross-listed with Straus Center.

Counts as the required pre-1700 course and a 3000-level course for english majors in both concentrations.

CORES

English majors in both concentrations and English minors may count two such courses towards their requirements while also fulfilling Core requirements.

ENG 1001 Books on Books, Films on Films

Section 311 TR 1:30 – 2:45

Section 331 TR 3:00 – 4:15

Professor Paula Geyh

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 or short story different from “reading” a film? What happens when a story passes from one medium to another? By addressing these questions, this course will help students to develop a deeper understanding of how narrative literature and film work and how they’re related (or aren’t).

The course 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, Books VII and X of *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*.

Counts toward the Media Studies Minor and fulfills the INTC requirement.

ENG 1006 The Monstrous

Sec 241 M/W 4:30-5:45

Professor David Lavinsky

“A monster is a person who has stopped pretending.”

--Colson Whitehead, “A Psychotronic Childhood”

Werewolves, dragons, giants, witches, demons, lepers, anthropophagi (a race of cannibals with eyes in their chests)—the Middle Ages were awash in tales of the monstrous. In this



class, we will consider monsters and the monstrous from the perspectives afforded by history writing, travel accounts, early maps of the world, folklore, drama, and literary texts.

Though sometimes dismissed as the imaginings of a more credulous era, such material not only drew on classical authors but also continued to have wide currency in early modern England, persisting through the change in religious culture known as the Reformation. Indeed, as the word “monster” (derived from the Latin verb

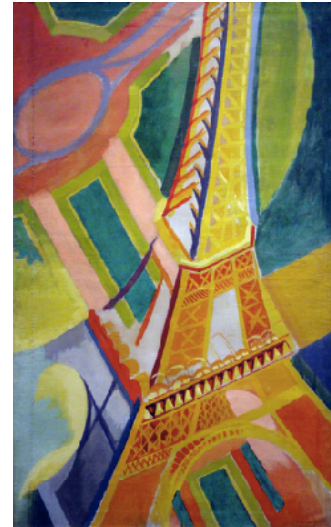
monstrare, or “to show”) suggests, stories of the monstrous reveal much about the cultures in which they circulated. Our readings will track medieval and early modern attitudes toward religious identity, birth and reproductive practices, gender, personhood, animality, and the supernatural. Throughout the term, we will make sense of these topics by

employing methods, questions, and theoretical propositions from different academic disciplines in the humanities. Requirements include short critical essays, response papers, regular postings to an online discussion forum, and a final exam.

Fulfills the CUOT requirement.

ENG 1005H Parisian Views
Sec 621 F 10:00-12:00
Professor Rachel Mesch

This course explores the ways that nineteenth-century Paris inspired artistic creation through its cultivation of a variety of new ways of *seeing*, which led in turn to new forms of entertainment. The artistic products of this rich and imaginative time were in many ways responsible for contemporary mass culture and our lingering fascination with the real. Thus, as we consider the wide variety of new desires, seductions and fascinations for which Paris itself seemed wholly responsible, we will also not fail to notice the deep and lasting impact of those practices on our current modes of entertainment and pleasure... from cinema to celebrity culture to reality TV.



We explore this fascinating history to our own cultural tastes through novels and poetry but also through the impressionist paintings that vividly documented urban change. In addition, we consider the overlapping ways through which innovations in photography, early cinema, architecture and various kinds of public exhibits (from the wax museum to the Paris morgue) addressed and channeled the feelings of excitement and anxiety around the new points of contact that the modern French city offered. Juxtaposing poems with paintings, novels with maps and photographs, we compare the different idioms through which these forms of expression attempted to respond to a shared set of questions about how to interpret the rapidly changing urban landscape. In the process, students come to understand their own city in a new way, with assignments that ask them to explore New York itself as an urban spectacle which offers, as did nineteenth-century Paris, a daily feast for the eyes.

Requirements: class participation; weekly blog posts; mid-term paper; group presentation; final paper.

Fulfills the INTC requirement.

ENG 1009 France and Its Others
Sec 231 M/W 3:00 - 4:15
Professor Rachel Mesch

While the notion of a cultural “melting pot” is central to American society, French society has been structured around a distinctly French notion of universalism: the idea that there



are core universal values that must supersede those of any minority subculture.

Thus, although Americans regularly embrace multiple identifications--as African-Americans, or Jewish Americans, for example--in France that double alliance is largely experienced as a tension.

This class traces the roots of that tension by examining ways that otherness has inspired and troubled the French imagination

through literary, historical and philosophi-

cal readings by major French writers from the 1500s to the present day. From Montaigne’s cannibals to the noble savages of Enlightenment texts, from Zola’s “J’accuse!” to the story of Babar, from the female other to the other as Jew to the other as Jewish female, we will explore the myriad ways through which France’s imagined others serve as manifestations of a cultural fascination with and anxiety about difference in its many forms. As we analyze the various intellectual conflicts that have arisen from the quest to understand what is deemed different, foreign, exotic or strange, we will also trace a struggle to define and circumscribe notions of French identity, selfhood and authority. Finally, at the semester’s end, we will use what we have synthesized from these thinkers to consider contemporary debates in French society about the place of religious and ethnic difference in the public sphere.

Fulfills the CUOT requirement.

ENG 1024 Culture of the Fin-de-siècle
Sec 341 T/R 4:30 - 5:45
Professor Jess Olson

Sigmund Freud. Gustav and Alma Mahler. Albert Einstein. Lou Andreas Salome. Arnold Schoenberg. Theodor Herzl. Oskar Kokoschka. Franz Kafka. Arthur Schnitzler.



Bertha Pappenheim. Max Nordau. Ernst Mach. Leon Trotsky. Gustav Klimt. Otto Wagner. Friedrich Nietzsche.

Travelling back in time, and finding one's self at a place like Vienna's Café Central or Prague's Café Slavia around the turn of the 20th century (the fin de siècle), there was a good chance that one of the conversations casually overheard as one enjoyed a cup of espresso or a Sachertorte would be between one, two, or more of these remarkable people. These men and women, who formed the intellectual, scientific, literary, artistic and musical vanguard of the modern age, will be the center of our study as we explore the flourishing of modern culture in central Europe between 1880 and 1914. We will approach our subjects from a variety of perspectives, including as subjects of literary interpretation, art and music history, and the history of ideas. In particular we will explore concepts that played a central role in the creation of fin de siècle culture, such as psychoanalysis, theories of degeneration and renaissance, social and political conflict, and the creation of new languages of artistic, musical and literary expression in historical context.

Fulfills the INTC requirement.

ENG 1017 Law & Literature

Sec 341 T/R 4:30 - 5:45

Professor Elizabeth Stewart

This course explores 1) Law in literature: the ways in which great literature has often helped us think about the law, and to ask, What is Justice? What is moral and what is immoral? Literature describes the ethical component in the law, that is, how people relate to each other. 2) Law as literature: jurists must think fundamentally about whether practicing law means interpreting an original mind or intention, or whether it means garnering norms from living texts, and also whether texts/laws mean different things for different communities. When we read a literary text we must ask ourselves similar questions. 3) Topic: these days we often hear the claim, "We are a country of laws," implying that there are other kinds of law that run counter to our Enlightenment notion that "no one stands above the law." We will discuss these issues in a broad range of literature and some film. Readings: Canonical works from the realms of literature and legal theory, including: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Kleist, Kafka, Camus, McEwan, Benjamin, Schmitt, Agamben. Films include *The Children Act* and *Into the Abyss*.



Fulfills the INTC requirement



**ENG 1026H Face-to-Face: Modern
Complex Identities in Film
Sec 361 T/R 6:45 - 8:00
Professor Elizabeth Stewart**

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 cultural identity. As Aristotle claimed, we learn to become ourselves by imitating what we see (on the stage) in front of us—for us, the film screen—we become ourselves by imitating our cultural ideals. This course explores the role cinematic images play in creating narratives about a multiplicity of cultural identities. Aristotle also insisted that it is the “ideal” character created on the stage who will aid in creating “ideal” citizens. In other words, Aristotle knew that the visual/verbal arts—in his case, theater, in our case film—have not only a representative function, but an ideological one as well. But cinematic images, like images in the other arts, have also held the function of “naturalizing” certain structures of oppression and domination as well as challenging them. This course will explore how American and foreign film represents various racial, class, gender, ethnicity, and national identities, and how they reproduce and challenge those representations at the same time. 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.

Films: *Zelig* (Allen 1983), *Birth of a Nation* (Griffiths 1915), *Triumph of the Will* (Riefenstahl 1936), *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Weir, 1975), *Fight Club* (Fincher, 1999), *Moonlight* (Jenkins, 2016), *Rear Window* (Hitchcock, 1954), *Force Majeure* (Östlund, 2014), *Cache* (Haneke 2005), *Beasts of No Nation* (Fukunaga 2015), *The Pervert’s Guide to Ideology* (Slavoj Žižek/Sophie Fiennes 2012).

Fulfills the COWC requirement and counts toward Media Studies Minor.

<http://www.yu.edu/yeshiva-college/ug/english/> to find out more about the YC English Department and its minor—and for links to the Writing minor and the Media Studies minor webpages.

