

YC Department of English Fall 2018 Course Offerings

If you're wondering which Fall 2018 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 new Media Studies minor, contact Dr. Rachel Mesch mesch@yu.edu. They would be happy to talk with you.

Required for English Major

SENIOR COLLOQUIUM—DR. LAUREN FITZGERALD

ENG 4001 Section 481 W 8:15—9:55

For English majors with senior standing. Both semesters of this course are required for the completion of the English major and may be taken out of sequence.

In this first half of our two-semester senior “capstone” course, students lead seminar-style discussions about a set of texts that English Department faculty have chosen together (TBA), culminating in individual Senior Oral Exams in which students present what they have learned over the year. Texts for 2018-19 will be Sir Thomas Malory, excerpts from *Le Morte d'Arthur*; Milton, excerpts from *Paradise Lost*; Franklin, *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*; Coleridge, selected poetry and prose; Wharton, *The House of Mirth*; Lange, *M*; Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*; Wilson, *The Piano Lesson*; and Bechdel, *Fun Home*.

Advanced Writing

Counts towards the Writing minor. English majors take at least one and as many as three advanced writing courses. Students may count one Advanced Writing course towards the English Minor. Pre-requisite: FYWR (H).

SCRIPTWRITING—DR. BARBARA BLATNER

ENG 1725 Section 361 T 6:45-9:15

Also counts towards the new Media Studies minor.

Acting out our stories before an audience is an ancient ritual that celebrates and illuminates human experience. Scriptwriters in any media have the unique thrill of



hearing their words spoken and their stories enacted. In this course, which welcomes both aspiring and experienced scriptwriters, you will write short plays and scenes for the stage. Each week, you will be assigned to write new work and to read plays by Churchill, Cathy Chiesa, Wilson, Baker, Pinter,

Shakespeare and others. Class time will consist of exercises on dialogue, conflict, story arc, setting and character, improvisations that explore plot shape; discussion of readings, and feedback sessions where you will cast and direct your scenes. We will look at how a play travels from page to stage to screen, how collaboration functions at all levels of production. We will attend a professional play reading and at least one fully produced show. The semester will conclude with a public presentation of work. Class participation, a polished ten-minute script, and a portfolio of revised work will constitute a final grade. This course will sharpen your observational, storytelling and collaborative skills and thereby grow your writing in any genre, as well as enhance your job candidacy in multiple fields, including, of course, the theater and performing arts, film, television, advertising and promotional industries.

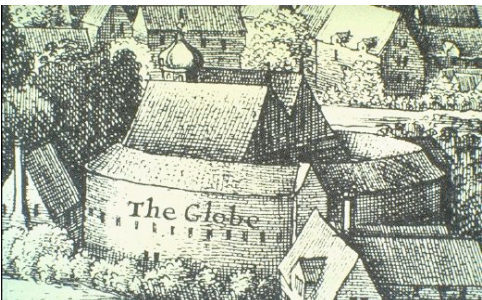
Literature

GLOBAL SHAKESPEARE—DR. DAVID LAVINSKY

ENG 2033 Section 241 M/W 4:30-5:45

Counts as the required pre-1700 course for English majors.

Bohemia, Athens, Troy, Egypt, Venice, Scotland, Cyprus, the Bermudas: Shakespeare's plays abound in different settings, both familiar and determinedly "foreign." In this class, we will explore how such settings—as dramatic landscapes, as regions of cultural contact, as contested or colonized national spaces—inform our sense for the imaginative resources of the early modern stage (the name of playhouse for which Shakespeare wrote was, fittingly, the Globe) and illuminate England's place within a shifting European world-system. A major concern of the course will be European colonialism in the so-



called "age of discovery," and the discourses of national identity and cultural otherness that both sustained and subverted England's efforts to establish new markets and colonies abroad.

Requirements: Regular postings to a discussion forum, collaborative performances of scenes from our plays, two critical essays, a final project.

VICTORIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES: DARWIN, TENNYSON, MILL, MARX, ENGELS, AND DICKENS—DR. WILL LEE

ENG 3055 (W-I) Section 341 T/R 4:30-5:45

Counts as one of the two 3000-level courses for English majors. Also fulfills the YC Writing-Intensive requirement.

Nineteenth-century British texts beg for interdisciplinary approaches, best represented by the movements in critical theory called New Historicism and Cultural Studies, which updated and transformed the Victorian Studies movement. Novels like Dickens' *Hard Times* focused explicitly on societal crises, while poets like Tennyson took on social and moral responsibilities, which many Victorians came to feel the Romantics had shirked. Darwin, geology, and contemporary scholarship led many people to question their religious beliefs and their views about human nature. Political developments led them to question their beliefs about men, women, and representative government. In what ways did each text describe or replicate social fault lines? Did the authors' ideas about how to palliate or eliminate social problems go far enough, or could they have gone further?



Readings will cluster around radical cultural developments such as industrialization, urbanization, democratization, and evolution, as unprecedented circumstances propelled writers toward new styles, forms, and positions. Through this course, you will learn to read texts closely, to interpret literature as part of a cultural and social fabric, to imagine (provisionally) what various works meant to the authors'

contemporaries, and to realize why modern and Victorian interpretations of the same work inevitably diverge. Since many if not most of our own social problems began to take on their modern forms during the Victorian era, students should see frequent analogies with our own cultural and subcultural positions.

Readings: Houghton, Williams, Darwin, Tennyson, Mill, Marx, Engels, and Dickens

This elective course welcomes students majoring in the any of the humanities and social sciences.

Requirements: participation; two 4-6 page close cultural readings; focused revision; brief presentation; 12 page research paper; take-home final

20TH CENTURY AMERICAN NOVEL—DR. PAULA GEYH

ENG 2067 Section 331 T/R 3:00-4:15

Fulfills the non-British literature requirement for English majors.

This course provides a broad historical survey of the American novel throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries. We will study these works within their historical contexts and in relation to the ideas, themes, and stylistic conventions of the intellectual and aesthetic movements of naturalism, modernism, and postmodernism. As part of our explorations of those movements, we'll be looking at the work of key artists (Sargent, Riis, Shinn, Sloan, Duchamp, Stella, Motley, Lawrence, Hopper, Weegee, Rauschenberg, Warhol, Paik, Holzer, Whiteread) in conjunction with the novels. The novels will include Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*, Hammett's *Red Harvest*, Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, DeLillo's *White Noise*, Robinson's *Housekeeping*, and Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*.



Requirements: Two papers and two exams.

GRAPHIC NOVELS AND ANIMATIONS—DR. ELIZABETH STEWART

ENG 2963 (W-I) Section 361 M 6:45-9:15

Fulfills the non-British literature requirement for English majors. Also counts towards the new Media Studies minor and fulfills the YC Writing-Intensive requirement.

Theme, idea, form, aesthetics, and craft in the evolving genres of the graphic novel and animation. How do and should we read, watch, and analyze comics and animations, and how do they approach and make contact with us? We will try to understand the nature of their expressive potential and also how they democratize art production by way of the technologies that bring them to life.

Comics, graphic novels, and animations can be ordered according to traditional sub-genres such as comedy, tragicomedy, family memoir, historical fiction, etc., so we will discuss how this new medium innovates traditional categories. Among a number of other concerns, we will deal with the question of why artists in the 20th and 21st centuries have so often turned to these media when narrating stories about the Holocaust, nuclear destruction, and human rights crises, and, on a smaller scales, stories about individual loss, emancipation, and growth. We will also try to understand the cultural politics of the super-hero phenomenon as well as the insistent tension between the utopian and the dystopian impulses in graphic novels and animations.



Texts/Animations include:

Graphic novels: Art Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale*; Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*; Howard Cruse, *Stuck Rubber Baby*; Mat Johnson, *Icognegro*; Alan Moore, David Gibbons, *Watchmen*; Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde*

Animations: Ari Folman, *Waltz With Bashir*; Stéphane Aubier and Vincent Patar, *A Town Called Panic*; Alan Moore, Dave Gibbons: *Watchmen* [live action]; Robert Zemeckis, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* [live action-animation blend]; Isao Takahata, *Grave of the Fireflies*; Richard Linklater, *Waking Life*

Requirements:

Seminar-style class participation, as this is a writing-intensive course; there will be class time devoted to discussions of writing issues, some writing sessions, some editing sessions, ungraded response papers, two short essays, and a term paper.

Cross-listed Core Courses

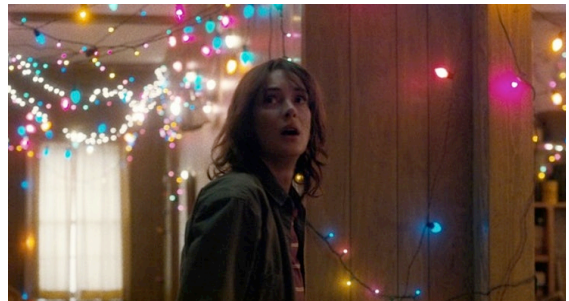
English majors and minors may count two such courses towards their requirements

STRANGER THINGS: THE ART OF THE UNREAL—DR. DAVID LAVINSKY
ENG 1034 Section 231 M/W 3:00-4:15

Reality is not always probable, or likely.

--Jorge Luis Borges

In this class, we will study how literature and other media can usher us into a claimed actuality very different from the external world as it is collectively perceived or experienced. At least initially, then, the issues we confront will be epistemological in nature—that is, they will concern how art challenges or otherwise defines the limits of what we can know and understand; and yet we will also try to push beyond familiar theoretical frameworks (e.g., Plato, Freud) by examining modern philosophical accounts of literary aesthetics. This work will guide us through a broad range of textual forms and discourses, from classical epic to contemporary film and television, all variously marked by the ramifying proximity of the alien and the familiar, by moments of estrangement and epistemic disruption. To reference the shadowy parallel dimension from the popular television miniseries “Stranger Things,” think of the course as a class trip to the Upside Down and



its analogous settings, as afforded by engagements with classical poetry; medieval romance; Arthurian legend; fantasy literature; mystical and visionary writing; magical realism; abstract expressionism; and, by the end of the term, science fiction.

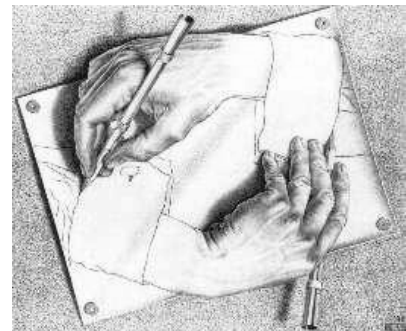
We will read/view selections from Virgil, Dante, Malory, Kempe, Tolkien, Hoffman, Lovecraft, Rushdie, Pynchon, Borges, Kubrick, Dalí, Asimov, and the Wachowskis, supplementing such material with critical and theoretical readings intended for a general student audience. Requirements will include regular responses to an on-line discussion forum, a critical essay, and at least one collaborative multimedia project

BOOKS ON BOOKS, FILMS ON FILMS—DR. PAULA GEYH

ENG 1001H Section 361 T/R 6:45-8:00

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*

LAW & LITERATURE—DR. ELIZABETH STEWART

ENG 1017 Section 241 M/W 4:30-5:45

Human beings live in the realms of *physis* (nature) as well as *nomos* (convention). Laws and the legal system constitute *nomos*, and language, written and oral, underlies them; language and *nomos* modify and “normalize” *physis*.

Thus we all have intimate contact with the world of language and law from the very beginning of our lives. Writing and law have walked hand-in-hand since the very beginnings of human history. Legal opinions, like novels and films, tell stories, stories about the law and the people, places, and things governed and affected by it; the law, like literature, is dependent on narratives as the carriers of the ethics of collective living. It follows then that all who practice law must necessarily also be readers, and thus interpreters, not only of words and sentences but also of narratives.

Arguably, law is the area that most immediately demonstrates the practical value of reading and interpreting the written word. And literary narratives, like legal narratives, are the trajectories plotted upon the material reality not only realistically, to describe our reality, but also normatively, to “normalize” it, and perhaps provocatively, in order to change it.



This class 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 how recent shows like *The Sopranos*, *Breaking Bad*, and *The Wire* deal with this issue. We will also examine representations of legal and political crisis and exception in further films and literature.

Readings: Canonical works from the realms of literature and legal theory: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Melville, Kafka, Camus, McEwan, Coetzee, Benjamin, Schmitt, Agamben. A selection of TV series, films.

Requirements: 1 3-page paper; short readings responses; 1 longer term paper.

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 Writing minor—and for links to the Writing minor and new Media Studies minors’ webpages.

