

# YC Department of English

## Spring 2019 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.

If you're wondering which Spring 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, Professor Lauren Fitzgerald [fitzger@yu.edu](mailto:fitzger@yu.edu). For information about the Media Studies minor, contact Professor Rachel Mesch [mesch@yu.edu](mailto:mesch@yu.edu). They would be happy to meet with you.

### Required for English Majors

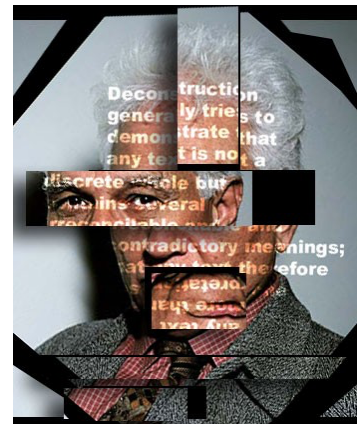
#### INTERPRETING TEXTS—PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART

ENG 2010 SECTION 261 M/W 6:45–8:00PM

*For new English majors and minors and Media Studies minors. May be taken at the same time as FYWR. Fulfills the YC Writing-Intensive requirement.*

This writing-intensive “gateway” course for English majors and minors, Media Studies minors, and other serious students of literature and film is an introduction to the practices of reading and interpreting literature. The course explores both theories and practices of reading, writing, and interpreting texts (of different sorts). The course also introduces students to contemporary schools of literary criticism. We will pair our various readings and viewings of texts with theoretical/philosophical texts. We will discover how various kinds of texts mutually enrich one another. The course will begin with seminal texts in the classical western literary and philosophical traditions (Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle). These foundational texts establish the frame of reference for many of the philosophical, ethical, political, psychological, and social concerns that still inform the study of art and literature today: studies in formalism and structuralism, in psychoanalysis, in Marxist and gender studies, in postmodernism and poststructuralism, and in post-colonialism.

The course also functions as an introduction to the Humanities in general; therefore it welcomes students from all majors and all academic backgrounds. As an introduction to the Humanities, the course materials include plays, poems, novels, films, other visual arts, and music.



## SENIOR ORALS—PROFESSOR LAUREN FITZGERALD

ENG 4002 Section 481 W 8:15—9:55

*For English majors with senior standing who completed ENG 4001 in Fall 2018.*

In this second 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, culminating in individual Senior Oral Exams in which students present what they have learned over the year. In Spring 2019, we’ll discuss Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth*, John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, August Wilson’s *The Piano Lesson*, and Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Currently, both semesters of this course are required for the completion of the English major.



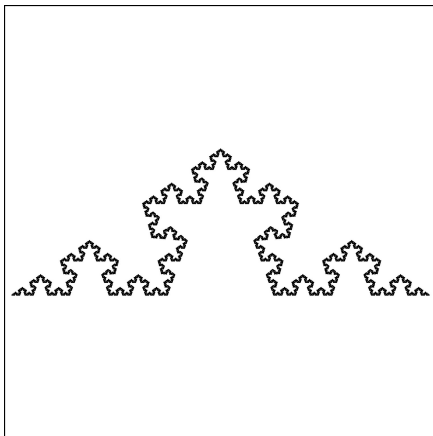
## Advanced Writing

*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 1010 or 1020.*

## WRITING DIGITAL POETRY—PROFESSOR BRIAN TRIMBOLI

ENG 1845 Section 241 MW 4:30—5:45

*Pre-requisite: FYWR. 1010 (H) or FYWR 1020 (H). Counts toward Media Studies minor.*



Writing Digital Poetry is for writers from all backgrounds who are interested in language, media, and/or art, as well as their intersections within poetry. This course might be for you if you’re interested in writing for the internet, or if you’ve ever thought about ways of bolstering the message of your texts with music, images, or videos. This course will provide the space to develop your own poetic voice, as well as how you might explore that voice within different mediums, and might be especially interesting for those studying

Computer Science, Marketing, Media Studies, Philosophy, as well as English or Writing Studies.

## WRITING FICTION—PROFESSOR DAVID PURETZ

ENG 1822 Section 361 T 6:45—9:15

*Prerequisite: FYWR 1010 (H) or FYWR 1020 (H)*



Our goal as fiction writers, broadly stated, may be to entertain or amuse readers, to move or persuade them, to get them to look more closely at or think more deeply about something that’s worth their attention—or some combination(s) of these. Ultimately the goal of fiction, as David Foster Wallace has said, is to show what it is to be a human being. In this Writing Fiction course we’ll be reading and writing prose that work toward these ends. This course is for both curious novices as well as for those with some experience writing stories who want to expand their knowledge and range. We will spend the first half of the semester discussing various works of fiction in long and short form. We will read for content, but just as importantly, we will study the voice, point of view, structure, and use of language. We will practice close reading techniques with our own writing in mind. Every week, we will be writing creatively in response to these works, using them as models and as inspiration for our own writing. The second half of the semester is dedicated to the writing workshop. You will be responsible for submitting one substantial story or a series of shorter stories for workshop critique and for extensive revision. Students who successfully complete this course will develop a working knowledge of a range of fiction writing styles, expand their ability to give detailed constructive feedback, develop a more sophisticated and unique writing style through practice and observation, and learn to advance their creative work through the process of revision. Some of the authors whose works we’ll be reading include: Paul Auster, Russell Banks, Ann Beattie, Ambrose Bierce, Raymond Carver, John Cheever, J.M. Coetzee, Joseph Conrad, Lydia Davis, Deborah Eisenberg, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ernest Hemingway, Shirley Jackson, Jack London, Bernard Malamud, Yukio Mishima, Tim O’Brien, George Saunders, and Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

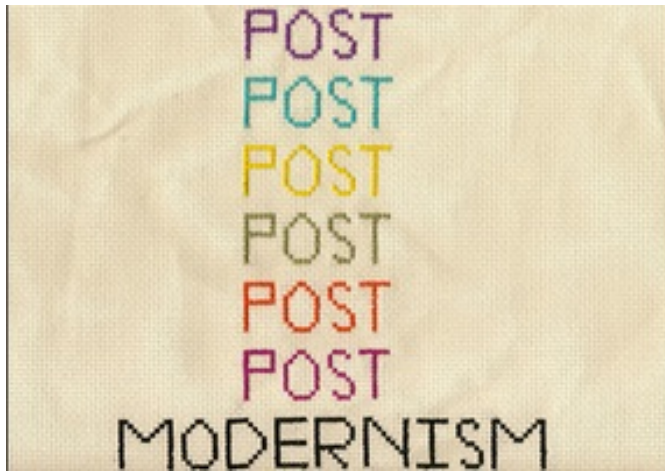
## Literature

*Pre-requisite: FYWR 1010 or 1020.*

## POSTMODERN FICTION: MEMORY, HISTORY, AND THE NOVEL—PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH

ENG 2083 SECTION 341 T/TH 4:30-5:45

In the age of competing “histories from below” and from the margins, of docudramas and historical metafiction, and of technologies that render historical evidence increasingly falsifiable and suspect, the traditional idea of history as an objective chronicle of the past has been challenged as never before. In this course, we’ll examine how postmodern novelists have participated in and



responded to these challenges through their depictions of World War II and 9/11. Novels we'll be reading may include Sebald's *Austerlitz*, Spiegelman's *Maus*, Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*, Zusak's *The Book Thief*, Colon's *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation*, Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, and DeLillo's *Falling Man*. We'll also be reading McCloud's *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* and essays by Lyotard, Hutcheon, Williams, and Freud.

**Requirements:** Three papers and an exam.

## **GENDER & LITERATURE—PROFESSOR RACHEL MESCH**

ENG 3065 Section 231 MW 3–4:15. *Counts as one of the two 3000-level courses for English majors.*

In this seminar, you will learn critical tools for analyzing gender in literature. Our readings of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century works from both the French (in translation!) and Anglo (British & American) traditions by both male and female authors will be coupled with theoretical texts from various domains of feminist literary criticism and gender and masculinity studies. Among the questions that we will ask: What does it mean to write as a woman or a man and why should that matter? What does it mean to “read for gender” and what is accomplished through this practice? How are masculinity and femininity constructed in literature? What role have history and culture played in constructing gender and determining what kinds of stories can be told? Does our own gender identity affect the way that we read? We will explore these questions in open conversation and dialogue. Most importantly, there will be ample opportunity to explore multiple points of view as you each sharpen your own critical perspective through a new set of analytical tools.



## Cross-listed Cores

English majors and minors may count two such courses towards their requirements. Pre-requirement: FYWR 1010 or 1020.



### **BOOKS ON BOOKS/FILMS ON FILMS — PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH**

ENG 1001/INTC 1001 Section 361 T/R 6:45 — 8:00. Counts toward Media Studies minor.

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? 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).

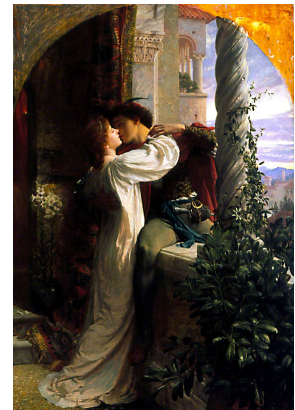
The course will begin by considering the relationship between truth and fiction, and some ideas about what “art” is and does. We’ll examine the roles of readers, film viewers, authors, directors, and critics. We’ll explore the forms and structures of literary and cinematic storytelling, and how these 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 Zusak’s *The Book Thief* and Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler*. Films will include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Sherlock Jr.*, *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*.

### **SHAKESPEARE & THE ARTS—PROFESSOR WILL LEE**

ENG 1003/INTC 1003 Section 331 T/TH 3:00—4:15

Shakespeare integrated many genres, subgenres, and forms of art into his plays: songs, poems, dances, and, in *The Tempest* at the very end of his career, instrumental music and a simple masque. Ever since the Renaissance, Shakespeare has continued to inspire artists of all kinds: painters, sculptors, choreographers, composers, poets, novelists, and filmmakers as well as his fellow playwrights. Shakespeare therefore offers today’s students an excellent opportunity to learn about a broad range of the creative arts during the English Renaissance and beyond. Drawing to a greater or lesser degree on close readings, textual studies, genre studies, genre theory, media studies, film studies, art criticism, art history, literary studies, Shakespeare studies, influence studies, historical studies, and cultural studies, we will focus on how each form of art, each medium,



each genre, and each artwork creates meanings.

Requirements: attendance, participation, three 2-page exercises, one 8-10 page essay, and a take-home final.



**LAW & LITERATURE—PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART**  
ENG 1017/INTC 1017 Section 241 M/W 4:30—5:45

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, Melville, Kleist, Kafka, Camus, McEwan, Benjamin, Schmitt, Agamben. Selections from TV series, films, including *M. Butterfly* (1993 Hwang/Cronenberg), *Philadelphia* (1993 Demme).

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 <https://www.yu.edu/yeshiva-college/ug/media-studies-minor> for information about the Media Studies minor.