

Course Descriptions

Ordinarily classes in the School of Letters meet for 2,100 minutes over the course of a six-week semester. Many literature classes will meet five days a week for 75 minutes per class session. Creative writing workshops, and some literature seminars, usually meet only two days a week, for two to three hours per session. These courses carry three hours credit each. Some classes may meet for fewer hours and carry less credit, if approved by the director and the School of Letters committee.

ENGL 500 Dante (3)

Close study of the three books of *The Divine Comedy*, with attention as well to Dante's literary ancestors including Virgil.

ENGL 501 Classical Literature in Translation (3)

Close examination of major texts of both Greek and Latin literature, read in modern English translations.

ENGL 502 Bible as Literature (3)

Introduction to both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, treating the texts, as much as possible, as literary documents open to multiple interpretations. Emphasis is on close reading of important episodes, in several translations. Supplemental readings will include representations of the Bible by major authors and artists.

ENGL 503 Literary Criticism (3)

This course considers some of the great questions about the nature and value of literature addressed by literary theorists from Plato to the present, engaging such critical approaches as the New Criticism, reader response theory, Marxist criticism, feminist criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, structuralism, deconstruction, new historicism, and cultural studies.

ENGL 504 Film Studies: Film as a Narrative Art (3)

While closely examining several classic films, the course introduces students to the major components of film style, essential techniques of film analysis and the critical vocabulary required for it, and some film theory.

ENGL 505 Classics of Latin American Literature (3)

Study of the literature of Spanish America, with special emphasis on major prose writers of the twentieth century, including Borges, Vargas Llosa, and Garcia-Marquez.

ENGL 507 The Craft of Poetry (3)

Through close analysis of the poems of various modern and contemporary masters, we will consider the implications of verse as an imitation of voice, and consider how the poet's voice is shaped by choices made in terms of imagery, themes, form and technique.

ENGL 508 Poetry, Lyrical and Dramatic (3)

A broad survey of poetry in English from the Renaissance to the present, with a special focus on two poetic modes, lyrical and dramatic. Reading include one or two plays of Shakespeare (with a focus on the use of verse therein) and lyric poems by Sidney, Jonson, Marvell, Wordsworth, Keats, Dickinson, Whitman, Yeats, Frost, Bishop, Plath, Strand, and Heaney, among others.

ENGL 509 Workshop in Poetry Writing (3)

Discussions center on students' poems. Selected readings are assigned to focus on technical problems of craftsmanship and style.

ENGL 510 Workshop in Fiction Writing (3)

Discussions center on students' fiction. Selected readings are assigned to focus on technical problems of craftsmanship and style.

ENGL 512 Workshop in Creative Non-Fiction (3)

Discussions center on students' prose. Selected readings are assigned to focus on technical problems of craftsmanship and style.

ENGL 513 Writing Pedagogy (3)

Focuses on imaginative and innovative ways to teach writing. It offers a variety of creative writing techniques and exercises which participants can incorporate into their own English courses as well as into other courses across the curriculum. The course will be useful to participants' own creative ventures as well as their teaching.

ENGL 514 Workshop in Playwriting/Screenwriting (3)

Discussions center on students' plays or screenplays. Selected readings are assigned to focus on technical problems of craftsmanship and style.

ENGL 530 Tennessee Williams (3)

A close study of Tennessee Williams's major dramatic works, as well as his poetry and fiction and the films based on the major plays. The course also looks at the biographical genesis of Williams's plays and will focus on the development of and interplay between his concepts of gender, sexuality, and religion. An examination of the critical responses to the plays and films is used to gauge shifts in the American social and cultural landscape.

ENGL 544 Independent Study (3)

An individualized course designed to meet the curricular needs and interests of a particular student. May be taken only by special arrangement with the proposed instructor, and with permission of the School of Letters Director. Repeatable for credit.

ENGL 552 Chaucer (3)

A close study of all of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, with special emphasis on Chaucer's language (including the pleasures of reading his poetry aloud in Middle English) and on the critical reception of his work up to the present day.

ENGL 553 The Romance of Arthur (3)

A study of the literature surrounding the figure of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, from its origins in the early Middle Ages to the present. Readings include *The Knight of the Cart* by Chrétien de Troyes, the Middle English verse romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, and Bernard Malamud's baseball novel, *The Natural*. We will also consider offshoots of Arthurian legend in the visual arts, opera, and such films as *Excalibur*, *The Fisher King*, and *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. The final assignment for the course may be either a term paper or a creative project.

ENGL 555 Spenser (3)

Close study of Edmund Spenser's major poem, *The Faerie Queene*, with some attention to such lesser works as *The Shepherd's Calendar* and the *Amoretti*.

ENGL 557 Shakespeare (3)

Advanced study of major plays and lyric poems of William Shakespeare, and of major critical traditions regarding Shakespeare's work.

ENGL 560 Seventeenth Century English Poetry (3)

A study of major English poetry of the seventeenth century, from the Metaphysicals to Milton. Authors covered include George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, and several Cavalier poets, including Robert Herrick and Richard Lovelace.

ENGL 562 Milton (3)

A study of Milton's poetry and prose considered in relation to the political, ecclesiastical, intellectual and literary life of seventeenth-century England. Primary attention is to *Paradise Lost*.

ENGL 563 Hebraism and Hellenism (3)

This course examines the Greek and Biblical traditions inherited by English culture and follows the transformations, adaptations, subversions, and consumptions of these texts and influence. Reading includes passages from the Old and New Testaments, the Homeric epics, and selections from such English writers as Milton, Pope, Fielding, and Byron.

ENGL 566 Dr. Johnson and the Poets (3)

Close study of several major English poets (Shakespeare, Donne, Cowley, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Gray) through the lens provided by the great critic Samuel Johnson, who wrote about them all. The course also looks ahead to such modern writers as Robert Lowell and Samuel Beckett, who read Johnson as a model and inspiration.

ENGL 567 The Eighteenth-Century English Novel (3)

Study of the development of the English novel during the "long" 18th century, including works by such writers as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Lawrence Sterne, and Jane Austen.

ENGL 570 British Romanticism (3)

Study of major literary works and theories of the Romantic period in Britain, including poetry by Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats.

ENGL 572 Special Topics in British Literature (3)

Though its content varies from semester to semester, this class always focuses on a special topic in British literature not fully covered in existing courses. Examples might include courses on a single author, a literary movement or tradition, a genre, or a theme. May be repeated when topic differs.

ENGL 574 The Nineteenth-Century English Novel (3)

This course traces the history of the classic nineteenth-century novel. Authors include Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott, George Eliot, Charles Dickens, and Thomas Hardy. With supplementary readings to be drawn from literary theory and recent criticism, the course analyzes such topics as fictional character, prose style, and narration, as well as issues of material culture and philosophy.

ENGL 575 The Expatriate Experience in American Literature (3)

A course focused on the American experience of Europe. Reading include major texts by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, Edith Wharton, Henry Adams, Ernest Hemingway, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Mina Loy, and Gertrude Stein.

ENGL 577 The American Renaissance (3)

Studies in the poetry, prose and nonfiction of the remarkable period from 1836 to 1865, when such writers as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Walt Whitman revolutionized American writing.

ENGL 579 The American Novel (3)

A study of the development of the American novel during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Authors treated, and major emphases, will vary from year to year but may include Mark Twain, Henry James, Edith Wharton, William Faulkner, and Toni Morrison.

ENGL 581 Modern British Poetry (3)

Examination of the modern period in British poetry, including close study of Hardy, Hopkins, Yeats, Lawrence, Auden and others.

ENGL 585 Literary Humor (3)

Despite E.B. White's warning that analyzing humor is like dissecting a frog ("it tends to kill the frog"), this course examines the serious ends of funny fiction by modern British and American writers, working toward an understanding how humor functions in literature and culture. Reading will include novels by Stella Gibbons, Evelyn Waugh, Kingsley Amis, Richard Russo, Zadie Smith, and others.

ENGL 586 Joyce (3)

The course examines major works of James Joyce, including his short-fiction experiments in *Dubliners* and the künstlerroman of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, but dwelling primarily on *Ulysses*, his vastly ambitious comic novel, testing the writer's claim that it would "keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant."

ENGL 588 The Classic Russian Novel (3)

Study of the Russian novel from the early nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, with special attention to the intersection of Russian history and literature. Novels by Pushkin, Lermontov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Pasternak feature as the center of the course; topics of particular interest will include the superfluous man and Russian Byronic hero, Russian Romanticism, representations of St. Petersburg, Russian intellectual history, and problems of literary translation.

ENGL 589 Modern American Fiction (3)

Between 1900-1950, literary authors avidly experimented with new forms and philosophies as they depicted rapid changes in sexual, racial, social, and political identity in the US. After defining the relevance of movements such as regionalism, realism, and modernism, this course addresses the historical and social effects of two world wars, immigration, and urbanization. Authors include Henry James, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, Richard Wright, and Patricia Highsmith. Short readings may be added by Gertrude Stein, Eudora Welty, John Dos Passos, James Baldwin, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

ENGL 590 Modern American Poetry (3)

Study of major American poets from the first half of the twentieth century, including Frost, Eliot, Pound, Stevens and others.

ENGL 591 American Poetry and the Environment (3)

Starting from topics raised in Mr. Fletcher's book *A New Theory for American Poetry*, the course examines the development, starting with Walt Whitman, of what might be called "environment poems," poems that are themselves environments. Other poets considered may include Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Bishop, Laura Riding, Hart Crane, James Agee, and May Swenson.

ENGL 592 The Contemporary Short Story (3)

Among the considerations of this discussion-oriented class will be strengths and weaknesses of stories, collections, and authors of the recent past. Along with speculating about what contemporary fiction can tell us about contemporary culture, we will address specific curriculum issues as they apply to the contemporary short story and the general topic of literary evaluation. Authors discussed include George Saunders, Edward P. Jones, Jamie Quatro, and Rebecca Lee.

ENGL 593 Faulkner (3)

Study of the celebrated novels of Faulkner's major phase--including *Sanctuary*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *Absalom, Absalom!*--as well as the author's significant but often overlooked work in poetry and short fiction.

ENGL 594 Literature of the American South (3)

Advanced study of the literary tradition of the U.S. South, with emphasis on such major writers as Mark Twain, Charles Chesnutt, William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Robert Penn Warren and others of the Agrarian circle, Zora Neale Hurston, and Flannery O'Connor. Attention also to antebellum and contemporary southern writing, and to writers associated with Sewanee.

ENGL 595 African-American Literature (3)

Advanced study of the major traditions of African-American writing from the nineteenth century to the present, including Frederick Douglass, Linda Brent, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Ernest Gaines, Toni Morrison, and Rita Dove.

ENGL 596 American Environmental Literature and Ecocriticism (3)

Exploration of the "green theme" and the emerging cross-disciplinary character of "ecocriticism" as reflected in writings selected from the full span of American cultural history. Readings from diverse genre include both traditional literary texts and seminal nonfiction by figures such as William Bartram, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Annie Dillard, Barry Lopez, and Wendell Berry.

ENGL 597 Contemporary American Poetry (3)

Study of American poetry since World War II, from the generation of Theodore Roethke and Elizabeth Bishop to contemporaries like Robert Pinsky and Susan Stewart, with a special emphasis on the relationship between these poets and the high moderns who preceded them.

ENGL 598 Forms of Fiction (3)

How does fiction "work"? This course attempts to answer that question with close study of stories, novellas, and novels with a special emphasis on issues of form and technique.

ENGL 599 Thesis (3 or 6)