

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS ENGLISH DEPARTMENT: Spring 2020

NOTE: If you have any questions about how a course ‘counts’ in the major, please see your English Major Faculty Advisor. If you do not have a Faculty Advisor, please contact Prof. Linda Shires shires@yu.edu in 2019 and Prof. Matt Miller matt.w.miller@gmail.com in 2020. Prof. O’Malley is on Research Leave for Spring. Although Avital Goldschmidt is not teaching a course this term she IS mentoring senior exit projects in Journalism.

Media Exit Project: Enroll in English 4002 with the name of your Track Co-ordinator: Mintz, Brown, or Goldschmidt. **CW Portfolio:** You may complete this requirement in ENGLISH 1900 with Prof. Peters. If you are graduating this spring or next fall and have not done the exit project, you should enroll in this course in spring to complete it.

MEDIA AND CREATIVE WRITING COURSES

ENGL 1503 Columns and Editorials

Tues. 5:30-8:00

Prof. Laura Adkins

In this advanced writing seminar, students will learn the basics of writing a standard 800-word opinion piece in the digital age and understand how this writing style fits into the modern journalistic landscape. Together, we will study opinion pieces, news coverage, magazine columns and selected books and essays on the craft of writing. We will rely on the Socratic method and ample practice writing assignments to challenge our underlying assumptions about how opinions are formed, argued and changed. By the end of this course, students will be able to confidently pitch, write and publish an opinion piece in a traditional media outlet.

Recommended Elective for Journalism track; Elective for other Media tracks and for Creative Writing; counts towards Writing minor. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H

ENGL 1600 Advertising Copywriting/xlist with Syms MAR 3323 Creative Advertising

Tuesday, 5:30-8:00

Prof. Erik Mintz

Good advertising doesn’t have to be an oxymoron. In this course we’ll examine what it takes to make an ad that’s persuasive. One that entertains or makes us laugh, cry, think or change our minds while simultaneously accomplishing the goal of selling a product, service or just getting us to nod our heads in agreement. By studying the masters who’ve done and still do exceptional advertising we’ll begin to understand what good advertising is all about. Through weekly course assignments and teacher and student critique we’ll develop the skills to write better print, TV, radio, and Internet advertising.

Required for Advertising Track; Elective for other media tracks. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or FHS.

ENGL 1651 Developing Effective Messages
Mon. 5:00-7:30

Prof. Deb Brown

Do you ever wonder why some brands' messages resonate with you while others don't make any impact? Developing effective messages that break through the clutter and get your attention is a key component of public relations. The course will include individual papers, workshops, and a team project that focus on developing effective messages and influencing audiences. For the project, you will develop and launch a new product in a crowded marketplace. You will learn how to create compelling messages for your new product and each team will present to a panel of judges who are professionals in the industry. Your final project can be used as a portfolio piece for internship or job interviews!

Required for the PR track; elective for other Media Studies tracks. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H

ENGL 1727 Topics in Communications: Business Writing
T/Th 9-10:15

Prof. Lynda Johnson

Business communications in the digital age is constantly evolving. You will need the skills to navigate professionally. Writing and communicating clearly will help you succeed in today's fast-paced, competitive and highly connected digital environment. Our digital world is connected globally with unmatched mobility that keeps business individuals discussing business anytime anywhere in the world. In this course you will learn how today's business communicators interact using multiple electronic devices and access information stored in remote locations to both work effectively and communicate quickly and professionally. You will learn all practical business writing skills through assignments and presentations. The focus is on both written and oral communication skills because job candidates with exceptional communication skills immediately stand out.

This course is highly recommended for students going into business or media, it is an elective for all Media Studies tracks and counts towards the Writing Minor. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H

ENGL 1810 Writing for Television
Wednesday 5:30-8:00

Prof. Erik Mintz

Each week, mostly on that other sunnier coast, writers gather and get paid to trade jokes and tell stories (on sitcoms) and introduce exciting plot twists and tension (on one-hour dramas) all in the pursuit of bringing entertainment to TV audiences. Each week, we'll try and simulate that process in class. As a beginning TV writer you'll learn about the craft through analysis of existing shows and by writing an episode of your own. As the script emerges from premise, to story beats, to a fully-realized episode, students will present the work in progress and will critique your fellow would-be TV writers in class as you learn to defend and improve your work.

This course is an elective for the Media Studies tracks and an elective cross-list for Creative Writing. Counts towards Writing Minor. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or FHS.

ENGL 1900 Advanced Creative Writing
T/Th 3:15-4:30

Prof. Ann Peters

This course is an advanced course for those who have taken an introductory creative writing class and want to continue to improve their skills in writing and gain a better sense of the unique qualities of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. The course is designed not only to help you improve your writing, but also to help you talk more confidently and constructively about your own and others' writing. You'll leave the course having developed a regular writing practice. Requirements for the course include a daily writing journal, weekly responses to writing prompts, participation in six peer workshops, and regular meetings with the professor. Over the course of the semester, you will produce new work and revise work from previous creative writing courses with the goal of completing a thirty-page portfolio of polished work by the end of the semester. The final portfolio can include work from any genre and counts for 40% of the grade. Note: for those with an English major concentration in Creative Writing, the portfolio is a requirement for graduation.

This course is required for CW track majors. Pre-requisite: English 1800 or another CW or CW x-list course. It counts towards the Writing Minor. Note that English 1900 does not count for the literature and the arts requirement.

ENGL 1920 Topics in Creative Writing: Reading, Writing, Blogging Poetry
M/W 3:10-4:25

Prof. Matt Miller

Teachers cannot create poets, but we can create the conditions for poetry to emerge. Like any art form, an important part of poetry involves understanding craft, though in an art as diverse as this one, precisely where the line lies between craft and inspiration—imagination and technique—is never entirely clear. This course in reading and writing poetry starts with the basics, emphasizing prosody (the way poets use sound in language), sharp visceral imagery, and approaches to the poetic line (or lack thereof). Working with the belief that writers must first understand conventions before they can meaningfully oppose or ignore them, students will develop more sophisticated understandings of poetry's tools, such as symbolism, metaphor, and rhyme, as well as more recent experimental techniques. We will read widely from the best and most representative poetry in the language, understanding that developments in our writing emerge from engaged reading.

In addition to writing and analyzing poetry, students will create their own blogs to share their work and comment on other poems. The course will guide students through the process of posting and sharing work online, as well the best practices for using images, video, and audio to enhance their online contributions. Students will respond to other

students' work via their blogs, and we will collectively establish an overall web site for Stern's creative writers to share their best writing.

Goals for the class include developing a better understanding of language as an artistic medium, coming to a fuller and more “interior” understanding of literature, developing the knowledge and skills for effectively using online resources, and writing that students can look back upon, knowing it pushed their natural human potential for creativity.

This course is an elective for Creative Writing track and for Media Studies. It counts towards the Writing Minor. It does *not* count for Literature and Arts requirement. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2000 Ways of Reading
T/Th 10:30-11:45

Prof. Nora Nachumi

Who decides what texts mean? Are some interpretations better than others? Does the author’s intention matter? How does language work? In this foundational course, we will study texts of the culture around us, as well as literature, and will consider the major debates about meaning and interpretive practices that have emerged throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

This course is more about *how* we read than what we read. The goal is to show how meaning is created through critical reading and to help you learn to read and interpret works contextually and closely. To this end, our course has several objectives: students should leave this course with a clear sense of the variety of theoretical approaches available to them as readers of texts; have a sense of why these approaches matter in apprehending all different kinds of texts; and be able to manifest their ability to read texts in different ways through verbal and written modes of communication.

You may find that the issues and texts – and the language in some of the readings – difficult at first. But the course is also fun and will help you gain some of the skills you’ll need to read and write critically about all kinds of texts, not just literary ones. We will read poems and novels but we will also be reading films, advertisements, rooms, and other kinds of texts you encounter every day. Each section of the course takes up a number of major issues of concern in literary and cultural studies, issues like authorship, language, reading, subjectivity, ideology, history and difference. Course requirements: two formal papers, shorter written responses, a midterm and a final exam.

This course is required for majors and minors. It fulfills the Literature and Arts requirement. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

II (Survey) COURSES

ENGLISH 2006 Survey of American Literature I: I Contain Multitudes: Identity in Early American Literature.

M/W 11:55-1:10

Prof. Joy Ladin

Walt Whitman was speaking for his country when he wrote, “Do I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself. I am large, I contain multitudes.” Whitman makes it sound simple to create a national identity that contains “multitudes,” but as American history and literature tell us, it's easier said than done. We will explore how Americans have wrestled with identity, from the writing of the Declaration of Independence through the complex encounters between different cultures that have called this land home, to the horrors of slavery that would, during the Civil War, tear this country apart. Our goal will be to understand how American struggles over national and cultural identity have shaped the fascinating, peculiar stories and poems in which Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne and others consider what it means to say “I.” You will get to join in exploring what it means to say “I” by writing creative responses to our readings, including two short (5 page) graded papers and brief ungraded exercises, and by making a short class presentation introducing a text of your choice.

This course is a “Traditions” course in English designed to pose questions about how texts, interpretive communities and reading practices generate histories. It is an Introductory-level course. It fulfills a II B requirement for the English major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. It counts for the Minor in American Literature. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

English 2007 Survey of American Literature II
T/Th 12-1:15

Prof. Ann Peters

American Literature II is an introductory survey of the period between the end of the Civil War and the present. We'll read a wide variety of works over a broad sweep of time. We'll learn about some of the literary movements of the time, starting with the realist tradition and ending with postmodernism. We'll learn about some of the schools of poetry that have emerged over the period: the Modernist Poets, the Beat Poets, the New York School Poets, and the Confessional School, among others. We'll consider literature in its context and look at how literature responds to changes in the culture at large. Fiction will include works by James Baldwin, Raymond Carver, Willa Cather, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Ralph Ellison, William Faulkner, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Henry James, Toni Morrison, Flannery O'Connor, and Edith Wharton. Poetry will include (but not be limited to) works by Elizabeth Bishop, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Allen Ginsberg, Joy Harjo, Langston Hughes, Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Adrienne Rich, and Wallace Stevens. We'll also be reading three longer works: a novel (Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*), a play (Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*), and a collection of poetry (Natasha Trethewey's 2017 *Native Guard*). You'll write four reading response letters, respond weekly to peer discussion forums, give an oral presentation on an author of your choice, and write one paper, 5-7 pages. There will be regular reading quizzes and a final exam. No midterm.

This course is a “Traditions” course in English designed to pose questions about how texts, interpretive communities and reading practices generate histories. It is an Introductory-level course. It fulfills a II C requirement for the English major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. It counts for the Minor in American Literature. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

III Topics INTRO. COURSES

ENGL 2791 Children’s Literature **M/W 10:25-11:40**

Prof. Linda Shires

This course will remind you of what it is like to be a child, while also challenging your adult analytical skills. It will examine the literary content, images, and cultural uses of children's literature, primarily in England and the United States, and primarily in prose, from its early incarnations to today. Our readings will fall into three units: Origins of Children’s Literature in fairy tales and re-writings of that form; Children’s Classics; Animal Fables. Most of the reading is prose, although poetry is embedded in some stories. Note that most classic children’s literature is written for a *dual* audience of children and adults. Given this immense field and the limited number of classes, we will study a representative sample, closely reading selected works while emphasizing broad literary movements, the change of what childhood was over time, ideology, intertextuality, and image/text relations. Authors to be read may include: Charles Perrault, Giambattista Basile, the Brothers Grimm, Frances Hodgson Burnett, George MacDonald, Lewis Carroll, Beatrix Potter, Rudyard Kipling, E.B. White, Angela Carter, Emma Donoghue, Robert C. O’Brien, Neil Gaiman, J.K. Rowling, Peggy Rathmann, Maurice Sendak, Roald Dahl. Requirements include: a short presentation, several reading quizzes, a midterm exam, a final exam, and a 7-8pp essay.

This is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English, designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It fulfills a III B Intro. requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. It is an elective for Education. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2834 Shakespeare Tragedies and Romances **M/W 9-10:15**

Prof. Gina Grimaldi

This course covers five plays by William Shakespeare from the latter half of his career, between 1599 and 1611: *Julius Caesar*; *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, tragedies dramatizing the falls of the title heroes, and *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*, romances including fantastical elements and plots of redemption.

We will discuss the texts in depth, focusing on genre, character, structure, language, and theme, as well as Elizabethan-Jacobean theater culture and historical interpretations and adaptations. Class sessions will involve seminar-style discussions, lectures, and video viewings. Requirements will be: two formal essays, a short presentation, a final research project, and reading-check quizzes.

This is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English, designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It fulfills a III C Intro. requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

Engl. 2880 Parents and Children
M/W 4:40-5:55

Prof. Matt Miller

The Russian writer Leo Tolstoy began his classic novel, *Anna Karenina*, by claiming that "happy families are all alike," while "every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Perhaps he was right. Certainly, many American writers have explored the drama and crises that arise from unhappy families. Some families depicted in American literature have courageously risen to the challenges they faced, overcame them (to some extent) and lived, if not "happily ever after," then at least happily enough. Other families have also been depicted tragically, of course, and many have been described as a balance of tragedy and triumph, comedy and clear-eyed realism.

American literature began to focus on parents and children with particular intensity beginning in the mid-nineteenth century with the growth of a literary movement known as "realism." Whether in novels, poetry, short stories, plays, or memoirs, an intense interest in parents and children continues in literature to the present day. This course explores the roles of parents and children--and how those roles have changed over time--in the work of a wide variety of American authors, including William Dean Howells, Willa Cather, William Faulkner, Lorraine Hansberry, Sylvia Plath, Allen Ginsberg, Toni Morrison, and others. While the writing we explore may not resolve the challenges of growing up or raising a child, it will surely shed a light on and help to better understand the challenges and rewards of that most important American institution: the family.

This is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English, designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It fulfills a III C Intro. requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H. This course counts toward the American Studies Minor.

ENGL 2901/WMNS 1020 Introduction to Women’s Studies: Theory and Practice
T/Th 3:15 – 4:30

Prof. Nora Nachumi

This course introduces students to Women’s Studies, an interdisciplinary field that grew out of the twentieth-century women’s movement. In its early years, those in the field concentrated on the “absence” of women (from literature, history, science, etc) and worked to add them to the curriculum. Today, Women’s Studies is a vast and still growing field of study that draws on many different disciplines in the humanities and the sciences in its efforts to describe, understand and – in many cases – improve women’s lives.

This particular course is organized around diverse representations of female experience. Drawing on a variety of sources—including essays, short fiction and visual media—we will ask how different categories of identity (i.e. race, class, gender, age, ability, etc.) impact each other. We will theorize and articulate our own positions regarding the issues we discuss and engage with positions that differ from our own. Students do not have to define themselves as feminists—or even be sympathetic to feminism as they currently define it—in order to take this course. Like all good conversations, the ones in this class generally benefit from a variety of reasoned opinions.

In addition to participation in class discussion, course requirements include reading quizzes, entries to a class forum, a presentation (oral and written) in lieu of a midterm, several short writing assignments and two papers (one with research).

This course is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English designed to pose questions about who reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It is an introductory-level course that fulfills a III D requirement for the English major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Prerequisites: English 1100 or FHS. It is required for students pursuing Women’s Studies Minor.

English 2924 H Topics: Female Friendship
T/Th 1:45-3

Prof. Ann Peters

My Brilliant Friend: Novels on Female Friendship

This is an Honors course. The Neapolitan quartet, Elena Ferrante’s series of novels about a friendship between two women who meet as children in Naples, has received extraordinary praise from readers and critics worldwide since its publication between 2011 and 2014. Carole DeSanti, an editor at Viking Press, explained recently in an interview that after reading Ferrante’s novels she “was bursting with the need to talk about them...because they speak to us so intimately, but are also highly social—showing us so many interrelations and co-creations, how we make and un-make one another, find and mirror each other—in all kinds of ways.” The topic of this honors course is fiction that explores this act of co-creation, this making and mirroring that happens between female friends.

We will explore female friendship in five relatively contemporary international novels, one from Italy, one from Great Britain, one from the United States, one from Hungary, and one from Canada. (I also ask that you read—or reread—Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* before the start of the semester.) We’ll begin with *My Brilliant Friend* and use the novel as a touchstone, returning to it for the rest of the term. After *My Brilliant Friend*, we’ll read Muriel Spark’s *Girls of Slender Means* (1963), Toni Morrison’s *Sula* (1973), Magda Szabo’s *The Door* (1987), and Margaret Atwood’s *Cat’s Eye* (1988). If there is time, we’ll read the second Ferrante novel in the quartet and watch sections of the recent HBO adaptation of *My Brilliant Friend*. Throughout the semester, we’ll consider how the novel of female friendship works as a bildungsroman or a coming-of-age story. And while female friendship is the central theme, our exploration will take us in all sorts of directions. In reading *My Brilliant Friend*, for example, we may find ourselves talking about class conflict or ambivalence over maternal roles or the effects of education or the

changing status of women in the seventies or about experiments in form and issues of authorship.

Requirements for the course include: four peer discussion forums; a close-reading analysis paper (5 pages); a comparison paper (7-10 pages); weekly reading quizzes; and a final exam. No midterm.

This is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English, designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It fulfills a III C Intro. requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Pre-requisite: 1100 or 1200H and 3.5 average.

III (Topics) ADVANCED COURSES

(Pre-Requisite for either is an Introductory Literature Course or flat A in 1200H or 1100 to be shown to teacher on transcript)

ENGL 3920 TPCS: Hardy & Kipling Today
M/W 11:55-1:10

Prof. Linda Shires

This course examines the highly innovative work of two authors who were crucial in helping nineteenth-century literature transition to modernity: Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) and Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936).

Born in England, Thomas Hardy took as his subject the life and romances of the middle and lower classes living in Dorset, a rural region southwest of London that he called “Wessex.” We shall read some of Hardy’s poems as well as two novels featuring very different heroines: Bathsheba Everdene of *Far from the Madding Crowd* and Theresa Durbeyfield of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented*. A master of irony and modern tragedy, Hardy transformed the realist novel. Moreover, in his poems, he handled time and human consciousness in new ways. Known for his love of the land, his tenderness towards working people, and his strong social criticism, Hardy also resembled Kipling as a brilliant craftsman.

Born of English parents in Mumbai, Kipling, who, like Hardy, authored fiction and poetry, is still best known for his ability to handle multi-cultural, multi-national, and even multi-species points of view. He was an innovator in the short story genre. Able to imitate the speech patterns of soldiers and bureaucrats, Anglo-Indians and Neolithic settlers, Tibetan monks and small children, Kipling wrote in a wide human language. Kipling’s highly creative *Jungle Books* and *Just So Stories for Little Children* dramatize the competing and collaborative relations between human beings and animals for survival. We focus on his stories, but, if we have time, we will also look at a late work *Thy Servant a Dog*-- part of Kipling’s lifelong study of anthropocentrism. Fascinated by the psychologies of children and grownups, he addressed both as his readers.

Their works have been repeatedly translated to the screen and stage, indicating the richness of their writing. For his achievements, Hardy received the British Order of

Merit and, for his, Kipling received the Nobel Prize in Literature. In this course we will consider similarities, differences, and critical controversies as we put their literary texts side by side. Requirements: two papers—one 5-6 pp and one 10-12pp research paper that replaces a final; midterm exam; short presentation. Close attention will be given for help with the research paper.

This is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English, designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why it matters. It is an Advanced-level course. It fulfills a III C Advanced requirement for the English Major. It fulfills “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisites: one previous course in English literature or a straight “A” on transcript for ENGL 1100 or 1200H to be shown to teacher.

ENGL 3675 American Playwrights and Their Plays
T/Th 1:45-3:00

Prof. Cynthia Wachtell

In “American Playwrights and Their Plays” we engage in a multidimensional study of important plays, playwrights, and theatrical movements of the past hundred years.

Through analyzing plays, attending performances in NYC, writing research papers, and even acting out scenes for each other, students gain insight into some of the most famous works of American theater. Together, we trace the development of American drama from the early nineteenth century to the present. As we read our way through over a dozen plays – ranging from Eugene O’Neill’s dark *Long Day’s Journey into Night* to Christopher Durang’s absurdist *Baby with the Bathwater* – we will consider the many ways in which the American play has been re-invented and re-purposed in the past century.

Among the topics we discuss are: what it means to “act” American, how playwrights handle difficult and taboo subjects, and the ways in which playwrights both borrow from one another and invent new directions for drama. We also examine the playwrights’ use of language, their staging instructions, the structuring of plot into scenes and acts, and other formal elements of drama and theatrical productions. So too, we consider the fundamental purpose and intent of theater, as we learn about assorted theatrical movements (for example, realism, political theater, experimental theater, and absurdism). The tentative reading list includes: Susan Glaspell, *Trifles*, Thornton Wilder, *Our Town* Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* and *View from the Bridge*, Eugene O’Neill, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, Edward Albee, *Zoo Story* and *The Sandbox*, Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, David Mamet, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Sam Shepard, *Buried Child*, Wendy Wasserstein, *The Sisters Rosensweig*, and Christopher Durang, *Baby With the Bathwater*

This course is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English designed to pose questions about who reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It fulfills a III B Advanced requirement for the English major. It fulfills “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” It counts for Am. Studies Minor. Pre-requisites: one introductory-level literature course or a grade of A in English 1100 or 1200H