

YC Department of English

Fall 2017 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 Fall 2017 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. She would be happy to meet with you.

Required for the English Major

SENIOR COLLOQUIUM—PROFESSOR LAUREN FITZGERALD

ENG 4001 Section 481 W 8:15—9:55

For English majors with senior standing.

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. It is 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 1020 (H).

WRITING FICTION AND CREATIVE NONFICTION – PROFESSOR LIESL SCHWABE

ENG 1740 M/W 3:00 – 4:15

Whether or not George Orwell actually said “all good stories are true” matters less than the fact that he is often cited as having said it and for the sentiment it evokes. The power of any story relies on its honesty, but truth on the page is not limited to what happened in real life. In this

creative writing workshop, students will write both fiction and nonfiction to discover what the genres share, how they differ, and why so many writers write both. Students will be responsible for weekly readings, lengthy original pieces of fiction and creative nonfiction, extensive revision, workshop participation, and a critical reflection essay. Readings will include works by Joan Didion, George Orwell, James Baldwin, David Foster Wallace, Zadie Smith, Ali Smith, Jo Ann Beard, Edwidge Danticat, and Geoff Dyer, among others.



Literature

Pre-requisite: FYWR 1020 (H).

SHAKESPEARE: HISTORIES AND COMEDIES—PROFESSOR RICHARD NOCHIMSON

ENG 2313 SECTION 241 M/W 4:30 — 5:45

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

This course offers the opportunity to get to know some of the most important creations of the playwright generally regarded as the greatest playwright ever: William Shakespeare. Shakespeare seems to be a writer for all tastes. His plays are appreciated and understood (not necessarily in the same ways) by sophisticated and unsophisticated theatergoers, by adults and children, by people in English-speaking countries and people from very different cultures such as India and Japan. He speaks as meaningfully to audiences in the twenty-first century as he did to his original audiences in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. The plays of Shakespeare expand our horizons. They are also enjoyable. Students will read and discuss ten plays: *Much Ado About Nothing*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Richard II*; *Henry IV, Part One*; *Henry IV, Part Two*; *Henry V*; *Troilus and Cressida*; *All's Well That Ends Well*; *The Merchant of Venice*; *Twelfth Night*.

Reading of some background and critical material will enhance students' ability to appreciate Shakespeare's art and meanings.

Class discussion is important. Students will keep an informal journal of reactions to the plays and other readings. Probably there will be an opportunity to see a live production of a play by Shakespeare.

Requirements: two five-page papers and a final.

AWAKENINGS: MODERNIST FICTIONS OF SELF-DISCOVERY — PROFESSOR RACHEL MESCH

ENG 2073 Section 331 TR 3:00 - 4:15

Counts as the required non-British literature course for English majors.



This course will examine novels from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries that explore the complexities of identity and human subjectivity in light of the radical social changes that mark this time period. These stories of self-discovery are also invariably stories of confrontation with the changing social landscape as the century turned, particularly with respect to gender roles, family life, religion, and work. Drawing from American, British, and French authors, we will examine how modernist fictions rejected literary conventions in order

to portray the ever-elusive self in its psychological

fullness, sometimes influenced by parallel developments in the field of psychoanalysis. We will also see how form and content cross-fertilize through the modernist novel, as the exploration of identity and subjectivity forces these writers to tell their stories in new ways, influenced by earlier movements like naturalism and realism but also utterly different. We will explore those differences together, in order to understand what defines literary modernism across continents.

Readings include: Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, Edith Wharton, stories TBD, Colette, *The Vagabond*, Proust, *Swann in Love*, Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

APPROACHES TO FILM—PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH

ENG 3575 Section 361 TR 6:45-8:45

Counts as the required non-British literature course as well as one of the two 3000-level courses for English majors.

From the earliest Edison kinetoscopes of the 1890s to Cameron's 3D *Avatar* and beyond, the cinema has captivated us and shaped our expectations and understanding of the world. This course will introduce students to the basics of analyzing film. We'll focus primarily on the close

reading of elements of mise-en-scène and montage, playing particular attention to how they come together to produce meaning. We'll also discuss different theoretical approaches to film, and film genres and their conventions.

Texts will include Kavin, *How Movies Work*; and Elsaesser and Hagener, *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses*. Films will include shorts by Edison and the Lumière Brothers; *A Trip to the Moon*; *Sherlock Jr.*; *Man with the Movie Camera*; *Rear Window*; *It Happened One Night*, *Citizen Kane*; *The Searchers*; *Singin' in the Rain*; *La Jetée*; *Meshes of the Afternoon*; *Vertigo*; *Breathless*; and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Requirements: Three papers and two exams.



Cross-listed Core Courses

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

BOOKS ON BOOKS, FILMS ON FILM—PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH

ENG 1001/INTC 1001 Section 341 TR 4:30-5:45

What do literature and film tell us about themselves and each other?

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 student to develop a deeper understanding of the relationships between literature and film, and through these relationships, of each medium.

The course will begin by examining the key elements of literary and cinematic story telling, and of how these elements come together to produce the meaning of a story. Then we will explore various approaches used in the analysis of literature and film, by studying both theoretical texts about literature and film, and close readings of particular works in both media, with the aim of enabling students to create their own compelling interpretations of literature and film.



Course texts will include Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*; Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*; and Zusak, *The Book Thief*. Films will include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Sherlock Jr.*, *Stranger than Fiction*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and *Fahrenheit 451*. Critical texts will include Plato, Book X of *The Republic*; Wilde, “The Decay of Lying”; Rushdie, *The Wizard of Oz*; and Spadoni, *A Pocket Guide to Analyzing Film*.

Requirements: 3 papers and a final exam.

**FICTION, THE ARTISTIC IMAGINATION, AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS—
PROFESSOR RICHARD NOCHIMSON**

ENG 1007/INTC 1007 Section 211 MW 1:30-2:45 PM

The primary focus of this course is to explore the fiction writer's creative process from different angles, including inspiration, conception, development, revision, and adaptation to the screen.



We will be exploring together general and more specific questions such as the following: What happens during the creative process? What is the relationship between an author's life and the author's fictional works? Where does literary inspiration come from? What do creators of fiction think about as they work? How do short stories and novels get written, rewritten, reimagined? How do writers draw upon and transform life experience into narrative fiction? In writing and in rewriting their works, what kinds of decisions do writers make about characterization, about setting, about point of view, about style, about structure, about ideas to be conveyed? How do readers react to and evaluate such decisions? In adapting fictional works, how closely do later writers and filmmakers follow the original work? How do audiences react to changes from the original?

Students will read three novels and will screen film/television versions of each of them. For one of the novels, there will also be background and critical readings.

The novels are the following: Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*; E. M. Forster, *Howards End*; John Le Carré, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*.

Students will also read a selection of short stories; in some cases there will be critical or background materials to accompany the stories. Some of the short story assignments will involve reading earlier and later drafts of the same story. In other cases, students will read a classic short story and also a much later version of the same story by a contemporary writer. Another approach will be to read contemporary stories alongside the canonical stories that served as their inspiration and subject matter, rather than as a source for more direct adaptation.

In addition to regular informal writing in response to the readings and screenings, there will be a midterm, a final, and two relatively brief papers. Students will have the option of writing a short story, along with their own commentary on their story and their own description of the process they followed in creating the story, in place of the second paper. This is a discussion course; attendance and participation are essential.

STRANGER THINGS: THE ART OF THE UNREAL—PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY
ENG 1034/INTC 1034 Section 361 Tu 6:45—9:15

The poets, Plato complained in the *Republic*, tell lies. But if it was art's superficial resemblance to the real that troubled Plato, how are we to understand art which crosses the threshold into something else, something far stranger. In this class, we will study how art—



chiefly literature but other media as well—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 Platonic and Freudian frameworks by pursuing the implications of Martin Heidegger’s proposition that “poetic images are imaginings in a distinctive sense: not mere fancies and illusions but imaginings that are visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the

familiar.” This concept 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, Tolkien, Hoffman, Rushdie, Pynchon, Brecht, 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.

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.