

YC Department of English Spring 2018 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 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, Professor Lauren Fitzgerald fitzger@yu.edu. For information about the new Media Studies minor, contact Professor Rachel Mesch mesch@yu.edu. They would be happy to meet with you.

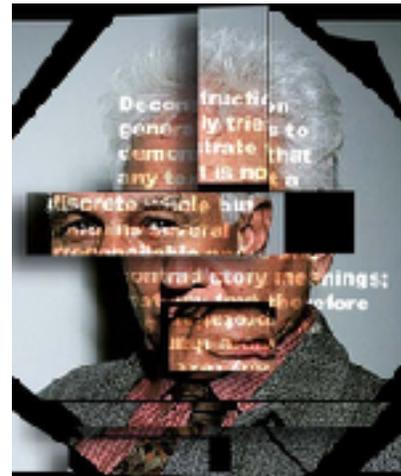
Required for the English Major

INTERPRETING TEXTS—PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH
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 some of the key interpretive approaches that define current studies in these fields. Its goal is for you to become a more knowledgeable, insightful, and accomplished interpreter of literature, film, and other arts. You’ll learn key ideas of what literature and film are and do, and fundamental concepts and paradigms used for interpreting them. You’ll learn how to use concepts from theoretical texts in conjunction with “close-reading” of novels, short stories, poems, and films to produce compelling analyses of these works. You’ll also be honing your crucial writing skills throughout the course.

This class welcomes students from different majors and academic backgrounds; it takes up critical issues that apply to all arts and media.

Requirements: informed class participation in discussions and class writing/editing sessions, ungraded response papers, several short essays, and a final paper.



SENIOR ORALS—PROFESSOR LAUREN FITZGERALD

ENG 4002 Section 481 W 8:15—9:55

For English majors with senior standing.

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 2018, we’ll discuss Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, Emily Dickinson’s *Selected Poems and Commentaries*, Nella Larsen’s *Passing* and Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King’s Horseman*, as well as attend a reading by and dinner with the poet Deborah Paredez. Both semesters of this course are required for the completion of the English major and may be taken out of sequence.



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).

TOPICS IN JOURNALISM: THE DIGITAL NEWSROOM — PROFESSOR CHARLES BERRET

ENG 1601 Section 621 F 10:00—12:30

Counts towards the new Media Studies Minor.

Every newsroom is now a digital newsroom. Many news outlets collapsed under the strain of this transformation, but those that thrive today have learned to keep pace with technological change. Over the course of the semester, we will study the tools, techniques, and platforms that have helped the press adapt to the digital age and maintain its essential role in a free society --



to hold powerful institutions accountable; to bear witness to injustice, trauma, and systemic failure; and to help readers keep track of a world that changes rapidly. This course has a hybrid structure, part seminar and part studio. In our seminars, we will discuss weekly readings on the state of journalism, its challenges, and its evolution. During studio sessions, we will practice some of the digital skills that today's leading journalists use to gather information and craft accurate, compelling stories. These skills include coding, gathering data from the web, using secure communication tools, and publishing online—but the course itself has no technical prerequisites

and will move at a pace designed for students of the humanities. Students will submit regular writing assignments to be collectively workshopped and published on a class website. You will also keep a 'code journal' documenting solutions to technical problems you encounter throughout the term. The final project may be either a term paper or a technical project involving code, data, or web publishing. Students with strong technical backgrounds or an interest in writing or journalism are especially encouraged to apply, though curiosity and FYWR are the only prerequisites.

WRITING POETRY – PROFESSOR BARBARA BLATNER

ENG 1832 Section 361 T 6:45—9:15

Counts towards the Writing minor and the English major and minor.

*How can you free your poet's mind?
How can you use the "rules" of poetic forms to write poems that work?*



In this workshop, you will write and study a range of poetic forms--villanelle, sestina, haiku, rap, renga, sonnet and others--and examine the many shapes the poetic line can take. Class time will be spent doing exercises designed to develop specific skills, reading and analyzing poems as models, and reading students' poems in order to offer as a class supportive critique and audience. A discussion of poetics—various ways of constructing and conceiving of poetry—will be based on weekly study of particular poetic forms and the many ways these forms might manifest on the page.

Texts: *Good Poems*, by Garrison Keillor; handouts of essays and poems.

Requirements:

- Weekly writing assignments.
- A portfolio of select finished poems.
- Readings and a response journal.
- Participation in workshops and discussion.
- Attendance at least one local poetry reading.
- Participation in an end-of-term public reading.

Literature

Pre-requisite: FYWR (H).

THE ART OF POETRY: TRADITIONAL THROUGH MODERNIST EXPERIMENTS— PROFESSOR WILL LEE



Students who have previously found poetry mystifying and thorny will learn how to unlock, unpack, and make sense of a broad range of traditional and modern poems in English by authors such as Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Browning, Whitman, Dickinson, Hardy, Hopkins, Yeats, Frost, Stevens, Williams, Pound, Moore, Eliot, and Crane. Students who already like and understand some poems will expand their range and their skills as

interpreters. All students will gain confidence through attentive reading, with respect for the text as written and an eye to the interrelationships of voice, style, form, content, and purpose. By writing clear, concise, well-organized, well-specified, and interesting interpretive essays, they will learn to think more analytically and critically. Brief lectures will punctuate guided



Socratic discussions intended to stimulate genuine thoughtfulness about the means and ends of specific poems. The main text will be Ferguson and Salter's fifth edition of *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (be sure to buy the longer edition, ISBN-13: 978-0393979206; used copies should be readily available). Requirements: participation and attendance; two short essays; a focused revision of one of the two; a take-home essay

exam; and a 10-12 pp. essay interpreting a challenging poem.

THE RELIGIOUS OTHER IN EARLY ENGLISH LITERATURE—PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY

ENG 3025 Section 241 M/W 4:30—5:25

Counts as the required pre-1700 course and as one of the two 3000-level courses for English majors.

Looking mostly at literature from the millennium known as the Middle Ages, we will investigate the themes and anxieties that shaped medieval notions of religious identity and, in particular, the strategies of religious self-definition that characterized Christianity's confrontation with Judaism and Islam during the period.

Our focus will be on texts that explore these issues through vivid imaginary encounters with the religious "other": accounts of martyrdom and sainthood, Jewish and Muslim representations of



the Crusades, literary adaptations of biblical writings, and various stage dramatizations of Jewish conversion, including Shakespeare's problematic comedy *The Merchant of Venice*. Culturally distant but nonetheless profoundly relevant, these readings will also prompt us to reflect on religious identity and otherness from the standpoint of our own efforts to inhabit the different intellectual and interpretive domains of Yeshiva University. No previous experience with the topic or the material is assumed. Requirements include short critical essays, postings to an online discussion forum, collaborative group presentations, and class attendance at least one off campus stage production.

Cross-listed Core Courses

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

SHAKESPEARE & THE ARTS—PROFESSOR WILL LEE

ENG/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 reading, 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.

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

ENG/INTC 1007H Section 231 MW 3:00—4:15PM

Pre-requisite: Honors standing or permission to attend an Honors course. Fulfills the YC Writing-Intensive requirement.

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 course has been approved for a Writing-Intensive designation and fulfills the YC W-I requirement.

This is a discussion course; attendance and participation are essential.

LITERATURE, MORALITY, AND ENTERTAINMENT—PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY

ENG/INTC 1013 Section 361 T 6:45—9:15



The didactic and moral content of English literature often seems in conflict with modern notions of reading as a form of entertainment or imaginative escape. What happens, for instance, if we derive pleasure or enjoyment from a text meant instead to reform our behavior or provide examples of how to act? And what does it mean if we dis-

cover moral or ethical models in literature we expected instead to amuse us or divert our attention from serious topics? Does literature have ennobling effects? By the same logic, can artifice inspire immorality, or distract us from what truly matters? And what becomes of the reader who resists or is already estranged, because of religious or cultural identity, from a text's prescriptive intent? We will approach these questions from different cultural and aesthetic vantage points, all variously concerned with how certain literary and artistic forms inscribe their audiences in the stories they tell, scripting a specific moral response in the process. Our investigation will ground itself in readings from classical antiquity before considering the interrelation of artistic form and moral meaning in specific contexts. We will track anxieties about the spiritual consequences of imaginative diversion and departure; reconsider the relationship between religious art and secular forms of entertainment, and the utility of the sacred/secular distinction more generally; explore the different ways in which visual, textual, and performative mediums exert a hold on our minds (and bodies); and assess how these concerns are implicated in contemporary debates about the problematics of reading and moral exemplification. Many of our readings will be drawn from early English poetry, prose, and drama, though no previous exposure to this period or its literature is assumed, and a wide range of critical and theoretical texts will help students situate unfamiliar material. Requirements include informed class participation, ungraded response papers, regular postings to an online discussion forum, a short critical essay, and a final 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, and <https://www.yu.edu/yeshiva-college/ug/media-studies-minor> for information about the Media Studies minor.