

YC Department of English Fall 2021 Course Offerings

If you're wondering which Fall 2021 English courses are right for you or have questions about the English major or minor or the Creative Writing minor, contact the chair of the English Department, Dr. Rachel Mesch rachel.mesch@yu.edu. For information about the Media Studies Minor contact Dr. Elizabeth Stewart estewart@yu.edu.

Course requirements can be found on our website:
<https://www.yu.edu/yeshiva-college/ug/english/requirements>

CREATIVE WRITING

These classes count towards the Creative Writing concentration and the Creative Writing minor. English majors in the Literary Studies concentration may count as many as two of these courses, and English minors may count one. Pre-requisite: FYWR 1020

WRITING WITH POWER: CLASSICAL RHETORIC FOR MODERN TIMES
ENG 1450 (WI)
M/W 3:00 - 4:15
Professor Lauren Fitzgerald

Do you want to become a more powerful writer, able to move readers and achieve your goals? This new YC English Department creative writing course will teach you how, using the tried-and-true method of *rhetoric*. Rhetoric has gotten a bad rap over the years, with “empty rhetoric” or “political rhetoric” signifying language that at best says nothing and at worst dangerously deceives. However, this word also names the oldest curriculum for teaching people to communicate

effectively. Rhetorical training both enabled ancient Greeks and Romans to become persuasive orators and allowed Shakespeare, Milton, and countless other famous authors to hone their creativity.



Weekly activities will include brief exercises that Shakespeare and Milton completed—a fable, proverb, character sketch, and description, among others (in poetry or prose; your choice!)—as well as short readings by and about Greek and Roman rhetoricians. For three longer projects, you'll produce a rhetorical analysis of a contemporary text; a high-stakes real-world document such as an

application essay, job letter, and/or resume; and a final portfolio of and reflection on your best work of the semester.

In the process of learning about classical concepts and applying them to 21st-century situations, you'll become a *rhetorician*, able to critically analyze texts and the larger systems in which they are produced, and a *rhetor*, adept at using these systems to produce texts that get things done. Because rhetoric informs all modes of communication, we'll also learn about making speeches and effective ways to deploy digital technologies to achieve rhetorical goals.

Fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement and counts towards the Media Studies minor.

WRITING FOR THE WORKPLACE: TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

ENG 1680

T/R 4:30 - 5:45

Professor David Puretz



This course explores how people in the working world find, create, and deliver technical information. Learn and develop the skills you will need to communicate more effectively and more efficiently in your professional life.

You will practice collaborative writing with in-depth group projects. You will become more proficient with digital and cross-platform communication, including social media and online content creation and management. And you will learn the art of *simplifying the complex*—writing about technical information for non-technical audiences, i.e.

managers, coworkers, clients, donors, governmental bodies, the general public, etc.

This work will involve: summaries/responses of peer-reviewed technical articles, field research including interviews with professionals in the field, application letters, memos, segmented research proposals, grant proposals, and feasibility reports. The final class project will include a team technical report and team presentation. Required Textbook: *Technical Communication*, 13E, by Mike Markel.

Counts towards the Media Studies minor.

LITERATURE

Pre-requisite: FYWR or FYWR (H). Literary Studies students take eight literature electives, and Creative Writing students take at least three, in addition to the Advanced Seminar (Fall) and Colloquium (Spring).

PRIMARY BONDS:

CHILDREN IN LITERATURE AND FILM (WI)

ENG 2017

T/R 6:45 - 8:00

Professor Elizabeth Stewart

Largely beginning in the 18th century, with major developments throughout the Romantic period,



and then throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, children and their lives have exerted a fascination on philosophers, writers, and readers alike. Children appear as mysterious, the “father of the man” (Wordsworth), heaven-sent, and idealized, but also as martyred, suffering, and the mute representatives of unthinkable experience; embodiments of innocence, mementos of human kindness, but also devastating carriers of the marks of humanity’s worst.

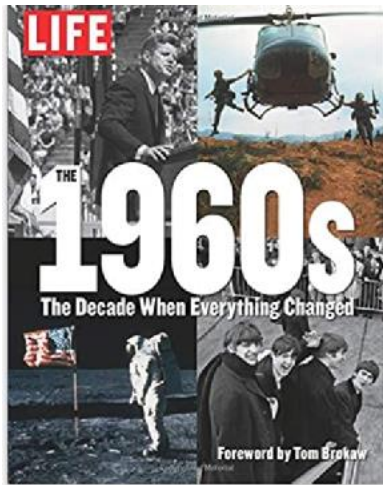
Child characters appear with an aura of mystery. In 1801, Thomas Reid wrote, “Could we obtain a distinct and full history of all that hath passed in the mind of a child from the beginning of life and sensation, till it grows up to the use of reason, this would be a treasure of natural history, which would probably give more light into the human faculties, than all the systems of philosophies about them since the beginning of the world.” In this sense, art and literature about children are also about the potentials

that inhere humanity as such. This course is largely about the psychology and phenomenology of childhood—and our fantasies about them.

Works by Sophocles, Euripides, Grimms’ fairy tales, Rousseau, Blake, Potok, Kosinski, McEwan, Winterson, Robinson, Kafka, Bulawayo. Films: *Heavenly Creatures*, *Kaspar Hauser*, *The Children Act*, *Hitler’s Children*.

**THE 1960s:
A POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY**
ENG 3092
T/R 3:00 - 4:15
Professor Paula Geyh

This interdisciplinary course will explore the roots, events, ideas, and legacy of the 1960s through literature, historical documents, and film. We'll begin by looking at America in the 1950s to



provide a historical context for the social movements that defined the political and cultural history of the 1960s and early 1970s. The rest of the course will be organized around those movements, including the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, the Anti-War Movement, the Youth Movement and Counterculture, and the early Women's Liberation Movement.

Course texts will include Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams*; Bloom and Breines, *Takin' It to the Streets*; Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*; Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five*; O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*; excerpts from Kerouac, *On the Road* and Plath, *The Bell Jar*; Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"; King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and "I Have a Dream"; Hayden, "The Port Huron Statement";

excerpts from Mailer, *The Siege of Chicago*; excerpts from Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, *Woodstock Nation*, and *Steal This Book*; Friedan, Morgan, and Echols. Films will include *Making Sense of the Sixties*, *The Wild One*, *Selma*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *A Hard Day's Night*, *The Graduate*, *The Stepford Wives*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Coming Home*, and *The Big Chill*. Requirements: two essays, an exam, and a presentation.

Counts towards the Media Studies minor.

**THE MOST DANGEROUS QUESTIONS:
KING ARTHUR AND THE IDEA OF ENGLAND**
ENG 3024

M 6:45-9:15
Professor David Lavinsky

This class is a study of some key moments in the legend of King Arthur, perhaps England's most celebrated and enigmatic folk hero. Readings drawn from early sources (medieval and early modern) will be supplemented with consideration of the legend



in contemporary film (*Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, dir. Terry Jones and Terry Gilliam, 1975) and literature (*The Tragedy of Arthur*, by Arthur Philips, 2011). Rather than isolate a set of

themes common to all these materials, however, we will explore how transformations in the Arthur legend raise far-reaching questions about the historical and social work of narrative fiction, especially romance; as one scholar has claimed, “only romance can deal with the most dangerous questions.” We will investigate this claim in relation to the array of topics introduced by our Arthurian texts: political disaster and dissolution; English national identity and its mythical origins; emotion, ethical conduct, and self-regulation; courtly love and the chivalric code; the earthly and the spiritual; social change and transformation. These topics will prepare us to consider, during the final third of the term, how Arthur and Arthurian legends emerge as potent cultural symbols in Tudor England and beyond. No prior background in early English literature or Arthurian material is assumed. Requirements include regular responses to an on-line discussion forum, a short critical essay, and a collaborative multimedia project, together with at least one excursion to the Cloisters, the medieval branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Counts for the pre-1700 requirement.

ADVANCED SEMINAR

ENG 3005

MW 4:30-5:45

Professor Rachel Mesch

This course explores the kinds of thinking and writing associated with literary studies, from traditional academic projects to more creative writing endeavors. Designed for all students in both the literary studies and creative writing tracks, the course is meant to build on the work you have already done in English 2010, while preparing you for the student-led senior colloquium in your final Spring semester. **You should therefore sign up for this course in the Fall semester before the Spring in which you plan to take the colloquium.** It is advisable to take the seminar earlier if you intend on a January graduation, rather than taking it in your final Fall semester. Our focus in Fall 2021 will be on gender and writing, with possible selections from Jane Austen, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Kate Chopin, E.M. Forster, Carmen Machado, and Toni Morrison. Writing exercises throughout the semester will culminate in a final paper or a creative project.

Required for all Creative Writing and Literary Studies students in the Fall semester before they plan to take Colloquium.



CORE COURSES

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

BOOKS ON BOOKS, FILMS ON FILMS (INTC)

ENG 1001

T/R 6:45 - 8:00 or TU/TH 4:30 - 5:45

Professor Paula Geyh

What do literature and film tell us about themselves and each other? What are the elemental forms and structures literary and filmic narrative? What approaches might one for the analysis of literature and film? How is reading a novel 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.



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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 Calvino, *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler*; O’Brien, “How to Tell a True War Story”; Cortazar, “A Continuity of Parks,”; Zusak, *The Book Thief*. Films will include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Sherlock Jr.*, *Stranger than Fiction*, *Singin’ in the Rain*, and *Cinema Paradiso*. Critical texts will include Plato, *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*.

Counts towards the Media Studies Minor and the INTC Core requirement.

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE (INTC)

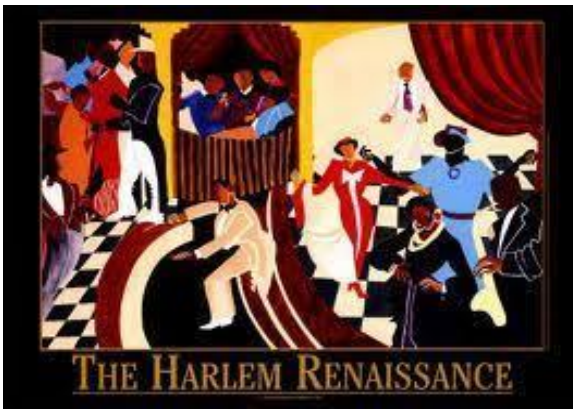
ENG 2810

T/R 4:30-5:45

Professor Ann Peters

In the 1920s and 1930s, between World War I and the Great Depression, African American culture experienced a flourishing both in literature and the arts known as the Harlem Renaissance. In this course, we’ll examine literature alongside art and music of the period and learn about some of the events and people that helped create the Harlem Renaissance. We’ll learn, for instance, about the Great Migration, the role of literary magazines in early 20th Century American literary

life, the impact of W.E.B. Du Bois, the significance of white patronage in Harlem, and the importance of Harlem as a cultural center.



Readings will include fiction, essays and poetry by writers like Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, James Weldon Johnson, Nella Larsen, Claude McKay, and Jean Toomer. We'll also be watching a short film about jazz, go on a tour of Harlem, and visit Harlem's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Requirements for the course include an oral presentation, three reading response letters (1-2 pages), group discussion forums, and a final literary analysis paper (5-7 pages). There will be no midterm or final. *Counts for the INTC Core requirement.*

**STRANGER THINGS:
THE ART OF THE UNREAL (INTC)
ENG 1034
M/W 3:00-4:30 (Honors) or M/W 4:30 - 5:45
Professor David Lavinsky**

Reality is not always probable, or likely. ---Jorge Luis Borges

In this interdisciplinary class, we will study how literature and other media construct fictional worlds, claimed actualities very different from those we collectively perceive and experience. At least initially, then, the issues we confront be epistemological in nature—that is, they will concern how art challenges otherwise defines the limits of what can know and understand; and yet we also try to push beyond familiar theoretical frameworks (e.g., Plato, Freud) by examining modern



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philosophical accounts of literary aesthetics. This work 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,” episodes of which we will view, 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 supplement

this diverse assemblage of material with critical and theoretical readings intended for a broad student audience. Requirements will include regular responses to an on-line discussion forum, short response papers, at least one critical essay, and a final paper/collaborative multimedia project, together with excursions to relevant NYC museums, archives, or historical sites.

Counts for the INTC Core requirement.

FRANCE AND ITS OTHERS (CUOT)

ENG 1009H

Friday 10:00-12:30

Professor Rachel Mesch



While the notion of a cultural “melting pot” is central to American society, French society has been structured around a distinctly French notion of universalism: the idea that there are core universal values that must supersede those of any minority subculture. Thus, although Americans regularly embrace multiple identifications--as African-Americans, or Jewish Americans, for example--in France that double alliance is largely experienced as a tension.

This class traces the roots of that tension by examining ways that otherness has inspired and troubled the French imagination

through literary, historical and philosophical readings by major French writers from the 1500s to the present day. From Montaigne’s cannibals to the noble savages of Enlightenment texts, from Zola’s “J’accuse!” to the story of Babar, we will explore the myriad ways through which France’s imagined others serve as manifestations of a cultural fascination with and anxiety about difference in its many forms. As we analyze the various intellectual conflicts that have arisen from the quest to understand what is deemed different, foreign, exotic or strange, we will also trace a struggle to define and circumscribe notions of French identity, selfhood and authority. Finally, at the semester’s end, we will use what we have synthesized from these thinkers to consider contemporary debates in French society about the place of religious and ethnic difference in the public sphere.

Counts for the CUOT Core requirement.

**FACE-TO-FACE:
COMPLEX MODERN IDENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY FILM (COWC)
ENG 1026
TR 3:00-4:15
Professor Elizabeth Stewart**



The basis of identity is to a large extent visual, and images are the bricks and mortar of what we eventually come to think of as cultural identity. As Aristotle claimed, we learn to become ourselves by imitating what we see (on the stage) in front of us—for us, the film screen—and we become ourselves by imitating our cultural ideals. This course explores the role cinematic images play in creating narratives about a multiplicity of cultural identities. Aristotle also insisted that it is the “ideal” character created on the stage who will aid in creating “ideal” citizens. In other words, Aristotle knew that the visual/verbal arts—in his case, theater, in our case film—have not only a representative function, but an ideological one as well. But cinematic images, like images in the other arts, have also held the function of “naturalizing” certain structures of oppression and domination as well as challenging them. This course will explore how American and foreign film represents various racial, class, gender, ethnic, and national identities, and how they reproduce and challenge those representations at the same time. While the course pays attention to both cognition and affect in our reception of film, it will emphasize the study of affect in cinematic identification, projection, and enjoyment. **FILMS:** *Zelig*, *Birth of a Nation*, *Moonlight*, *Fight Club*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Rear Window*, *Caché*, *Force Majeure*, *Beasts of No Nation*
Requirements: class participation, short responses, 2 critical essays.
Counts towards the Media Studies minor and for the COWC core requirement.

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 Creative Writing minor—and for links to the Creative Writing minor and the Media Studies minors’ webpages.