

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Fall 2026

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 department Associate Chair, Prof. Seamus O’Malley: seamus.omalley@yu.edu

Media Exit Project: The media exit project will now be completed as part of an advanced course taken with our media studies instructors.

Internships: *Must be approved for academic credit before being started.* Fill out the form and give a description of the internship duties to your faculty or media advisor. Internships are only required for media studies students who wish to earn a concentration in journalism or advertising. www.yu.edu/registrar/forms

MEDIA AND CREATIVE WRITING COURSES

ENGL 1501 News Writing

Monday evenings 6pm-8:30pm

Jason Gewirtz

In this class we will take real world examples and write the news. We’ll work with several different formats including radio, television and digital news stories. While the stories may be similar, the platforms are very different requiring different styles, different leads and different ways to present quotes and soundbites. In this class you will learn as a student but participate as if you’re in a real newsroom. After January 20th, the news cycle is likely to change quite dramatically as the new administration is sworn in, in Washington. Beyond writing we’ll also learn about the challenges for journalists these days and the ethics that guide the business.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200 or 1200H. Elective for Media Tracks & Creative Writing. Counts toward Writing Minor.

ENGL 1728/HIST 2909 Media Revolutions

M/W 1:25pm-2:40pm, 1:40pm-2:55pm, D slot

Prof. Jeffrey Freedman

This course will survey the history of media from the ancient world to the present. Taking ‘media’ in the broadest sense to encompass the full range of communications technologies, we will begin with the papyri scrolls of ancient Greece and move from there through the manuscript codex of the Middle Ages, the printed book of the age of Gutenberg, newspapers in the 18th and 19th centuries, radio and film in the 20th century, and the internet and social media of our own digital age. Several recurrent questions will frame our survey of media landscapes: How, to what ends, and in what institutional settings are particular media used? How do they affect modes of thinking? And what are the relations of different media to the various historical forms of religious, political, and economic power?

Elective for Media Tracks; same as HIST 2909; pre-req: ENGL 1100 or ENGL 1200H

ENGL 1800 Intro to Creative Writing

M/W 1:25pm-2:40pm, 1:40pm-2:55pm, D slot

Sarah Snider

This course offers a multi-genre introduction to the art of creative writing from the process of invention through revision. In this class, we will practice writing literary short fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction alongside critically reading and creatively excavating works in all three genres. We will develop and refine our skills through engaging with in-class writing prompts, full-class workshops, and class discussions of a broad stylistic

range of craft techniques and assigned readings; all the while, as we share our work and ideas, we will build our class into its own creative community.

Introduction to Creative Writing presupposes no prior experience with college-level creative writing. Students are encouraged to take this course prior to enrolling in other creative writing classes, and they are required to take it before taking an advanced creative writing class. This course may count towards the Creative Writing Track and Writing Minor. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1100 or 1200.

ENGL 1812 Screenwriting

M/W 3:10pm-4:25pm/3:35pm-4:50pm, E slot

Prof. Erik Mintz

You love movies, right? (otherwise, why are you even reading this?) But how well do you know movies? No, it's not just about that great movie a parent is always telling you to watch (*Casablanca*? *Citizen Kane*? *The Godfather*? Though you might want to listen to them). Here, it's also about knowing what it takes to make a great movie from a terrific screenplay. That means building an involving story. Full of plot twists, conflict, well-written (even memorable?) dialogue, and some sort of resolution. But also, getting your audience intrigued by the characters and drawn into the setting, so they'll stay with you for two hours or so. What we set out to do in this class is to understand how to tell that involving story. Prepare to watch and gain some understanding of some great movies and their screenplays. And then prepare to begin writing one, too.

Elective for Media; cross-list CW; counts towards Writing minor.

ENGL 2000 Textual Methods and Theory

M/W 11:55am-1:10pm, C slot

Prof. Seamus O'Malley

Who decides what texts mean? Why are some interpretations better than others? How much does the author's intention matter? How does language generate meaning? In this foundational course, we will study a variety of texts, including some classic literature, as we consider major debates about meaning and interpretive practices that have emerged throughout the last hundred years.

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, 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 readings difficult at first. But the course is also enjoyable and will help you gain the skills you'll need to read and write critically about all kinds of texts, not just literary ones. We will read poems, short fiction, a novel, and a play, but we will also be interpreting other kinds of "texts" you encounter every day, like videos, essays, photographs (and yes, a photograph can be read as a text—we'll learn how and why). Different sections of the course take up major issues of concern in literary and cultural studies, issues like authorship, language, reading, subjectivity, ideology, aesthetics, and history. Course requirements will include three essays.

This course is a requirement for English majors and minors (but not for the writing minor). It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-Requirement: English 1100 or 1200H.

LITERATURE COURSES: Category II (Survey) Courses

ENGL 2004 Survey of British Literature II

M/W 10:25am-11:40am, B slot

Prof. Seamus O'Malley

This course introduces you to some of the most influential writing in Western literature. We study British poetry and fiction written from 1670-1870 in the retrospectively tagged literary ages: Restoration, Eighteenth Century, Romantic, and Victorian. British literature laid the groundwork for our American literature and influenced English-speaking global literatures, much of which today still alludes to, while rewriting, the texts we'll study. Although this course is a survey stressing the development and changes of literary topics, forms, and genres, we will also study historical influences to which the literature responded. The reading chosen offers a compelling variety, but we'll be focusing on the theme of humanity's place in the universe: How do we relate to the universe? How do we depict it? Is the self in harmony with the world, or alienated from it? And how do individuals relate to others when society lacks common answers to these questions? Writers will include John Milton, Jonathan Swift, William Wordsworth, Mary Shelley, and Christina Rossetti.

This is an Introductory survey course. It fulfills a Survey II B requirement for the English major. It can fulfill a requirement Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2590 African American Literature

M/W 1:25pm-1:40pm/1:40pm-2:55pm, D slot

Prof. Katherine Payne

This course will survey African American literature from the 1700s to the present. Authors will include Phillis Wheatley, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Toni Morrison, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and others. We will examine the relationship between writing and freedom by asking: What role has writing by African Americans played in the long fight for political freedom and equality? How has that writing changed over time—stylistically or otherwise—to reflect the different needs of its historical moment? How has that writing been shaped by different ways of thinking about race? How has race, in turn, been shaped or constructed by that writing? In addition to reading, a significant component of this course will be listening to music such as spirituals, jazz, hip hop, and other works within the African American oral tradition.

This is an Introductory survey course. It fulfills a Survey II B requirement for the English major. It can fulfill a requirement Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

LITERATURE COURSES: Category III (Topics) Courses

ENGL 2700 Intro to Film

Tuesdays 3pm-5:55pm, N slot once a week only

Prof. Nora Nachumi

Focusing principally on classic and contemporary English-language, Hollywood-made cinema, this course provides a comprehensive introduction to the formal elements of film while remaining attentive to the various ways in which film involves interactions with specific audiences and larger social structures. Over the course of the semester, we will investigate how meaning is produced formally, examine the aesthetic and rhetorical aspects of film, and explore the social and cultural contexts that shape how we and other audiences make sense of and take pleasure in films. Some of the films we may consider include: *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Citizen Kane* (1941), *Casablanca* (1942), *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), *Singing in the Rain* (1952), *Rear Window* (1954), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *Star Wars: A New Hope* (1977), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994), *The Matrix* (1999), *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001), *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), *Smoke Signals* (2019), *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022), and *Wicked* (2024). Upon

completing the course, students should have a working knowledge of film form and vocabulary, a general outline of film history, and some critical/theoretical perspectives for analyzing film.

Course requirements include: 5 open-book quizzes, scene analyses worksheets, a midterm, and one 5-7page essay.

Pre-req: English 1100 or 1200H or FYWR 1020. Fulfills category III. Fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts.

ENGL 2820 Literature and the Environment

T/Th 3pm-4:15pm, N slot

Dr. Ann Peters

What do we gain by paying attention to the natural world? In what way does an understanding of the environment, be it “natural” or humanly constructed, inform our language and literature? How have literary interpretations of the land evolved and how have they influenced our attitudes towards nature? Why have so many writers been so consistently concerned and inspired by the idea of wilderness? How can writing and reading about the environment help us to respond to the current threats of climate change?

These are just some of the questions that we will explore in “Literature and the Environment.” This course will introduce students to central literary environmental texts and to some of the debates within the field of eco-criticism. This course also will help you to sharpen your attention to your environment; you will keep an informal nature journal and will take a nature walk.

This course is cross-listed in literature and Creative Writing. While some of what you will be doing in this class is typical of a literature course -- reading and analyzing literary texts--you will also be doing some creative writing of your own. You will be expected to write a nature poem and one longer personal essay.

Readings will include poems by Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Clare, Bishop, and Limon; excerpts from the journal of Henry David Thoreau; classic environmental essays by Berry, Dillard, Muir, Leopold, and Lopez; a very long novel, *The Overstory* by Richard Powers and excerpts from Richard McFarlane’s *The Wild Places*.

There will be a final exam, three short reading responses (2-3 pages each), an observation journal/scrapbook, and one long personal essay about your own experiences with the environment.

Note: This is an honors course and is cross-listed in Literature & Creative Writing.

ENGL 2880 Parents and Children: Five Novels on Family

T/Th 1:35pm-2:50pm, M slot

Prof. Ann Peters

In this course, we will study literature that explores how identity is shaped by family – parents, grandparents, ancestors, foster and stepparents. We will read four classic novels that consider this theme – Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Wives and Daughters* (1866), Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987), and Kiran Desai’s recent novel, *The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny* (2025). We will also be reading an excerpt from Maxine Hong Kingston’s autobiographical novel, *The Woman Warrior* (1976). Although the theme of parents and children runs through all these works and will be the focus of discussion, we will also be talking about a range of other topics: gender and gender roles, the problem of memory, courtship and marriage, the effects of slavery and racism on family and community, childhood and generational trauma, the influence of class and money, and much more. We will also consider the evolution of the novel’s form, from the thick descriptive realism of the Victorian Age (Gaskell) to modernism and stream of consciousness (Woolf) to post-modern experimental narrative (Morrison) and finally to an expansive family saga that draws inspiration from magic realism and from almost all the other modes and forms of narrative already introduced (Desai). Two of the

novels are set in Great Britain, two in the United States, and one is set in multiple places across the Globe: Vermont, New Delhi, New York City, Italy and Mexico.

Note: These are challenging novels, some of them quite long. Please take this into consideration before enrolling in the course. I encourage you to take the class, but you need to be excited to read!

Over the course of the semester, you will write four reading response letters (roughly three pages) and a thesis-driven literary argument paper (6-10 pages). There will be regular reading quizzes and group responses, and a final exam.

III C, Intro

ENGL 2920 Topics: Great Books

T/Th 11:50am-1:05pm, L slot

Prof. Charlotte Fiehn

Great Works will involve the close study of influential texts traditionally regarded as foundational works of Western culture. Through sustained close reading and discussion of Sophocles' *Antigone*, George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, and Albert Camus' *The Stranger*, students will examine how form, language, genre, and historical context shape literary meaning, and how concepts of "greatness" and canon formation emerge, persist, and change over time. The course will emphasize careful attention to textual detail alongside broader consideration of the social, political, philosophical, and aesthetic environments in which these works were produced.

Students will develop skills in close reading, interpretation, and critical analysis, identifying central themes, arguments, and literary strategies and supporting analytical claims with textual evidence. Instruction will center on guided discussion, collaborative inquiry, and frequent writing. Assignments will include weekly reading and three short analytical essays.

This class fulfills a III C Intro. requirement for the English Major. It also fulfills the general requirement, Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2920H Jane Austen: In Her Time and Ours

T/Th 10:25am-11:40am, K slot

Prof. Nora Nachumi

This course examines Austen's major novels in chronological order, situating them within their historical and cultural contexts while also asking if, why, and how they matter today. We will explore Austen's innovative narrative techniques, her artistry in character creation, and her subtle yet powerful use of irony and free indirect discourse to construct vivid psychological portraits. Central questions that guide our readings include: Is Austen a conservative moralist or a quietly subversive critic of her society? How does she transform the pressing political concerns of her era—such as inheritance, property, war, gender roles, and social mobility—into the comic form of the comedy of manners? How do her novels negotiate the boundaries between realism and romance, satire and sentiment?

In addition to close readings of the novels, the course will consider moments in Austen's reception history by exploring different adaptations of her work. By placing Austen "in her time and ours," we will think about what her fiction might have offered readers in her time and what it does in our own.

Assignments include informal reading responses, a midterm exam, a presentation, and a final research paper. Pre-req: English 1100 or 1200H or FYWR 1020. This is a Category III Topics course. It fulfills the General Education category Interpreting Literature and the Arts. It also counts towards the minor in Women's Studies.

ADVANCED LITERATURE COURSE: Category III (Topics)

ENGL 3733 Development of the British Novel III

M/W 3:10pm-4:25pm/3:35pm-4:50pm, E slot

Prof. Seamus O'Malley

The early years of the twentieth century witnessed the peak and decline of Britain's global empire. The modernist experiments of that era, most notably those by Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, engage with Britain's empire in interesting and unexpected ways, both thematically and formally. After the Second World War, and the subsequent independence movements across the crumbling empire, British culture faced a profound challenge to its national identity as waves of immigrants from newly-autonomous nations arrived on English soil. The first-generation descendants of immigrants, like Andrea Levy, Hanif Kureishi and Zadie Smith, fused the cultures and mores of foreign cultures onto the traditional form of the English novel. Meanwhile, the "Commonwealth"—the ghost of the British Empire—emerged into independent nationhood.

This course will investigate two related processes that result from globalization, imperialism and post-coloniality. Throughout, we will witness literary cultures struggling with new forms to depict their ever-changing racial, ethnic, class and sexual identities. Primary authors may include Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, Hanif Kureishi, Salman Rushdie, Andrea Levy, and Zadie Smith.

Class will be discussion-based and participation will be a substantial part of the final grade. There will also be two close reading essays, a final 10-page research essay, and a final exam.

This is an advanced-level "topics" course in English. It fulfills the III B requirement for the English Major. It fulfills the "Interpreting Literature and the Arts" general education requirement. Pre-requisite: an introductory-level literature course or grade of A in ENGL 1100 or 1200 (FHS).

English Department Course Grid, Fall 2026

Monday	Tues	Wed	Thurs
A 9-10:15	J 9-10:15	A 9-10:15	J 9-10:15
ENGL 1100: Composition, Payne		ENGL 1100: Composition, Payne	
B 10:25-11:40	K 10:25-11:40	B 10:25-11:40	K 10:25-11:40
ENGL 1200: Composition, Payne ENGL 1100: Composition, Snider ENGL 2004: Survey of British Literature II, O'Malley (cat. IIB, Intro)	ENGL 2920: Topics: Jane Austen in Her Time, Nachumi (Honors, cat. III)	ENGL 1200: Composition, Payne ENGL 1100: Composition, Snider ENGL 2004: Survey of British Literature II, O'Malley (cat. IIB, Intro)	ENGL 2920: Topics: Jane Austen in Her Time, Nachumi (Honors, cat. III)
C 11:55-1:10	L 11:50-1:05	C 11:55-1:10	L 11:50-1:05
ENGL 1100: Composition, Snider ENGL 2000: Textual Methods and Theory, O'Malley (Required for English Major and Minor, Seminar)	ENGL 2920: Topics: Great Books, Fiehn (cat. IIIC, Intro) ENGL 1200: Nachumi	ENGL 1100: Composition, Snider ENGL 2000: Textual Methods and Theory, O'Malley (Required for English Major and Minor, Seminar)	ENGL 2920: Topics: Great Books, Fiehn (cat. IIIC, Intro) ENGL 1200: Nachumi
D 1:25-2:40, 1:40-2:55	M 1:35-2:50	D 1:25-2:40	M 1:35-2:50
ENGL 1800: Intro to Creative Writing, Snider ENGL 2590: African American Literature, Payne (Intro, cat. II) ENGL 1728 Media Revolutions, Freedman (media X-list)	ENGL 2880: Parents & Children, Peters (cat. IIIC, intro) ENGL 1010: Fiehn	ENGL 1800: Intro to Creative Writing, Snider ENGL 2590: African American Literature, Payne (Intro, cat. II) ENGL 1728 Media Revolutions, Freedman (media X-list)	ENGL 2880: Parents & Children, Peters (cat. IIIC, intro) ENGL 1010: Fiehn
E 3:10-4:25	N 3:00-4:15	E 3:10-4:25;3:35-4:50	N 3:00-4:15
ENGL 3733: Development of the British Novel III, O'Malley (advanced, cat IIIC) ENGL 1100: Composition, Payne ENGL 1812: Screenwriting, Erik Mintz (counts for Media, CW, Writing Minor)	ENGL 1200: Fiehn ENGL 2820: Literature and the Environment, Peters (Honors, intro, cat. III) ENGL 2700: Intro to Film, Nachumi (seminar, cat. IIIB, course meets once per week for film viewings and so continues until 5:40pm)	ENGL 3733: Development of the British Novel III, O'Malley (advanced, cat IIIC) ENGL 1100: Composition, Payne ENGL 1812: Screenwriting, Erik Mintz (counts for Media, CW, Writing Minor)	ENGL 1200: Fiehn ENGL 2820: Literature and the Environment, Peters (Honors, intro, cat. III)
F: 4:40-5:55	P 4:40-5:55	F 5:00-6:15	P 4:40-5:55
	ENGL 2700, which meets once per week, continues in this slot until 5:40pm		
Monday Evening 6:00-8:30pm			
ENGL 1501: News Writing, Gewirtz. 6:00-8:30pm			