

SCW English Department Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

(If you have any questions about how a course 'counts' in the major, please see your English Faculty Advisor; if you still have questions, please contact Prof. Linda Shires shires@yu.edu and if you do not have an English Major Advisor, please contact Prof. Matt Miller matt.w.miller@gmail.com)

ENGL 1503 Columns and Editorials

Wednesday, 5:30-8

Prof. Avital Goldschmidt

This course examines opinion writing for print and online media, focusing on the importance of audience and drawing on both the published writing of major columnists and opinion pieces written by students. Emphasis will be put on political opinion writing, particularly as part of today's American political discourse, as well as longform thought essays. Topics include strategies for finding editorial and column ideas, research process, persuasion skills, and effective writing style and tone. Through readings, writing assignments, and class discussions, each student should be able to execute a well-thought-out, well-written column.

This course, as one of three Journalism basic courses, is strongly recommended for students concentrating in Journalism. This course counts as an elective for the Media Studies and CW tracks. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H. It counts toward the Writing Minor.

ENGL 1600 Advertising Copywriting

Wednesday, 6-8:30

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.

This course is required for students on the media studies track with a concentration in advertising and is an elective for other Media Studies tracks. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

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 12:00-1:15

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

ENGL 1811 Writing for Television
Tuesday 6-8:30

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 track and an elective cross-list for Creative Writing. It also counts towards the Writing Minor. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or FHS.

ENGL 1920 Topics in Creative Writing: Reading, Writing, Blogging Poetry
M/W 3:10-4:25 **Prof. Matt Miller**

(NOTE: THIS COURSE COUNTS FOR LIT. III C Intro, MEDIA, or CW)

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. It is a cross-list with III B Intro. for Literature. It is an elective for Media Studies. It counts towards the Writing Minor. It fulfills the Literature and Arts Requirement. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2000 Ways of Reading
M/W 11:55-1:10

Prof. Joy Ladin

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.

Required for English Major and Minor. Open to others. Students are encouraged to take it early in their career, if possible. Fulfills Literature and the Arts Requirement. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H. This course is normally capped at 18.

II Classes

ENGL 2005 Survey of British Literature III (II C Intro.) Prof. Michael Shelichach T/Th 10:30-11:45

This course surveys British literature from 1879 to the present, with a focus on the ways narratives have constructed and questioned conceptions of the self. Through close readings of select novels, novellas, and short stories, we will consider how notions of human identity changed over the course of the twentieth century and how fiction initiated, responded to, and engaged with those changes. Readings will include works by late Victorians such as Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad, Modernists such as Virginia Woolf and Ford Madox Ford, and contemporary writers such as Rachel Cusk and recent Nobel Prize-winner Kazuo Ishiguro. Requirements will include short writing responses, essays, and a final exam.

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. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

**ENGL 2600 Topics Hist: American Countercultures (II B Intro.) Prof. Matt Miller
M 4:40-5:55 and W5-6:15**

The word “counter-culture” probably first calls to mind the counter-cultures of one’s own generation, usually music-related, whether hipster DIY culture, goth, hip-hop, or, if one is a bit older, grunge, punk, or even hippies and beatniks. Counter-cultures, however, have existed for as long as there have been groups of people unhappy with their present society. They have attracted musicians, artists, activists, poets, philosophers, rebels, and young people. Together, they have created alternate forms of culture that have profoundly affected both their own movements and the mainstream societies they rebelled against.

This course focuses on the literature and counter-cultural expressions of Americans from the early nineteenth century to the present. We will explore different formulations of cultural rebelliousness and redefinition: whether from the “proto-goth” of Edgar Allen Poe or today’s techno-horror and “steampunk” culture, from free-thinking, transcendentalist radicals like Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman to the beatniks and hippies of the 50s and 60s, or from the fiery renunciations of former slaves like Frederick Douglass to the cultural redefinitions of rap and hip-hop. Students in this course will examine and analyze the ways Americans have both rebelled and, what’s harder, created their own alternate forms of society and the culture that shapes it.

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.

III Classes

**ENGL 2750 The Graphic Novel (III B Intro.) Prof. Seamus O’Malley
M/W 3:10-4:25**

For most of the twentieth century, comic books were considered a low form of popular entertainment, suitable only for young boys. Around the 1980s, comics grew up and became graphic novels. Will Eisner gave us the first graphic novel, *A Contract with God* (1978), a fragmented memoir of his childhood in the Jewish Lower East Side; Frank Miller transformed the superhero comic Batman into a fable of paranoia in *The Dark Knight Returns* (1986); Alan Moore exploited the dark side of superhero comics for political commentary in *V for Vendetta* (1985) and *The Watchmen* (1986); and, most importantly for reaching a new audience, art Spiegelman’s *Maus* (1991), a narrative of his grandfather’s memory of the Holocaust, won the Pulitzer Prize.

Subsequent experiments in comic frames, color, texture, and perspective soon followed. The comic book format, invented for action and adventure, proved adept at constructing

memoirs, as evidenced by authors like Chester Brown, Seth, and Joe Matt. Comics became not just for little boys, but for grown men as well.

Along the way, however, pioneering female graphic novelists like Linda Barry, Vanessa Davis, Lauren Weinstein, Miriam Libicki and Alison Bechdel launched major contributions to the graphic novel world, Bechdel's *Fun Home* (2007) being hailed by many as the greatest example of the genre to date. Comics are now for women.

This course will explore many aspects of graphic novels, but its primary aim will be to analyze what makes them a unique art form. Not quite literature, not quite art, they have their own set of conventions and readerly assumptions that require a set of critical interpretive practices that borrow from, but cannot imitate, literary or art criticism.

Course requirements include 5 quizzes, reading responses, a 5-page essay and a final exam.

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. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2793H Fiction and Film: A Translation (III B Intro.)

T/Th 10:30-11:45

Prof. Nora Nachumi

What happens when a novel is adapted into a film? Are some better than others? Who gets to decide what texts mean? How do novels and films generate meaning? Over the course of the semester we will read a selection of novels and short stories which pose very different challenges to those who adapt them in terms of their structure and content. Each text will be considered alongside one or more film adaptation, ranging from those that are "faithful," or "straight" adaptations (e.g. *Emma*, *Like Water for Chocolate*) to those that are much "looser" in their relationship to the original (e.g. *Clueless*, *Blade Runner*, *Young Frankenstein*). We will study the strengths and limitations of these adaptations, paying special attention to the different modes of representation they employ. What can written words do that films cannot and vice versa? What are some of the historical and cultural contexts, the marketing goals and the audience's knowledge that influence the makers and viewers of these adaptations?

Possible texts: novels - *Emma* (Jane Austen), *Frankenstein* (Mary Shelley), *Like Water for Chocolate* (Laura Esquivel), *The Maltese Falcon* (Dashiell Hammet), *Rebecca* (Daphne DuMaurier), *Wuthering Heights* (Emily Bronte); short stories - "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep" (Phillip K. Dick), "Memento Mori" (Jonathan Nolan), "Stand By Me" (Stephen King); Film Adaptations - *Blade Runner* (1982), *Clueless* (1995) & *Emma* (1996), *Frankenstein* (1931) & *Young Frankenstein* (1974) *The Maltese Falcon* (1940), *Memento* (2000); *Rebecca* (1940), *Like Water for Chocolate* (1992); selected material on the components of fiction, film and on the theory and practice of film adaptation.

This is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” Honors 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. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H. One must have a 3.5 average to enroll in an Honors course.

ENGL 2841 Arthurian Legends, Past and Present (III C Intro.)

T/TH 9-10:15

Prof. Gina Grimaldi

Was King Arthur a real person, and did he have an actual Round Table of knights? What are the historical origins of folklore about Guinevere, Merlin, Camelot, and Avalon? This course will explore Arthurian legend in a variety of genres from medieval times to the present day in an attempt to discern fact from fiction—and understand why Arthur’s realm has captivated so many people. Possible works we’ll study include: *Annales Cambriae*; Geoffrey of Monmouth’s writing; Chrétien de Troyes’s *Arthurian Legends*; Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*; William Morris’s *The Defense of Guinevere*; Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*; T.H. White’s *The Once and Future King*; Disney’s *Sword in the Stone*; Helgeland’s *A Knight’s Tale*; and George RR Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Requirements will include at-home essays, a short presentation, and an in-class exam.

This course 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 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 (III C Intro)

M/W 1:25-2:40

Prof. Matt Miller

The great 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, Eugene O'Neill, 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 Introduction to Women’s Studies: Theory and Practice (III D Intro.)
Crosslist with WMNS 1020

T/Th 12:00-1:15

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 fulfills a III D Intro requirement for the English major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisites: English 1100 or FHS. It is required for students pursuing Women’s Studies Minor.

ENGL 2936 Monstrous Imaginations: Then and Now (III C Intro.)

M/W 10:25-11:40

Prof. Linda Shires

Monsters have engrossed the literary imagination for centuries and still capture readers and viewers. A bit like the Geico lizard or the Energizer bunny, they just keep reappearing. Moreover, we can't seem to let them go. We even have vampire apps and werewolf games. Why? In this class we will examine cultural constructions of monstrosity at different historical moments. We'll investigate types of the "monstrous"—especially ghosts, devils, ogres, goblins, vampires, and werewolves. We'll ask how such creatures pose questions about the threat of the unfamiliar, in what ways they and their shadows redirect storytelling, and why such tales simultaneously jolt us and yet remain addictive. Course topics include: relationships between humans and animals, reason and madness, evil and ethics, and much more.

Readings include: old and new, men's and women's, versions of the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood," "Young Goodman Brown" (Nathaniel Hawthorne), *Frankenstein* (Mary Shelley), "Goblin Market" (a poem by Christina Rossetti), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (a novella by Robert Louis Stevenson), and *Dracula* (Bram Stoker). Possible other choices: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (new illustrated edition; J.K. Rowling), *The Book of Lost Things* (John Connolly) or *The Graveyard Book* (Neil Gaiman). We will also watch a film or two. Short critical readings on monstrosity from a psychoanalytic, sociological, feminist, and historical perspective will be supplied.

In addition to participation in class discussion, course requirements include reading responses, the leading of class discussion once, midterm exam, and a paper.

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

ENGL 2960: Representations of the Holocaust (III C Intro)

M/W 11:55-1:10

Prof. Linda Shires

This class studies cultural processing of the Holocaust over time and in different places. We ask: in what ways is the Holocaust depicted (and why and for whom) through kinds of representations: posters, personal statements, fiction, poetry, films, monuments, memorials, and drawing? We pay special attention to changing national traditions in Austria, Germany, America, and Israel. Course materials fall into four units. In the first we look at comparative depictions of key figures: Anne Frank, Oskar Schindler, and Adolf Hitler. We read Anne's *Diary* and watch *The Diary of Anne Frank* (George Stevens, Director), *Schindler's List*, and clips of Nazi Propaganda films including

Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefenstahl, Director). You will understand the centrality of propaganda from viewing it at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) archives online. A second unit examines the meanings and politics of particular places, such as Auschwitz, and of major memorials, monuments, and museums here and abroad, such as Yad Vashem or Theresienstadt. A third unit teaches fiction, poetry, and memoir by survivors. We also consider uses of humor in film and graphic novel by the 2nd generation. A fourth unit studies a recent Holocaust film, alongside a true story of a high school today-- warning us how easy it is to adopt totalitarianism. The course is focused on how a regime successfully persuades people to eradicate millions of fellow human beings and on how sufferers and survivors (and their children and grandchildren and great grandchildren) then are left to cope with and represent the unspeakable.

In addition to participation in class discussion, requirements include reading responses, a midterm exam, and two 7-8pp papers.

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 requirement for the English Major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ADVANCED COURSES

ENGL 3920 Topics: Virginia Woolf (III C Advanced)

M/W 10:25-11:00

Prof. Seamus O’Malley

This single-author course will examine the works of Virginia Woolf (1882-1941). Born in Victorian England to an intellectual family, Woolf was a leading member of the Bloomsbury Group who broke away from so many inherited traditions and experimented with new ways of living and new forms of writing.

One reason Woolf has become so central to literary studies is because her concerns are ours. Her themes include gender, sexuality, empire, nationality, and mental illness. However, Woolf never believed that any topic was simple, and her nuanced writings always present issues as more complex than we might naively assume.

Woolf wrote in many different forms and genres. This course will focus mainly on her novels (*Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando*, *Between the Acts*), but also bring in her short fiction, memoir, critical essays, and diaries.

Woolf is one of the English language’s great prose stylists, but her fiction is challenging. Instead of clear plots, she, like many modernist experimenters, relies on fragmented

interior monologues and streams of consciousness. As much as any other canonical writer, she requires close attention and careful reading. At the same time, her works reward the reader with depictions of everyday emotions and experiences that are intimately recognizable, but also rendered fresh because of Woolf's stylistic techniques.

This is an Advanced course, so course requirements will include two essays (7 page and 12 page), the second of which will incorporate secondary criticism on Woolf. Before the second essay you will be required to orally present a work of secondary criticism that you plan to use for the research essay. There will also be a final exam.

This is an ADVANCED level English course. All students enrolled must have received either a flat "A" in ENGL 1100 or 1200H (and must show the instructor their transcript) or have taken at least one introductory-level literature course in addition to 1100 or 1200H in order to enroll. It fulfills a III C Adv. requirement for the English Major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." It counts towards the Women's Studies Minor.

ENGL 3921 Topics: American Jewish Literature (III C Advanced)

T/Th 1:45-3

Prof. Cynthia Wachtell

The course traces the fascinating development of Jewish American Literature from the late nineteenth century to the present, with a special emphasis on modern day writers.

Through a study of stories, novels, and plays, we explore immigration and Americanization; the impact of the Holocaust; Jewish self-identity and stereotypes; the Jewish family; and more. We will read works by major writers of the past, including Abraham Cahan, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Cynthia Ozick, Saul Bellow, Arthur Miller, and Wendy Wasserstein. And we will read works by major writers of the present, including Nicole Krauss, Jonathan Safran Foer, Allegra Goodman, and Nathan Englander.

Highlights of the course will include a guest visit by a major American Jewish writer and local field trips!

This is an ADVANCED level English course. All students enrolled must have received either a flat "A" in ENGL 1100 or 1200H (and must show the instructor their transcript) or have taken at least one introductory-level literature course in addition to 1100 or 1200H in order to enroll. It fulfills a III C Adv. requirement for the English Major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, "Interpreting Literature and the Arts."