

SCW English Department Fall 2016 Course Descriptions

If you wish to major in English or need a faculty advisor, contact Dr. Matt Miller matt.w.miller@gmail.com ; Questions, contact Dr. Linda Shires shires@yu.edu.

Note: Dr. Nora Nachumi is on leave for Fall.

ENGL 1500 Media Studies

T/Th 12-1:15

Lynda Johnson

How many messages are you bombarded with on a daily basis? This course will explore the way we communicate through mass media and its impact on culture. You will take a close look at the changing and evolving media landscape, as well as how we consume thousands of messages daily from a variety of media sources. With this course you will learn how content is created and disseminated through the various forms of mass media and its impact on our lives. There will be a final media project in this course that uses both traditional and new media methods. Students will leave knowing the importance and impact of media on our society.

Required for all English majors on the media studies track. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H

ENGL 1503 Columns and Editorials

Avital Goldschmidt

Wednesday, 5:30-8

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 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 creative writing tracks. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H. It counts toward the Writing Minor.

ENGL 1600 Advertising Copywriting; x list with Syms MAR 3323 Creative Advertising

Tuesday, 6-8:30

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 1650 Public Relations

Deb Brown

Monday, 5-7:30

Are you interested in the exciting and dynamic world of public relations? In this practical course, you will learn the basics of public relations and will be able to apply those skills to an internship or entry-level position upon graduation. This course is practical (no exams) and involves guest speakers, several papers and a final team project. For the final project, you and your team will develop and present a public relations plan for a real company or nonprofit organization. The company/nonprofit may even execute your ideas! Your final project will become a portfolio piece that you can use on interviews.

This course is required for students with a concentration in public relations and is an elective for other media studies tracks. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

English 1725 Topics in Comm.: Digital Communications

Ted Birkhahn

Thursday, 3:15-5:45 (N/P)

In the fast moving and often unforgiving world of public relations and marketing, digital media has forever changed how companies build and protect their reputations, not to mention how they interact with their customers and sell their products and services. This course dives into the latest trends in digital and social media communications, including some of the best and worst practices occurring in business today. Students will learn how companies and their advisors are using digital communications to proactively build their brands as well as manage major crisis events. Students will be evaluated based on their ability to grasp the strategic, creative and tactical elements of digital communications.

This course is an elective for the media studies track. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 1802 Writing Creative Non-Fiction

Dr. Joy Ladin

M/W 1:25-2:40 D1

“She pushed the light of the English language a little further against the darkness.” That's what E.M. Forster said about Virginia Woolf, and that will be our mission in this class. Secrets, lies, fears, stories we don't know how to tell, things we don't know how to say... Human lives are filled with darkness that language, the right language, can bring into the light of understanding. In this class, we will learn to use language and narrative to illuminate human lives through a number of different forms of creative non-fiction: autobiographical essays; observation and

eavesdropping; in-depth interviews and profiles; and blog that we share online. We will develop the writing skills these forms demand through exercises, drafts, workshops, and online responses to one another's work. We will also analyze writing by established and emerging writers that demonstrates the skills we need, and the challenges we face, in pushing the light of language against the darkness. In addition to the reading I will assign, class members will enrich the syllabus by presenting writing by others that they admire. This class can be taken for either creative writing or literature credit; writing assignments will be adjusted accordingly, but everyone will share their own writing.

This course counts as a Literature course or a CW course. It can fulfill the core requirement Interpreting Literature and the Arts. As a Literature course: 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 is an introductory course in English. It fulfills a III C requirement for the English Major. As a Creative Writing course it counts as an elective for the CW track. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

This course counts toward (1) of the Writing Minor, American Studies Minor, or Women’s Studies Minor.

ENGL 1812 Screenwriting
T/Th 10:30-11:45

Leslie Russell

Screenwriting is the art and craft of visual storytelling. How do we find and develop those ideas and stories that live inside of us, and then bring them to life in cinematic format? Through lectures, screening of clips from features, reading screenplays, intensive screenwriting exercises, students will explore the interplay of visual language, screenplay structure and character to create original compelling and emotional stories. The course follows a workshop format where all students participate in writing, reading and analyzing each other’s work. By the end of the course students are expected to complete the first act of their screenplay with a step outline of the full script they intend to write and maybe even sell!! To awaken the pictures that live in our story-
imagination is to become more fully and radiantly alive - Screenwriting is a creative journey that initiates that personal awakening!

This course counts as an elective for the CW track or for the Media Studies track. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H. It counts toward the Writing Minor.

ENGL 2000: Ways of Reading (formerly called Gateway...)
M 3:10-4:25//W 3:35-4:50

Dr. Matt Miller

Who decides what texts mean? Why are some interpretations better than others? 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 fun 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 and novels, but we will also be interpreting films, essays, photographs and other kinds of texts you encounter every day. Each section of the course takes up major issues of concern in literary and cultural studies, issues like authorship, language, reading, subjectivity, ideology, aesthetics, and history.

This course is required for English majors and minors. Students are encouraged to take it as early as possible in their schedule. This is an introductory-level "Language, Texts and Interpretation" course in English designed to pose questions: Why read? Why write? It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisite English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2004 Survey of British Literature II (II B Intro)
M/W 11:55-1:10

Dr. Linda Shires

Surveying the history of British literature and culture, this course focuses on the 1660s to 1860s. We will read important literary texts within their historical contexts, while establishing key connections among writers, genres, and eras. The class features a terrific variety of poetry and prose from some of the most talented authors of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century and the Romantic and Victorian periods. Readings will include excerpts from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, excerpts from Swift's satire *Gulliver's Travels*, Defoe's castaway fiction *Robinson Crusoe*, children's literature, lyrics, dramatic monologues, odes, sonnets, and George Eliot's/Mary Ann Evans's short realist novel that concerns labor and love, but reads like a fairy tale! *Silas Marner*.

The course includes quizzes, entries to a blog, forum or personal journal (tba), a paper, midterm, a team report (oral and written), and a final exam.

This is an introductory-level "Traditions" course in English designed to pose questions about how texts, interpretive communities and reading practices generate histories. It fulfills a II B requirement for the English Major; and it fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2007 Survey of American Literature II (II C Intro.)
T/Th 3:15-4:30

Dr. Ann Peters

American Literature II introduces a wide variety of works written from after the Civil War until today. You'll look at the way the literature of the nation evolved, study the literary movements of the time, learn terms like "realism," "naturalism," "regionalism," and "modernism," and be introduced to elements of the different genres: poetry, the short story, and the novel. You will think about literature in its context and consider how these texts are responding to changes in the culture at large. We'll be reading three novels (Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and Denis Johnson's *Train Dreams*) and a number of short stories and poems by writers such as William Dean Howells, Hart Crane, Edith Wharton, Abraham Cahan, Robert Lowell, Robert Frost, Sherwood Anderson, William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, Marianne Moore, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Philip Roth and Toni Morrison. There are two papers, a short response to a critical article (5 pages) and a final argument paper (7-10 pages). There will also be a midterm, a final and daily in-class reading responses.

This is an introductory-level "Traditions" course in English designed to pose questions about how texts, interpretive communities and reading practices generate histories. It fulfills a II C Intro.requirement for the English Major; and it fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H. This course counts toward the American Studies Minor.

ENGL 2580 American Jewish Literature (II C Intro.)
T/Th 1:45-3

Dr. Cynthia Wachtell

What does it mean to be a Jewish American writer? Why have some authors embraced this label, while other writers have adamantly rejected it? What unique obligations does the Jewish American writer bear? What type of stories and novels are "good" for the Jews, and who gets to decide?

This course traces the development of Jewish American literature from the late nineteenth century to the present. The short stories, novels, poems, plays, and humorous sketches we read offer a fascinating look at how the Jewish American experience and Jewish American identity have changed and continue to change. Among the topics we consider are: the conflict between tradition and modernity; the legacy of the Holocaust; the experiences of immigration, Americanization, secularization and suburbanization; Jewish self-identity; Jewish stereotypes; gender roles; and the bonds of the Jewish family.

We will read works by many famous Jewish American authors including: Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Henry Roth, Bernard Malamud, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Philip Roth, Grace Paley, Cynthia Ozick, Saul Bellow, Wendy Wasserstein, Nathan Englander, and Nicole Krauss.

This is an introductory-level “Traditions” course in English designed to pose questions about how texts, interpretive communities and reading practices generate histories. It may be used towards the category II C Intro. requirement for the English Major; and it fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H. This course counts toward the American Studies Minor.

ENGL 2750 The Graphic Novel (III B Intro.)
M 3:10-4:25/W 3:35-4:50

Dr. Seamus O’Malley

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 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. This course fulfills the American Studies minor.

ENGL 2880H Parents and Children (III C Intro)
M 4:40-5:55/ W 5:00-6:15pm

Dr. 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 an Honors Course (3.5 GPA needed to enroll). 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. This course counts toward the American Studies Minor.

ENGL2920 Topics: The Russian Short Novel (III C Intro.)
Tues/Thurs. 1:45-3:00

Dr. Manfred Weidhorn

A newly liberated college senior declares, perhaps not without irony, at a graduation party in Noah Baumbach's movie *Kicking and Screaming*, "The first thing I'm going to do is read all the great short novels." For reasons that are not quite clear, Russia has provided perhaps the greatest number of outstanding short novels of any Western society. (One editor speaks of "short novels [or long stories—a particularly Russian form known as *spovesti*].") Indeed, some by the two titans, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, are among the supreme works of literature.

This course will survey, in translation and mainly in chronological order, the greatest Russian novellas. We will scrutinize plot, character, imagery, as well as philosophical, religious, and psychological ramifications; also, within the unavoidable constraints of translation, choice of words and questions of style. No less important are questions of structure; why, for instance, does a tale about a dying man begin with him already dead? Or, what is achieved by the at first blush odd organization of expository and narrative material in NOTES FROM THE

UNDERGROUND and in THE KREUTZER SONATA?

Works by Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoyesvki, Chekhov, Bunin. Two short (1000 words) papers [5%], a longer one (3000) [20%], midterm [25%] and final examinations [50%].

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 is an introductory course in English. It fulfills a IIC requirement for the English Major. It can be used to fulfill a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisite: English 1100 or FHS.

ENGL2921 Topics: Shakespeare (III C Intro.) M/W 9-10:15

Gina Grimaldi

Shakespeare died in 1616. Yet he remains the most famous writer of the English-speaking world. Poet and playwright, he has been read and performed constantly. Why is that? Why do so many people think his writing is so great? What meanings did his plays have in his own time, and how do we read, speak, or listen to his words now? What should we watch for when viewing his plays? SCW students have requested a class on Shakespeare only, so rather than look at his works in the context of other Renaissance dramatists or poets, we’ll focus on some of his masterworks instead.

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

ENGL 2960: Representations of the Holocaust (III C Intro) M/W 10:25-11:40

Dr. Linda Shires

This class studies cultural interpretations of the Holocaust over time and in different places. We ask: in what ways is the Holocaust depicted (and why and for whom) through posters, books, films, literature, monuments, museum displays, and by different generations? We pay special attention to changing national traditions of interpretation in Austria, Germany, America, and Israel. Course materials fall into four units. In the first unit we will look at comparative depictions of key figures: Anne Frank, Oskar Schindler, and Adolf Hitler. In this unit we will watch *The Diary of Anne Frank* (George Stevens, Director); clips of Nazi Propaganda films including *Triumph of the Will* (Leni Riefenstahl, Director) and numerous examples of kinds of propaganda from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) archives online; clips from the documentaries *Schindler* and *Blind Spot: Hitler’s Secretary*; and the film *Schindler’s List*. In

a second unit, we will examine the meanings and politics of particular places such as Auschwitz and of major memorials, monuments (in Berlin and Vienna), and museums (the USHMM, the Jewish Museum of Berlin, and Yad Vashem). Literature figures largely in a third unit of the course; here we look at stories, poetry, memoir, and novel. We also consider uses of humor in film and graphic novel by the 2nd generation. A fourth unit concerns art installations, toys, and art. Woven throughout the course we read essays by prominent Holocaust scholars such as: Ian Kershaw, James Young, Sarah Horowitz, Tim Cole, Marianne Hirsch, and others.

Required: reading quizzes; midterm exam; 2 exercises leading to each paper: one 6-7pp argument paper; one researched, 10-12pp argument paper replacing 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 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.

ENGL 2971 Literature and Social Change: World War I. (III C Intro.)

M/W 11:55-1:10

Dr. Seamus O’Malley

The Great War, or First World War (1914-1918), was a cataclysmic event so shocking that we are still living through its repercussions. Empires collapsed, nations emerged, and boundaries were established that are still proving problematic. But the impact went beyond geopolitics. Theories of the mind were recast, as the first diagnoses of “shell shock”—now known as post-traumatic stress disorder—challenged prevailing notions of the psyche. Especially in Britain, women replaced men on the factory line, disrupting traditional notions of gender and domestic space. And the young men and women who came of age during the war—those whom Gertrude Stein later referred to as “The Lost Generation”—would never trust political authorities again. In short, the Great War ushered in the modern world, for good or ill.

The war had an equally seismic impact on culture and the arts. Notions of stability and tradition were exploded, replaced by an aesthetic of rupture and fragmentation. Ironically, this disillusionment transformed into creativity, as the cycles of death injected new life into poetry, prose, painting and music, as well as the still infant form known as “motion pictures.”

This course will cover British literature of the war. We’ll begin by reading the poems of “trench poets” like Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and Isaac Rosenberg. We will then turn to the novelists—mostly female—who wrote early fictional accounts of the war (Rebecca West, May Sinclair, Virginia Woolf). We will conclude with the flowering of war novels and memoirs of the late 1920s by writers such as Ford Madox Ford and Robert Graves. Along the way we will read critical and historical accounts of the war and its social consequences in fields like psychology, nursing and medicine, and politics.

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 COURSE

(REQUIRED FOR ENTRY: A previous or concurrent Introductory English course or flat A in English 1100 or 1200H)

ENGL 3921 Topics: The Harlem Renaissance (III C Advanced)

T/Th 1:45-3

Dr. 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 examine the literature of the Harlem Renaissance alongside art and music of the period. We will critically reflect on negotiations of race as they appear in Harlem Renaissance works and consider the features that distinguish Harlem Renaissance texts from other 20th century literary texts. We’ll be watching two documentaries about the period—one on the music coming out of Harlem at the time and another about the visual artists of the period. We will read works by Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Claude McKay, James Weldon Johnson, Nella Larsen, Jean Toomer, Jessie Fauset, Alain Locke, and George Schuyler. You will write four short reading responses, a museum visit report (5 pages) and one longer research paper (10 pages) on a topic of your choice. There will be a midterm and a final.

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 it matters. It is an Advanced-level course. 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.” Pre-requisites: one previous course in English literature or a straight “A” on transcript for ENGL 1100 or 1200H. It counts toward the American Studies Minor.