

SCW English Department Spring 2015 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 x-list with CW
Tuesday 5:00-7:30pm

Alan Tigay

Focuses on the skills and techniques of writing unsigned editorials and signed columns for newspapers, magazines, and web-based publications.

Strongly recommended for the Journalism track in Media Studies. Elective for other Media Studies Tracks. Cross-lists with Creative Writing as elective. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 1610 Advanced Advertising Copywriting
Wed. 6:00-8:30 xlist with Sy Syms Marketing

Erik Mintz

What does it take to get a job as a copywriter in the advertising business? A good book, for sure. The "book" means your portfolio, the spec ads that you'll need to show to a prospective employer. This course will be an intensive workshop devoted to further exploring what it takes to get your print, TV, and Internet ideas whipped into shape. For those who haven't taken the preliminary Advertising Copywriting course (ENG 1600), we will review principles discussed in that class and then go full force into trying to make creative, provocative and smart ads that could compel a viewer of the ad to act upon the message. *Note: For portfolio to be in presentation shape, student should be prepared to work on the "art" side of the ad as well, doing a semi-professional job in Photoshop, with her own hand-drawn artistic ability, or by enlisting the art talents of a fellow student.*

Required for students on the Advertising Track; Elective for other Media Studies Tracks. Pre-requisite: ENGL 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 1651 Developing Effective Messages
Mon. 5:00-7:30

Deb Brown

Every day, you're bombarded with multiple messages from various companies in the forms of advertising, public relations, promotions and more. What messages capture your attention? Which ones do you ignore and why? If you had to develop a campaign about a new product or company, how would you break through the clutter to ensure your target audience is listening to your message? This course will explore how to use public relations techniques to rise above the noise and effectively engage your audience. As part of a team, you will choose a product in a crowded marketplace and learn how to develop a strong message platform to differentiate your product from its multiple competitors.

You will learn how to effectively conduct a focus group and survey, write a key message document and develop a plan that your team will present to industry experts in public relations, advertising and marketing. The class will also focus on how to write a persuasive argument, why media training is critical in winning interviews, how to effectively present, and more. This is a practical class, which means no exams. However, there are several papers, an op-ed as the midterm assignment, and a final team project.

This course is required for the PR Track. Elective for other Media Studies tracks. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H

English 1800, Introduction to Creative Writing
T/Th 1:45-3

Prof. Matt Miller

This creative writing course will introduce students to two genres: poetry and short stories. Toward the end of the semester, we will briefly experiment with a third genre: the one-act play. Students will explore what makes each of these modes of writing unique, as well as how they overlap, complicate, and enrich one another. Your workload will be comprised of both reading and writing with an emphasis on your own creative work. You will be expected to produce one revised and polished short story, several short poems, and a brief one-act play. In addition, you will be learning terms and concepts important to these genres, and you will respond to several outstanding examples of poetry, stories, and short plays from established writers. You will share your writing with your professor and your fellow students, and we will try some exercises that will challenge you to write in new ways. You may come to this course with little or no experience in writing, but you will leave having developed your natural potential for creative expression in language.

This course is a required for English majors on the Creative Writing Track. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2000, Gateway: Introduction to Critical Methods
T/Th 10:30-11:45

Prof. Nora Nachumi

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.

Required for the English Major and Minor. Students are encouraged to take it as early as possible in the major. This course is a “Language, Texts and Interpretation” course in English designed to pose questions: Why read? Why write? It is an introductory-level course in English. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum.: “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H. This course is normally capped at 18.

II Classes

English 2007 Survey of American Literature II (II C Intro) **T/Th 12-1:15**

Prof. Matt Miller

This course in American Literature opens upon a world radically different from our own: no gasoline engines, telephones, air conditioning, film, radio (the word “broadcast” referred to a method of sowing seeds), no refrigerators, toilet paper, matches, light bulbs, or blue jeans. The Civil War, recently concluded, had left America morally and physically exhausted. Slaves had been freed, but much of the South was in ruins. It was a time of immense industrialization, immense change, and these changes would only accelerate in the decades ahead, as radios, television, and finally computers revolutionized how we apprehend ourselves and our world. Machine guns would be invented, then airborne bombers (first in the form of dirigibles), and then the atomic bomb. It took an art as vibrant and dynamic as American literature to keep up, and keep up it did, as writers explored ever-evolving ways of expressing their world in language. To do justice to a span of creative production this rich and varied is indeed daunting. We will try our best, as we read some of the most important authors of the last century and a half, including Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, Willa Cather, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, and John Ashbery, to name only a few. Through intense, athletic reading, lively and focused conversation, and our own reflective writing, students will come away with more sophisticated and enlivening understandings of American literary classics, as we relate these writings both to history and our own present lives.

ENGL 2600 Historical Approaches: Shakespeare among English Renaissance Dramatists (II A Intro) **T/Th 10:30-11:45**

Prof. Manfred Weidhorn

Shakespeare’s contemporary, Ben Jonson, said in a eulogy of his erstwhile rival, “He was not of an age, but for all time!” He meant that Shakespeare dealt not just with

current issues but with universals of human nature, with those traits that are as salient today as in the past. That reach applies to space as well as time, for, thanks to frequent stage performances of his plays worldwide, Shakespeare is easily the world's most famous writer, as well as one of the greatest. Such transcendence makes us forget that he, like all human beings, started out in a particular time and place. He was part of the Elizabethan-Jacobean cultural flowering, which, along with Classical Greece, the Spanish Golden Age, and the Paris of Louis XIV, is a landmark in theatrical history.

This course will do two things: study some of Shakespeare's best works in the three major genres (comedy, history, tragedy) and sample some of the best plays by his contemporaries (Marlowe, Jonson, Webster), plays which, had they not been overshadowed by Shakespeare's, would be considered classics in their own right. We will consider such themes as theatrical conventions, the nature of comedy and tragedy, the problem of evil, the definition of heroism, the role of metaphor.

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

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

Prof. Cynthia Wachtell

The course traces the development of Jewish American Literature from the late nineteenth century to the present. Students read short stories, novels, plays, essays, and humorous sketches. Among the topics we will focus upon 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 complex bonds of the Jewish family. Authors include Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Cynthia Ozick, Saul Bellow, Wendy Wasserstein, & Woody Allen.

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 honors course. It fulfills a II C requirement for the English major. It can fulfill a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

III Classes

ENGL 2791 Children's Literature (III C Intro.)
M/W 10:25-11:40

Prof. Linda Shires

Remember the child in yourself? Are you ready to find her again? It is fun to read with children, but adults also read children's books on their own to return to a world of the imagination that gets, well, dulled by adult responsibilities. From fairy tales to adventure

stories, fantasies to animal fables, we'll explore together the ever-fascinating world of children's fiction.

In this course you'll encounter a variety of stories and novellas written from the seventeenth-century up to modern times, with a focus on English and American literature. The conception of the child and childhood has changed over time and so we'll study sociological, psychological, aesthetic, and literary issues. We'll be asking such questions as: How does children's literature "work" for children *and* adults? How does it "work" in culture? What can children's literature tell us about how children "grow up"? What can it reveal about reading? How can images work collaboratively in verbal texts? What do our own favorite books tell us about ourselves?

Authors include: Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Lewis Carroll, Rudyard Kipling, Roald Dahl, E.B. White, Angela Carter, Emma Donoghue, Robert C. O'Brien, Peggy Rathmann, Maurice Sendak, and others. Selections run 2--200 or so pages and many have illustrations.

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. It can be used to fulfill a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

English 2779 Fact and Fiction: American Literary Nonfiction x-list CW, J, (III C Intro.) T/Th 3:15-4:30 Prof. Ann Peters

Fact and Fiction examines the development since World War II of alternative forms of journalism in America—literary nonfiction, new journalism, personal journalism, the non-fiction novel. Combining the accuracy of nonfiction with the dramatic force of fiction, the best of expository prose with the readability of the novel or the short story, literary nonfiction is a genre that has dramatically altered our definitions of journalism and of literature. Some the questions we will ask in this course are: Why have some journalists in the 20th century intentionally departed from standard practices valued by mainstream journalists, foregoing the objective stance to include their own involvement in the story—both as creator and as subject? What makes a piece of journalism "creative?" What is the connection between form and subject matter? How do facts contribute to our fictions and how does fiction contribute to the facts?

In this course we read essays and longer works by John Hersey, James Agee, Joseph Mitchell, Truman Capote, Joan Didion, John McPhee, Calvin Trillin, Janet Malcolm, Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, David Shields, David Foster Wallace, and others. We end the course by reading examples of literary non-fiction being written now, and together, as a class, investigate some of the online and print venues where creative nonfiction is being published. You will write several short response papers and a longer comparison paper, (7-10 pages). You'll also try your hand at your own work of literary nonfiction, and will write a short report on your findings on examples of literary nonfiction being published now. There will be a midterm but no final.

This is a cross-listed course which can count for CW, LIT, or Journalism. In Creative Writing and in Journalism, this is an elective. In Literature 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. The course is open, however, to students who are not majoring in English. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2880 Parents and Children (III C Intro.)
T/Th 3:15-4:30

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, overcome 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 Mark Twain, Willa Cather, William Faulkner, Saul Bellow, Toni Morrison, Sylvia Plath, Marilynne Robinson, 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 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. It counts towards the Minor in American Literature. It can be used to fulfill a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2920H Topics in Literature: Classic Texts/Contemporary Revisions (III C Intro.; Honors)
T/Th 1:45-3

Prof. Ann Peters

In this course, we read four ‘classic’ works alongside later poems, stories, and novels written in response. Our aim is to consider some of the ways that writers re-imagine and revisit canonical texts. What is gained in doing so? What are the conditions under which

literary forms evolve? We will, for example, consider Shakespeare from a post-colonial perspective and read several revisions of the original play as well as poems and essays that 'rewrite' the play, either through a critical lens or a more creative one. Readings for the course will include: Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in conjunction with the poetry of Browning, Shelley, Aime Cesaire, Rilke, Lemuel Johnson, and Ted Hughes; Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* and Tillie Olson's *Tell Me a Riddle*; Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach* and poems in response; Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*. You will write four short response papers (2-3 pages) and two longer papers (7-10 pages). There will also be 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 is an honors course; entry is with a 3.5 GPA. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisite: 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2922 Topics in Literature: The Outsider in American Literature (III C Intro.)

M/W 1:25-2:40

Prof. Joy Ladin

America was built by outsiders. Puritans and Quakers fleeing religious persecution left their own country for a new life. Yet those very outsiders soon pushed, as pioneers, into Native American territory and took over. They themselves held slaves in the south and later caricatured new immigrants, such as the Irish. What is the line between outsider and insider anyway? When are outsiders heroes and when denigrated for their differences? When, how, and why does one turn into the other? And how did American Literature come to grips with this complex question? Americans celebrate individualism and individuality, proudly call our country the melting pot of the world, but look suspiciously at those whom we see as "not like us." When American writers portray outsiders, they are portraying the conflicted soul of America itself.

This class will explore the American literary fascination with outsiders from several different perspectives. We will start by examining how the least marginalized group in American history – educated white men—portrayed outsiders. Among writers we will study are: Emerson, Poe, and Melville. We will then turn to women's writing and examine how white women are themselves represented as outsiders. We will analyze stories by Wilkins Freeman, Chopin, and Perkins Gilman to understand how seeming insiders could be outsiders. We will conclude by examining one of the great revolutions in American literary history: the full emergence of African-American men and women authors. The searing, penetrating explorations of African-American life in works such as DuBois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Hurston's southern sketches offer an inside look at the effects of treating a minority as outsiders in what we think of as the greatest, most inclusive nation on earth.

In addition to a midterm and a final exam, class members will write a short personal essay and a critical essay exploring the portrayal of outsiders in one or more texts.

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. It counts towards the American Studies Minor. It can be used to fulfill a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

English 2923 Topics in Literature: The Graphic Novel (III C Intro)

M/W 3:10-4:25

Prof. 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, a 5-page essay and a final 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 is an introductory course in English. It fulfills a IIIC 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 1200H.

ENGL 2936 Monstrous Imaginations: Ghosts, Witches, Werewolves, Oh My!
(III C Intro) M/W 10.25-11:40

Gina Grimaldi

This course will explore the figure of the monster in its various forms across literary genres and periods. Using anthropological and psychological angles, we will examine the abhorrent and wicked creatures that disturb us yet persistently inhabit popular fiction. We will discuss how and why authors have imagined monsters—beings that are categorically “other” than us but sometimes unnervingly similar to us—in an attempt to understand what monsters have represented and what functions they have performed from classical era to modern day.

We’ll start our investigation into monstrosity with the 1970s children’s picture-book classic, *The Monster at the End of this Book: Starring...Grover*, which one critic calls “a fascinating treatise on several of the philosophical problems lurking at the core of modern and classical thought.” Next we’ll return to earlier traditions by reading a few Greco-Roman myths, a medieval werewolf poem, Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, and selected early-American short stories. Lastly we will study more recent works, some familiar and some divisive: Shirley Jackson’s *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Stephanie Meyer’s *Twilight*, Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith’s *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*, and Patrick Ness’s *A Monster Calls*, perhaps among others.

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 IIIC 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 1200H.

ADVANCED COURSES

ENGL 3920 Topics in Literature: Irish Renaissance (III C ADV)

M/W 11:55-1:10

Prof. Seamus O’Malley

What is a Literary Renaissance? In the year 1890 Irish literature was barely a blip on the world radar. By 1922, W.B. Yeats and James Joyce were towering figures of world literature. How did this happen?

The answer involves issues of language, culture, politics, and empire. The 32 years this course will investigate saw dizzying change, due to the Great War, suffragism, the attempted revival of the Irish language, and an eventual revolution against British rule. Throughout, Irish writers began crafting novels, plays, poems and stories that both charted the particulars of contemporary Irish life, while also engaging in universal themes that continue to draw readers a century later.

Irish writers faced many paradoxes: writing about Ireland in English; writing about Ireland from London; writing about an Irish nation that did not yet exist. It is these very paradoxes that produced such creativity, and we will consider the works of Lady Gregory, Yeats, J.M. Synge, Emily Lawless, Joyce, and Sean O'Casey.

Course requirements will include one class presentation, one 5-page essay, one 10-page research 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 it matters. It is an advanced-level course. It fulfills a III C requirement for the English Major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Prerequisites: one previous course in English literature or a straight "A" on transcript for ENGL 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL3921 Topics in Literature: Austen in her Time (III C ADV)
T/Th 12-1:15 Prof. Nora Nachumi

Jane Austen's novels have been called "timeless" in the sense that they still appeal to readers today. In this course we examine the assertion by considering the novels as products of their time. In addition to Austen's six major novels, we will read excerpts from her juvenilia, biographical material, selections of work by Austen's contemporaries, social history, and current literary criticism in order to educate ourselves about the contexts that helped shape the novels, and to learn about the issues which the novels engage. If time allows, we may also read and/or view some current interpretations of the novels in order to further examine the "timeless" nature of Austen's appeal.

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 requirement for the English Major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Prerequisites: one previous course in English literature or a straight "A" on transcript for ENGL 1100 or 1200H. It counts towards the Minor in Women's Studies.