



Department of English
Undergraduate Course Descriptions
Fall 2026



English Department Faculty



Chiji Akoma,
Michael Dowdy,
Alan Drew,
Joseph Drury,
Michelle Filling-Brown,

Travis Foster,
Heather Hicks,
Karyn Hollis,
Brooke Hunter,
Kamran Javadizadeh,

Yumi Lee,
Jean Lutes,
Joseph Lennon,
Crystal Lucky,
Mary Mullen,

Adrienne Perry,
Megan Quigley,
Evan Radcliffe,
Lara Rutherford-Morrison
Lauren Shohet,

Mary Beth Simmons,
Catherine Staples,
Kimberly Takahata,
Tsering Wangmo.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: FALL 2026

COURSES THAT FULFILL ENGLISH REQUIREMENTS:

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PRE-1800

Pre-1500

- 3001 Foundational Lit in ENG 1
- 3150 Chaucer

1500 - 1650

- 3001 Foundational Lit in ENG 1

1650 - 1800

- 3001 Foundational Lit in ENG 1
- 4590 U.S. Independence at 250

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH POST-1800

1800 – 1945

- 4500 Black Atlantic
- 4642 Fictions of Motherhood

1945 – PRESENT

- 3650 African Drama
- 4642 Fictions of Motherhood
- 4651 Undocumented Americans
- 4654 25 Poems

**BLACK, AFRICANA, LATINX, INDIGENOUS, ASIAN
AMERICAN AND/OR ASIAN LITERATURE**

- 3650 African Drama
- 4500 Black Atlantic
- 4590 U.S. Independence at 250
- 4651 Undocumented Americans

Courses offered that count for the...

Minor/Concentration in Creative Writing:

2003	Intro to Creative Writing	2017	Writing Detective Fiction
2005	Writing the Short Story	2018	Nature Writing Workshop
2006	Writing of Poetry	2061	Editing & Publishing

Major/Minor in Gender & Women's Studies:

3001	Foundational Lit in ENG 1	4654	Fictions of Motherhood
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Major/Minor in Peace & Justice:

2790	Rewriting Genres of White Supremacy	4654	Fictions of Motherhood
		4651	Undocumented Americans
4590	U.S. Independence at 250		

Writing Practice/Critical Theory Elective for the Minor & Concentration in Writing and Rhetoric*:

2003	Intro to Creative Writing	2020	Digital Journalism
2005	Writing the Short Story	2061	Editing & Publishing
2006	Writing of Poetry	2250	Ways of Reading
2017	Writing Detective Fiction	2993	Internship
2018	Nature Writing Worksho	2996	Internship

GIS: Africana Studies Major/Minor

2790	Rewriting Genres of White Supremacy	4500	Black Atlantic
3650	African Drama		

Minor in Sustainability

2018	Nature Writing Workshop
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Minor in Legal Studies

4590	U.S. Independence at 250
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Major/Minor in Latin American Studies

4651	Undocumented Americans
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Major in Cultural Studies

2790	Rewriting Genres of White Supremacy
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**note: all ENG courses 2000 and above with a literature focus count toward the Upper Level Lit requirement for the minor/concentration in Writing & Rhetoric*

UPPER-LEVEL ENGLISH COURSES

ENG 2003-001 Introduction to Creative Writing

TR 8:30 AM – 9:45 AM

Tsering Wangmo

This introductory level creative writing workshop aims to spark your interest and talents as a reader and creative writer in the genres of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. We will think about craft— what it is, what it does, and how— in a way that makes craft fun, accessible, and inclusive. Reading closely the works of contemporary writers you will discuss what you love about their writings. These discussions will help you understand the art and craft of their writing, what you can learn from them, and how you can build your own creative works. You'll generate new work each week in response to prompts.

Class time will include in-class writing, technique-focused exercises, and reading responses. You will have the chance to workshop your writing in a supportive environment and revise using the feedback you receive. No previous writing experience is required.

This course number can be taken multiple times

This course counts toward the minor in Creative Writing

This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

ENG 2005-001 Writing the Short Story

MW 3:20 PM – 4:35 PM

Alan Drew

Writing is sometimes inspiration, other times epiphany, and still other times catharsis. But mostly writing is discipline and the mastery of craft. This is an introductory course to the process of short story writing specifically, but also to fiction writing in general. This process will include not only the reading of many

short stories by well-established writers, but also the consistent production of your own creative work. The goals of this course are to analyze from a writer's viewpoint the work of many contemporary and classical authors, to strengthen your ability to discuss such work, and to use what you have learned throughout this process to inform your own writing.

Class time will be divided between reading and discussing the work of established authors, writing exercises that emphasize various elements of craft, and the sharing and constructive discussion of students' works. Since good writers are also good readers, students should expect a fairly heavy reading load outside of class. For this class to be successful in its goals, student participation is essential. This is not a lecture class, but rather a participatory experience where the work we all contribute will lead to our growth as writers. I hope for an atmosphere that is supportive, lively, thoughtful, creative, honest, and one that encourages us all to take risks.

*This course counts towards the minor in Creative Writing
This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric*

ENG 2006-001 Writing of Poetry

TR 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM

If you've wished to read and write poems in the company of other artists, this writing workshop might be the one for you. This course focuses on the pleasures and insights of poetry. Over the course of the semester, you will read many poems to explore key elements of the art of poetry (such as image, sound, form, rhythm), and you will write poems using your own experience, imagination, and observation.

Class time will include writing to prompts, technique-focused exercises to make you familiar with the many forms a poem might

take, and exploration in small groups to how and why a poem moves you or bring about a change in you.

The workshop element of the course is dedicated to your writing. Your poems will be read in an environment that allows for constructive feedback. It's important that the workshop promotes the growth and development of each artist while also honoring their creative intuitions and lived experiences. You will have the chance to revise your works using the feedback you receive.

No previous writing experience is required.

This course counts toward the minor in Creative Writing

This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

ENG 2017-001 Writing Detective Fiction

MW 1:55 PM – 3:10 PM

Alan Drew

Do you love detective fiction? Have you always wanted to write your own “whodunit?” In this course, you’ll read and analyze classic and contemporary detective fiction while working to produce, workshop, and polish your own creative work. We will read a wide range of authors from Raymond Chandler and Cormac McCarthy to Richard Price and Attica Locke. We will also explore the genre in films such as John Sayles’s *Lone Star* and Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*. While we will look closely at the classic tropes in detective fiction, we will also look at the way some of these authors and filmmakers push against those tropes to create authentic works of art that defy genre expectations. Class time will be divided between reading and discussing the work of these authors, writing exercises that emphasize various elements of craft, and the sharing and constructive discussion of student work. Since good writers are also good readers, students should expect a fairly heavy reading load outside of class. For this class to be successful in its goals, student participation is essential. This is not a lecture

class, but rather a participatory experience where the work we all contribute will lead to our growth as writers. I hope for an atmosphere that is supportive, lively, thoughtful, creative, honest, and one that encourages us all to take risks.

This course counts toward the minor in Creative Writing

This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

ENG 2018-001 Nature Writing Workshop

TR 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM

Catherine Staples



Are you curious about the fall migration, chimney swifts, bog gardens, the connection between bio-diverse native trees and wildlife? Does the natural world include the urban? Where do we fit in? Would you like to listen and write in the meadows and woods, even on the edge of a parking lot where unseen water collects deep in the aquifer? Our time in the garden will be a source for the creative non-fiction, poetry, and fiction pieces you'll write this semester.

Nature Writing Workshop is designed to immerse you in a writer's habits and to awaken you to the web of interrelationships in the natural world. Good writing is born of close observation, alert listening, and curiosity. Much of the writing we do will begin in

the field—whether we are studying the bog gardens at Stoneleigh or releasing newly banded warblers or saw-whet owls at Rushton Farm. From H. D. Thoreau and Nan Shepherd to R. W. Kimmerer, Robert Macfarlane, Ada Limon, and Tracy K. Smith, we’ll study writing we admire—following leads, noting word choice, imagery, imagination, metaphor and sound—as well as the sentence and the line. Field trips and walks will be occasions for writing and expanding knowledge of agro-ecology, habitat, regenerative farming, birds, native plants and trees. Our focus will be on process and discovery, on sharpening language and seeing more deeply.

This course counts toward the minor in Creative Writing

This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

This course counts toward the minor in Sustainability

ENG 2020-001 Digital Journalism

MWF 10:40 AM – 11:30 AM

Lara Rutherford-Morrison

This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of journalism, with an emphasis on digital media. Our class will focus on the ins and outs of digital journalism as a practice, with students gaining hands-on experience writing within a variety of media platforms. Assignments may include writing news stories for the web, covering live events via social media, podcasting, and more. Throughout, we will work to build a solid foundation of good writing and a core understanding of journalistic standards and ethics.

Furthermore, students in this class will think and write about the existential and ethical questions plaguing our rapidly changing, embattled media landscape: Has digital media democratized journalism or eroded its foundations? How have social media and the rise of an influencer economy altered what it means to be “authentic” or “real”? How has the ubiquity of generative AI

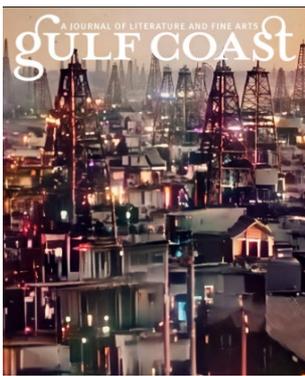
influenced our collective understanding of “truth” and “objectivity”? And what is the deal with “fake news”?

This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

ENG 2061-001 Editing & Publishing

MWF 12:50 PM – 1:40 PM

Adrienne Perry



This hands-on course asks what it means to “make culture” through the act of editing and publishing, an act that occurs at the “intersection of art and commerce.” While the course focuses on literary publishing, primarily through journals and their impact on literary culture in the United States, we will consider the work of editors and publishing broadly. To understand editing and publishing in light of the current literary landscape, we will discuss the economic and social forces shaping it now and in the past: the Amazonification of publishing, the role of AI, book bans and censorship, and questions of equity and representation.

Editorial sessions where editors evaluate poetry and prose, the practice of developmental and line editing, drafting letters to authors, the development of resumés geared toward editorial work, and the creation of a unique literary journal are some of the

activities, skills, and projects students will develop and learn from across the term.

Essays by editors, contemporary poetry and prose, editor-author correspondence, and original and edited texts will prepare students for this active editorial work. *Literary Publishing in the Twenty-first Century*, *What Editors Do*, and submissions from journals such as *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature & Fine Arts* will serve as guides, while conversations with editors and authors will deepen our background knowledge and editorial skills.

This is a good course for writers eager to understand the editorial process, those who are “editing and publishing curious,” and readers interested in contemporary literature. Requirements: Participation in editorial sessions, editorial letters, the creation of a literary journal or zine, and active engagement, among other activities.

This course counts toward the minor in Creative Writing

This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

ENG 2250-001 Ways of Reading: Lit Analysis

TR 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM

Michael Dowdy

This course will provide English majors with the skills and methods they need to become careful, critical readers of texts. We will explore a variety of forms and genres including poetry, drama, short stories, film, and long-form prose works. We will also explore different lenses, or critical methodologies, that shape how we interpret texts. These lenses might include historicism, queer theory, feminist theory, critical race theory and others.

As we dip into these schools of thought, we will consider how different ways of reading will always make some interpretive insights more legible and obscure others. This course also offers an introduction to the research paper and a chance to produce your

own literary criticism informed by one of our critical methodologies.

This course fulfills the Junior Research Requirement and is required for all English majors

This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

ENG 2306-001 Harry Potter: Quests/Questions

MWF 10:40 AM –11:30 AM

Evan Radcliffe

In this course we will use the tools of literary analysis to discuss all seven Harry Potter novels. You don't need to be a fan of the series (although fans are welcome—I'm one myself), but you do need to be ready to do a lot of reading (and re-reading), writing, and critical thinking. (To get the most from the course, and to avoid inevitable spoilers, you will want to have read the books ahead of time.)



A central topic will be how the series evolves, and we will trace the shifting portrayals of particular features of the novels' world, such as individual teachers and students, magical society and institutions, magical places (from Azkaban to Zonko's), and other

patterns and recurring elements. Together, we will ask questions about (for example) novelistic form, character and characterization, the uses and transformations of literary models, and representations of gender, class, and other social issues. Readings in some secondary materials will inform these discussions. We will also look at the role the novels (and J. K. Rowling) have played in pop culture and wider cultural discussions, including the kinds of responses they have generated. Some aspects of how the course develops will depend on the input of class members.

ENG 2790-001 Rewriting Genres of White Supremacy
TR 2:30 PM –3:45 PM
Mary Mullen

“Rewriting Genres of White Supremacy” centers literature by Indigenous, Black, and white American writers to consider some of the most pressing concerns of our contemporary moment, namely Catholic and other religious identities, indigeneity, blackness, otherness, intersectionality, power, privilege, racism, and social justice. Further, the course invites students to examine both personal and national identity as these concepts have been birthed and formed within a system that privileges whites over others.

The course title takes inspiration from Travis Foster’s book, *Genre and White Supremacy in the Postemancipation United States*, in which he argues that in the wake of Emancipation, two developments unfolded: “white supremacy amassed new mechanisms and procedures for reproducing racial hierarchy; and black freedom developed new practices for collective expression and experimentation.”

Alongside visual images, historically grounded modules on the construction of race, and a critical dialogic component, the course supports all students in their exploration of racial and social hierarchies through the powerful expressions of key nineteenth,

twentieth and twenty-first century writers, including Leslie Marman Silko, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, and Herman Melville.

This course counts toward UNITAS Division 1

This course counts toward the Peace and Justice major/minor

This course counts toward the Cultural Studies major/minor

This course counts toward the Africana Studies major/minor

This is a Race, Justice, and Dialogue course (RJDC)

ENG 2800 Teaching Practicum

This course gives senior English majors, with a GPA in the major of 3.5 or above, the opportunity to work as teaching assistants in introductory level courses under the supervision of a faculty member. Prior to registration, interested students should approach the professor with whom they would like to work and ask about the possibility of arranging an assistantship (faculty are under no obligation to work with an assistant). The professor and student should work out the specifics of the assistantship together, but the teaching assistant would probably be expected to attend all classes and read all course texts; work one-on-one with the students on their writing; teach several classes over the course of the semester; lead small discussion groups or writing workshops within the class; help generate questions for class discussion and topics for papers.

The student receives three credit hours for the course; the course is graded and counts as an elective towards fulfilling the requirements of the major.

*Restricted to Senior English Majors with a GPA of 3.5 or above.
Permission of consulting teacher and Chairperson required.*

ENG 2991-001 English Majors in the Workplace
M 3:20 PM – 4:35 PM for the first 10 weeks of the semester
Michelle Filling-Brown

This course invites students to think intentionally about who they are—and who they are in the process of becoming—within the dynamic and flexible field of English. Through reflection, conversation, and practical exploration, students will gain a clearer understanding of the many professional and academic pathways open to English majors, from publishing, education, and law to nonprofit work, business, media, and graduate study. Students will build essential career skills, including crafting polished résumés, writing compelling cover letters, developing effective interviewing strategies, and networking with Villanova alumni. By the end of the course, students will be better prepared to navigate their next steps and more adept at articulating the value of their English degree and Villanovan co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences across a wide range of professional settings.

This is a one-credit course.

ENG 2993-001/ENG 2996 English Internship

Ideally, each of you will complete at least one internship during your years as an English major. If you want to receive academic credit and count your internship to count toward your English major, there are three-credit internships (ENG 2993) and six-credit internships (ENG 2996), depending on the amount of time you are committing. (If you want the credits to count as free electives instead, ENG 1903 and ENG 1906 are 3-credit and 6-credit internship numbers for you to register).

You can do a local internship during the academic year, balancing it with your other coursework, or an internship anywhere in the country during the summer. To begin to get a sense of your internship options, you can reach out to our English Department Program Coordinator, Michael Malloy, at

Michael.malloy@villanova.edu. The English Department weekly newsletter features an “internship of the week,” too. You will, of course, also want to look for internships yourself, based on your own interests and experience. The college Internship Office is available to help you; reach out to Kate Szumanski at kathryn.szumanski@villanova.edu.

Once you’ve identified an internship you’re interested in, you apply for credit by going to the “OUS Forms” tile on MyNova and completing the “for-credit internship” application. Your point person at this stage is Charlotte Holmes in the CLAS Internship Office, and her email is charlotte.holmes@villanova.edu. Connect with Charlotte to work out the accreditation before the Drop/Add period ends during the semester you want to pursue the internship. If you run into trouble at any stage, or have any questions, you can also always reach out to Jean Lutes, the department chair, at jean.lutes@villanova.edu.

This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

ENG 3001-001 Foundational Literature in English 1

TR 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM

Lauren Shohet

When today’s British royals worry about the skin color of an unborn prince, or when the African American football hero O.J. Simpson is put on trial for murdering his white ex-wife, the images grounding modern-day conversation arguably trace back to Shakespeare’s *Othello*. *Othello* itself contains both seeds of modern-day racist thinking and very different, sometimes more liberatory, historical understandings of categories like ethnicity, gender, community, and family. This course explores both continuities and changes in English literature from the beginnings (Anglo-Saxon oral poetry) to the mid-eighteenth century (the rise of the newspaper). We look at how the Anglophone literary canon represents various kinds of “others” and how other traditions and cultures look back at Western Europe. We study how the canonical

tradition can oppress (and has oppressed) *and* how marginalized writers have appropriated the canon for their own projects. We also study different ideas of environmental stewardship (or, alternatively, exploitation) as part of the power systems we trace in our readings.



The texts we study in this survey can be breathtakingly beautiful and exciting (if sometimes infuriating or inscrutable) in their own right, and the tools we will develop for approaching unfamiliar or difficult texts will equip you to read and enjoy figures like Chaucer, Spenser, Mary Sidney, Shakespeare, Olaudah Equiano, Mary Wroth, Aemelia Lanyer, Donne, Milton, Lucy Hutchinson, and Mary

Rowlandson. Since many of our texts also have been vitally important to later Anglophone writers, the class also equips you to recognize how more recent authors engage them.

After taking this course, you'll understand why Zadie Smith says interviewing Jay-Z is "like talking to Chaucer"; you'll find Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Spenser's *Faerie Queen* in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, Shakespeare's *Othello* in Tim Blake Nelson's *O*, and Sidney in Hallmark cards. Throughout the course, we will address the relations of the written word to oppression, liberation, gender, history, spirituality, and community. We will consider ways that media change during the period we study (from orality, to manuscript, to print) helps us think about media change today, and we will reflect on our own encounters with digital, print, and manuscript versions of course materials.

Requirements: Lively discussion, frequent in-class informal writing, two 3-6 page papers (in successive drafts), project-based midterm and final (with creative, historical, and critical options).

This course counts toward UNITAS Division 2

This course counts toward the GWS major/minor

ENG 3150-001 Chaucer

TR 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Brooke Hunter



Few poets combine devout stories of saints, sexually explicit comedies, philosophically probing romances, and tales of elaborate fart jokes as well as the medieval poet, Geoffrey Chaucer. This course serves as an introduction to Chaucer's lively collection of stories and storytellers, *The Canterbury Tales*, and to the complex medieval society in which Chaucer lived. Chaucer's life intersected with many important historical shifts: the Black Death, the Peasant's Revolt, and the rise of the proto-Protestant Wycliffite movement. As we explore Chaucer's poetry, we will also place his works in the historical contexts from which they spring. Reading Chaucer requires learning Middle English and much of the class will be devoted to acquiring the necessary language skills. No previous experience with Middle English is required.

ENG 3650-001 African Drama

MW 4:45 PM – 6:00 PM

Chiji Akoma

This course examines the literary and performance aspects of modern African drama. It begins by locating African drama in the context of oral performance — storytelling, mask idioms, dance theatre — and then examines how the genre has been impacted by the infusion of other global literary traditions while retaining indigenous forms. We will study African dramaturgy and aesthetics and the interfaces of the oral and written, and the various theatrical practices that operate in the continent. The course will also explore the postcolonial dimensions of modern African drama. Among plays to be discussed: *Death and the King's Horseman* by Wole Soyinka; *The Marriage of Anansewa* by Efua Sutherland; *Collision of Altars* by Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin; *I Will Marry When I Want* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii; *The Dilemma of a Ghost* by Ama Ata Aidoo. Students will produce and perform parts of the plays as their final project.

*This course counts toward the Africana Studies major/minor
This course counts toward UNITAS Division 3*

ENG 4500-001 Black Atlantic

MW 3:20 PM – 4:35 PM

Travis Foster

This intellectually ambitious, interdisciplinary course takes up one of the most generative and consequential fields of contemporary critical inquiry: the Black Atlantic. Drawing on literature, history, and the rich tradition of critical theory known as Black Thought—a tradition encompassing thinkers from Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois to Sylvia Wynter, Saidiya Hartman, and beyond—we will examine how the transatlantic slave trade and practices of enslavement fundamentally remade Europe, Africa, and the Americas during the early modern era. At the same time, we will devote sustained intellectual attention to the diasporic Black culture that emerged during slavery and in its wake: “a culture,” as

Paul Gilroy puts it, “whose themes and techniques transcend ethnicity and nationality to produce something new.”

Our reading will be wide and demanding. Primary literary texts will sit alongside works of history, philosophy, and critical theory, asking us to think across disciplinary boundaries and to bring multiple interpretive frameworks to bear on a single, urgent set of questions. We will begin with the seventeenth-century institutionalization of racialized slavery in North America; move through the cultures of enslaved people in the Americas and the Caribbean; then to the Haitian Revolution as a world-historical event; and finally to the subsequent mechanisms of re-enslavement—including mass incarceration—that have since defined the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Our path will be roughly chronological, but our aim is not to chart events on a historical timeline. It is, rather, to think seriously and carefully about how we read and recover the silences of the past through meticulous interpretation of Black Atlantic writings.

This is a course about how ideas travel, how culture survives and transforms under conditions of extreme violence, and how a tradition of Black intellectual and artistic life has persistently theorized freedom, memory, and humanity on its own terms.

This course counts toward the Africana Studies major/minor

This course counts toward UNITAS Division 1

ENG 4590-001 U.S. Independence at 250

TR 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM

Kimberly Takahata

2026 marks 250 years since the Declaration of Independence formally separated the colonies from Great Britain. Yet independence is an idea that began developing before the Declaration’s signing and has continued to take on new meanings in the centuries that followed. To honor the vast, expanding, and at times contradicting definitions of independence that have emerged

in United States history, this class examines documents from the founding of the United States alongside historical contemporaries and recent literature about colonial America. We will ask: how have the United States and US writers define independence, and how have those definitions changed over time? How do the stories we tell about the United States shape our expectations about what independence means? As our class moves from 1776 to the present day, we will explore how early America remains a crucial touchpoint to how writers imagine possibilities of inclusion and liberation and critiques of oppression and conquest.

This course counts toward the Peace and Justice major/minor
This course counts toward the Legal Studies minor

ENG 4642-001 Fictions of Motherhood

TR 8:30 AM – 9:45 AM

Jean Lutes



What power do mothers have? Who has the power to define motherhood? You will examine U.S. narratives of motherhood from the nineteenth century to the present, with special attention to definitions of reproductive justice, and you will study how literary representations of human reproduction have reflected and reframed the evolving scientific and legal definitions

of motherhood and pregnancy. Throughout, we will treat gender as a category best understood in relation to other key identity factors such as race, ethnicity, class, and religion.

Likely texts include Anne Bradstreet's "The Author to Her Book" (1678), Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1851), Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930), Gwendolyn Brooks' "the



mother" (1945), Sylvia Plath's "Morning Song" (1960), and Jesmyn Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (2017).

This course counts toward the Peace and Justice major/minor

This course counts toward the GWS major/minor

ENG 4651-001 Undocumented Americans

TR 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM

Tsering Wangmo

What can we learn about citizenship and belonging from the perspectives of undocumented Americans? Through the genres of memoir, poetry, and critical essays, we will pay attention to the diversity of experiences as represented by those who were, or who remain without legal documentation in the United States. Some of the questions we will discuss include: What does it mean to be an American? Who is permitted to enter the United States and who is forced to leave? How did immigrants become "illegal"? We will examine the historical production of concepts and political designations such as "refugee," "citizen," and "noncitizen."

We will look to the perspective from noncitizens to guide our discussions on the term "undocumented": how it has been defined and discussed; which institutions and policies are involved in the making and unmaking of citizens; why immigrants and migrants are and have been perceived as ethnic "others" and racial; and where we might find possibility for change.

Readings will include Karla C. Villavicencio's *The Undocumented Americans* (2020), Jose Antonio Vargaz's *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen* (2018), Reyna Grande's *The Distance Between Us* (2013) and more.

This course counts toward the Latin American major/minor

This course counts toward the Peace and Justice major/minor

ENG 4654-001 25 Poems

TR 11:30 PM – 12:45 PM

Kamran Javadizadeh

This course is for anyone who feels distracted when they read, for anyone who wants the chance to slow down and pay attention. It's also a course for anyone who wants to learn how poems work, to try out new ways of talking and writing about poetry, and to weave poems into the fabric of our everyday lives.

The idea is simple: we will read just one short poem per class session, approaching it both in our preparation and discussion from various angles, learning it inside and out. We will read a diverse selection of poems and will develop strategies and a critical vocabulary for making sense of poetry. Our poets (mainly drawn from the last century and the American tradition) will include Emily Dickinson, Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Butler Yeats, Langston Hughes, George Oppen, Lorine Niedecker, Elizabeth Bishop, Gwendolyn Brooks, Frank O'Hara, Sylvia Plath, James Schuyler, James Merrill, June Jordan, Louise Glück, Terrance Hayes, and Solmaz Sharif.

The unique design of this class will also give us a chance to think about the practice of close reading itself: about what we can see more clearly when we look carefully at a text in isolation and about what we might miss when texts are taken out of their material, historical, and even literary contexts.

No previous experience with poetry is either necessary or expected! Students will be asked to write short responses to the poems we read, to make occasional presentations in class, to commit one short poem of their choice to memory, and to write two critical essays.

ENG 5000-001 Climate Fiction

TR 2:30 PM – 3:45 PM

Heather Hicks

[A]s Daniel Read and his colleagues (1994) pointed out more than a decade ago, only two simple facts are essential to understanding climate change. If significant global warming occurs, it will be the result primarily of an increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere. And the single most important source of carbon dioxide is the combustion of fossil fuels, most notably coal and oil. How can it be that people don't know these basic facts?

Kari Marie Norgaard, *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life* (2011)

Young people are worried about climate change. A [survey](#) by Sacred Heart University this summer found that more than half of people aged 15 to 29 agreed with this statement: "My level of concern for climate change causes psychological distress that impacts my daily life."

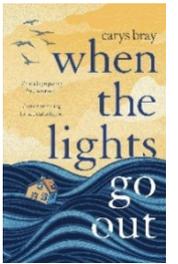
Daily Briefing, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Nov. 25th, 2024

A baby born this year will be 60 in the 2080s, when demographers at the U.N. expect the size of humanity to peak. The Wittgenstein Center for Demography and Global Human Capital in Vienna places the peak in the 2070s. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington puts it in the 2060s. All of the predictions agree on one thing: We peak soon.

Dean Spears, "What Happens When Global Human Population Peaks?" *The New York Times, Sept. 18, 2023*

Since 2000, a groundswell of major novels depicting human-generated climate have been published. This senior seminar will examine some of the most well-known and/or critically acclaimed of these works of so-called "climate fiction." We'll note the major threats they identify, including extreme heat, desertification, storms, sea level rise, and the attendant social disruption that might result from these forces.

We'll then consider how climate fiction portrays these physical and social phenomena by calling on a range of literary forms and traditions, including the Book of Revelation, the *bildungsroman*, the Gothic, adventure novels, the “cozy catastrophe,” the American Western, and young adult fiction, among many others. To gain further purchase on the texts, we will read samples of literary theory by thinkers including Timothy Clark, Amitav Ghosh, Adeline Johns-Putra, and Ursula Heise.

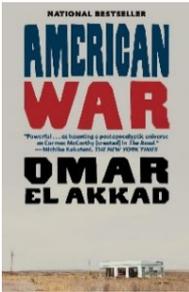


We'll compare how writers have explored the impact of climate change on various regions of the U.S., as well as other parts of the world. Of particular interest, too, will be how male and female writers take up and use these traditions—and create new ones—similarly or differently, as well as how gender, race, class, and sexuality are imagined/reimagined in the context of

environmental deterioration. We'll ask how the recurrent characters of this genre both reinforce and question conventional gender roles and other social norms. We'll also ponder the reasons so many important writers have turned to this genre in the past 20 years.

Finally, we'll weigh what effects these texts may be having in a society facing a number of crises, including not only climate change, but also economic turmoil and political strife. What threats do these authors identify in the face of climate change, and what social and scientific solutions do they offer? Do such novels romanticize environmental apocalypse? Create a sense of hopeless resignation? Inspire positive action? Teach us how to survive? Make us feel less alone? Or perhaps make us appreciate what we have now?





Our reading list will likely include Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006), Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones* (2011), Claire Vaye Watkins's *Gold Fame Citrus* (2015), Omar El Akkad's *American War* (2017), Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140* (2017), Ling Ma's *Severance* (2018), Carys Bray's *When the Lights Go Out* (2020), Nnedi Okorafor's *Noor* (2021), and Nick Fuller Googins's *The Great Transition* (2023).

Assignments will include both short essays and a longer seminar paper.

This course counts for English Senior Seminar and is required for all English majors

HON 5440-100 Poets in the Gallery at the Philadelphia Museum of Art

October 23th – 25th, 2026

Catherine Staples



The Philadelphia Museum of Art will be the centerpiece for this one-weekend, one-credit, poetry writing workshop. Writers of all levels are welcome. We'll browse the American galleries contemplating rowers on the river, fisherman gathering in nets at dusk, and portraits—from the steady gaze of Yarrow Mamout to Eakin's young opera singer. With persona poems, we will slip into silent figures, giving them voices. In the hold of the small Gothic chapel, we'll look at stained glass, reliquaries, and a recumbent knight, and then forge our own Anglo-Saxon riddles. We'll hunt for small gems by William Blake, Mary Cassatt, Pierre Bonnard, and Vincent van Gogh. After passing through the Indian Pillared Temple Hall, we'll engage with the mystery of Rama, Sita, and Nandi, letting the details *tease us out of thought*. Even if you have never written poetry before, you'll leave the museum with plenty of new poems. This generative poetry workshop begins at 5:00 pm on Friday with exercises in memory, observation, and still life. On Saturday, we will take an early train into the city and spend the day at Philadelphia Museum of Art, writing our way through the galleries, using the paintings, sculpture, and installations as entry points for new poems. On Sunday, we'll gather for brunch and a reading of new poems.

Non-honors students please email HonorsProgram@villanova.edu for course approval. This course counts towards the minor in Creative Writing in some cases.



Villanova English



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UNIVERSITY

College of Liberal Arts
and Sciences

Jean Lutes
Chair, English Department
800 Lancaster Ave.
Villanova, PA 19085-1699

Phone: 610-519-5077
E-mail: jean.lutes@villanova.edu