

Department of English

Undergraduate Course Descriptions

Spring 2027





Chiji Akoma | Michael Dowdy | Alan Drew | Joe Drury | Michelle Filling-Brown



Heather Hicks | Kamran Javadizadeh | Yumi Lee | Joseph Lennon



Crystal Lucky | Mary Mullen | Adrienne Perry | Lauren Shohet | Mary Beth Simmons



Cathy Staples | Kate Szumanski | Kimberly Takahata | Tsering Wangmo

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: SPRING 2027

COURSES THAT FULFILL ENGLISH REQUIREMENTS:

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PRE-1800

Pre-1500

3181 Irish Epics, Visions & Hauntings

1500 – 1650

3181 Irish Epics, Visions & Hauntings
3250 Shakespeare

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH POST-1800

1800 – 1945

3507 Strange Cases: Imagining Health & Illness
4000 American Literary Traditions I
4618 A Renaissance in Harlem
4652 Letters, Texts & Twitter

1945 – PRESENT

4646 Race & Ethnicity in Contemporary American Lit
4652 Letters, Texts & Twitter
4691 Work & Play in Contemporary Lit
4702 Authors On & Off the Page

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

4618 A Renaissance in Harlem
4646 Race & Ethnicity in Contemporary American Lit

Courses offered that count for the Minor/Concentration in Creative Writing:

2003 Intro to Creative Writing
2009 Writing the Trad. Novel
2013 Writing Memoir
2022 Writing Through Conflict
2024 Scriptwriting
4702 Authors On & Off Page

Courses offered that count for the Writing Practice/Critical Theory Elective for the Minor/Concentration in Writing and Rhetoric:

2003 Intro to Creative Writing
2009 Writing the Trad. Novel
2013 Writing Memoir
2022 Writing Through Conflict
2023 Journalism
2024 Scriptwriting
2030 Tutoring Writers
2250 Ways of Reading
2993 Internship
2996 Internship
4702 Authors On & Off Page

Note: All ENG courses 2000 and above with a literature focus count toward the Upper Level Lit requirement in Writing and Rhetoric.

Courses offered that count for the Major/ Minor in Africana Studies

4618 A Renaissance in Harlem
4646 Race & Ethnicity in Contemporary Amer. Lit
5011 (GIS) African & Caribbean Politics & Lit

Courses offered that count for the Major/ Minor in Irish Studies

2022 Writing Through Conflict

Courses offered that count for the Major/ Minor in Gender & Women's Studies

2302 Apocalyptic Literature
3250 Shakespeare
5000 James Baldwin

Courses offered that count for the Minor in Legal Studies

4646 Race & Ethnicity: American Novel

Courses offered that count for the Minor in Health Humanities & Medical Arts

3507 Strange Cases: Imagining Health & Illness

Courses offered that count for the Major/ Minor in Peace & Justice

4000 American Literary Trad I
4646 Race & Ethnicity in Contemporary Amer. Lit

UPPER-LEVEL ENGLISH COURSES

ENG 2003-001 Introduction to Creative Writing
MW 4:45 PM – 6:00 PM
Catherine Staples



In this introductory course, students will develop as creative writers and readers through a series of prompts, readings, and workshops. Some of the authors we'll read include: Virginia Woolf, Natasha Trethewey, Seamus Heaney, Eleanor Wilner, Kenan Orhan, and Tracy K. Smith, to name just a few. We'll study writing we admire, noting craft, making word hoards, and following the leads of lines we love.

Students will begin by writing creative non-fiction, drawing upon memory and sense of place; then poetry, engaging imagination and the lyric voice; then fiction, honing our storytelling skills. One genre will lay the groundwork for the next. We'll examine word choice, imagery, metaphor, sound, and form—as well as the sentence and the line. Throughout, our focus will be on process: the pursuit and discovery of technique and strategy that helps us to unearth our subjects and find our clearest voices. The final portfolio involves revision and polishing of selected pieces.

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 2009-001 Writing the Traditional Novel
TR 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM
Alan Drew

Writing long fiction can be like running a marathon: a long, stamina-stretching affair filled with pain, excitement, epiphany, and an immense sense of accomplishment. This course is designed for students eager to leap into the complex process of writing a novella or short novel. This process will include not only the reading of longer pieces by well-established contemporary authors, but also the production of your own novella or chapters of a novel.

The goals of this course are to analyze from a writer's perspective the work of a number of contemporary novella and short novel writers, use what you learn through this process to inform your own writing, and foster a creative, thoughtful environment in which to create original works of narrative fiction.

Since the instructor of this course will also be working on a novel, he will share his own work and process with the class. The class will also discuss issues particular to the serious writer: how to approach your work, how to overcome writers' block, how to deal with the emotional hurdles of spending hours alone writing, how and when to publish, and various other problems that arise during the creative process.

Class time will be divided among reading published stories, writing exercises that emphasize elements of craft and structure, exploration of purpose in your writing, and constructive discussion of students' works in a workshop format. 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 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
This course is an English elective

ENG 2013-001 Writing Memoir
TR 2:30 PM – 3:45 PM
Tsering Wangmo

If you have a story you'd like to tell, this creative writing workshop course can help you get started. Memoir is a window into slices of everyday life and experiences just as it can be into big moments. In this introductory course we will read seminal essays and memoirs to examine the ways in which writers remember, reflect, research, and record their stories.

You'll generate work each week responding to prompts and to in-class writing exercises that help you identify the events from your life and the structure best suited for your story. We'll study craft— what it is, what it does, and how— in a way that makes craft fun, accessible, and inclusive.

As we examine craft, we will also engage with the tension in writing about how the self relates to the world and to other people. Some of the questions we will discuss include: How do we select events from our lives? What is our relationship with memory? How do we keep in mind the ethics of writing "truths" that may involve the lives of other people?

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

ENG 2022-001 Writing through Conflict
TR 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM
Alan Drew

This course explores the important role of creative writing in confronting, protesting, and engaging with socio-political conflicts. The goals of this course are to study the work of established American, Irish, and other international authors who focus their creative eye on socio-political conflicts in their many forms, from poverty and racism to war and atrocity, and use these models as guides for the student's own original creative writing.

In this course students will examine the lens through which established writers view these conflicts, will analyze the elements of craft employed by those authors and poets, and use similar techniques in their own creative writing. Among the writers we will study are: Seamus Heaney, Glenn Patterson, Anna Burns, Claudia Rankine, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Yiyun Li, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Time in class will be divided between the discussion of readings, lessons concerning craft, directed writing exercises, and the workshopping of student work. This is not a lecture course, but rather a participatory experience that is essential to the success of the class. Regular attendance and active engagement are required.

As part of this course, students will have the opportunity to travel to Belfast, Ireland over Villanova's fall semester break to participate in an intensive creative writing conference. The students will have the opportunity to participate in writing workshops, readings, and symposiums at Queens University.

Co-sponsored by Villanova's Program in Creative Writing and the Center for Irish Studies, and in conjunction with the Seamus Heaney Center at Queens University, this exchange will have a particular focus on exploring the legacy of The Troubles in Northern Ireland. Over a seven day period, students will engage in daily writing workshops with both Irish and American authors, take literary tours in Belfast, attend readings and creative writing symposiums in the evenings, and revise and share their work in a student showcase on the final night of the exchange.

*There is a co-requisite 1-credit course (ENG 2992) designed to provide an embedded study-abroad experience to complement a requisite English course.

*There is a cost associated with the travel to Belfast. Please contact Professor Alan Drew (alan.drew@villanova.edu) for more information.

This course counts toward the minor in Creative Writing
This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric
This course counts for the Irish Studies major/minor

ENG 2023-001 Journalism
MWF 12:50 PM – 1:40 PM
Kate Szumanski

Misinformation and disinformation circulate widely on social media platforms, and it has become increasingly difficult for the public to discern fact from fiction. And as we've experienced, the effects and consequences can be quite dire. We might ask ourselves, "*Is this source reliable and trustworthy? How do I know that this information is sound? How can I make informed decisions based on this information?"* This is one of many reasons why access to quality journalism is important; actually, it isn't simply important but vital to a healthy, thriving, participatory democracy.

But what is journalism -- exactly? Will I know it when I read it or hear it or see it? The American Press Institute says that the central purpose of journalism is "to provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society." What does this look and sound like?

In this course, we will explore, study, and discuss the foundations of accurate, fair, and responsible journalism, and, in the spirit of all news being local, will practice the craft in collaboration with student editors and writers from *the Villanovan*, the student content production team from VTV, and the editorial team at WXVU. We will brainstorm newsworthy topics, identify reliable sources, create good questions, interview our sources, corroborate evidence, fact check information, write articles, edit them, and more.

In addition, we'll read and analyze the work of well-respected reporters from *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, two news sources that you can access for free with your Villanova username and password. We'll read articles from a variety of "beats": Breaking News, Health, Science, Technology, Climate, Culture, Sports, and more. You're invited to join me and immerse yourself in the study and practice of responsible journalism.

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

ENG 2024-001 Scriptwriting
MW 3:20 PM – 4:35 PM
Michelle Filling-Brown

Unlock your storytelling potential in this course designed for aspiring playwrights, dedicated creative writers, *and* those who have no experience with scriptwriting/creative writing and want to try something new. In this creative writing course, we will study drama and techniques that lead to developing characters, crafting stories, and writing scenes. We will learn to create engaging narratives, while experimenting with different genres.

In this immersive and collaborative scriptwriting workshop, we will work as authors, editors, and critics, ultimately each crafting a one-act play. Through a blend of creative writing exercises, engaging workshops, peer critiques, and group discussions, we will explore the scriptwriting process and gain confidence in our capacity to develop characters and stories. We will read scripts in and outside of class.

To a large extent, this is a class in revision and imagination. In-class activities will guide us through experimenting with comedy and drama, developing complex characters, and crafting authentic dialogue. We will be able to take risks without fear of failure as we play and learn the craft of scriptwriting.

Some of our learning will extend beyond the traditional classroom to study human interactions and dialogue to inspire our writing. We will also attend live theater and readings by published authors.

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

ENG 2030-001 Tutoring Writers
MWF 10:40 AM – 11:30 AM
Mary Beth Simmons

In Tutoring Writers, students will study the theory and practice of effective one-on-one writing tutorials. Students will investigate their own writing processes, take part in shadow tutoring and mock tutorials, and lead class discussion one day in the semester. Readings range from the important and particular rules of grammar to first person peer tutor accounts of writing tutorials. Authors include Ben Rafoth, Anne Lamott, Lynne Truss, and Gerald Graff. There will be three formal papers, four journal entries, and a final

exam. Successful completion of the course allows the student to work for a competitive wage in the Villanova Writing Center.

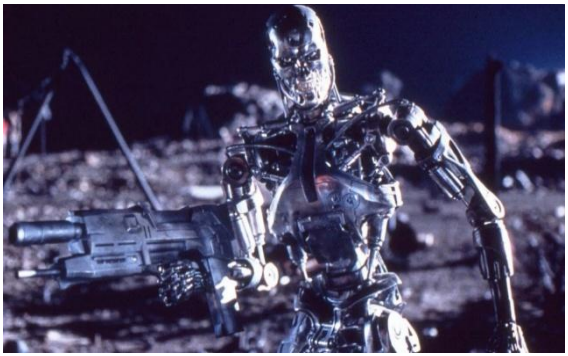
Permission of Instructor Required
This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

ENG 2250-001 Ways of Reading: Lit Analysis
TR 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM
Joseph Drury

This course aims to give English majors the chance to reflect upon the methods and improve the skills literary critics use to read and write about literature. Our initial focus will be on "close reading" and the various techniques critics devised in the mid-twentieth century to interpret literary texts and lay the foundations of English as an academic discipline. We will consider what it means to *interpret* a literary text and what other ways of reading are implicitly set aside or foreclosed by the work of interpretation. Using a small number of primary texts in different genres and from different historical periods as case studies, we will then explore some of the new approaches to literature—e.g. Marxist, psychoanalytic, feminist, deconstructionist, queer, post-colonial, and so on—that have emerged over the last few decades, paying particular to the relationship between reader and text they assume and the literary objects and devices they foreground. Finally, students will have the opportunity to develop their own voice as readers and writers by applying one or more of these approaches in a research paper.

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 2302-001 Apocalyptic Literature
TR 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM
Heather Hicks



You only need to turn on the television, make your way to a movie theatre, or survey the new novels by authors of both bestsellers and literary fiction to see that the apocalyptic genre is enjoying a period of enormous influence. Recently, these narratives have helped to give voice to widespread social fears about climate change and the threat posed by rogue AI. Yet narratives about the end of the world stretch back to the beginnings of human culture.

Why are we endlessly fascinated by scenarios of global devastation, and how have these narratives helped us cope with the uncertainties that have always been a central part of human existence? This course will explore the literary apocalyptic tradition in the West from the Book of Revelation to the present. It will introduce you to a range of literary forms, including the biblical text of Revelation, the Romantic poetry of the "Last Man" tradition, short stories of the American Romantic period, early science fiction short stories from both America and the U.K., modernist poetry, graphic novels, postmodern fiction, and popular films, all of which have depicted apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic scenarios.

You will be asked to think about all these texts in their historical contexts and also to consider how the apocalyptic form has both changed and remained the same through time. What specific fears

motivated the writers at different historical moments, and how did those fears shape the form and content of the literature? How can these stories help us to find a path forward in the face of ever-evolving perils? Readings and films will include The Book of Revelation, "Darkness" by Lord Byron, "The Masque of the Red Death," by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Scarlet Plague" by Jack London, and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* by James Cameron.

In this updated version of the course, we will give special attention to influential narratives that have explored the dangers of advanced artificial intelligence. Requirements will include posts to a discussion board and two papers.

This course counts toward the GWS major and minor

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 1:55 PM – 3:10 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 and meets the first 10 weeks of the semester.

ENG 2993-001/ENG 2996 English Internship

Ideally, each of you will do at least one internship in a field you are interested in during your years as an English major. While we do not require this, you should make it a goal. There are three-credit internships (ENG 2993) and six-credit internships (ENG 2996), depending on the amount of time you are committing. 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 get started, you can reach out to our English Department Program Coordinator, Michael Malloy, at michael.malloy@villanova.edu. The college Internship Office is

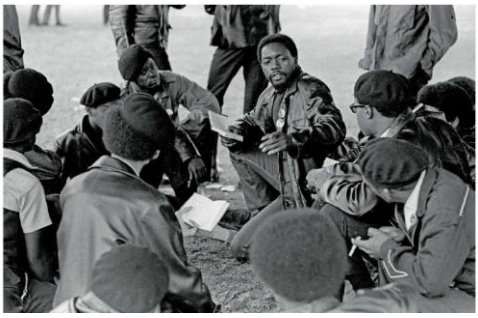
also available to help you; reach out to Kate Szumanski at kathryn.szumanksi@villanova.edu.

Once you've identified an internship you're interested in, you apply for credit by searching "internship" on MyNova and completing the "CLAS Internship Application for Credit" form. 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 2994-001 Reading and Community
T 5:30 PM – 6:45 PM for the first 10 weeks of the semester
Mary Mullen



Studying the kind of reading that takes place outside of the classroom in book groups and community reads, this one-credit course practices reading in community while studying hot new books selected by students in the course. We will think about how community shapes reading and how reading shapes

communities as we practice writing book reviews, analyze marketing and other paratextual elements of literature, and recommend good reads to one another.

This is a one-credit course and meets the first 10 weeks of the semester.

ENG 3181-001 Irish Epics, Visions & Hauntings
TR 8:30 AM – 9:45 AM
Joseph Lennon

In this class we read great Irish epics, vision tales, and gothic stories of hauntings. We begin with the Old Irish saga *Táin Bó Cuailnge* (*Cattle Raid of Cooley*), Fenian stories of Fionn mac Cumhaill, and the satiric middle Irish vision text, *Aislinge Meic Conglinne*.



We move on to the nature-oriented, medieval tale of madness, *Buile Suibhne* (*Sweeney Astray,* translated by Seamus Heaney), as well as bardic poetry that survived colonialism and the collapse of Gaelic social order in the seventeenth century. Two eighteenth century Irish language works, *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire* (*Lament for Art Ó Laoghaire*) by Eileen O'Connell and *Cúirt An Mheán Oíche* (*The Midnight Court*) by Brian Merriman, are read with an eye toward understanding the seeds of ecological destruction and conflicts between Gaelic and Anglo cultures.

The course ends with a sampling of gothic tales and the contemporary animated film, *Wolfwalkers*.

This course counts for the Irish Studies major/minor

ENG 3250-001 Shakespeare
TR 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM
Lauren Shohet



How do Shakespearean plays think about ways that people define themselves, understand other people, connect or conflict with others? How do language and performance advance or hinder these efforts? How do Shakespeare's influential, sometimes beloved, plays continue to impact our own experiences of self, community, outsiderhood? (And how the heck do we figure out what Shakespeare's sometimes dense and twisty words mean?)

In this course, we'll study a half-dozen plays from different genres and decades of Shakespeare's career. Likely texts include: *Twelfth Night, Merchant of Venice, Taming of the Shrew, Othello, The Tempest*, and *Cymbeline*. We'll explore how different plays and different forms of language construct (and deconstruct) models of desire, sexuality, gender, ability, and ethnicity/race. Through reading, informally performing, and watching these dramas, we'll systematically hone our sensitivity to Shakespearean language. We will also spend some time studying the amazing archive of what our culture thinks it knows about Shakespeare – generative AI — toward learning and unlearning the "common sense" that makes

Shakespeare culturally authoritative and comparing it with other visions of/in the plays.

Your work in this class will include frequent short in-class writing, two formal papers, and a range of assignments that will offer you some choice and variety among critical essays, historical research, performance opportunities, and adaptation studies. You'll finish the class with increased literacy in Shakespearean language; early-modern constructions of race, gender, and ability; and the history of sexualities.

This course counts toward UNITAS Division 2
This course counts toward the GWS major and minor

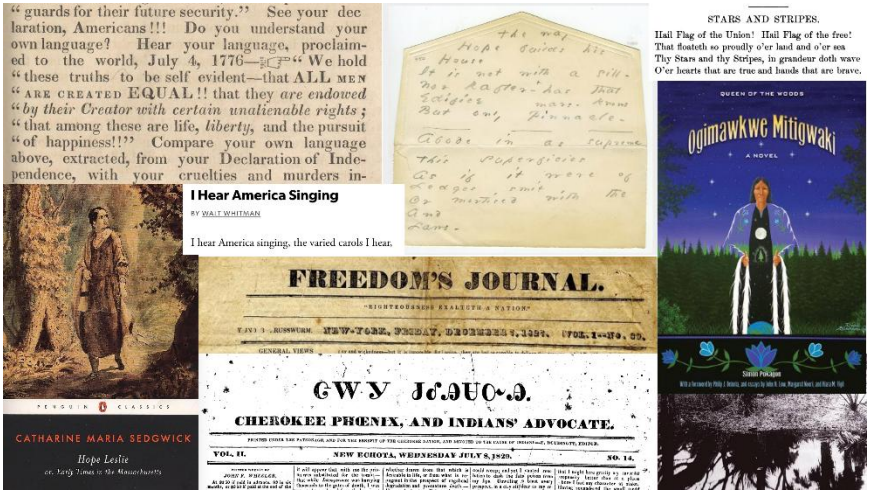
ENG 3507-001 Strange Cases: Imagining Health & Illness
TR 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM
Joseph Drury

What was it like to live through the Great Plague of London in 1665, which killed nearly a quarter of the city's population? How did Jane Austen respond to the sexist assumptions encoded within medical discourse on the nervous system? And why is it a doctor—Dr. Jekyll—who turns into Mr. Hyde? These are some of the questions we will be asking in this course on British literary responses to medical science and practice from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century.

We will consider the cultural factors shaping new ideas about contagion, hygiene, addiction, and psychopathology, as well as the effect of professionalization on literary representations of medical practitioners. Reading literature that engages critically with medical discourses and the assumptions about race, class, gender, and sexuality embedded in them, we will explore what medical practitioners diagnosed as the pathologies and pathogens of modern life and discuss how their theories shaped understandings of the normal and the deviant at different moments in history.

This course counts toward the Health Humanities & Medical Arts minor

ENG 4000-001 American Literary Traditions I
TR 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM
Kimberly Takahata



This class introduces students to literature of the nineteenth century—a time of war, creativity, expansion, and hope—to explore what makes literature "American." We will ask: who gets to decide who or what counts as "American," and why is literature important to answering this question? Reading novels by rebellious women, contemplative poetry, and texts of political activism, we will trace the disagreements, collectives, and surprises that marked conceptions of America in the 1800s.

This class will address several categories that we use and reference today, like race, citizenship, and history, using the framework of nineteenth-century America to examine how these ideas have developed and changed over time. Ranging across the United States and briefly into the wider Americas, this course will consequently approach "America" as an ongoing and flexible idea.

This course counts toward UNITAS Division 1
This course counts toward the Peace & Justice major and minor

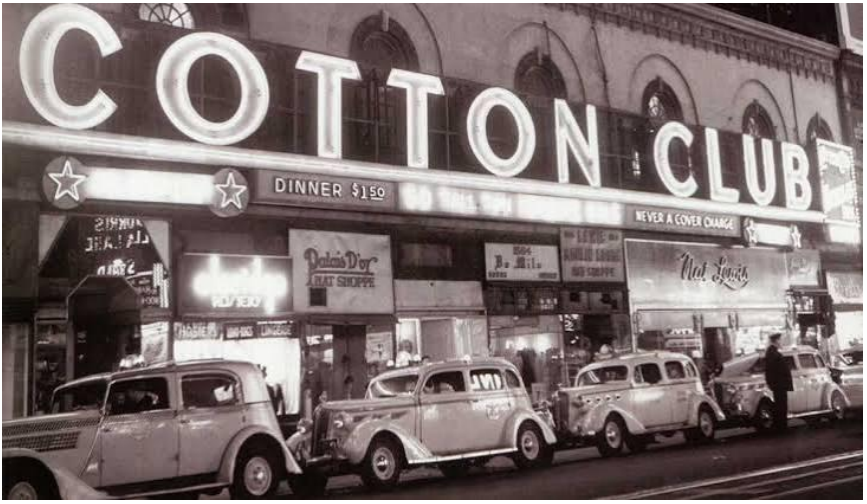
ENG 4618-001 A Renaissance in Harlem
TR 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM
Crystal Lucky

This course asks a question that is foundational to studying literature: how does reading and writing help us to understand ourselves and others?



In this class, we will chart how Indigenous, Black, and settler persons used forms and genres of the early Americas to navigate emerging ideas about identity and make bodies "legible." Reading texts from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century—a period before the codification of racial and national labels—we will explore how literature established communal expectations and stereotypes as a tool of power as well as space for critique, experimentation, and creativity.

Our class will move from what is now known as Texas to Virginia and Massachusetts to the Caribbean while we read reports, natural histories, poems, and novels. We will dive deeply into each text as examples of lived, bodily experiences to learn about key historical



developments in the early Americas as well as how these texts continue to be relevant today.

This course counts toward UNITAS Division 1
This course counts toward the Africana Studies major and minor

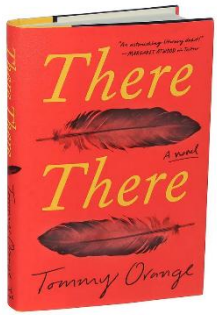
ENG 4646-001 Race & Ethnicity in Contemporary American Literature
MW 3:20 PM – 4:35 PM
Yumi Lee



This course examines race and ethnicity in contemporary American literature with a particular emphasis on questions of the law and its interpretation. Laws have historically been instrumental in defining race in the United States; indeed, some scholars have described race itself as a "legal fiction."

In this class, we will examine how authors have used literary works to record, reflect on, and respond to the changing legal status of race and ethnicity in US society since the middle of the 20th century, a period which saw the United States move toward policies of formal equality under the law. How have authors used literature to interpret or interrogate the law as it has governed our understandings of race? And how do these works imagine the horizon of justice?

Literary readings for this class will include novels by Nella Larsen, Américo Paredes, Toni Morrison, Julie Otsuka, and Tommy Orange. Alongside these works, students will examine the language and rhetoric of landmark legal texts themselves, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, and engage with both legal and literary criticism to better frame our understanding of the literary texts and the questions they raise.



This course counts toward UNITAS Division 1
This course counts for the Africana Studies major/minor
This course counts toward the Peace & Justice major and minor
This course counts toward the Legal Studies minor

ENG 4652-001 Letters, Texts & Twitter

MWF 10:40 AM – 11:30 AM
Kamran Javadizadeh





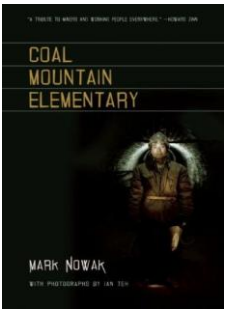
How do letters bring together distant lovers, friends, family? What forms of intimacy follow from such textual exchanges? When literature borrows from this kind of writing, how is it changed? This course examines epistolary writing, broadly speaking: We'll read letters, the newer digital forms (email, social media, instant messaging) that have largely replaced them, and the literary representations of the epistolary in modern and contemporary novels, poems, and essays. Our goal will be to study how writing allows intimacies to form across spatial and temporal distances.

Texts will include Emily Dickinson's letters and "envelope poems," letters between Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West, James Baldwin's letter-essay to his nephew, Elif Batuman's novel about (among other things) the early days of email, Solmaz Sharif's sequence of poems to an uncle who died in war before she was born, and Sally Rooney's novel about love, adultery, and friendship in the era of the email and text message. As we explore the new worlds that epistolary writing makes possible, our modes of inquiry will borrow from queer theory and feminist studies. Assignments will include short, take-home critical essays, in-class writing, and our own epistolary experiments.

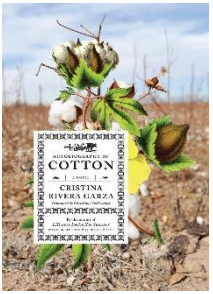
This course counts toward UNITAS Division 2

ENG 4691-001 Work & Play in Contemporary Lit

TR 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM
Michael Dowdy



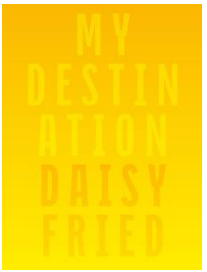
This class explores representations of work and play in contemporary cultural texts from the Americas. We will consider how stories, poems, films, and songs depict the struggles and joys of various jobs: “dirty" (i.e., coal mining), “unskilled” (i.e., crop picking), “professional” (i.e., sports), and more. In these innovative texts, oppositions between work and play break down and creative forms of solidarity and community emerge.



Requirements include class participation and informal and formal writing.

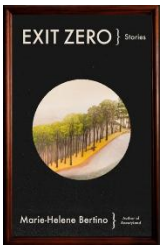
Possible texts include Cristina Rivera Garza’s *Autobiography of Cotton*, Allison Stine’s *Trashlands*, and Mark Nowak’s *Coal Mountain Elementary*, alongside films such as *Matewan*.

ENG 4702-001 Authors On & Off the Page
TR 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM
Adrienne Perry, Tsering Wangmo



If you are a writer, a fan of contemporary writing, or interested in how authors get published, this is the course for you. We will read the work of four cutting-edge, award-winning writers including Daisy Fried, Leontia Flynn, Marie Helene Bertino, and Kenan Orhan. Each author will give a reading as part of the annual Villanova Literary Festival, and they will also visit our class. In addition to providing the opportunity to explore issues that are central to contemporary poetry and prose, the course

puts you in direct contact with the authors: you will have the chance to ask them about their work, their writing process, and the nuts and bolts of getting published.



The books we'll be reading cover a range of forms and themes: a surrealist novel focused on questions of exile and migration, magical stories rooted in the real world, and poetry centered on motherhood, grief, and place.

This course is a great opportunity to pursue an interest in contemporary literature, creative writing, or even the publishing industry. Students can also explore their own creativity in works of fiction and poetry. Course requirements include: regular attendance and participation in class discussions, the writing of several creative and/or critical pieces, and one creative project. Please Note: Attendance at all four evening readings, which will take place at 6 pm on Tuesdays or Thursdays, is mandatory.

This course counts toward the Fine Arts Core Requirement
This course counts towards the minor in Creative Writing
This course counts toward the minor/concentration in Writing and Rhetoric

ENG 5000-001 James Baldwin
MW 1:55 PM – 3:10 PM
Yumi Lee

"You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world," James Baldwin said in a 1963 interview, "but then you read." In this senior seminar, we will study the life and work of James Baldwin, one of the great writers and thinkers of the twentieth century. We will read and discuss Baldwin's novels *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, *Giovanni's Room*, *Another Country*, and *If Beale Street Could Talk*; his era-shaping essays on

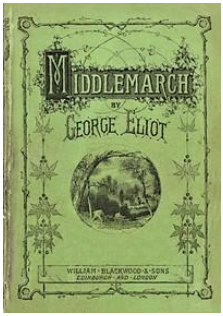
race, sexuality, masculinity, and American history and culture; and biographical and critical materials that will help us appreciate and situate the work of this major figure in Black, queer, and American literary history. We will also consider Baldwin's literary influences, his contemporaries and collaborators, and his enduring cultural and political legacy.

By diving into Baldwin's work across decades, continents, and contradictions, students will gain a new and indelible perspective on the cultural and political movements that shaped not just the American, but the global twentieth century into the present day. This capstone course will culminate in a final research project and a course mini-conference in which students will have the opportunity to share their research.

This course counts for English Senior Seminar and is required for all English majors
This course counts toward the GWS major and minor

ENG 5000-002 Middlemarch
TR 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM
Mary Mullen

Middlemarch is a classic—a novel so good (or at least, so acclaimed, so canonized) that it became a standard used to evaluate other novels and novel traditions, and a structure for twenty-first century life writing. Narrating the everyday lives of characters in a provincial town, the novel reflects on both crucial historical developments (political reform, railways, the modernization of medicine) and unhistoric acts by seemingly insignificant people. Nineteenth-century critics recognized the novel as a masterpiece that would last the test of time. Scholars of the Irish novel, even today, ask why there wasn't an Irish *Middlemarch.*



In this senior seminar we will study George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and consider what it teaches us about the form of the novel, literary history, and the canon. We will think about gender, genre, race, and colonialism as we read the novel alongside literature and literary criticism that helps us situate the novel in literary history.

This course counts for English Senior Seminar and is required for all English majors
This course counts toward UNITAS Division 2

GIS 5011-001 African and Caribbean Politics & Literature
MW 1:55 PM – 3:10 PM
Chiji Akoma & Olukunle Owolabi

This team-taught course by the Department of Global Interdisciplinary Studies (GIS) is an interdisciplinary endeavor that uses theoretical, conceptual, and empirical knowledge from history, development economics, and political science, to explore the rich and diverse literary traditions of contemporary Africa and its large diaspora in the Caribbean Region.

The course not only looks into the political dysfunctions that follow the dark histories of these postcolonial territories, but it also seeks to offer our students theoretical and aesthetic tools with which to appreciate the interface between the political and the cultural.

As a GIS research seminar, the course adopts an expansive yet rigorous approach to the understanding of contemporary African and Caribbean political realities in social scientific terms and through literary representation.

The first half of the course will be primarily focused on Africa. We will examine how the interaction of European-dominated states and African societies resulted in distorted views of tradition and modernity, contributing to neo-patrimonial forms of governance in postcolonial Africa. We explore this theme through the lens of political theory and literature.

The second half of the course turns its focus on the Caribbean, exploring dependency and underdevelopment, as well as the interactions among class, race, and ethnicity in Trinidad, the most culturally diverse of all the Caribbean islands. Along the lines of the latter, we will examine Earl Lovelace's novel, *The Dragon Can't Dance*, to consider the centrality of Carnival in Caribbean consciousness, not simply as a cultural expression, but as the prism through which the complexities of race, ethnicity, and class as powerful factors in West Indian civil society are best understood.

This course counts toward the English major as an elective
This course counts toward UNITAS Division 3
This course counts toward the Africana Studies major and minor
This course counts toward the Political Science major and minor

HON 5440-101 At Stoneleigh Garden: Reading and Writing Children's Stories

January 22-24, 2027
Catherine Staples

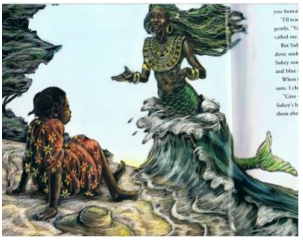
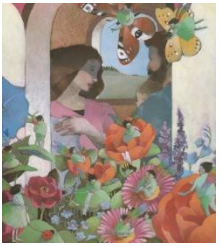


Dr. Barnes' collection of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and early Modern paintings will be the centerpiece for this *one-weekend,* poetry writing workshop. From Cezanne's card players and Picasso's acrobats to Matisse's storytelling interiors, we'll let the details of paintings—a nearly hidden face, a goat's expectant look, a half-open violin case—
"tease us out of thought." How was Picasso influenced by dancers, acrobats, and musicians? What drew him to these performers? What are we to make of the repeating "still-lifes" within paintings by Matisse? How might Monet's painting of his floating boat-studio on the Seine and Matisse's *The Music Lesson* be considered responses to world events and, at the same time, self-portraits? The workshop begins on Friday evening with pizza and exercises in memory & observation. On Saturday morning, we'll take the train into Philadelphia and spend the day at the Barnes Foundation on the parkway. We will write our way through the galleries, using paintings and sculpture as well as the ensembles of quirky objects—keys, hinges, candle sticks, and locked chests—as entry points for new poems. On Sunday, we will gather to feast and workshop our new poems.

Non-honors students please email HonorsProgram@villanova.edu for course approval.

One-credits bundle to count toward the minor in creative writing in some cases.

HON 5440-100 At Stoneleigh Garden: Reading and Writing Children's Stories
April 9-11, 2027
Catherine Staples

From *Goodnight Moon* and *The Woman Who Flummoxed the Fairies* to *Wind in the Willows, Sukey and the Mermaid,* and *Alice in Wonderland*—we will read and write our way through Stoneleigh's gardens, meadows, and woods. We'll set imagination loose upon such mysteries as the disappearing, reappearing greenhouse, the wetland water trough in Catalpa court, the three gates to somewhere / nowhere, the spotted pitcher plants of the bog garden, the hollow stump down which Alice might have followed a white rabbit, and the nearly lost gardener's path beyond the grove of *Flame Thrower* Redbuds. The workshop begins on Friday evening with pizza and the recollection of beloved childhood books. We will practice generating narratives with exercises in observation and imagination. On Saturday morning, we'll spend the day out-of-doors writing at Stoneleigh Garden. Mid-day their will be a Ratty-and-Mole-like picnic near the old fox den. On Sunday, we will gather to feast and workshop our new poems.

Non-honors students please email HonorsProgram@villanova.edu for course approval.

One-credits bundle to count toward the minor in creative writing in some cases


Villanova English



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