



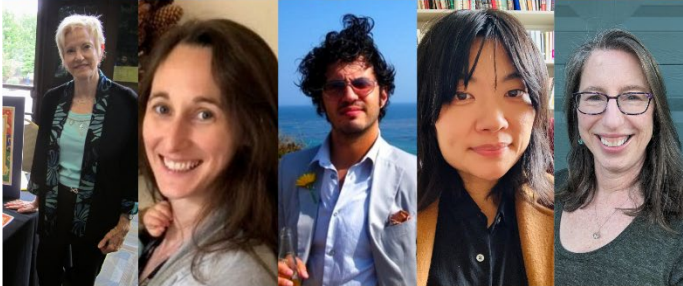
Department of English
Undergraduate Course Descriptions
Spring 2026



English Department Faculty



Michael Dowdy,
Alan Drew,
Joseph Drury,
Michelle Filling-Brown
Travis Foster,



Karyn Hollis,
Brooke Hunter,
Kamran Javadizadeh,
Yumi Lee,
Jean Lutes,



Mary Mullen,
Adrienne Perry,
Megan Quigley,
Lauren Shohet,
Mary Beth Simmons,



Catherine Staples,
Katherine Szumanski,
Kimberly Takahata,
Tsering Wangmo.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: SPRING 2026

COURSES THAT FULFILL ENGLISH REQUIREMENTS:

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PRE-1800

1500 – 1650

3350 Milton: Genre and Gender

1650 – 1800

3350 Milton: Genre and Gender

3425 British Gothic Fiction

4010 Early American Textual Bodies

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH POST-1800

1800 – 1945

3425 British Gothic Fiction

3622 Virginia Woolf's Century

4624 Crime Fiction & Gender

1945 – PRESENT

2360 Adaptation: Film as Literature

3660 Contemporary Literature & Film in India

4624 Crime Fiction & Gender

4646 Race & Ethnicity in Contemporary American Lit

4702 Authors On & Off the Page

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

3660 Contemporary Literature & Film in India

4010 Early American Textual Bodies

4646 Race & Ethnicity in Contemporary American Lit

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

2003	Intro to Creative Writing	2013	Writing of Memoir
2006	Writing of Poetry	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	2250	Ways of Reading
2006	Writing of Poetry	2360	Adaptation: Film as Lit
2013	Writing of Memoir	2993	Internship
2023	Journalism	2996	Internship
2030	Tutoring Writers		

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

4646	Race & Ethnicity in Contemporary American Lit
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Courses offered that count for the Major/ Minor in Asian Studies

3660	Contemporary Literature & Film in India
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Courses offered that count for the Major/ Minor in Cultural Studies

3660	Contemporary Literature & Film in India
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Courses offered that count for the Major/ Minor in Gender & Women's Studies

3350	Milton: Gender & Genre	4010	Early Am. Textual Bodies
3622	Virginia Woolf's Century	4624	Crime Fiction & Gender

Courses offered that count for the Minor in Legal Studies

4624	Crime Fiction & Gender
4646	Race & Ethnicity: American Novel

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

3660	Cont. Lit & Film in India	4624	Crime Fiction & Gender
4010	Early American Textual Bodies	4646	Race & Ethnicity: American Novel

**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 1:00 PM – 2:15 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 course is designed as an introduction to the world of creative fiction, non-fiction, and poetry writing. The goals of this course are to read the work of established authors and poets, to discuss various elements of craft employed by those authors and poets, and to use similar techniques to improve students' own creative writing. 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 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 2006-001 Writing of Poetry

TR 8:30 AM – 9:45 AM

Cathy Staples

Writing of Poetry is a generative writing workshop designed to immerse you in a writer's habits—close reading, alert observation, curiosity, and imagination. We will read Tracy K. Smith, Seamus Heaney, Rick Barot, and Maya Popa among others. You will write poems about the natural world, wonder, the universe, and your experience in the world. Like Tracy K. Smith, we'll trust to the role of imagination, questions, and mystery. Another focus will be

imagery *as mirror and as lamp* as well as metaphor, sound, and the line. In preparation for your final project, we'll take close looks at the shaping of a volume or a sequence, the poem-by-poem build of a section, the through-line of imagery, and the link between endings & beginnings. In lieu of a final, you will create a small chapbook. Throughout, our focus will be on process and discovery, on sharpening language and seeing more deeply. The course includes field trips to Mendell observatory to see the stars and Rushton Farm to witness bird-banding.



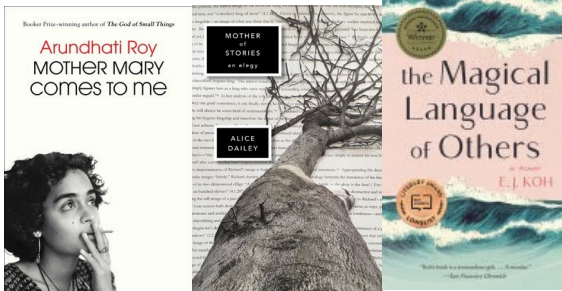
This course number can be taken multiple times

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 of Memoir
TR 11:30 AM – 12:45 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 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."

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 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 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM

Kamran Javadizadeh

What goes on in a college English classroom can often seem mysterious. How do we know that literary texts mean what we claim they mean? This course aims to clear up some of that mystery and to prepare you, thereby, to do upper-level work as English majors. We will read a manageably small batch of primary texts, allowing ourselves the time not only to ask what they mean but also to explore and unpack the methodological approaches that guide us towards our interpretive conclusions. We will study a rich archive of literary criticism—principally to lay bare the moves that we make as readers of texts and also to expand and refine our sense of what can be done when we write about writing. The goal of the course is to give you a sense of what kinds of questions to ask about a literary text and the tools to begin to answer those questions in sophisticated and rigorous ways. Primary texts will

include works by Virginia Woolf, William Shakespeare, John Keats, Lucille Clifton, and Jane Austen.

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 2360-001 Adaptation: Film as Literature
TR 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM
Adrienne Perry



Adaptations of literature into film, such as Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* or Ryan Coogler's *Black Panther*, have enjoyed popular success. This course asks a few key questions: What is the value of retelling works of literature in film, and how do such retellings work? What makes the relationship between text and image, which dates back to film's earliest days, so alluring for us as readers, viewers, or artists? To answer these questions, we will examine the elements of storytelling used to transform prose into moving image, considering the way adaptations act as translations or other forms of homage, such as sampling.

As part of this conversation, we will grapple with issues of power, privilege, and representation. Essays by bell hooks and Susan Sontag, among others, will inform our discussion of texts and films such as *Rashōmon* and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. Requirements include active class participation and engagement, brief reading

quizzes, and a range of critical and creative projects students will be able to devise or choose from.

This course counts toward Diversity I

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

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 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.szumanski@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 6:00 PM – 7:15 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. We'll meet for 10 weeks in the semester—finishing before the busy time of finals.



ENG 3350-001 Milton: Gender and Genre
TR 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM
Lauren Shohet

This course will explore the writing of John Milton (1608-1674) and also “Milton” as a cultural and literary institution. We will consider Milton’s writing on its own terms, in company of his contemporaries (including another writer of seventeenth-century epic poetry, Lucy Hutchinson), and as a lasting resource for both liberatory and repressive projects.

We will equip ourselves with tools we need to discover the energy, beauty, and perplexity of Milton’s beautiful poetry and his influential writing on gender, sex, knowledge, marriage, divorce, and religious violence. We’ll look at some ways that Anglo-American colonialism and white supremacist projects relied on readings of Milton, then survey some of the contrary ways that, for over three centuries, writers of marginalized identities have used Milton to create a liberatory legacy. The course concludes with a unit studying adaptations of *Paradise Lost* in early American poetry (Phillis Wheatley), Gothic fiction (Shelley’s *Frankenstein*), fantasy (Pullman’s *Dark Materials*), graphic novels (Moore’s *Watchmen*), and popular culture (movies!).

Requirements: class participation, frequent informal writing, two papers (in successive drafts), oral midterm, breakout final group project on a *Paradise Lost* adaptation or a reception study of *Paradise Lost*'s afterlives in education, politics, advertising, or similar arena.



This course counts toward Diversity 2

This course counts toward the GWS major and minor

ENG 3425-001 British Gothic Fiction

TR 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM

Joseph Drury

The first gothic fictions appeared in Britain towards the end of the eighteenth century during a period of great social and political upheaval. Inspired by the new aesthetics of the sublime, early gothic novels were Enlightenment attempts to reimagine what it would have been like to live in a barbarous premodern world in which an unreformed Catholic Church reigned supreme, aristocrats abused their power, and individuals, especially women, had little or no protection from the rule of law. But as the initial optimism inspired by the French Revolution began to give way to despair at the senseless violence it had unleashed, gothic authors began to look for answers in works that explored the unconscious desires and primal instincts that remained untouched by enlightened modernity. By the nineteenth century, gothic authors were turning their attention to new cultural anxieties—scientific and technological innovation, urbanization, crime, mass immigration—that seemed to suggest that European culture was entering a period of decline. This course will introduce students to the first one hundred years of British gothic fiction, with a coda that looks at the repurposing of gothic conventions by a contemporary author. It will focus on the historical contexts in which these works were written and the different theoretical approaches that critics have used to interpret them. Readings may include works Ann

Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance*, Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and Helen Oyeyemi's *White is for Witching*.

ENG 3622-001 Virginia Woolf's Century

TR 2:30 PM – 3:45 PM

Megan Quigley



Come read Virginia Woolf! Recent political events have made it clear that even if Woolf's suffragists had their first major victory a century ago, their battle is far from won. #MeToo Woolf; Lesbian Woolf; Transgender Novelist Woolf; Eco-Woolf; Woolf for European Union; Woolf and social activism—our current climate makes Woolf's writing and legacy more urgent than ever. We need to know

our Woolf, this course argues, so that when we fight the backlash against feminism, we know its origins. Understanding first-wave feminists like Woolf—warts and all—helps us to see how gender, sexuality, and race played a role in early twentieth-century's conceptions of self, family, and citizenship. Woolf's idiosyncratic voice can continue to guide intersectional feminists in their current struggles.

Over the semester we will ask: Why are audiences as fascinated by Virginia Woolf's life as they are by the novels she wrote? Why does she think that every woman needs *A Room of One's Own*? What is the boundary between fiction and autobiography? What role does Woolf's gender play in her status as a literary celebrity? This course will posit that Woolf's novels and essays *themselves* instigate these debates. In seeking to destroy the conventions of the realist novel and simultaneously explain new forms through what life is like "here, now," Woolf's novels interrogate the relationships among fiction, biography, gender and autobiography.

We will read four novels by Woolf as well as extracts from her *Essays* and *Diaries*. We will study explosive issues in Woolf studies (snobbery, racism, anti-Semitism, sexual molestation, lesbianism, suicidal ideation) while we also learn about literary high modernism by immersing ourselves in Woolf's own writing.



This course counts toward Diversity 2

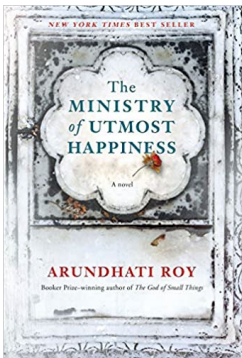
This course counts toward the GWS major and minor

ENG 3660-001 Contemporary Literature & Film in India

TR 2:30 PM – 3:45 PM

Tsering Wangmo

The author Raja Rao voiced his dilemma of writing in English nine years before India gained its independence from British rule. “One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own,” he wrote in the introduction to his book *Kanthapura*. In this course, we will read four Anglophone novels, short stories and poetry produced by writers in India starting with Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura*, a novel about a community’s anti-colonial uprising in a remote Indian village.



We'll end the course with Arundhati Roy's most recent novel where we see present-day India through the eyes of characters who find themselves on the nation's periphery. Our conversations in class will cover debates on caste, religious conflicts, gender and sexuality in contemporary India as well as on historical events such as the independence struggle and the partition. We will also investigate our own practices of responding to texts and include in

our discussions select Urdu and Hindi films. No prior knowledge of the Indian subcontinent or Indian cinema is required.



The texts we will read include Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938), Kushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Kiran Desai's *Inheritance of Loss* (2004) and Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of the Utmost Happiness* (2018).

This course counts toward Diversity 3

This course counts toward the Cultural Studies major/minor

This course counts toward the Asian Studies major/minor

This course counts toward the Peace & Justice major and minor

ENG 4010-001 Early American Textual Bodies

MW 3:20 PM – 4:35 PM

Kimberly Takahata

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 Diversity I

This course counts toward the GWS major and minor

This course counts toward the Peace & Justice major and minor

ENG 4624-001 Crime Fiction & Gender

MWF 9:35 AM – 10:25 AM

Jean Lutes

We will study crime and detective fiction as an intellectually rich phenomenon that engages social and economic realities and addresses fundamental questions about the nature of knowledge itself. Because narratives of detection are often preoccupied by gender and sexuality, a rigorous inquiry into the genre yields startling insights into the meanings our culture has attached to particular genders and particular sexualities.



Surveying a selection of mostly American narratives beginning with Edgar Allan Poe's influential story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), we will approach crime narratives as both an art form and an index of societal beliefs. We will ask some hard-boiled questions of our own, including: Why is crime fiction so popular? What desires are created, fulfilled, or neglected by crime fiction? How does this genre reinforce – or undermine – existing power relations? How do crime narratives advance justice or perpetuate injustice? How have crime fiction authors responded to racial violence? To mass incarceration? Finally, what can be known, how, and by whom? Likely texts include Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress*, and Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister, the Serial Killer*.

This course counts toward Diversity 2

This course counts toward the GWS major and minor

This course counts toward the Legal Studies minor

This course counts toward the Peace & Justice major and minor

**ENG 4646-001 Race & Ethnicity in Contemporary
American Literature**

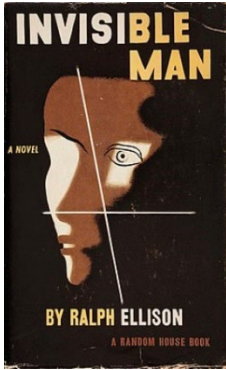
MW 4:45 PM – 6:00 PM

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 authors such as Ralph Ellison, Américo Paredes, Maxine Hong Kingston, Toni Morrison, and Tommy Orange. Alongside these works, students in this class 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 legal and literary criticism.

This course counts toward Diversity I

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 4702-001 Authors On & Off the Page

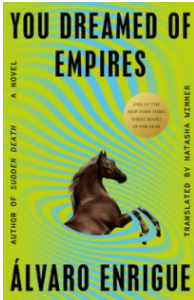
TR 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM

Alan Drew, Adrienne Perry

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 Maya Popa, Cauvery Madhavan, Álvaro Enrique and the translator Natasha Wimmer, as well as Rick Barot. 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, fiction, and memoir, 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, from Spanish conquistadores in 16th century Mexico to exquisite lyric poetry. This class 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 participation in class discussions, creative writing (poetry and prose), and attendance at all four evening readings, which will take place at 7:00 pm on Tuesdays or Thursdays.

This course counts toward the Fine Arts

This course counts towards the minor in Creative Writing

ENG 5000-001 Melville

MW 1:55 PM – 3:10 PM

Travis Foster



Encounter nineteenth-century America through its most challenging writer. This course examines five major works by Herman Melville—*Moby-Dick*, “Bartleby, the Scrivener,” *Benito Cereno*, “Hawthorne and His Mosses,” and *Battle-Pieces*—to explore the radical scope of his literary imagination.

Written during a period of industrial expansion, imperial ambition, and looming civil war, Melville's texts question the contradictions of democracy and the costs of progress.

At the center is *Moby-Dick* (1851), a novel that is at once an adventure tale and a philosophical epic, confronting questions of evil, knowledge, and the inscrutability of the universe. From the whaling industry's environmental devastation and species extinction to the global reach of capitalism, the novel anticipates debates about ecological crisis and economic inequality. "Bartleby" turns to the soul-depleting monotony of office labor and asks whether capitalism and Christian ethics can coexist. *Benito Cereno* dramatizes how white supremacist terror hides in plain sight, revealing the limits of perception and the self-serving narratives of power. "Hawthorne and His Mosses" theorizes American literature as a space for "wicked" originality, and *Battle-Pieces* offers a poetic reckoning with the Civil War and its moral aftermath.

Across these works, we will explore themes such as environmental catastrophe, natural resource extraction, racist violence, knowledge from below, queer desires, masculinities, war, martyrdom, and the tension between democratic ideals and systemic oppression. We will also examine Melville's experimental forms—his irony, parody, and genre-blending—and consider his relevance to contemporary crises.

Requirements: frequent informal writing, one short analytic paper, a substantial final project on one of the texts studied (along with several building block assignments along the way), and an oral presentation at the senior-seminar mini-conference.

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

ENG 5000-002 Adaptation: Page, Stage, Film

TR 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM

Lauren Shohet

How and why do we recycle old stories? In this seminar, we'll explore ways that inherited texts move into different media, settings, and contexts: myth into film, verse into novel, medieval England onto other planets. The seminar will involve both full-class work and a significant independent component.



We will begin by studying some theories of adaptation and a variety of adaptive projects. How is cultural adaptation like/unlike genetic evolution? Is the book always better than the movie? We will explore the Coen brothers *Odyssey* movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou* and Nina MacLaughlin's contemporary feminist retellings of Ovid, *Wake, Siren*.

We then will turn to some adaptive clusters of Renaissance texts, selected from among: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Peter Weir's movie *The Truman Show*, and Philip Pullman's fantasy trilogy *His Dark Materials* (as *Paradise Lost* adaptations); Shakespeare's *Henriad*, the Quintessence Theatre's *Shakespeare's Dark Accidents*, and HBO's *Succession*; and *Macbeth*, Rupert Goold's *Macbeth* film (2010), and Billy Morrisette's noir comedy *Scotland, PA*.

For your individual capstone paper, each of you will revisit a text you've studied before (or always wanted to), then research and write about its afterlives (or its heritage). Or you might choose to create an adaptation of your own.

Requirements: frequent informal writing, 2 short analytic papers, substantial final project (with preliminary building blocks), oral presentation at department senior-seminar mini-conference.

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

This course counts toward the GWS major and minor

HON 5440-100

At Stoneleigh Garden: Reading and Writing Children's Stories

April 10-12, 2026

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* along with selected Greek myths—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 water garden in Catalpa court, the three gates to nowhere, the miniature world of the bog garden, the hollow stump down which Alice might have followed a white rabbit, and the lost greenhouse. The workshop begins on Friday evening with pizza and exercises in observation and imagination. On Saturday morning, we'll spend the day writing at Stoneleigh Garden. On Sunday, we will gather for coffee, tea, and breakfast; we'll share our new work while feasting!

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 5445-100

**At the Barnes: One-Credit Poetry
Workshop**

January 23-25, 2026

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 "tease us out of thought." Why did Picasso identify with street acrobats and performers? What are we to make of the repeating "still-lives" 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 of the artists? 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 for coffee, tea, and breakfast; we'll share our new work while feasting! 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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