Critical Writing and Creative Nonfiction

English 2880-2890 offers guidance and an audience for students who wish to gain skill in expository writing—a common term for critical, reflective, investigative, and creative nonfiction. Each section provides a context for writing defined by a form of exposition, a disciplinary area, a practice, or a topic intimately related to the written medium. Course members will read relevant published material and write and revise their own work regularly, while reviewing and responding to one another’s. Since these seminar-sized courses depend on members’ full participation, regular attendance and submission of written work are required. Students and instructors will confer individually throughout the term. English 2880-2890 does not satisfy requirements for the English major. http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/engl2880-2890

Each seminar limited to 18 students. Students must have completed their colleges’ first-year writing requirements or have the permission of the instructor.

2890 Seminar 101 Expository Writing: Creative Nonfiction: The Invented “I”  MWF 10:10 - 11:00  Akinsiku, Lanre
4 credits.

We are our experiences, but we’re also our reflections of those experiences. So honest reflection about our thoughts and actions allows us to constantly invent and reinvent ourselves. In this course we’ll explore the personal essay, focusing on how and why writers frame experiences as they do. As thinkers, we’ll consider the practice of critical reflection, learn to contextualize our experiences, and become more conscious of the ways in which we see the world. As writers, we’ll study narrative craft, including scene, dialogue, metaphor and character development. Our reading will feature Jamaica Kincaid, Eula Biss, James Baldwin and David Foster Wallace, among others. Through our workshops, we’ll learn how to be generous, empathetic, and constructive readers of our peers’ work.

2890 Seminar 102 Expository Writing: TV Nation: Television and Identity in America  MWF 11:15 - 12:05  Faulkner, David
4 credits.

Television mediates our national and domestic life more than we may realize. From its origins, TV—even for those who consume little of it—has represented, even regulated, our experiences of childhood and adolescence, production and consumption, politics and citizenship. It seeks to define us as people, workers, and citizens. In this course, we will develop ways to read and to write about the small screen as a cultural text. In doing so, we will explore how the genres, institutions and ideologies of contemporary television both reflect and refract our national and domestic life.

2890 Seminar 103 Expository Writing: Exploring the Personal Essay  MWF 12:20 - 1:10  Green, Charlie
4 credits.

In this course, we will read and write personal essays, exploring the various possibilities within the genre. We will explore the power of image and specific detail, the uses and limits of the first-person narrating self, and the boundary between public and private. Reading will focus on contemporary essayists, possibly including Leslie Jamison, Claudia Rankine, Eula Biss, Hilton Als, and John Jeremiah Sullivan; we will also read older essays, including those of Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, and James Baldwin. We will also pay close attention to students’ writing, with workshop feedback. Working through drafts, students will develop fuller skill at criticism and revision.

2890 Seminar 104 Expository Writing: Secrets, Surveillance, and You  MWF 1:25 - 2:15  Reinhardt, Jonathan
4 credits.

Political secrets call to mind spies like James Bond or Jason Bourne. What if the protagonist of the drama of political secrets is not some fantastical secret agent, but you? Drones, hackers, and secret court hearings have become part of our infrastructure of knowledge-making and governing. This is done in your name, to keep you safe. This course will explore the relationship between political secrets, transparency, knowledge, and individuality. We will discuss literary texts like the story of Judas, In Cold Blood, and A Most Wanted Man, investigative journalism about Wikileaks and the Snowden documents, and films like Zero Dark Thirty and Imitation Game. In the end, we all have to choose which secrets to tell, which to keep.

2890 Seminar 105 Expository Writing: Creative Nonfiction: The Everyday is Extraordinary  MWF 2:55 - 4:10  Neal, Joseph
4 credits.

In this course we’ll draw on the everyday stuff of life. We will look at how authors such as Annie Dillard, James Baldwin, David Sedaris, John Steinbeck, and James Thurber have taken small moments, faint memories, and everyday experiences and transformed them into lasting works that speak to the human condition. Our exploration will be supplemented by works of street photographers such as Alfred Stieglitz and Henri Cartier-Bresson and cinema-verité documentarians such as Agnes Varda and Ross McElwee. In-depth discussions and writing assignments will allow students to mine the minutiae of the everyday, and workshops throughout the term help hone their writing to create clear and illuminating pieces.
2890 Seminar 106 Expository Writing: Patient Zero to Global Pandemic
4 credits.

The medical historian Roy Porter claims diseases are "largely of mankind's own making." If so, what is our responsibility in fighting them? This course examines literature, television, film, and radio concerning disease outbreaks in order to consider how humans manage disease on an individual and societal level. How do fictional representations of outbreaks speak to ongoing debates about international aid work, quarantine procedures, and mandated vaccinations. Course materials may include Albert Camus's The Plague, Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake, Siddhartha Mukherjee's The Emperor of All Maladies, episodes from House, M.D., TV mini-series Angels in America, and films from the X-Men series.

2890 Seminar 107 Expository Writing: Grassroots Politics
4 credits.

What does it take to run a successful grassroots campaign in the U.S.? This course will teach you the nuts and bolts of political campaigning for both candidates and issues. You will learn how to determine the best timing for your campaign, how to develop a campaign strategy, how to target and persuade voters, how to raise money, how to use media, how to manage people, and how to run an election-day operation. Drawing on readings from political scientists, modern campaign consultants like James Carville and Dick Morris, and classical strategists like Sun Tzu, you will discover the art and science of campaigning, while improving your research and writing by producing documents like op-eds, district profiles, and strategy memos all for the campaign of your choice.

2890 Seminar 108 Expository Writing: Legal (Science) Fictions
4 credits.

Science fiction writers imagine whole new social, economic or political systems in order to diagnose or cure the world’s ills, and questions of law inevitably emerge. Should this robot be considered a legal person? Does this cool new policing tactic infringe our civil rights? As we look at how these fictional worlds take shape, we’ll consider how such topics as personhood, equality, and social control arise in science fiction and other fantasy genres and how science fiction treats issues of gender, race, labor, policing and politics. Assignments will include writing your own Utopia, and a collaborative research project on a currently contested legal-technological issue. Authors will include Philip K. Dick, Joanna Russ, Ursula Le Guin, China Miéville, and Octavia Butler.

3860 Philosophic Fictions
4 credits.

"Fictions" of thought and language abound in all good writing, especially in works that deliberately test and play with ideas: dialogues, satires, parables, philosophic tales, and "thought-experiments." Students will write critically about such works and will experiment with writing in similar forms in order to argue flexibly, ridicule vice and folly, or involve readers in pleasingly or disturbingly insoluble problems. Readings may include Plato's Gorgias or Republic, Swift's "Modest Proposal" and Gulliver's Travels, parables by Jesus and Kafka, dystopias by Caryl Churchill and George Saunders, science fiction by Octavia Butler and the Wachowski brothers, short stories by Jorge Luis Borges and Flannery O'Connor, and essays by Richard Rorty and Terry Eagleton. Course limited to 15 students. See http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/sad4449/3860/.

Creative Writing

Students usually begin their work in Creative Writing with English 2800 or 2810, and only after completion of the First-Year Writing Seminar requirement. Please note that either English 2800 or English 2810 is the recommended prerequisite for 3000-level Creative Writing courses. English 2800 and 2810 may satisfy a distribution requirement in your college (please check with your college advisor). English 3820-3830, 3840-3850, and 4800-4810, 4801-4811 are approved for the English major. In addition, one course at each level of Creative Writing is required for the Creative Writing minor: one 2800 or 2810, one 3820, 3830, 3840 or 3850, and one 4800, 4801, 4810 or 4811.

MAJORS AND PROSPECTIVE MAJORS, PLEASE NOTE: Although recommended for prospective English majors, English 2800-2810 cannot be counted towards the 40 credits required for completion of the English major. English 2800 or English 2810 is a prerequisite for 3000-level Creative Writing courses, which count towards the major. English 2800 is not a prerequisite for English 2810.

2810 Seminar 101 Introduction to Creative Writing
3 credits.

An introductory course in the theory, practice, and reading of fiction, poetry, and allied forms. Both narrative and verse readings are assigned. Students will learn to savor and practice the craft of poetry and narrative writing, developing techniques that inform both. Some class meetings may feature peer review of student work, and instructors may assign writing exercises or prompts.

2810 Seminar 102 Introduction to Creative Writing
3 credits.

2810 Seminar 103 Introduction to Creative Writing
3 credits.
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<th>Credits</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tr>
<td>2810 Seminar 104</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MW 11:15 - 12:05</td>
<td>Duprey, Travis</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 106</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MW 12:20 - 1:10</td>
<td>Klippenstein, Cody</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 107</td>
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<td>MW 12:20 - 1:10</td>
<td>Neal, Joseph</td>
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<td>Green, Charlie</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 109</td>
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<td>MW 1:25 - 2:15</td>
<td>LaRose, Richard</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 110</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MW 2:30 - 3:20</td>
<td>Akinsiku, Lanre</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 111</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MW 7:30 - 8:20</td>
<td>Yuen, Kenneth</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 112</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TR 10:10 - 11:00</td>
<td>Stevens, Mary-Margaret</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 113</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TR 11:15 - 12:05</td>
<td>White, Renia</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 114</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TR 12:20 - 1:10</td>
<td>Ma, Ling</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 115</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TR 1:25 - 2:15</td>
<td>Elterman, Karen</td>
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<td>2810 Seminar 116</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TR 1:25 - 2:15</td>
<td>Oliver, Emily</td>
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<td>3830 Seminar 101</td>
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<td>MW 10:10 - 11:00</td>
<td>Vaughn, Stephanie</td>
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4 credits.

Prerequisite: ENGL 2800 or ENGL 2810 and permission of instructor based on submission of a manuscript (bring manuscript to first day of class, or submit via email, depending upon instructor’s preference). ENGL 3820 or 3830 counts toward the English major, and either it or ENGL 3840 or 3850 (Intermediate Poetry Workshop) is required for the Creative Writing minor. ENGL 3820 and 3830 are the same course, the former offered in fall, the latter in spring. Limited to 15 students.

This course focuses upon the writing of fiction or related narrative forms. May include significant reading and discussion of readings, explorations of form and technique, completion of writing assignments and prompts, and peer review of student work. Many students will choose to write short stories, but excerpts from longer works will also be accepted. Students may take 3820 or 3830 more than once.

3830 Seminar 102     | 4       | TR 10:10 - 11:00 | Fowler, Karen Joy  |
| 3830 Seminar 103     | 4       | TR 12:20 - 1:10  | Lennon, John       |
Prerequisite: ENGL 2800 or ENGL 2810 and permission of instructor based on submission of a manuscript (bring manuscript to first day of class, or submit via email, depending upon instructor's preference). ENGL 3840 or 3850 counts toward the English major, and either ENGL 3820 or 3830 (Intermediate Fiction Workshop) is required for the Creative Writing minor. ENGL 3840 and 3850 are the same course, the former offered in fall, the latter in spring. Limited to 15 students.

This course focuses upon the writing of poetry. May include significant reading and discussion of readings, explorations of form and technique, completion of writing assignments and prompts, and peer review of student work. Students may take 3840 or 3850 more than once.

Prerequisite: permission of instructor based on submission of a manuscript (bring manuscript to first day of class, or submit via email, depending upon instructor's preference). Prior completion of a section of ENGL 3840 or 3850 is strongly recommended. ENGL 4800 and 4810 count toward the English major, and fulfill the 4000-level writing seminar requirement of the Creative Writing minor. Limited to 15 students.

This course is intended for verse writing students who have completed ENGL 3840 or 3850 and wish to refine their writing. It may include significant reading and discussion of readings, advanced explorations of form and technique, completion of writing assignments and prompts, and peer review of student work. In addition to the instructor's assigned writing requirements, students may work on longer-form verse projects. Students may take 4800 or 4810 more than once.

Prerequisite: permission of instructor based on submission of a manuscript (bring manuscript to first day of class, or submit via email, depending upon instructor's preference). Prior completion of a section of ENGL 3820 or 3830 is strongly recommended. ENGL 4801 and 4811 count toward the English major, and fill the 4000-level writing seminar requirement of the Creative Writing minor. Limited to 15 students.

This course is intended for narrative writing students who have completed ENGL 3820 or 3830 and wish to refine their writing. It may include significant reading and discussion of readings, advanced explorations of form and technique, completion of writing assignments and prompts, and peer review of student work. In addition to the instructor's assigned writing requirements, students may work on longer-form narrative writing projects. Students may take 4801 or 4811 more than once.

Prerequisite: permission of instructor based on submission of a manuscript (bring manuscript to first day of class, or submit via email, depending upon instructor's preference). The reading of poetry is the single most important element of a poet’s education. In this course, we'll read a volume of poems each week and post descriptive, interpretive comments on social media sites, such as Goodreads, twitter, blogs, or online journals. In this way, our class will join—affect and improve—the international conversation on poetry and poetics. We'll discuss content and craft to understand divergent aesthetics, and we'll investigate each book's historical provenance: where did this poetry come from? What are its affinities? In order to write well-informed reviews, we'll delve into essays on poetics, blogs, interviews. "There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page...becomes luminous with manifold allusion.” (Emerson)

Courses at the 2000 level include foundational surveys designed to introduce English majors and minors to important areas of the curriculum, courses on major themes and topics that span historical periods, and courses intended for non-majors as well as majors and minors. No previous college-level study in English is assumed.
An introductory survey of modern methodologies in criticism and theory. Readings include key texts from such schools as New Criticism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, post-structuralism, Marxism, feminism, and postcolonial studies. The course gives students a solid foundation in the issues, techniques, and vocabularies of advanced literary analysis. While literary questions are predominant throughout the semester, this course is nevertheless designed to be accessible and useful not only for English and literature majors (and prospective majors) but also for anyone interested in gaining a foundation in aesthetic and cultural analysis. The contemporary humanistic disciplines largely share a technical vocabulary, and this class provides undergraduates from various fields a firm grounding in the key concepts and issues of what has come to be called "theory."

### 2020 Romantic Wanderings, Myths Retold, and the Foundations of Modern Literature

MWF 11:15 - 12:05  Londe, Greg  

One of the richest traditions in world literature, English literature was built on stories of the bold and the madcap: discoverers lost at sea, songs of love and loss, resurrected heroes and the hungers of the undead. From *Gulliver's Travels* to "The Tyger," from Jane Austen to "Jabberwocky": your favorite authors writing today know and transform these classics. This course surveys 250 years of poetry and prose in English, from the barbed wit of Swift and Pope and the beguiling wanderings of the Romantic poets, to the myths retold by Victorian writers and the rumblings of war in Modernism. Lectures and weekly discussion sections teach close reading and other skills needed for in-depth literary study. Authors may include Alexander Pope, William Blake, John Keats, Robert Browning, Christina Rossetti, W.B. Yeats, Virginia Woolf, and others. No previous study of this literature is assumed.

### 2040 Introduction to American Literatures: Civil War to the Present

TR 11:40 - 12:55  Hutchinson, George  

This course will introduce students to American literature from the Civil War to the present. We will consider a wide range of authors and literary movements while paying close attention to radical shifts in American culture in the past century and a half. We will ask: What traditions do American authors inherit and what new ones do they invent? How does this writing engage central issues of modern American culture such as race, immigration, class mobility, and technology? The class will examine a variety of genres including poetry, novels, manifestos, and drama. Authors include Mark Twain, Kate Chopin, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, William Faulkner, Felipe Alfau, Langston Hughes, Allen Ginsberg, Thomas Pynchon, Toni Morrison, and others.

### 2080 Shakespeare and the 20th and 21st Centuries

MWF 12:20 - 1:10  Davis, Stuart  

This course may be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.

### 2100 Medieval Romance: Voyage to the Otherworld

TR 10:10 - 11:25  Hill, Thomas  

This course may be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.

### 2512 Caribbean Worlds

M 2:00 - 4:25  Boyce Davies, Carole  

This introductory course to the study of the Caribbean will begin with examinations of what constitutes the Caribbean and an understanding of Caribbean space. We will then study its peoples, contact between Europeans and indigenous peoples, African enslavement and resistance, Indian indentureship and other forced migrations. By mid semester we will identify a cross-section of leading thinkers and ideas. We will also pay attention to issues of identity, migration and the creation of the Caribbean diaspora. Constructions of tourist paradise and other stereotypes and the development of critical Caribbean institutions and national development will be discussed as we read and listen to some representative oral and written literature of the Caribbean and view some relevant film on the Caribbean.
Native American depictions of human interactions with frightening beings can help readers appreciate Indigenous perspectives and experiences. That is, when contemporary Indigenous writers repurpose features of gothic, fantasy, sci-fi, or environmentalist fiction, their reimagined insatiable antagonists are almost universally formed as critical representations of colonialism, while monstrousity emerges from transgressions against Indigenous values and relationships. In reading for this course, we'll examine Indigenous depictions of voracious beings, the relationships these fearsome figures attempt to disrupt, and the means by which protagonists fight their demons. Through the lens of critical Indigenous theory and a sampling of short stories, novels, ethnographies, historical readings, and films, this course will examine how Native American authors continue a long-established practice of balancing relationships through storytelling and story-writing.

This course will introduce both a variety of writings by Asian North American authors and some critical issues concerning the production and reception of Asian American texts. Working primarily with novels, we will be asking questions about the relation between literary forms and the socio-historical context within which they take on their meanings, and about the historical formation of Asian American identities.

This course will introduce students to the African American literary tradition. Through aesthetic and contextual approaches, we will consider how African American life and culture has defined and constituted the United States of America. From slave narratives to Hip-Hop music, we will trace the range of artistic conventions and cultural movements while paying close attention to broader historical shifts in American life over the past three centuries. We will ask: How do authors create and define a tradition? What are some of the recurring themes and motifs within this tradition? Authors will include: Phillis Wheatley, Harriet Jacobs, Frederick Douglass, David Walker, W.E.B. DuBois, Jean Toomer, Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ntozake Shange, Toni Morrison, and Percival Everett.

This undergraduate course introduces the formal and topical innovations that African cinema has experienced since its inception in the 1960s. Sections will explore, among others, Nollywood, sci-fi, and ideological cinema. Films include: Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*, Mohamed Camara's *Dakan*, Djibril Diop Mambéty's *Touki-Bouki*, Cheikh Oumar Sissoko's *Finzan*, Anne-Laure Folly's *Women with Open Eyes*, Ousmane Sembène’s *Camp de Thiaroye*, Jean-Pierre Bekolo's *Quartier Mozart*.

Courses at the 3000 level cover major literary periods, authors, traditions, and genres, as well as literary theory, cultural studies, and creative and expository writing. These courses are designed primarily for English majors and minors, though non-majors are welcome to take them. Some previous college-level study in English is assumed.

In recent years, *Beowulf* has received renewed attention in popular culture, thanks to the production of two recent *Beowulf* movies and riveting new translations (eg. Seamus Heaney). The poem’s appeal lies in the complex depictions of its monsters, accounts of heroic bravery, and lavish portrayals of life in the Meadhall. Through close readings we will also explore the "dark side" of the poem: its punishing depictions of loss and exile, despairing meditations on unstable kingship and dynastic failure, and harrowing depictions of heroic defeat and the vanities of existence on the Middle-Earth. Attention to the poem's literary heritage (in Latin and Norse) and its layered pagan and Christian perspectives reveals an amalgamated Christian heroic ethos. [Readings in Old or Modern English]
3190 Chaucer
4 credits. (Also MEDVL 3190)

This course may be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.

An introduction to the poetry of Chaucer, often considered the “founder” of modern English literature, as well as an introduction to the literary, social, and cultural setting in which he developed his poetry. No previous knowledge of Chaucer or his language (Middle English) is required, but students will develop a set of tools for independent work, including understanding Chaucer’s life, language, uses of other literature, connections to other writers (a “community” of poets?), political setting, and philosophical (moral, sociological, political, etc.) outlook. How should we assess Chaucer? What did “English literature” mean then? What did he “found”? Three papers and final (take-home) exam.

3270 Shakespeare: The Late Plays
4 credits. (Also PMA 3770)

This course may be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.

The course focuses on Shakespeare’s middle to late plays, from the “problem comedies,” through the great tragedies and romances. While we will pay particular attention to questions of dramatic form (genre) and historical context (including ways in which the plays themselves call context into question), the primary concentration will be on careful close readings of the language of the play-texts, in relation to critical questions of subjectivity, power, and art. On the way, we will encounter problems of sexuality, identity, emotion, the body, family, violence, politics, God, the nation, nature and money (not necessarily in that order).

3330 Fictions of Self-Invention: The 18th Century Novel
4 credits.

This course may be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.

If the Satanic fantasy is to believe ourselves “Self-begot, self-raised by our own quick’n’ing power,” as Milton says, then the early novel is diabolical. Foundlings and orphans, abandoned wives, abducted daughters, incestuous marriages, exiled or restlessly traveling sons: early fiction imagines the possibility of socially inventing ourselves by challenging and leaving behind both the family defined by birth and a place called home. We will examine the ideology of self-invention—its promotion of individual autonomy through education, culture, sex, and economics—in such novels as Defoe’s Moll Flanders, Haywood’s Love in Excess, Fielding’s Tom Jones, Austen’s Emma. We will also examine how fiction tries to invent itself by turning to forms of realism and forgetting the history of literature.

3470 The Victorian Novel
4 credits.

This course may be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.

Jane Austen and zombies, A Christmas Carol in 3D, PBS miniseries: why is nineteenth-century fiction so un-dead? The plot of the Victorian novel—sexual betrayal, pathological greed, the sadistic damage wrought on helpless children—reflects wrenching social, scientific, and technological transformations whose global sweep rivals that of our own era’s conflicts. Intertwining domestic and imperial spaces, realistic fiction embodied the most innovative attempt to grasp and contain such seismic shifts in an entertaining idiom for a rising mass readership. These works refract the cultural debates of the age and suggest sources of redemption. We can take pleasure in them even as we critically analyze how the Victorians live now. Likely authors include: Dickens, Gaskell, Brontë, Eliot, Collins and Hardy.

3530 Imagining India, Home and Diaspora
4 credits.

A modern country and an ancient civilization, India has been imagined through the ages in many different ways. This introductory course focuses on the 20th and 21st centuries, drawing on films (Bollywood and Hollywood), tv shows, music, novels, and political thought. Readings from Gandhi, Ambedkar, Tagore, Kipling, Forster, Premchand, Senapati, Manto, Ananthamurthy and Roy as well as such diasporic writers as Rushdie, Lahiri, and Naipaul. Students enrolled in this class may enroll in an optional one-credit course, HINDI 3316, where they will have the opportunity to discuss the course materials in Hindi.

3560 Thinking from a Different Place: Indigenous Philosophies
4 credits. (Also AIS 3560, AMST 3562)

The Western nation-state has failed to solve the two most pressing, indeed catastrophic, global problems: poverty and climate change. This failure is due to the inability of national policy to imagine a world beyond a boundary drawn by the formative capitalist ideas of property, production, and profit. The course will begin by discussing the historical origin and continuing force of these ideas while raising questions about their limits. It will look at a range of alternative ideas about how the world should work if we want to keep it socially, economically, and ecologically in balance. The alternatives we will query come from a range of Indigenous writers of fiction, poetry, and theory, who locate themselves in Native American (north and south), Aboriginal, and Maori communities.
An introduction to recent American fiction through close reading of novels and short fiction since 1970. Some consistent themes will be resistance and revolt, ideas of gender, race and identity, power and marginality, history and memory, and definitions of America. We’ll also consider the texts as experiments in language, form, and aesthetic pleasure. Readings may include Doctorow’s *The Book of Daniel*, Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior*, Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*, stories by Donald Barthelme and Alice Munro, Morrison’s *Beloved*, and Viramontes’ *Their Dogs Came with Them*.

Spy Kids, *Dora the Explorer*, *Jane the Virgin* give us Hollywood visions of what it is like to grow up Latin@ in this country. Sandra Cisneros, Junot Diaz, Sonia Sotomayor and DREAMers provide another set of representations. In this course we will read fiction, poetry, and memoirs about the experience of growing up in the U.S. We will consider the narratives that migrant farmworkers, actors, novelists, and activists produce as they think about how children learn and navigate the processes called racialization, sexualization, and gendering. We will also compare this literature to the work of visual artists like Ana Mendieta as well as filmmakers like Robert Rodriguez.

In addition to nourishing the body, food operates as a cultural system that produces and reflects group and individual identities. In this class we will examine foodways—the behaviors and beliefs attached to the production, distribution, and consumption of food—to explore the way food practices help shape our sense of gender, race, sexual orientation, and national identity. In doing so we will focus primarily on literature and film but will also range into the fields of anthropology, sociology, and history. Some questions under discussion: How do factors such as gender, class, race, and religion shape the foods we eat and the circumstances in which we eat them? How do writers use the language of food to explore issues such as gender, sexuality, class, and race?

What can lawyers and judges learn from the study of literature? This course explores the relevance of imaginative literature (novels, drama, poetry, and film) to questions of law and social justice from a range of perspectives. We will consider debates about how literature can help to humanize legal decision-making; how storytelling has helped to give voice to oppressed populations over history; how narratives of suffering cultivate popular support for human rights; the role played by storytelling in a trial; and how literature can shed light on the limits of law and public policy.

Courses Originating in Other Departments

Explores major American playwrights from 1900 to 1960, introducing students to American theatre as a significant part of modern American cultural history. We will consider the ways in which theatre has contributed to the construction and deconstruction of a national identity. Similarly, we will examine the influence of the American Theatre on and in film. We will pay special attention to the social, political, and aesthetic contexts of the time period and discuss the shifting popularity of dramatic forms, including melodrama, realism, expressionism, absurdism, and the folk play, in the American theatre canon. Authors include O’Neill, Glaspell, Odets, Rice, Hellman, Hughes, Miller, Williams, and Albee, among others.

Since its establishment during the antebellum era in the slave narrative, autobiography has been a foundational genre in African American literary and cultural history. Fifty years after the 1966 founding of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland, California, we will examine the development of this genre and draw on it as a lens to think about one of the most important and controversial political and activist movements in the nation’s history. We will draw on key studies in history and cultural analysis related to the movement as a backdrop for exploring Black Panther autobiographies, including works by Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, David Hilliard, George Jackson, Elaine Brown, Angela Davis, Eldridge Cleaver and Assata Shakur, among others. Concomitantly, we will examine writings by a new generation of Black Panther authors, from Mary Williams, the adopted daughter of Jane Fonda to Ericka Brown, the daughter of Elaine Brown, with whom we will dialogue in a session about her “Black Panther Princess” project. We will examine the complex and sometimes forgotten origins of the Black Panther Party as a political movement in the U.S. South. We will examine the impact of prison literature as a genre on the development of this body of autobiographical work. Finally, we will examine the impact of the body of Black Panther autobiography on film. The autobiographical literature of this movement is also a valuable resource to learn about in light of contemporary movements that reflect on relationships between communities and strategies of policing.

Courses at the 4000 level are advanced seminars intended primarily for English majors and minors who have already taken courses at the 2000 and/or 3000 level. Other students may enroll in these courses, but are encouraged to consult with the instructor.
4020 Literature as Moral Inquiry

What can literary works, especially novels, tell us about moral issues? Should they be seen as suggesting a form of moral inquiry similar to the kind of philosophical discussion we get in, say, Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*? Can reading philosophical works in ethics together with novels that deal with similar themes help us understand these themes better? This course is an attempt to answer these questions.

We will read selections from Aristotle, Kant, Marx, and Nietzsche, and use these works to help us understand the nature of moral inquiry in novels like Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, Coetzee’s *Disgrace*, Morrison’s *Beloved*, Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, and Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. Other writers we will most probably read include Nadine Gordimer, Doris Lessing, and Kazuo Ishiguro.

4090 Theories of Popular Culture

Why study popular culture? Although it is often equated with mass culture and perceived to be unworthy of academic study, this course argues that popular culture is an important site for the production of both pleasure and politics. We consider a range of theoretical approaches and read a spectrum of cultural critics and theorists, from those who equate the popular with the “folk” and the marginalized to those who explore the highly mediated and commercialized aspects of the popular. We look across media and its sites—television, film, the porn industry, baseball, popular music, and Starbucks coffee shops. Studies of texts will be located in economic, political, and social contexts. Also, we ask what feelings of desire, pleasure, fear, and disgust does popular culture generate?

4510 James Baldwin and Philosophy

As a writer, James Baldwin was active in many genres. Novelist, essayist, cultural commentator, and, of course, critic, are some of them. This course is interested in the ways in which James Baldwin might be said to have taken up philosophical issues in his writing. More simply phrased, what kind of thinking does Baldwin’s writing evince? Baldwin, it seems, is never only taking up issues of race, or religion, or the diasporic condition, or critiquing America’s failure to live to its own political promise(s). There is always a philosophical question at stake: Baldwin must be thought, at some level, through abstraction to get fully, properly, at the questions Baldwin is trying to address. To this end, this course will read Baldwin’s works in relation to some of the criticism—the theoretical responses—that his work has provoked. Baldwin will be read as a religious thinker (the thinker of religion), Baldwin as a thinker of the Civil Rights movement, Baldwin as a film scholar.

4550 Race and Time

Race, comparison, and time—what do these terms have to do with each other? What does it mean to be in time, or out of time? What are some other ways of inhabiting time, or of being inhabited by time? What is the time of the racialized subject? How is time and temporality figured in literature? Some of the writers we’ll be reading in the course include Carolivia Herron, Carlos Bulosan, Jamaica Kincaid, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, and Joy Kogawa. Other readings will be drawn from a range of disciplines, including selections from the work of Johannes Fabian, Frantz Fanon, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Cathy Caruth, Thomas Bender and David Wellbery.

4570 Africa Writes Back

What happens to the truth of fiction when two authors, each with a unique and sometimes opposing cultural and historical perspective, write about the same events? What if the two novelists are writing for different audiences and even different nations? In African literature one often finds African writers responding to European writers about their portrayals of colonialism and resistance. In this course, we shall be considering the “she said, he said” of African colonial and anti-colonial literature. For example, we shall look at the ways in which Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* is a response to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, and at the treatment of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* by J.M. Coetzee in his novel, *Foe*.

4708 Fictions for New Worlds

This course may be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.

In *The New Science*, Vico posits that all nations are “poetic in their beginning.” In this course we will read works of literature that imagine themselves at the beginning of a new nation or polity: such works as Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Thomas More’s *Utopia*, John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, Toni Morrison’s *A Mercy*, and NoViolet Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names*. We will reflect upon each work in its specific historical and geopolitical context. But we will also imagine how, collectively, these literatures might tell a different history of civil society than the one we are accustomed to.
"In many ways," says Anton Ego in *Ratatouille*, “the work of a critic is easy.” Is that true? This course examines critical writing intended for general readers—book and film reviews in particular—with an emphasis on the practical strategies critics use in framing their writing for different audiences and in manipulating different forms (the review-essay, the survey, the hatchet job, the retrospective, etc.). We'll read from some of the great mid-century critics (Pauline Kael, Randall Jarrell), as well as the many critics who have flourished in the contemporary era (Updike, Vendler, Wood, Dargis, et al.). Our goal will be to better understand, if not answer, the ancient question, “What's the point of criticism?”, as well as its modern variant, “Why should anyone care what That Guy thinks?”

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**4920 Seminar 101 Honors Seminar II: Oscar Wilde**

W 12:20 - 2:15  
Hanson, Ellis

“I was a man who stood in symbolic relations to the art and culture of my age,” Oscar Wilde once announced in a characteristically immodest, yet accurate, appraisal of his talent. With his legendary wit, his exuberant style of perversity and paradox, and his tendency to scandal, he has come to stand in symbolic relation to our own age as well, and for some of the same reasons he was a delight and a challenge to the Victorians. We will explore his poetry, essays, plays, letters, and fiction, in the context of the Aesthetic, Decadent, and Symbolist movements of the late-nineteenth century and also in the context of current debates in literary criticism and the history of sexuality.

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**4920 Seminar 102 Honors Seminar II: Not-Male in the Middle Ages**

R 12:20 - 2:15  
Raskolnikov, Masha

*This course may be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.*

“Not-male” would be “female,” right? In pre-1400s Europe, no, not exactly. In the Middle Ages those excluded from the category “male” might be saints, eunuchs, martyrs, people from other countries, and even Jesus Christ as well as women. We will read some indelibly strange and surprising works of medieval literature (mostly in translation, some in Middle English), and current scholarship on the history of how familiar-seeming notions like “gender,” “sex,” “woman” “holiness,” and “nation” developed in the Middle Ages. In this Honors seminar we will also discuss how to construct a sustained scholarly argument. The weak of stomach should be warned: this is not the Middle Ages of shy maidens in castles. Here be monsters.

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**4930 Honors Essay Tutorial I**

4 credits.

**4940 Honors Essay Tutorial II**

4 credits.  
Prerequisite: ENGL 4930. Permission of director of Honors Program required. Students should take care to enroll in the correct section with their thesis advisor.

ENGL 4940 Honors Essay Tutorial II is the second of a two-part series of courses required for students pursuing a Bachelor of Arts with Honors in English. The first course in the series is ENGL 4930 Honors Essay Tutorial I.

**4950 Independent Study**

2-4 credits.  
Independent reading course in topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses. Students select a topic in consultation with the faculty member who has approved to supervise the course work. Permission of departmental advisor and director of undergraduate studies required. To register: obtain an independent study form from the College Registrar or from the department office, Goldwin Smith 250.

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**Courses Originating in Other Departments**

**3910 Poetry and Poetics of the Americas**

MWF 11:15 - 12:05  
Monroe, Jonathan

As globalization draws the Americas ever closer together, reshaping our sense of a common and uncommon American culture, what claims might be made for a distinctive, diverse poetry and poetics of the America? How might we characterize its dominant forms and alternative practices? What shared influences, affiliations, concerns and approaches might we find and what differences emerge? Ranging across North and South America, Central America and the Caribbean, this course will place in conversation such figures as Edgar Allen Poe, Jorge Luis Borges, Pablo Neruda, Nicanor Parra, Roberto Bolano, Claudia Rankine, Joan Retallack, Rosmarie Waldrop, and Cecilia Vicuña.

**4210 Shakespeare in (Con)text**

W 10:10 - 12:05  
Levitt, Bruce

Examines how collaboration among stage directors, designers, and actors leads to differing interpretations of plays. The course focuses on how the texts themselves are blueprints for productions with particular emphasis on the choices available to the actor inherent in the text.
Toni Morrison is best known for her body of novels that began with publication of *The Bluest Eye* in 1970. We will focus on reading novels by Morrison, including *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), *Paradise* (1998), *Love* (2003) and *A Mercy* (2008). The presentation of her novels in trilogy form and her contributions to the genre of historical writing will be given some consideration. We will explore the author’s stylistic innovation and expansion of this genre. We will consider topics such as how to read novels critically. In this course, we will examine some of the distinctions between how novels are discussed and written about in popular and academic contexts.

**4981 Postcolonial Poetry and the Poetics of Relation**

4 credits. (Also COML 4290, ENGL 6850, COML 6380)