

FALL 2020 COURSES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH ◊ RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

The English major at Rhode Island College offers the opportunity to explore literature as well as other texts through a variety of perspectives in literary and cultural criticism. Majors learn to read texts critically, to understand the historical and cultural conditions within which texts are produced, and to become aware of current theoretical approaches that shape the study of English today. Courses for English majors also emphasize effective writing in several critical modes.

ENGLISH 200: **Reading Literature and Culture**

Brandon Hawk TuTh10-12

What does it mean to be an English major? How do we read, think about, analyze, and critically write about literature and culture? How does close reading help us to engage with the world around us? These are just a few of the questions we will explore in this course, as we explore what “close reading” means for literary studies. Content will include poetry, plays, short stories, essays, and film, ranging from ancient bestsellers to recent releases. Requirements include engagement in class discussions and three essays (4-6 pages each).

Jennifer Holl MW 10-12

As an introduction to the English major, this course offers students practice and instruction in the strategies and critical vocabularies of literary studies. As we read works of poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction, film, and digital media from various time periods and cultural contexts, we will hone our skills in close reading and critical writing. Requirements include active class participation, regular informal writing, four papers, and an oral presentation.

ENGLISH 208: **British Literature**

Gary Grund MW 2-4

This course is a survey of the most important British writers in verse and prose during the Old English period, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance/Early Modern period. Some emphasis will be placed on the cultural and intellectual background of each period, as well as an investigation into the concept of periodization itself, but the goal of the course is to introduce students to the varied and changing modes of literary expression beginning with *Beowulf* and the earliest lyrics in English. Careful analysis of the material and participation in classroom discussion are essential. There will be three papers in the course along with three examinations.

ENGLISH 209: **American Literature**

Stephen Brown MTh 12-2

Students will read significant texts from the history of American literature, colonial era to the present, representing canonical as well as “marginal” literary voices. The course cannot pretend to “survey” 400 years of our national literature, but we will consider a number of works within a rich cultural and historical context, with particular attention to the role of literature in negotiating and interrogating American national identity. Requirements will include frequent reading quizzes; brief response papers; two essays, one critical and one based in historical research, and a final exam

ENGLISH 212: **Adolescent Literature**

Jean Brown Tu 4-8

The field of Adolescent or Young Adult Literature is a dynamic one, reflecting a body of literature that is written specifically for youth. YA Literature examines the lives, challenges, and circumstances that young people encounter daily; however, most significantly, YA literature demonstrates the universality of themes to all ages and cultures. In this course, we will read works by leaders in the field such as Myers, Green, Bauer, Easton, Zusak, Danforth, Venkatraman, Portman, Reinhardt, and others, encompassing a range of literary genres from fantasy to contemporary realistic fiction and from biographies to poetry and film. Adolescent Literature provides opportunities for connections between the reader and the text as well as exploring opportunities for examining the implications of its use with students in grades 6-12.

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**ENGLISH 220:
Intro to Creative Writing**

Karen Boren MTh 12-2

This course is an introduction to the crafts of poetry, fiction, nonfiction prose, and drama. Students learn the fundamentals of imaginative writing by writing in each genre themselves, by sharing and critique of student writing in workshop, and by reading and discussion of published writing. Regular attendance, active verbal and written participation, revision of written work, and peer critique through workshop are required elements of this class. At the end of the semester, students will turn in a portfolio of their best writing.

Carrie Shippers TuTh 2-4

This course introduces students to some of the basic elements of writing and reading creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. We will spend a lot of time discussing, studying, and practicing the five techniques essential to all three genres: image, voice, character, setting, and story. Students will complete six formal assignments that will be workshopped by the entire class and at the end of the semester will turn in a portfolio of polished final pieces. Attendance, thoughtful reading of assigned texts, drafting and revising, commenting on classmates' work, and thorough revision are all required elements of the course.



**ENGLISH 230:
Writing for Professional Settings**

**TuTh 10-12
MW 8-10
MTh 12-2
MW 6-8
TuF 12-2**

**ENGLISH 232:
Public and Community Writing**

Becky Caouette MTh 12-2

This course will explore three overlapping, simultaneous threads during the fall semester: the public writing we already do (as participants in the digital age, this is where we'll begin); the public writing others do; and the public writing we wish to do. In all of these, we'll inquire as what it means to write *for* and *in* the public and community: what are our roles, what are the expectations, and how can writing reflect and enact change? The class will engage in individualized, semester-long projects in which students become active, critical participants in a thoughtful public conversation. Participants should expect a good deal of writing, lively conversation, thoughtful readings, and the opportunity to create a supportive writing community. We welcome all disciplines and majors.

**ENGLISH 263:
Zen East and West**

**Joseph Zornado TuTh 2-4
Getting Literature**

This course is about what Zen Buddhism and literature have in common. Above all it's a course about reading and about studying the ways in which different times and different cultures have expressed in literature what it means to think, to be, and to do. To begin our study of Zen we begin—and end—with the study of literature (through weekly reading assignments) and of writing both informal and formal; class time will include lecture, group discussion, and small group work; we will watch three films, and write to learn. Formal written essays are due at midterm and final.

ENGLISH 267:**Books that Changed American Cultures****Alison Shonkwiler TuTh 10-12**

What books captivated the American reading public and had a profound impact on the twentieth century? What can our reading of them today tell us about the concerns of the time—and about our culture now? Beginning with Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, the novel that exposed the meatpacking industry to a revolted public in 1906, we will read bestsellers—fiction and nonfiction—that changed the ways Americans saw themselves. These books taught skills of self-help, exposed conditions of poverty, confronted the enormity of the atomic bomb, attacked racial and social injustice, inspired the modern environmental and feminist movements, changed views of childrearing, and fueled the “culture wars” on college campuses. Class meetings will focus on the close reading of each text. We will analyze works for their meaning and significance and also consider secondary sources about their historical impact. Requirements include a regular reading and attendance; several short response papers; and a collaborative research report.

ENGLISH 300:**Introduction to Theory and Criticism****Zubeda Jalalzai TuTh 10-12**

This course introduces students to the field of literary theory and criticism as well as to the various debates waged by literary and cultural critics about what constitutes effective and meaningful ways to read texts. By the end of the course, students shall be able to identify the primary terms and underlying principles of certain schools of literary theory (including some classical theories, Formalism, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism/Gender Studies, Marxism, Postcolonial, and Critical Race Studies). These perspectives vary widely in their ideas about language, authorship, history, power, identity (race, class, gender, sexuality), to name a few! Students shall also be able to recognize what each theory offers and begin to understand what each might leave out. In this way, students will come to see that the foundational terms of a theoretical perspective construct particular understandings of reality.

ENGLISH 302:**American Lit From 1860-1914****Stephen Brown TuTh 2-4**

This course will survey literature of the United States from just before the beginning of the Civil War to the end of World War II—85 years of epochal and increasingly rapid national and global change. We will consider some of the huge range of literary expression and diversity of authorship during an era that comprises American literary realism, naturalism, and modernism. We will read our texts closely but will be interested as well in the relation of literature to the wider culture and in how the writers contributed to the ongoing development of American national identity. Requirements will include regular attendance, 20-25 pages of writing based on critical analysis and contextual research, and a final exam.

ENGLISH 310:**Readings for Writers****Mark Anderson MW 2-4****Sing, Heavenly Muse**

In this course, we will read works of poetry, fiction, and literary nonfiction with a focus on the choices and techniques of the authors about such matters as voice, persona, point of view, and the literary exploration of both “true stories” (e.g. personal, historical) and well known fictions (e.g. myths, fairy tales). Some critical essays will complement the primary sources. Writing assignments will include both critical essays and creative work based on assigned texts and issues discussed in class. Other requirements include attendance and active participation in class discussion.

ENGLISH 326:**Studies in African American Literature:****Majida Kargbo MTh 12-2****Afro-Fabulations and the Reinvention of Black Life**

In this course, we will study contemporary works of African American and Black Diasporic fiction in their historical, political, and literary contexts. As we read these works and relevant scholarly texts, we will consider questions of periodization, genre, and literary tradition. We will study the function of genres such as satire, contemporary narratives of slavery, science fiction and realism in our readings. Throughout the term, we will consider how these contemporary works participate in, reflect on, complicate, or otherwise engage a broader tradition of African American literature. The goal of this course is to help you engage with African American and Black Diasporic literature, improving your writing, reading, and critical thinking skills in the process. Books include works by Danzy Senna, Octavia Butler, Colson Whitehead, and Toni Morrison. Requirements include reading responses, active participation, and a final research paper.

ENGLISH 336:**Reading Globally****Anita Duneer TuTh 4-6****Narrative Experimentation and Global Identities**

In our current age of economic and cultural globalization, postcolonial writers have been telling stories that experiment widely with narrative voice, perspective, and form. What do these postmodern narrative choices tell us about the intersections of global, national, ethnic, racial, and gendered identities? And in what ways is the prefix “post” helpful or inadequate as we consider the stylistic experimentation in a range of genres from around the world? Readings will include a sampling of poetry, short stories, novels, memoirs, and films by African, Caribbean, Native American, and Asian writers. Requirements include class participation, quizzes, informal writing, a group research presentation, and two papers (6-8 pages each).

ENGLISH 346:
Shakespeare: The Tragedies and Romances

Gary Grund MW 4-6

After spending some time with matters of background—intellectual, dramatic, social—this course will examine 9 or 10 tragedies and the four romances over the course of the semester. We will move along chronologically, that is, in the order of Shakespeare's composition of these works to gain a sense of his evolution as a practicing playwright and as a poet. The course will demand active participation in class discussion and careful reading at home. In addition, there will be a mid-term examination as well as a final and two papers required for the course, one somewhat shorter than the other.

ENGLISH 371:
Intermediate Creative Writing: Fiction

Karen Boren MW 2-4

This course focuses on the craft of fiction writing. The primary texts will be student-produced fiction, which we will use to explore various techniques, such as characterization, scene construction, plot, diction, point of attack, dialogue, symbol, imagery, and language precision. In addition to student work – work in progress – we will also examine non-student, published work. Regular attendance, active verbal and written participation, revision of written work, and peer critique through workshop are required elements of this class. At the end of the semester, students will turn in a portfolio of written work. (Prereq. Eng. 220)

ENGLISH 372:
Intermediate Creative Writing: Poetry

Carrie Shippers MTh 12-2

This intermediate poetry workshop will focus largely on the work written by members of the class. In addition, students will work in small groups to facilitate discussion of recently published books of poetry, with attention to individual poems as well as how those poems are arranged into a satisfying full-length collection. Attendance, thoughtful reading of assigned texts, completing and distributing drafts, commenting on classmates' work, and thorough revision are all required elements of the course.

ENGLISH 375:
Shoreline Production: Selection and Editing

Mark Anderson M 4-6

In this course, students will learn and practice the elements of publishing a literary arts magazine, focusing this semester on solicitation of manuscripts and artwork, selection of material for the magazine, and editing. Requirements include attendance, active participation in discussion and in selecting and editing works to be published in the magazine. Much of your work for Shoreline will occur outside of the class meeting times, so you'll need to allow time outside of the classroom to do the work required.

ENGLISH 432:
Studies in the English Language

Brandon Hawk TuTh 2-4
Introduction to Old English

Leorna Eald Englisc! As the oldest form of the same language we use, Old English offers answers to many questions about the roots of our eccentric language. This course serves as a basis for advanced study of Old English literature, such as *Cædmon's Hymn*, *The Dream of the Rood*, and *Beowulf*. Students will learn introductory knowledge for reading Old English through studying basic grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, as well as translating texts like short stories, medicinal recipes, laws, historical accounts, and poems. Requirements include engagement in class discussions, language exercises, quizzes, exams, and essays.

Seminars

**ENGLISH 460:
Seminar In Major Authors and Themes**

Susan Abbotson TuTh 10-12

Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams

Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller are undoubtedly two of the most important playwrights of the twentieth century. Although a vital force in American Theater since the 1940s and 1950s their careers stretch decades beyond, and this course will consider (as far as time allows) the full breadth of their oeuvres, and how each was critically received during their lengthy careers. Given the proliferation of texts by both, besides plays they also wrote screenplays, novels, essays, poetry and fiction, we can only hope to cover a small part of their output, but enough to allow us to better understand the similarities and differences between these seminal writers, and their main literary aims and achievements. Requirements include active participation in discussion, class presentations, and a substantial research paper.

Barbara Schapiro MW 4-6

Trauma, Loss, and Creativity in Literature

Loss, trauma, and crisis can often spur a creative response. Drawing on psychoanalytic and literary sources, this course will study loss as a creative stimulant in the human psyche. Does the act of symbolizing have an essentially restorative and reparative function? How are anger and aggression involved in the creative work of mourning? Can narrative or storytelling heal trauma? The first few weeks of the course will look at psychoanalytic writings that examine these questions. We will then turn to works of literature in which the subject of trauma or loss is central, and we will investigate the various creative strategies that loss can evoke. Readings will include poetry by Wordsworth, Hughes, Komunyakaa, Olds, Plath, and Sexton; fiction by Gilman, Kafka, Baldwin, Morrison, Ozick, Klay, and Moore; graphic fiction by Bechdel. There will be one research/critical essay due at the end of the term, as well as frequent informal response writing, study questions, and an oral presentation. As this is a seminar, active participation in discussion is expected.

**ENGLISH 477:
Internship in Rhetoric and Writing**

Mike Michaud TBA

What do English majors write after they graduate? What role does writing play in 21st century “knowledge economy” workplaces? What will you need to know to navigate the transition from writing-for-the-teacher to writing-for-the-boss? The Internship in Rhetoric and Writing is an opportunity for English majors to gain exposure to professional workplaces and professional writing. Students identify a site at which to intern, work with Dr. Michaud to secure a position, and then work 14 hours per week on writing projects at their field-site. In addition, they participate in a classroom component (2-3 hours per week) in which they keep an internship journal, read in the professional literature about workplace writing, and produce two short reflective reports on their learning. The classroom component of the course is conducted entirely online. If you are interested in an internship, please contact Dr. Michael Michaud (mmichaud@ric.edu) to set up an informational meeting during the semester BEFORE you plan to intern.

**ENGLISH 501:
Introduction To Graduate Study**

Jennifer Holl Tu 4-7

Literary and Cultural Theory

As a graduate-level introduction to theory, this course will explore some of the key questions and methodologies that animate literary and cultural scholarship today—questions about ideology and identity, about the objects and affects of cultural value, about the processes and structures of meaning-making. Course readings will consist mostly of primary theoretical texts from fields including semiotics, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, postmodernism, queer theory, critical race theory, and affect theory. As we approach these theoretical schools as an ongoing dialogue in critical thought, perpetually informed through revisions in theoretical and cultural assumptions, we will examine how these theories provide a varied set of tools and lenses that we can apply to readings in poetry, drama, film, and cultural texts. Requirements will include active participation, short written responses, a presentation, a short paper, and a longer final research paper.

**ENGLISH 521:
Of Gods and Monsters:**

Joseph Zornado Th 6-9

The Cinematic Superhero as Social Practice

Why superheroes? Why so popular? What do they mean and why should we care? To get at questions like these we will approach the figure of the cinematic superhero in terms of psychoanalysis and ideology. On our list will be representative examples of defining cinematic superheroes including *Superman* (1978), *Ironman* (2008) and iterations of *Spiderman* and the “origin story.” We will take up *Wonder Woman*, (2017) and *Black Panther*, (2018), along with other films from the Marvel and DC superhero franchises. We will top it all off with a bit of *Godzilla* because he is king of the monsters. Seminar requirements include regular attendance and participation, two oral presentations, an annotated bibliography, and a final research paper of 12-15 pages.

**ENGLISH 581:
Workshop in Creative Writing**

Mark Anderson Tu 4-7

Poetry

A graduate level creative writing workshop, this course is primarily devoted to the discussion of poems written by class members. Students will be asked to submit two poems or revisions each week, and to provide reading materials—other writers’ poetry and/or criticism—for at least two class discussions, which should deal with current issues in contemporary poetry and aesthetics. The aim will be to produce, by semester’s end, a body of work of “publishable quality.” Other requirements include attendance and active participation in workshop discussions.

Karen Boren Th 4-7

This course focuses on the craft of fiction writing. The primary texts will be student-produced fiction and/or literary nonfiction (40-50 pages), which we will use to explore various techniques such as characterization, scene construction, plot, diction, point of attack, dialogue, symbol, imagery, and language precision. In addition to student work – work in progress – we will also examine craft by considering non-student, published work through the writer’s eye, discussing theories of narrative craft.

SELECTED 100– LEVEL COURSES

ENGLISH 113:**Approaches to Drama: Page to Stage****Susan Abbotson MW 10-12**

Because this course satisfies the General Education Arts Requirement there is a strong emphasis on the performative aspects of drama. However, this is not an acting class but an English one, in which we will be looking at drama productions from the Greeks through to contemporary times, noting the changing styles of theaters and performance, while reading and analyzing some of the playscripts being created. Requirements include class participation, a visit to a live performance, quizzes and response papers, midterm, final, and two short creative papers (3-5 pages each).

ENGLISH 120H:**Studies in Literature and Identity****Barbara Schapiro MW 2-4****Gender, Love, and Power in Literature**

This course will focus on the interplay of gender, love, and power in literature. We will examine representations of romantic love and strife between the sexes through the ages, looking particularly at how these relationships are affected by socially constructed gender roles and norms. The texts will reflect a variety of genres and historical periods, ranging from ancient Greek plays to contemporary American short stories and films. The course will also emphasize critical thinking and writing skills. Requirements will include informal response writing, two 4-6 page critical essays, a midterm and a final exam. Texts: Euripides *Medea*; Aristophanes *Lysistrata*; Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale; selected Lais of Marie de France; Shakespeare *Taming of the Shrew* and *Much Ado About Nothing*; Ibsen *A Doll’s House*; Jones *Dutchman*; selected short stories of Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, D.H Lawrence, Junot Diaz, and Kristen Roupenian. Films: *Much Ado About Nothing*; *Dangerous Liaisons*; *Adam’s Rib*.

ENGLISH 120:**Studies in Literature and Identity****Gary Grund MW 10-12****Love and Death in Literature**

This course explores the many visual, musical, and literary texts in which love seeks to find its highest fulfillment in death. Our texts will be drawn from the ancient, medieval/Renaissance, and modern periods and include characters who, for the sake of love, refuse to accept death as well as those who find in death not an end but a beginning. Romeo and Juliet are obvious examples, but variations are plentiful. These characters discover/recover their identities, find themselves, through a love that is validated by death. The course has three examinations and three papers as requirements.

Zubeda Jalalzai W 6-10**Muslim Literatures**

This course is both an introduction to literature in Rhode Island College’s General Education program, as well as a class that explores the nature of literature and genre, particularly some of those texts based on religion or culture that in some ways may be termed “Islamic” or associated with a Muslim majority country. How does culture define literary production? To provide some cultural and religious context, we will begin with a brief introduction to seminal works of literature like selections from the *Qur’an* and *The 1001 Nights*. We shall see that much of the literature engages significant global issues and represents a long history of contact between various continents. We will also read works by American Muslims including those from the 1960s with Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam as well as by transnational writers like Khalil Gibran and Mohsin Hamid. Through our reading of epic texts, poetry, autobiography/memoir, magical realist novels, as well as the Marvel comic, *Ms.Marvel*, we will examine the correlation between the boundaries of identity and the limits of genre.

Magdalena Ostas TuTh 10-12**Literature and Everyday Life**

This course will explore representations of everyday life in literature and art. Rather than investigate murders, betrayals, thrills, crimes, explosions, catastrophes, or dramas, we will explore the importance of the completely unremarkable. We will become interested in what mundane objects, ordinary lives, repetitive events, everyday places, and other seemingly trivial matters can tell us about ourselves and about the world. We will pursue the question of what it means for something apparently small to have real ethical significance, political charge, or personal import. Our texts will include novels, stories, poems, plays, and films, and students can expect not only to develop critical thinking and writing skills but also to actively broaden the range of texts with which they are willing to grapple. Requirements include mandatory attendance, attentive reading, informal writing exercises, two formal papers, and two written exams.

Anita Duneer MTh 12-2**Identity, Place, and Community**

This course considers literary representations of home and community in a world on the move. Students will consider the particular and universal aesthetics of storytelling, as well as the power of stories to shape the way readers view themselves and understand people of other cultures. Readings will include poems, stories, novels, and films by authors such as Chinua Achebe, NoViolet Bulawayo, Zitkala-Sa, Tommy Orange, Ai Weiwei, and Mohsin Hamid. Requirements include participation, online discussion and quizzes, two papers (4-6 pages each), and a final creative project.

**ENGLISH 121:
Studies in Literature and Nation**

**Brandon Hawk MW 10-12
Vikings!**

Vikings have taken popular culture by storm, invading much of the media around us. This course explores literature about Vikings from medieval Iceland, including historical texts, short stories, longer works called sagas, and film. We will use this topic as a lens to explore and understand various literary elements as well as notions about nationhood. Requirements include engagement in class discussions, reading responses, and a series of creative assignments based on role playing.

Other courses taught by English Faculty

**FYS 100:
Shock Therapy:**

**Susan Abbotson M-TH 12-2
Drama as Action**

Throughout history, rulers have viewed the communal opportunity offered by theater as a dangerous form of communication, and have striven to censor anything perceived as threatening the social order. Students will explore socio-cultural boundaries enforced and broken by drama from the Greeks to contemporary works, as playwrights provoked attention toward a variety of inequities and wrongs. Protest drama is by its very nature shocking, but can it go too far, does it still work, and can we create some of our own? Requirements include active participation in discussion, class presentations, an independent research assignment, a short paper (3-5 pages) and a final group presentation.