

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT COURSE DESCRIPTIONS SPRING 2023

The English major at Rhode Island College offers the opportunity to explore literature, creative writing, and professional writing. All majors learn to read texts critically, to understand the historical and cultural conditions within which texts are produced, and to practice critical, creative, and practical writing.

Your introduction to the major begins with English 200, which emphasizes close reading and acquiring a critical vocabulary and methodology. Creative writing majors also take English 220, the introduction to creative writing. All 300/400 level courses are designed to follow up on 200-level courses and to prepare you for the capstone course, English 460.

Early Spring 12/23/22–1/13/23

ENGL 261 (MTWTh) 4:00pm-5:50pm (Hybrid)

Arctic Encounters

Potter

This class examines narratives of cultural contact both "factual" and "fictional," between European explorers of the Arctic and its indigenous peoples in the comparative context of European and colonialism, visual representation, and emergent literatures. Material will include historical accounts, fiction, and film, as well as music and other performative arts. Requirements include attendance, active participation in discussion, twice-weekly response writings, and one 4-6 page critical essay, which will go through a draft reading process.

Spring (1/17/23–5/1/23)

ENGL 200W (MW) 10:00am-11:50am (In-person)

Reading Literature and Culture

Abbotson

This course introduces how English majors might approach literary writing that includes fiction, drama and poetry—for pleasure, enlightenment, insight, and greater knowledge. This is not a heavy reading course, but students will consider how to develop and advance their critical skills in terms of reading and writing and be given the opportunity to practice these skills on a variety of verbal and non-verbal texts. There will be an emphasis on close reading throughout, alongside an encouragement toward familiarity and confidence in using critical terminology, methodologies, and using proper literary style formatting at the college level. Requirements include class participation, quizzes, midterm, final, and essays (4-6 pages). This is a Writing in the Discipline course.

ENGL 208 (W) 2:00pm-3:50pm UPDATED

British Literature

Potter

What does it mean to read? And, over the past few centuries, during which the ability to read passed from a small elite of priests and clerics to the professional classes generally, and finally became nearly universal, how has the meaning of the act of reading changed? In this section

of British Literature, we'll survey a variety of texts from 1722 to the present, looking both at the stories and characters they contain, but also at their changing relationship to society in a time of steadily increasing literacy. In the end, we'll look back to see how, and why, some of these texts emerged as part of an evolving literary "canon," while others came and went, or never reached that space at all. Work will include weekly response writings on our class blog and two formal written essays.

ENGL 212 (TTh) 4:00pm-5:50pm (In-person)

Adolescent Literature: Banned Books

Quintana Vallejo

Why do books for young people get banned? What do these bans show about social and cultural taboos? In this course, we will answer those questions by studying adolescent literature by such authors as Kacen Callender (*Felix Ever After*), Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale*), and Toni Morrison (*The Bluest Eye*). This course does not have exams and, instead, requires active class participation, a research paper (3-5 pages long), and a creative adaptation project.

ENGL 220W (MTh) 12:00pm-1:50pm (In-person)

Introduction to Creative Writing

Boren

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.

ENGL 222W (TTh) 10:00am-11:50am (In-person)

Introduction to Professional Writing

Michaud

English majors often dream of a writing life beyond college and many go on to pursue it—in public relations or marketing, in editing or publishing, in cultural or non-profit work, or in technical communication or journalism. This course is designed to help you begin to imagine what a writing life beyond college might look like so you can begin to pursue it. Coursework will focus on two elements: 1) developing transferable knowledge about and skill with writing, 2) investigating professional writing career pathways. Course requirements include weekly reading and informal writing assignments and development of a professional writing portfolio that will help you begin to position and present yourself to future employers.

ENGL 230 (Online asynchronous) UPDATED: (W) 2-3:50 pm (Hybrid)

Workplace Writing

Michaud

What kind of writing do college students do after graduation? What will you need to learn to communicate effectively on the job? What role does writing play in 21st century workplaces? This course attempts to answer all of these questions and more. ENGL 230 will provide you with the tools you need to understand the role of writing in the workplace so that you can successfully navigate the many challenges you will face as a writer after college. Course

assignments include weekly writing and a semester-long portfolio project in which you investigate and practice forms of professional writing that are relevant to your future career.

ENGL 261 (T) 12:00pm-1:50pm (Hybrid)

Arctic Encounters

Potter

This class examines narratives of cultural contact both "factual" and "fictional," between European explorers of the Arctic and its indigenous peoples in the comparative context of European and colonialism, visual representation, and emergent literatures. Material will include historical accounts, fiction, and film, as well as music and other performative arts. Requirements include attendance, active participation in discussion, a weekly response paragraph, and two 4-6 page critical essays, each of which will go through a draft reading process.

ENGL 265 (MW) 2:00pm-3:50pm (In-person)

Women's Stories Across Cultures

Okoomian

In this Connections course we will study contemporary stories by women from various world cultures and in various narrative modes, including fiction, film, memoir, poetry, and comics. Focusing on women's struggles for identity and agency in their cultural contexts, we will compare women's diverse strategies of finding and telling their stories. We will treat the category of "woman" as a flexible one that allows for queer and trans voices as well as cisgender ones. Assignments will include a short critical paper, a short research paper, a group oral presentation; there will be an option for a creative project. Classes will be primarily discussion-based. Connections courses are General Education courses on topics that emphasize comparative perspectives, such as across disciplines, across time, and across cultures.

ENGL 300W (T) 12:00pm-1:50pm (Hybrid)

Introduction to Theory and Criticism

Jalalzi

This course introduces students to the field of literary criticism and theory as well as to 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 and cultural criticism. Over time students shall begin to develop their own critical positions regarding the study of literature and culture.

ENGL 302 (MW) 10:00am-11:50am (In-person)

Studies in American Literature 1860-1945: Realism and Naturalism

Duneer

The period between the Civil War and World War I was a time of sweeping geographical and ideological movements. The closing of the frontier, removal of Native Americans from ancestral lands, mass migrations of African Americans, waves of immigrants from Europe and Asia, and a burgeoning class of workers pouring into the cities all contributed to debates about a changing national identity and issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Course readings will include authors such as Twain, Chesnutt, Chopin, Sui Sin Far, Zitkala-Sa, Cahan, DuBois, James, Wharton, Dreiser, Crane, and London. We will consider the position of these authors in relation to the literary movements of romance, realism, and naturalism, and to their place in American literary

history. Requirements include class participation, quizzes, informal writing, an individual or group research presentation, and two papers (6-8 pages each).

ENGL 315 (Th) 4:00pm-5:50pm (Hybrid)

Literature, Environment and Ecocriticism

Potter

This course takes up the central questions of Ecocriticism, with a focus on the Arctic regions of the world, and their role as a bellwether for global climate change. We'll look at the physical and cultural geography of the Arctic, the way the region has been represented in documentary films and television, and the challenges facing its indigenous peoples and ecological balance. Readings will include books by Nancy Campbell, Subhankar Banerjee, Barry Lopez, and Dorothy Eber, along with films by Zacharias Kunuk, Peter Mettler, Aletha Arnaquq-Baril, and Nyla Innuksuk. Regular responses on our class discussion board, as well as a midterm and final paper of 4-6 pages, are required.

ENGL 336 (MW) 4:00pm-5:50pm (In-person)

Reading Globally: Narrative Experimentation and Global Identities

Duneer

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).

ENGL 345 (MW) 10:00am-11:50am (In-person)

Shakespeare: Histories and Comedies

Holl

This course approaches Shakespeare's comedies and histories through the various theoretical lenses that inform contemporary Shakespeare scholarship, including psychoanalytic, ecocritical, queer, performance studies, critical race, orientalist, and postcolonial approaches. We'll read *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, and *Henry IV*, each through a different theoretical lens, as we also engage with a variety of early modern prose, poetry, and art to situate these plays within ongoing early modern conversations. Course requirements will include active class participation, short response papers, a research paper, and exams.

ENGL 350 (TTh) 10:00am-11:50am (In-person)

Topics: Introduction to Queer Literature (Cross-listed with GEND 350: Topics in GWST)

Quintana Vallejo

What is queer literature? How do we define queerness? This course will answer these questions by introducing exciting new approaches to the study of queerness in literature. We will read four books including the graphic novel *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel, *Felix Ever After* by Kacen Callender, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong, and *The Beauty Queens* by

Monalisa Ojeda. Through our readings we will explore the topics of queerness, intersectionality, and identity. This course does not have exams and, instead, requires active class participation, a research paper, and a creative adaptation project.

ENGL 372W (MTh) 12:00pm-1:50pm (In-person)

Intermediate Creative Writing: Poetry

Shipers

This class is an intermediate poetry workshop where we will read, discuss, and steal techniques from a wide variety of contemporary poets, including some whose work is delightfully weird. Along the way, we will read individual poems, short craft essays, and books by three debut authors, as well as devote a substantial portion of class time to discussing student work. Attendance, thoughtful reading, poem drafts, commenting on classmates' work, collaborating in small groups to lead class discussion, and thorough revision are all required elements of the course.

ENGL 373W (TTh) 2:00pm-3:50pm (In-person)

Intermediate Creative Writing: Nonfiction Prose

Shipers

Truth? What is truth? This workshop may not entirely answer that question, but it will make you glad you asked. During the semester, we will read and discuss a wide range of literary nonfiction, including individual and collected essays, as well as a memoir and short craft pieces that model a variety of approaches that students might "steal" for their own workshoped pieces. Attendance, thoughtful reading of assigned texts, drafting and revising, commenting on classmates' work, informal response writing, and thorough revision are all required elements of the course.

ENGL 376 (F) 10:00am-11:50am (In-person)

Shoreline Production: Design and Distribution

Shipers

Editing! Proofing! Layout! Planning a launch party! This course will focus on the tasks necessary to produce the annual issue of *Shoreline*, RIC's literary and art magazine. Requirements include regular attendance and active participation. It is important to note that much of the *Shoreline* production work will occur outside of our weekly class sessions, so students will need to allow time to complete the work required. (But it's really fun work, I promise. We make a magazine!)

ENGL 432 (TTh) 2:00pm-3:50pm (In-person)

Studies in the English Language: History of the English Language

Hawk

This course serves as an introduction to the study of language generally (linguistics) as well as the history of the English language specifically. We will examine key moments of language development from Old, Middle, Early Modern, and Present-Day English. We will explore questions like:

- Why are English grammar and spelling so strange?
- Where do words come from and where do they go?
- How does language relate to gender, class, and race?

Requirements include engagement in class discussions, informal presentations, short essays, and a research assignment.

ENGL 460 (MW) 2:00pm-3:50pm (In-person)

Seminar in English

Holl

English 460 offers students opportunities to reflect upon their experiences as English majors and apply the skills and strategies they have acquired toward the next steps in their academic and professional careers. In this semester-long, culminating workshop, we will revisit and revise past work; craft an educational narrative; prepare a professional profile for life beyond RIC; and draft an individualized capstone project that explores students' own interests and showcases their achievements in reading, writing, and research. Requirements include engaged class participation; an assignment sequence of reading, writing, revising, and/or research that will result in a final portfolio; and a presentation.

ENGL 477 (TBD)

Internship in Professional Writing

Michaud

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 Professional 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. Michael Michaud to secure a position, and then work 12-14 hours per week on writing projects at their field site. In addition, they participate in a classroom component (2-4 hours per week) in which they keep an internship journal, read in the professional literature about workplace writing, write weekly thought pieces on their reading, and produce two reports on their learning. The classroom component of the course is conducted entirely online.

If you are interested in an internship, please contact Dr. Michaud (mmichaud@ric.edu) the semester BEFORE you plan to intern to set up an informational meeting.

ENGL 525 (M) 4:30pm-7:20pm (In-person)

Topics: Modern and Contemporary Drama

Abbotson

This course will begin with the aftermath of the Sturm und Drang movement and bring you through to the New Brutalism of contemporary theater, mapping other dramatic trends of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries that fall between. We shall look at a variety of dramatic texts and performances, coupled with key dramatic theories that influenced both creation and production. A variety of oral presentations will be assigned that will ask you to lead class discussion and offer summaries of assigned critical material, and there will be two essay assignments to complete.

ENGL 541 (Th) 4:00pm-6:50pm (In-person)

Topics: Contemporary American Literature

Shonkwiler

This course will introduce students to the literary concerns and historical contexts of fiction of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, focusing on questions of race, gender, sexuality, and national identity; mass culture, consumerism, and the counterculture; postmodernism, globalization, and concerns about technology and the environment. Many of the texts of this period demonstrate literary artfulness in their uses of narrative perspective, temporality, imagery, or characterization; many texts, especially since the end of the Cold War, posit an increasingly complex relationship between fiction and history. Authors may include Pynchon, DeLillo, Ozeki, McCarthy, Yamashita, Spiegelman, Powers, Hamid, and/or Whitehead. Students will be responsible for a class presentation and will write a seminar paper that combines textual analysis with an interrogation of secondary criticism.

ENGL 581 (W) 4:00pm-6:50pm (In-person)

Workshop in Creative Writing: Prose

Boren

This course focuses on fiction and literary nonfiction writing. The primary texts will be student-produced prose, which we will use to explore various techniques such as characterization, scene construction, plot, essay structure, voice, 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, and viewing/hearing readings from published writers. Classes will include group workshops, one-on-one tutorials, and individualized reading lists, so students may pursue their areas of particular interest.