

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Fall 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.

ENGL 200W: Reading Literature and Culture

TTh 10:00am–11:50am (In-person)

Holl

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

ENGL 203: Career Readiness for Humanities Majors

F 10:00am–10:50am (In-person)

Hawk

This course will help students to understand their Humanities major, get the most from that major based on their own interests, and prepare for employment post-graduation. Many students wait till their senior years to think about careers, when some important prep work should be done much earlier. The course aims to jump start students' thinking about what they want to do with their degrees while they still have plenty of time to choose particular courses, arrange internships, and investigate possibilities.

ENGL 209: American Literature
MW 2:00pm–3:50pm (In-person)

Duneer

This course is an introduction to a broad range of writers, genres, and themes that have helped shape an evolving American literary tradition. We will attempt to situate course readings within major historical, cultural, and literary movements: Exploration; Puritanism; Revolution and Enlightenment; Romance, Transcendentalism, and the American Gothic; Slavery and Race; Realism and Naturalism; the Harlem Renaissance; Modernism, Postmodernism and Contemporary Multicultural Literature. We will consider writers' responses to philosophical, social, and political debates, while keeping an open mind to the ways in which texts resist categorization, and how authors imaginatively blend tradition and innovation to express the complexity and diversity of American experience. Requirements include active participation, weekly response writings, an exam, and a formal paper.

ENGL 210: Children's Literature: Interpretation and Evaluation
MW 8:00am–9:50am (In-person)

Abbotson

Over the semester we shall look at a variety of texts produced for children, including poetry, fairy tales, picture books and novels, and consider, throughout, the authors' attitudes toward and depictions of children, alongside issues of identity, gender, and race. As a literature course, the primary aim is to help you develop the necessary critical understanding and skills to allow you to examine and evaluate children's literature on your own, and to reach a better awareness of how our culture views, and, in a sense, creates the child. Requirements include active attendance, reading quizzes and response papers, 2 critical essays (4-6 pages), short class presentation, midterm and final.

ENGL 220W Introduction to Creative Writing

TTh 4:00pm–5:50pm (In-person)
Shipers

TTh 2:00pm–3:50pm (In-person)
Shipers

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 approximately 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, active participation in class discussion, drafting of creative work, and thorough revision are all required elements of the course.

ENGL 230W: Workplace Writing

TTh 12:00pm–1:50pm (In-person)
Quintana-Vallejo

MW 2:00pm–3:50pm (In-person)
Staff

Th 4:00pm–7:50pm (In-person)
Staff

In order to become effective and clear communicators in industry settings, students explore the social and rhetorical dimensions of workplace writing. Emphasis is on case studies (real-life situations). Genres may include résumés, cover letter, letters of intention, business letters, proposals, presentations, and/or reports.

ENGL 231W: Multimodal Writing

TTh 4:00pm–5:50pm (In-person)

Michaud

Websites, blogs, Instagram stories, tweets, memes—these are the tools of 21st-century multimodal writers. ENGL 231 is designed to build on the knowledge you have already to help you become a more rhetorically sophisticated composer of digital and multimodal texts. You'll write for a range of purposes and audiences, gain experience navigating different communications technologies and platforms, and develop knowledge of how to communicate effectively in a global and visual world. Course requirements include frequent informal reflective writing and weekly deadlines for self-generated digital and multimodal projects.

ENGL 261: (Gen Ed: Connections) Arctic Encounters

MW 2:00pm–3:50pm (Hybrid)

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 263: (Gen Ed: Connections) Zen East and West
MW 10:00am–11:50pm (In-person)
Zornado

ENGL 265: (Gen Ed: Connections) Women's Stories Across Cultures
MW 10:00am–11:50am (In-person)
Okoomian

In this Connections course we will study contemporary stories by women from various world cultures and in various narrative modes, which may include 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 two critical papers and 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: Introduction to Theory and Criticism
MW 10:00am–11:50am (In-person)
Duneer

This course is an introduction to literary and cultural theory as historically constituted and vitally relevant to current trends in English scholarship—and to the ways we make meaning of texts every day. Students will examine the assumptions readers make when encountering a text and practice reading literary and non-literary texts through the lens of several theoretical concepts. We will study a variety of foundational theoretical approaches (such as Formalism, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism/Gender Studies, Marxism, Postcolonial, and Critical Race Studies) and examine some of the ways contemporary scholars engage with key concepts and assumptions. Students will read and write about literary theory and criticism and develop rhetorical strategies that will help them navigate ongoing critical conversations within and beyond the classroom. Requirements include active participation, informal writing, a presentation, two formal papers, and an exam.

ENGL 304: Studies in British Literature to 1500: Arthurian Literature**TF 12:00pm–1:50pm (In-person)****Hawk**

Noble knights, lovely ladies, and courtly kings...the stories of King Arthur and his Round Table contain many of the images we often associate with the high Middle Ages. While reading Arthurian literature, we will explore themes such as chivalry, courtly love, and the grail quest, tensions between secular and religious ideals, and competing loyalties in politics and gender relationships. We will read selections of works by Marie de France, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Chrétien de Troyes, Geoffrey Chaucer, anonymous Welsh poets, Thomas Malory, and Alfred Lord Tennyson; and we will view various film adaptations. Requirements include engagement in class discussions, short and long essays, and presentations.

ENGL 324: Literature by Women: Drama**MW 4:00pm–5:50pm (In-person)****Abbotson**

Given that drama is the most public of all the literary genres, it should not be surprising that the contributions of women in the field have been a struggle, and yet women have insisted and found their way onto the stage since Medieval times. Somewhat historically structured, this course will track the progress of female playwrights from Hildegard of Bingen through to contemporary contributors such as Suzan Lori-Parks and Paul Vogel to see how these women view their societies and place within. We shall be reading a play a week, plus additional secondary readings. Requirements include active attendance, short response papers, an oral presentation, midterm, final, and one research essay (8-10 pages).

ENGL 326: Studies in African-American Literature**TTh 4:00pm–5:50pm (In-person)****Quintana-Vallejo**

The collection of novels, essays, and poetry in this class reflect the power and beauty of Black American literary production from the last 150 years. Using key texts that range from Toni Morrison to Martin Luther King Jr., from a contemporary YA novel to James Baldwin, this course enables students to parse issues of inequality, marginalization, historical disenfranchisement, and identity—all while celebrating subaltern voices.

ENGL 341: Studies in Literature and Film**MTh 12:00pm–1:50pm (In-person)****Holl**

This course will investigate the complex web of relationships amongst page, stage, and screen as we read works of drama from the 16th to the 21st centuries and a diverse collection of film and TV adaptations they've inspired. Course readings will include *Romeo and Juliet*, *Pygmalion*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Closer*, *Angels in America*, and *Fleabag*; film and TV adaptations; and readings in adaptation criticism that derive from film, performance, feminist, queer, and affect theory. Course requirements include active class participation, short responses, exams, and a research paper.

ENGL 371W: Intermediate Creative Writing: Fiction**TTh 10:00am–11:50am (In-person)****Boren**

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)

ENGL 372W: Intermediate Creative Writing: Poetry**MW 2:00pm–3:50pm (In-person)****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 375: *Shoreline* Production: Selecting and Editing**M 12:00–1:50pm (In-person)****Michaud**

This course focuses on the basic principles of producing RIC's own literary journal, *Shoreline*. Topics include what a literary magazine is and does; various forms of marketing; inviting and judging submissions for the annual fall literary contest; and sponsorship, promotion, and attendance at a literary event (reading, discussion, or workshop). Requirements include attendance and active participation, informal writing assignments, and a class presentation. Because some of the *Shoreline* production work will occur outside of our weekly class sessions, students will need to plan accordingly in order to complete their tasks.

ENGL 379W: Rhetoric for Professional Writing**MW 10:00am–11:50am (In-person)****Michaud**

After college English majors go on to many different kinds of careers—some become teachers, others join non-profit organizations, others still go into public relations or communications. No matter where you end up you can expect to spend a significant portion of your day writing, and much of what you will write will be of the persuasive sort. We're all persuaders in the professional world, trying to gain approval for a new project, to secure funding for a proposal or grant, or to move an organization towards a new or alternative course of action. The study of

rhetoric can help professional writers become better persuaders, and that's what this course is all about—teaching you methods for more effective persuasive writing.

Course requirements for ENGL 379 include weekly informal writing and reading assignments and a semester-long course project in which you will draw on and apply the theories of rhetoric that you learned in this class.

ENGL 460W: Seminar in English
TTh 2:00pm–3:50pm (In-person)

Jalalzai

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 477W: Internship in Professional Writing
Day/Time TBD

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 501: Literary and Cultural Theory
M 4:00pm–6:50pm (In-person)

Holl

As an introduction to graduate study, 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, and about the processes and structures of meaning-making. Course texts will consist mostly of primary theoretical readings, and we will explore how these theories provide a varied set of tools and lenses that we can

apply to readings in fiction, poetry, drama, film, and cultural texts. Requirements will include active participation, several short papers, a presentation, and a final research paper.

ENGL 530: Topics in British Literature before 1660: The Vercelli Book

T 4:00pm–6:50pm (In-person)

Hawk

The Vercelli Book is the most important collection of Old English literature. This anthology of poetry and prose includes debates and romance between soul and body after death; miracles like toddler Jesus taming dragons; apocalyptic visions of heaven, hell, and Judgment Day; saints, sinners, warriors, and persistent women; cannibals, demons, and Hellmouths—oh my! We will read through the Vercelli Book, as well as critical articles about the book and its contents, in order to gain a better sense of early English literature and culture. Requirements include engagement in class discussions, short essays, presentations, and a final research essay.

ENGL 581: Workshop in Creative Writing

Th 4:00pm–6:50pm (In-person)

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, 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 workshop, one-on-one tutorials, and individualized reading lists, so students may pursue their areas of particular interest.