

CONTENTS

Expository Writing Seminars.....	3
200–Level Courses.....	8
Introductory Workshops.....	12
300–Level Courses.....	13
Upper–Level Workshops.....	17
Capstones.....	19

Please note: For your convenience, here is a list of the English Department faculty, their office locations, phone extensions, and email addresses.

INSTRUCTOR	EMAIL ADDRESS FALL 2020	EXT.	OFFICE
Baker, Calvin	cbaker1@skidmore.edu	TBA	PMH 318
Benzon, Paul	Sabbatical -Fall	5162	PMH 311
Bernard, April	Sabbatical - Fall	8396	PMH 319
Black, Barbara, Chair	bblack@skidmore.edu	5154	PMH 313
Boyers, Peg	pboyers@skidmore.edu	5186	PMH 327
Boyers, Robert	rboyers@skidmore.edu	5156	PMH 325
Bozio, Andrew	abozio@skidmore.edu	5158	PMH 317
Cermatori, Joseph	jcermato@skidmore.edu	5163	PMH 316
Chung, Sonya	Leave - Full Year	5150	PMH 311
Dunn, Olivia	odunn@skidmore.edu	8493	PMH 332
Emerson, Maude	Leave - Fall	5488	PMH 335
Fawcett, Jennifer	jfawcett@skidmore.edu	5193	PMH 336
Golden, Catherine	cgolden@skidmore.edu	5164	PMH 321
Greaves, Margaret	mgreaves@skidmore.edu	5191	PMH 309
Greenspan, Kate	kgreensp@skidmore.edu	5167	PMH 324
Hall, Linda	Sabbatical – Academic Year	5182	PMH 318
Hrbek, Greg	Sabbatical - Fall	8398	PMH 310
Hughes, Mary-Beth	mhughes@skidmore.edu	TBA	PMH 333
Jorgensen, Caitlin	ljorgen1@skidmore.edu	8393	PMH 326
Junkerman, Nicholas	njunkerm@skidmore.edu	5161	PMH 306
Lee, Wendy	wlee1@skidmore.edu	5153	PMH 322

Marx, Michael, Assoc. Chair	mmarx@skidmore.edu	5173	PMH 320
McAdams, Ruth	rmcadams@skidmore.edu	8112	PMH 331
Melito, Marla	mmelito@skidmore.edu	5174	Star. 201
Mintz, Susannah	smintz@skidmore.edu	5169	PMH 305
Niles, Thad	tniles@skidmore.edu	8114	LIBR 442
Parra, Jamie	jparra@skidmore.edu	5172	PMH 315
Pashley, Brenda	bpashley@skidmore.edu	8147	Star. 102
Stokes, Mason	mstokes@skidmore.edu	5184	PMH 308
Suresh, Archana	scukkema@skidmore.edu	5177	PMH 320E
Taylor, Mark	mtaylor2@skidmore.edu		Remote
Wientzen, Timothy	twientze@skidmore.edu	8397	PMH 307
Wolff, Melora	mwolff@skidmore.edu	5197	PMH 323
Woodworth, Marc	mwoodwor@skidmore.edu	5180	PMH 328

EN 103
4 credits

WRITING SEMINAR I

Designed to be accessible to a wide range of students, this course uses a variety of real-world topics and text types as students build audience-based writing skills for effective communication and persuasion. Students will learn reliable strategies to gain confidence and develop an academic voice in a supportive community of writers, with special emphasis on making effective grammatical and stylistic choices. Along with writing skills, the course supports critical thinking, critical reading, and organizational skills that translate to other courses.

This course does not fulfill the all-college Foundation Requirement in expository writing.

Section 01
TTh 9:50-11:10

T. Niles

Section 02
TTh 11:30-12:50

A. Suresh

Section 03
TTh 2:50-4:10

A. Suresh

Section 04
TTh 1:10-2:30

A. Suresh

EN 105
4 credits
See Sections Below

WRITING SEMINAR II

The Department

In this seminar, students will gain experience in writing analytical essays informed by critical reading and careful reasoning. Special attention is given to developing ideas, writing from sources, organizing material, and revising drafts. The class will also focus on grammar, style, and formal conventions of writing. Peer critique sessions and workshops give students a chance to respond to their classmates' work. Weekly informal writing complements assignments of longer finished papers. This course fulfills the all-college Foundation Requirement in expository writing. Each section of 105 is focused on a particular topic or theme.

EN 105 01
WF 10:30-11:50

WRITING AS RADICAL EMPATHY

O. Dunn

EN 105 02
WF 1:00-2:20

WRITING AS RADICAL EMPATHY

O. Dunn

“Language is far from being a closed, self-contained system, and words are deeply intertwined with our ways of engaging with the world. Language in this sense is more like an interface rather than a firewall, an array of devices that connects us to the things that matter to us,” says the scholar Rita Felski. Good writing can give the reader an emotional experience, a chance to interact with another person’s mind and heart. But how does it do this? How does language convey emotion? How does a writer make us see what they see, feel what they feel? In this class, we’ll move outside of our comfort zone—away from simply reading works we might enjoy because they are “relatable.” We’ll explore what boundaries writing can cross. We’ll discuss how writing can create change in the world. We’ll

look at work from writers and artists who actively work to make us see things their way, from poets to activists to visual artists. We'll pay special attention to how each artist crafts their work; using these same tools, you'll create powerful writing of your own. By the end of the semester, after drafting and revision, you'll have a portfolio of polished writing.

EN 105 03
WF 8:40-10:00

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

B. Pashley

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” These words from Ghandi inspire this writing seminar where we will examine what it means to be a part of a community. What types of communities exist? Are there inherent responsibilities that people have as members of communities? And who truly benefits from volunteerism and community service? Participating in a volunteer experience (in person or remotely) that resonates with you will be the foundation for much of your writing in our class. Using this experience and course readings, you will create several original compositions using a formal writing process. Additionally, you will produce informal writing, criticize each other's writings, debate controversial topics, and improve your presentation skills, all while participating in something larger than yourself: a community of writers. At the conclusion of this class, you can expect a more sophisticated sense of yourself as a writer and a more refined sense of self and community. You'll really understand what's in it for you.

EN 105 04
WF 10:30-11:50

BAD TASTE

M. Taylor

EN 105 16
MW 5:10-6:30

BAD TASTE

M. Taylor

EN 105 17
WF 8:40-10:00

BAD TASTE

M. Taylor

“If someone vomits watching one of my films,” writes film-maker John Waters in his autobiography, “it's like getting a standing ovation.” While college classes usually focus on works of art and literature collectively considered good, this class revels in the *bad*: the embarrassing or disgusting, the artistic failure, the guilty pleasure. With the help of some influential theorists of “badness,” and a selection of “bad” examples drawn from poetry, fiction, film, and visual art, we will examine the categories—ugly, kitschy, campy, sappy, problematic, etc.—that have been and continue to be used to police what is and is not art, and to distinguish “good” art from “bad.” We will consider how artistic hierarchies become entangled with other kinds of hierarchies, exploring how “bad” art both sustains and subverts racial, sexual, and economic power. Why, for example, are the terms “rom com” and “chick flick” so often used dismissively? What makes a work of art provocative and avant-garde, rather than offensive—or simply gross? And when does the “merely” bad become the “so-bad-it's-good”? For the final project, students will reflect on the terms they themselves use to evaluate and describe cultural products, writing critically about a category of artistic “badness” of their own choosing.

EN 105 06
MWF 8:00-8:55

FOOD FIGHTS

C. Jorgensen

Everyone has a favorite food, and most have at least one food they won't touch. But food is about

more than taste: it references memory, community, language, and culture. Sometimes that yields nostalgia; sometimes it produces conflict. In this class, we will examine food writing on a number of topics: What pleasure lies in food memory? How does food intersect with economics, language, social justice, history, and race? Who has the right to claim—and to profit from—the food of a particular culture? In the end, what should we eat—both for our own sake and for the sake of the planet? Our writing projects will range from nonfiction narrative to researched argument; our readings will range from memoir to persuasive text. You will develop your ability to analyze food writing, and you will learn how to enter into the debate using the tools of rhetoric. These tools include various types of appeals (in Greek terminology, *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*) as well as strategies for invention (coming up with something to say), arrangement (organizing your thoughts), and style (writing clear, graceful, persuasive prose). There will be frequent formal and informal writing, peer review, revision exercises, and small-group workshopping. And at some point in the semester, there will probably be food.

EN 105 007 **MEAN GIRLS:** **J. Fawcett**
TTh 9:50-11:10 THE ROLE OF UNLIKEABLE FEMALE CHARACTERS

EN 105 015 **MEAN GIRLS:** **J. Fawcett**
TTh 11:30-12:50 THE ROLE OF UNLIKEABLE FEMALE CHARACTERS

In her 2015 essay “I Was Not a Nice Little Girl,” author Gillian Flynn writes, “I think women like to read about murderous mothers and lost little girls because it’s our only mainstream outlet to even begin discussing female violence on a personal level. Female violence is a specific brand of ferocity. It’s invasive.” From a quick look in the psychological thriller section of any bookstore, you’ll notice an extensive number of books with the word “girl” in the title: *Gone Girl*, *The Girl on the Train*, *The Good Girl*, *The Wicked Girls*, *Pretty Girls*. What all these books have in common are young female characters who are unlikeable. In these stories, women are both predator and prey, the observer and the observed, the innocent and the indecent. Yet traditionally, the word “girl” connotes naiveté, innocence, and powerlessness. In this writing seminar, we will examine popular fiction, graphic novels, plays, and a range of short texts from feminist theory, psychology, pop culture, gender studies, and literary criticism to identify that “female ferocity” that Flynn writes about and to think about the role it plays in the stories we read. What is the internalized definition of “girl” that these authors are pushing against? Where did it originate? How are these characters different when they are not white or straight or cis-gendered, or have such characters even been written yet? Can we find parallels in young male characters? Above all, we will write and rewrite. Coursework includes four polished essays, short written responses to our readings, peer critique, and in-class workshops.

EN 105 08 **WRITING GENDER** **R. McAdams**
MWF 10:30-11:25

EN 105 09
MWF 11:45-12:40

Whether or not we always realize it, gender constantly, quietly shapes our experiences—from determining which bathroom we use at a gas station, to framing others’ responses if we start to cry in public, to influencing the way we speak and write. But what is gender, actually? How is it constructed and maintained? In this writing seminar, we will analyze the way that biological and social definitions of gender compete with and inform each other, as well as the way that gender identities and

expressions have varied historically and culturally. We will read and write about practices like drag and cross-dressing that play with normative expectations, as well as about non-binary and transgender identities that reject the reduction of gender to the biological sex assigned on a birth certificate. Above all, we will write and talk about writing—in essays, short assignments, and peer review sessions—and we will explore how writing reflects gender and shapes our understanding of what gender is.

EN 105 10
TTh 4:30-5:50

HAPPY?

M. Melito

From the *Declaration of Independence* to the #100daysofhappiness project, one could argue that Americans are obsessed with the pursuit of happiness. But what are we really seeking? What lengths are we willing to go to find happiness? How do factors like income, education, relationship status, and technology inform our perceptions? Can we bottle happiness? Buy happiness? Be coached into happiness? What does it mean to be truly happy? And what happens when you are not? In this writing seminar we will examine these questions and our own cultural and personal biases through reading, writing, and discussion. We will examine texts from philosophers, poets, psychologists, film-makers, and essayists as we consider the question of what it means to be happy. Students will prepare weekly responses, formal essays, and a research project, in addition to participating in peer workshops and teacher conferences.

EN 105 11
TTh 1:10-2:30

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

T. Niles

Argument seems inescapable. As a central cultural practice of Western higher education, adherence to its rituals can determine the success of an essay or presentation, which is perhaps enough to motivate its study. But more compelling reasons for examination may come from the arguments that surround us in newspapers, advertisements, and everyday political discourse. Certainly, responsible citizens and consumers ought to critically examine attempts to influence their lives, gain their money, or win their allegiance. The skills we learn will help us understand the structure and strategy of arguments. Hopefully, what we learn will be relevant to our lives inside and outside of the academic sphere. In this writing course, we will explore some fundamental principles of argument (using real-life examples when possible) and examine rhetorical choices in a variety of situations. We will also explore how professionals confront various psychological, social, linguistic, and ethical issues related to persuasion. All this will prepare us to create a final project designed to enhance public discourse and decision-making—i.e., a useful text designed for a real-world audience.

EN 105 012
TTh 4:30-5:50

AIDS AND ITS CULTURAL EFFECTS

J. Parra

This course explores the history of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the US with an emphasis on the response to the crisis by queer activist writers and visual artists. Focusing on the first decades of the public health crisis, we will examine the grassroots political and artistic interventions that documented otherwise invisible suffering, raised public awareness, organized networks of care, and demanded an appropriate governmental response from the Reagan administration as it led a campaign of homophobic negligence. We will look at written work, visual art, protests, and films that blurred the line between art and activism in novel ways, discussing how to write about such works with a respect for their historical contexts. Finally, we will consider the cultural legacy of those early years of the crisis. Writers and artists we may consider include Mark Doty, Félix González-Torres, Derek Jarman,

Tony Kushner, Paul Monette, Mark Morrisroe, Marlon Riggs, Sarah Schulman, David Wojnarowicz, and others.

EN 105 013
TTh 9:50-11:10

FRANKENSTEIN'S [A] MONSTER!

B. Diaby

In 1818, a teenager began composing a story that would grip the public consciousness and never let it go. Simultaneously a horror story as well as a moral tale about difference, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* still offers us new ways to think about pressing issues, from life and death, to inhumanity and identity. In this course, we'll dive deep into the text and its cultural legacies, exploring how the book can still speak to new topics and concerns while also discussing its limits. Along with the novel itself and its historical backgrounds, we will discuss various critical methods of reading it, drawing from critical race theory, feminism, Marxism, and others. Along with papers, students will create an annotated bibliography.

EN 105 014
TTh 2:50-4:10

ARGUMENTS FROM THE STAGE

J. Fawcett

“Theatre remains any society’s sharpest way to hold a live debate with itself. If it doesn’t challenge, provoke or illuminate, it is not fulfilling its function” (Peter Hall, *The Necessary Theatre*). In centuries past, when the majority of the population was illiterate, the theatre was more than entertainment; it was a political tool. Today, we have unlimited access to arguments, polemics, and opinions delivered via a sound bite; however, despite intense competition from social and mainstream media, theatre remains a powerful means for provoking change. From Shakespeare to Brecht, from Tony Kushner to Young Jean Lee, theatre provides the opportunity to experience different methods of persuasion (ethos, pathos, and logos) in action. In this writing seminar, we will dissect scenes and monologues from some of the world’s greatest plays to understand how the arguments are constructed and what role theatre plays in current public discourse. The goal of the class is to develop a rigorous process for creating written work that is clear, thought-provoking, and elegant. Coursework includes essays, short written responses to daily readings, peer critique, and in-class workshops.

EN 105H
4 credits

WRITING SEMINAR II:
HONORS SECTIONS

The Department

The honors sections of EN 105 offer highly motivated students with strong verbal skills the opportunity to refine their ability to analyze sophisticated ideas, to hone their rhetorical strategies, and to develop cogent arguments. Toward these goals, students write and revise essays drawing upon a variety of challenging readings and critique each other’s work for depth and complexity of thought, logic of supporting evidence, and subtleties of style. Students must have an EW placement of EN105H to enroll in the class.

EN 105H 01
MWF 2:15-3:10

WRITING GENDER

R. McAdams

Whether or not we always realize it, gender constantly, quietly shapes our experiences—from determining which bathroom we use at a gas station, to framing others’ responses if we start to cry in public, to influencing the way we speak and write. But what is gender, actually? How is it constructed

and maintained? In this writing seminar, we will analyze the way that biological and social definitions of gender compete with and inform each other, as well as the way that gender identities and expressions have varied historically and culturally. We will read and write about practices like drag and cross-dressing that play with normative expectations, as well as about non-binary and transgender identities that reject the reduction of gender to the biological sex assigned on a birth certificate. Above all, we will write and talk about writing—in essays, short assignments, and peer review sessions—and we will explore how writing reflects gender and shapes our understanding of what gender is.

EN 105H 02
MW 3:30-4:50

**MELTDOWN: LITERATURE,
CULTURE & CLIMATE CRISIS**

T.Wientzen

Climate change is often thought of as a technical problem, something squarely in the domain of the sciences and policy makers. What practical value do the humanities really offer in mitigating the mass extinction of species or rising sea levels, after all? Yet the sheer scale of climate change demands new cultural narratives that might allow us to navigate a dramatically changed future. If our species is to survive, we will, in short, require new ways of thinking about the world and the cultures that define us. In this course, we will engage a wide array of cultural texts that register our moment of ecological history—and texts that imagine possible futures for us. We will read and write about work by scientists, public policy experts, and historians, as well as creative texts by filmmakers and fiction writers. Among other things, we will ask how moving between scientific knowledge and cultural texts might help us understand and confront a future utterly unlike the past.

EN 110
4 credits

INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY STUDIES

This course introduces students to the practice of literary studies, with a particular emphasis on the skills involved in close reading. The course aims to foster a way of thinking critically and with sophistication about language, texts, and literary production. We will ask such questions as how and why we read, what it means to read as students of literature, what writing can teach us about reading, and what reading can teach us about writing. The goal overall is to make the words on the page thrillingly rich and complicated, while also recognizing the ways in which those words have been informed by their social, political, aesthetic, psychological, and religious contexts. This course is writing intensive and will include some attention to critical perspective and appropriate research skills. (Fulfills the all-college Foundation Requirement in expository writing; prospective English majors are encouraged to take EN 110 prior to enrolling in 200-level courses.)

Section 01
TTh 11:30-12:50

J. Cermatori

Section 02
WF 10:30-11:50

N. Junkerman

Section 03
TTh 2:50-4:10

W. Lee

Section 04
TTh 9:50-11:10

M. Stokes

200 – LEVEL COURSES

EN 211 01
MWF 1:00-1:55
3 credits

FICTION

W. Lee

“Plot is why we read *Jaws*, but not Henry James.” So Peter Brooks put it when describing the commonly held view that “reading for the plot” is a low form of activity. And yet, as Brooks goes on to argue, plot is “the organizing line, the thread of design, that makes narrative possible because finite and comprehensible.” Taking Brooks’s view as our starting point, we will examine the complex relationship in works of fiction between plot and other essential elements such as character, setting, point of view, and tone. In doing so, the course will introduce students to some of the major movements and developments in prose fiction since the nineteenth century. We will investigate the relationship between changes in fictional conventions (genre, plot structures, techniques of narration and characterization, and ways of organizing time and space) and the social transformations of different historical periods.

Readings might include short stories, novellas, and novels. Authors might include Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Arthur Conan Doyle, Henry James, Edith Wharton, John Cheever, Jamaica Kincaid, Paul Auster, Jhumpa Lahiri, Ling Ma, and (Skidmore graduate) Kathleen Collins.

**RECOMMENDED PREPARATION FOR ADVANCED COURSES IN FICTION
COUNTS AS A “FORMS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE” COURSE**

EN 211 02
TTh 4:30-5:50
3 credits

FICTION

R. Boyers

This course introduces students to a wide range of stories and two novels, moving from classic works by Tolstoy, Melville, Chekhov, Wright, Woolf, and Kafka to contemporary fiction by authors such as Jamaica Kincaid, Alice Munro, Anita Desai, Danzy Senna, and Michael Ondaatje. Throughout the course we’ll be talking about the way fiction animates ideas and allows us to discuss the most pressing and intimate matters without relying on stale assumptions. The course will include a mid-term and a scheduled final exam. Students will write two short papers. Regular attendance will be required, and class participation will count for 20% of the course grade.

**RECOMMENDED PREPARATION FOR ADVANCED COURSES IN FICTION
COUNTS AS A “FORMS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE” COURSE**

EN 213 01
WF 8:40-10:00
3 credits

POETRY

B. Diaby

Designed to bring the general student into a familiar relationship with the language and structure of poetry. General readings from the whole range of English and American poetry, from early ballads to contemporary free forms, introduce students to representative poets and forms.

**RECOMMENDED PREPARATION FOR ADVANCED COURSES IN POETRY
COUNTS AS A “FORMS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE” COURSE**

EN 225W 01
MW 1:10-2:30
4 credits

INTRODUCTION TO SHAKESPEARE

A. Bozio

“The purpose of playing,” Hamlet tells us, “is to hold as ‘twere the mirror up to nature.” In this moment, as so often happens in early modern drama, *Hamlet* becomes metatheatrical. That is, the play begins to think explicitly about the nature of performance, asking what it means to act – when acting requires that you represent yourself as something you are not – and what effect this misrepresentation has upon the social order. In this class, we will take up these questions by learning, first, how plays were staged in the early modern period. What difference does it make, for example, that Ophelia was played by a boy or that the actor playing Othello would have worn blackface? Our answers to these questions will inform the way that we think about Shakespearean drama as a space of cultural negotiation, in which ideologies of gender, power, history, and desire are reimagined at the moment that they are performed. Our readings will include *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *1 and 2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *The Winter’s Tale*, as well as secondary sources that will help us to place these plays within the cultural landscape of early modern England. To gain greater insight into the way that plays make meaning, we will watch some performances in class and, occasionally, stage moments of the plays ourselves. Students will also be expected to write two short essays and one longer research paper.

COUNTS AS A “LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN CONTEXT” COURSE
COUNTS TOWARD THE EARLY PERIOD REQUIREMENT

EN 227 01
TTh 2:50-4:10
3 credits

**INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN
AMERICAN LITERATURE**

M. Stokes

This course will survey African American literature from the 1700s to the present. Beginning with Phillis Wheatley and Frederick Douglass, we will examine the uneasy relationship between “race” and writing, with a particular focus on how representations of gender and sexuality participate in a literary construction of race. Though this course is a survey of African American literary self-representations, we will keep in mind how these representations respond to and interact with the “majority culture’s” efforts to define race in a different set of terms. We will focus throughout on literature as a site where this struggle over definition takes place—where African American writers have reappropriated and revised words and ideas that had been used to exclude them from both American literary history and America itself. Our text will be the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. Assignments include several short essays (2 pages) and one longer, synthetic essay.

COUNTS AS A “LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN CONTEXT” COURSE
COUNTS AS A CULTURAL DIVERSITY COURSE

EN 228W 01
WF 1:00-2:20
4 credits

DETECTIVE FICTION

S. Mintz

Crime stories of all kinds—from classic puzzles to mystery and suspense, spy thrillers, heists and jewel capers, forensic and police procedurals, cozy house murders and urban hard-boiled noir—are among the most popular of all narrative forms. Despite its status as a less-than-literary genre (and its origins

in dime-store novels and pulp magazines), detective fiction is, at its best, a quite intricate reckoning with important abstract concepts: justice, truth, knowledge, civility, desire, social identity. This class will start with Poe, Conan Doyle, and Christie and touch on the major 20th- and 21st-century trends of this globally best-selling category, focusing on stories about detectives who—though they work toward the restoration of law and order—also defy the status quo. We’ll ask why detective stories are so much fun to read and watch, and seek to understand how that pleasure is bound up with both endorsement and critique of a society’s dominant values. We’ll explore the nature of literary form, observing different authors’ manipulation of the crime template, and we’ll take a look at some fiction-film/TV adaptations. Students will write frequently and be responsible for an active and richly analytical engagement with the issues of the class.

COUNTS AS A “FORMS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE” COURSE

EN 229 01
TTh 11:30-12:50
3 credits

THE BRONTËS

C. Golden

A madwoman in the attic, impassioned love, and a mysterious/abusive past. Such sensational themes may seem ripped from today’s social media, but in fact, they are the defining elements of the novels of the Brontë sisters. Beginning with biography, we will adopt new historicist and gender studies approaches to study arguably the greatest English literary family of the nineteenth century. Readings include Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847), Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847), and Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) as well as poetry by the three sisters and their brother, Branwell. Some attention will be given to how illustrators, directors, and actors have visually rendered the novels or recreated them for the big screen. Course work includes 4 short papers, a longer paper, and an oral presentation (with a PowerPoint) on aspects of Victorian life that inform the Brontë novels.

COUNTS AS A “LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN CONTEXT” COURSE
COUNTS FOR GENDER STUDIES CREDIT

EN 229H 01
TTh 1:10-2:30
4 credits

THE EUROPEAN LYRIC
IN THE MIDDLE AGES

K. Greenspan

This course introduces students to the rich body of medieval lyric poetry in its historical development from the late classical period through the Middle Ages (c. 400-c.1500). We will read songs of love and war, meditations, satires, charms and prayers composed by wandering students, noble troubadours, revolutionary *stilnovisti*, devout friars and riddling bards, and study the traditions within which they wrote and the innovations they wrought. Further, we will consider issues of translation, performance, and literacy in the context of the sometimes competing, sometimes complementary cultures of secular society and the medieval Church. Most of the poems will be read in translation, except for those in Middle English, which we will learn to read in the original. We will also read some modern essays that will teach us more about medieval culture and its poetry. Students who read French, Spanish, Italian, Latin, or German are welcome to lend us their expertise in reading the poems in the original. Assignments will include three papers, a journal, group presentations, and active participation in class, including reading aloud.

**COUNTS AS A “LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN CONTEXT” COURSE
COUNTS TOWARD THE EARLY PERIOD REQUIREMENT
FULFILLS HONORS FORUM REQUIREMENT**

**EN 245 01
MWF 10:30-11:25
3 credits**

SCIENCE FICTION

T. Wientzen

Establishing itself in the popular consciousness in the 1940s and 50s via dime store magazines, cheap paperbacks, and B-movies, science fiction was once thought to be little more than adventure tales for boys—the cultural trash of a nuclear age. But the genre was, from its very origins in the late nineteenth century, something much more than just extraterrestrial capers or tales of amazing superpowers. Emerging in tandem with new social structures of mass modernity and a body of science that was rapidly shifting entrenched notions of the cosmos, science fiction articulated new visions and fears about the future while allowing readers the ability to see their present in defamiliarized ways. This course examines the nexus of politics and science that helped establish science fiction from its inception until the present day. Beginning with late nineteenth-century texts, we will consider the genre’s efforts to integrate scientific knowledge about evolution, astronomy, and technology and apply it toward social issues like labor relations and religion.

We will examine the use of science fiction in the context of race relations, feminism, totalitarianism, and a host of issues that arose out of the early twentieth century. Along the way we will trace the evolution of the genre from its earliest, “literary” days, through the pulpy, “golden era” of the mid-century, the “new wave” of the 1960s, and beyond. Texts include literary works by H. G. Wells, W. E. B. Du Bois, Olaf Stapledon, and Margaret Atwood, as well as nonfiction writings about the genre’s social and scientific contexts. Class requirements: active in-class participation and analytical essays.

COUNTS AS A “FORMS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE” COURSE

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOPS

**EN 251 01
Th 6:10-8:55
4 credits**

**SPECIAL STUDIES IN CREATIVE WRITING
READING AND WRITING CHILDHOOD**

M. Hughes

An introduction to writing fiction, with a focus on literature of youth and childhood. This course explores writing fiction in combination with close reading of a selection of stories. The assigned stories will be various. Often the protagonists will be young, although sometimes a youthful character will play a crucial by-stander role or be the seed of a tale that considers adult characters more fully. Most classes will include writing exercises that gradually increase in complexity. This is intended as a hands-on approach to essential aspects of fiction writing such as variety and pattern in narrative design, how time works to shape and move a story, the ways a character might be revealed or hidden (for starters). At intervals we’ll look at in-progress student work with a goal of a complete story to be presented by semester’s end.

**POSSIBLE PREREQ FOR UPPER-LEVEL WORKSHOPS
COUNTS AS A “FORMS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE” COURSE**

EN 281 01
WF 1:00-2:20
4 credits

INTRODUCTION TO FICTION WRITING

C. Baker

In this introductory course students will explore the fundamental apparatus of prose narratives by reading a variety of stories, with an eye toward understanding their construction, and writing their own. The course will cover the technical components of fiction, including: characterization, structure, style, and setting. It will also begin to weigh the aesthetic, social, and intellectual motives of meaning-making that inform all stories, and story-telling, from fiction to history to science to narratives of self. Students will be expected to complete weekly writing assignments, of increasing sophistication, and produce a final story of 10-12 pages.

POSSIBLE PREREQ FOR UPPER-LEVEL WORKSHOPS
COUNTS AS A “FORMS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE” COURSE

EN 282 01
MW 3:30-4:50
4 credits

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY WRITING

M. Greaves

Writing poetry is close to practicing magic; poems transform everyday experience into something a little strange. In this course, you will study and practice the building blocks of poetic craft. A solid foundation in the basics will help you to develop your poetic voice, whether you've been writing for years or are just starting out. In a series of short assignments, you will read, respond to, and imitate a range of poems and forms. You will also write new poems of your own that we will workshop as a group throughout the semester. Your work will culminate in a miniature collection of 10-12 revised poems.

POSSIBLE PREREQ FOR UPPER-LEVEL WORKSHOPS
COUNTS AS A “FORMS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE” COURSE

300 – LEVEL COURSES

EN 303H 01
MWF 9:15-10:10
4 credits

PEER TUTORING PROJECT

C. Jorgensen

This course provides the foundation for Writing Center tutoring. Much of the course is devoted to experiential learning, first through the shadowing of experienced tutors and then through the practice of tutoring in the Writing Center. In our class meetings, we will consider the roles of writing centers; strategies for effective tutoring sessions, including techniques for supporting student writers whose first language is not English; the often-problematic position of Standard Written English; approaches to papers from various disciplines; and methods for explaining grammatical and punctuation guidelines. We will spend other class times in small-group and one-on-one conferences with the instructor, during which we can discuss what students are experiencing in their sessions, how they might negotiate difficulties, and why a given session has been successful (and what success may mean); these conversations offer a chance to assess progress and to debrief and plan.

All students meet in class once each week; the second weekly class period is set aside for group and individual conferences on a rotating basis. Coursework involves four hours of tutoring each week and a handful of short reflective papers.

NOTE: This course is the required preparation for tutoring in the Writing Center.

PREREQUISITE: PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR
FULFILLS HONORS FORUM REQUIREMENT

EN 322 01
TTh 1:10-2:30
3 credits

BAD MELVILLE

J. Parra

What does it mean to evaluate something as “good” or “bad”? How and why do we use these categories to describe persons, actions, and aesthetic objects? Should we always strive to succeed—to be good, live a good life, and read good books? Why?

This course will explore the virtues of badness through the work of an artist who died a failure: Herman Melville. Among other shorter works, we will discuss the emergence of his masterpiece, *Moby-Dick*, from relative obscurity at the time of its author’s death into the pantheon of great American literature and look at a novel that many critics still consider to be Melville’s worst, *Pierre*. If we put aside the question of success or failure, how else might we productively read such a work? What, in other words, do we want from our literature? And how should we read for it? The class will look to Melville’s fiction for its meditations on the ethical, political, and social problems that follow from “good” behavior as well as the potential for radical change that appears to us as bad behavior. Other readings may include portions of Melville’s early successes *Typee* and *Omoo* as well as *Benito Cereno*, “Bartleby, the Scrivener,” and more. Students will also be assigned critical writing on Melville starting with early reviews and ending with recent scholarly writing.

EN 328R 01
WF 1:00-2:20
4 credits

JAMES JOYCE’S *ULYSSES*

T. Wientzen

Warning: this class is for the hardcore literary nerd.

James Joyce’s 1922 novel *Ulysses* is one of the most celebrated and despised novels in the English language. A major part of its legacy has to do with how hard it is to read. Many “serious” readers often find that they simply cannot get beyond the opening chapters. And yet, *Ulysses* is often classed as being one of the most important novels ever written—the great work of Ireland and perhaps of the modern English-speaking world. Loosely built on the model of Homer’s *Odyssey*, Joyce’s novel turns the mundane events of a single day in colonial Dublin (16 June 1904) into a modern epic about empire, love, gender, urban life, the transcendent beauty of everyday life, and the “nightmare” of history.

Because *Ulysses* is an unusually challenging book, there is only way to read it for the first time: with a dedicated community of peers and the guidance of an experienced hand. We will begin this epic journey by reading Joyce’s first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), in which he introduced readers to many of the dominant questions that preoccupy *Ulysses*, as well as one of its principal characters. Moving on to *Ulysses*, we will attempt to disentangle the political, aesthetic, and

philosophical strands Joyce laboriously weaved into his novel. We will undertake this task by analyzing Joyce's distinctive understanding of his young century, one that could appear as both a moment of liberation and a waking nightmare. In so doing, we will attempt to understand how *Ulysses* became, according to many, the paradigmatic expression of a modernist sensibility.

EN 331 01

THE WILD(E) NINETIES

B. Black

TTh 2:50-4:10

3 credits

The 1890s in England was an infamous decade. And the harrowing misbehavior of Jekyll and Hyde will be our entry point. In this course, we will explore the preoccupations of this era: gender and sexuality, theater and theatricality, empire and culture, morbidity and the cult of suicide, the city and decadence, socialism and aestheticism. We will read widely in the corpus of Oscar Wilde, including *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Wilde's vexed and vexing letter from jail, *De Profundis*, a text that defies traditional readings. While Wilde is the course's presiding genius (as he was for the decade), we will also read such works as Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, a scathing indictment of the era's gender and race politics, and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four*, a fantasy of empire gone horribly wrong. Be prepared to examine the aesthetics of camp in Gilbert and Sullivan's musical *Patience*, Michael Field's (a.k.a. Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper) queer poetics, Aubrey Beardsley's art of the grotesque, H. G. Wells's visions of the apocalypse, and the radical journalism of *The Yellow Book* as we aim to reanimate the vitality and intensity of the decade's literary and artistic culture.

COUNTS FOR GENDER STUDIES CREDIT

EN 341 01

MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCE

K. Greenspan

TTh 9:50-11:10

3 credits

Of all the literary genres that flourished during the later Middle Ages, romance may be the most characteristic of the era, uniquely suited to the articulation and celebration of chivalric values and ideals. But it also incorporates folk and fairy tale motifs, Christian themes, epic journeys, explorations of the supernatural in this and the other world, and poignant longing for another, better time. Because English romance took much of its mythic background from Celtic legends and its narrative form from Breton and French culture, we will begin the course with a brief look at some of the major influences on the romance genre, in translation: selections from the Four Branches of the Welsh Mabinogion, Marie de France's *Lais*, and Chrétien de Troyes' *Lancelot*. Then we will move to the English romances themselves, all in the language of England as it was spoken and written between 1250 and 1480 – Middle English. Our readings will include Sir Launfal (a re-telling of Marie's lai of Lanval); Emaré (a story of incest and abandonment, with a debt to Arabic sources); Sir Orfeo (a Celtic retelling of the Orpheus myth); the great Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; and selections from Malory's prose *Morte d'Arthur*, with its haunting depiction of the downfall of Arthur's kingdom, Camelot. EN 341 may be taken more than once for credit with a different topic.

COUNTS TOWARD THE EARLY PERIOD REQUIREMENT

EN 363 01
TTh 11:30-12:50
3 credits

MODERNIST IMAGINATION

R. Boyers

The word “modernism” no longer calls to mind a simple set of ideas. Many artists of the so-called modernist period—roughly, the period between 1920 and 1950—believed that modernist art is not about beauty or indeed about any sort of sensory gratification. But this was by no means the view of Virginia Woolf or Henri Matisse. Marcel Duchamp regarded the habit of distinguishing between good and bad taste as ridiculous. But no such animus inspired the practice of modernist writers and artists like Thomas Mann or Giorgio Morandi. Many modernists argued that art was not the place for ideas or politics, but the poet W.H. Auden saw no reason to refrain from introducing politics into his work, and ideas play a central role in a wide range of modernist novels, poems, and paintings. Some early modernist works seemed immediately interesting to their first audiences precisely because they were felt to be “too much.” Avant-garde artists and their fans loved to mock the philistine middle classes who disdained James Joyce, Picasso, and others who had challenged the assumptions upheld by *The New York Times* and other establishment publications. And yet modernism rapidly achieved the sort of widespread acceptance that no one could have predicted even a few years earlier. Modernist works challenged the notion that success in art had anything to do with proper sentiments, verisimilitude, or politically correct views. Students of modernism taught themselves to think seriously about the values to be found only in art and to avoid confusing them with values to be found elsewhere—in the bedroom, the board room, or the political arena. Today several leading writers and thinkers are revisiting modernism in a wide range of books and articles. It seems that a revival is under way, and thus it is a good time to take a look back and to ask whether modernism ought again to be the name of our desire.

This course will therefore examine a variety of works in several different genres. Among the authors, film directors, critics, and artists included in the course syllabus are Virginia Woolf, Franz Kafka, T.S. Eliot, Susan Sontag, Jackson Pollock, Georgia O’ Keefe, Ingmar Bergman, Jean-luc Godard, Federico Fellini, Machado de Assis, Octavio Paz, Marianne Moore, & Thomas Mann.

Required: Mid-Term and Final Exam, two short papers or one end-of-term paper.

EN 363P 01
MW 3:30-4:50
4 credits

**STRANGE THINGS:
RACE, GENDER, OBJECTHOOD**

W. Lee

“A study of persons and things,” writes literary critic Barbara Johnson, “might reveal all of the ways we already treat persons as things, and how humanness is mired in an inability to do otherwise.” Taking Johnson’s idea as our starting point, this course will investigate the blurry divisions between persons and things, animate and inanimate beings, and human and non-human life in literature and media. For example: Why are some objects with human features represented as familiar, cute, and harmless while others are presented as strange, uncanny, and threatening? What counts as a normal versus a strange human relationship to material things—and who decides? What happens when non-human objects and beings speak with seemingly human voices? What happens when people transform themselves into objects of art? How and to what effect are various things, as well as persons, racialized and gendered? How have differences between persons and things been shaped and unsettled by race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability? What roles have different media and technology played in producing, estranging, and transforming the meanings of persons and things? To address these

questions, we will read and view texts in a range of media from the nineteenth century through the present, with primary emphasis on American texts from the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Texts may include poetry by John Keats, John Yau, and Robin Coste Lewis; fiction by Herman Melville, Ralph Ellison, Ruth Ozeki, and Ted Chiang; films such as *The Birds* (1963), *Grey Gardens* (1975), *Ex Machina* (2014), and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017); as well as music videos, video art, and gifs. We will read theory and criticism (primarily in the fields of queer theory, feminist studies, ethnic studies, disability studies, and media studies) by Mel Y. Chen, Scott Herring, Barbara Johnson, Georg Lukács, Sianne Ngai, and others.

COUNTS AS A CULTURAL DIVERSITY COURSE
COUNTS FOR GENDER STUDIES CREDIT
COUNTS TOWARD THE MEDIA AND FILM STUDIES MINOR

EN 364P 01
TTh 2:50-4:10
4 credits

THE USES OF LITERATURE

A. Bozio

What is the use of literature today? As the oceans rise and the planet burns, fascism threatens the foundations of democracy, white supremacy moves from the political fringe to the mainstream, and capitalism exploits the many in the name of the few, one could be forgiven for thinking that the answer is “none”—that reading literature is not simply useless, but the ultimate form of privilege. In this course, we will consider the degree to which that perspective is true by studying theories of what literature is and does. We will contrast an older model of literary studies—known as “critique”—with newer models that posit literature as fundamentally political (and thus capable of effecting political change). For context, we will also study accounts of our current political crises, thinking through such concepts as neoliberalism, intersectionality, and the Anthropocene to gain insight into the way that literature may engage these phenomena. In the final section of the course, students will present their own arguments as to the uses of literature in the twenty-first century, using a cultural artefact (a book, a film, a work of art) of their choosing.

UPPER-LEVEL WORKSHOPS

EN 378 01
WF 1:00-2:20
4 credits

NONFICTION WORKSHOP **SPECULATIVE NONFICTION**

M. Wolff

In this workshop for students with experience in writing nonfiction, we explore the effects of speculative prose in literary essays. How does empirical knowledge conveyed in nonfiction—of visible facts, literal event, and lived experience—invite, or even demand, prose passages of ambiguity, metaphor, meditation, sensory insight, and imagination? How do we speculate in a work of nonfiction without *violating* facts, but *clarifying* them? How is speculation an effective, ethical methodology for literary essayists? Is an essay’s truth sometimes the speculative technique itself?

In this craft workshop, you draft essays to expand your capacity to employ a range of speculative techniques. Assigned readings include work by Margo Jefferson, Jhumpa Lahiri, Lia Purpura, Jerald Walker, Julio Cortazar, Vladimir Nabokov, Charles Lamb, Gretel Erlich, Zadie Smith, Le Thi Diem Thuy, Edwidge Danticat, and others.

Requirements: Weekly readings; three essays, 4 pages minimum, drafted and revised; writing exercises; 2-3 workshop presentations of manuscript work; attendance; participation in all workshop discussions; letters of peer response and critique.

**PREREQ: EN 251, 280, 281, OR 282: PLUS PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR
SEE APPLICATION PROCESS BELOW.**

**EN 379 01
W 6:00-8:45
4 credits**

POETRY WORKSHOP

P. Boyers

Intensive practice in the writing and critiquing of poetry. Workshop format with most class time devoted to discussion of student writing. Reading and weekly writing assignments aimed at increasing the poet's range and technical mastery.

**PREREQ: EN 251, 280, 281, OR 282: PLUS PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR
SEE APPLICATION PROCESS BELOW.**

**EN 380 01
Th 6:10-8:55
4 credits**

FICTION WORKSHOP

C. Baker

An intensive seminar for committed writers. The course's primary format will be writing, close reading, discussion, and rewriting. There will be assigned reading as necessary, but students entering the class will already possess an appropriate command of canonical literature. Each writer will workshop two stories, revise their work based on feedback, and submit a more polished version for grading. A final portfolio of 25 pages will be due at the end of the semester.

Attendance, class participation, and written responses are of paramount importance. Each writer will also be expected to utilize office hours to further review their own work.

**PREREQ: EN 251, 280, 281, OR 282: PLUS PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR
SEE APPLICATION PROCESS BELOW.**

Application Process for 300-level Creative Writing Workshops

(EN 378 Nonfiction Workshop, EN 379 Poetry Workshop, EN 380 Fiction Workshop)

Five days prior to the first day of Registration, you must submit in hard copy to the department administrator in PMH 313:

- 1) a list of previous creative writing and/or genre courses taken at Skidmore (EN 211 Fiction, EN 213 Poetry, EN 215 Drama, EN 219 Nonfiction, EN 228W Intro to Creative Writing, EN 251 Special Studies in Creative Writing, EN 280 Intro to Nonfiction Writing, EN 281 Intro to Fiction Writing, or EN 282 Intro to Poetry Writing).
- 2) the name and number of the course being applied for, and
- 3) a writing sample in the genre of the workshop to which you are applying: 5 poems, or 8-10 double-spaced pages of fiction or nonfiction.

Your name should appear in the upper-right hand corner of every page.

In consultation with the department's creative writing faculty, the Instructor of the course will make selections, notify you of the decision, and enter Registration Overrides into the Banner system so that selected students may register.

Students who are not accepted may reapply in following semesters.

CAPSTONES

NOTE: The Capstone Experience is satisfied in most cases by a Senior Seminar (EN 375) or Advanced Projects in Writing (EN 381). (Students with appropriate preparation and faculty permission may instead choose the senior thesis or project options: EN 376, 389, 390).

SENIOR SEMINAR:

EN 375 01
TTh 4:30-5:50
4 credits

**LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY:
EXISTENTIALISM**

J. Cermatori

Does human existence have meaning, and if it doesn't, how should we live and act in the world? How should one chart one's own path when the significance of things cannot be guaranteed by any absolute values or higher power? Albert Camus once proclaimed that "The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion." How is it possible to put this idea of freedom into practice? In the first half of the twentieth century, existential philosophy emerged as a response to these questions, provoking a wide-ranging discussion in art and politics alike. In this seminar, we will survey some of its ramifications in the realm of modern literature. Opening up an interdisciplinary dialogue, we will consider both how literature adapts philosophical discourse and how it functions as a form of philosophical discourse in itself — how literature enacts philosophy by other means. We will start with a survey of several key figures and concepts in the field (Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, and others; the void, anxiety, freedom, the gaze, and authenticity). We will then analyze literary works often considered part of a larger existentialist "constellation." Readings will range across multiple genres and may include texts by W. H. Auden, Samuel Beckett, and Ralph Ellison. Together, we will seek to generate a host of open questions that can permit a wide range of independent research projects at the end of the term. How did existentialism influence, say, the radicalisms of the 1960s, Beat Poetry, psychology, post-humanism, second-wave feminism, and the development of queer theory? What are the meanings of existential thinking for social justice, for leading a fulfilled life, and for confronting the "existential threats" facing humanity in the 21st century? Our primary aim will be for students to develop and write their capstone papers, but we will also spend time reflecting on their years at Skidmore and their next chapters of life after college.

SENIOR SEMINARS TO BE OFFERED SPRING 2021

EN 375 **AMERICAN LITERATURE & CULTURE IN THE 1990s** **W. Lee**

I Love the '90s. The Dream of the '90s is Alive in Portland. How '90s Are You?

It might seem strange to begin scholarly inquiry about American literature and culture during the 1990s with titles borrowed respectively from a VH-1 mini-series, IFC's *Portlandia*, and a BuzzFeed quiz. The afterlife of the 1990s, however, will be the jumping off point for this interdisciplinary senior seminar's investigation of the relationship between the literature, culture, and politics of the decade in the U.S. We will begin by considering how recent popular culture and media stories about the 1990s often evoke feelings of nostalgia. We will then explore what the decade looks and feels like in a range of American literary and cultural texts. Throughout our course, we will attend to how 1990s literary, film, and TV texts reinforce, complicate, and/or unsettle the terms in which the political and cultural debates of the decade linked questions about national identity at the brink of the new millennium with shifting ideas of racial, class, gender, and sexual identities.

Our readings will be organized by 1990s concerns such as the Culture Wars, the "death of literature," the "end of history," multiculturalism, family values, and gender trouble. We will also address the question of how and why so many 1990s literary texts are themselves pre-occupied with or haunted by earlier texts and historical periods. Fiction and nonfiction might include works by Don DeLillo, Jeffrey Eugenides, Charles Johnson, Toni Morrison, and Karen Tei Yamashita. Films and television shows might include *Paris is Burning*, *Office Space*, *The Matrix*, and *The Simpsons*. Supplementary texts will include readings in the fields of queer theory, ethnic studies, literary criticism, and cultural studies, as well as historical primary sources such as political speeches and news articles. Critics and theorists that we will read include Lauren Berlant, Judith Butler, Paul Gilroy, and Lisa Nakamura.

EN 375

CAPTIVITY

N. Junkerman

Early American literature is filled with stories of captivity. These tales—told by prisoners of war, victims of kidnapping, and enslaved people—offer powerful accounts of cultural collision, redemption and loss, and violence and transformation. This is a course focused not on a single literary genre, but on the enduring figure of the captive (or former captive) with a story to tell. We will begin with early narratives written by white colonists who were taken captive by Native Americans. From there we will extend our examination of captivity into the nineteenth century, with a particular focus on the African American slave narrative. Finally, we will briefly consider the ongoing American fascination with captivity in contemporary journalism, fiction and film.

EN 376 01
3 credits

SENIOR PROJECTS

The Department

This offering allows a senior the opportunity to develop a particular facet of English study that he or she is interested in and has already explored to some extent. It could include projects such as teaching, creative writing, journalism, and film production, as well as specialized reading and writing on literary topics. Outstanding work may qualify the senior for departmental honors. All requirements for a regular Independent Study apply. To register, fill out a "Senior Thesis or Senior Project Registration" form, available in the English department and on the English department's website. Students who wish to be considered for Honors for a senior project must complete at least two preparatory courses in the appropriate genre.