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INSTRUCTOR	OFFICE HOURS Spring 2021 All Hours via Zoom	EXT.	OFFICE
Baker, Calvin	Th 3:00-5:00 & by appt.	5165	PMH 318
Benzon, Paul	T 1:30-2:30 and 4:30-5:30 W 10:00-11:00 & by appt.	5162	PMH 311
Bernard, April	By appt.	8396	PMH 319
Black, Barbara, Chair	W 10:00-11:00 & by appt.	5154	PMH 313
Boyers, Peg	Email pboyers@skidmore.edu	5186	PMH 327
Boyers, Robert	Email rboyers@skidmore.edu	5156	PMH 325
Bozio, Andrew	T 4:10-5:00, F 1:00-2:00	5158	PMH 317
Cermatori, Joseph	T, Th 1:00-2:30	5163	PMH 316
Chung, Sonya	On Leave	5176	PMH 313
Diaby, Bakary	M, W 1:30-2:30 & by appt.	5166	PMH 334
Dunn, Olivia	W, F 10:00-11:00 & by appt.	8493	PMH 332
Emerson, Maude	W 1:30-3:00	5488	PMH 335
Evans, Adam	By appt.	5770	LADD 100
Fawcett, Jennifer	T, W 10:30-12:00 & by appt.	5193	PMH 336
Golden, Catherine	Th 10:30-11:30 & by appt.	5164	PMH 321
Greaves, Margaret	T 2:00-4:00, Th 10:00-12:00, & by appt.	5191	PMH 309
Greenspan, Kate	T, Th 3:00-4:30 & by appt.	5167	PMH 324
Hall, Linda	Sabbatical	5182	PMH 318
Hrbek, Greg	By appt.	8398	PMH 310
Jorgensen, Caitlin	W 9:00-11:00 and weekdays by appt.	8393	PMH326
Junkerman, Nicholas	W 12:00-2:00 & by appt.	5161	PMH 306
Lee, Wendy	W 3:00-5:00 & by appt.	5153	PMH 322
Marx, Michael Associate Chair	https://calendly.com/mmarx_office_hours	5173	PMH 320
McAdams, Ruth	M 1:00-2:00, W 3:15-4:15	5174	PMH 331
Melito, Marla	F 11:00-12:00 & by appt.	8112	Star. 201
Mintz, Susannah	By appt.	5169	PMH 305
Niles, Thad	T, Th 1:00-2:00	8114	LIBR 442
Parra, Jamie	By appt.	5172	PMH 315
Pashley, Brenda	By appt.	8150	Star. 101
Stokes, Mason	T 11:15-12:15, Th 2:45-3:45, & by appt.	5184	PMH 308
Suresh, Archana	M 11:00-12:00, W 1:00-2:00, & by appt.	5177	PMH 320E
Wientzen, Tim	By appt.	8397	PMH 307

Wolff, Melora	By appt.	5197	PMH 323
Woodworth, Marc	On Leave	5180	PMH 328
Main Office	M – F 8:30-12:00 and 1:00-4:30	5150	PMH 313

Make sure to speak with your advisor well in advance of fall '21 Registration (which begins April 13th)

EN 103
4 credits

WRITING SEMINAR I

The Department

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
MWF 12:20-1:15

T. Niles

Section 02
TTh 9:40-11:00

A. Suresh

Section 03
TTh 11:10-12:30

A. Suresh

Section 04
WF 8:40-10:00

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
TTh 12:40-2:00

UTOPIA/DYSTOPIA

N. Junkerman

When we look ahead, our imaginations often seem to run in two directions—either toward the hope of future happiness, or the fear of future despair. In this course, we'll look at how these two impulses have produced visions of utopia and dystopia in literature, film, political speech, and journalism. We will examine hopeful and fearful visions of human society across several centuries, and challenge ourselves to ask big questions about the relationship between imagination and social reality. Above all, we will write and talk about writing—in essays, short assignments, peer review sessions—and we will explore how writing both reflects and shapes our dreams and nightmares. Possible texts include the sermons of Jonathan Winthrop; the speeches of Ronald Reagan; novels by Ursula Le Guin, Octavia Butler, and Edward Bellamy; and films like *Snowpiercer* and *Children of Men*.

EN 105 02
MWF 11:15-12:10

WRITING GENDER

R. McAdams

EN 105 03
MWF 10:10-11:05

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 nonbinary 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 04
TTh 3:40-5:00

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 05
MWF 11:15-12:10

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 06
MW 2:30-3:50

**MELTDOWN: LITERATURE, CULTURE,
AND THE 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 105 07
MWF 9:05-10:00

**MEAN GIRLS: THE ROLE OF
UNLIKEABLE FEMALE CHARACTERS**

J. Fawcett

EN 105 09
MWF 11:15-12:10

**MEAN GIRLS: THE ROLE OF
UNLIKEABLE FEMALE CHARACTERS**

J. Fawcett

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. What many of these books have in common is 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 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. The goal of the class is to develop a rigorous process for creating written work that is clear, thought-provoking, and elegant. Coursework includes three short papers and three polished essays developed through multiple drafts, peer critique, and individual conferences.

EN 105 08
TTh 2:10-3:30

THE COLOR OF JUSTICE

A. Bozio

Why is racism such a durable force in the United States? Couldn't we end it by simply refusing to see differences between people? In this course, we'll consider the limits of "colorblindness" by studying some of the structures that shape race in America, as well as their effects upon the lived experience of people of color. Reading works by James Baldwin, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and Claudia Rankine alongside critical race theory, we'll first study different forms of racism and the way that race intersects with gender and sexuality. Turning to the history of housing segregation, we'll then consider the consequences of government policy for what has been called "the racial wealth gap" and ask if reparations could offer an answer to these injustices. Finally, we will turn to mass incarceration and its role in perpetuating racial inequality. Through this course, students will learn to become more critical readers and thinkers, to undertake different kinds of research in pursuit of answers to difficult questions, and to craft strong and compelling arguments.

EN 105 10
MWF 1:25-2:20

**THE WITCH: SUPERSTITION, STIGMA,
AND SOVEREIGNTY**

J. Fawcett

Hag, crone, prostitute, midwife, monster. Other. Beyond the pointy hat and the broomstick, what is a witch? Witches have been around for centuries. Today they may range from kitschy Halloween staples to a fearsome symbol of power, but one thing hasn't changed: at the root is an iconic female figure who challenges misogyny. This course will explore the place of witches in history, literature, and Western culture, focusing on how they connect to female bodies, deformity, and feminism. Non-conformity used to get you burned at the stake: what are the costs today? The goal of the class is to develop a rigorous process for creating written work that is clear, thought-provoking, and elegant. Coursework includes three short papers and three polished essays developed through multiple drafts, peer critique, and individual conferences.

EN 105 11
WF 8:40-10:00

WRITING AS RADICAL EMPATHY

O. Dunn

EN 105 12
WF 10:10-11:30

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 13
MWF 10:10-11:05

QUARRELS WITH OURSELVES

M. Emerson

EN 105 14
MWF 12:20-1:15

QUARRELS WITH OURSELVES

M. Emerson

This course takes its title from a remark by the poet William Butler Yeats: “Out of our quarrels with others we make rhetoric. Out of our quarrels with ourselves we make poetry.” The materials of this course will be not only poetry, but many kinds of writing and other forms of expression that contain “quarrels with ourselves.” We will explore states of ambivalence, indecision, and self-division that arise around questions of love, identity, politics, and aesthetics. How do writers and artists give form to their dilemmas, and how do various forms—like the sonnet, the essay, and the pop song—accommodate different kinds of quarrels? What does someone stand to gain by sustaining ambivalence, and what does she risk losing? You will be asked to write analytical essays about these questions in the works of others, and you will also be asked to write at least one essay on a topic about which you yourself can’t make up your mind. Course requirements include regular writing, peer-editing, and revision assignments.

EN 105 15
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 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. Pandemic permitting, at some point there will be food.

EN 105 15
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 Gandhi 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 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 a DSP (Directed Self-Placement) of EN105H to enroll in the class.

EN 105H 01
MWF 1:25-2:20

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
TTh 9:40-11:00

WRITING ON DEMAND

L. Hall

When the essayist Joan Didion was in her twenties, she wrote editorial copy for *Vogue* magazine on a wide range of subjects. In her forties, she noted that it is “easy to make light of this kind of ‘writing,’ [but] I do not make light of it at all: it was at *Vogue* that I learned a kind of ease with words... a way of regarding words not as mirrors of my own inadequacy but as tools, toys, weapons to be deployed strategically on a page.” Inspired by Didion’s on-the-job apprenticeship, this course will ask you to undertake the work of a professional copywriter or ghostwriter. What might you be asked to compose? The introduction to the documentary “extras” for a television series. The “Our Story” blurb for the website of a local restaurant. A capsule biography for a mayoral candidate. A C.E.O.’s response to a request from *Forbes*: “Tell us about the biggest mistake you ever made as a leader.” The instructor will furnish you with material; with her guidance, you will shape it into publishable or, as the case may be, presentable prose. Expect frequent short assignments, most of them graded.

EN 110
4 credits

INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY STUDIES

The Department

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.)

Here are the fall 2021 sections of EN 110, each with an organizing theme or set of questions.

EN 110 01
TTh 9:40-11:00

TEXTS AND BODIES

P. Benzon

What can literature tell us about the body? What possibilities does it present for understanding the body—physically, socially, historically, and politically? How do authors working in various genres use language to represent bodies, tell their stories, and imagine them in new ways?

In this course, we’ll ask these and other questions as we study a range of literary and cultural texts across history and genre. Paying careful attention to literary form and practices of close reading, we’ll explore how authors use language to think about embodiment in relation to issues of identity, power, politics, time, history, violence, the supernatural, and more. Possible texts will include poetry by William Shakespeare, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Sylvia Plath, and Tracy K. Smith; fiction by Carmen Maria Machado and Toni Morrison; drama by Tony Kushner; and film by Barry Jenkins and Jordan Peele.

EN 110 02
TTh 11:10-12:30

LITERARY HAUNTINGS

M. Greaves

This course will introduce you to practices of literary study through works that are haunted by the past and by other literary works and authors. How do various genres like poetry, fiction, and film engage with history and memory, not just in theme but also in form? We will begin the course with the sonnet, considering Terrance Hayes’s contemporary sonnets that teem with ghosts—literal ghosts, as well as ghostly remnants of the traditional sonnet form itself. After treating poems as laboratories for practicing close attention to language, we will turn to fiction, focusing on ghost stories and novels by Henry James and Kazuo Ishiguro. Our final unit will pair a well-known ghost play, *Hamlet*, with Emily St. John Mandel’s post-apocalyptic Shakespearean novel *Station Eleven*. Students will complete three essays, some short creative assignments, and a final exam as they build a toolkit of terms and methods for engaging with literary texts.

EN 110 03
MW 2:30-3:50

LITERARY WORLDS

W. Lee

A radio allows a couple in a Manhattan apartment building to eavesdrop on their neighbors. A gay mortician in San Francisco reflects on the irony of being the one to prepare for burial the body of Harvey Milk's murderer. A French diplomat is held captive by the French government—and by his own Orientalist fantasies about “the perfect woman.” The first Black woman elevator inspector in an unnamed city full of skyscrapers suspects that she is being framed for a catastrophic failure. Two friends host a dinner party in order to prove to themselves that they know how to get away with murder.

These are just a few of the worlds that our course will visit as we read, discuss, and analyze texts that include fiction, poetry, drama, prose nonfiction, film and theory. This writing intensive course will introduce students to the skills and practices of literary studies. Questions that we will address include: What is close reading? How do we develop arguments about literary texts? How do we identify and analyze evidence in different genres and forms of literature? How do literary genres and forms change over time, and how do those changes relate to the social transformations of different historical periods? How does the world of a given literary text reflect, refract, or otherwise engage with the “real” world? Writers might include Roland Barthes, John Cheever, Caryl Churchill, David Henry Hwang, Tracy K. Smith, Colson Whitehead, Kevin Young, and Skidmore graduate Kathleen Collins. Film: Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*.

EN 110 04
WF 10:10-11:30

BODIES OF LITERATURE

S. Mintz

In this section of EN 110, we'll explore the myriad ways in which literature has represented the human body—including such hybrid extensions of bodies as companion animals and prosthetic technologies. Our goal will be to understand why—and how—embodiment matters: to characters, to plots and narrative structures, to motifs, themes, and symbolism. How has representation of the body changed over time? What's the difference between a realistic and a metaphorical use of bodily features? What role do disability, disfigurement, and disease play in literary treatments of the human “condition”? And how do the specific rules and possibilities of literary form bring bodies into being? Students will write often and be expected to contribute to conversation.

GN 151A
W 5:00-6:00
1 credit

COLLOQUIUM ON LITERARY RESEARCH METHODS

J. Cermatori

In this course, faculty from the Skidmore English department will lead weekly discussions on their recent research projects and on the methods that are central to their interests and subfields in literary studies. These conversations will focus on the practical, theoretical, and empirical aspects of scholarly work. They aim to serve as an introduction to key theories and research methodologies in literary studies, as well as help you develop pathways into literary analysis that are favorable to your interests. Along the way, faculty will discuss their personal and professional trajectories, inviting you to imagine the many professional avenues that Skidmore English majors can pursue. (1 Credit. S/U only.)

This is a new course, open to students of all years but especially recommended to new majors or those considering majoring in English.

200 – LEVEL COURSES

EN 211 01
TTh 11:10-12:30
3 credits

FICTION

R. Boyers

EN 211 is an introduction to the art of fiction, with discussions focused on the broadest possible range of pertinent issues. What is the difference between a relatively straightforward “realist” novel and a novel clearly intended to deviate from the conventions of realism? What makes a book a feminist novel? Why would a writer begin a story by telling us immediately what is going to happen in the narrative and then gradually work “backwards” through the story line in patient, vivid detail? What prompted a writer to compose a fiction in the first person, from the point of view of a single character, rather than telling it from an omniscient point of view, where it is possible to delve into the thoughts and feelings of all of the characters? Do we have a special interest in fiction with political intentions? Can we be attracted by stories that challenge rather than confirm our own view of things?

The course will introduce students to many different kinds of short stories by writers recent and not so recent, writers as diverse as Kafka, Melville, Tolstoy, Ralph Ellison, Bharati Mukherjee, Jamaica Kincaid, Alice Munro, James Baldwin, and others. It will also devote some weeks to novels by Danzy Senna (*New People*), Claire Messud (*The Woman Upstairs*) and JM Coetzee (*Disgrace*).

Students will write two 1500-word papers and take both a mid-term and final exam.

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

EN 211 02
MWF 1:25-2:20
3 credits

FICTION

T. Wientzen

The novel is one of the most resilient literary forms in modern history. Emerging in the eighteenth century, it quickly became a dominant mode of literature because it offered a vehicle for representing human life in all its cultural, geographical, and historical variability, one that has endured well in to the twenty-first century. Yet, from the very beginnings, the novel (and its descendent, the short story) was to explore much more than just *human* life, with various kinds of non-human entities (animals, monsters, *things*) becoming an integral part of its history and even helping to spur narrative experimentation.

Looking at the role of both human and non-human figures across the history of modern fiction, this course offers students an introduction to some of the dominant movements in prose fiction since the nineteenth century, including science fiction, the gothic, modernism, and postmodern literature. Focusing on the formal techniques of narrative fiction (such as irony, tone, setting, genre, and characterization), we will develop skills for reading fiction while attending to the historical conditions that underwrote its evolution. Readings will include works of short fiction by Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Rebecca West, Vladimir Nabokov, and Angela Carter, among others, as well as novels by Mary Shelley, H. G. Wells, J.M. Coetzee, and Kazuo Ishiguro. Attending to the formal and thematic concerns of these writers, we will explore some of the political and literary stakes of fiction that have challenged our ideas of “the human” over the last three hundred years. Class requirements: active class participation, three short essays, and a final exam.

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

EN 213 01
MWF 1:25-2:20
3 credits

POETRY

B. Diaby

Designed to bring the general student into a familiar relationship with the language and theory of poetry. General readings from a wide range of English and American poetry, from early ballads to contemporary forms. There will be posted responses and short writing exercises.

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

EN 228W 01
MW 2:30-3:50
4 credits

PROSE BOOT CAMP

L. Hall

“Can you really teach anyone how to write?” someone at *The New York Times* once asked Kurt Vonnegut. Writers—especially writers who teach—are accustomed to that question, and generally have a ready reply. Vonnegut’s answer was unusual: “Listen, there were creative writing teachers long before there were creative writing courses, and they were called and continue to be called editors.” He neglected to mention a crucial difference between teachers and editors: the latter are responsible for preparing writing for publication. Teachers can let things go—in fact, they may have been trained to work with students on one or two weaknesses at a time.

If you are sincerely interested in improving your writing at the level of the sentence, Prose Boot Camp offers straight talk about problems and how to fix them. You will undertake the work and be held to the standards of a professional ghostwriter or copywriter. The instructor will furnish you with material; with her guidance, you will shape it into publishable or, as the case may

be, presentable prose. Note: this course is not designed to be useful to writers who are currently working on their mastery of the English language.

COUNTS AS A “FORMS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE” COURSE

EN 221 01
WF 12:20-1:40
3 credits

**INTRODUCTION TO ASIAN
AMERICAN LITERATURE**

W. Lee

The field of Asian American literature and culture includes an array of stories told in variety of styles about people belonging to a number of different ethnic groups. For example: American-born daughters struggling with their Chinese immigrant parents' expectations, young Japanese American men dealing with the aftermath of World War II internment, a Vietnamese-born writer in the U.S. who encounters dismissals of ethnic literature as “a license to bore,” a Taiwanese American time machine repairman navigating his life in a science fictional universe, a 15 year-old South Asian teenaged girl whose life in Sherman Oaks, California is narrated by tennis legend John McEnroe.

This course will introduce students to major authors, works, and topics in Asian American literature and culture. The course aims to provide a sense of the historical conditions out of which various forms of Asian American writing and culture have emerged and changed over time. The class will focus on textual analysis and close reading—on how specific texts give representational shape to the social and historical experiences that they depict. In doing so, the course will explore how the formal and stylistic features of Asian American texts influence their promotion, reception, and interpretation. Readings consist chiefly of works that have canonical status within the field of Asian American literary studies but also include works that suggest new directions in the field. Readings include fiction, nonfiction, science fiction, poetry, TV, and film. Writers may include Frank Chin, Cathy Park Hong, Maxine Hong Kingston, Jhumpa Lahiri, Ling Ma, John Okada, Viet Thanh Nguyen, and Charles Yu. Film and TV: *The Half of It*, *Never Have I Ever*.

COUNTS AS A “LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN CONTEXT” COURSE
COUNTS TOWARD GENDER STUDIES CREDIT
COUNTS AS A CULTURAL DIVERSITY COURSE

EN 229H 01
WF 12:40-2:00
4 credits

INTRODUCTION TO MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

K. Greenspan

From the saintly to the sinful: a sampling of the treasures of medieval English literature, presented in the context of the rich material and intellectual culture of the 12th through the 15th centuries. Our recurring theme, “Visions of Life and Death,” will lead us to examine such topics as resurrection and immortality; heaven, hell, and purgatory; penance and pilgrimage; death, relics, and remembrance; ghosts and otherworld journeys. We will read all works in their original dialects, giving enough attention to Middle English grammar and vocabulary to make the readings easily accessible.

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

EN 229W 01
TTh 3:40-5:00
4 credits

**RACIAL CAPITALISM AND THE
EARLY MODERN ENGLISH STAGE**

A. Bozio

Calls to defund the police rightly stress a relationship between racism and capitalism. In this course, we'll study the origins of that relationship in the early modern period and the role that literature played in its development. First, we'll read competing accounts of when, where, and why capitalism came into being, focusing on the importance of both race and racism to its historical evolution. We'll then use those insights as a framework for analyzing early modern drama, juxtaposing canonical works (*Titus Andronicus*, *As You Like It*, and *The Merchant of Venice*) with less familiar but equally compelling texts (*Orlando Furioso*, *The Fair Maid of the West*, and *The City Madam*) in order to understand how literature engaged, furthered, and at times contested the rise of racial capitalism. In the last days of the course, we'll consider the legacy of these ideas in the twenty-first century, asking what the study of racial capitalism means for us today.

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

EN 235 01
TTh 11:10-12:30
4 credits

WRITING BLACK/WRITING BACK

M. Stokes

A survey of African American literature from the 1700s to the present. 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 examines 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 re-appropriated and revised words and ideas that had been used to exclude them from both American literary history and America itself.

As a Bridge Experience course, EN 235 asks students to reflect upon their own positions in their respective communities and on campus and to connect their study of power, justice, and identity to other areas of their education, as well as to the world beyond the classroom. Toward that end, students will work in pairs to create a podcast that explores how one of the texts on the syllabus might help us think about power, justice, and identity in our current moment. These podcasts will be made available to the larger Skidmore community.

COUNTS AS A “LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN CONTEXT” COURSE
COUNTS AS A CULTURAL DIVERSITY COURSE
COUNTS AS THE NEW GENERAL EDUCATION BRIDGE COURSE REQUIREMENT
COUNTS TOWARD THE BLACK STUDIES MINOR

EN 242 01
TTh 9:40-11:00
4 credits

DISABILITY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

N. Junkerman

This course is an exploration of disability as a complex interaction between individual bodies and minds and broader social expectations, categorizations and judgments. Over the course of the semester we will learn how social stigma, legal restrictions, and state-sponsored violence have worked together to shape the identities and limit the life chances of Americans with disabilities. At the same time, we will study the long struggle for justice and equality waged by people with disabilities. We will learn how activists, writers, artists, organizers, and scholars have fought to dismantle ableist institutions and ideas. We will study the successes of this multi-faceted movement, but we will also frankly examine how much remains to be done to make America a more just and less oppressive nation for its disabled citizens. Finally, we will study how these national questions reverberate on our own campus. Remembering that college students and college campuses have been major players in the struggle for disability justice, we will consider what it would mean for our campus to be broadly “accessible.”

COUNTS AS A “LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN CONTEXT” COURSE
COUNTS AS THE NEW GENERAL EDUCATION BRIDGE COURSE REQUIREMENT

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOPS

EN 280 01
WF 12:20-1:40
4 credits

INTRODUCTION TO NONFICTION WRITING

S. Mintz

What is “creative nonfiction”? How is it different from other forms of nonfiction, as well as from other forms of creative writing? How do we know when we’re doing it, and how do we learn to do it well? In this introduction to the so-called “fourth genre,” we will explore the boundaries of essay writing, with an emphasis on personal and meditative essay, memoir, nature and travel writing, portraiture, and other less conventional forms, including the many varieties of lyric essay. Guided by exercises, prompts, workshop discussion, and published examples, students will discover the forms, style, subject matter, and sound that best suit their writerly intentions.

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

EN 281 01
WF 12:20-1:40
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.

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

EN 282 01
W 6:30-9:30
4 credits

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY WRITING

P. Boyers

Writing and reading assignments are geared to the beginning poet, but the structure of the class is essentially the same as that of a more advanced workshop: weekly prompts will provoke student poems to be discussed in class as well as in private meetings with the professor. By the end of the term students will be expected to have completed and revised twelve new poems.

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

300 – LEVEL COURSES

EN 303H 01
MWF 9:05-10:00
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 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 sessions 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. Coursework involves reading and discussion in Writing Center theory and practice, short reflective papers, and four hours of tutoring each week.

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

PREREQUISITE: PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR
FULFILLS HONORS FORUM REQUIREMENT

EN 312R 01
WF 10:10-11:30
4 credits

MODERN BRITISH NOVEL

T. Wientzen

The early twentieth century witnessed a profound crisis across almost all sectors of society. At the very moment when colonial boundaries were being tested and European powers were reaching unprecedented levels of barbarism in the trenches of World War I, new political and social arrangements were being forged between genders and social classes. The literary period we call modernism was a kind of “soundtrack” to this collapsing world—a cultural record of the anxieties and utopian aspirations that mass social upheaval promised. Noted above all for its experimental approach to literary form, modernism displaced the realisms that predominated in the nineteenth century in favor of genuinely new approaches to articulating the most important social and political questions of the early century.

This class offers an overview of the predominant concerns and aesthetic innovations that animated the modernist novel. Organizing our study around issues of nationalism, urban life, gender, consumption, violence, and technology, we will attempt to understand the ways in which the literary experiments of novelists in England and Ireland responded to the crises unfolding around them. Reading works by novelists like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Rebecca West, Joseph Conrad, and E. M. Forster, we will consider the effects of colonial violence, the impact of new ideas about human perception, and the consequences of wartime trauma on a wide range of literary texts. With sideways glances toward contemporary intellectual and artistic movements, we will interrogate modernism's preoccupation with matters of self and consciousness, space and time, nation and community, race and gender, as well as industry and media. Above all, we will ask the question at the heart of all art of the period: what does it mean to be "modern"?

EN 313 01
TTh 2:10-3:30
3 credits

MODERN POETRY

M. Greaves

A treasonous fascist who spent twelve years in a psychiatric hospital following a breakdown in a cage in Italy. An Irish senator who studied magic. An anti-Semite who took a vow of celibacy and wrote whimsical poems that became the musical *Cats*. These three giants of modernist poetry—Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, and T.S. Eliot—sought to produce prophetic work that exceeded the bounds of the individual, even as their dramatic biographies have captivated critics and inflected subsequent ideas about poetry (often for the worse). Modernist poets wrote during large-scale crises and innovations in the first half of the twentieth century, from national revolutions to World War I to the discovery of the expanding universe. They seemingly had much more to worry about than lyric poetry's conventional preoccupation with the self. And yet, poems of the period are obsessed with the fragmented modern self and its relation to the social structures that both produce and alienate it. In this seminar, we will consider some of the major works of modernist poetry through the idea of subjectivity. This issue is a basic poetic one: who—or what—is the voice that seems to guide a poem? But it is also a historically situated one: how did poems register changes in ideas about consciousness, including the rise of Freudian psychoanalysis? And how did factors of race, gender, sexuality, and class affect the presentation and reception of a poetic self? In addition to studying poems by key figures like Yeats, Eliot, Robert Frost, Langston Hughes, Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens, we will read short critical works by these poets to consider their theories alongside their practices of poetic craft. We will also attend to how discoveries in other disciplines, from anthropology to physics, came to bear on the era's poetic crisis of the self. Assignments will include two papers, a presentation, and a final research project with an optional creative component.

EN 316R 01
TTh 11:10-12:30
4 credits

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH NOVEL

C. Golden

Angels, fallen women, eccentrics, and aspiring heroes and heroines populate the nineteenth-century British novel. This era of production and consumption witnessed rapid change in industry, economics, communications, religion, education, and gender roles. We will consider the unique "woman question" of this period as well as the Victorian preoccupations with death, the pastoral, and the domestic family circle in the novels of Austen, Gaskell, Thackeray, Dickens, Eliot, and Hardy. Adopting a cultural studies focus, we will examine material objects (a valentine, a writing desk) and events and places (The Battle of Waterloo, Stonehenge) that impact plot and characterization. Be advised: this course is reading intensive. Two of the "multi-plot" novels are close to 900 pages, but filled with exciting plot twists, complex characterization, and satisfying endings. As a 4-credit, research intensive course, students will research an object, place, or event and present it first as a PowerPoint and subsequently as a fully realized case for a virtual gallery on COVE (the Collaborative Organization for Virtual Education). Students will also write 2-page papers called briefs on the novels and a 10-12-page research paper on a theme central to nineteenth-century literature and culture.

COUNTS FOR GENDER STUDIES CREDIT

EN 326P 01
WF 10:10-11:30
4 credits

**STRANGE THINGS: RACE, GENDER,
AND 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 Ralph Ellison, Ruth Ozeki, and Ted Chiang; films such as *The Birds* (1963), *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 theory, 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 337 01
TTh 3:40-5:00
3 credits

CONTINENTAL NOVEL

R. Boyers

Most often, when writers and critics think about “THE NOVEL,” they have in mind the “realist” fiction produced in the 19th century and very early twentieth century—much of it by the writers studied in this course. It is fair to say that the names of Tolstoy, Dostoyevski, Turgenev, Flaubert, Henry James, Edith Wharton, Thomas Mann, and Andre Gide have for a long time signified what many readers mean when they speak of the European novel—though Wharton and James were born in the US. In the middle of the twentieth century, the critic George Steiner gave to his book on the two competing traditions within the history of “the novel” the title *Tolstoy or Dostoyevski*, and there he considered not only those Russian masters but other figures studied in our course. Intimate acquaintance with the works of these writers is indispensable for all students of literature and creative writing. What is more, the pleasure to be derived from these works is very deep and enduring. Just a few supporting quotations: 1—from VIRGINIA WOOLF: “We must envy that extraordinary union of extreme simplicity combined with the utmost subtlety that we find in the great Russian writers.” 2—from JAMES WOOD in *The New Yorker*: “Flaubert is the originator of the modern novel...who has stirred thousands of successors.” 3—from SIGMUND FREUD: “Few novels delve as deeply into the human psyche as the works of Dostoyevski.” Students enrolled in EN 337 will read the following: Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*; Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*; Dostoyevski, *Crime and Punishment*; Turgenev, *Fathers & Sons*; Andre Gide, *The Immoralist*; and short stories by Thomas Mann, Henry James, and Edith Wharton. Students will write two 1500-word papers or one 3000-word paper. They will take a mid-term and a final exam.

EN 339 01
TTh 3:40-5:30
4 credits

QUEER THEORIES (AND PRACTICES)

J. Cermatori

An overview of foundational texts and significant ideas in the field of gender and sexuality studies, focusing on the interplay between theory and praxis in the struggle for queer liberation. Our readings will be focused on key U.S.-American writings from the past half century, and will examine queerness as a field in which forms of identity, power, and claims to justice intersect. Students will gain familiarity with major thinkers and important concepts for LGBTQ+ life and politics today, including: gender and sexual nonconformity; queer intersections with race, ethnicity, and nationhood; LGBTQ+ aesthetics, sociality, and world-making; dissident forms of desire and identification; solidarities and protest. As an advanced English Department seminar, we will also devote special attention to queer literary critique and contemporary LGBTQ+ fiction, poetry, and drama. The course will culminate in students designing and executing a mid-length independent research project. This course satisfies Skidmore’s Bridge Experience requirement and will therefore involve several practice-based/application components, including special guest conversations, service-learning events, and creative writing assignments.

COUNTS AS THE NEW GENERAL EDUCATION BRIDGE COURSE REQUIREMENT

EN 341 01
TTh 9:40-11:00
3 credits

**CHAUCER MARATHON PART I:
CANTERBURY TALES**

K. Greenspan

In this course you will embark on one of the most delightful adventures in reading you will ever have: Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1380s–1390s). From their composition to this very day, the *Canterbury Tales* have given readers delight in reading and in being alive. The pageant of Canterbury pilgrims competing for the prize of a free dinner, telling stories, and reveling in their own foibles opens an ever-fresh window onto the workings of the medieval English imagination. We will read Chaucer in Middle English only, a language that is not only easy to learn, but is full of thrilling linguistic surprises. You will wish we still spoke a language so rich in nuance and humor.

COUNTS TOWARD THE EARLY PERIOD REQUIREMENT

EN 348 01
MW 2:30-3:50
3 credits

MILTON

S. Mintz

Regicide Milton. Proto-feminist Milton. Heretical Milton. The “Divorser” Milton. Ecological Milton. ... Buddhist Milton? Queering Milton? Disability and Milton? (Ir)relevant Milton? In what ways does—or should—such a figure as John Milton continue to “matter”? To address that question, we will plunge into Milton's major works: the early masque called *Comus*, the sonnets, the political tracts on divorce and censorship, the epics *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*. We'll explore the relationship between these texts and seventeenth-century England, but also to test their meaning for, and track their influence on, much more contemporary media and events. What does Milton matter to films as disparate as *Sabrina* and *Devil's Advocate*? How does *Paradise Lost* shape the fantasy novels of C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman? How does Milton show up in contemporary art, on the web, or in the lyrics of Drake, Morissey, and Lana Del Rey? Can reading Milton help us navigate issues of free speech and ideological violence in an “alternative factual” world? Course requirements will include shorter analyses of Milton's work and a final project bringing Miltonic themes into conversation with works of contemporary pop culture, news, and/or critical theory.

COUNTS TOWARD THE EARLY PERIOD REQUIREMENT

EN 377P 01
MW 4:00-5:20
4 credits

**READING FOR WRITERS:
POETRY AND NONFICTION**

A. Bernard

By reading both poetry and nonfiction, creative writing students who are concentrating in each of the two genres will be able to experiment and enlarge their sense of themselves as writers. We will begin with the Japanese writer Basho, whose classic *Narrow Road to the Deep North* is a hybrid of nonfiction and poetry writing; each following week we will read complementary works in nonfiction and poetry, with writing assignments (for workshop discussion) based on what we read, all in an atmosphere of good will and good humor.

PREREQUISITES: EN 110; ONE COURSE FROM “LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN CONTEXT”; AND ONE OF THE FOLLOWING: EN 211, EN 213, EN 215, EN 219, EN 280, EN 281, EN 282, EN 251

ADVANCED WORKSHOPS

EN 380 01
W 6:30-9:30
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, students must email the following information to the professor of the course you wish to enroll in: 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 FOR FALL 2021

EN 375 01
TTh 12:40-2:00
4 credits

RACE AND NATURE

M. Marx

In a 2011 interview, environmental author Lauret Savoy offers a sharp criticism of nature writing, describing the genre as “a writing of privilege, a writing of opportunity and choice.” Reinforcing Savoy’s contention, Carolyn Finney, author of *Black Faces, White Spaces*, argues that “[People] must be willing to let go of the assumption that their view of the environment is a universal one, and be ready to collaborate with people to create new ways of framing and thinking about the environment.”

In “Race and Nature,” we will embrace Finney’s charge to “create new ways of framing and thinking about the environment.” We will read fiction, nonfiction, and poetry by authors of color alongside white writers of nature and the environment to examine how race shapes our relationship to the land and informs our experiences with nature. Importantly, this course will address the question of justice, both racial and environmental, and how the two converge. Our seminar will begin with the writings of Henry David Thoreau and John Muir and an introduction to ecocriticism. Then, informed by the intersections of race, gender, and history, we will turn our attention to the literature of race and nature. Readings might include works such as *Trace* and *The Colors of Nature* by Lauret Savoy; *The Home Place Memoirs of a Colored Man’s Love Affair with Nature* by J. Drew Lanham; *Gloryland* by Shelton Johnson; *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko; *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya; and *Under the Feet of Jesus* by Helena Maria Veramontes.

Throughout the semester our primary focus will be developing and writing the capstone paper, but we will also spend time reflecting on our education at Skidmore and the next chapters of life after college.

SENIOR SEMINARS TO BE OFFERED SPRING 2022

EN 375

MEPHISTOPHELES

K. Greenspan

Fascination with the Devil permeates just about every mode of Western storytelling: literature, the visual arts, music, theater, scripture, sermon. The *summa* of his artistic embodiment is Goethe’s Mephistopheles, *der Geist der stets verneint* (the spirit that ever negates), who strives to bring about the damnation of Faust. In this Senior Research Seminar, we will study three versions of the Faust legend: Christopher Marlowe’s 1604 Play *Dr. Faustus*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s verse drama *Faust* (1806 – 1832), and Arrigo Boito’s opera *Mefistofele* (1868). We will ask questions about artistic originality, translation, theology, and genre, and inquire into the ways in which Mephistophelean characters have shaped modern representations of evil.

Other works we may draw upon include the late 15th-century Creation play; a slightly later play with a woman as the Faust figure, *Mary of Nijmegen*; a popular Renaissance pamphlet, *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Dr. John Faustus* (1588); a 1796 Gothic Romance, *The Monk*, by Matthew “Monk” Lewis; the Scots author James Hogg’s *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824); G. B. Shaw’s Act III: “Don Juan in Hell,” from his 1903 play *Man and Superman*; Max Beerbohm’s short story “*Enoch Soames*” (1916); and C. S. Lewis’s *Screntape Letters* (1942).

We will screen F. W. Murnau's silent masterpiece, *Faust*; the Globe Shakespeare Company's production of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*; Jan Svankmajer's puppet/claymation/live action *Faust*; Istvan Szabo's *Mephisto*, which follows the career of an ambitious German actor during the Nazi era; and, of course, a sterling production of Boito's *Mefistofele*, featuring the great Samuel Ramey in the title role.

You will be guided through the process of developing productive research questions, finding appropriate primary and secondary resources, and producing a staged and revised 25-page research paper. Along the way you will present short seminar papers on topics that contribute both to your own research and inform our discussions of the assigned readings and films.

EN 375

WHAT WAS POSTMODERNISM?

T. Wientzen

What do we mean when we describe something as “postmodern”? Coined to describe a variety of movements in architecture, art, and literature after modernism, by the 1980s the term took on immense critical weight. As critics described ascendant aesthetic modes, they often did so in relationship to a historical moment that saw the consolidation of capitalism as a global force—a historical moment with far-reaching consequences for our experience of the world. However, as theorists assembled frameworks for understanding the postmodern condition, the term itself became a kind of political tool. As it began to appear in university curricula and in the popular press, the term became a kind of epithet used by those critical of “social justice” and “political correctness,” associations that endure to this day, leaving many confused about what “postmodernism” is—or what it was.

In this course, we return to the moment when theorists diagnosed the material and cultural conditions of postmodernism. In so doing, this course aims to understand “postmodernism” as a historical period of the past, but one that has enduring consequences for understanding the twenty-first century. Among other things, we will discuss key terms within theories of postmodernism, such as “spectacle,” “master narratives,” “cognitive mapping,” “simulacra,” “the culture industry,” and “écriture féminine.” Reading theorists of postmodernism in conversation with key literary figures of the late twentieth century, we will examine the ways these terms help us understand the historical moment we inhabit, and map the postmodern critical vocabulary around systems of gender, class, and race. Literary texts may include work by Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie, Hélène Cixous, William Gibson, Octavia Butler, John Barth, Don DeLillo, and Joanna Russ.

EN 376 01

SENIOR PROJECTS

The Department

3 credits

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.

EN 389 01

PREPARATION FOR THE SENIOR THESIS

The Department

3 credits

Required of all second-semester junior or first-semester senior English majors who intend to write a thesis. Under the direction of a thesis advisor, the student reads extensively in primary and secondary sources related to the proposed thesis topic, develops his or her research skills, and brings the thesis topic to focus by writing an outline and series of brief papers which will contribute to the thesis.

PREREQUISITES: APPROVAL IN ADVANCE BY THE DEPARTMENT

EN 390 01

SENIOR THESIS

The Department

3 credits

Intensive writing and revising of senior thesis under the close guidance of the student’s thesis committee. The thesis provides an opportunity for English Majors to develop sophisticated research and writing skills, read extensively on the topic of special interest, and produce a major critical paper of forty to eighty pages. Not required of the English major, but strongly

recommended as a valuable conclusion to the major and as preparation for graduate study. Distinguished work will qualify eligible students for departmental honors. To register, fill out a “Senior Thesis or Senior Project Registration” form, available in the English department and on the English department’s website.

PREREQUISITES: EN 389 AND APPROVAL IN ADVANCE BY THE DEPARTMENT