ENGLISH

http://english.jhu.edu/

The Department of English offers separate undergraduate and graduate programs, each designed to suit the needs of its particular student body. The undergraduate program, in the context of university requirements and elective courses, provides the basis for a liberal education and prepares students for graduate work or professional schools, such as medicine and law, as well as professional teaching and literary scholarship. The graduate program prepares advanced students for professional teaching careers in English literature.

Facilities

Besides the Sheridan Libraries, Hopkins students have easy access to the 12 million volumes and innumerable historical manuscripts of the Library of Congress, as well as the library at Dumbarton Oaks, the Folger Library, the Freer Library, the library of the National Gallery, and many other specialized public collections. Students learn about advances in research and criticism and confer with leading American and European scholars and critics through participation in the activities of the Tudor and Stuart Club, the ELH Colloquium, and the department’s other programming.

Programs

- English, Bachelor of Arts (https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/english/english-bachelor-arts/)
- English, Minor (https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/english/english-minor/)
- English, PhD (https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/english/english-phd/)

For current course information and registration go to https://sis.jhu.edu/classes/

Courses

AS.060.100. Introduction to Expository Writing. 3 Credits.
Introduction to “Expos” is designed to introduce less experienced writers to the elements of academic argument. Students learn to recognize “The Fundamental Structure of Academic Argument” as they learn to read and summarize academic essays, and then they apply the fundamental structure in academic essays of their own. Classes are small, no more than 10 students, and are organized around three major writing assignments. Each course guides students’ practice through pre-writing, drafting, and revising, and includes discussions, workshops, and tutorials with the instructor. In addition to its central focus on the elements of academic argument, each “Intro” course teaches students to avoid plagiarism and document sources correctly. “Intro” courses do not specialize in a particular topic or theme and are available to freshmen only.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.107. Introduction to Literary Study. 3 Credits.
This course serves as an introduction to the basic methods of and critical approaches to the study of literature. Some sections may have further individual topic descriptions; please check in SIS when searching for courses.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.108. Time Travel. 3 Credits.
Why is time travel such a consistent and perplexing theme in literature and film over the last 150 years? Why is modernity so concerned with peering backwards or forwards? This course will examine the history of time-travel fiction, from its beginning in utopian fiction through its box-office dominance in the 1980s, and into today. Writers will likely include Mark Twain, Edward Bellamy, Harold Steele Mackay, Ray Bradbury, Robert Heinlein, and Philip K. Dick. Movies will include *The Terminator*, *Back to the Future*, and *Primer*.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.109. Robots, Androids, Slaves. 3 Credits.
Since the rise of Silicon Valley, tech enthusiasts and futurists have been debating the possibility of what has been called “the singularity” — the moment when artificial intelligence (AI) decisively and irreversibly surpasses human abilities. If this does happen, observers worry, it’s not just that robots will take our jobs; will we become subservient to our new robot masters? Will we become extinct, and not because of climate change? This course explores such questions through the lens of literature and popular media. We will watch several films from the last 15 years or so that depict the rise of AI. We will ask about the roles that gender, race and class have in our imagination of the work robots do. And we will read a range of short essays that approach the question of labor and technology from different angles than mass media usually do.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.111. Freshman Seminar: How Not to Be Afraid of Poetry. 3 Credits.
What is poetry? And why don’t we like it? This course will explore what makes poetry turn ordinary language into something extraordinary, into shapes and sounds so that sometimes we find it difficult to understand and sometimes we find it gives us great delight. This seminar will open up a range of poetry written in English, including some of the greatest writers of the English language. This course is designed for the students without a strong background in reading poetry but who have the desire to gain it; the main emphasis is exploration of the world and words of poetry and developing an appreciation and analytical understanding of the ways poetry can express, advocate, record, and move. Assignments will include reading poems, becoming an expert about a single poet, attending public poetry readings, creating poems, and writing short weekly assignments about poems. You will be expected to be an active member in classroom discussion and activities. Pre 1800 course.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.113. Expository Writing. 3 Credits.
“Expos” is designed to introduce more confident student writers to the elements of academic argument. Students learn to apply “The Fundamental Structure of Academic Argument” in academic essays of their own. Classes are capped at 15 students and organized around three major essay assignments. Each course guides students’ practice through pre-writing, drafting, and revising, and includes discussions, workshops, and tutorials with the instructor. In addition to its central focus on the elements of academic argument, each “Expos” course teaches students to document sources correctly and provides its own topic or theme to engage students’ writing and thinking. Please see the following list of individual course descriptions to decide which sections of “Expos” will most interest you. “Expos” courses are available to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, and to seniors by special permission.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.114. Expository Writing. 3 Credits.
“Expos” is designed to introduce more confident student writers to the elements of academic argument. Students learn to apply the paradigm of academic argument in academic essays of their own. Classes are capped at 15 students and organized around four major writing assignments. Each course guides students’ practice through pre-writing, drafting, and revising, and includes discussions, workshops, and tutorials with the instructor. In addition to its central focus on the elements of academic argument, each “Expos” course teaches students to document sources correctly and provides its own topic or theme to engage students’ writing and thinking. Please see the Expository Writing Program’s website for individual course descriptions to decide which sections of “Expos” will most interest you. “Expos” courses are available to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, and to seniors by special permission from the English Department.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.120. Realism Unsettle: The Colonial and Postcolonial Novel at Sea. 3 Credits.
A haloed claim about the realist novel is that it tells us stories that help make sense of the world—but is it possible to represent the complexity of social life under global capitalism? How do novels engage with the problem of knowledge posed by empire and colonization? We will look at writers from within the imperial metropolis as they struggle to imagine the totality of the geopolitical world, and also at writers from formerly colonized regions who “write back” to the imperial center, bending novelistic conventions along the way. The course starts by asking how new conventions and quirky techniques of novel-writing emerge when novelists try leaving the certainty of their national and regional boundaries to enter the confusion of uncharted territories. It then turns to postcolonial novels, to consider how these write against, or claim power through, the notion that their regions are chaotic and indecipherable. Primary texts: Moby Dick, Lord Jim, A Passage to India, Sea of Poppies, The White Tiger.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.124. Politics, History and Autobiography. 3 Credits.
Students will write a mini-autobiography in the form of seven 3000 word essays, work shopped in class. Readings include A Small Place by Jamaica Kincaid and Brothers and Keepers by John Edgar Wideman.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.126. Feminist Fiction: Fundamentals. 3 Credits.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.129. Writing Africa Now. 3 Credits.
This course surveys post-2000 literary and cultural production from sub-Saharan Africa. Topics will include debates over genre and fiction’s relevance to African experience, legacies of canonical writing about independence, urban Africa as violent or “tragick” landscape, and problems of scale and geographical context. Readings by authors such as Adichie, Wainaina, Duiker, and Vladislavic, and students will be introduced to the main print and online arteries of African intellectual discussion. This class is for non-majors and does not count towards the English major or minor.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.131. Race and Pop-Culture in America. 4 Credits.
How does American pop-culture deal with race? Through primary sources like Fresh Off the Boat and Jane the Virgin, comic books like Ms. Marvel, and books like The Hate U Give and Crazy Rich Asians, and their filmic adaptations, we examine and question how race is represented and used in recent popular media. Short secondary sources supplement our thinking and provide background to vital pieces of our culture often overlooked under the label of entertainment.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.135. American Nightmares: Burroughs, Highsmith, Dick. 3 Credits.
These three authors share a common starting point: Patricia Highsmith, William S. Burroughs and Philip K. Dick all began their careers writing mass market genre fiction in pre-Stonewall, pre-civil rights, Cold War 1950s America. Absorbing the stylistic codes of their respective marketplaces of suspense writing and lesbian romance, “drug” confessional, and science fiction, each writer’s conformist apprenticeship in pulp resurfaces in increasingly nightmare forms in the violent and paranoid scenarios that dominate their mature work. Reading broadly in each author’s short fiction, novels, and prose, we will sequentially examine Burroughs’ “cut-up” techniques and “routines”, Highsmith’s free indirect discourse gone wrong, and Dick’s disorienting temporal experiments as inflamed allergic reactions to generic codes. We will also examine the cinematic afterlives of these authors by looking at key scenes from three adaptations of their work: Alfred Hitchcock’s Strangers on a Train (1951), David Cronenberg’s Naked Lunch (1991), and Richard Linklater’s A Scanner Darkly (2006).
Area: Humanities

AS.060.137. Doctors Without Borders: Literature, Medicine, and the Human Condition. 3 Credits.
Doctors play a significant role in shaping literary history as both writers and fictional subjects. From Chekhov to Sherlock Holmes, W. Somerset Maugham to Middlemarch, medical practice is imagined to bestow a privileged understanding of humanity in confrontation with questions of life and death. This course explores how writing about medicine connects long-established themes of mortality, authority, and ways of knowing to timely questions of global migration, cultural contact, and social justice. We will read literary writing by physicians as well as writing that depicts their work in detail, by authors including Nawal El Saadawi, Atul Gawande, Abraham Verghese, Damon Galgut, and Taiye Selasi.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.139. Expository Writing: The Narrative Essay. 3 Credits.
Telling stories is one of the first and most important ways that human beings try to make sense of the world and their experience of it. The narrative art informs fiction and nonfiction alike, is central to the writing of history, anthropology, crime reports and laboratory reports, sports stories and political documentaries. What happened? The answer may be imagined or factual, but it will almost certainly be narrative. This course focuses on the narrative essay, a nonfiction prose form that answers the question of “what happened” in a variety of contexts and aims to make sense not only of what happened but how and why. We will begin by summarizing narrative essays, will move to analyzing them, and in the second half of the course you will write two narrative essays of your own, the first based on a choice of topics and sources, the second of your own design. Authors may include James Baldwin, Annie Dillard, Chang Rae Lee, Danielle Ofr, George Orwell, Richard Rodriguez, Richard Selzer, and Abraham Verghese. You will learn the power of narrative to inform and persuade as you test that power in your own writing.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.141. Nineteenth Century Narrative and Early Film. 3 Credits.
This course will situate the birth of the movies within the context of 19th century fiction and visual technology. Filmmakers are likely to include Georges Méliès, Sergei Eisenstein, D. W. Griffiths, Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, King Vidor, and Rouben Mamoulian; novelists are likely to include Charles Dickens (Christmas Carol or Oliver Twist), Robert Louis Stevenson (Jekyll and Hyde), and perhaps Virginia Woolf (Mrs. Dalloway).
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.142. Indigenous Science Fiction: (Re)making Worlds. 3 Credits.
This discussion-based seminar will survey science fiction written by indigenous authors in what are now the United States, Canada, and Australia. We will investigate by what means and to what ends this particular genre has been taken up by indigenous peoples both to reflect on their settler-colonial pasts and presents and to imagine decolonial futures. Texts may include: Leslie Marmon Silko, Almanac of the Dead; William Sanders, "The Undiscovered"; Daniel Heath Justice, The Way of Thorn and Thunder; Blake Hausman, Riding the Trail of Tears; Wabgeshiq Rice, Moon of the Crusted Snow; Claire Coleman, Terra Nullius; Tanya Tagaq, Split Tooth. Fulfills the Global and Minority Literatures requirement.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.146. Detective Fiction. 3 Credits.
This course will look at the history of English-language detective fiction through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We will pay special attention to the way clues and suspense operate, the role of the reader in figuring out the mystery, and the complicated relationship of the detective with official authority. Authors will likely include some selection of Wilkie Collins, Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, Dashiell Hammet, and Raymond Chandler. This class is for non-majors.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.151. Doubles, Demons, and Dummies: The Literature of the Fantastic. 3 Credits.
Talking reflections. Dolls with knives. Dancing automatons. They are all part of the strange and dangerous world of the fantastic. This course examines the literature of the fantastic, or what we can refer to as creepy double, demon, and dummy stories. We’ll look at everything from Poe to American Psycho in an attempt to figure out what just happened, why, and how it relates to literary meaning.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.155. Expository Writing: Introduction to the Research Paper - Controversies in Adolescence. 3 Credits.
"Introduction to the Research Paper" is designed to introduce more experienced student writers to the fundamental skills of the research process. These include asking research questions, evaluating the usefulness of sources to answer them, synthesizing sources, reading sources critically, and developing arguments that deliver an original thesis. Students will work with a research librarian at the Eisenhower Library, with whom they will learn to navigate traditional databases as well as new media sources. The Research Paper is topic-based and divided into three linked units of instruction. The course culminates with a paper of 10-12 pages that draws upon the cumulative skills of the semester. Each course is capped at ten students and available only to those who have taken "Expository Writing" (060.113/114)
Prerequisite(s): AS.060.113 OR AS.060.114
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.157. Literature and Anti-slavery in the Caribbean and Beyond. 3 Credits.
This course provides an introduction to the texts and rhetoric of the movement that abolished slavery in the Caribbean. Among other topics, we examine: how the formerly enslaved represented their experiences of slavery; how abolitionism emerged across the West Indies, Cuba, and Haiti; and the techniques artists used to imagine radical, post-slavery worlds. Authors include: Olaudah Equiano, Mary Prince, Esteban Montejo, Frederick Douglass, Herman Melville, and Aimé Césaire (all texts will be available in English).
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.161. Shakespeare's Secret Histories. 3 Credits.
Shakespeare is often presented as either a writer of unique and timeless genius, or a purveyor of Eurocentric, racist, and colonialist ideologies. "Shakespeare's Secret Histories" challenges both these paradigms by showing how four works by Shakespeare are bound up in their past and futures to the literatures and cultures of non-European peoples.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.163. William Faulkner, Race, and Southern Fiction. 3 Credits.
This course will introduce students to debates in American literary studies around questions of race, politics, and the history of the American South. The course will center around a reading of William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom! alongside literary history, critical theory, and other pieces of fiction from the American South. We will use these texts to explore the transformations of racial discourses in 19th and 20th century America, with close attention to how they influence the present.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.164. Cyberpunk: High-Tech, Low Life. 3 Credits.
This course will examine the science fiction movement of cyberpunk as an aesthetic, narrative, and political reaction to late neoliberalism. We will read and discuss literature, film, and interactive media from this genre to develop an understanding of how cyberpunk texts register, refract, and attempt to reconcile antagonisms central to contemporary life.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.165. Science Fiction and Climate Change. 3 Credits.
This course will examine representations of, and confrontations with, climate change in science fiction. Special focus will be given to indigenous futurisms as uniquely valuable perspectives on the climate crisis. We will examine these narratives alongside climate change discourse, literary theory, and literary criticism.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.166. Crafting Race in 19th Century British Culture. 3 Credits.
Race is a social construct – but how does society actually create that construct? “Crafting Race in 19th-Century British Culture” explores how the idea of race was developed, deployed, and reinforced through nineteenth-century British cultural objects. Students investigate how media like literature and art produce and replicate arguments about race that justified or fought against oppression. Alongside literary texts, students will also work with advertisements, paintings, and theatrical practice. We take an intersectional approach, thinking not only about race, but also the connections between gender, class, sexuality, and disability. What are the roots of problems we think of as exclusively modern, like whitewashing in media? How has racial thinking been passed down through time and across oceans? Ultimately, our investigation aims to provide insight to modern issues of race through a better understanding of social history.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.167. A Room of One's Own: Modernism and Privacy. 3 Credits.
Modernism is often understood as having discovered new ways of rendering private, psychological life. Writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, for instance, wrote prose that gave its readers the feeling of being inside someone's head. But these forays into new psychological interiors were composed within particular architectural arrangements, and described particular kinds of rooms. In this course, we will consider how access to or a lack of privacy – in Woolf's phrase, “a room of one's own” – shapes modernist literature. As the semester continues, we will see the resonances of “privacy” expand beyond its physical meaning to include emotional, identitarian, and cultural privacies. Novelists include Woolf, CLR James, Nella Larsen, and Willa Cather; poets include Gertrude Stein, T.S. Eliot, and Wallace Stevens.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.168. Visions of the Home: Communes and Collective Living in American Culture. 3 Credits.
In this course, we will examine stories of intentional and communal living, attending to the ways in which narratives of home life have been shaped by larger social and historical structures. We will read autobiographical narratives, collectively written guides to structure and etiquette, satirical novels, and science fiction in order to query what the possibilities and limits of the home are envisioned to be. We will consider, among other issues: gendered labor and queer kinship; the shifting economics of housing, real estate, and rent; the formation of neighbourhoods and local identities; questions of movement, immigration, citizenship, and race; the dynamics of interpersonal conflict in intimate spaces; and how questions of familial belonging and kinship affect one's sense of home.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.182. Introduction to Research Methods. 3 Credits.
What counts as "research" in English literary studies? Where do you start? How is English studies research different from other fields including composition/rhetoric, history, or creative writing? This course is designed to help students learn to answer these questions, by familiarizing you will the basics of English studies research. We start by learning about the major methods and strategies available to ask generative research questions. Then, we dive into the resources available (and the skills that best access these resources) to see what answers are possible when conducting an inquiry for a literary studies project.
Assignments will focus on identifying major starting places and helping you develop your writing and critical thinking.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.201. The Nineteenth Century British Novel. 3 Credits.
Reading major novelists from the nineteenth century including Austen, C. Brontë, Dickens, Eliot, Hardy, and Conrad. We will pay attention to formal conventions, and relation to social and historical context.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.205. Feminist Fiction: Violence, Sex and Gender. 3 Credits.
This course will start with passages from Lysistrata and the Book of Judges, and have as a running concern the overlapping structures of violence, race and gender. Novels will include the following pairs: Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea, The Bluest Eye and Bastard Out of Carolina, The Handmaid's Tale and Octavia Butler's novella Bloodchild.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.207. William Shakespeare. 3 Credits.
Who was William Shakespeare, and what can his poems, histories, comedies and tragedies tell us about our overlap with, and divergences from, the early modern world?
Area: Humanities

AS.060.208. English Literature from Beowulf to Milton. 3 Credits.
British Literature I is a survey of English writing on the isle of Britain from the seventh to the seventeenth centuries. It traces the formal experimentation in poetry and prose, and in narrative, lyric, and drama, through which that writing eventually became pre-eminent in Britain. It will also attend to the social and cultural circumstances—in the court, in church, and in the evolving public and private spheres—that shaped the many genres that emerged in this rich 1000 years and developed a definition of 'literature' itself. Author's read include Chaucer, Langland, Kempe, Spenser, Shakespeare, Lanyer, Donne Herbert, Marvel, and Milton. Through lectures, class discussion, written responses, and longer essay assignments, students will master the fundamentals of English literary history as well as the techniques of critical reading and writing.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.209. The Literary History of the Devil to 1800. 3 Credits.
This course reads major works in European literature before 1800 (give or take) depicting the devil. It examines the history of the various social, cultural and political guises under which the devil appears, and the function that representing radical evil performs, in literature and society. Among our readings will be Dante's Inferno; Milton's Paradise Lost; Goethe's Faust, Part One, and many other major Satanic works.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.210. British Literature II. 3 Credits.
This course provides a framework for grasping the dazzling variety and explosive innovation of literature in English during the last quarter-millennium. Attending both to textual details and to historical contexts, we will see how Wordsworth, Austen, Keats, Tennyson, Dickens, Wilde, Woolf, Rushdie, and other writers extend and undo tradition, illuminate their times and places as well as our own, and conspire to bring to us the intense experience distinctive to great literary art.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.211. How Not to be Afraid of Poetry. 3 Credits.
What is poetry? And why don't we like it? This course will explore what makes poetry turn ordinary language into something extraordinary. Opening up a range of poetry in English, the course will involve reading poetry aloud, thinking about poetry and its forms, and gaining experience in understanding poetry. Assignments will include attending to details small and large in poems, becoming an expert about a single poet, debating aesthetic issues, and composing short analytical papers about poems. There are two required written assignments, a midterm and a final examination.
Area: Humanities


AS.060.216. Zombies. 3 Credits.
This lecture survey will attempt to answer why the zombie has become such a fixture in contemporary literature and cinema. We will track this figure across its many incarnations—from its late-eighteenth-century appearance in ethnographic fictions growing out of the modern cultures of racialized slavery in the Americas right up to twenty-first-century Hollywood blockbusters in which the origins of the figure in the cultures of racialized slavery are perhaps not overt yet continue to manifest. What are the implications of the zombie's arc from a particular human being targeted for domination by a sorcerer to a living-dead horde created by radiation or epidemic? "Texts" may include: Mary Shelley, Frankenstein; Edgar Allan Poe, "The Man Who Was Used Up"; H.P. Lovecraft, "Herbert West—Re-Animator"; Zora Neale Hurston, Tell My Horse; Victor Halperin, dir., White Zombie; George Romero, dir., Dead series; Edgar Wright, dir., Shaun of the Dead; Alejandro Brugués, dir., Juan de los Muertos; Colm McCarthy, dir., The Girl with All the Gifts; Colson Whitehead, Zone One; Jordan Peele, dir., Get Out. Fulfills the Global and Minority Literatures requirement.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.217. Time Travel. 3 Credits.
Why is time travel such a consistent and perplexing theme in literature and film over the last 150 years? Why is modernity so concerned with peering backwards or forwards? This course will examine the history of time-travel fiction, from its beginning in utopian fiction through its box-office dominance in the 1980s, and into today.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.219. American Literature to 1865. 3 Credits.
A survey course of American literature from contact to the Civil War.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.221. The Modernist Novel: Consciousness and Crisis. 3 Credits.
A course on key novels written in Britain or its former colonies between 1900 and 1960. Major attention to the meanings of modernism across the arts as well as innovations in prose fiction.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.222. American Literature, 1865 to today. 3 Credits.
This course is a survey of major developments in American poetry and narrative fiction from the end of the Civil War to the present day. Authors to be covered may include Mark Twain, Willa Cather, Henry James, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Wallace Stevens, and John Ashbery.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.223. African American Literature from 1900 to Present. 3 Credits.
A survey of the major and minor texts written by African Americans during the twentieth century, beginning with Charles Chesnutt's The Marrow of Tradition and concluding with Toni Morrison's Beloved.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.224. Sir Philip Sidney. 3 Credits.
Courtier, theorist, diplomat, soldier, and martyr, Sir Philip Sidney exemplified but also changed the cultural ideals of his Elizabethan moment. Hoping to evaluate Sidney's extravagant claim that "the poet, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention doth grow, in effect, into another nature", this course reads Sir Philip Sidney's innovations across a range of genres: literary theory ("An Apology for Poetry"), poetry ("Astrophel and Stella"), scriptural translation ("The Sidney Psalms") and prose romance ("The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia"). The course concludes with an examination of his many afterlives as exemplary subject for biography, adaptation, homage and critical argument.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.225. Zombies. 3 Credits.
This lecture survey will attempt to answer why the zombie has become such a fixture in contemporary literature and cinema. We will track this figure across its many incarnations—from its late-eighteenth-century appearance in ethnographic fictions growing out of the modern cultures of racialized slavery in the Americas right up to twenty-first-century Hollywood blockbusters in which the origins of the figure in the cultures of racialized slavery are perhaps not overt yet continue to manifest. What are the implications of the zombie's arc from a particular human being targeted for domination by a sorcerer to a living-dead horde created by radiation or epidemic? "Texts" may include: Mary Shelley, Frankenstein; Edgar Allan Poe, "The Man Who Was Used Up"; H.P. Lovecraft, "Herbert West—Re-Animator"; Zora Neale Hurston, Tell My Horse; Victor Halperin, dir., White Zombie; George Romero, dir., Dead series; Edgar Wright, dir., Shaun of the Dead; Alejandro Brugués, dir., Juan de los Muertos; Colm McCarthy, dir., The Girl with All the Gifts; Colson Whitehead, Zone One; Jordan Peele, dir., Get Out. Fulfills the Global and Minority Literatures requirement.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.226. Nineteenth Century British Novel. 3 Credits.
Reading major novelists from the nineteenth century including Austen, C. Brontë, Dickens, Eliot, Hardy, and Conrad. We will pay attention to formal conventions, and relation to social and historical context.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.231. Time Travel. 3 Credits.
This course will trace the history of English-language detective fiction through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Why does the figure of the detective appear when it does? How does it change over time, and what can we learn from that? We will pay special attention to the ways in which clues and suspense operate, the role of the reader in figuring out the mystery, and the complicated relationship of the detective with official authority. Authors will likely include some selection of Wilkie Collins, Edgar Allen Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, Dashiell Hammet, and Raymond Chandler.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.232. Detective Fiction. 3 Credits.
This lecture will trace the the history of English-language detective fiction through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Why does the figure of the detective appear when it does? How does it change over time, and what can we learn from that? We will pay special attention to the way in which clues and suspense operate, the role of the reader in figuring out the mystery, and the complicated relationship of the detective with official authority. Authors will likely include some selection of Wilkie Collins, Edgar Allen Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, Dashiell Hammet, and Raymond Chandler.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.265. Nineteenth Century British Novel. 3 Credits.
Reading major novelists from the nineteenth century including Austen, C. Brontë, Dickens, Eliot, Hardy, and Conrad. We will pay attention to formal conventions, and relation to social and historical context.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.301. Literary Theory. 3 Credits.
This course serves as an introduction to a wide range of critical approaches to literature through various canonical theoretical studies of the Book of Genesis.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.304. Large Novels. 3 Credits.
This course will look at novels that are not only large in size, but which also think about the meaning and methods of trying to capture huge segments of the world into a piece of art. How much can be fit into a novel? What is gained and what is lost? How large is too large? We will read Charles Dickens's Bleak House, Lev Tolstoy's War and Peace, and Herman Melville's Moby Dick.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.305. Sir Philip Sidney. 3 Credits.
Courtier, theorist, diplomat, soldier, and martyr, Sir Philip Sidney exemplified but also changed the cultural ideals of his Elizabethan moment. Hoping to evaluate Sidney's extravagant claim that "the poet, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention doth grow, in effect, into another nature", this course reads Sir Philip Sidney's innovations across a range of genres: literary theory ("An Apology for Poetry"), poetry ("Astrophel and Stella"), scriptural translation ("The Sidney Psalms") and prose romance ("The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia"). The course concludes with an examination of his many afterlives as exemplary subject for biography, adaptation, homage and critical argument.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.306. The Historical Novel. 3 Credits.
We're in the middle of dramatic social, technological and political change: how are we to understand it? This course will address this question by studying the historical novel. We're likely to start by reading Scott's Waverley and end with contemporary fiction. Throughout our focus will not be on particular historical facts or events but on the idea of history itself, the role of institutions and individuals within it, and the powers and limits of literary narrative.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.307. Training Writing Consln. 1 Credit.
A one credit course for those undergrads who have been nominated as Writing Center tutors. Permission required.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
**AS.060.308. The Essay Form and Creative Non-Fiction. 3 Credits.**

We’ll focus on the essay form, with special attention to recent creative non-fiction that responds to art and literature itself. Theoretical, stylistic, and formal issues will all be considered.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.060.309. Slavery in Renaissance Literature. 3 Credits.**

Against the backdrop of the rise of the European slave trade, how were slaves represented in early modern English literature? How was the condition of enslavement inflected by emergent nationalism, colonialism and theological constructions of difference? This course puts Renaissance literature into conversation with comparative histories of slavery and critical race theory. Authors include Aristotle, Terence, Epictetus, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, John Milton, Aphra Behn, Orlando Patterson, Kim Hall, Stephen Greenblatt, Mary Nyquist, Moses Finley and others.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.060.310. A Century of Queer Literature. 3 Credits.**

This course is designed to offer a broad, non-exhaustive overview of queer literature written in the past hundred years. Although not every text on the syllabus was published in the U.S., the relation of these works to U.S. LGBTQ culture and politics will be our main interest. Individual weeks are designed to focus on particular facets of queer experience—how place (urban or rural), class stature (wealthy or working class), and race inform what is possible for queer individuals, relationships, and larger communities. Students will be encouraged to pursue their own larger critical questions around queer literary canon formation, but discussions will return to the question of how queer life and literature changes in the transition from the margins to the mainstream. What possibilities and what constrictions emerge as queerness seems to become more legible to larger numbers of people? Other routes of inquiry will address the varying ways these works address the relation between gender and sexuality, and whether there is such a thing as a cohesive queer narrative style or form. While our reading list primarily is composed of shorter works of fiction (usually <200 pages) by lesbian, gay, queer, and trans writers, the syllabus also includes memoir, drama, and poetry.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.060.311. Literature in the Age of Mass Incarceration. 3 Credits.**

The United States in 2018 held more than two million people behind bars, and each year it imprisons more people per capita than any other nation in the world. Understood in terms of “mass incarceration,” a “new Jim Crow,” or “carceral capitalism,” scholars and activists have come increasingly to characterize contemporary U.S. society in light of these facts. Despite this, there has been only sporadic attention within literary studies to the prison as a driving force in American literature, even as canonical works in world literature, from Antigone to Les Misérables to Native Son, feature prominent prison plots. This course in American literature aims to examine how writers, both within and beyond the walls of the prison, have responded to the shifting role of incarceration in the U.S. We will read examples of both “prison literature” and literature that thematizes the prison as an institution across the period of explosive growth in imprisoned populations in the U.S. We will ask what kinds of writing—what genres, moods, styles, and forms—emerge from experiences of incarceration and the literary history of its representation. And we will investigate how a focus on the history of the prison might reshape readings in American literature. Finally, we will consider the role of writing and reading in political struggles against racism, militarism, and heteropatriarchy in the U.S. By developing a critical account of the prison through the kaleidoscope of literature, we will look to develop tools to better understand a central feature of contemporary social life in the U.S. Authors covered may include: Chester Himes, Malcolm X, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Audre Lorde, Piper Kerman, Mohamedu Ould Slahi, and Colson Whitehead, among others.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.060.312. Bad Mothers: Nineteenth-Century Novels and Contemporary Theories of Maternity. 3 Credits.**

What makes a “bad” mother? Are bad mothers doomed to be bad, or are they produced by their circumstances? Why did so many nineteenth-century texts fixate on the different ways in which maternity could be flawed? This course pursues these questions in order to consider the psychology and politics of motherhood, an identity and a performance that for some has been synonymous with womanhood itself. Even as our primary texts naturalize and idealize motherhood, they encounter again and again maternity’s instability, its undesirability, its pain, its banality, and its failures. To dive into these questions, we will turn to twentieth- and twenty-first century theorists—including Sigmund Freud, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Jacqueline Rose, and bell hooks—for their insights about how individuals and societies think about mothers. Starting with maternal archetypes like the Grimms’ Evil Stepmother and the classical infanticide Medea, our primary texts will include works by Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf, Amy Tan, and at least one recent film/TV episode (TBD). Assignments include short reflections, one presentation, and one final research paper.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.060.313. Literature of the Settler Revolution. 3 Credits.**

The nineteenth century saw the creation of an “Angloworld” as a result of what one historian has called “the settler revolution.” In perhaps the largest mass migration in human history, millions of English-speakers (and others) invaded Indigenous worlds in what have consequently come to be known as the United States, Canada, and Australia. This seminar offers an introduction to nineteenth-century Indigenous and settler Anglophone writing in the US, Canada, and Australia with a view to understanding the role of literature in inciting, interrogating, and resisting this settler revolution.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive
**AS.060.314. Social Media Fictions. 3 Credits.**

Writers around the world are now searching for ways to incorporate new modes of social interaction - e.g. Facebook, Twitter, text messaging, and Skype - into their print work. This course explores the various techniques they have adopted for this purpose, with an eye to critically evaluating their implications for narrative structure and its "reality effect." From Teju Cole's very public experiments with the Twitter novel to a Zimbabwean writer's attempt to capture plot turns through SMS, we will discuss the ways in which narrative is helped or hindered by the ubiquity of social media. Writers studied will include Tendai Hurhu, Zadie Smith, Jonathan Franzen, and Eben Venter.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

**AS.060.315. Literature of Incarceration. 3 Credits.**

We will take up a history of writing from and about various carceral sites (prison, detention camps, etc-- as well as Circe's island and Jonah's whale) to see what they can teach us about larger questions of the movement (or not) of certain populations, the ideology and economies of imprisonment, and campaigns for the abolition of prisons.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

**AS.060.316. Mapping the Global Metropolis. 3 Credits.**

Cities have long taken on a central role in literature, but much of our reading about urban space is confined to a few Western hubs. And while the city has traditionally been a space for fictional characters to develop into national subjects, much of the most innovative contemporary writing sees the city as a character of its own. This course will address the representational challenges of globalization through fiction and genre-bending memoir about contemporary metropolises that act as its microcosm: Johannesburg, Lagos, Delhi, London, and New York. We will read primary works by Ivan Vladislavic, Chris Abani, Aravind Adiga, Zadie Smith, and Teju Cole, as well as supplementary excerpts from books including Capital, by Rana Dasgupta, Mike Davis' Planet of Slums, Ato Quayson's Oxford Street, Accra, and Loren Kruger's Imagining the Edgy City. Finally, the course will include theoretical readings about globality and representation, such as Fredric Jameson's essay on "Cognitive Mapping" and Arjun Appadurai's seminal book Modernity at Large.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

**AS.060.317. Jane Austen Beyond England. 3 Credits.**

This will be an in-depth study of Austen's novels with an emphasis on how they have traveled outside of the country of her birth – e.g. to the United States, India, and East Asia--through the work of individuals and the flows of global capitalism. Students will gain perhaps a disorienting sense of what Austen means in different cultures at different historical moments, and conduct individual research to learn more. Knowledge of another language is not necessary but could prove useful. The course will include a field-trip to the Alberta Burke Austen collection at Goucher College.

Prerequisite(s): AS.060.107
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

**AS.060.318. Contemporary Literature and Climate Change. 3 Credits.**

In this course we will study the ways literary texts have imagined and addressed climate change, from the turn of the 20th century until today. We will primarily focus on novels, but I will provide non-fictional background reading on the history of how we’ve conceptualized “climate,” and we will also read some poetry. We’ll think a lot about genre: how does climate change look in realist fiction? Science fiction? Poetry? Is apocalypse the only framework in which to view it? How do race, gender, class and geopolitics alter writers’ views on climate? Texts will include H.G. Wells, The Time Machine; Kim Stanley Robinson, New York 2140; Octavia Butler, Parable of The Sower; Emily St. John Mandel, Station Eleven; Brenda Hillman, Seasonal Works with Letters on Fire; and Allison Cobb, After We All Died. We’ll also draw on the Yale University Press anthology of climate writing, The Future of Nature.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

**AS.060.319. Introduction to Disability Studies. 3 Credits.**

Disability has historically occupied a very narrow place in our cultural imaginations. In modern times, disability is almost always considered a medical issue. Yet, seemingly able-bodied, normal observers often exhibit a wide range of reactions when they encounter a disabled body. What would happen, therefore, if we shifted our focus away from the medical and toward these aesthetic and affective reactions? What if we focused on the pity, fear, and horror that encountering disability engenders in a so-called normal person? What if we considered normalcy itself as something that is socially constructed? In pursuit of answers to these questions, this course introduces students to the field of disability studies. Through an investigation of how disability is represented across a wide range of different media, the course will challenge students to rethink what they may think they know about culture, embodiment, and the politics of medical categories. Readings for this course may include Ceci Bell, Ken Kesey, Virginia Woolf, Jordan Scott, Carson McCullers, Nina Raine, Lennard J. Davis, Ellen Jean Samuels, Tobin Siebers, Anlor Davin, Robert McRuer, Mladen Dolar, Jasbir K. Puar, Melanie Yergeau, Marilyn Wann, and April Herndon.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

**AS.060.320. Icons of Feminism. 3 Credits.**

This course looks at four crucial figures who have haunted feminist thought and responses to feminism over the centuries. Sappho, known as the first female poet, remains an enigmatic icon of feminine desire and creativity; Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus and the heroine of Sophocles’s play Antigone, still inspires feminist analyses of women’s relationship to law, the state and civil society; and Joan of Arc, the militant maid of Orleans, troubles thinking about women and violence as well as women, religion and spirituality. The last figure is Mary Wollstonecraft, often cited as the first modern feminist. The course will examine literary works written about these iconic figures, as well as contemporary feminist writing about their influence and viability as models for the future of feminism.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.321. Literature and Anti-Slavery in the Caribbean and Beyond. 3 Credits.
This course provides an introduction to the texts and rhetoric of the movement to abolish slavery in the Caribbean. Our exploration of the literary and discursive patterns that bind the struggle against slavery in this diverse region (including the British West Indies, Cuba, and Haiti) will be guided by several questions. How did the formerly enslaved represent their experiences and level critiques against the slave system? What arguments did abolitionists - black and white, enslaved and free - make against slavery, and how did they imagine emancipation? What techniques do novelists, poets, and other artists use to represent the horrors of slavery and emancipatory struggles? To explore these and other problems, this class focuses on novels, poems, images, films, political treatises and first-person histories produced (mainly) by individuals who had either experienced Caribbean slavery or participated in the network of Transatlantic abolition. These texts to chart a complex journey, from the middle passage and eighteenth-century plantation life to international abolition, resistance to slavery, and the memories of racial slavery. The final section considers how the cultural legacy of Caribbean slavery and antislavery are taken up by artists from the Harlem Renaissance and various anti-colonial movements, and more recently by critics of mass incarceration in the US. Authors include, among others: Olaudah Equiano, Mary Prince, Esteban Montejo, Cirilo Villaverde, Frederick Douglass, Herman Melville, Langston Hughes, Aimé Césaire, and Ava DuVernay (all texts will be available in English).
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.322. Visions of the Home: Communes and Collective Living in American Literature. 3 Credits.
In this course, we will examine stories of intentional and communal living, attending to the ways in which narratives of home life have been shaped by larger social and historical structures. We will read autobiographical narratives, collectively written guides to structure and etiquette, satirical novels, and science fiction in order to query what the possibilities and limits of the home are envisioned to be. We will consider, among other issues: gendered labor and queer kinship; the shifting economics of housing, real estate, and rent; the formation of neighbourhoods and local identities; questions of movement, immigration, citizenship, and race; the dynamics of interpersonal conflict in intimate spaces; and how questions of familial belonging and kinship affect one's sense of home.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.323. Mind, Body, and Materialist Science in Victorian Literature. 3 Credits.
What was the relationship between mind and body in Victorian discourses of science? In 1875, William B. Carpenter gave a lecture entitled "Is Man an Automaton?" claiming that the human mind was reducible to material processes that were independent of the higher faculty of the will. Prior to Carpenter, however, nineteenth-century thinkers had already been exploring the possibility of the material foundation of human existence. Was the mind an extension of the body? How could scientific theories explain unknown, hidden domains of the mind? How far could evolutionary science go to challenge the foundation of human existence by locating psychological phenomena in biological life and in physical adaptations to the material environment? To explore these questions, this course examines the discourses of the mind and body in the Victorian era that were shaped by both literary and scientific texts. Starting with the pseudo-scientific discourse of mesmerism, we will examine the growing interest in observing mental life through outward bodily signs. We will then investigate discourses surrounding mental illness, automatic behavior, the unconscious workings of memory, evolutionary and hereditary ideas, and the relationship between human and nonhuman organisms. As we read texts written by Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, George Elliot, Wilkie Collins, Thomas Hardy, and Olive Schreiner, we will explore how such scientific discourses challenged traditional notions of dualism, identity, agency, and ethics.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.326. Shakespeare: The Novel. 3 Credits.
What if King Lear had been a mother? What if the we thought about Othello through the lens of the holocaust? What if the indigene Caliban was the hero, not the villain? What if Miranda chose Caliban over her European suitor? (The Tempest) Could a modern-day Kate be tricked into marriage and "tamed" (The Taming of the Shrew)? When contemporary novelists rewrite Shakespeare, they pose questions left hanging in the play and bring the plays into our own world. In this course, we will read Shakespeare plays (King Lear, The Tempest, The Taming of the Shrew, Merchant of Venice) along with contemporary novelists that rewrite -- and confront -- those plays (Jane Smiley, Caryl Phillips, J. M. Coetzee, Anne Tyler). Students will take up important literary questions about kinds of literature (plays vs novels), the canon, imitation, adaptation, and also address the themes of power, gender and sexuality, family dynamics, authority, colonization and the environment.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.327. "All Art is Propaganda". 3 Credits.
This course will explore black literature written as protest. We will examine how, in the face of threats to black life, Frances E.W. Harper, Richard Wright, Amiri Baraka, and others have realized versions of W.E.B. Du Bois's objective: "all art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists."
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.328. Malcolm and Martin: An Introduction to the Lives and Thought of Two Icons of the Black Freedom Struggle. 3 Credits.
Using their recorded speeches, written lectures and published writings and drawing from their biographies, this course will explore the important life work of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. We intend to upend traditional conversations about political radicalism and ethnic politics by analyzing these spokesmen associated most indelibly with black nationalism and racial integration, respectively.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.329. Fantasy and Failure: Inventing Worlds in the English Renaissance. 3 Credits.
What did the English Renaissance think humans were capable of? What worlds could they build, how far could they travel, and what limits could they transgress? In his Oration on the Dignity of Man, Pico della Mirandola asserted that, in contrast to vegetables, animals, or even angels, “man is granted to have what he chooses, to be what he wills to be.” While Renaissance humanism was enthusiastic about the seemingly limitless abilities of the “Renaissance man,” English literature of the period from roughly 1500-1700 is often more skeptical of this optimism. If humans could activate their divine potential and achieve godlike status, they were still always in danger of regressing into one of the baser states of animality or vegetation. This course examines literary explorations of the ways that individual ambition fails or the ideal society proves unattainable. The course is divided into three units: utopia and early science fiction, theater, and poetry. Topics for discussion may include political ambition, gender inequality, ecological dangers, and Renaissance magic; authors will include Thomas More, Margaret Cavendish, William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Amelia Lanyer, and John Donne, among others.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.330. Literature and the Environment: 1500-1700. 3 Credits.
This is an introduction to study of literature and the environment with a focus on early modern literature. During the period 1500-1700, the ground was laid for a modern understanding of the relationship between humans and their environment, and we will explore how literature shaped that relation. Topics and authors may include: Nature v. Nurture (Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare); Environmental genres (pastoral, georgic, creation stories); Nature v. Civilization (Montaigne, Bacon, Milton); Climate, Extreme Weather, the Little Ice Age (The Tempest, Dekker; Heywood’s Play of the weather); Land management, gardens, forestry, rivers (Marvell, Denham, Herrick, Jonson, Lanyer); Health and plague (Nashe, Defoe, Dekker); Country v. City (Philips). We will take up current discussions in ecocriticism, and students should be ready to engage with some critical reading and theory.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.331. The Literature of the Atlantic Slavery. 3 Credits.
This seminar will trace the historical development of the slavery debate in the Atlantic world through examination of key texts from a host of genres and locations—Quaker religious tracts, political documents like the Haitian Declaration of Independence, Cuban antislavery novels, slave narratives, and “classics” of American literature like Melville’s Benito Cereno. We will consider how the institution of Atlantic slavery was variously represented, justified, and criticized, discovering in the process the deep structures of modern slavery discourse.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.335. Black Satire. 3 Credits.
In this course, we will explore the use of satire in black literary and artistic traditions. Reading will likely include poems and novels by Paul Laurence Dunbar, George S. Schuyler, Claude McKay, William Melvin Kelly, Ishmael Reed, Fran Ross, Percival Everett, and others. In addition, we will venture into the genres of film (“Get Out”) and visual art (work by Glenn Ligon and Kara Walker, the latter currently on exhibit at the BMA). The politics of satire emerge in these texts particularly through the treatment of racial uplift and respectability ideologies, race relations, the legacies and histories of slavery, visions of utopia and dystopia, and the concept of the “post-racial.” With attention to the historical and cultural conditions under which these works were produced, we will address the ways in which satire can (or cannot) effect change in the world.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.337. James Joyce’s Ulysses. 3 Credits.
A careful semester-long reading of James Joyce’s masterpeice Ulysses, one of the greatest and most intimidating novels in world literature. 
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.338. Literature in the Age of Revolution, 1780-1830. 3 Credits.
This course explores literary, philosophical, and political writing from the years 1780 to 1830. It asks students to consider what constitutes a “revolution”; and how transformations in political, economic, and social organization across the Atlantic world (and beyond) are experienced, in their own time and in ours.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.339. A Room of One’s Own: Modernism and Privacy. 3 Credits.
Modernism is often understood as having discovered new ways of rendering private, psychological life. Writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, for instance, wrote prose that gave its readers the feeling of being inside someone’s head. But these forays into new psychological interiors were composed within particular architectural arrangements, and described particular kinds of rooms. In this course, we will consider how access to or a lack of privacy – in Woolf’s phrase, “a room of one’s own” – shapes modernist literature. As the semester continues, we will see the resonances of “privacy” expand beyond its physical meaning to include emotional, identitarian, and cultural privacies. Novelists include Woolf, CLR James, Nella Larsen, and Willa Cather; poets include Gertrude Stein, T.S. Eliot, and Wallace Stevens.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.341. Milton. 3 Credits.
This class will study Milton’s poetry and prose across the whole of his writing career, with special attention to Paradise Lost, the great epic poem retelling the story of the fall of humankind. We will consider Milton’s literary background, his contemporary political and social milieu, as well as critical debates that surrounding the poet, who was accused of being ‘of the devil’s party.’ Pre-1800 course.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.342. Contemporary Novel of Ideas. 3 Credits.
The novel of ideas is often traced to 18th century French or 19th century Russian writing, but it has come broadly to signify works of robust philosophical contemplation. The inherently slippery term seems to indicate a work in which “form” is subsidiary to “content,” or at least, in which narrative structures adapt to prioritize thought rather than style, image, or even character. But how, exactly, and about what, do novels “think”? In large part, the novel of ideas is now conflated with a rote and recognizable brand of social realism. This course asks what might qualify as a novel of ideas today, both in terms of the novel’s changing relation to geographical space (and thereby the formal spaces in which philosophy might lurk), and of the particular “ideas” it critiques or puts forth. We will read novelists including J.M. Coetzee, Marlene van Niekerk, Jonathan Franzen, Teju Cole, and Ronan Bennett within a longer literary-philosophical tradition, with reference to works such as Candide, War and Peace, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, and Kierkegaard’s Diary of a Seducer.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.343. Marxism and Literature. 3 Credits.
This course will provide a survey of some of the concepts in Marx’s work, especially those to be found in volume 1 of Capital, that might help us get a clearer sense of 21st-century politics and culture. We will move outward from reading Marx to reading recent and classic texts in the Marxist critical tradition. We will discuss explicitly economic ideas about commodities, surplus value, and concrete and abstract labor, as well as historical and political ideas like “primitive accumulation” and the “uneven and combined development” of nations. We will think about what reading Marx and the Marxist tradition can help us see about colonialism, gender, race, technology, and the environment, as well as how it can clarify the character of economic crises. Toward the end of the term we will turn to literary texts, not necessarily “Marxist” themselves, to help us understand important questions that Marxism cannot tackle by itself, like: who are people, anyway? What do they hope for, when they write? Is there a Marxist idea of beauty, and is it different than everybody else’s? Along with Marx, and anti-colonial, anti-racist and feminist writers in the Marxist tradition, we’ll read work by the novelist NK Jemisin, and the poet Stephanie Young.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.345. Sympathy and the Machine. 3 Credits.
Is the rise of the machine eroding human connection? How does literature imagine the place of human connection in a world marked by the rise of the machine? This course thinks about Industrial Age fiction, which swims in a heady mixture that’s part-dream and part-nightmare: Are machines bettering us, are they replacing us, will they miss us? We will look at how nineteenth century British writers tried to come to terms with an increasingly mechanized world: Literature of this time attempts new ways of articulating how machines were reshaping people’s lives, their sense of self, their ideas of love, personal growth, community, and social order. The three novels we will read for this course—Charles Dickens’s Hard Times, Elizabeth Gaskell’s Mary Barton, and George Eliot’s Mill on the Floss—are enmeshed in larger conversations and debates about the machine and the human. Readings of each novel will be paired with surrounding sociological, political, and critical discussions, in order to develop a richer understanding. A Dean’s Teaching Fellowship Course.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.348. Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury. 3 Credits.
An exploration of the achievements and investments of one of the most influential coteries in the history of Britain. In addition to delving into key fictions by Virginia Woolf, we will examine novels by Leonard Woolf and E. M. Forster, art criticism by Roger Fry and Clive Bell, biographical essays by Lytton Strachey, economic writings by John Maynard Keynes, and poetry by T. S. Eliot.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.350. Reason and Romance: Literature of the British Eighteenth Century. 3 Credits.
Any era can be characterized by its oppositions and polarities, but perhaps few were more defined by their contradictions than the eighteenth century in Britain. Reason and passion, honor and ribaldry, skepticism and fantasy, tradition and revolution: in capturing the tensions between these dyads, the wildly energetic literature of the period furnishes a singular lens through which to examine questions of consciousness, gender, celebrity, race, political theater, and even life during a pandemic that continue to shape our lives today. Authors studied may include Frances Burney, Ottobah Cugoano, Daniel Defoe, Olaudah Equiano, John Gay, Samuel Johnson, Charlotte Lennox, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and Mary Wollstonecraft.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.353. Margaret Atwood: Imagining Catastrophe. 3 Credits.
This is the moment for a course on the Canadian climate activist, poet, and novelist Margaret Atwood. Best known for her dystopian The Handmaid’s Tale (1985), Atwood’s monitory visions in poetry, short stories, non-fiction and novels attend to themes of malevolence, metamorphosis, memory, genetic mutation, totalitarianism, corporate control, feminism, and climate disaster, while rooted in traditions of folklore, myth, and ironic detachment. Among other works, including poetry and non-fiction, we will read novels The Handmaid’s Tale, The Testaments, The Blind Assassin, Oryx and Crake, The Year of the Flood, and MaddAddam, exploring Atwood’s “writing with intent.” Seminar discussion; midterm; class presentations; two short papers and one final project.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.354. Literature of the Sea. 3 Credits.
In this course, we will read 19th- and 20th-century American and British literature about the sea, using an approach informed by recent scholarship in what has been called Blue Humanities or Oceanic Studies.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.357. Crafting Race in 19th Century British Culture. 3 Credits.
Race is a social construct – but how does society actually create that construct? “Crafting Race in 19th Century British Culture” explores how the idea of race was developed, deployed, and reinforced through 19th century British cultural objects. Students investigate how media like literature and art produce and replicate arguments about race that justified or fought against oppression, from the poetry of the abolition movement to Jane Eyre’s relationship with racialized bodies to The Moonstone’s concerns with imperialism. Alongside literary texts, students will also work with advertisements, paintings, and theatrical practice. We take an intersectional approach, thinking not only about race, but also the connections between gender, class, sexuality, and disability. What are the roots of problems we think of as exclusively modern, like whitewashing in media? How has racial thinking been passed down through time and across oceans? Ultimately, our investigation aims to provide insight to modern issues of race through a better understanding of social history.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.360. Politics, History and Autobiography. 3 Credits.
This is an intensive seminar exploring the political and historical dimensions of personal experience. The class is designed to introduce students to writing critically about their own lives and to understanding the function of autobiographical writing in the lives of black Americans. We function partly as a writers’ workshop and partly as a critical review. The final goal of the seminar is a polished 15-20 page autobiographical essay and a 5-7 page critical review of an autobiography, such as would be found in the New York Review of Books.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.361. The Politics of Memoir. 3 Credits.
This course explores the interlocking political and historical dimensions of personal experience, an account of ourselves and our relations (“the quest for competitive advantage between groups, individuals, or societies”) that points us in the direction of what “is ‘common’ to the whole community.” What does it mean for people who are not the chief actors or theorists of political movements to construe the record of their experience as an act of political intervention, an aid in our total understanding of the structure of popular belief and behavior? Furthermore, what happens when attempt to historicize and critique these recorded experiences? The class asks its members to focus closely on an episode of autobiographical experience as both an historical fossil and tangible politicized moment, particularly the places where race, gender and economic power are visible. By producing a “critical discourse of everyday life—by turning residual, untheorized everyday experience into communicable experience... one can reframe ostensibly private and individual experiences in terms of a collective struggle.” To help our investigation we will read and analyze closely memoirs, many of them from the African American experience. We function partly as a writers’ workshop and partly as a critical review. The final goal of the seminar is a polished 20-25 page autobiographical essay.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.362. Medicine in Renaissance Literature. 3 Credits.
From quacks to plague, from humoralism to hypochondria, this course explores how early modern literature represents and occasionally satirizes medicine. Authors include Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne, Nashe, Browne and Moliere.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.363. Henry James. 3 Credits.
This seminar will focus on the novels and short fiction of one of the most brilliant crafters of prose and plot ever to write in English. Extensive attention will be devoted to the intricacies of James’s language; to his transatlantic situation; to his relationship to other authors; and to his place in the histories of literature, criticism, and theory. In a few instances, we will read his work in relation to writing by his brother, the pioneering philosopher and psychologist William James.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.367. The Fallen Woman in Victorian Literature and Culture. 3 Credits.
This course aims to trace how Victorian literature and culture created, negotiated, or even contested “the fallen woman,” the stereotype of a woman who transgressed the norms of appropriate sexual conduct. A fallen woman was a figure of illegitimacy: an adulteress, an unmarried mother, a seduced maiden, a prostitute, or even just a woman who didn’t meet the norms of gender and sexuality. Although such a phrase itself has disappeared today, we continue to see similar stereotypes of women in our own cultural imagination. By looking at a range of Victorian fiction, poems, and images, we will trace how representations of the fallen woman created, negotiated, or even contested stereotypes that were circulating around them. Students will read novels that address questions of gender and sexuality in Victorian discourse, including Elizabeth Gaskell’s Ruth, George Eliot’s The Mill on the Floss, and George Moore’s Esther Waters. Shorter texts will include Gaskell’s short stories, and poems by Christina Rossetti, Augusta Wester, and Thomas Hardy.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.368. Early/Modern/Cucks. 3 Credits.
A cuckold (“cuck” for short) is a man whose wife cheats on him. Jokes about cuckoldry and cuckoldry are everywhere in Renaissance literature (especially in Shakespeare), but by the 19th century, society had moved beyond such crude forms of humor. Or so we thought. In the last ten years, America has witnessed a shocking resurgence of cuck and cuckoldry, from online pornography to extremist right-wing discourse. In Early/Modern/Cucks we study the literature of this troubling obsession, reading a range of early modern authors from England, Italy, France, and Spain (all texts will be read in translation).
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.371. Race and Space. 3 Credits.
Though we often think of the human fascination with the cosmos and the stars as universal and timeless, it has a history, including a literary one. This becomes especially vivid when we pay attention to the history of race. In this course we will explore the crucial role the cosmos and outer space have played in shaping understandings of emancipatory struggle, past and present.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.372. "Things of Darkness": Shakespeare and the Legacy of Early Modern Racialization. 3 Credits.
How and why do Shakespeare's works channel racism and supremacist ideologies? How and why is it that they have also been used for inspiration and aspiration by people of color and thinkers on the political left? This course uses performance history from the Elizabethan moment to the present to explore how early modern topics such as anti-Semitism, bodily monstrosity, blood lineage, colonialism, and religious concession have allowed Shakespeare's plays to function as vehicles for thinking about race across time. Case studies include anti-Semitism in The Merchant of Venice at a time when it was illegal for Jews to be in England; the eighteenth-century blackface traditions of Othello and the careers of Edmund Kean and Ira Aldridge; Duke Ellington's exploration into Shakespeare in his 1957 jazz album Such Sweet Thunder; and Julie Taymor's 1994 Titus Andronicus, which was optioned and championed by Steve Bannon, former executive chairman of Breitbart News. Each unit of the course features an early modern play, readings about the performance tradition of that play, and an article or book chapter on that play.
Area: Humanities  Writing Intensive

AS.060.378. Advanced Introduction to African Literature. 3 Credits.
This course reaches beyond the much-taught postcolonial African realist canon to explore less-studied, more formally challenging works from across the continent, focusing on long-form prose and poetry. While texts will be clearly placed in an historical context, the emphasis in our readings will be on the inception, evolution, and intermingling of literary genres. How do seminal moments in African literary history complicate our received understandings of periodicity, mimesis, and the relation among selfhood, collectivity, and narration? What possibilities exist for theorizing African literature as a corpus, and what, conversely, are the descriptive and institutional limitations of "African Literature"? Primary texts will include "Ethiopia Unbound" (J.E. Casely Hayford); "Chaka" (Thomas Mofolo); "The Wrath of the Ancestors" (A.C. Jordan); "Song of Lawino" (Okot p’Bitek); and "The Promised Land" (Grace Ogot), as well as poetry by Shaaban bin Robert and H.I.E. Dhlomo, among others. We'll pay some attention, too, to critical trends and contextualization.
Area: Humanities  Writing Intensive

AS.060.380. Romantic Poetry: Imagining the People. 3 Credits.
Perhaps the most influential moment in modern letters, the Romantic period not only straddled the age of democratic revolutions, abolition, mass media and industrialization, it ushered in the modern concept of Literature and its social role. Among the most pressing issues of Romantic poetry were those related to representing, speaking for and speaking to an imaginary creature called The People, not wholly commensurate with that other imaginary creature, The Nation or its Citizens. So for instance, the Ballad revival of the period brought into print the ancient songs of "the folk," but the movement was riddled with fakes and forgeries. Rising literacy inspired working class poets, women and ethnic minorities to reshape the English language through poetry. Yet at the same moment, literary gentlemen began to produce their own version of a marginalized and dispossessed "people." All these efforts can be set against a State effort to introduce the first national census, to account for all subjects of the crown. A struggle over who "counts" in the realm of literature clashed with fights over political institutions and the new science of political economy.
Area: Humanities  Writing Intensive

AS.060.383. Contemporary Russian Novel in English. 3 Credits.
Russia is back in the headlines, and its resurgence seems unlikely to waver anytime soon. But while many students are familiar with nineteenth-century novelists like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, more recent Russian writing is often a mystery. This course approaches contemporary Russia through the careers of its two major living novelists, Vladimir Sorokin and Ludmila Ulitskaya, both of whose work spans the late Soviet period (1980s and 90s) through today. In addition to questions of genre, translation, and contemporary Russian literary culture's relation to Soviet models, we will consider how Sorokin and Ulitskaya have brokered Russia’s intellectual standing on a world stage. Works studied will include Ulitskaya’s Sonechka, The Funeral Party, and Daniel Stein, Interpreter, and Sorokin’s The Queue, Day of the Oprichnik, and The Blizzard.
Area: Humanities  Writing Intensive

AS.060.384. The Contemporary Novel. 3 Credits.
In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, writers of narrative fiction have been working furiously to keep up with the turbulence that global capitalism has visited on the world — war, political chaos, environmental catastrophe, massive forced migration and displacement — while trying to maintain ties to the techniques of narrative that gave the 19th century reality novel its successes and its prestige. In this course we will read a range of texts, mostly in translation, that stretch and deform those conventions in order to represent the lives and struggles of characters who are caught up in immense historical change. More and more often, novelists are choosing to depict characters drawn from what Marx would have called “surplus populations” — people for whom economic stability and personal safety are out of reach, partly because they are seen as not worth employing (or exploiting). Under these conditions, we will ask, is it only possible to tell tragic stories? What do happy endings look like? What do changes do character development and point of view have to undergo, for instance, to keep up with 21st-century history? Is realism still the best vehicle for telling these stories? Readings will include novels by Sally Rooney, Eduard Louis, Fernanda Melchor, Elena Ferrante, Marlon James, and Manoranjan Byapari, as well as secondary material by Sarah Chihaya, Merve Emre, Katherine Hill, Jill Richards, and the Endnotes collective.
Area: Humanities  Writing Intensive
AS.060.386. Reading the American Swamp. 3 Credits.
The Shape of Water, Creature from the Black Lagoon, Swamp Thing – what is it about the terrain of swamplands that inspires us to dream up hybrid creatures that live within them? This course takes a long view of the American fearful fascination with these amphibious land- and water-ecosystems as it has evolved to become a unique landscape of its own, roughly between 1850 and 1950. Our reading will reveal the black world’s simultaneous attraction to and rejection of the swampy landscapes. At each twist, texts imagining swamplands give us a unique glimpse into the aesthetic, social, and political anxieties and struggles of the moment. This course aims to track these historical shifts and developments of precisely how and why they occur, all the while asking what is it about swamplands that attracts our deepest worries and our eeriest curiosities.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.387. Black Empire. 3 Credits.
This course examines the transnational visions of Black Empire as articulated and framed by black thinkers, writers, and visual artists around the world, roughly between 1850 and 1950. We will consider how both individuals and groups (such as the United Negro Improvement Association) responded to imperialist maneuvers through discourses of Ethiopianism, Pan-Africanism, and anti-colonialism, and how these discourses interacted with one another in surprising ways, ways that reveal the black world’s simultaneous attraction to and rejection of the imperial model in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Our reading will include novels, poems, essays, and critical texts—at least two of which share a title with this course—by W. E. B. Du Bois, Pauline E. Hopkins, Sutton E. Griggs, J. A. Rogers, Langston Hughes, George S. Schuyler, Claude McKay, Brent Hayes Edwards, Paul Gilroy, Wilson Jeremiah Moses, Michelle Ann Stephens, and others.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.388. Old World/New World Women. 3 Credits.
The course considers the transatlantic writing of three women in the early modern period, Anne Bradstreet, Aphra Behn, and Phillis Wheatley. We will consider issues of identity, spirituality, religion, commerce, enforced labor, sexuality, race, and gender, along with literary tradition, formal analysis and poetics. We will read a good deal of these early women writers. Foremost in our mind will be the question of how perceptions of space and time are mediated through the global experiences of early modernity.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.389. Emily Dickinson. 3 Credits.
Dickinson’s poetry, more than most, has seemed to prompt creativity in others. In the past two decades, especially, poets, writers, critics, and filmmakers have found their own voices in response to hers. We will focus on the formal, aesthetic, historical and gendered aspects of her poetry as we try to understand, and benefit from, this power to elicit response. Exams are unlikely. Instead, expect close attention to your own writing, as we pay close attention to hers.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.390. Literature and Visual Modernity. 3 Credits.
This course will study the idea of modernity, a term that has been of continuing use in trying to understand ourselves and our society. We will focus on the major works of prose, poetry, and painting that attempted to come to terms with modernity in the nineteenth century. Texts are likely to include non-fiction prose by Mill, Baudelaire, Darwin, and Benjamin; fiction by Henry James, Conrad, and Vernon Lee; poetry by the Brownings, Tennyson, and Hardy; and paintings (some at the BMA) by D.G. Rossetti, Turner and Cezanne.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.391. Early American Literature. 3 Credits.
This course is an introduction to literatures drawn from across the Americas, although primarily the British North American colonies that would eventually become the United States, from first contact in 1492 up through the American wars of independence. Our readings are roughly organized according to chronology and genre. We will think about the adapted and emergent generic forms through which “the New World” was ongoingly invented, including genres like the Indian captivity narrative and the slave narrative that arguably make their debut in world literary history in the Americas during this time frame. We will conclude by attending to the rather late emergence of the novel in American literary history, reading four novels that appeared in the early US national period. The objective of the course is simply to contextualize and analyze a wide array of texts, each of which richly rewards the engaged reader, in order to trace the origins of American literatures. Course texts may include contact narratives (Columbus, Caminha, Smith, Hennepin); conquest narratives (Mather, Las Casas, Poma de Ayala); Indian captivity narratives (Cabeza de Vaca, Rowlandson, Staden); slave narratives (Gronniosaw, Jea, Cugoano); revolutionary polemics (Paine, Bolivar); and the earliest American novels: William Hill Brown, The Power of Sympathy; Hannah Webster Foster, The Coquette; Leonora Sansay, Secret History or, the Horrors of Santo Domingo; Charles Brockden Brown, Arthur Mervyn. Fulfills the pre-1800 requirement.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.392. Reading Ayn Rand. 3 Credits.
This course will investigate Ayn Rand, both as a novelist and as an enormously influential thinker. Special attention will be paid to the Soviet and American contexts that produced Rand’s work, as well as her place in a lineage of conservative thought, and the influence she has had on American politics. The approach of this course will be critical, but, I hope, fair. Readings will likely include Anthem and Atlas Shrugged, as well as selections from Rand’s philosophical works: Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal and The Virtue of Selfishness.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.393. Geoffrey Chaucer: Ribaldry, Romance and Radical Religion. 3 Credits.
Geoffrey Chaucer is sometimes called the 'father of English literature', but the deftness with which he captured the variety of the human condition, in poetic forms that were each, in themselves, startlingly new, was in so many ways an inheritance too rich for literary tradition to absorb. One reason to return to Chaucer's writing now is to see how funny (and even obscene) verse narrative can be, and how compelling a fourteenth-century love story remains. It is also to open a window onto a culture entirely different from our own but in which the power of language (the role of free speech), the freedom of the individual, the status of women, violent tensions between cultures and ethnicities and the role of religion in civil society were not only topical, but made the more so by Chaucer's powerful political vision and thought. Chaucer is timeless because he wrote so well that he always rewards reading (and the Middle English in which he wrote is very easy to master) but he is always worth reading because reading him is at once so eye-opening and such a pleasure, a way of stretching one's sense of the present by understanding (really understanding) a particular moment in the past. This class will pursue such understanding by paying particular attention to Chaucer's masterpieces, Troilus and Criseyde and The Canterbury Tales. But we will begin with a quick and easy workshop on Chaucer's language, and try to define, along the way, some of the more interesting aspects of his style. Our goal will be to learn to enjoy Chaucer's poetry by reading it carefully enough to take the full measure of what exactly it was about.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.394. Class Fictions. 3 Credits.
This seminar investigates one of the central concerns of nineteenth-century fiction: social and economic class. Why did raising oneself from humble beginnings, and falling into poverty, become such familiar stories? And why are they still so familiar today? We will look at how a number of writers approached the topic of class mobility, each with a unique blend of excitement and anxiety. Authors will likely include Jane Austen, Honoré de Balzac (in translation), Charles Dickens, and William Dean Howells. In order to understand our topic better, we will also look at a selection of theoretical work on the nature of class.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.397. Thomas Pynchon. 3 Credits.
Intensive reading of two major Pynchon novels, along with theories of modernity, postmodernity, etc.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.400. Billie Holiday's Baltimore 1870-1960: A Reverse Classroom Journey in the Archives. 3 Credits.
This course will use the tools of the historical archive to etch a social history of Baltimore during the long Billie Holiday (1915-1959) era from the Reconstruction through post-World War II. Holiday’s remarkable and unique art has earned her the title of the premier jazz singer of all-time, but unknown to most, her voice and experience were strongly shaped by her early life in Baltimore City, the city’s black habitation and migration, its musical culture, its black middle and lower class, its urban density, as well as its cabaret and underworld life. Our task is to examine the city as an unfolding, racializing process, and to glean the evidence from multiple local archival sources to reconstruct some of the rough margins of possibility for the lived experience of Holiday’s grandparents and parents, all born in Baltimore, as well as her own experience as truant, orphan, and sex assault victim in the 1920s. Two questions will occupy our interests intensely. How did the two black communities she lived in extensively evolve from the late 19th through the early 20th centuries? Second, what information can be unearthed about black musical culture—ragtime, marching bands, banjo and fiddle ditties, riverboat music—as it evolved in the post-World War I “jazz” age of sound recording and broadcasting? What was the artist’s relationship to her urban geography? How did it change over space and time? What dimension of shared fate did she have with the community of black Baltimore domestic workers, laborers, artisans, and small business people from the first half of the twentieth century? In what manner did Baltimore’s racial segregation and racism define her life and art? How was her consciousness as a vocal opponent to segregation shaped by her grooming in the city?
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.402. The Computer in Modern Literature. 3 Credits.
How have computers, and human interactions with computers, been represented in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature? How have attitudes toward computers changed over that time? Now most books are written on computers, and many are read on them as well: what traces of these forms of production and consumption can we find in literary texts?
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.405. Psychoanalysis and Literature. 3 Credits.
In this course we will read some foundational texts by Sigmund Freud, and pair them with a select group of literary works—Sophocles’ “Oedipus the King” and “Oedipus at Colonus”, William Shakespeare’s “Hamlet”, Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Purloined Letter”, Wilhelm Jensen’s “Grädva”—which have inspired psychoanalytic ideas and generations of psychoanalytic literary interpretation.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.406. Transfiguring the Renaissance. 3 Credits.
Tracing the poetics of bodily transformation then and now, this course puts early modern literature into dialogue with medical epistemologies of the sexed body and contemporary critical reflections upon transgender experience, embodiment and transition. Early modern texts might include Arthur Golding’s translation of Ovid’s “Metamorphosis”, John Lyly’s “Gallathea”, Francis Beaumont’s “Salmacis and Hermaphroditus”, Ben Jonson’s “Epicoene, or The Silent Woman”, Middleton & Dekker’s “The Roaring Girl” and John Milton’s “Paradise Lost.”
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.501. Independent Study. 3 Credits.
Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.
Writing Intensive

AS.060.502. Independent Study. 1 - 3 Credits.
Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.

AS.060.505. Internship - English. 1 Credit.
Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.

AS.060.506. Internship-English. 1 - 3 Credits.
Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.

AS.060.509. Senior Essay. 3 Credits.
The English Department offers qualified majors the option of writing a senior essay. This is to be a one-semester project undertaken in the fall of the senior year, resulting in an essay of 30-35 pages. The senior essay counts as a three-credit course which can be applied toward the requirements for the major. Each project will be assigned both an advisor and a second reader. In addition, students writing essays will meet as a group with the Director of Undergraduate Study once or twice in the course of the project. The senior essay option is open to all students with a cumulative GPA of 3.6 or higher in English Department courses at the end of the fall term of their junior year. Project descriptions (generally of one to two pages) and a preliminary bibliography should be submitted to a prospective advisor selected by the student from the core faculty. All proposals must be received at least two weeks prior to the beginning of registration period during the spring term of the junior year. Students should meet with the prospective advisor to discuss the project in general terms before submitting a formal proposal. The advisor will determine whether the proposed project is feasible and worthwhile. Individual faculty need not direct more than one approved senior essay per academic year. Acceptance of a proposal will therefore depend on faculty availability as well as on the strength of the proposal itself. When completed, the senior essay will be judged and graded by the advisor in consultation with the second reader. The senior essay will not be part of the Department's honors program, which will continue to be based solely on a cumulative GPA of 3.6 in English Department courses.
Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.
Writing Intensive

AS.060.602. Proseminar.
This course is intended to train students in skills required by the discipline, help prepare them for a range of futures, and integrate them into the university community.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.604. Philology.
An examination of the many ways (both as old and then 'New', but also as the subject of a key 'return') that 'philology' has been claimed as the master category of literary study. The nuts and bolts of older philological procedures as well as the broadest theoretical claims for the term will be attended to.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.605. The Decolonial Intellectual.
A recent resurgence of interest in decolonial theory raises important questions about the relationship between postcolonial literature and the institutions, as well as disciplinary frameworks, by which it’s advanced. From Ngugi wa Thiong’o, to the writers of South Africa’s Drum generation, to the contemporary Afropolitan theorist Achille Mbembe, U.S. universities have been host to many of decolonization’s notable intellectuals. This seminar takes a synthetic approach to understanding the forms and histories by which decolonization has been articulated: we’ll survey fiction, personal and political essays, and “theory” to make sense of the various tensions at decolonization’s core (e.g. territorialization vs. de-territorialization, internationalism vs. cosmopolitanism, or text vs. context). Writers studied will include Frantz Fanon, Lewis Nkosi, Ayi Kwei Armah, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Walter Mignolo, An Yountae, Kwame Nkrumah, Hamid Dabashi, Buchi Emecheta, and Sylvia Wynter, among others.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.607. Fiction and Doubt After 1888.
Examines the interrelation between fiction and doubt since the late nineteenth century. Authors may include Ward, Conrad, Joyce, Eliot, Stevens, Woolf, Baldwin, Flannery O’Connor, Ishmael Reed, Sefi Atta, R. O. Kwon.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.613. American Movement.
This seminar examines representations of people in motion in U.S. writing from 1900 to the present. Migration, international and intranational, will be central to our study, but we’ll also consider other forms of travel, transits of authorial and readerly attention, experiences of vagrancy and acceleration, and predicaments of stasis in primary texts as well as theoretical work around mobility. Authors and directors studied may include Simone de Beauvoir, Henry James, Gayl Jones, Jack Kerouac, Chang-Rae Lee, Claude McKay, Bernadette Mayer, Muriel Rukeyser, and Gertrude Stein.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

The field now known as “global Anglophone literature” has emerged from a complicated and rapidly advancing disciplinary lineage. A host of past and present recordings – including postcolonial, Commonwealth, Third World, global, transnational, world, and the Global South – provide a record of the wider profession’s anxieties in relation to non-Western literary traditions. This course prepares graduate students to be able to articulate some of the subtle differences in approach that this nexus of closely related terms may obscure, from the heyday of postcolonial theory in the 1980s and 90s to contemporary subfields like Indian Ocean studies. In addition to key critical texts by theorists including Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Franco Moretti, Peter Hallward, and Emily Apter, students will be introduced to some outstanding recent methodologies and critiques from the adjacent body of work on comparative literature.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.616. Milton.
A seminar covering the career of John Milton, including all his major poetry and much of his prose. There will be attention to the history of printing, publication and concepts of reading and writing, as well as to current issues and topics within early modern studies that bear on Milton (e.g. materialism, secularization, ‘surface’ reading, political theology, quantitative vs hermeneutic methods, actor-network theory). As such, the course will also be an introduction to various methods in early modern studies.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.617. Black Print Culture.
Students interested in black print culture will engage in intensive archival research, both collaborative and individual, using the Sheridan Library’s Rare Book and Manuscript collections. Texts include poems, printed lectures, pamphlets, novels, periodicals, ephemera, correspondence, etc., alongside relevant critical and theoretical reading.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

In Milton: Black and White we will consider Milton and the discourses of racialized categories (poetical, political, and embodied), specifically attending to his role in the historical developments of white identity; concepts of justice; the genre of epic; and universal notions of personhood through the liberal tradition. We will also consider how black writers have responded to Milton (including Phillis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, Malcolm X, the gospel tradition, Toni Morrison, Chris Ofili) through readings of Paradise Lost and selected prose, as well as readings in contemporary critical theory.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.619. Sentimental Reasons.
Recent work in cognitive approaches to literature have led critics to return to the sentimental novel of the eighteenth-century as a “laboratory,” in Daniel Goss’s words, for the investigation of human emotion. There is no easy “fit” between these literary narratives and the narratives of cognitive science, nor between them and the regnant moral philosophy of the age (built upon the mechanism of human sympathy or upon “nervous” association). There is rather a discomfort that reveals social inequities as well as alternative possibilities for both thinking and feeling. The sentimental mode took hold in the circuits of the Atlantic world. This course will study several sentimental narratives that traveled promiscuously through those circuits: Bernardin de St. Pierre’s Paul and Virginia, Sterne’s Sentimental Journey, Mackenzie’s Man of Feeling; Equiano’s Interesting Narrative; Williams’ Peru; and Brown’s The Power of Sympathy. Alongside these works we will read studies by critics working the seams between affect and cognition, philosophy and literature, rhetoric and science. The course will provide a broad history of the sentimental mode, stretching to reflections on the links between the sentimental and the melodramatic. It will simultaneously attend to the experience of reading for sentiment, to forms of feeling and what those feelings know.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.620. Thinking with Scale: Frameworks in Early Modernity.
Concepts include expansion, crowding, data collection, the miniscule, temporality, the planetary and the cosmic in the first age of European mercantile activity and colonial expansion. With readings from world-systems theory and theories of the anthropocene, our case studies will comprise pre-modern English literary texts, including Milton, Paradise Lost, Anne Bradstreet, The Four Monarchies, early modern science (Hooke, Newton), Defoe, The Storm, and early British and colonial American holdings in the Garrett Library. The class will be hands-on, working with material from Special Collections, and will include working towards a digital project (no digital project background necessary).
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.625. Theory of the Novel.
This course will look at the development of novel theory from the eighteenth century until the present. Authors will include Scott, Barbauld, Dallas, Lewes, Eliot, James, Shklovsky, Tomasevsky, Jakobson, Bakhtin, Lukács, Auerbach, Barthes, Jameson, Girard, Sedgwick, Moretti, Armstrong, Miller, Hale, Lynch, and Woloch. Novelists will likely include Madame de Lafayette, Austen, Goethe, and Wolfe.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.626. Reading for Race at the Movies and on TV, in the years 2015-16.
2015-16 was a radical, decisive two-year period for many things, including film by and about African-Americans. This course seeks to understand this phenomenon through current events, wider aesthetic and historical trends, and the body of critical work devoted to reading filmic representations of cultural and political ideologies. 2015-16 films and TV shows under consideration will include: Moonlight; Creed; Hidden Figures; Fences; Birth of a Nation; Straight Outta Compton; O.J: Made in America; Atlanta; Black-ish; This Is Us; Luke Cage; The People v. O.J Simpson.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.627. Poetry and Performance.
This course will be devoted to the histories and theories of 19th-, 20th-, and 21st-century poetry and performance, beginning with William Wordsworth’s and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s Lyrical Ballads. Upon hearing the poets read, William Hazlitt remarked that “[t]here is a chaunt in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment.” This early instance of reception history will provide the backdrop for our discussion throughout the semester. Besides Wordsworth and Coleridge, our reading list will include verse, theory, and criticism by Robert Browning, Walt Whitman, T.S. Eliot, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, William Carlos Williams, Charles Olson, Allen Ginsberg, Norman Pritchard, Amiri Baraka, Tracie Morris, Christian Bök, Lisa Gitelman, Frederick Kittler, Peter Middleton, John M. Picker, Susan Stewart, and others.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
Today human rights and capabilities are two intertwined concepts. In the early modern period, these were much debated and literature was a key site for the development of these imperfect, variable and contested discourses. Reading literary works from the European tradition, in particular in Europeans’ engagement with dissident groups both within and outside Europe, we will explore themes of embodiment, power, risk, vulnerability and the languages and practices of equivalence and domination in the variable discourses of humanitarianism, natural law, and rights in authors including Shakespeare, Grotius, Montaigne, Hobbes, Milton, Behn, Locke, Swift, Montagu and Defoe.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.629. The History of the Book.
The course will account for the major transformations in the media used for writing from the scroll to the web as well as the rich account of this history and its theorizations.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.631. Tyranny in Early Modern Literature.
In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul writes: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God: and the powers that be, are ordained of God.” In the wake of such a declaration, what constitutes tyranny? When is resistance to tyranny justified? What forms of recourse are compatible with the Christian obedience enjoined by Paul? How did early modern literature offer a means of leverage, redress and coping with the depredations of “the powers that be”? In search of provisional answers to these questions, this course tracks the representation and rhetorical evaluation of the tyrant figure at the intersection of political philosophy and literature. Political writings by Aristotle, Plato, Marsilius of Padua, Dante, Jean Bodin, James I, John Milton and Hanna Arendt are placed in dialogue with historical and theoretical writing by Greg Walker, Stanley Cavell, Mary Nyquist and Terri Snyder on tyranny, slavery, resistance theory and biopolitics. Literary texts, principally drama and prose romances, will include The Wakefield Master’s “Herod the Great”, Sir Philip Sidney’s “The New Arcadia”, Christopher Marlowe’s “Tamburlaine”, Robert Greene’s “Planetomachia”, William Shakespeare’s “Richard III” and “The Winter’s Tale”, Ben Jonson’s “Sejanus His Fall”, and Elizabeth Cary’s “The Tragedy of Mariam, Fair Queen of Jewry”.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.633. Biography and African American Subjects from the 19th and 20th Centuries.
This course will read through contemporary biographical treatments of prominent 19th and 20th century African American writers to explore the prominent ideological predispositions as well as the structure of archival sourcing in the creation of life-writing on black subjects. Students will make research trips to the Library of Congress, the University of Delaware, Morgan State University and other local archives for instruction in research methodology and the collection of primary source materials. Student final projects will use primary archival sources to intervene in debates about the interpretation of historical subjects and historical events.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

In recent years, the literature of the middle of the twentieth century has come into its own. Now recognized as a period of exceptional invention, not merely the weak successor to the great age of high modernism, the 1930s through the 1960s gave us texts that, among other things, offer windows onto the birth of the postwar order. This course will examine challenging, fascinating, sometimes infuriating writing about World War II, the rise of the welfare state, and the “colonization in reverse” that brought the Windrush writers from the Caribbean to England. Authors studied may include Elizabeth Bowen, Anthony Burgess, T.S. Eliot, H.D., Richard Hoggart, George Lamming, Philip Larkin, Marghanita Laski, Sam Selvon, Alan Sillitoe, John Wain, Virginia Woolf, and John Wyndham.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

This seminar offers an introduction to a key concept in contemporary critical theory and literary and cultural studies: settler colonialism, understood as a specific form of colonialism focused on the appropriation of land rather than the exploitation of labor and thereby involving the attempted elimination and replacement of indigenous polities and societies by an invading force. The course will have a dual focus: 1) tracing the theoretical distinction of settler colonialism from other forms of colonialism and tracking the critique implicit in this distinction of dominant forms of leftism that arguably presuppose a settler-colonial frame of reference; 2) tracking the history of what James Belich has called the “Anglo settler revolution” of the nineteenth century and engaging in a comparative analysis of the literatures produced in the course of that revolution in what are now Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere in the Pacific. We will especially attend to narrative fictions—often (self-) identified as “romances”—that chronicle settlement and register the temporal disruption of indigenous persistence and resistance. Secondary texts may include: Belich, Replenishing the Earth; Glen Coulthard, Red Skin, White Masks; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, The White Possessive; Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor”; Patrick Wolfe, Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology. Primary texts may include: Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Huntly; S. Alice Callahan, A Child of the Forest; Marcus Clarke, His Natural Life; Susanna Moodie, Roughing It in the Bush; Herman Melville, Typee; Sydney Owenson, The Wild Irish Girl; Simon Pokagon, Ogimawke Mitigwaki (Queen of the Woods); John Richardson, Wacousta or, The Prophecy; Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Hope Leslie; and the FX television series, Taboo.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.637. Counterfactual Literature.
This course will focus on the formal, affective, ethical, and conceptual issues associated with forking-path texts—poems, fictions and films that openly offer alternative paths to the experience of individuals.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.638. Whitman and the Whitmanian.
This course will take the occasion of the bicentennial of the birth of Walt Whitman as an occasion to think about the legacies of his poetry in American literary history, especially in contemporary poetry. We will read key texts of Whitman’s then move to more recent writing, paying attention to the key scholarship on Whitman from the last few decades, as well as to recent scholarship on poetry that is in dialog with the questions of democracy, capitalism, on the one hand, and form and address, on the other, that have shaped our reading of Whitman and of poetry in the Whitmanian mode.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

This seminar will provide an intensive introduction to antebellum nineteenth-century U.S. literature by way of tracking a critical formulation foundational to the field of American studies as whole: "the American Renaissance." Coined by F.O. Matthiessen in 1941, "the American Renaissance" initially referred to a canon of five white male writers (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman) alleged to have produced work of distinction in two interrelated senses—first, specifically "American" literature deserving of academic study. We will follow the fortunes of this critical formulation, tracing how some of the authors in Matthiessen’s canon have subsequently been reinterpreted and repositioned as well as how "the American Renaissance" canon has been expanded and its very conceptualization contested. Primary authors whose work may be examined include William Apess, William Wells Brown, Lydia Maria Child, Frederick Douglass, Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Hawthorne, Harriet Jacobs, Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and the anonymous author of Xicotencatl. Secondary works may include: Matthiessen, The American Renaissance (1941); Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance (1988); Michaels and Pease, The American Renaissance Reconsidered (1989); Crews, "Whose American Renaissance?" (1988); Colacurcio, "The American-Renaissance Renaissance" (1991); Avallone, "What American Renaissance?" (1997); Grossman, Reconstituting the American Renaissance (2003); Brickhouse, Transamerican Literary Relations (2004); Fluck, Romance with America (2009); Hager and Marrs, "Against 1865" (2013).
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

How much can you say about a novel? How much of a novel can a critic interpret? The large scale of the novel form seems to resist the interpretive techniques of literary criticism, which look closely at a small number of textual examples. But what if we tried to read every word of a novel, and see it in all its forms: genre, structure, history, politics, biography, and so on? This seminar will look closely at a small number of Victorian novels (probably Dickens’ *David Copperfield* and Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda*, subject to change). We will approach these novels through a variety of theoretical lenses. There will be a special emphasis placed on the relations between form, history, and politics. This seminar will also offer students a chance to apply theories of literature and the novel often considered in abstract.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.642. Reading Capital Now.
Since the 2008 financial crash, there’s been rising popular consciousness of capitalism’s crisis-bound character and, therefore, its vulnerability. But finance isn’t the only thing that capitalism has brought to a boiling point: for attentive readers of Marx, the mounting climate disaster, the COVID pandemic, and the struggle for Black Lives have only further highlighted the complex interconnections among our energy and food infrastructures, histories of racist and settler-colonial violence, the patriarchal organization of sexuality, and the maintenance of capitalist profitability no matter the social cost. The aim of this seminar is, first, to show how a thorough reading of the first volume of Marx’s Capital goes a long way toward helping us see all these histories and crises as part of a single, many-faceted dynamic, and second, to highlight 20th- and 21st-century Marxist work that takes Marx in new directions, from critiques of racial capitalism, colonialism, and the patriarchy of the wage, to studies of climate crisis and the global recomposition of the labor pool.
Along with Marx, we’ll read work by WEB DuBois, James Boggs, Silvia Federici, Thiti Bhattacharya, Jairus Banaji, Nikhil Singh, Andreas Malm, the Endnotes collective, James Parisot, and others.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

This course will read the major writings of William Wordsworth as experiments in tracking feeling between individual and multitude. It will take advantage of two currents in recent criticism to work through the problem of how one feels with and for large numbers. On the one hand, this requires taking up models of sympathy and feeling that depart from those established since the eighteenth century, where models of sympathy relied on a 1-1 relationship between human persons. These alternative models attend to “multitudes,” and thus a different scale of life, human and not (e.g. Spinoza, Virm, Hardt and Negri). On the other hand, reading Wordsworth in this light requires a reconsideration of the art of numbers – that is, poetry – alongside and sometimes in opposition to the science of numbers called political economy.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.644. Oceanic Studies & the Black Diaspora.
In this course, we take up Hester Blum’s blunt observation that “the sea is not a metaphor” in order to consider the visions and hopes black writers have associated with the sea, as well as the despair and trauma transatlantic slavery has left “in the wake;” to quote Christina Sharpe.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.060.645. What was Literary Character?
What role did literary character play along the passage from ancient theories of dramatic action to contemporary theories of subjectivity and personhood? What role, specifically, did Shakespearean personhood play in the theorization of literature's capacity to stage and represent a portable, exemplary "self"? How do group categories of race, gender and class qualify and inflect the ostensive individuation of character outcomes? As test cases, in this course we will consider an array of early modern literary persons from before and after Shakespeare as depicted in poetry, drama and prose: Heywood's Lucrece, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Shakespeare's Hamlet and Cleopatra, Middleton's Timon, Molieri's Alceste, Milton's Christ and Behn's Oroonoko. This course will range widely across theorists of literary character and the reader/character relationship, considering Aristotle, Theophrastus, Sir Thomas Overbury, Sigmund Freud, Aaron Kunin, Blakey Vermeule, Toril Moi, Rita Felski, Amanda Anderson, and Thomas Metzinger, among others.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.647. Capitalism for Humanists.
Recent global crises of capital accumulation have obliged both scholarly and journalistic accounts of capitalism to become more sophisticated and comprehensive. This course will be an introduction to some of those accounts. We will approach the problem of describing capital and its dynamics from several angles: conversations about combined and uneven development, about the racialization of enslaved and "surplus" populations; about the forms of social reproduction (often gendered) proximate to the wage; about technological change, robotification, and its implications for the production of capitalist value; about theories of the value-form itself. One aim of this course will be to think about how a better understanding of capital — its history and its mechanics — can make us better scholars of literature, so we will also devote ourselves to assessing the resources and the limits of earlier literary-critical accounts of literature’s relationship to capital accumulation.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

George Eliot’s novels have been the focus of some of the most deeply thought criticism of the Victorian period. In this seminar we’ll read a selection of those novels as they have invited the study of topics which may include the theory of the novel and of narrative; aesthetics and continental philosophy; representation and the nature of individuation; sympathy; the history of affect; formalism, politics, and ethics; the novel and emergent sciences. We’ll spend most of our time on Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda, along with her non-fiction prose and some of her translation work of Spinoza and Feuerbach. We’re likely to read criticism by Gallagher, Hertz, Woloch, Plotz, Anderson, and Duncan. Depending on student interest, we may also take up Eliot’s relation to earlier literary figures—Wordsworth being a likely candidate.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.649. The Essay Form & Academic Prose.
While we will spend some time with the history and theory of the essay, much of our time will be spent considering the contemporary essay and its form. Across the past decade, academics have increasingly published essays designed for non-specialists. We’ll study many of them, both as objects of critical attention and of practical value. Writing assignments will include the option to write essays.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.060.650. Character Studies.
What are literary characters? Can we imagine literature without them? And how do they relate to questions of form and society? Starting with Aristotle, and moving through 20th- and 21st-century critics such as Lukacs, Barthes, and Woloch. We will pay special attention to the historical relationship between theories of character and approaches to the novel.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.652. The Time and Space of Capital.
This course will look at the relationship between the logical and historical aspects of Marx’s analysis of capitalism, which special emphasis on key arguments in volumes 2 and 3 of Capitalism. We will ask questions about capital's use of time and space in the service of accumulation, and read more recent secondary material all term from anti-colonial, feminist, queer, Indigenous, and Black radical traditions, in order to develop a fresh picture of the complex interrelation or different types of oppression and exploitation across capitalist history. Some familiarity with the concepts and argument of Capital, volume 1 will be helpful, but are not required.
Area: Humanities

AS.060.666. The Slavery Debate in the Atlantic World.
This graduate seminar will trace the historical development of the slavery debate in the Atlantic world through examination of key texts from a host of genres and locations—Quaker religious tracts, political documents like the Haitian Declaration of Independence, Cuban anti-slavery novels, slave narratives, and “classics” of “American” literature like Melville's Benito Cereno. Our historical investigations into the rhetorical field of anti- and proslavery will be framed by a theoretical interest in political theology. How might critical reflection on sovereignty, recent and not so recent—from Derrida back to Bodin (widely acknowledged as having provided one of the first philosophical defenses of anti-slavery)—help us recast the intellectual history of the slavery debate and Atlantic radicalism, more generally?
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive


AS.060.800. Independent Study.
This course is a semester-long independent research course for graduate students. Students will have one-on-one assignments and check-in’s with designated faculty throughout the semester.

AS.060.893. Individual Work.

AS.060.894. Independent Reading.
Area: Humanities


SA.903.995. English Listening Proficiency.

SA.903.996. English Speaking Proficiency.

SA.903.997. English Reading Proficiency.

SA.903.998. English Writing Proficiency.
Cross Listed Courses

Agora Institute
AS.196.364. This is Not Propaganda. 3 Credits.
We live in an era of disinformation and media manipulation run amok. More information was meant to improve democracy and undermine authoritarian regimes; instead the opposite seems to be happening. This course will take you from Russia to South Asia, Europe to the US, to analyze how our information environment has been transformed, why our old formulae for resisting manipulation are failing, and what needs to be done to create a model where deliberative democracy can flourish.
Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive

Center for Africana Studies
AS.362.111. Introduction to African American Studies. 3 Credits.
This is the gateway class to the study of African American life, culture, politics and history in the United States and the Caribbean. African American Studies is a multi-disciplinary field of study that includes history, social sciences, literature and the arts. This academic discipline is often taught under parallel terms emphasizing related geographies and identifying concepts: Black Studies, Afro-American Studies, Africana Studies, Pan-African Studies and African Diaspora Studies. Unlike every other modern academic discipline in the college, African American Studies was founded because of a social and political revolution. The class has two purposes, operating in tandem: (1) provide students with a generous historical, political and cultural overview of the lives of African descendants in the western hemisphere, but principally in North America; (2) explicitly address the problem of regularized systemic inequality in American society as a response to and an attempt to dominate a core nugget of identity difference that is the operative mechanism in black protest, resistance and revolt. This is a difference that includes, but is not limited by or reducible to morphology, culture, history, and ontology. We accept as an operating principle that an inquiry into an enslaved group of nonwestern human beings marked by difference cannot rely solely on the western episteme for its excavation. Thus, we will examine a body of diverse evidence during the semester, works of literature, history, sociology, political science, music and film. The course requirements include essays, examinations, and presentations.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.362.201. African American Poetry and Poetics. 3 Credits.
In this course, we will follow the development of black poetry primarily as it has evolved in the United States. Beginning with the first published African American writers of the eighteenth century and ending with several important poets writing and performing today, we will consider the shape of the African American poetic tradition as commonly anthologized and as defined by our own theoretically-informed readings of the assigned literature. Attention will be given to both canonical and neglected literary movements and groups. Readings will include poetry and essays by Frances E.W. Harper, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Amiri Baraka, Harryette Mullen, Tracie Morris, and others.

AS.362.305. Black Periodical Studies. 3 Credits.
This course explores the ways in which nineteenth- and twentieth-century black periodical culture fostered (and, at times, hampered) the literary and cultural production of the African diaspora. Authors will likely include Frederick Douglass, "Ethiop (William J. Wilson)," Frances E.W. Harper, Pauline Hopkins, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Richard Bruce Nugent, and others.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.362.311. Black Utopias. 3 Credits.
In this course, we will read literary and historical texts that present visions of black utopia. Authors include "Ethiop" (William J. Wilson), Marcus Garvey, Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, and others.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

Classics
AS.040.145. Story and Argument from Homer to Petrarch. 3 Credits.
Stories entertain us, but we also tell them to make a point. This course will explore the ways that stories were used to make points by Greek and Latin authors from Homer to Petrarch, while also looking at, and comparing them to, the techniques of argument contemporaneous thinkers were developing. This is a course about narrative and rhetoric but also about how and in what way stories matter.
Area: Humanities

AS.040.214. Antigone's Echoes: Activism and the Law from Ancient Greece to Today. 3 Credits.
Where should the law come from, the individual or the state? What does it mean to apply a law equitably? How can one protest an unjust system? These are just a few questions that Antigone, long considered to be one of the most important dramatic works in the western tradition, has raised for philosophers and playwrights across the centuries. In this class we will read several versions of Sophocles’ Antigone and explore this character’s enduring relevance to theories of gender, performance, world literature, and politics. Dean’s Teaching Fellowship course.
Area: Humanities

AS.040.626. Plato and Poetry.
This graduate seminar will explore Plato’s contributions to the "old quarrel" between poetry and philosophy, encompassing such topics as the relationship between poetic inspiration and human reason, the role of literature in pedagogy, and the metaphysical implications of poetic fiction. We will focus on several Greek texts from the Platonic corpus related to these themes, as well as some later sources that engage with Platonic ideas.

Comparative Thought and Literature
AS.300.203. Freshman Seminar: How Literature Works: Narrative Imagination from Ancient to Modern Times. 3 Credits.
Is storytelling part of human nature? Do myths and legends have a universal structure? As a bridge between experience and language, narratives inform the way we understand history, gender, politics, emotion, cognition and much more. This course will explore how narratives are composed, how they are experienced, and eventually, how they evolve throughout history. We will be reading a diverse selection of ancient and modern texts, including selections from Plato and Aristotle, the Odyssey, the Hebrew Bible, as well as 19th- and 20th-century authors such as the Brothers Grimm, Gustave Flaubert, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. The second part of the course focuses on philosophical and critical approaches to narrative in arts and media, concluding with the evolving concept of narrative in the digital age. Theoretical readings include selections from Karl Marx, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler. All readings will be in English.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.300.219. Freshman Seminar: Babblers, Mumbles & Howlers: Languages of Modernist Fiction: Freshman Seminar. 3 Credits.

Does literature represent reality or create it? Is language just a tool we use to communicate, or is it shaped by our culture, or indeed, is our culture—and even our own experiences—shaped by our language? Modernist writers at the turn of the 20th century grappled with these questions, concerned that literature and in fact language itself was ill-equipped to face the changes occurring at the beginning of a new era of modernity. From symbolist and sound poetry to innovations in stream of consciousness narration and non-syntactic fragmentation, the literature of the time reflected a reeding faith in the ability for ordinary spoken language to communicate feeling, meaning, and the authentic self. The task of modernism in turn became the reinvention of a new literary language that could either capture this condition of crisis or seek to overcome it. This course will investigate the various responses and solutions to the crisis of language in Anglo-American and European modernist fiction. Authors to be studied: Virginia Woolf, Andrei Bely, Franz Kafka, Jean Toomer, Filippo Marinetti, Andrei Platonov, Mikhail Bakhtin, Yuri Olesha, et al. All readings will be in English.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.300.309. The Contemporary Philosophical Novel. 3 Credits.

What can literature offer to philosophical reflection? Can literature address experiences that evade theoretical philosophy? Or do fictional writing conflict with rigorous philosophical inquiry? The long-standing separation of philosophy and literature begins when Plato bans poetry and tragedy from the ideal city in the Republic. This seminar focuses on nineteenth and twentieth century thinkers that challenge the predisposition against literature through different attempts to write the “philosophical novel.” In this seminar, we will take seriously the philosophical stakes of literary texts, and investigate how and why literature offers a unique perspective for philosophical reflection. We will read texts by Plato, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Iris Murdoch, and David Foster-Wallace.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.300.308. Creating the Jazz Image. 3 Credits.

What is jazz? What do we think of when we hear the term “jazz culture”? Where does it stand and how does it function in American culture and social history? In this course, we will look at ways in which jazz and one of its fundamental elements, improvisation, influence and is influenced by other forms of art. We will look at both at the history of the music and its relation to painting, design, photography, poetry, fiction, dance and film, as well as its impact on forming identities, social structures and political questions. We will discuss the role of jazz within the wider frameworks of race, gender, ethnicity, class, and nationality, as well as its status as an entertainment and art form up until late-60s.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.300.307. The Modernist Novel: Mann, Woolf, and Joyce. 3 Credits.

In this course, we will survey the major works of three of the greatest, most relentless innovators of the twentieth century – Thomas Mann, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce – who explored and explored narrative techniques for depicting what Woolf called the “luminous halo” of life.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.300.306. Lover’s Discourse. 3 Credits.

Much of what we know about love and desire we owe to fiction’s ability to evoke these experiences. Consider for example that the publication, in Germany, of The Sorrows of Young Werther inspired young men across Europe to dress and behave just like him. We will study in this course a selection of love stories chosen because they break the mold and question their conventions. Taking a critical distance from these tales of seduction, we will examine not only the manifestations and meanings of love, but also the configurations of gender they inspire and reflect. Indeed, just as nowadays film and television represent, as well as mold, our identities as desiring subject, fictions from the eighteenth-century onwards have shaped our current understanding of gendered subjectivities. The readings for this seminar (all available in English) include: Austen, “Persuasion”; Balzac, “The Girl with the Golden Eyes” and “Sarrasine”; Barthes, ”Lover’s Discourse”; Goethe, ”The Sorrows of Young Werther”; Mann, ”Death in Venice”; Rousseau, excerpts from “Julie or The New Heloise”; Sulzer, ”A Perfect Waiter”, Winterson, ”Written on the Body”.

Area: Humanities

AS.300.305. Rise of the Modern Short Story. 3 Credits.

A comparative tour of examples of short stories from three continents that emerged from earlier narrative forms in the 19th and 20th centuries. Attention will be given to new structural, rhetorical, and thematic concerns including the development of new sub-genres, e.g. fictions of detection, case histories, portraits of the artist, and the adaptation of several stories to newer media [at least 2 of the longer narratives translated to film will be screened]. A detailed syllabus of ourreadings will be available later in the summer; because there is no anthology that quite fits our needs, all the texts or translations, as well as critical and contextual notes will be supplied in digital forms. Note: there will also be an optional hour for questions & discussion TBA.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.300.303. Shakespeare and Ibsen. 3 Credits.

William Shakespeare and Henrik Ibsen are the two most frequently performed playwrights in history, and both have been credited with reinventing drama: Shakespeare for the Elizabethan stage and Ibsen for the modern. In this course we will pair together plays by each author – those that stand in an explicit relation of influence as well as those that share a significant set of concerns – in order to investigate how each takes up and transform key problems in the literary, political, and philosophical tradition for their own historical moment. Plays to be studied: by Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, The Tempest, A Winter’s Tale; by Ibsen, St. John’s Night, Hedda Gabler, Rosmersholm, The Wild Duck, The Master Builder, When We Dead Awaken.

Area: Humanities

AS.300.302. Literature of the Everyday. 3 Credits.

The ordinary, the common, the everyday: why does literary realism consider the experiences of the average individual to be worthy of serious contemplation? In this course, we will read closely a set of novels by Flaubert, Mann, Dickens, Zola, Tolstoy, and Woolf from the period between 1850 and 1950 in which the development of realism reaches it climax. These novels explore the nature of work, family, the body, consciousness, and the changing relation between individual and tradition in modernity. We will situate these novels in their social/historical, and literary contexts, and establish a set of terms for the formal study of the novel as a genre (plot, character, setting, narrative, etc).

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.300.336. Forms of Moral Community: The Contemporary World Novel. 3 Credits.

Literary and philosophical imaginations of moral community in the post-WWII period. Texts include: Coetzee, Disgrace; McEwan, Atonement; Achebe, Things Fall Apart; Ishiguro, An Artist of the Floating World; Roy, The God of Small Things; Lessing, The Grass is Singing; Mistry, A Fine Balance; Morrison, Beloved; and essays by Levi, Strawson, Adorno, Murdoch, and Beauvoir on the deep uncertainty over moral community after the crisis of World War II. Close attention to novelistic style and narrative will inform our study of the philosophical questions that animate these works. What does it mean to acknowledge another person’s humanity? Who are the members of a moral community? Why do we hold one another responsible for our actions? How do fundamental moral emotions such as contempt, humiliation, compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, and regret reveal the limits of a moral community?

Area: Humanities

AS.300.337. The Tragic Tradition. 3 Credits.

This course offers a broad survey of tragic drama in the Western tradition, from its origins in ancient Greece to the twentieth century. In weekly lectures and discussion sections, we will study the specific literary features and historical contexts of a range of different works, and trace the continuities and transformations that shape them into a unified tradition. Key questions and themes throughout the semester will include what counts as tragic, the tragedy of social and political conflict, the bearing of tragedy on the meaning and value of life, the antagonistic relation between world and humans, the promises and dangers of tragedy for contemporary culture. Authors to be studied: Sophocles, Euripides, Seneca, Shakespeare, Racine, Goethe, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekov, Brecht, Pirandello, and Beckett.

Area: Humanities

AS.300.339. Introduction to Comparative Literature. 3 Credits.

This course offers an introduction to the history, theory, and praxis of comparative literature. We will read texts from some of the founding figures of the discipline and look at the most recent debates in the field, including translation studies, literary theory, and world literature, among others. Particular attention will be given to the methodologies and problems of studying literatures in different linguistic traditions and the relation between literature and other areas of thought and culture, such as philosophy, art history, and psychoanalysis. Case studies in comparative approaches to literature will provide concrete examples to our discussions.

Area: Humanities

AS.300.340. Literature and Film of Unintended Consequences. 3 Credits.

Sometimes brilliant ideas and plans don’t work as anticipated, or go very badly—for example, empowering the “invisible hand” of the market, building a huge hydroelectric dam, or plotting a double murder by two strangers. This course explores these and other fascinating literary instances of unintended consequences—the unanticipated results of actions that people planned ending up a very different way. Reading or watching mainly twentieth-century American literature and movies, as well as some essays and poetry, we will follow a range of different creators as they think about unplanned effects and why they matter. What can these works tell us about how we intend, act, or make meaning at the limits of our control? Texts will include films by Charlie Chaplin, Billy Wilder, and Alfred Hitchcock, poetry or fiction by Wallace Stevens, Patricia Highsmith, and Zadie Smith.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

AS.300.349. Capitalism and Tragedy: from the 18th Century to Climate Change. 3 Credits.

In contemporary discussions of climate change, it is an increasingly prevalent view that capitalism will lead to the destruction of civilization as we know it. The notion that capitalism is hostile to what makes human life worth living, however, is one that stretches back at least to the early eighteenth century. In this class, we will examine key moments in the history of this idea in works of literature, philosophy, and politics, from the birth of bourgeois tragedy in the 1720s, through topics such as imperialism and economic exploitation, to the prospects of our ecological future today. Authors to be studied: George Lillo, Balzac, Dickens, Marx and Engels, Ibsen, Weber, Brecht, Arthur Miller, Steinbeck, Pope Francis, and contemporary fiction, politics and philosophy on climate change.

Area: Humanities

AS.300.402. What is a Person? Humans, Corporations, Robots, Trees. 3 Credits.

Knowing who or what counts as a person seems straightforward, until we consider the many kinds of creatures, objects, and artificial beings that have been granted—or demanded or denied—that status. This course explores recent debates on being a person in culture, law, and philosophy. Questions examined will include: Should trees have standing? Can corporations have religious beliefs? Could a robot sign a contract? Materials examined will be wide-ranging, including essays, philosophy, novels, science fiction, television, film. No special background is required.

Area: Humanities

AS.300.418. The Modernist Novel: James, Woolf, and Joyce. 3 Credits.

In this course, we will survey the major works of three of the greatest, most relentless innovators of the twentieth century — Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce — who explored and exploded narrative techniques for depicting what Woolf called the “luminous halo” of life.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

AS.300.437. Literature and Philosophy of the Everyday. 3 Credits.

The ordinary, the common, the everyday: why does literary realism consider the experiences of the average individual to be worthy of serious contemplation? In this course, we will read closely a set of novels by Flaubert, Mann, Dickens, Eliot, Zola, Tolstoy, and Woolf from the period between 1850 and 1950 in which the development of realism reaches its climax. These novels transform the conventions for the representation of lives of lower and middle class subjects, revealing such lives as capable of prompting reflection upon deep and serious questions of human existence. Theoretical and philosophical texts on the everyday by Auerbach, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Beauvoir, Lefebvre, Certeau, and Wittgenstein will accompany our discussions.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive
First Year Seminars

Bildungsroman, Vollendungsroman: Novels of Youth and Old Age.

This seminar explores the Vollendungsroman, or novel of age, as a twenty-first-century counterpart to the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Bildungsroman that Moretti and others view as the symbolic form of modernity. We will examine how Vollendungsroman broach the relation between subjectivity and "age" (not only in the sense of individual maturity, but also in the sense of historical epoch); how they bring into question traditional conceptions of growth, authority, interiority, body-soul, authenticity, and reconciliation; how they represent alternatives to the modes of moral response and being valorized in the Bildungsroman; and how, in and through their very form, they meditate upon the philosophical significance of the classic phase of the novel. Selected novels by Goethe, Austen, Brontë, Joyce, Woolf, Coetzee, Ishiguro, and McEwan. Open to qualified undergraduates.
Area: Humanities

What is a Person? Humans, Corporations, Robots, Trees.

Knowing who or what counts as a person seems straightforward, until we consider the many kinds of creatures, objects, and artificial beings that have been granted—or demanded or denied—that status. This course explores recent debates on being a person in culture, law, and philosophy. Questions examined will include: Should trees have standing? Can corporations have religious beliefs? Could a robot sign a contract? Materials examined will be wide-ranging, including essays, philosophy, novels, science fiction, television, film. No special background is required.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

Theory, Now and Then: Autonomy, Form, Critique.

This course explores recent developments and disputes in critical theory in relation to their longer philosophical genealogies. The three topics—form, autonomy, and critique—have been the subject of much recent debate, contention, and new analysis, yet each was also a source of critical and philosophical interest in years past. Our aim will be to make sense of today's interventions in conversation with earlier theory. "Historical" theory writing will include Adorno, Lukács, Cavell, and Jameson; contemporary theory will include Nicholas Brown, Rita Felski, Caroline Levine, Mark McGurl, and Toril Moi.
Area: Humanities

Literature and Philosophy of the Everyday.

The ordinary, the common, the everyday: why does literary realism consider the experiences of the average individual to be worthy of serious contemplation? In this course, we will read closely a set of novels by Flaubert, Mann, Dickens, Eliot, Zola, Tolstoy, and Woolf from the period between 1850 and 1950 in which the development of realism reaches its climax. These novels transform the conventions for the representation of lives of lower and middle class subjects, revealing such lives as capable of prompting reflection upon deep and serious questions of human existence. Theoretical and philosophical texts on the everyday by Auerbach, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Beauvoir, Lefebvre, Certeau, and Wittgenstein will accompany our discussions.

History

From Voice to Parchment: Media and Communication before the Printing Press, 800-1440.

Epic traditions, call to Crusade, public curses, music of the troubadours: this course examines oral tradition and music—the "viral media" of pre-modern Europe—while tracing the impact of new recording technologies: early musical notation, manuscripts, and book production.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Crossing the Literary Color Line.

This course will focus on African American writers who wrote white-life novels. We will examine how writers of the interwar period crossed the literary color line in an attempt to imagine a different kind of reality— one predicated on interracialism and democracy.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

From Blood Feud to Black Death: European Society in the High Middle Ages, 1000-1400.

Explores the development of society and institutions in the medieval west including kingship and law, religion and difference, gender and ideology. Looks closely at social responses to change and adversity.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Billie Holiday and American Culture.

A course examining introducing students to the life, times and music of Billie Holiday. We will read biographies, autobiographies, novels, and listen to music.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive
AS.100.354. Playing in the White: Black Writers, the Literary Colorline and Writing Whiteness. 3 Credits.
This course will turn to known and not-so-known black writers during the early to mid-twentieth century who defied literary expectation and wrote stories that featured or focused on whiteness. We will consider what whiteness offered black writers and the political work that their literary experimentations did for a white American publishing industry.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive

AS.100.373. Crime, Punishment, Felony and Freedom: Law and Society in Pre-Modern England. 3 Credits.
Using legal texts as a window into English society, we will address the changing nature of royal power, trial by jury, treason, felony, and the freedoms enshrined in the Magna Carta.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.100.672. Medieval Materialities: Objects, Ontologies, Texts and Contexts.
We will use the meanings and methodologies of “materiality” to examine the medieval world, by analyzing objects, texts, networks, patterns of circulation and appropriation, aesthetics and enshrinement, production and knowledge communities.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.100.682. Introductory Topics in Computation for Scholarship in the Humanities.
The first half of this seminar course consists of non-mathematical introductions to, and discussions of, the fundamental motivations, vocabulary, and methods behind computational techniques of particular use for humanistic research. The second half combines selected readings chosen to address specific questions raised by these discussions with hands-on application to students’ research goals. Each participant will lead discussion for one of the selected readings relevant to their interests.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.100.725. Sex and Slavery II.
Research and methods in the field of sexuality and slavery studies. Part 2: Caribbean & African Continent.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Interdepartmental
AS.360.133. Freshman Seminar: Great Books at Hopkins. 3 Credits.
Students attend lectures by an interdepartmental group of Hopkins faculty and meet for discussion in smaller seminar groups; each of these seminars is led by one of the course faculty. In lectures, panels, multimedia presentations, and curatorial sessions among the University’s rare book holdings, we will explore some of the greatest works of the literary and philosophical traditions in Europe and the Americas. Close reading and intensive writing instruction are hallmarks of this course; authors for Fall 2020 include Homer, Plato, Dante, John Donne, George Herbert, Christina Rossetti, Mary Shelley, Friederick Nietzsche, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Frederick Douglass.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

Modern Languages and Literatures
AS.211.203. Propaganda: From Blut und Boden to Post-Fact. 3 Credits.
This course taught by Writing Seminars professor Wayne Biddle and Media Studies professor Bernadette Wegenstein covers the 20th-century history of propaganda with special focus on its visual techniques, on censorship, and how media serve as sites of both control and resistance to power. We will pay particular attention to the influence of misinformation abetted by the new media revolution, and both the rise of the political rhetoric of “fake news” and the massive dissemination of actual fake news since the 2016 election. Students will write papers pegged to current issues and events using the critical framework developed in class. Cap 30 students. Reader: Jason Stanley: How Propaganda Works, Princeton University Press, 2015.
Writing Intensive

AS.211.325. Representing Otherness in Literature and Film. 3 Credits.
The term ‘Otherness’ is known to be rooted in the Self-Other opposition as it emerged in German Idealism, adopted by psychoanalysis and transformed to Post-Colonial and Feminist theories. This theoretical framework will allow us to explore the role of the Other in literature and cinema. Students will become familiar with the historical development of the notion of the "stranger" through reading and analyzing various contemporary works of prose, poetry and cinema from various countries. We will analyze the ways in which these works depict Otherness and will investigate questions regarding their social, political and philosophical framework as well as the literary and cinematographic devices they employ. The course will have a comparative nature with the aim of learning more about the differences between the literary and cinematic representations.
Area: Humanities

AS.211.333. Representing the Holocaust. 3 Credits.
How has the Holocaust been represented in literature and film? Are there special challenges posed by genocide to the traditions of visual and literary representation? Where does the Holocaust fit in to the array of concerns that the visual arts and literature express? And where do art and literature fit in to the commemoration of communal tragedy and the working through of individual trauma entailed by thinking about and representing the Holocaust? These questions will guide our consideration of a range of texts — nonfiction, novels, poetry — in Yiddish, German, English, French and other languages (including works by Primo Levi and Isaac Bashevis Singer), as well as films from French documentaries to Hollywood blockbusters (including films by Alain Resnais, Claude Lanzmann, and Steven Spielberg). All readings in English.
Prerequisite(s): Cannot be taken by anyone who previously took AS.213.361
Area: Humanities
AS.211.335. Uncanny Valleys in Literature & Film. 3 Credits.
When artificial humans too closely resemble actual human beings, feelings of eeriness or revulsion can be elicited in human observers - the ‘uncanny valley’ effect. Something to be avoided in robotics, in fiction this effect has been a source of endless fascination. Tales of the supernatural, science fiction and horror often use doubt about the human or non-human status of fictional characters to structure imaginary worlds. What can our engagement with artificial humans in fiction tell us about our own humanity? How can emotional entanglement with not-quite-human characters help us critically reflect on aspects of reality? Class will be discussion-based with accompanying readings from literary theory, philosophy, sociology and other fields addressing relevant themes. Authors may include ETA Hoffmann, Nietzsche, Freud, Wittgenstein, Kafka and Philip K. Dick. Films may include Blade Runner and Get Out.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.211.337. Wandering Jews? Jewish Migration in Film and Literature. 3 Credits.
Migration in all its forms has played a major role in shaping Jewish identity throughout history. From the Biblical exodus from Egypt through the beginnings of the diaspora under the Romans to the massive European Jewish immigration to America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to the founding of the state of Israel, the migrations of Jews have also had a major place in Jewish literature. Going all the way back to the Bible, but focusing on the 20th century, this course will explore the ways in which literature and film represent the experience of migration, whether negative (compelled by expulsion or violence); positive (lured by economic or social opportunity); or somewhere in-between. We will examine poetry, plays, prose and film in Yiddish, German, Hebrew, and English (all in translation) on aspects of Jewish migration including the social and political factors motivating migration from the countryside to the shtetl (town) to the city and from Central and Eastern Europe to the Americas, Palestine, and Israel. Issues under discussion will include: adaptation and assimilation; minority rights; what is the relationship of old and new or major and minor languages and literatures?; what is the place of tradition and heritage in a diasporic context? We will also consider the resonances between contemporary debates on migration and historical examples of these issues as they are reflected in literature and film.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.211.361. Narratives of Dissent in Israeli Society and Culture. 3 Credits.
In this course we will study and analyze the notion of dissent in Israeli society and culture on its various literary and artistic forms. We will examine the emergence and the formation of various political and social protest movements, such as the Israeli Black Panthers, Israeli feminism and the 2011 Social Justice protest. We will discuss at length the history and the nature of dissent in the military and in relation to Israeli wars and will track changes in these relation. Significant portion of the course will be dedicated to the literary, cinematic and artistic aspects of Israeli protest and their influence on Israeli discourse. We will explore the nature and role of specific genres and media such as the Israeli satire, Israeli television, newspaper op-ed and the recent emergence of social media. Students wishing to work in English exclusively for 3 credits should enroll in section one. Students who are fluent in Hebrew are wishing to attend an additional hour-long Hebrew discussion session per week with Professor Cohen (time TBD in consultation with enrolled students) for 4 credits should enroll in section 2.
Area: Humanities

AS.211.362. Critical Knowledges: Black, Feminist, Queer. 3 Credits.
How does what we learn and what we call knowledge matter? Is it clear what “knowledge” means? Does it have the same meaning historically, across different academic disciplines and in daily life? Never have such questions been more relevant than in these volatile times. This course offers a literary and theoretical inquiry into the matter of knowledge/s. Through works by authors from diverse, interdisciplinary traditions including German and American thought and literature, as well as critical, Black, feminist, and queer theory, we will address alternative epistemologies that operate with “partial” or “unfinished” models of knowledge. Thus, students will become familiar with difficult, influential material from various disciplines, while focusing less on judgment and more on dialogical aspects of knowing.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.211.445. Rogues, Tricksters, and Saints: Boccaccio’s Decameron. 3 Credits.
Boccaccio’s Decameron (1352), a collection of 100 short stories, ranges from the bawdy through the cynical to the romantic and even fantastic. It has inspired numerous writers, artists, musicians and film-makers. We will read Boccaccio’s masterpiece on its own terms and in relation to the development of story-telling, from gossipy “news” (novelle) to artistic short story, theatrical adaptation, literary fairy-tale, and the fantastic. The Decameron will be compared with its forerunners in saints’ lives, bawdy fabliaux, and moral exempla, and with its literary, theatrical, and cinematic imitators in Italy and Europe. Italian graduate students and undergraduate majors will attend an extra weekly meeting conducted in Italian.
Prerequisite(s): Students may not have taken AS.214.445.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.211.477. Renaissance Witches and Demonology. 3 Credits.
Who were the witches? Why were they persecuted for hundreds of years? Why were women identified as the witches par excellence? How many witches were put to death between 1400 and 1800? What traits did European witch-mythologies share with other societies? After the witch-hunts ended, how did “The Witch” go from being “monstrous” to being “admirable” and even “sexy”? Answers are found in history and anthropology, but also in medicine, theology, literature, folklore, music, and the visual arts, including cinema.
Prerequisite(s): Students who have already taken AS.214.171 cannot take AS.211.477.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.211.479. Dante's Journey through the Afterlife. 3 Credits.
Dante’s Divine Comedy presents a complete picture of the medieval world-view in all its aspects: physical (the structure of the cosmos), historical (the major actors from Adam to Dante himself) and moral (a complete system of right and wrong). Dante shows how the Christian religion portrayed itself, other religions, the nature of God, humans, angels and devils, and human society. We will explore these topics both from the viewpoint of Dante’s own time, and in terms of its relevance to our own societal and cultural concerns.
Prerequisite(s): AS.214.479
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive
AS.211.480. Religious Themes in Film and Literature. 3 Credits.
This course would be of interest to anyone who would like to learn about the intersection of religion and modern culture. At the center of the course will stand a close study of the representation of religious themes and their role in modern literature and cinema. The works which we will deal with are not considered religious yet they include religious themes as part of their narrative, images, language or symbolic meaning. We will trace in various works from various countries and genre, themes such as: divine justice, providence, creation, revelation, the apocalypse, prophecy, sacrifice and religious devotion. We will also study the ways in which Biblical and New Testament stories and figures are represented in these works. The course will have a comparative nature with the aim of learning more about the differences between the literary and cinematic representations.
Area: Humanities

AS.211.754. Modernist Primitivism.
This course will explore the aesthetics and politics of primitivism in European modernity, focusing on the visual arts and literature in German and Yiddish, but looking at the wider European context, including France and Russia. We will begin with the backgrounds of primitivism in Romanticism, looking especially at its ethnographic and colonial sources. We will then focus on the presence of anthropological and ethnographic discourses within various registers of modernist thought, literature, and visual culture, with special attention to visual and literary primitivism. Our central concerns will include: the attempt to create a modernist aesthetics grounded in ethnography; the primitivist critique of modernity; the place of primitivism in the historical avant-garde; the development of the notion of “culture” in modernity; and the aesthetics of modern ethnic and national identity. Key thinkers, artists, and writers to be considered include Herder; Gauguin; Picasso; Wilhelm Worringer; Carl Einstein; Hannah Höch; and Emil Nolde.
Area: Humanities

Criticism in the 21st century has tended to relegate psychoanalysis to a dustbin of fads that proliferated at the end of the prior century but that today are of interest only to balkanized cliques of devotees. Bucking this trend, this seminar will examine the intellectual history and abiding influence of psychoanalysis’s key critical concept: the unconscious. Basing our discussions on in-depth readings from key thinkers in the analytic tradition such as Freud, Lacan, and Klein, as well as the post-analytic philosophical tradition, including Zizek, Butler, Laclau and Mouffe, Deleuze and Guattari, and Jameson, we will work to distill an understanding of the unconscious as essential to the practice of criticism tout court, and as inhering even in those discourses that have sought most stridently to distance themselves from it. Seminar discussions will take place in English; readings will be available in the original as well as in translation.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.213.328. German Literary Modernism. 3 Credits.
Taught in English. German Literary Modernism focuses on modernist works of literature between 1900-1930, considering central modernist authors against the backdrop of dramatic changes and events in European culture and society, including urbanization, technological change, the First World War, and social and artistic movements. Students will engage literary works—by such authors as Kafka, Rilke, Hofmannsthal and Thomas Mann—that express a sense of crisis about modern life, or provoke questions about the nature of reality, the human self, the reliability of perception, and the possibilities of language and art. Students have the option of an additional hour of German discussion and doing all the assignments in German for German-language credit (3+1) towards the major or minor. Students interested in that option should register for section 2.
Area: Humanities

AS.213.374. Existentialism in Literature and Philosophy. 3 Credits.
This course explores the themes of existentialism, including the meaning of existence, the nature of the self, authenticity and inauthenticity, the inescapability of death, the experience of time, anxiety, freedom and responsibility to others, in literary and philosophical works. It will be examined why these philosophical ideas often seem to demand literary expression, or bear a close relation to literary works. Readings may include writings by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Heidegger, Rilke, Kafka, Simmel, Jaspers, Buber, Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Camus.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.213.407. German Media Theory. 3 Credits.
German Media Theory is an advanced course for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students, giving an introduction and overview of the specifically German version of Media Studies that first gained traction in the 1980s. The term media refers not just to mass media but more broadly to devices that process, transfer and store information, reaching from the alphabet that changed the culture of writing, or the printing press made famous as the foundation of the ‘Gutenberg galaxy’ to computers and smart phones dominating our current lives. In this course we will cut across disciplinary boundaries to explore the multifaceted roots and formations of German media theory which combine literary poststructuralism, histories of science and technology, psychoanalysis, cybernetics, art history, and philosophy among other fields. Readings include works by Friedrich Kittler, Bernhard Siegert, Cornelia Vismann, Wolfgang Ernst, Walter Benjamin, Niklas Luhmann, Michel Foucault, Marshall McLuhan and many others. The course will be taught in English and all readings will be available in English.
Area: Humanities

AS.213.446. Nature and Ecology in German Literature and Thought. 3 Credits.
Nature and Ecology in German Literature and Thought considers the understanding and representation of the natural world in literary works and aesthetic theory from the 18th to the 20th centuries. We will consider such topics as poetic reverence for nature, anthropocentric representations of nature in literature, the thematization of landscape, the representation of animal life, the distinction between the human and animal as explored by literary writers, and ecologically-oriented critique of human consciousness. Readings may include works by such writers and thinkers as Goethe, Kant, Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Rilke, and Kafka, and more recent works of literary ecocriticism.
Area: Humanities
AS.213.639. On the Difficulty of Saying I.
This course takes as its point of departure the position that language carries within it the traces of something that exceeds the cognitive grasp of the subject and to this extent undoes any claim to knowledge the subject might make. This position has been central to twentieth and twenty-first century thought from psychoanalysis and poststructuralism to media theory and new materialism. This course will not take issue with this position. It will examine instead how this position evolved from the idealism of Fichte to the eerily inhuman, if not mechanical, talking figures in texts by Novalis ("Monolog"), Poe ("Maelzel's Chess Player"), Hoffmann ("Die Automate"), Büchner (Leonce und Lena), and Kafka ("Ein Bericht für eine Akademie"). We will explore the literature of the personal and impersonal in romantic and modernist texts in order to ask what moves and motivates works in which the first-person narrator would seem to be nothing more than a fiction—a staged phenomenon or a mechanical device.
Area: Humanities

AS.213.643. Franz Kafka in Philosophical and Literary Perspective.
This course is devoted to close study of the writings of Franz Kafka from both philosophical and literary perspectives. Readings will include Kafka's short prose works and novels along with philosophical and literary critical interpretations thereof. Readings may include commentaries by Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Hannah Arendt, Albert Camus, Giles Deleuze, and Giorgio Agamben. Primary texts for students from the German section will be in original; any other students may read Kafka in translation.
Area: Humanities

AS.213.687. Imagination in Philosophy and Literary Theory.
Imagination in Philosophy and Literary Theory is devoted to studying theories of imagination in the history of philosophy and literary theory, from the ancient Greeks to the present day. We will study philosophical conceptions of the role of imagination in memory, cognition, perception, and creativity, and assess traditional philosophical oppositions between imagination and reason, the imaginary and the real. Readings may include selections from Aristotle, Kant, Coleridge, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Dufrenne, Stevens, Iser, Ricoeur, Ryle, Wittgenstein, and Nussbaum.
Area: Humanities

AS.214.479. Dante Visits the Afterlife: The Divine Comedy. 3 Credits.
Dante's Divina commedia is the greatest long poem of the Middle Ages; some say the greatest poem of all time. We will study the Commedia critically to find: (1) What it reveals about the worldview of late-medieval Europe; (2) how it works as poetry; (3) its relation to the intellectual cultures of pagan antiquity and Latin (Catholic) Christianity; (4) its presentation of political and social issues; (5) its influence on intellectual history, in Italy and elsewhere; (6) the challenges it presents to modern readers and translators; (7) what it reveals about Dante's understanding of cosmology, world history and culture. We will read and discuss the Commedia in English, but students will be expected to familiarize themselves with key Italian terms and concepts. Students taking section 02 (for 4 credits) will spend an additional hour working in Italian at a time to be mutually decided upon by students and professor.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.214.640. Film Theory.
The seminar deals with film theory in its history and its current trends. We will examine structuralist, post-structuralist, feminist, Marxist, psycho-analytic and other theoretical approaches to understanding and interpreting the cinematic medium. We will look at several different genres of contemporary films from Italy, France, Spain, and Latin American Film, from auteur-films to independent documentary collectives, animation films to blockbusters. We will invite at least one film theorist and one filmmaker to class during the semester.
Area: Humanities

AS.215.290. Latin American Critical Perspectives on Colonialism: From the 'World Upside Down' to the 'Coloniality of Power'. 3 Credits.
This course, taught in English, examines how indigenous and local (postcolonial) intellectuals in Latin America responded to the ideology and practices of Spanish Colonialism in the earliest post-conquest years (1532), continued to battle colonialism during the period of the wars of independence, and finally arrived at the production of an analysis that shows how modernity is but the other face of colonialism. Among key works to be discussed are Guaman Poma's illustrated sixteenth-century chronicles, D.F. Sarramonte's _Civilization and Barbarism_ (1845), and Anibal Quijano's "Coloniality of Power" (2000).
Writing Intensive

AS.215.307. Cervantes: Don Quixote and The Exemplary Novels. 3 Credits.
In this course we will read the most important narrative works of Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote and the Exemplary Novels, works that are widely understood to have changed western literature. We will read both works in the English translation by renowned translator Edith Grossman, who will also visit Hopkins during the semester. Those who wish to receive credit toward the Spanish major will read the books in the original and attend a separate section conducted in Spanish. Those students should enroll in section 2 of the course.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.215.312. The Great Latin American novel according to Carlos Fuentes. 3 Credits.
An investigation into the historical development of the great Latin American novel according to Carlos Fuentes new book on the subject. Course includes reading novels by machado de Assis, Garcia Marquez, Carlos Fuentes, Vargas Llosa, Cortazar and Piglia
Area: Humanities

AS.215.406. Novelist Intellectuals. 3 Credits.
What does a novelist's op-ed about economics have to do with her literary writing? In what ways does a fiction writer's essays on the environment inform how we read her novels? What happens when we find the political opinions of a writer objectionable? This undergraduate seminar will consider what the Spanish writer Francisco Ayala termed "novelist intellectuals," that is, literary writers who actively participate in a society's public sphere. Considering writers from Madrid to New York, from London to Buenos Aires, we will ask how one should hold a novelist's fictional and non-fictional writings in the balance and explore ways of reading that allow us to consider the public intellectual side and the aesthetic side of a novelist together.
Area: Humanities
AS.215.417. Literature of the Great Recession. 3 Credits.
The Great Recession—sometimes called the financial crisis or the economic crisis of 2008—brought financial markets to a halt and created significant political turmoil across the North Atlantic. But its impact on culture, and literature especially, has often been ignored. This seminar will travel across Europe, from Dublin to Madrid, from London to Reykjavik in order to examine how literature has registered this most recent economic crisis. We will focus on how crisis is narrated and the ways in which literary works have managed to provide a voice for marginalized social, economic, and political demands.
Area: Humanities

How should one study contemporary literature and culture? Is “the contemporary” a period in and of itself? Does it require a distinct conceptual approach? This graduate seminar will examine various approaches that have emerged since Michel Foucault called his genealogies a “history of the present.” We will pay special attention to contemporary literature and culture’s most distinguishing feature today: crisis. Considering theories of crisis and “the contemporary” together, the course will explore how living in a time of overlapping crises—economic, political, social, cultural, environmental, and others—affects the way we interpret the world.
Area: Humanities

The course engages close readings of Borges critical essays and some of his fiction in order to establish the points of interpellation that Post-modern theory takes from or shares with Borges’s meditation on the problem of writing.

Program in Museums and Society
AS.389.329. Author/Canon/Archive. 3 Credits.
Why are some literary works from the past reprinted, anthologized, and considered worthy of study, but not others? Why are some works “lost” and some “rediscovered,” while others simply fall out of favor? Focusing on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American literary culture, we will use rare books and archival materials from JHU collections to examine Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Stephen Crane, Charles Chesnutt, and Zora Neale Hurston, along with a few authors you’ve never heard of, in terms of the relationship between authorship, stewardship, and status.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.389.346. Scribbling Women in the Literary Archive. 3 Credits.
Students examine select texts and archival materials related to Emily Dickinson, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Edith Wharton, Ida B. Wells, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Sui Sin Far, Alice Duer Miller, and Zora Neale Hurston. Students interrogate how these writers navigated the constraints of gender, as informed by race and class, in the decades before and after the 19th Amendment and consider literary collecting in relation to gendered cultural politics.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.389.359. Modernist Networks in the Archive. 3 Credits.
This class examines three American writers who built important and enduring networks, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and Langston Hughes. We will investigate the artefactual traces of their networks through recently acquired special collections materials and digital representations, in order to address questions about aesthetics and style, politics and power, race and gender, and what is and is not present in the literary archive.
Area: Humanities

Study of Women, Gender, Sexuality
AS.363.331. Gender and Sexuality beyond the Global West: Stitching Women-Sewing and Gender, Labor, and Art. 3 Credits.
What's radical about stitching? And how did sewing coming to be viewed—across centuries, cultures, regions, and political epochs—as (in embroidery artist Hannah Hill's words) "women's work"? This course will analyze and discuss how work with needle and thread has been associated with women, their bodies, and the domestic space where the repetitive labor of mending, the mixed opportunity for making, and the devalued practice of the "applied arts" took place. Looking at histories of work, fictions, and visual objects, we will explore stitching's gendered past and its potential for oppressive normativity and radical, creative expression alike. Over the semester, our course follows the “red thread” of stitching via four short response papers (or one Unessay), one in-class presentation, and one final oral history/research project on an interdisciplinary discussion related to the (often radical) politics and poetics of women’s lives and works. Authors and artists may include Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Gaskell, Virginia Woolf, Alice Walker, Carol Ann Duffy, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Tracey Emin, Louise Bourgeois, Elaine Reichek, Silvia Federici, Marimarosa della Costa, Kyung-Ah Ham, and Project Runway.
Area: Humanities

AS.363.338. The Poetics and Politics of Sex: Feminist Utopia in Theory and Fiction. 3 Credits.
This course examines the historical development of feminist utopia in theory and fiction. Readings will center Indigenous, Black, postcolonial, diasporic, and transnational perspectives that engage the topic of feminist utopia.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.363.445. Reading Judith Shakespeare: Women and Gender in Elizabethan England. 3 Credits.
If Shakespeare had a sister who went to London to be a writer, what would she write? Virginia Woolf’s account of the thwarted career of Shakespeare’s hypothetical sister, Judith, in A Room of One’s Own frames our reading of plays and poetry by Shakespeare and contemporary women writers, including Isabella Whitney, Elizabeth Cary, Mary Sidney, Aemelia Lanyer, and Mary Wroth. Working within a selected historical context, students will create fictional biographies of “Judith Shakespeare,” including her perspective on our identified authors and a sample or description of Judith’s own literary accomplishments. Secondary course readings will reflect contemporary economic, political, and religious contexts.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

Theatre Arts Studies
AS.225.318. 21st Century Female Playwrights. 3 Credits.
This is a writing intensive class exploring the current wealth of women playwrights, including Pulitzer Prize winners: Wendy Wasserstein, Paula Vogel, Lynn Nottage, and Jackie Sibblies Drury (2019 Prize for FAIRVIEW). We will discuss Script Analysis and read (and see) plays by numerous writers including Claire Barron, Kia Corthron, Theresa Rebeck, Sarah Ruhl, Danai Gurira, Caleen Sinnette Jennings, and Hansol Jung. This course will include a mid-term and a Final Paper.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

For current faculty and contact information go to http://english.jhu.edu/people/