

## Tentative Listing of 2022-23 English Courses Open for TF Applications

**Small**= 0-2 sections; **Medium**=3-4 sections; **Large**=5+ sections

**ACCEPTING WAITLIST APPS ONLY:** This applies to new courses or other courses that have not been pre-allocated sections.

**English students:** *While these courses should be in addition to the 7 courses per semester you apply for, please do sign up if you are interested--sections may well open up!*

### Fall 2022

#### English 10. Literature Today **L**

Jesse McCarthy and Tracy K. Smith

All literature was contemporary at some point, but the literature that is contemporary now provides special opportunities for enjoying, questioning, and understanding the world. Literature Today focuses on works written since 2000—since most of you were born. It explores how writers from around the world speak to and from their personal and cultural situations, addressing current problems of economic inequality, technological change, structural prejudice, and divisive politics. We will encounter a range of genres, media, and histories to study contemporary literature as a living, evolving system. The course uniquely blends literary study and creative writing—students will analyze literature and make literature. The conviction that these practices are complementary will inform our approach to readings and course assignments.

#### English 20. Literary Forms **S**

Deidre Lynch

This foundational course for English concentrators examines literary form and genre. We explore some of the many kinds of literature as they have changed over time, along with the shapes and forms that writers create, critics describe, and readers learn to recognize. The body of the course looks to the great literary types, or modes, such as epic, tragedy, and lyric, as well as to the workings of literary style in moments of historical change, producing the transformation, recycling, and sometimes the mocking of past forms. While each version of English 20 includes a different array of genres and texts from multiple periods, those texts will always include five major works from across literary history: Beowulf (epic), King Lear (tragedy), Persuasion (comic novel), The Souls of Black Folk (essays; expository prose), and Elizabeth Bishop's poems (lyric). The course integrates creative writing with critical attention: assignments will take creative as well as expository and analytical forms.

## **English 20. Literary Forms S**

**Vidyan Ravinthiran**

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## **English 97. Literary Methods S**

**Derek Miller**

This course, taught in small groups and required for concentrators, introduces theories, interpretive frameworks, and central questions about literature and literary media. What do we do when we read? What is an author?

What do we mean by "literature" itself? How might we compare and evaluate interpretations? How do the historical, social, cultural, and legal frameworks around a text shape its meanings and its effects? Combining major critical and theoretical writings with primary works, the course investigates how literary production and interpretation are informed by philosophical and aesthetic traditions, gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, national and post-colonial identities, and the material forms in which literature circulates, from parchment books to the internet. Students will also practice fundamental literary research methods through close engagement with Harvard libraries.

## **English 102m. Introduction to Old English: Charms, Herbals, Folk Medicine, Miracle Cures S**

**Daniel Donoghue**

This course combines language study with the investigation of a critical theme. The narratives set for translation provide a thematic coherence as we dig into the language of Old English, which is the vernacular used in England from the sixth century until about 1100. Although some of its features remain recognizable today, Old English needs to be learned as a foreign language with its own spelling, pronunciation, syntax, and so on. The term begins with an emphasis on grammar, which will be covered in graduated steps until midterm, after which the readings and translation will take up more of our class time.

The unifying theme of the readings will be remedies to preserve the health of the human body. Old English literature offers an abundance of medical texts, including herbal remedies and magical incantations. Some come from ancient Greek and Latin sources, while others are local folk recipes. Some are fantastical, some are known to be effective, and others clearly rely on the placebo effect. The readings will move from simple prose to intricate poetry. An end-of-term project will assign each student a short Old English magical charm—think of it as

a human utterance charged with power to control nature. With the help of personal coaching, each student will produce a literal and a creative translation.

### **English 115b. The Canterbury Tales S**

Nicholas Watson

What makes stories so pleasurable and so enraging? How do we understand the strong emotions they evoke, and how do we learn to resist their power? Answering back to a world of fake news and divisive political narratives, this course revisits Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* the deepest, most caustic, and most entertaining analysis of the problematic status of stories ever written.

### **English 125pc. Shakespeare and Popular Culture S**

Alan Niles

### **English 157. The Classic Phase of the Novel S**

Philip Fisher

A set of major works of art produced at the peak of the novel's centrality as a literary form: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Madame Bovary*, *Anna Karenina*, *Middlemarch*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Buddenbrooks*. Society, family, generational novels and the negations of crime and adultery; consciousness and the organization of narrative experience; the novel of ideas and scientific programs; realism, naturalism, aestheticism and the interruptions of the imaginary.

### **English 181a. Introduction to Asian American Literatures M**

Ju Yon Kim

Aiiiiiiii! An *Anthology of Asian-American Writers* (1974) was one of the earliest attempts to collect writings that were, to quote the editors, "exclusively Asian-American." Yet as their lengthy—and controversial—explanation of the selection process makes clear, Asian American literature defies neat categorization. How do we determine that a work of literature is "Asian American" when the term itself has been continuously revised, contested, and expanded since it first came into common usage in the late 1960s as a political, panethnic identification? Furthermore, when assessing whether a literary work is "Asian American," how important are considerations of its thematic concerns, its relationship to specific cultural forms and traditions, and the author's background? This course is both a survey of Asian American literature and an introduction to ongoing debates about what constitutes Asian America. We will study a variety of literary genres and ask how formal and stylistic conventions, as well as shifting sociohistorical circumstances, have shaped conceptions of Asian American literature.

### **English 182. Science Fiction S**

Stephanie Burt

Utopias, dystopias, artificial intelligence, life on new planets, and much, much more-- from the late 19th century to the present, \*mostly in novels and short stories but also in comics, poetry, games, film and TV.\* Likely readings include Mark Twain, H. G. Wells, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Robert A. Heinlein, James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice Sheldon), Octavia Butler, William Gibson, Nalo Hopkinson, Ted Chiang, Tillie Walden, Charlie Jane Anders, N. K.

Jemisin.... We will also be playing a tabletop role playing game as part of the class.

## **English 185e. The Essay: History and Practice M**

**James Wood**

Matthew Arnold famously said that poetry is, at bottom, “a criticism of life.” But if any literary form is truly a criticism of life, it is the essay. And yet despite the fact that all students write essays, most students rarely study them; bookshops and libraries categorize such work only negatively, by what it is not: “non-fiction.” At the same time, the essay is at present one of the most productive and fertile of literary forms. It is practiced as memoir, reportage, diary, criticism, and sometimes all four at once. Novels are becoming more essayistic, while essays are borrowing conventions and prestige from fiction. This class will disinter the essay from its comparative academic neglect, and examine the vibrant contemporary borderland between the reported and the invented. We will study the history of the essay, from Montaigne to the present day. Rather than study that history purely chronologically, each class will group several essays from different decades and centuries around common themes: death, detail, sentiment, race, gender, photography, the city, witness, and so on. In addition to writing about essays – writing critical essays about essays – students will also be encouraged to write their own creative essays: we will study the history of the form, and practice the form itself. Essayists likely to be studied: Plutarch, Montaigne, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Woolf, Benjamin, Orwell, Camus, Primo Levi, Barthes, Baldwin, Sontag, Dyer, Didion, Leslie Jamison, Knusgaard, Ta-Nehisi Coates.

## **English 195ec. Gender & Representation S**

**James Engell**

An economist and a humanist, together with professors from the natural sciences, analyze familiar conceptual and policy-relevant issues from viewpoints of their respective disciplines. For example, how do we measure inequality, and at what point does it become problematic (and how do we know)? How then should it be addressed (e.g., tax code, minimum wage)? What are the best policies to confront job losses from technology? What does sustainable growth mean? The goal is not merely to examine four intertwined issues “growth, technology, inequality, and education” but also to understand the distinct concerns and methods of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

## **GenEd- FALL**

### **GenEd 1050. Act Natural Accepting Waitlist Apps Only**

**David Levine**

“To thine own self be true,” runs the famous line in Hamlet. But which self? And why? And who’s judging? Does this injunction to be authentic even make sense today, when profiles proliferate online and surveillance is ubiquitous? Acting—the art of creating and reproducing selves—can help us navigate these questions. Just as every century’s approach to acting tells us something about their idea of personhood, so too can our own era’s quandaries around empathy, personae, identity, work, art-making and politics be explored through our approach to acting. The course will examine the construction of private and public selves across eras and disciplines, through a combination of lectures, screenings, readings, and talks. Sections

and examinations will be practice-based, focused on a single basic task: students will be asked to turn into each other over the course of the term.

### **GenEd 1183. The English Language Today, Yesterday, Tomorrow **M****

**Daniel Donoghue**

How does the English language shape our world? And how does the world shape English? Our “world” includes our most intimate thoughts and feelings, but it also can expand into an ever-widening social network; either way, whether personal or global, the English language has a profound and reciprocal effect with its speakers. This is not a traditional grammar course, warning against dangling participles. Instead, you will discover that notions of correct grammar have a surprising and whimsical history. But our inquiry goes much further: Why is English spelling so weird? Is the language morphing online? Will innovations in HipHop and Spanglish become standard? How did an obscure medieval dialect expand to become a world language? What did Shakespeare sound like? How do we know? Is the spread of world Englishes endangering its coherence as a language? Is that a problem? The course is guaranteed to unsettle some common assumptions, and the English already familiar to you will become more quirky and fascinating. Besides thrilling your inner word geek, the knowledge you gain will sharpen your writing skills and make you a more perceptive reader. You will also gain greater confidence about the place of your English in your world.

## **Spring 2023**

### **English 20. Literary Forms **S****

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### **English 97. Literary Methods **S****

**Beth Blum**

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### **English 97. Literary Methods S**

**Anna Wilson**

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### **English 103g. Advanced Old English: Scribes and Manuscripts S**

**Daniel Donoghue**

Building on the basic grammar and translation skills learned in English 102, this course introduces students to Old English literature in its most immediate context: the manuscripts that preserve their earliest copies. The weekly task of translation will be supplemented by consistent attention to the manuscript contexts of Old English literature. The texts will include selections from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the OE Genesis with its illustrations, Exeter Book Riddles, Beowulf, and others. The instruction will guide students through basic principles of manuscript study. As a special event we will invite a professional calligrapher to instruct students—equipped with a goose quill!—on the traditional skill of calligraphy. At the end of the term, with the help of personal coaching, each student will edit and translate manuscript folios in a collaborative edition of an Old English text.

### **English 119ty English Literature: The First 1000 Years S**

**Alan Niles**

This course is an introduction to the different voices, cultures, and traditions that made the first 1000 years of English literature, from Beowulf to Aphra Behn. We will study major and influential writings alongside lesser-known interlocutors—works by Marie de France, Geoffrey Chaucer, Margery Kempe, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, Mary Sidney, John Milton, Alexander Pope, and more. We will engage with the (often contested) social, political, and religious contexts that gave rise to creative work. We will pay particular

attention to the historical transformations of romance, epic, drama, fable, and lyric, and the ways these forms were embedded in the social worlds of their time.

**English 124p. Shakespearean Playwriting S**

Stephen Greenblatt

**English 131p. Milton's Paradise Lost M**

Gordon Teskey

This course focuses on Milton's most famous work, *Paradise Lost*, the greatest long poem in English and the only successful classical epic in the modern world. Milton went totally blind in his forties and composed *Paradise Lost* by reciting verses to anyone available to take them down, like the blind prophets and poets of legend. Yet the moral and political questions he raised are surprisingly enduring and modern. We will consider how Milton generates the sublime and how he builds great scenes and characters, especially his most famous one, Satan.

**English 164p. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Poetry (\*new) Accepting Waitlist Apps Only [But please sign up if you are interested! Sections may well open up!]**

Peter Sacks

**English 176hr. The Harlem Renaissance: The New Negro and Black Manhattan, 1894 – 1937 S**

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

The “new birth of freedom” that Abraham Lincoln hoped to see rise out of the death and destruction of the Civil War manifested itself during the twelve years that followed it. Reconstruction (1865 - 1877) ushered in a “Second Founding” of the nation through the ratification of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, establishing birthright citizenship, due process and equal protection of the laws, and the right to vote for black male citizens. As revolutionary as Reconstruction was, it was also short-lived, and the long, violent roll-back against it, curiously known as the “Redemption,” witnessed the curtailing of these rights and the rise and institutionalization of Jim Crow segregation in what one newspaper editor coined the “New South.” A key aspect of Redemption was a propaganda war designed to debase the image of African Americans, and thereby justify the deprivation of their rights. Resisting it, African Americans, starting in the mid-1890s, employed the concept of a “New Negro” to combat racist images of an “Old Negro” fabricated by apologists for Jim Crow. Thus began what we might call America's first “social media” race war. The trope of a New Negro underwent several revisions between the 1890's and 1920's, when—in the midst of the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the North—the Harvard-trained philosopher, Alain Locke, revised and appropriated the term to describe a remarkable flowering of art and literature that he named “The New Negro Renaissance.” Later commentators would label the period “The Harlem Renaissance.” Locke and his contemporaries thought that “armed with culture,” as W.E.B. Du Bois wrote much later, they could efficaciously wage the struggle against anti-black racism through what an historian of the period cleverly called “civil rights by copyright.” This course traces the history of the metaphor of a “New Negro” from its inception at the dawn of Jim Crow to the end of The New Negro Renaissance in the Great Depression.

## **English 178x. American Novel: Dreiser to Present M**

**Philip Fisher**

A survey of the 20th-century novel, its forms, patterns of ideas, techniques, cultural context, rivalry with film and radio, short story, and fact. Wharton, *Age of Innocence*; Cather, *My Antonia*; Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* and stories; Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* and stories; Ellison, *Invisible Man*; Nabokov, *Lolita*; Robinson, *Housekeeping*; Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye* and stories; Ha Jin, *Waiting*; Lerner, *Leaving the Atocha Station*. Stories by James, London, Anderson, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Gaitskill, Wallace, Beattie, Lahiri, and Ford.

## **English 183. Theaters of the Real (\*new) Accepting Waitlist Apps Only [But please sign up if you are interested! Sections may well open up!]**

**Derek Miller**

Theater, like other arts, often seeks to imitate reality, to present life as it is, to be—for lack of a better word—real. For many reasons, however, reality in the theater is a strange ideal. First and foremost, what counts as a good representation of reality changes over time. Secondly, Realism, the particular style that most contemporary media claim when they are “realistic,” was born in the nineteenth century and was and is a highly contested category. Third, and perhaps most importantly, theater is always in some sense real in ways that most other art forms are not: theater really presents real bodies in real space and real time.

This course considers theater and its relationship to what we might call “the real.” We will focus on how theater has represented reality, particularly since the rise of Realism in the 1880s and 1890s. We will insist, first and foremost, that Realism is a style with a specific history and a set of evolving practices that produce its effects. But we will also struggle with the distance between Realism and reality, with theater’s phenomenological reality, and with the many non-Realist theaters that nonetheless purport to present real life. In short, we aim to understand why and how—in production practices, acting techniques, narrative forms, and more—people attempt to stage the real.

Readings include plays by Ibsen, Chekhov, Hansberry, Inge, Wilson, Smith, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Brecht, and Baker. Theoretical texts include works by and about Stanislavski, Belasco, Worthen, Artaud, Zola, Kirby, Auslander, Baudrillard, and States.

## **English 184rf. Rogue Fictions (\*new) Accepting Waitlist Apps Only [But please sign up if you are interested! Sections may well open up!]**

**Matthew Ocheltree**

## **English 187aa. The Aesthetics of Athletics S**

**John Stauffer**

This course explores the rarely studied but intimate relationship between art and athletics in literature, visual art, movies, and performance. We examine literary and other representations of athletics; the emotional and philosophical parallels of artists and athletes; along with the dedication to craft and the ideal of perfection. Authors include Herman Melville; David Foster Wallace; Chad Harbach; Joyce Carol Oates; Frederick Douglass; Willa Cather, Ross Gay, Samuel Fussell, others.

**English 189vg. Video Game Storytelling (\*new) Accepting Waitlist Apps Only [But please sign up if you are interested! Sections may well open up!]**

**Vidyan Ravinthiran**

Although this course touches on blockbuster games, it's primarily concerned with alternative forms of storytelling within indie games. In so-called "walking simulators", there's more exploration than action, more narrative than gameplay. They prioritize discovery over system-mastery, asking us to think differently about game environments. Drawing on video game scholars—Brendan Keogh, Ian Bogost, Jon Stone—we'll examine the gendered deconstruction of horror-codes in *Gone Home* (described by Brigid Kennedy as "an explicitly queer videogame with an explicitly queer narrative") and the interplay between the singular and the shareable in the trans micro-narrative, *Dys4ia*; retrospective plotting queries in *The Return of the Obra Dinn* a purely economic and empirical view of the world. We'll also discuss *Firewatch*, *Disco Elysium*, *Kentucky Route Zero*, Bitsy games, and think about how games, more than any other art-form, probe the division identified by Theodor Adorno within capitalist society, separating "work" from leisure, or "play".

**English 192. Political Theatre and the Structure of Drama Accepting Waitlist Apps Only [But please sign up if you are interested! Sections may well open up!]**

**Elaine Scarry**

The estranged, didactic, intellectual theatre of Brecht, and the ritualistic, emergency theatre of Artaud serve as reference points for a range of American, English, and Continental plays. The unique part played by "consent" in theatrical experience. Emphasis on the structural features of drama: establishing or violating the boundary between audience and stage; merging or separating actor and character; expanding or destroying language. Readings include Brecht, O'Neill, Artaud, Genet, Pirandello, and such earlier authors as Euripides and Shelley.

**English 195bd. The Dark Side of Big Data (\*new) Accepting Waitlist Apps Only [But please sign up if you are interested! Sections may well open up!]**

**Maria Dikcis**

Does it sometimes feel like Instagram ads are listening a little too closely to your conversations? Have you ever wondered if certain corporations might own images of your face? Today, fears abound that algorithms are not only populating our lives with annoying targeted advertisements but might also be creating the most unequal societies that have ever existed. In this interdisciplinary seminar, we will explore key methodological overlaps and differences between humanistic and scientific approaches to the phenomenon known as Big Data, or enormously large data sets that are analyzed by computer software to reveal patterns associated with human behavior and communications. In particular, we will focus our attention on the dark side of Big Data, which is increasingly embedded with harmful biases against women, people of color, immigrants, and low-socioeconomic status communities. Our inquiries will thus concern a wide array of issues that stem from the misapplication of Big Data, such as data discrimination, biased artificial intelligence, search engines that reinforce racism, predictive policing, and surveillance capitalism, as well as how these issues intersect with race, class, gender, and citizenship. We will ground these discussions about contemporary theories of Big Data in engagements with a number of literary texts, films, and new media artworks. These cultural case studies range from a poetry collection exploring anti-Blackness and the carceral state, a documentary on social media data scandals, a glitch feminism manifesto, a

memoir about working at an Amazon.com fulfillment center, queer video games, and robot love poems.

## **GenEd- SPRING**

### **GenEd 1133. Is the U.S. Civil War Still Being Fought? **M****

**John Stauffer**

Most of us were taught that the Civil War between the Confederacy and the Union was fought on battlefields chiefly in the American South between the years of 1861-1865. In this narrative, the North won and the South lost. But what if the issues that resulted in such devastating bloodshed were never resolved? What if the war never ended? This course demonstrates the ways in which the United States is still fighting the Civil War, arguably THE defining event in U.S. history. In each class, we connect current events to readings and themes in the course, highlighting how and why the war is still being fought. From Nat Turner's slave rebellion in 1831 to the recent riot (or battle) in Charlottesville, we trace how and why the South was in certain respects the victor, even though the Confederacy was destroyed and the Constitution amended. We explore the different kinds of war—ideological, political, cultural, military, and para-military—that placed the unfreedom of blacks—as slaves, serfs, and prisoners—at the center of larger conflicts over federal versus state and local rule, welfare, globalization, and free trade. We analyze the Civil War in literature, art, politics, photography, prints, film, music, poetry, speeches, and history, while also discovering how these cultural forms worked to shape our memory of the event itself. By the end of the course, we will be able to show how and why contemporary U.S. debates are rooted in this defining narrative, and we will better understand the dilemmas the nation faces today.