

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Spring 2026

NOTE: If you have any questions about how a course ‘counts’ in the major, please see your English Major Faculty Advisor. If you do not have a Faculty Advisor, please contact department Associate Chair, Prof. Seamus O’Malley: seamus.omalley@yu.edu

Media Exit Project: The media exit project will now be completed as part of an advanced course taken with our media studies instructors.

Internships: *Must be approved for academic credit before being started.* Fill out the form and give a description of the internship duties to your faculty or media advisor. Internships are only required for media studies students who wish to earn a concentration in journalism or advertising. www.yu.edu/registrar/forms

MEDIA AND CREATIVE WRITING COURSES

ENGL 1502 Feature Writing

Monday only 6pm-8:30pm

Jason Gewirtz

This class focuses on writing digital news features on digital journalism platforms. We will start with journalism basics, but you will soon be writing full-length feature articles. We will cover idea generation, pitches, story production, ethics, basic photography, graphics production, and what is sometimes referred to as second-day stories... where we take news of the day or breaking news and then pull a specific thread to explore a cause or personal story impacted by that day-of or breaking news story. We also have an agreement with the student editors of the *YU Observer* that allows students in this course to work with the newspaper to pitch feature stories to the newspaper when appropriate. This class will also cover and allow you to write personal profiles, travel stories, Israel-based features, and more.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200 or 1200H. Elective for Media Tracks & Creative Writing. Counts toward Writing Minor.

ENGL 1802 Writing Creative Nonfiction

T/Th 10:25am-11:40am K slot

Katherine Payne

In his essay “The Singular First Person” Scott Russell Sanders claims, “I choose to write about my experience not because it is mine, but because it seems to me a door through which others might pass.” Writing about the self is a vehicle for personal growth, but it is also a style that captivates audiences, informs, persuades, and moves them. This semester we will examine both historical and contemporary creative nonfiction from around the world with a particular focus on personal essays and memoir. We will develop habits of creativity including journaling, brainstorming, collecting materials, participating in workshops, revising, and assembling a writing portfolio. But most importantly we will write, keeping in mind that writing about oneself is a passageway from personal experience to public presentation, from reader to writer, from past to present, and from the known into the unknown.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200 or 1200H. Elective for Media Tracks & Creative Writing. Counts toward Writing Minor.

ENGL 1811 Writing for Television**M/W 3:10pm-4:35pm/3:35pm-4:50pm E slot****Erik Mintz**

Each week, mostly on that other sunnier coast, writers gather and get paid to trade jokes and tell stories (on sitcoms) and introduce exciting plot twists and tension (on one-hour dramas) all in the pursuit of bringing entertainment to TV audiences. Each week, we'll try and simulate that process in class. As a beginning TV writer you'll learn about the craft through analysis of existing shows and by writing an episode of your own. As the script emerges from premise, to story beats, to a fully-realized episode, students will present the work in progress and will critique your fellow would-be TV writers in class as you learn to defend and improve your work.

Pre-requisite: English 1100 or FHS. This course is an elective for the Media Studies track and an elective cross-list for Creative Writing.

LITERATURE COURSES: Category II (Survey) Courses

ENGL 2005 Survey of British Lit III**M/W 10:25am-11:40am B slot****Seamus O'Malley**

This is a survey course of British Literature, beginning around 1870 and culminating in recent years. We will sample a variety of genres, including poems, short stories, novels, plays, and literary criticism. The course will be divided into three units: Late Victorian (1870-1900); modernism (1900-1945); and postmodern/contemporary (1945-present). We'll query the concept of "British Literature": works that enter the canon is often produced outside the geographic boundaries of Britain, so we will track the presence of Irish, and then later Anglophone African writing within British literary networks. Authors may include Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Elizabeth Bowen, Chinua Achebe and Zadie Smith.

Classes will be mostly discussion-based, and students will be required to write three short essays, one for each unit of the course. There will also be a final exam.

It is an Introductory course. It fulfills a Survey II C requirement for the English major. It can fulfill a requirement "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2006 Survey of American Literature I**M/W 1:40pm-2:55pm/1:25pm-1:40pm D slot****Matt Miller**

American Literature I introduces students to the major writers, texts, and movements in U.S. literary history from the Colonial period through the late-nineteenth century, tracing the development of American voices from foundational political and captivity narratives to the rise of Romanticism and the beginnings of realism. We will read a wide range of works—poetry, prose, autobiography, and fiction—and consider how literature both reflects and shapes the cultural, political, and philosophical transformations of its time. Authors studied include Anne Bradstreet, Mary Rowlandson, Benjamin Franklin, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Frederick Douglass, Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Herman Melville, Margaret Fuller, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Kate Chopin, and Mark Twain. Students will be assessed through reading-check quizzes, in-class writing exercises, online discussion forums, and a final paper. This course fulfills the II B requirement for the English major, satisfies the Interpreting Literature and the Arts requirement, and counts toward the Minor in American Literature.

This course does not contain content which some Stern students may find objectionable. As a designated "Traditions" course, American Literature I asks how texts, interpretive communities, and reading practices generate literary histories. Prerequisite: English 1100 or 1200.

ENGL 2510 American Literature & Culture: The Gilded Age, The Progressive Era**T/Th 11:50am-1:03pm L slot****Ann Peters**

Stretching roughly from the 1870s to the early 1900s, The “Gilded Age,” as Mark Twain dubbed it, was a time in America of tremendous change: immigration, rapid urbanization, the rise of industrialization, and a growing consumer culture. It was also a period of stark contrasts, marked by great affluence and extreme poverty, by excessive displays of wealth and by urgent calls for social reform. “Gilded” means something is covered in a thin layer of gold, and Twain used the word to describe what he and others saw as a new culture of glittering surfaces covering up a corrupt reality. But this same period is also sometimes referred to as “The Progressive Era,” a moment in history when major new policies were introduced to improve American lives and to respond to the social and economic inequality of the time, when efforts were made to scrape away the glitter and see what was hidden below.

In this course, we’ll read a wide range of literary works: satirical novels of upper-class Boston and New York; gritty tales of the downtown tenement; stories set in New England villages and in the Deep South. In our reading, we’ll gain a focused understanding of the cultural changes occurring in these years and will study the literary movements (realism, naturalism, regionalism) adopted by American writers at the time. Readings include two novels, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) by William Dean Howells and *The House of Mirth* (1905) by Edith Wharton, and number of shorter works by writers like Abraham Cahan, Charles Chesnutt, Stephen Crane, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Hamlin Garland, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Henry James, and Zitkala-Sa. We’ll also be watching a documentary about Jacob Riis. We end the course reading a more contemporary novel about the period, E.L. Doctorow’s *Ragtime* (1975). Course requirements include: an in-class essay, a final exam, one 5-7 page paper, and three short reading responses. There will also be regular reading quizzes.

Prerequisite: English 1100 or 1200. Fulfills IIC for the English major.

ENGL 2520 The Roaring Twenties**M/W4:40pm-5:55pm/5pm-6:15pm F slot****Matt Miller**

This course focuses on one of the most lively and fascinating periods in American history: the 1920s. Often referred to as “the Jazz Age” or “the Roaring Twenties,” this decade saw the United States through such important events as prohibition, the ascendancy of organized crime, the country’s first major revolutionary youth movement, the invention of popular radio and with it pop music, the so-called “lost generation,” and the creation of America’s first internationally respected native art form—jazz. We will explore these phenomena and others in the context of many mediums, including novels, short stories, poetry, film, cartoons, musical recordings, and a unique history book that has remained in print for over 80 years. Students will also be asked to relate contemporary events and media from the present to events and ideas from the 1920s.

This is an introductory course in American literature. Students will be assessed through reading-check quizzes, in-class writing assignments, an online discussion forum, and a final paper. This course features one novel with some mild sexual content in Toni Morrison’s novel, *Jazz* and a couple other shorter works. Yes, we will read *The Great Gatsby*.

It fulfills a III C requirement for the English major. It fulfills the “Interpreting Literature and the Arts” general education requirement. It counts toward the American Studies minor. Prerequisite: English 1100 or 1200.

LITERATURE COURSES: Category III (Topics) Courses

ENGL 2740 Classic Modern Novels: The Marriage Plot

T/Th 1:35pm-2:50pm M slot

Ann Peters

In this course, we will read four classic 19th century novels, and one novel published recently. The four long novels are: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*, and Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*. The fifth will either be Sally Rooney's *Intermezzo* (2024) or Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013). We'll decide this together.

So many classic novels of the 19th century depend upon the marriage plot – whether to marry, who to marry, what obstacles can occur in the process of getting married, and even, in some cases, what happens after the marriage has occurred. (Many marriage plot novels just stop at the wedding. No more life to be had! “Reader, I married him.”) While courtship and marriage act as the organizing principles of the novels assigned for this course, the topics of our discussion will extend way beyond this theme. In this course we'll be talking about identity and agency; about class and gender; about religion; about the economics of family life in the 19th century; about narrative form and voice; about the way domestic spaces and public spaces inform our understanding of tradition and power; about heroines who follow convention and those who break it; about how these heroines define and re-define themselves as they move toward or away from marriage.

Requirements Include: One short paper, a personal criticism essay in response to a novel (5-7 pages); one long analysis/argument paper (7-10 pages); an in-class midterm essay; and regular reading responses. Note: these are long novels. Plan for this.

Honors Course.

ENGL 2901 Introduction to Women's Studies

T/Th 3pm-4:15pm N slot

Charlotte Fiehn

This course is an introduction to Women's Studies, an interdisciplinary field that grew out of the twentieth-century women's movement. In its early years, those in the field concentrated on the “absence” of women (from literature, history, science, etc.) and worked to add them to the curriculum. Today, Women's Studies is a vast and still growing field of study that draws on many different disciplines in the humanities and the sciences in its efforts to describe, understand and – in many cases – improve women's lives.

The course is organized around diverse representations of female experience. Drawing on a variety of sources--including essays, short fiction and visual media--we will ask how different categories of identity (i.e. race, class, gender, age, ability, etc.) impact each other. We will theorize and articulate our own positions regarding the issues we discuss and engage with positions that differ from our own. Students do not have to define themselves as feminists—or even be sympathetic to feminism as they currently define it—in order to take this course. Like all good conversations, the ones in this class generally benefit from a variety of reasoned opinions.

This is an introductory level “topics” course in English. It fulfills a III D for the English major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisites: English 1100 or 1200 H or FYWR1020. It is required for students pursuing Women's Studies Minor.

ENGL 2920 Topics: British Romanticism

M/W 11:55am-1:10pm C slot

Seamus O'Malley

The poets of the British Romantic era (roughly 1790-1830) were the world's first rock stars: passionate artists who led unruly lives often marked by early deaths, leaving behind a corpus of deeply personal and emotional works. They were witness to a revolutionary age (literally in the case of the United States, France, and Haiti)

and a radical shift in art: not only did the Romantics usher in a new style of writing verse, but they created a new image of the poet. Instead of the craftsman/commentator, the Romantics saw themselves as sages and visionaries.

This course will look at this generation of British, mostly English poets: Charlotte Smith, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, and John Keats. We will also read excerpts from the political treatise *Vindication of the Rights of Women* by Mary Wollstonecraft, the first English-speaking feminist, and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, wife to Percy and 19-year-old inventor of science fiction.

Course evaluations will include one short and one long essay; a midterm and final exam; and class participation.

Course fulfills a IIIB requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ENGL 2920 Topics: Hamlet and the Hebrew Bible

T/Th 9am-10:15am J slot

Shaina Trapedo

Shakespeare's 16th-century England was an era rife with religious and political conflict and uncertainty, and one of the central questions over which much ink and blood were spilled was "How should the religious individual live?" As a prominent poet and playwright, Shakespeare recognized that the patrons of London's public theaters also occupied parish pews, and he frequently adopted and adapted scriptural narratives, tropes, and paradigms from the Hebrew bible in his dramatic scripts and sonnets. Throughout this course, we'll explore moments of intersection—when the Hebrew bible is summoned to the Shakespearean stage's in *Hamlet*, the bard's most theologically-charged play—to see how close-examination of Jewish notions and narratives might lead to a deeper understanding of *Hamlet*, and how the play can, in turn, inspire renewed (and perhaps revised) reflections of the Hebrew bible and Judaic thought. While *Hamlet* serves as the centerpiece of our inquiry, readings will draw widely from biblical sources and exegetical texts of the period, as well as from philosophical and dramatic works that influenced the playwright and the development of revenge tragedies, and from secondary criticism within Shakespeare and Religious Studies.

Category IIIA, Honors course/Strauss Center course

ENGL 2960 Representations of the Holocaust

T/Th 10:25am-11:40am K slot

Charlotte Fiehn

The study of literature helps us to understand other people. It affords us greater insight into our own historical moments and teaches us to empathize with people across historical, geographical, and cultural divides. Studying language and learning what it is capable of also helps us to develop our own capacities as thinkers and communicators; studying language and learning to appreciate the kind of eloquence and beauty it is capable of helps us to think more clearly and communicate better, making us more adept at understanding other people as well as conveying our own thoughts and feelings more effectively.

Drawing on this context, this course will allow students to explore literature and other artistic representations of the Holocaust, including works produced during or after, and in response to, the Holocaust that reflects on the experience of Jewish and non-Jewish people.

Beginning with Deborah Lipstadt's academic book, *Denying the Holocaust*, we will explore the startling history of Holocaust denial, and to frame our understanding of the importance of Holocaust representation through this important lens. Reading Lipstadt's book, we will focus on what is at stake when writers and artists are less than rigorous in their research of the Holocaust and related history, for example. We will also consider the need for continued attention to the Holocaust because of the proliferation of Holocaust denial.

Focusing on twentieth and twenty-first century shaping of the meanings of the Shoah through specific disciplines, discourses, institutions and media, students will consider examples of fiction, poetry, memoir, history, film, museums, and monuments. Students will also explore the importance of perspective, examining the work of Jewish writers and artists who witnessed and survived the Holocaust, including Elie Wiesel, as well as non-Jewish writers and those who did not experience the Holocaust directly. After reading Lipstadt's book, we will read and discuss works such as Wiesel's *Night*, Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl*, Andre Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just*, and Paul Celan's "Death Fugue," among others. Examining these texts as works of literature, we will contextualize what makes Holocaust literature effective and important.

The course will involve writing two essays, one a short critical analysis essay, and the other a longer research paper, embedding secondary sources. There will also be weekly assigned readings and periodic reading journals due. Subject to scheduling and availability, we will also take advantage of the many archives and resources around the city, with trips to the NYPL and possibly the Center for Jewish Studies and the Jewish Museum.

Course fulfills a IIC requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Prerequisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

ADVANCED LITERATURE COURSE: Category III (Topics)

ENGL 3525 Transcendentalism

M/W 3:10pm-4:25pm/3:35pm-4:50pm E slot

Matt Miller

Between the 1830s and 1860s this country's most talented writers forged a distinctively American literature and philosophical outlook on the world known as Transcendentalism. What is our best self? What is our relationship to nature? to the universe? to each other? These are just a few of the key questions Transcendentalists addressed in speeches, poems, and essays. A time of rebirth, this literary movement has been called "the American Renaissance" (F.O. Matthiessen, 1968). It features some of the most memorable literature of the last two centuries.

The course will begin with our discussion of influential essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson, such as "Self-Reliance" about one's relationship with nature and G-d. We'll read excerpts of Henry David Thoreau's famous meditation on the natural world, *Walden*. We'll examine the journalism, as well as the feminist and abolitionist writings of women such as Margaret Fuller. We'll study Walt Whitman, both his poetry and prose, and examine how this singularly original American transformed Transcendentalism into something bolder, shaggier, and more in touch with ordinary Americans. We'll also look at the darker, almost gothic side of Transcendentalism as embodied by the stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne and the gem-like precision of the poetry of Emily Dickinson. Finally, we'll consider how the Transcendentalists are still relevant for us today, as we ask ourselves what Emerson called "the practical question of the conduct of life: How shall I live?"

This is an Advanced Seminar in American literature. Reading assignments will be more challenging than in an introductory class, and students are required to have either completed one literature class before taking this one, OR they may enroll if they received a full "A" grade in ENGL 1100 or 1200. Students will be assessed through reading-check quizzes, in-class writing assignments, an online discussion forum, and a final paper.

This course does not contain content which some Stern students may find objectionable. It focuses mostly on poetry and nonfiction essays often related to philosophy and nature. It is a "Forms, Identities, Reading Practices" course in English, designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It fulfills a III C Advanced requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. It counts towards the American Studies Minor.

English Department Course Grid, Spring 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
A 9-10:15	J 9-10:15	A 9-10:15	J 9-10:15
ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Grimaldi	ENGL 2920: Topics: Hamlet & the Hebrew Bible, Trapedo (cat. IIIA, Honors/Strauss) ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Payne	ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Grimaldi	ENGL 2920: Topics: Hamlet & the Hebrew Bible, Trapedo (cat. IIIA, Honors/Strauss) ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Payne
B 10:25-11:40	K 10:25-11:40	B 10:25-11:40	K 10:25-11:40
ENGL 2005: Survey of British Lit III, O'Malley (cat. IIC intro) ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Grimaldi	ENGL 2960: Representations of the Holocaust, (cat. IIIC intro), Fiehn ENGL 1802: Writing Creative Nonfiction, Payne	ENGL 2005: Survey of British Lit III, O'Malley (cat. IIC intro) ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Grimaldi	ENGL 2960: Representations of the Holocaust, (cat. IIIC intro), Fiehn ENGL 1802: Writing Creative Nonfiction, Payne
C 11:55-1:10	L 11:50-1:05	C 11:55-1:10	L 11:50-1:05
ENGL 2920: Topics: British Romanticism (IIIB), O'Malley ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Grimaldi	ENGL 2510: American Literature and Culture (IIC), Peters ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Fiehn	ENGL 2920: Topics: British Romanticism, O'Malley ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Grimaldi	ENGL 2510: American Literature and Culture (IIC), Peters ENGL 1100: Composition and Rhetoric, Fiehn
D 1:25-2:40	M 1:35-2:50	D 1:25-2:40	M 1:35-2:50
ENGL 2006: Survey of American Literature I, Miller (cat. IIB Intro) ENGL 1200: Freshman Honors Seminar O'Malley	ENGL 1100: Composition, Fiehn ENGL 2740: Classic Modern Novels (cat. IIIC Honors), Peters	ENGL 2006: Survey of American Literature I, Miller (cat. IIB Intro) ENGL 1200: Freshman Honors Seminar O'Malley Club hour 2:40-3:30	ENGL 1100: Composition, Fiehn ENGL 2740: Classic Modern Novels (cat. IIIC Honors), Peters
E 3:10-4:25	N 3:00-4:15	E 3:10-4:25; 3:35-4:50	N 3:00-4:15
ENGL 3525: Transcendentalism (Adv, Cat. III), Miller ENGL 1811: Writing for Television: Elective for Media; cross-list CW; counts towards Writing minor, Erik Mintz	ENGL 2901: Introduction to Women's Studies, Fiehn (cat. III, Intro) ENGL 1200, Peters	ENGL 3525: Transcendentalism (Adv, Cat. III), Miller ENGL 1811: Writing for Television: Elective for Media; cross-list CW; counts towards Writing minor, Erik Mintz	ENGL 2901: Introduction to Women's Studies, Fiehn (cat. III, Intro) ENGL 1200, Peters
F 4:40-5:55	P 4:40-5:55	F 5:00-6:15	P 4:40-5:55
ENGL 2520: Literature & Culture of the Roaring Twenties (cat. IIIC), Miller		ENGL 2520: Literature & Culture of the Roaring Twenties (cat. IIIC), Miller	
EVENING, ONCE PER WEEK 6-8:30pm ENGL 1502: Feature Writing; cross-list CW; counts towards Writing minor, Jason Gewirtz			