YC Department of English
Fall 2025 Course Offerings

Our courses invite students to deepen their writing, reading, and critical thinking skills. We welcome interested students from all majors to join our community. Majors may choose between the Creative Writing and Literary Studies tracks.

If you're wondering which Fall 2025 English courses are right for you or have questions about the English major or minor or the Writing minor, contact the Chair of the English Department, Professor Elizabeth Stewart: estewart@yu.edu. For information about the Media Studies minor, contact Professor Elizabeth Stewart: estewart@yu.edu.

Course requirements for the major and our minors can be found on the YC English website.

Required for English Majors

Both Literary Studies and Creative Writing Concentrations

ENG 3005 ADVANCED SEMINAR
M 6:00-8:30
PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART

This course explores the kinds of thinking and writing associated with literary and cultural studies, from traditional academic projects to more creative writing endeavors. Designed for all students in both the literary studies and creative writing tracks, the course is meant to build on the work you have already done in English 2010 Interpreting Texts, while preparing you for the student-led Senior Colloquium in your final Spring semester. You should therefore sign up for this course in the Fall semester before the Spring in which you plan to take the colloquium. It is advisable to take the seminar earlier if you intend on a January graduation, rather than taking it in your final Fall semester. Thus, anyone planning to graduate by January 2027 should sign up for Fall 2025.

This year, we will study forms and structures of narrative[1] as well as the phenomenon that Peter Brooks has described as "the world overtaken by narrative."[2] We will specifically focus on the workings of narrative within story, history, myth, and their various interrelations. Also, this year students and professor will collaborate in shaping the course. Every class participant will be asked to construct a module dedicated to studying a particular kind of narrative chosen from a variety of disciplines and media;

while working on this material together, we will remain mindful of the claim made by several influential 20th – 21st century theoreticians that the drive for narrative fundamentally shapes cognition, experience, perception, and fantasy.
Texts: Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, P.K. Dick, *Man in the High Castle* and student selections.

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[1] the selection, arrangement, and processing of narrative material

[2] Brooks, (2022) *Seduced by Story,* NYRB.

Creative Writing

These classes count towards the Creative Writing track and the Creative Writing minor. English majors on the Literary Studies track may count as many as two of these courses, and English minors may count one. The prerequisites for the classes are FYWR 1020 or BCOM 1010.

ENG 1822H WRITING FICTION
T/R 4:30 - 5:45
PROFESSOR DAVID PURETZ

Our goal as fiction writers is to entertain or amuse our readers, to move or persuade them, to get them to look more closely at or think more deeply about something that we feel is worth their attention—or some combination(s) of these. Ultimately the goal of fiction, as David Foster Wallace has said, is to show what it is to be a human being. In this Writing Fiction course, we will be reading and writing stories

that work toward these ends. The course is for both curious novices as well as for those with some experience writing stories who want to expand their knowledge and range. We will spend the first half of the semester discussing various works of fiction from different traditions and time periods. We will read for content, but just as importantly, we will study the voice, point of view, structure, and use of language. We will practice close reading techniques with our own writing in mind. Every week, we will be writing creatively in response to these works, using them as models and as inspiration for our own writing. The second half of the semester is dedicated to the writing workshop. You will be responsible for submitting one substantial story or a series of shorter stories for workshop critique and for extensive revision.

ENG 1832 WRITING POETRY
T/R 3:00 - 4:15
PROFESSOR BRIAN TRIMBOLI

Writing Poetry is for writers from all backgrounds, and all skill levels, who are interested in poetry and its far-reaching implications. This course will help writers develop an appreciation of contemporary poetry, as well as their own poetic voice, and will provide a space to explore the different impacts of poetic language. We will pursue influence and understanding from the great contemporary poets of the world, and will examine how regions and cultures shape, and are shaped by, poetry. Writers will work towards a portfolio of their own poetry, and will read the work of Yehuda Amichai, Wislawa Szymborska, Breyten Breytenbach, Kofi Awoonor, as well as many others.

ENG 1450 WRITING WITH POWER:
CLASSICAL RHETORIC FOR MODERN TIMES
M/W 4:30 – 5:45
PROFESSOR LAUREN FITZGERALD
Fulfills the Writing-Intensive requirement and counts towards the Media Studies minor.

Would you like to become a more powerful writer, able to move readers and achieve your goals? This creative writing course will teach you how, using two of the earliest sources of European and U.S. culture, ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric. Though "empty rhetoric" and "political rhetoric" signify language that at best says nothing and at worst dangerously deceives, "rhetoric" also names the oldest Western curriculum for teaching people to communicate effectively. Over thousands of years, this time-tested art enabled ancient Greeks and Romans to become persuasive orators and Shakespeare, Milton, and countless other famous authors to hone their creativity.

Weekly activities will include brief exercises that Shakespeare and Milton themselves completed—a fable, proverb, character sketch, and description, among others—as well as short readings by and about Greek, Roman, and modern rhetoricians. For three longer projects, you'll produce a high-stakes, real-world document such as an application essay, job letter, and/or resume; a rhetorical analysis of a contemporary speech; and, because rhetoric informs all modes of communication including those using digital technologies, your own presentation with a slideshow. In the process, you'll become a *rhetorician*, able to critically analyze texts and the larger systems in which they are produced, and *rhetor*, adept at using these systems to produce texts that get things done.

Plato and Aristotle walking and disputing. Detail from Raphael's *The School of Athens* (1509–1511)

Literature and Film Electives

Pre-requisite: FYWR/H 1020//BCOM 1010. Literary Studies students take eight, and Creative Writing students take at least three electives, in addition to ENG2010 Interpreting Texts, the Advanced Seminar (Fall), and the Colloquium (Spring).

ENG 2356 ENGLISH LIT: 18TH CENTURY
M/W 3:00 – 4:15
PROFESSOR CARRIE SHANAFELT

Eighteenth-century British fiction inspired entire generations of any age, gender, and class to look to novels for entertainment, information, moral wisdom, and vicarious excitement. From their roots in travel and crime fiction, through the development of the comic realistic novel, to the invention of Gothic and horror fiction, authors of literature in this period helped to reshape philosophical discourse, alter the political and legal priorities of the nation, and construct a common sense of public life and secular values in the wake of the sectarian violence of the previous century. The texts we will read are stunningly vivid, funny, frightening, and full of adventure, and the moral dilemmas they pose are instantly familiar to twenty-first-century readers. We will be reading works by Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe, Eliza Haywood, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne, and Ann Radcliffe.

ENG 2964 THE ART OF FILM II : 1968 - PRESENT
T/R 3:00 - 4:30
PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH
COUNTS TOWARD THE MEDIA STUDIES MINOR

This course will introduce students to the basics of analyzing film through an exploration of important films of the past 60 years. We'll focus primarily on the close reading of elements of mise-en-scène (everything up there on the screen) and editing, playing particular attention to how they come together to produce meaning. We'll discuss film genres and their conventions, and key theoretical concepts scholars use for analyzing film.

Texts for the class will be Barsam & Monahan's *Looking at Movies* and Elsaesser & Hagener's *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*.

Films will include *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974), *Annie Hall* (Woody Allen, 1977), *Days of Heaven* (Terrence Malick, 1978), *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979), *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982), *Do the Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1987), *Toy Story 2* (John Lasseter, 1999), *Grand Budapest Hotel* (Wes Anderson, 2014), *Boyhood* (Richard Linklater, 2014), and *Parasite* (Bong June-Ho, 2019).

Core Courses

English majors and minors may count up to two Core courses towards their requirements.

ENG 1001 BOOKS ON BOOKS, FILMS ON FILMS (INTC)

T/R 1:30 - 2:45

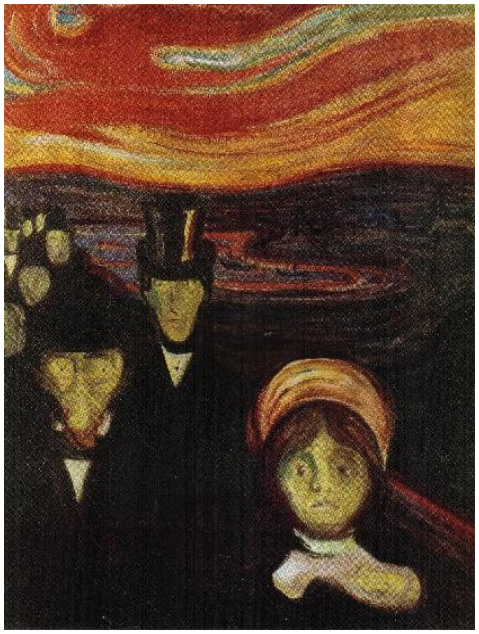
PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH *Counts toward the Media Studies minor*

What do literature and film tell us about themselves and each other? What are their principal components and how do they work? What approaches might one use for analyzing them? How is reading a story different from "reading" a film? By addressing these questions, this course will help students develop a deeper understanding of how narrative literature and film work and how they're related (or aren't).

In this course we'll explore the forms and structures of literary and cinematic storytelling, and how these elements come together to produce meaning. We'll examine the roles of readers, film viewers, authors, directors, and critics. Finally, we'll survey various approaches used by scholars and critics to analyze literature and film.

Course texts will include O'Brien, "On the Rainy River"; Hammett, "The Girl with the Silver Eyes"; and Cortázar, "A Continuity of Parks." Films will include *Sherlock Jr.*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Stranger than Fiction*, and *The Truman Show*. Critical texts will include Aristotle, "Poetics"; Wellek & Warren, "The Nature and Modes of Narrative Fiction"; Vonnegut, "The Shapes of Stories"; Lynn, *Texts and Contexts*; Wilde, "The Decay of Lying"; Rushdie, *The Wizard of Oz*; and Spadoni, *A Pocket Guide to Analyzing Film*.

ENG 1019 TIMES OF CRISIS: LITERATURE, ART, MUSIC (CUOT)
PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART
M/W 3:00 - 4:15



Counts toward the Media Studies minor

The course looks at the connections between music, art, and literature and historical periods of crisis, tumult, and social destabilization. The course investigates the music, art, and literature produced in contexts of moral, political, financial, ecological, health, bio-technological crises. It also explores psychological and phenomenological crises, such as the crisis of personal boundaries in social media.

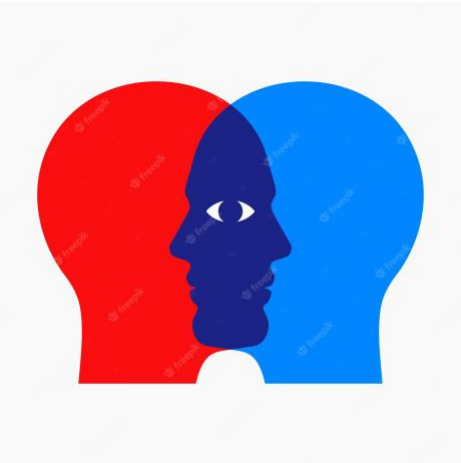
Moments of crisis beget states of exception: culturally, art forms and genres react to crisis by reinventing themselves for unprecedented times; exceptionality of form in the 20th and 21st centuries has often resulted in the breakdown of representation, tonality, and humanism; it has also, however, had consequential social effects and generated its own new forms of consolation.

The course will likewise explore the phenomenon of "late work," crisis work produced by individual artists late in life, as they confront their own mortality.

ENGL 1023H AUTHORSHIP: PLATO TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (CUOT)
F 10:00 - 12:30
PROFESSOR LAUREN FITZGERALD
For incoming freshmen Honors students.

This course explores a topic that you might be surprised to learn will come up frequently in your work as a college student, representations of *authorship* over the last ~2500 years. From a historical perspective, and because depictions of this process have changed significantly over the centuries, we'll consider how famous authors have described where ideas for writing come from: Is it divine inspiration? The world around them? Imitation of previous authors? Hard work and craftsmanship? An expression of who we are? Collaborations with others? We'll also address more recent perspectives on who gets to be called an author: For instance, why is there a debate about whether Shakespeare authored his works? Are women writers part of the authorial tradition? What about college students? Most important, we'll look at why this topic matters to you, right now. Ever wonder why, as a student, you must produce original writing, usually on your own, when the writing that people do on the job and/or the internet can be anonymous, collaborative, imitative, and even, strictly speaking, plagiarized? We'll tackle this question too and raise many others about the far-reaching topic of authorship.

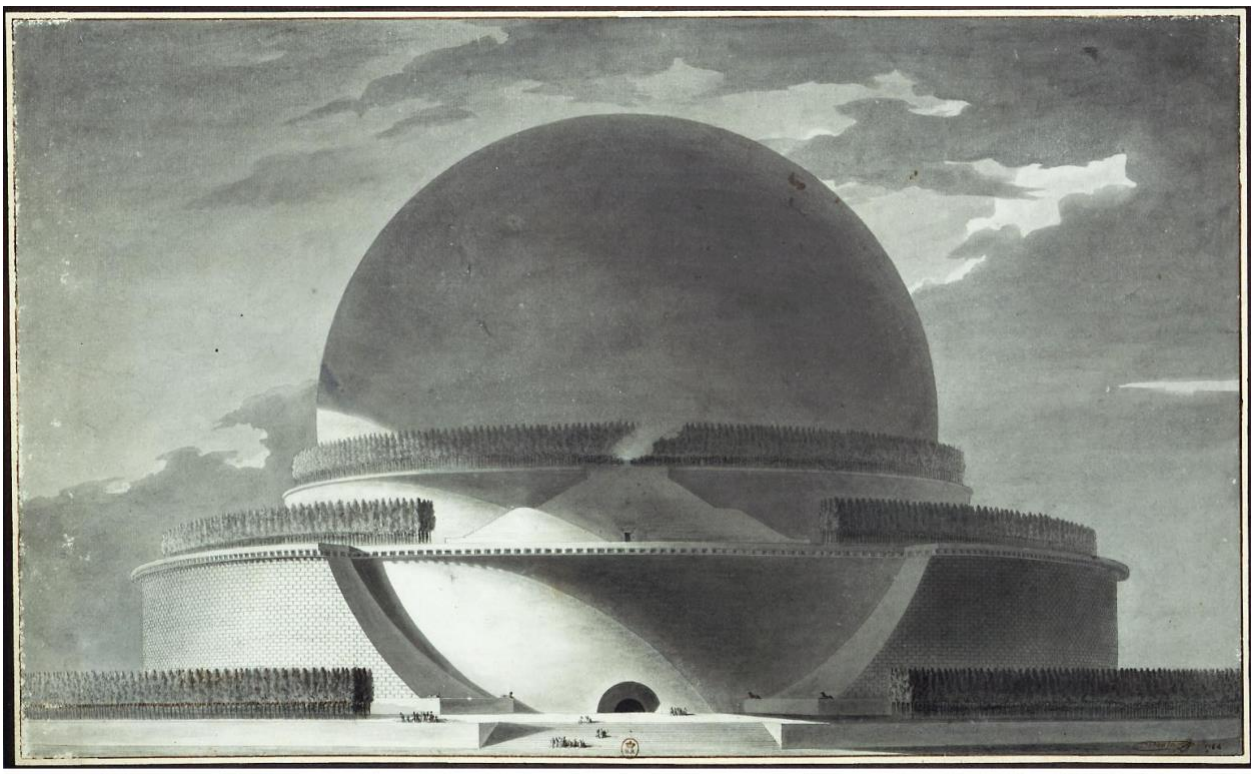
ENG 1026 FACE-TO-FACE:
COMPLEX MODERN IDENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY FILM (COWC)
M/W 4:30 - 5:45
PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART
Counts towards the Media Studies minor.



The basis of identity is to a large extent visual, and images are the bricks and mortar of what we eventually come to think of as subjectivity on the whole and cultural identity more broadly speaking. As Aristotle claimed, we learn to become ourselves by idealizing and imitating what we see on the stage —for us, the film screen— in front of us and we become ourselves by imitating our own ideals, thereby overcoming other possible iterations of ourselves. This is a course about subjectivity, the social order in which it emerges, ideology, and power. It explores the role cinematic images play in our own unconscious formation. While the course pays attention to both cognition and affect in our reception of film, it will emphasize the study of affect in cinematic identification, projection, and enjoyment.

In its new variant, the course's main themes are: subjectivity, technology, power, and horror. Theory to be studied: Aristotle, Lacan, Hegel, Žižek, Mulvey. Films to be studied: *The Truman Show, Psycho, Get Out, Alien, The Virgin Suicides, Vertigo, The Dark Knight, Caché, Parasite.*

ENG 1033 UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS ACROSS TIME (CUOT)
T/R 4:30 – 5:45
PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Throughout history, great thinkers and social revolutionaries have imagined and created utopias—visionary communities embodying their ideals. Others, questioning the totalitarian impulses they believed lurked behind such utopian projects, have imagined dystopias that demonstrate the ways such projects might go awry. With attention to the shaping influences of social, political, and economic forces, "Utopias and Dystopias Across Time" will explore utopian and dystopian thought from the 16th-century to the present through works of literature, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and film.

Course texts will include Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," Kumar's "The Elements of Utopia" and "The History of Utopia," More's *Utopia*, Maslow's "A Theory of Human Motivation," Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*,

Buss's "The Evolution of Happiness," excerpts from Marx's the *1844 Manuscripts* and "The Communist Manifesto," excerpts from Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and Morris's *News from Nowhere*, Foucault's "Panopticism," Orwell's *1984*, excerpts from Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time,* and Anderson's *Feed*. Films will include *Modern Times*, *Pleasantville*, and *Wall-E.*

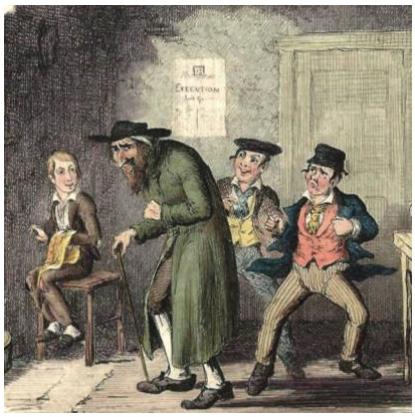
ENG 2791: CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

M/W 1:30 – 2:45 *OR* 4:30 – 5:15 (THIS SECTION IS HONORS)

PROFESSOR CARRIE SHANAFELT

During the Victorian era, a new conception of the child began to emerge alongside the earliest theories of modern psychology. Children began to be seen not just as young people, but as vulnerable beings whose experiences could shape their minds, lives, and behaviors, potentially resulting in an unimaginably different future. Fiction written for children turned away from the warnings of violent folktales toward narratives that welcomed readers into a world of meaning, where learning how to act with purpose and bravery is just as important as avoiding fatal errors. All of the texts we will read this semester depict a child protagonist who enters an allegorical zone of fantasy where everything and everyone they encounter represents an obstacle, lesson, or problem they will face as adults in the real world. We will read and discuss major works of British and American children's fiction by Lewis Carroll, L. Frank Baum, JM Barrie, CS Lewis, Norton Juster, Madeleine L'Engle, and Lionel Davidson.

ENG 2453H: JEWS IN WESTERN LIT (INTC)
M/W 6:45 - 8:00 PM
PROFESSOR SHAINA TRAPEDO



From medieval blood libels to *Ulysses*' Leopold Bloom, the figure of the Jew has loomed large in the Western literary imagination. This course will examine how authors through the ages, such as Boccaccio, Chaucer, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Lessing, Dickens, and Eliot, have represented Jewishness in poetry and prose for their predominantly Christian readers. How are Jews positioned in relation to law, commerce, community, morality, wisdom, and faith in the fictional worlds they inhabit? What technical or thematic purpose do Jewish characters serve in the construction of the text as a whole? Through deep engagement with a variety of texts, we'll consider to what extent these works reflect, reinforce, challenge, and/or change the existing archetypes and assumptions about Jews in their respective historical and cultural moments, and how these characterizations reverberate in the social history of antisemitism (and philosemitism). We'll also briefly consider the literary afterlives of these characters in the hands of Jewish writers, such as Will Eisner's graphic novel *Fagin* and Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*. Taught under the auspices of both the English department and the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, this course will feature occasional guest lectures by affiliated humanities faculty.

ENG 4930H TOPICS: SECULAR THEOLOGY: AMERICAN JEWISH LITERATURE (INTC)

F 10:00 - 12:15
PROFESSOR FRED SUGARMAN
For incoming freshmen Honors students

After WWII, when European Jewry and its religious institutions were nearly decimated, a transition occurred from religious to secular identification for Jews. Jews were anxious to embrace American secular culture and mostly abandoned Rabbis and the synagogues to embrace American culture. Jews were entering colleges and thanks to the GI Bill, many of their professors were Jews signaling the ascent of culture over religion. Diverse figures such as Morris R. Cohen (CCNY), Irving Howe (CUNY), Lionel Trilling (Columbia), and other stars of the academy brought heightened interest and value in the arts, particularly the study of the novel. Not surprisingly, a generation of Jewish writers became touchstones for what would be the deepest explorations of Jewishness in America.

This class will concentrate on the three most important writers in replacing religion with literature: Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud and Philip Roth. Bellow straddled the worlds of American and European cultures, Malamud maintained his devotion to the American realistic novel and Roth was the final, far-reaching figure who negated religion and replaced it with the language of the novel.

Visit http://www.yu.edu/yeshiva-college/ug/english/ to find out more about the YC English Department and its faculty and the English major and minor. Visit https://www.yu.edu/yeshiva-college/ug/writing to learn about the Creative Writing minor—and for links to the Creative Writing minor and the Media Studies minors' webpages.