YC Department of English
Spring 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 Spring 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).

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

Creative Writing

These classes count towards the Creative Writing concentration and the Creative Writing minor. English majors in the Literary Studies concentration may count as many as two of these courses, and English minors may count one. Pre-requisites: FYWR 1020/H or SSSB Business Communications I

ENG 1408 Telling the Self: Memoir M/W 4:30 – 5:45
Professor Sarah Snider

"I am large, I contain multitudes."
--Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"

Working off of the premise that we, too, contain multitudes, in this creative writing workshop, we will explore the process of taking our intricate, unruly, expansive, and multidimensional selves and experiences and shaping them onto the written page. Through mining for inspiration a range of works, from the linear to the experimental, in which writers use "I" as a point of departure for describing their worlds, we will develop and refine our own methods for telling the complexity of the self.

This course will move between discussions of readings and craft techniques, in-class writing, and full-class workshops. Students will work as a classroom community to constructively comment on each other's work as well as to investigate through writing the ways that the self can be expressed and transformed, pushing the boundaries of the artistic and written imagination.

ENG 1721 Introduction to Creative Writing Mondays 6:45–9:15
Professor Brian Trimboli

For writers from all backgrounds and all skill levels. The course will encourage writers to sharpen their communication skills through exploration of the three major genres within creative writing. We will read, and write, fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction, in order to better understand reader-based writing through precision and voice. Writers in this course will start with the basic elements of short fiction and work their way towards producing short non-fiction, as well as poetry. In addition, we will be reading authors such as Italo Calvino, Barry Yourgrau, Margaret Atwood, Haruki Murakami, Louise Gluck, and Yusef Komunyakaa, in order to better understand the genres' trajectories and contemporary standing. This course will provide the space to develop your own writerly voice, as well as how you might explore that voice within different mediums, and might be especially interesting for those studying Media Studies, Philosophy, as well as English or Writing Studies.

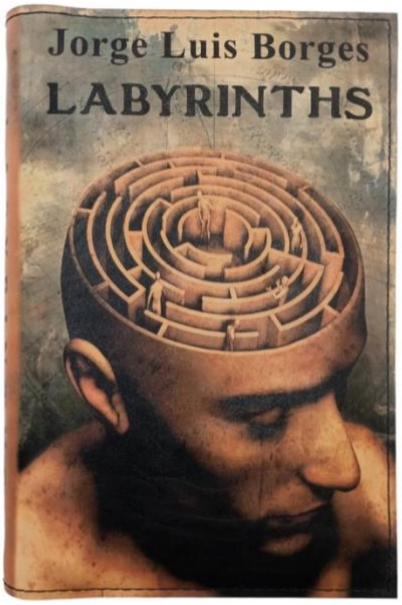
ENG 1028 Truth in Fiction and the Expression of Experience
T/R 4:30 – 5:45 (*This course also fulfills the INTC Core Requirement*)
Professor David Puretz

In this course we will examine the relationship between authors and the stories they tell. We will explore how creative works can be simultaneously fictional and autobiographical, and we will investigate the notion, as stated by Camus, that "Fiction is the lie through which we tell the truth." To what extent do an

author's unique individual experiences influence his or her fictional work? How large of an impact might the author's gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexuality, geography, and socioeconomic position in society have? In what ways does a fictional narrative reflect the "real world" of its author? And why is it important for authors to convey their representations of truth to readers?

Our inquiry will include a close study of works by (and about) James Baldwin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ralph Ellison, Leslie Marmon Silko, Tim O'Brien, and others. To deepen our understanding of the relationship between artists and their art, we will also analyze creative expressions in other disciplines, including film and painting.

Course assignments will require critical and creative engagement. You will write a formal paper that combines informed literary analysis with research on an author, as well as compose a work of fiction that expresses your own truth. Together, these assignments will comprise 10-15 pages of revised work. Additional coursework includes short writing exercises, quizzes on the readings, and active participation in collaborative discussions. The term will culminate in an oral presentation as a final exam, allowing you to articulate your insights and reflections.



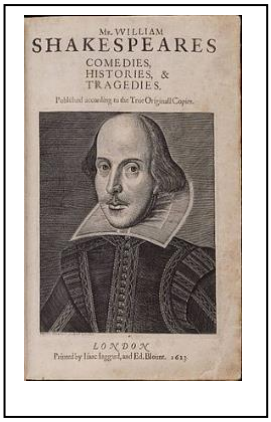
LITERATURE & FILM Electives

Literary Studies students take eight of these electives, and Creative Writing students take at least three, in addition to the Advanced Seminar (Fall) and Colloquium (Spring). Pre-requisite: FYWR or FYWR (H) or Business Communications I.

ENG 2010 Interpreting Texts: Literary Reading and Critical Practice
M/W 3:00 – 4:15
Professor Carrie Shanafelt

Whenever we encounter a text (literary, artistic, cinematic, informative, commercial, historical, etc.), our interpretation is guided by expectations of form, knowledge of context, and the tension between our own worldviews and that of the text. In this course, we will learn and practice a wide variety of analytical strategies that expand from our own aesthetic reactions to communication with others, drawing on evidence from genre and form, history and culture, and politics and philosophy. Texts in this course will include poetry, fiction, theory, and film, all of which challenge us to develop new strategies for finding meaning in the world around us as well as in the works we discuss.
Fulfills WRIN req.

ENG 2033 Shakespeare: Major Plays
T/R 3:00 – 4:15
Professor David Lavinsky



In this introductory course, we will read a good selection of Shakespeare's major plays, paying special attention to their place within the cultural and political contexts of early modern England. This course counts as the required pre-1700 course for English majors. Requirements: Regular postings to an online discussion forum, in-class collaborative performances, a final project, and at least one Shakespeare-themed excursion in NYC.

ENG 2960 Art of Film 1896 - 1968 T/R 4:30 – 5:45
Professor Paula Geyh

For over a century, movies have captivated us and shaped our expectations and understanding of the world. This course will introduce students to the basics of analyzing and writing about film. We'll focus primarily on the close reading of elements of mise-en-scène (everything up there on the screen) and montage (film editing), paying particular attention to how they come together to produce meaning. We'll explore several theoretical approaches to analyzing film and the conventions of film genres including the screwball comedy, the Hitchcock mystery, the Western, the musical, horror, and sci-fi.
Although not a "history of film," the course is organized chronologically, and it examines key movements in film history, including early silent film, classic

Hollywood film, Soviet montage, German Expressionism, experimental film, and the French New Wave.
Among the films we'll study are *Citizen Kane*, *It Happened One Night*, *Rear Window*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Man with a Movie Camera*, *Vertigo*, *Breathless*, *The Searchers*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Texts include Kawin's *How Movies Work* and Elsaesser and Hagener's *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*.

ENG 2861H Major Authors: Whitman/Melville F 10 - 12:30
Professor Fredric Sugarman

Herman Melville and Walt Whitman were both born in 1819 and died within a year of each other (1891/1892). They developed within the artistic battles in New York City embodied in the Young America movement, a now forgotten footnote to the work of two great writers. The two never met nor did they read each other's works. Yet, while one worked in poetry and the other predominantly in prose (Melville was also an accomplished poet), they posit opposing philosophies of what it is to be an American. Whitman was the great dissolver of all differences; Melville was the creator of the social reality; whereas Whitman saw the poet's role as subsuming all objective reality and recasting it as a unified poetic vision, Melville saw the literary act to be rescuing the real from the onset of poetic/personal subjectivity.

This class will concentrate on the two masterpieces of each writer – Song of Myself and Moby-Dick. Beginning with Whitman and his Preface to the 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass, we will read Song of Myself in its entirety also considering his other great masterpiece, Crossing Brooklyn Ferry. The undertaking is to see how Whitman's poetic enterprise is to undo the world he lives in, imaginatively recreating it through poetry, and establishing a voice – Walt Whitman, a kosmos – that represents an America of the

imagination. After Whitman, we will turn to the whaling adventure in which Captain Ahab adopts a philosophy akin to Whitman's which Ishmael will try to evade and undo. Moby-Dick is a battle for the idea of America, a struggle between what Whitman believed to be for the good and Melville could never accept as the real.

ENG 4001 Senior Colloquium
Professor Elizabeth Stewart
M 6:00 - 8:30

This course provides students majoring in English with a culminating, "capstone" experience, which forges links between your previous courses while directing you towards new paths of inquiry. Concluding with a Senior Final Paper and Oral Presentation, this semester-long course explicitly links the gateway course (English 2010, Interpreting Texts) with other courses in the major by creating and following connections among texts, genres, cultural contexts, and critical perspectives. In this way, we hope you will consider your own stake in the ongoing conversation of literary studies, the questions that drive your interest in the field, and the ways in which you might carry your intellectual pursuits into the future. The course joins students and faculty in dialogue around texts and the interpretive practices that contextualize them, while enhancing community among English majors through its collaborative nature. Building on the work of the Advanced Seminar, students will consult with members of the English department faculty to prepare for leading their own sessions of the course. ***Required for all Creative Writing and Literary Studies students in their final Spring semester.***

CORE COURSES

INTC (Interpreting the Creative)

ENG 1001 Books on Books, Film on Film
T/R 1:30 – 2:45
Honors: T/R 3:00 – 4:15
Professor Paula Geyh

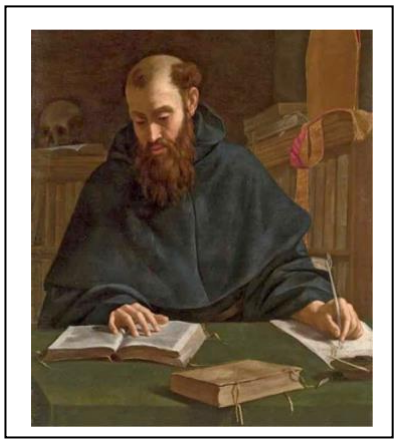
What do literature and film tell us about themselves and each other? What are their principal components and how do they work? What approaches might one use for analyzing them? How is reading a novel different from "reading" a film? By addressing these questions, this course will help students to develop 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 Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*; O'Brien, "On the Rainy River"; Hammett, "The Girl with the Silver Eyes; Cortázar, "A Continuity of Parks"; and Phillips, *A Humument*. Films will include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Sherlock Jr.*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, *Stranger than Fiction*, and *The Truman Show*. Critical texts will include Aristotle, *Poetics*; Vonnegut, "The Shape of Stories," Wellek & Warren, "The Nature and Modes of Narrative Fiction"; Lynn, *Texts and Contexts*; and Spadoni, *A Pocket Guide to Analyzing Film*. ***Fulfills INTC req.***

ENG 1013 Words To Live By: Literature, Morality, and Entertainment
T/R 4:30 – 5:45
Professor David Lavinsky

Can stories have ennobling effects? Can they teach their readers what to feel or think, and therefore how to act? And if so, by what means? This course sets out to examine these questions from a variety of perspectives, all variously concerned with the interrelation of artistic form and moral meaning. We will track anxieties about the spiritual consequences of imaginative diversion and departure; reconsider the relationship between religious art and secular forms of entertainment, and the utility of the sacred/secular distinction more generally; explore the different ways in which visual, textual, and performative mediums exert a hold on our minds (and emotions, and therefore our bodies); and assess how these concerns are implicated in contemporary debates about the problematics of reading and moral exemplification. Many of our readings will be drawn from early English poetry, prose, and drama, though no previous exposure to this period or its literature is assumed, and a wide range of critical and theoretical texts will help students situate unfamiliar material. "Interpreting the Creative" (INTC) courses within the Yeshiva College core curriculum provide students with foundational tools for appreciating, understanding, and interpreting works from various domains of the creative arts—literary, visual, musical, theatrical and other performing arts. INTC courses teach students to understand how creative works shape and enhance our perception and understanding of ourselves and the world we live in; apply multiple interpretive frameworks to analyze and compare different kinds of creative works; and write and defend theses about works of art, and in some cases create works of art. ***Fulfills INTC req.***



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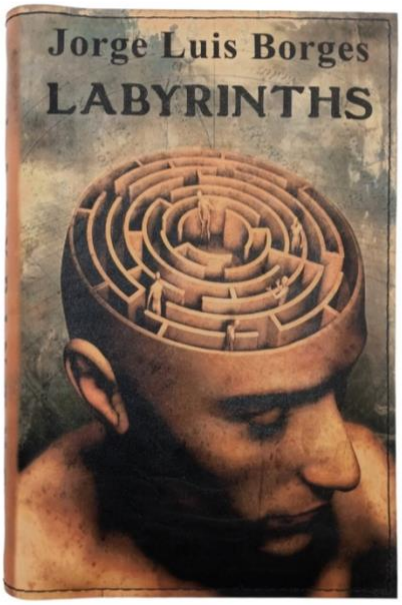


participation in collaborative discussions. The term will culminate in an oral presentation as a final exam, allowing you to articulate your insights and reflections. ***This course is a Creative Writing elective and also fulfills the INTC req.***

ENG 1030 Revolutionary Fictions: Early American Literature
M/W 4:30 – 5:45 (sec. 241); 6:45 – 8:00 (sec. 261)
Professor Carrie Shanafelt

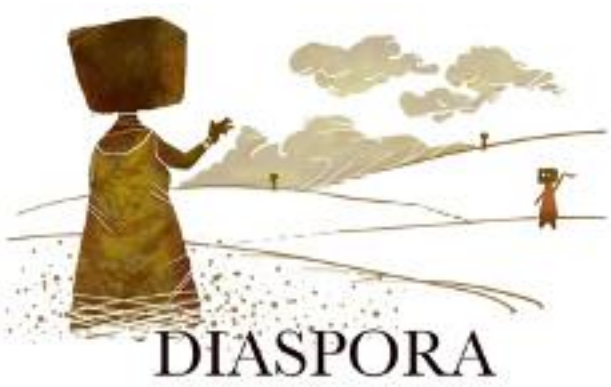
"(I am large, I contain multitudes.)" – "Song of Myself" 51, Walt Whitman

From colonial settlement to the Civil War, the British colonies (and later United States of America) were in conflict about who constitutes "the people," what they will honor from their ancestors, and whether they will ever successfully form a stable and just nation. This course focuses on how American writers fashioned themselves under immense pressure during terrifying times with fragile allegiances. Through poems, speeches, essays, sermons, autobiography,

satire, and horror fiction, we will learn how the multivocality of early America found expression in the representation of divided and anxious minds.
Fulfills INTC req.

COWC (Contemporary World Cultures)

ENG 1002 Diaspora Literature
M/W 3:00 - 4:15
Professor Elizabeth Stewart



This course explores literature about diaspora: "diaspora" as the abandonment of home, whether voluntary or enforced, and a search for a new home, new opportunities, and new beginnings, even as the home of the past lingers in the imagination, in memory, and in desire.
The massive and often chaotic displacements of peoples seeking refuge from violence, famine, and persecution in their homelands or opportunities for economic survival in an increasingly globalized and politically turbulent world. The twentieth century, the century of totalitarianism and genocide, had already seen seismic shifts in populations fleeing ethnic cleansing, political persecution, and specific events such as WWI and WWII, the Holocaust, African decolonization, the Indian partition, various regime changes, and nation-building. Literature and film in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have recorded the histories and fictionalizations of such diasporic experiences. The two oldest and far-reaching global diasporas have been the Jewish and the African diasporas. Both were painful, both produced flowering cultural expression, and both continue to develop, centuries later, to this day.
Texts: Shakespeare, *The Tempest,* Henry Louis Gates, *Black in Latin America* (documentary); Christopher Guldbransen*, Stealing Africa: Why Poverty?* (documentary), Haitian filmmaker Raoul Peck, *I Am Not Your Negro* (documentary), Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks,* Australia's Peter Weir,

Picnic at Hanging Rock (film), Ryan Coogler, *The Black Panther,* W. G. Sebald, *The Emigrants* (Germans, Jews, US), Austrian Jewish writer and journalist Joseph Roth, *The Wandering* Jews*,* Czech Jewish writer Franz Kafka, "Josephine, the Singer, or: the Mouse Folk," Israeli Kafkaesque writer S.Y. Agnon, *The Parable and Its Lesson.* ***Fulfills COWC req.***

ENG 1026H Face-to-Face: Complex Modern Identities in Contemporary Film M/W 4:30 - 5:45
Professor Elizabeth Stewart

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 cultural identity. As Aristotle claimed, we learn to become ourselves by imitating what we see (on the stage) in front of us—for us, the film screen—and we become ourselves by imitating our cultural ideals. This course explores the role cinematic images play in creating narratives about a multiplicity of cultural identities. Aristotle also insisted that it is the "ideal" character created on the stage who will aid in creating "ideal" citizens. In other words, Aristotle knew that the visual/verbal arts—in his case, theater, in our case film—have not only a representative function, but an ideological one as well. But cinematic images, like images in the other arts, have also held the function of "naturalizing" certain structures of oppression and domination as well as challenging them. This course will explore how American and foreign film represents various racial, class, gender, ethnic, and national identities, and how they reproduce and challenge those representations at the same time. 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.

FILMS: *Everything Everywhere All at Once, The Truman Show, Psycho, Get Out, Alien, The Virgin Suicides, Vertigo, The Dark Knight, Caché, Parasite.*
Requirements: class participation, midterm, 2 analytical essays, presentation.
Honors. Fulfills the COWC req. Counts towards the Media Studies minor

ENG 1027 Global Englishes: Language and Culture in the 21st Century
T/Th 4:30-5:45PM
Professor Lauren Fitzgerald

Ever wonder why English is the first or second language of more people than any other? Or why English is spoken with different accents and different words for the same things? Or why it is usually the "lingua franca" for people who need to communicate with each other but don't share a mother tongue? Or what "standard" English is and why it has prestige?

In this course, we will trace how English came to be the leading language it is today and why it is not one language but many "Englishes." We'll examine why English has been called "the money language" by which millions of people get ahead and conduct business and how it is inextricably linked to globalization. We'll also analyze creative expression in Global Englishes, the so-called "new" literatures that are not only multilingual but multicultural and multiliterary, requiring new ways of reading. And you'll consider your own relationship with English, how languages work, and how to become more adept at cross-cultural communication.

This course welcomes students of all language backgrounds—English as a first or second language, monolinguals, bilinguals, multilinguals, translinguals, code-switchers, code-meshers, and Yeshivish speakers!

Fulfills the COWC and WRIN req.

Image Source: https://www.gls.edu/why-is-english-the-money-language/

CUOT (Cultures Over Time)

ENG 1006 The Monstrous T/R 1:30 – 2:45
Professor David Lavinsky

> A monster is a person who has stopped pretending. In a zombie apocalypse ("Night of the Living Dead") or a secret alien takeover ("Invasion of the Body Snatchers"), you fall asleep one evening and when you wake up in the morning the world has changed. Your relatives and your friends, your neighbors and the friendly folks who run the dry cleaners reveal themselves as the monsters they've always been, beneath the lie of civilization, of affection. They look the same, but now they want to destroy you, to consume you. And you have to keep running.
>
> --Colson Whitehead, "A Psychotronic Childhood"

In this course, we will consider ideas about monsters and the monstrous in history writing, travel accounts, early maps of the world, folklore, drama, and literary texts, with a particular focus on the European Middle Ages. Though sometimes dismissed as the imaginings of a more credulous era, such material not only drew on classical authors but also continued to have wide currency in the early modern world, persisting through the change in religious culture known as the Reformation. Indeed, as the word "monster" (derived from the Latin verb *monstrare*, or "to show") suggests, stories of the monstrous reveal much about the cultures in which they circulated. Our readings will track medieval and early modern attitudes toward religious identity, birth and

reproductive practices, gender, personhood, animality, and the supernatural. Throughout the term, we will make sense of these topics by employing methods, questions, and theoretical paradigms from different academic disciplines in the humanities. Requirements include response papers, regular postings to an online discussion forum, and a final project.
Please note that this is an interdisciplinary CUOT course. CUOT courses will enable students to: (1) understand the role of historical context in cultural production and the complex and multiple ways in which cultures change over time; (2) analyze the cultural artifacts of pre-twentieth century societies using multiple kinds of sources; (3) write and defend historically grounded theses using both primary and secondary materials. ***Fulfills the CUOT req.***

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.