YC Department of English
Fall 2022 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 2022 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 Rachel Mesch: rachel.mesch@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.

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. The prerequisite for these classes is FYWR 1020.

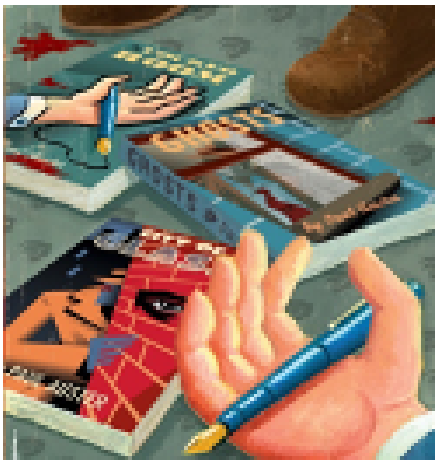
ENG 1660 WRITING ABOUT ILLNESS & MEDICINE
M/W 4:30-5:45
PROFESSOR LIESL SCHWABE

"Much of my life has been spent trying to imagine what it was like to be another human being." So wrote neurologist and author Dr. Oliver Sacks, who understood how central

stories are in helping medical professionals not only care for the ill, but also empathize with patients and their families. For this reason, hospitals and medical schools now widely rely on "narrative medicine" to train doctors, learn from patients, and expand our understanding of what it means to "treat the ill to the best of one's ability."

In this nonfiction writing workshop, students will read and write across a variety of genres to consider the experiences of nurses, doctors, public health officials, patients, and everyday people, including yourself. Exploring creative writing to deepen our understanding of care, responsibility, and vulnerability, three major essays will be required, along with weekly informal writing, thoughtful peer review feedback, and significant revision. Required texts include, but are not limited to, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, by Anne Fadiman, as well as additional book excerpts and essays by Susan Sontag, Oliver Sacks, Siddhartha Mukherjee, Atul Gawande, Jerome Groopman, Dhruv Khullar, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, Suleika Jaouad, Joan Didion, Virginia Woolf, and (former YU Professor and Dean) Joanne Jacobson.

ENG 1822 WRITING FICTION
M/W 4:30-5:45
PROFESSOR DAVID PURETZ



Our goal as fiction writers, broadly stated, may be to entertain or amuse readers, to move or persuade them, to get them to look more closely at or think more deeply about something that's worth their attention—or some combination 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 course we'll be reading and writing prose that work toward these ends. Writing Fiction 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 in long and short form. 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. Students who successfully complete this course will develop a working knowledge of a range of fiction writing styles, expand their ability to give detailed constructive feedback, develop a more sophisticated and unique writing style through practice and observation, and learn to advance their creative work through the process of revision.

LITERATURE & FILM Electives

Pre-requisite: FYWR or FYWR (H). 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).

ENG 2037 SHAKESPEARE AND FILM
T/R 3:00-4:15
PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY
Counts for the pre-1700 requirement

In this course, we'll study Shakespeare's principal plays and their adaptation into modern and

contemporary media, especially film. Our emphasis will be on transnational and non-Anglophone cinema, the idea of a "global" Shakespeare, and the construction of cultural identity in both playwriting and filmmaking. The class is intended for anyone interested in Shakespeare, film and media studies, or creative writing. Assignments will include collaborative work on film scripts and storyboards.

ENG 2083 POSTMODERN FICTIONS
M/W 4:30-5:45
PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH

In the age of competing "histories from below" and from the margins, of docudramas and historical metafiction, and of technologies that render historical evidence increasingly falsifiable and suspect, the traditional idea of history as an objective chronicle of the past has been challenged as never before. In this course, we'll examine how postmodern novelists have participated in and responded to these challenges through their depictions of World War II and 9/11. Novels we'll be studying will include Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*, Spiegelman's *Maus,* Sebald's *Austerlitz*, Colon's *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation*, Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, and Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*. We'll also be reading McCloud's *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* and essays by Lyotard, Hutcheon, Williams, and Freud.

ENG 2453H/ Straus JEWS IN WESTERN LITERATURE
T/R 6:45-8:00
PROFESSOR SHAINA TRAPEDO

From medieval blood libels to *Ulysses's* Leopold Bloom, the figure of the Jew has loomed large in the Western literary imagination. This course will examine how authors through the ages have represented Jewishness in poetry and prose for their predominantly Christian readers.

How are Jews positioned in relation to law, commerce, community, morality, sexuality, wisdom, and faith in the fictional worlds they inhabit? What technical or thematic purpose do Jewish characters serve in the construction of 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 anti-semitism (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 *Faygin* 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 3589/PSY 4932 LITERATURE & PSYCHOLOGY
M/W 3:00-4:15
PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART

This course explores poetry and prose in relation to neurosis, psychosis, and the psychology of mystical experience and gender; it also explores diagnostic narratives and narratives of recovery. These intersections of literature and psychology are structured along 5 main lines:

- Meaning-making and story-telling as the key to psychological coping with and recovery from trauma (Frankl, Spiegelman, *Maus;* Folman, *Waltz with Bashir)*
- The psyche as "text": literary and psychoanalytic theory, "reading" the psyche (short texts by Freud, Lacan)

- ➢ Jung's work on collective unconscious experience in mythology and mystic texts: imagery, mythologems, and archetypes
- ➢ First-person narratives of insanity and recovery, and third-person "authoritative" narratives of "madness." (Plath, Freud case histories, Shaffer, *Equus;* Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde;* James, *Turn of the Screw)*
- ➢ Literature, psychology, and gender (Ovid, *Silence of the Lambs)*

ENG 3005 ADVANCED SEMINAR
M 6:00-8:30
PROFESSOR RACHEL MESCH

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 2024 should sign up for Fall 22. Our focus this semester will be on frameworks for thinking about gender, from canonical texts to popular culture. We'll read selections from Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, E.M. Forster, John Updike, Alison Bechdel, and Toni Morrison alongside contemporary films and television shows (*Girls*, *Breaking Bad, The Sopranos*, *Atlanta*) . Writing exercises throughout the semester will culminate in a final paper or a creative project, and students will each have a chance to lead their own discussions in preparation for colloquium.

CORE COURSES

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

INTC (Interpreting the Creative)

ENG 1001 BOOKS ON BOOKS, FILMS ON FILMS
M/W 1:30-2:45 OR **M/W 3:00-4:15**
PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH
Counts towards the Media Studies Minor and the INTC requirement.

What do literature and film tell us about themselves and each other? What are the elemental forms and structures of literary and filmic narrative? What approaches might one use for the analysis of literature and film? 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).

The course will begin by considering the relationship between truth and fiction, and some ideas about what "art" is and does. We'll examine the roles of readers, film viewers, authors, directors, and critics. We'll explore the forms and structures of literary and cinematic storytelling, and how these elements come together to produce meaning. Finally, we'll briefly 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, "How to Tell a True War Story," Cortazar, "A Continuity of Parks," and Zusak, *The Book Thief*. Films will include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Sherlock Jr.*, *Stranger than Fiction*, *Singin' in the Rain,* and *The Artist* or *Cinema Paradiso*. Critical texts will include Plato, *The Republic*; Wilde, "The

Decay of Lying"; Wellek & Warren, "The Nature and Modes of Narrative Fiction"; Lynn, *Texts and Contexts*; Rushdie, *The Wizard of Oz*; and Spadoni, *A Pocket Guide to Analyzing Film*.

ENG 1800 WRITING/READING POETRY
T/R 3:00-4:15
PROFESSOR BRIAN TRIMBOLI
Counts towards the INTC requirement.

Writing/Reading 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 be reading the work of Yehuda Amichai, Wislawa Szymborska, Breyten Breytenbach, Kofi Awoonor, as well as many others.

ENG 1013 WORDS TO LIVE BY
T/R 1:30-2:45
PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY
Counts toward the INTC requirement.

The didactic and moral content of English literature often seems in conflict with modern notions of reading as a form of entertainment or imaginative escape. What happens, for instance, if we derive pleasure or enjoyment from a text meant instead to reform our behavior or provide examples of how to act? And what does it mean if we discover moral or ethical models in literature

intended merely to entertain? Does literature have ennobling effects? By the same logic, can artifice inspire immorality, or distract us from what truly matters? And what becomes of the reader who resists or is already estranged, because of religious or cultural identity, from a text's prescriptive intent? We will approach these questions from different cultural and aesthetic vantage points, all variously concerned with how certain literary and artistic forms inscribe their audiences in the stories they tell, scripting a specific moral response in the process. Our investigation will ground itself in readings from classical antiquity before considering the interrelation of artistic form and moral meaning in specific contexts. 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 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.

COWC (Contemporary World Cultures)

ENG 1002 DIASPORA LITERATURE (COWC)
M/W 6:45-8:00
PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART
Counts toward the COWC requirement.

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, *Lumumba* (film), *Sometimes in April (*film) and *I Am Not Your Negro* (documentary), Australia's Peter Weir, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (film), W. G. Sebald, *The Emigrants* (Germans, Jews, US), Austrian Jewish writer and journalist Joseph Roth, *The Wandering* Jews and selections from *The End of the World,* Czech Jewish writer Franz Kafka, "Josephine, the Singer, or: the Mouse Folk," Israeli Kafkaesque writer S.Y. Agnon, *The Parable and Its Lesson.*

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

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: *Zelig, Birth of a Nation, Moonlight, Fight Club, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Rear Window, Caché, Force Majeure, Beasts of No Nation.*
Requirements: class participation, short responses, 2 critical essays.

CUOT (Cultures Over Time)

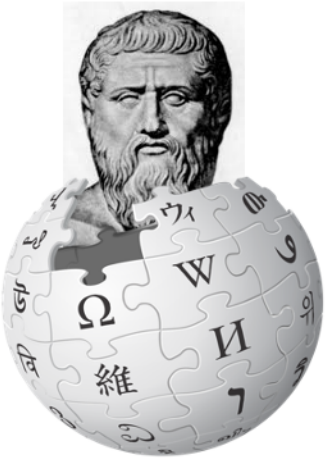
ENG 1036 TRAVEL WRITING THROUGH THE AGES: FRONTIERS AND BORDERS
T/R 4:30-5:45
PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY
Counts toward the CUOT requirement.

In this class, we will explore an assortment of literary and historical texts all broadly defined as "travel writing." Our investigation begins in classical antiquity, with material focused on the westward migration of refugees following the Trojan War. Turning to later periods, it then examines how crusades, pilgrimages, mass expulsions, and explorations to the far reaches of the known

world reflected—and shaped—medieval notions of cultural difference; key here is the account of Italian merchant adventurer Marco Polo. Next, we consider the age of discovery, and the role maps and other geographic conventions played in early modern representations of the Atlantic, perhaps most notably in Shakespeare and his contemporaries. After considering these and other sources (e.g., selections from Ibn Battuta, Jonathan Swift, Mark Twain, Freya Stark, and Jamaica Kincaid), the semester concludes with travel narratives that frame the experience of the refugee, the migrant, and the asylum seeker. Implicit in all these cases is the idea that travel writing is not just an aesthetic or stylistic choice but also an attempt to grapple with the complexities of historical experience. Hence our focus on its changing contexts; major topics include race, slavery, colonialism, religious difference, emigration, empire, commerce, tourism, and the exotic. In addition to critical essays and presentations, students will have the opportunity to write their own travel narratives.

ENGL 1023H AUTHORSHIP: PLATO TO WIKIPEDIA
F 10:00-12:30
PROFESSOR LAUREN FITZGERALD
For incoming freshmen Honors students. Counts toward the CUOT requirement.

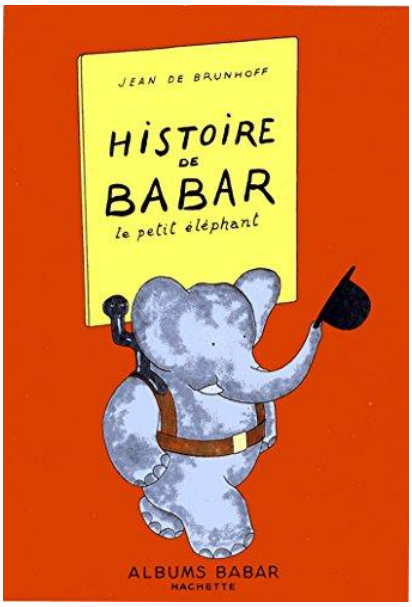
This course explores a topic that you might be surprised to learn will come up frequently in your work as a college student, representations of *authorship* over the last ~2500 years. From a



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 1009H FRANCE AND ITS OTHERS
PROFESSOR RACHEL MESCH
F 10:00-12:30
For incoming freshmen Honors students. Counts toward the CUOT requirement.



While the notion of a cultural "melting pot" is central to American society, French society has been structured around a distinctly French notion of universalism: the idea that there are core universal values that must supersede those of any minority subculture. Thus, although Americans regularly embrace multiple identifications--as African-Americans, or Jewish Americans, for example--in France that double alliance is largely experienced as a tension.

This class traces the roots of that tension by examining ways that otherness has inspired and troubled the French imagination through literary, historical and philosophical readings by major French writers from the 1500s to the present day. From Montaigne's cannibals to the noble savages of Enlightenment texts, from Zola's "J'accuse!" to the story of Babar, from the female other to the other as Jew to the other as Jewish female, we will explore the myriad ways through which France's imagined others serve as manifestations of a cultural fascination with difference in its many forms. As we analyze the various intellectual conflicts that have arisen from the quest to understand what is deemed different, foreign, exotic or strange, we will also trace a struggle to define and circumscribe notions of French identity, selfhood and authority. Finally, at the semester's end, we will use what we have synthesized from these thinkers to consider contemporary debates in French society about the place of religious and ethnic difference in the public sphere.

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.