

YC Department of English

Spring 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 Spring 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 1408 WRITING THE SELF: MEMOIR
M/W 4:30 – 5:45
PROFESSOR LIESL SCHWABE



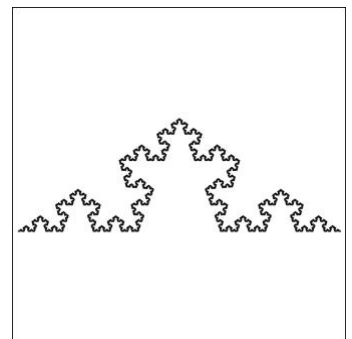
While the authenticity and innovation of contemporary memoir seems (and often *is*) edgy and modern, the genre stretches back across time and around the world. In this class, we'll read recent work, by writers such as Cathy Park Hong, Kiese Laymon, Claudia Rankine, and Rebecca Solnit, and Lilly Dancyger, as well as classics, including those by Primo Levi, James Baldwin, Michel de Montaigne, Sei Shonagon, and Virginia Woolf. The first half of the term will be primarily focused on exploring published work, developing a shared vocabulary, asking important questions of craft that arise when transposing the messiness of lived experience into clear, compelling prose, and finding an overall familiarity with the genre. In addition to weekly informal reflections, Students will draft at least three significant personal narrative projects, though whether these are separate, stand-alone essays or the on-going development of a longer work will be up to you. The second half of the semester will be spent almost exclusively in workshop, as we discuss student writing-in-progress. No previous experience or a particularly “interesting” life are required. But curiosity, excitement, and a willingness to honestly and extensively revise will be crucial, both to your success in the class and in finding the empowerment and insight that often arises when you're willing to step outside of yourself in order to see yourself – and possibly the world that has shaped you – that much more clearly. Please contact Professor Schwabe with any additional questions: schwabe@yu.edu.

ENG 1845 WRITING DIGITAL POETRY

TUESDAYS 6:45

PROFESSOR BRIAN TRIMBOLI

Writing Digital Poetry is for writers from all backgrounds who are interested in language, media, and/or art, as well as their intersections within poetry. This course might be for you if you're interested in writing for the internet, or if you've ever thought about ways of bolstering the message of your texts with music, images, or videos. This course will provide the space to develop



your own poetic voice, as well as how you might explore that voice within different mediums. Writing Digital Poetry might be especially interesting for those studying Computer Science, Marketing, Media Studies, Philosophy, as well as English or Writing Studies.

Writers will develop poetry through traditional and mixed-media approaches, explore the importance of revision while building digital spaces for finished products, and challenge form by incorporating poems into videos, choose-your-own-adventure style websites, and other integrations of technology.

Counts for the Media Studies minor.

LITERATURE & FILM

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 2010 INTERPRETING TEXTS (WI)

PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH

T/R 3:00 - 4:15

This writing-intensive “gateway” course for English majors and minors, Media Studies minors, and other serious students of literature and film is an introduction to some of the key interpretive approaches that define studies in these fields. Its goal is for you to become a more knowledgeable, insightful, and accomplished interpreter of and writer about literature and film. In the course, you’ll learn key ideas of what literature and film are and do, and fundamental concepts and paradigms used for interpreting them. The material is organized in clusters of literature, film, and theoretical and critical texts to show how they work



together and shape one another. Texts for the course will include works by Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Wellek & Warren, Dickens, Freud, Lacan, Marx, Althusser, Woolf, Beauvoir, Cixous, and Reeser.

Requirements: Two papers, a series of informal response papers, and two exams.

This course is a requirement for the English major and can fulfill the requirement for a Writing-Intensive course. May be taken at the same time as FYWR.

ENG 2964 ART OF FILM: 1968- PRESENT

TR 4:30 – 5:45

PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH

This course will introduce students to the basics of analyzing and writing about film through an exploration of important films of the past 50 years.

We'll focus primarily on the close reading of elements of mise-en-scène (everything up there on the screen) and editing, paying 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), *Salaam Bombay!* (Mira Nair, 1988), *Toy Story 2* (John Lasseter, 1999), *In the Mood for Love* (Wong Kar-Wai, 2000), *City of God* (Fernando Meirelles & Kátia Lund, 2002), *Only Lovers Left Alive* (Jim Jarmusch, 2013), *Grand Budapest Hotel* (Wes Anderson, 2014), *Boyhood* (Richard Linklater, 2014), and *Parasite* (Bong June-Ho, 2019).



ENG 3042H MILTON AND RELIGION

M/W 4:30 - 5:45

PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY

& RABBI DOV LERNER (STRAUS CENTER)

This class explores the life and work of John Milton (1608-74), with special attention to *Paradise Lost*, the greatest biblical epic in English. Informed by Milton's knowledge of several languages (including Hebrew) and his study of exegetical tradition (including Midrash), *Paradise Lost* reprises the biblical account of creation and human sin on a vast imaginative scale. We will locate Milton's vivid adaptation of sacred texts and commentary at the interface of two major cultural frameworks, both crucial to the study of English literary history more generally: 1., seventeenth-century religious politics, notably the English civil war and the execution of Charles I (which Milton applauded); and, 2., efforts to fashion a literary idiom grounded in the power and poetry of biblical writing. Key topics will include the development of Christian Hebraism (that is, the systematic study by Christians of Hebrew grammar, texts, and scholarship), the literary use of rabbinical sources, and the impact of English biblical translation in the era of print. Some consideration will also be given to the critical and philosophical questions surrounding Milton's unforgettable—some would say heroic—characterization of Satan, a rebel against the divine will; as one astute reader of *Paradise Lost* would later claim, its author was “of the devil's party without knowing it.” We will approach these concerns through secondary readings intended for a broad student audience. No experience with Milton or early modern literature is expected, and introductory tutorials will cover matters such as poetic form and meaning. This course will be taught collaboratively, under the auspices of both the English department and the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, with occasional guest lectures by affiliated humanities faculty. Requirements include short critical essays, regular postings to an online discussion forum, a collaborative final project or presentation of some kind, and at least one class trip to a New York City museum or archive to examine early editions of Milton's work.

Counts for the pre-1700 requirement for the major.



ENG 3376 THE EUROPEAN NOVEL

M/W 3:00 - 4:15

PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART



This course covers the rise of the novel in the second half of the 18th century, the optimistic age of Enlightenment, and its development into the long, dynamic, and persistent life of European literary realism that is still with us today. Within this tradition, the 19th century in particular featured the masterful microscopic dissections of the everyday life of the middle and lower classes of the 19th century by a Balzac, a Flaubert, a Dostoevsky, a Dickens, who carried on the work of social critique begun by the Enlightenment masters but did so in a whole new way. The realist masterpieces of the 19th century developed a new way of writing, away from the stylizations and romanticisms of the past, to dissect the human personality faced with the task of navigating a whole new reality shaped by industrialization, capitalism, city life—in sum, by a radical shift toward the materialism and shocks that came to shape all of modern Western society and culture, now focused on the values of accumulation, property, and propriety—and their often sordid underbellies. Instead of romanticisms and idealizations, the novel depicted not only the massive transformations and successes, but also, very powerfully, the anxieties of modern Western life.

The shorter works of Goethe, Kleist (Germany), Mary Shelley, Dickens (England), Voltaire, Balzac, Flaubert (France), Tolstoy, Dostoevsky (Russia).

Counts for the 1700-1900 requirement for the major.

ENG 4001 SENIOR COLLOQUIUM

MONDAYS 6:00 - 8:30

PROFESSOR RACHEL MESCH



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

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

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

PROFESSOR PAULA GEYH

T/R 1:30 - 2:45



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 or short story 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 Zusak, *The Book Thief* and short stories by O’Brien, Lodge, and Cortázar. Films will include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Sherlock Jr.*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, *Stranger than Fiction*, *Singin’ in the Rain*, and *Cinema Paradiso*. Critical texts will include Plato, Books VII and X of *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*. ***Counts towards the Media Studies Minor and the INTC Core requirement.***

**ENG 1002H DIASPORA LITERATURE
(COWC) (HONORS)**

M/W 6:45 - 8:00

PROFESSOR ELIZABETH STEWART



This course explores literature and film about historical diaspora experiences: “diaspora” refers to 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 twenty-first century has so far been characterized by massive and often chaotic displacements of peoples seeking refuge from violence, famine, and persecution in their homelands or are simply seeking 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, narratives, and representations of such diasporic experiences. The two oldest and most far-reaching global diasporas were the Jewish and the African diasporas. Both have been intensely painful while also producing flowering cultural expressions of diasporic experience, and both continue to develop, centuries later and to this day.

Texts, films, and authors include: Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, works by Benjamin Sehene (Rwandan Tutsi exile), Raoul Peck (Haitian filmmaker), shorter works by Frantz Fanon, H.L. Gates, Achille Mbembe; excerpts from W.G. Sebald's *The Emigrants* (German migration to the US and UK), from *The Wandering Jews* by Joseph Roth (Austrian Jew), from the work of Franz Kafka (Czech Jew), Y.S. Agnon (Israeli, formerly Austro-Hungarian, Jew). **Music:** African American, Afro-Caribbean, Jewish.

Counts for the COWC Core requirement.

ENG 1005 PARISIAN VIEWS (INTC) (WI)

MW 3:00 - 4:15

PROFESSOR RACHEL MESCH

This course explores the ways that nineteenth-century Paris inspired artistic creation through its cultivation of a variety of new ways of *seeing*, which led in turn to new forms of entertainment. The artistic products of this rich and imaginative time were in many ways responsible for contemporary mass culture and our lingering fascination with the real. Thus, as we consider the wide variety of new desires, seductions and fascinations for which Paris itself seemed wholly responsible, we will also not fail to notice the deep and lasting impact of those practices on our current modes of entertainment and pleasure... from cinema to celebrity culture to reality TV.



We explore this fascinating history to our own cultural tastes through novels and poetry but also through the impressionist paintings that vividly documented urban change. In addition, we consider the overlapping ways through which innovations in photography, early cinema, architecture and various kinds of public exhibits (from the wax museum to the Paris morgue) addressed and channeled the feelings of excitement and anxiety around the new points of contact that the modern French city offered. Juxtaposing poems with paintings, novels with maps and photographs, we compare the different idioms through which these forms of expression attempted to respond to a shared set of questions about how to interpret the rapidly changing urban landscape. In the process, students come to understand their own city in a new way, with assignments that ask them to explore New York itself as an urban spectacle which offers, as did nineteenth-century Paris, a daily feast for the eyes.

Requirements: class participation; weekly blog posts; mid-term paper; group presentation; final paper.

Counts towards the Media Studies Minor and the INTC Core requirement.

ENG 1006 THE MONSTROUS (CUOT)

M/W 1:30-2:45

PROFESSOR DAVID LAVINSKY

“A monster is a person who has stopped pretending.”

--Colson Whitehead, “A Psychotronic Childhood”



Werewolves, dragons, giants, witches, demons, lepers, anthropophagi (a race of cannibals with eyes in their chests)—the Middle Ages were awash in tales of the monstrous. In this class, we will consider monsters and the monstrous from the perspectives afforded by history writing, travel accounts, early maps of the world, folklore, drama, and literary texts. 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 early modern England, 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 propositions from different academic disciplines in the humanities. Requirements include short critical essays, response papers, regular postings to an online discussion forum, and a final exam.

Counts towards the CUOT Core requirement.

**ENG 1026 FACE-TO-FACE: COMPLEX MODERN
IDENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY FILM (COWC) (WI)**

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.

Counts towards the INTC Core requirement.

**ENG 1041 SPOILER ALERT: MODERN STORYTELLING ACROSS
GENRE (INTC)**

M/W 4:30 - 5:45

PROFESSOR RACHEL MESCH



This class will explore modern storytelling across genres, from the novel, short story, and graphic novel to film, television, podcasts and beyond. Students will learn to engage deeply with these diverse forms as texts to be critically analyzed, and we will study the way that stories are both products of culture and determined by them. Some of the questions

we'll consider: What kinds of stories are we allowed to tell in a given historical moment, and who is allowed to tell them? What determines a “happy ending” and why are certain stories controversial? How do stories help us to see ourselves? How have we moved away from endings, as a culture, and towards the serial, and what is lost and gained in this movement? What new genres of storytelling have emerged in recent decades, and how can we understand their relationship to traditional literary forms? This class is about the need for stories and how texts—literary and otherwise—generate meaning. In addition to studying the underpinnings of narrative, we'll pay attention to the ways we consume stories: whether by reading, watching episode by episode, or binging in one gluttonous Netflix weekend. Becoming aware of our own practices will help us think about our relationships with the stories we most connect to. The class thus aims to be as much an introduction to literary and textual study as an exploration of what it means to be human in an ever-changing world.

Writings by William Goldman, Jonathan Safran Foer, Margaret Atwood, Edgar Allan Poe, Toni Morrison; numerous films, television shows, and podcasts. *Assessments:* discussion forum and viewing journals, two short essays and a final project.

Counts towards the INTC Core requirement.

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.