

YC Department of English

Spring 2026 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 2026 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](#).

English Major Requirements

ENG 2010 Interpreting Texts: Literary Reading and Critical Practice

Dr. David Lavinsky

TR 6:45 - 8:00 (*Fulfills WRIN requirement*)

This “gateway” course to the English major is an introduction to critical issues in the discipline of literary studies. It has three main priorities: to understand what a literary text is; to examine how literary language works to produce meaning; and to entertain different methods or critical approaches for



making sense of these issues. Because the course topic is relevant to a wide range of majors within the humanities, students from different academic backgrounds are welcome to enroll. Readings will be similarly diverse: philosophy and literary criticism; prose, poetry, and drama from different times and places; film, visual art, or architecture; music, new media, or digital media; and perhaps also one or more excursions within New York City. This course can be used to fulfill either the 1st or 2nd semester of the two-semester literature requirement. It is a requirement for the English major. *Required for all Creative Writing and Literary Studies students*

ENG 4001 Senior Colloquium

Dr. 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*

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-requirements: FYWR 1020/H or SSSB Business Communications I

ENG 1721 Introduction to Creative Writing

Dr. Brian Trimboli

TR 6:45 - 8:00

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 1822 Writing Fiction

Professor David Poretz

TR 4:30 - 5:45



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 Writing Fiction course we'll be reading and writing prose that work toward these ends.

This 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 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.

ENG 4930 Topics: Writing Creative Non-Fiction

Professor Sarah Snider

MW 4:30 - 5:45

In this writing workshop, we'll dive into the world of creative nonfiction, an area of writing where factual storytelling meets the art of literary craft. We'll explore a range of

LITERATURE Electives

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

ENG 4930 Topics: Transatlantic Slavery

Dr. Carrie Shanafelt

MW 3:00-4:15

In the seventeenth century, new forms of human trafficking and forced labor became institutionalized as the foundation of the emerging global economy. In this course, we will take an interdisciplinary approach to reading texts by and about enslaved and formerly enslaved Africans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including fiction, poetry, oratory, journalism, advertisement, theology, philosophy, economic analysis, and autobiography, focusing on works written in English. Our authors will include Aphra Behn, Jonathan Swift, John Locke, Adam Smith, Ottobah Cugoano, Olaudah Equiano, Thomas Jefferson, Phillis Wheatley Peters, Jeremy Bentham, and others. Over the course of the semester, students will

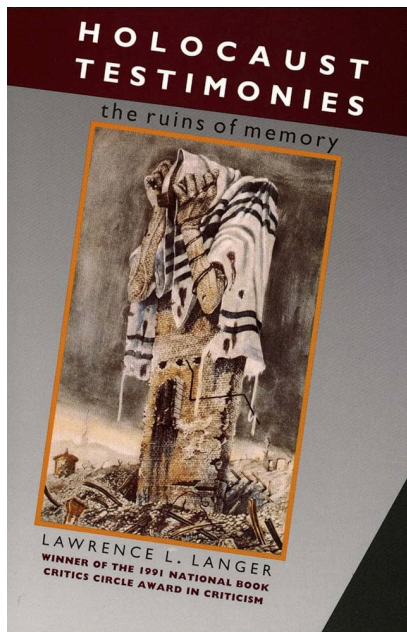


choose a focus for their own research project that puts a variety of literary and historical sources in conversation.

ENG 4930 Topics: Names, Not Numbers (Media Studies)

Dr. Elizabeth Stewart (et al.)

MW 3:00 - 4:15



This interdisciplinary course bridges history, literature, psychology, and media studies to explore the Holocaust through the testimonies of survivors. Students analyze the historical and cultural contexts of the Holocaust, examine narratives of survival, and study the role of storytelling and media in shaping collective memory. Emphasis is placed on documentary filmmaking as both a creative and scholarly method of preserving history. Students will have the opportunity to learn about the history of media, the ways in which media connects to other forms of cultural expression, its evolving social impact, and how to analyze its products and effects. Students will conduct and produce their own interviews with survivors. Through this lens, the course investigates how film, journalism, and digital storytelling influence public understanding, historical accountability, and moral responsibility.

The course will feature several guest lecturers, among them first- and second-generation survivors, filmmakers, historians, and writers.

ENG 4930 Topics: Dante (Honors, Straus Ctr)

Drs. David Lavinsky & Dov Lerner

TR 3:00 - 4:15

This co-taught Honors seminar will introduce students to the life and work of Dante (1265-1321), with a focus on his poetic masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy*, and its place within the changing cultural world of late medieval Europe. Of particular concern will be Dante's self-understanding as a religious writer, his use of biblical materials, and his engagement with a wide range of philosophical and theological paradigms, including those articulated in Jewish sources, which we will consider at length. Some attention will also be given to Dante's influence on Jewish writers and commentators in later periods. This course counts as the required pre-1700 course for English majors and 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.



Core Courses

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

ENG 1026 Face-to-Face: Complex Modern Identities in Contemporary Film

Dr. Elizabeth Stewart

MW 4:30 - 5:45

(Counts towards the Media Studies minor and fulfills the COWC requirement and the WRIN 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 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. The course examines the nature of subjectivity by way of the horror film genre. 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 1027 Global Englishes: Language and Culture in the 21st Century

Dr. Lauren Fitzgerald

TR 4:30-5:45PM

(Fulfills the COWC requirement and the WRIN requirement)



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!

**ENG 1036 Frontiers and Borders:
Travel Writing Through the Ages**

TR 4:30 - 5:45

Dr. David Lavinsky

(Fulfills the INTC 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, 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 try writing their own travel narrative.

ENG 1800 Writing/Reading Poetry

Dr. Brian Trimboli

TR 3:00- 4:30

(Fulfills 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 4930 Topics: Interpreting Film

Dr. Carrie Shanafelt

MW 1:30 - 2:45; MW 4:30 - 5:45

(Fulfills the INTC requirement and the WRIN requirement)

In this course, we will examine a wide range of film genres, learning to recognize and apply terminology for techniques of photography,



movement, editing, sound, dramatization, acting, and writing developed by filmmakers over the past 130 years. In class, we will watch film clips and a few full-length films, discuss readings in film criticism and theory, and learn strategies for writing about film for a variety of audiences. There will be in-class and at-home writing assignments, as well as quizzes on the terminology we study together. For the final projects, students will choose a film director whose work they will focus on for an in-class presentation making use of everything we have learned, and work on a film review essay focused on a single film in the context of its genre.

ENG 4930H Topics: The Values of Verse: Sacred and Secular Perspectives

(Honors, Straus)

MW 6:45 - 8:00

Dr. Shaina Trapedo

(Fulfills the INTC requirement)

What makes a good poem? What good are poems? For Aristotle, poetry played a crucial role in civic stability. Roman statesman-turned-satirist Horace declared that



poets should aim to “delight” and “profit” their audiences. 14th-century Catholic and Italian humanist Francesco Petrarch struggled to justify the joy he found in the aureate language of antiquity and prove that the arts serve a spiritual purpose. Though he confessed to loving Homer and Virgil, he later resolved, “my poet [shall be] David... I want to have his Psalter always at hand

[and] beneath my pillow when I sleep and when I come to die.” During the Renaissance, the Psalms served as a touchstone for poets exploring the texture, edges, and impediments of human experience, which infused their art with the lyricism and wisdom of ancient Israel that has profoundly shaped Western literature and culture to this day. This course will explore the virtuosity of verse and by what means poetry yields sacred insight and secular wisdom. For Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, who taught English literature at Stern College after completing his Ph.D. in English at Harvard in the late 1950s, “[q]uite apart from the precision, economy, suggestiveness, and force, great poetry may be imaginative and passionate– and, as such, inspiring, exhilarating, and ennobling.” In seeking to understand the value(s) of verse, we will study a variety of poets including Ovid, Dante, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Bradstreet, and Goethe, among many others. Taught under the auspices of the English department and the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, this course will feature occasional guest lectures by affiliated humanities faculty, including a series of guest lectures by Douglas Murray.

ENG 2920 American Renaissance

Dr. Fred Sugarman

F 10 - 12:30

(Fulfills INTC requirement)

The remarkable emergence of a group of writers between the 1830’s and the start of the Civil War is often referred to as The American Renaissance, an eruption of great essayists, novelists and poets who gave America standing



as a world-challenging (and changing) culture. No longer a new country or second-class citizens to the literature of Europe, the writers of this period – Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Thoreau, Whitman and Dickinson – brought American genius to the attention of the world.

The class will briefly consider the Puritan origins of America through Jonathan Edwards' work, and its impact on these writers as they reacted against their foreground and built a new identity for America. Particular attention will be given to the founder of American thought, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and his greatest expounder, Walt Whitman. We will also read stories by Hawthorne and Melville as well as *The Scarlet Letter* and Thoreau's *Walden*.

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.