

# *Haverford College*

## *English Department*

### *Fall 2021 Course Guide*



*Containing descriptions of readings,  
approaches, and course conduct of all  
department offerings.*

*Created by Julia Giordano (HC '21, English Major)*

## **Major Requirements:**

Admission to the major requires completion of at least two courses, one at the 100 level and 1-2 at the 200 level, by the end of the sophomore year; note: ENGL 150L may be counted as one 200-level course (since its rubrics are in line with 200-level materials).

**In the total major requires eleven credits, including a .5 credit tutorial (298j) as part of Junior Seminar. Note 399F and 399B comprise a 1.5 credit course taken over the full senior year.**

- Seven courses at the 100, 200 and 300 levels of which
  - At least two must be in literature written before 1800
  - At least two in literature written after 1800
  - At least one (and no more than two) must be at the 100 level; a minimum of two, preferably three, must be at the 200 level (WRPR 150 "Approaches to Literary Analysis" counts); and a minimum of two must be at the 300 level.
- ENGL 298 and 299, the two-semester Junior Seminar in English
- ENGL 298J, the .5 credit yearlong Junior Seminar in English
- ENGL 399F (Fall) and 399B (Spring) for a total of 1.5 credit Senior Conference

Note: The department will give major credit for a one semester course in a foreign literature in the original language and/or for Comparative Literature 200.

No more than four (4) major credits will be awarded for work done beyond the Tri-College Consortium, whether abroad or in the U.S. Courses taken in the Bryn Mawr English Department, the Swarthmore English Department, and the U. Penn English Department may also be counted towards the major at Haverford.

## **Creative Writing Concentration:**

Creative Writing courses at Haverford are open to all students. Only a handful of English majors per year, however, are accepted into the Creative Writing Concentration.

The Creative Writing Concentration entails:

- Students interested in completing a Creative Writing Concentration must: 1) have taken or be in the process of completing **two** college creative writing courses by the spring of their junior year. 2) apply for acceptance to the Concentration by submitting a portfolio of creative work to the Director of Creative Writing in March of junior year
- Writing a senior thesis composed of an original creative text (usually poetry, fiction or drama) and a rigorous critical component.

Students interested in completing a Creative Writing Concentration apply for acceptance in the spring semester of their junior year by submitting a portfolio of creative work to Asali Solomon, Director of Creative Writing **by the Friday before Spring Break of their junior year (no extensions)**. The Departmental Concentration Committee will grant admission to students whose work suggests their readiness to generate a substantial literary project.

<b>COURSE NUMBER</b>	<b>DIV. DIST. CROSSLIST</b>	<b>COURSE NAME</b>	<b>CLASS HOURS</b>	<b>LTD. ENROLL</b>	<b>INSTRUCTOR</b>
ENGL 101A	HU	Theories of the Novel	M/W 1:00-2:30	15	Mohan
ENGL 115A	HU/AA	Black Memoir and Mythography: An Introduction	T/TH 11:30-1:00	25	Solomon
ENGL 205A	HU/CL/VIST	Legends of Arthur	M/W 2:30-4:00	25	McInerney
ENGL 249A	HU	Introduction to Asian American Literature	T/TH 2:30-4:00	25	Kim
ENGL 260A	HU	In the American Grain: Traditions in American Literature	T/TH 11:30-1:00	30	Zwarg
ENGL 278A	HU/GS	Contemporary Women Writers	T/TH 11:30-1:00	20	Watson
ENGL 291A	HU	Creative Writing Poetry I	F 1:30-4:00	15	Devaney
ENGL 293A	HU	Introduction to Creative Writing: Fiction	F 11:00-1:30	15	Solomon
ENGL 294A	HU	Creative Writing: Fiction II: Novel Openings	W 1:30-4:00	15	Chang
ENGL 298A	HU	Junior Seminar	T/TH 10:00-11:30	17	Reckson
ENGL 301A	HU/GS	Topics in Middle English – Premodern Women Writers	T/TH 2:30-4:00	15	Watson
ENGL 356A	HU/ENVS	Studies in American Environment and Place	T 7:30 -10:00 p.m.	15	Finley
ENGL 363A	HU	Trauma and Its Others	T/TH 2:30-4:00	15	Zwarg
ENGL 373A	HU	Modernist Narratives	M/W 10:00-11:30	15	Mohan
ENGL 389A	HU/CL	Interpreting Lyric Poetry: Love, Loss and Transcendence	T/TH 1:00-2:30	12	Benston
ENGL 399F	HU	Senior Conference: Mohan, Reckson, Stadler, Solomon, Zwarg			
WRPR 150L	HU	Writing Program	T/TH 10:00-11:30 T/TH 10:00-11:30 T/TH 10:00-11:30	A001 A002 A003	Benston McInerney Kim

**Cross-Listing Key: VIST=Visual Studies; AA=Africana Studies; CL=Comparative Literature; GS=Gender & Sexuality Studies; HLTH=Health Studies; ENVS=Environmental Studies**

## The Novel

This course is a survey of the British novel in the twentieth century, during which the form increasingly became fraught with self-consciousness and irony. To an unprecedented extent, novelists themselves entered into skirmishes over questions such as: Should the novel describe the workings of historical reality or must it reveal the intricacies of the self and its inner life? Should the novel, like other arts, assiduously pursue the perfection of its technique and medium or must it abandon itself vitally to chance, fluidity, and hybridity, appropriating and incorporating all manner of ideas, expressive possibilities, and forms? Is representation ever objective or ideologically innocent? Are conventions such as "realism," "character," "plot" and "narrator" still meaningful or aesthetically interesting and how must they be redesigned to meet the demands of contemporary experience? What are the novel's unique pleasures in a world overridden by narratives in visual and digital media? We will explore the responses these questions have generated in novels, statements by novelists, and narrative theory.

### Likely Texts for the course:

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

James Joyce, Chapters 1 and 4 of *Ulysses* (1922)

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

Graham Greene, *The Quiet American* (1955)

Angela Carter *The Passion of New Eve* (1977)

John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981)

Salman Rushdie, *Satanic Verses* (1988)

Geoff Ryman, *253* (1996)

Bernadine Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019)

Critical essays by Ian Watt, Virginia Woolf, Seymour Chatman, Eric Auerbach, Peter Brooks, Rosemary Jackson, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Patricia Waugh, and Linda Hutcheon.

**Course Requirements:** 4 short pieces of close reading (2-3 pages), 2 essays (5-7 pages), and a class presentation.

**This Course satisfies the Introductory Requirement for the English major has no pre-requisites.**

### Black Memoir and Mythography: An Introduction

Black autobiographies and memoirs are often self-consciously outward-facing investigations of nation, historical era and the human condition. Each text we will read creates a portrait of a key political or cultural moment, situating autobiographical subjects in the Civil Rights Movement, the post-integration era, the rise of hip hop, the aftermath of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and the Black Lives Matter Movement. Exploring issues of gender, family and sexuality as they are shaped by the confines of an oppressive state, each is a meditation on the relationship between black individuals situated in a moment and a broader collective existence as it is located in a historical line that moves in both directions.

This course is an introductory level course to the genres of autobiography and memoir through the lens of black lived experiences. Beginning with Malcolm X's groundbreaking account of his personal and political transformations, the course will familiarize students with myriad shapes of life writing as well as the aesthetic and political concerns associated with representing black selves. This course will continuously question and explore concepts of truth, arriving at a more informed understanding of the alchemy of memory, time and narrative conventions.

#### **Course Requirements:**

The requirements for this course will be 3 formal essays, ranging from 5-8pp, and a number of shorter informal writing assignments, some creative. Students will also keep what is known as a Commonplace book, or a compendium of quotes from the material that resonates with them. They will also take a "Diabolical" midterm exam.

#### Texts:

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm X with Alex Haley

*Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, a Bio-mythography, Audre Lorde (1982)

*Black Ice*, Lorene Cary (1991)

*Soldier: A Poet's Childhood*, June Jordan (2000)

*Brother, I Am Dying*, Edwidge Danticat (2007)

*The Beautiful Struggle*, Ta-Nehisi Coates (2009)

*When they Call You a Terrorist: a Black Lives Matter Memoir*, Patrisse Khan-Cullors and asha bandele (2018)

*Heavy: An American Memoir*, Kiese Laymon (2018)

*The Forty-Year Old Version* (film), dir., Radha Blank (2020)

We will read a combination of books in their entirety and shorter excerpts that I will provide on Moodle.

## Legends of Arthur

King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table have had a powerful hold on the popular imagination for centuries. In this class, we will read some of the earliest versions of the Arthurian Legend and discover a complex and various tradition, full of fascinating contradictions. In the story of the Grail Quest, for instance, elements deriving from Celtic and Christian mythologies often appear to be at odds with each other; we will try to illuminate this relationship by reading some Welsh and Irish analogue tales. We will also consider the role of the Arthurian corpus (sometimes called the “matter of Britain” although the earliest Arthurian romances are French) in establishing national and ethnic identities. We will pay particular attention to and French Romances and their representation of chivalry and courtly love. These quintessentially medieval concepts raise fascinating questions about the conflict between personal and private morality and about the construction of both identity and gender, as does the representation of otherness in the form of the Black (Saracen) knights of the Round Table, or Wolfram von Eschenbach's biracial hero Feirefiz. Finally, we will explore the survival of the Arthurian legend into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; it is transformed into a Victorian morality tale by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and forms the foundation of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*.

The course will include both an Arthurian film festival and a workshop in the production of medieval manuscripts, for which we will make our own oak gall ink.

### Texts:

*The Romance of Arthur*, ed. Wilhelm (Garland)  
Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances* (Penguin)  
Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, ed. Cooper (Oxford Classics)  
Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival* (Penguin)  
Other readings, including *The Lay of the Horn*, *The Knight of the Two Swords*, excerpts from Irish and Welsh mythology, and assorted critical readings, on Moodle.

### Requirements:

**Graded assignments:** Bibliography assignment (2-4 pages), assigned the first day of classes and due mid-September (10%)  
1 4-6 page paper on a medieval text due mid-October (20%)  
1 4-6 page paper on a post-medieval interpretation (novel, film, illustration, etc.) of the Arthurian legend due late November (20%); for VIST minors, this project must focus on visual materials.  
Final essay examination covering all the material on the course (30%)

### Factors in participation grade (20%):

Regular attendance and engaged participation in discussion.  
Participation in the Arthurian Film Festival (viewings and discussions)  
Participation in the manuscript making workshop (there will be different ways for people to participate-- no artistic skill required).

ENGL H249A  
TTH 2:30-4

Prof. Elizabeth Kim  
Woodside 303  
[ekim1@haverford.edu](mailto:ekim1@haverford.edu)

### ENGL 249: Introduction to Asian American Literature

This course will explore the diversity of Asian American experience by studying a selection of foundational and emerging works by Asian American writers. Assigned readings of various literary genres will address themes such as immigration, generational conflict, racism, assimilation, difference, and political struggle. We will read and interpret texts in context by considering the historical events and periods they concern. What does Asian American identity, culture, and aesthetic look like? How do writers represent them? What does the racial and literary category “Asian American” constitute? Through studying a diverse range of narratives, we will gain a deeper understanding of the landscape of Asian American literary representation.

#### *Texts*

*No-No Boy*, John Okada  
*The Woman Warrior*, Maxine Hong Kingston  
*Dictee*, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha  
*Rose*, Li-young Lee  
*Native Speaker*, Chang-Rae Lee  
*The Interpreter of Maladies*, Jhumpa Lahiri  
*Night Sky With Exit Wounds*, Ocean Vuong  
*The Fortunes*, Peter Ho Davies  
*Minor Feelings*, Cathy Park Hong

English 260A

Tues/Thurs. 11:30-1:00

Professor Zwarg

Hall 203

### In the American Grain: Traditions in American Literature

(NOTE: no prerequisites, open to Freshmen; this course carries credit for pre-1800 requirement)

Borrowing from William Carlos Williams' *In the American Grain*, this course will conceptualize American literature as a comparative literature whose traditions emerge from certain inalienable forces released as English becomes the dominant political language of North America. Shakespeare's late drama *The Tempest* and Mary Rowlandson's *Captivity narrative* will frame our discussion of the significant cultural specters haunting the English language as it adapts to and seizes political control of the continent. When ships begin circling the Atlantic, pulling radically different world views into contact, their route shapes a cultural exchange far more various and complex than competing empires of Europe can understand and control: the creative productions and exchanges of that route engrave the self-fashionings of an emerging and flawed democratic republic with hidden levels of meaning, a heterogeneous blend of memory and experience that will make itself manifest in a variety of forms.

Powerful transformative energies emerge from the curious mix of privilege, dislocation and calamity on this American scene, whether in the terror and strange delight found in the pages of **Columbus' journal**, **Cabeza de Vaca's** account of the Southwest, Rowlandson's time with the Wampanoag Indians, in the Salem witch hunt so oddly reported by **Cotton Mather**, or in the circum-Atlantic revelations of print culture and urbanity as depicted by **Olaudah Equiano**, **Phyllis Wheatley**, and **Ben Franklin**. The circuits traveled so differently by these writers reveal something of what can happen to a trickster tale as it moves from oral to written form, with wavering patterns of self-promotion and self-irony.

By the close of the eighteenth century, the tension between the marvelous and the scientific always at play in the renaissance deepens into the psychological peregrinations of Brown's *Wieland* and the stunning revolution in Haiti. At the same time, the epistolary form so constituent of the novel becomes the vehicle for sending a message about the seductive and captivating reversals at play in this nation's constitutional moment, as we will find in Foster's *Coquette*. And there are ghosts haunting truths held to be self-evident in revolutions past, passing, and to come. If Poe purloins the letter to find them, the legacy of the Haitian Revolution reveals the confused translations of liberty and violence at the core of our "freedoms."

With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, people escaping from slavery become subjects of a captivity narrative stranger than anything Rowlandson might have imagined, and by 1851 Melville's *Moby-Dick* reprises the *Tempest*. Students should be able to ask a number of important questions by the end of the course. Does the great WHITE whale rise from the lower depths of Prospero's mind? Will the *Raven* (Caliban?) ever stop his mournful refrain? Perhaps Ahab, like **Nat Turner** in his **Confessions**, is the only one capable of saying "no" in thunder; or perhaps Ahab's determination is a delusional desire pitching toward its final wrack.

Primary Texts:

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*  
Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*  
Henry James, *Portrait of a Lady*  
Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, selected stories  
Sarah Orne Jewett, selected stories  
Nella Larsen, *Passing*  
Willa Cather, "Paul's Case"; *My Antonia*  
Sherwood Anderson, "Hands" from *Winesburg, Ohio*  
Woody Guthrie, excerpt from *Bound for Glory*  
James Agee, excerpt from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*  
James M. Cain, *Mildred Pierce*  
John Horne Burns, "Momma" from *The Gallery*  
Patricia Highsmith, *The Price of Salt*  
James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room*

Secondary Texts:

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*  
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Queer and Now"  
Annamarie Jagose, from *Queer Theory: An Introduction*  
Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author"

\*Some requirements may be adjusted depending on the size of the class.



**Course Description:**

What do we mean when we talk about “women’s writing”? Is women’s writing inherently different from men’s writing? What are the advantages and disadvantages of grouping women’s writing together as one category? In this course, we will explore women writers active between 1900 and the present. We will read poetry by Maya Angelou, Sylvia Plath, and Audre Lorde, short novels and stories by Nella Larsen, Radclyffe Hall, and Sandra Cisneros, and critical essays by Virginia Woolf, Toni Morrison, and bell hooks. Throughout the course we will consider the marginalization of women writers and explore the diverse strategies that women use to make their voices heard. Building on our discussion of gender and writing, we will also analyze how gender intersects with other vectors of identity such as race and class and consider how this combination shapes the creation and reception of literary texts.

**Assignments** will include in-class presentations, two short papers, and a final project. The final project may take the form of a research paper or a creative project.

**Preliminary Reading List:**

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (1929)

Nella Larsen, *Passing* (1929)

Radclyffe Hall, “Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself” (1934)

Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* (1984)

Sylvia Plath, select poems

Maya Angelou, select poems

Audre Lorde, select poems

Zora Neale Hurston, “What White Publishers Won’t Print” (1950)

Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Experience” (1980)

bell hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman?: Black Women and Feminism* (1981)

Toni Morrison, “Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature” (1988)

**ENGLH291A01**  
**Friday 1:30-4 pm**

**Thomas Devaney**  
**Fall 2021**

## **Creative Writing Poetry I**

CW Poetry I is an introductory creative writing workshop. The workshop involves both reading and writing poetry. Students will have the opportunity to expand their repertoire by modeling their pieces in conversation with the work of various poets including: William Carlos Williams, Naomi Shihab Nye, Ada Limón, and Tracy K. Smith. We will analyze and investigate issues of form, including Haiku and sonnets. The class will workshop in both small and large groups. Students will come out of the course with a short collection of their individual work submitted as a final portfolio.

A final portfolio of revised poems (10 to 12 pages) is required.

### **TEXTS:**

- *Sleeping on the Wing*, edited by Kenneth Koch and Kate Farrell
- *American Journal: Fifty Poems for Our Time*, edited by Tracy K. Smith
- *Voices in the Air*, by Naomi Shihab Nye

English 293  
F 11:00-1:30

Asali Solomon  
Fall 2021

### Introduction to Creative Writing: Fiction

This course will explore the glorious art and stringent discipline of storytelling through a focus on the fundamental elements of fiction: character, plot and language, both in narrative and dialogue. Students will develop as readers, and learn to write distinct and engaging short stories. The centerpiece of class meetings will be a workshop where students discuss their peers' work and offer useful and inspiring criticism. We will also read and discuss a wide range published short fiction by authors such as Jenny Zhang, George Saunders, Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, Octavia Butler, Sherman Alexie, Flannery O'Connor, learning to respond to this work as *fiction writers*. The success of this course depends on each student's frequent and thoughtful participation; **those who expect to miss more than one meeting due to previously scheduled events should consider another course.**

**Course Requirements:** Students will write two stories for workshop (6-10pp), respond to classmate's workshop stories and complete five (5) writing exercises. You must write a revision of one of your stories for your final project. This course will also require attendance at fiction readings, virtual if necessary.

**This course has a limited enrollment of 15 students. You must submit a writing sample to [asolomon@haverford.edu](mailto:asolomon@haverford.edu) by the end of the preregistration period. Please send no more than 10pp – prose fiction if you have it or any piece that reflects your skill as a writer. Please include your name, year and major (if declared). You will hear about your status in the course at the beginning of next semester.**

English 294—Advanced Fiction Writing: Novel Openings  
Alexandra Chang, [achang1@haverford.edu](mailto:achang1@haverford.edu)  
Fall 2021, Wednesday 1:30-4pm

### **Advanced Fiction Writing: Novel Openings**

How does a writer decide where to start a novel? What techniques and strategies do novelists use to create momentum from their opening pages? How does a novel's opening "teach" a reader to enter the narrative? In this course, we will explore some answers to these questions by reading the beginnings of novels by authors like Julie Otsuka, Anelise Chen, Toni Morrison, Charles Yu, Alexandra Kleeman, Ali Smith, Sigrid Nunez, and more. We will look closely at and discuss craft choices each author makes. We will examine how these choices not only draw a reader in, but set up what's to come in the rest of the novel. Through these discussions and readings, you will gain tools and methods to employ in your creative inventions. Exposure to a variety of novel openings, and the close analytical work we'll do to try and understand their power and inner workings will, ideally, rub off on your own fictional efforts.

While we will read published work, much of our time will be devoted to discussing your fiction, with a focus on craft choices, process, writing for an audience, and productive feedback. We will talk about structure, pacing, point of view, character development, theme, scene, and motivation, among other things. I'll often ask you to look beyond your draft, to consider the possibilities that a piece presents.

*Course Requirements:* Each student will submit two sections of their novel's opening (10-20pp) for workshop, respond to peer submission, and complete additional writing exercises throughout the semester. A final revision of the combined novel opening (20-40pp total) will be required.

**The prerequisite for this class is a college-level creative writing course. The course has a limited enrollment of 15 students. You must submit a writing sample of 5-10pp (preferably fiction) to [achang1@haverford.edu](mailto:achang1@haverford.edu) by the first day of class to be considered. Please include your name, year, major, and previous creative writing classes taken. You will hear about your status in the first week of the semester.**

## **Junior Seminar in English**

This course is a two-semester Seminar required of all Junior English majors.

Through readings, class discussion, written assignments, and tutorials, students will become familiar with 1) a series of texts selected to represent a range of English language poetry and fiction; and 2) examples of critical writing selected to represent critical theory and practice as it has been influenced by linguistics, hermeneutics, history, sociology, psychology and the study of cultural representation. Junior Seminar aims to cultivate in the student some sense of the variety of British, American, and Anglophone literature and its criticism, and to introduce the student to the activity of criticism as it interacts with literature and the intellectual life of our time. This active criticism will lead students to grasp both the nature of literary convention and tradition and the perspectives that open up the canon to a richer diversity of voices and forms. Sections will follow the same syllabus, meeting together occasionally for joint sessions. For the most part the two sections will function as independent seminars, with each instructor responsible for a single seminar.

Students will be required to write three papers (5-7 pages) first term, with revisions in response to the critique each paper will receive in tutorial sessions, and take part in an oral examination at the end of the first semester. The second semester includes two longer papers (8-10 pages), and concludes with a comprehensive final examination that covers both semesters of the course. Regular attendance in both discussion and tutorial is required, and students are urged to prepare rigorously for class.

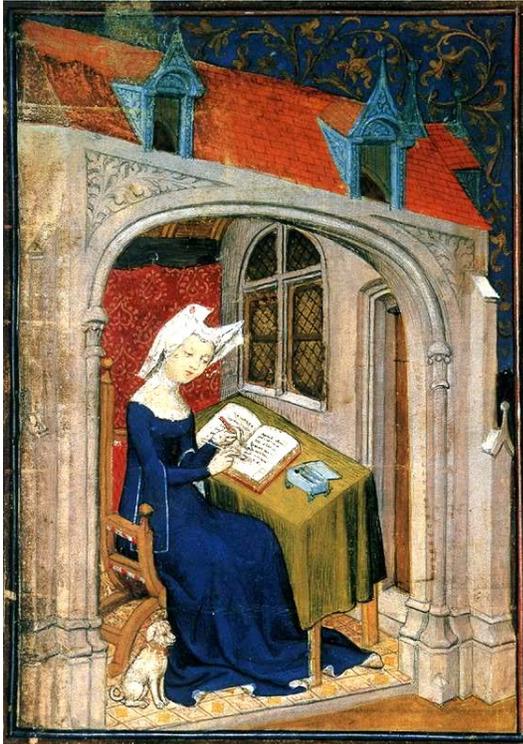
**Readings:** The first term is devoted to poetry, poetics, and practical criticism, and includes examples of Renaissance lyrics by Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton, complemented by contemporary American poetry; selected British Romantic poetry from Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats; nineteenth-century American poems by Whitman and Dickinson; and poetry by Yeats, Stevens, Bishop, and Walcott. The second term focuses on narrative and its theorization and criticism, and readings include George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, slave narratives by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, stories by Edgar Allen Poe, and James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

# ENG 301: Premodern Women Writers

Sarah W. Watson

Fall 2021

Tues/ Thurs 2:30 - 4:00pm



## Course Description:

In 1928, Virginia Woolf urged women writers to draw inspiration from literary “foremothers” such as Jane Austen. But who were the women who paved the way *before* Austen? This course examines women writers active between 1100 and 1700. We will read the romances of Marie de France, the mystical visions of Hildegard von Bingen, the proto-feminist works of Christine de Pizan, and the bawdy poetry of Gwerful Mechain. We will study the political speeches of Elizabeth I, the science fiction writing of Margaret Cavendish, and the poetry of Isabella Whitney, Aemilia Lanyer, and Aphra Behn. While the heart of the course will cover women authors in England and Western Europe, we will devote a long unit to exploring early women writers from around the globe including ‘A’ishah al-Ba’uniyyah, an Arabic scholar and poet, Sei Shōnagon, a Japanese author and court lady, and Phyllis Wheatley, the first African-American woman to publish a book of poetry.

Throughout the course, we will consider the social and cultural circumstances that have challenged women writers across time and space. How, we will ask, have women overcome restricted access to education or harmonized the art of writing with the ever present duties of wifhood and motherhood? How have women carved out a space for their writing in a male-dominated profession? What methods do women use to authorize their voices? Secondary texts by historians and literary scholars will guide our inquiry, offering critical frameworks for the investigation of gender, writing, and authority.

**Assignments** will include in-class presentations, two short papers, and a final project. The final project may take the form of a research paper or a creative project.

## Partial Reading List:

Hildegard von Bingen, “The Cosmic Egg” and “A Vision of Love” (c.1160)

Marie de France, *Lays and Fables* (c.1170)

Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405)

Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe* (c.1430)

Gwerful Mechain, “Cywydd y cedor (The Female Genitals)” (c.1490)

Isabella Whitney, “I.W. To Her Unconstant Lover” (c.1567)

Elizabeth I, “The Golden Speech” (1601)

Aemilia Lanyer, “Eve’s Apology in Defense of Women” (1611)

Phyllis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects* (1773)

Jennifer Summit, *Lost Property: The Woman Writer and English Literary History* (2000)

David Wallace, *Strong Women: Life, Text, and Territory 1347-1645* (2011)

Elaine V. Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (1987)

English 356a  
Tuesday 7:30-10:00

S. Finley  
HU III

### **English 356: Studies in American Environment and Place**

This course will be a seminar examination of the complex intersection of three principal terms or areas of concern: 1) self-identity or person, as shaped and marked by dwelling in place; 2) how person and place express the cultural, national, and racial programs of the American 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; and 3) how all of these depend upon the resources of the material environment in which life is lived, whether sustainably, indeed, healthily and equitably, or not. This seminar gravitates toward American environmental history. It is motivated as well as by the recognition that “American geography, both as discipline and as the spatial expression of American life, is racialized” (Kobayashi and Peake, as noted below). The course will freshly seek to account for this reality: racialization is part of what passes as the “normal and normalized, landscape” of America. This “natural” landscape contains the enduring marks of the displacement of indigenous peoples, marks that can be deciphered and distinctly illuminated by a writer like William Least Heat Moon. We hope not only to study “human life as essentially a life of location, . . . as a matter of identity found in place” (Place and Experience (1999), but also to note the translocation, the migration, of emplacement. As we do this work, we will turn often to questions about how the local or regional environment makes visible the expression of larger forces (political, economic, racial), even where it may serve as a protest or resistance to the erasure of its uniqueness, its organic and inherent material memory.

**Readings:** Primary readings will be gathered from texts mostly American, from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will read widely in theoretical texts concerned with the cultural production of landscape, social geography, and polemical environmentalism. By way of balancing, even refreshing, our material concerns, we will look closely at the art of the Hudson River Valley School and the visionary, “Illuminist” landscapes of George Inness.

Secondary readings will include Kobayshi and Peake, “Racism out of Place: Thoughts on Whiteness and an Anti-racist Geography”), Pierre Nora (*Les Lieux de Memoire*), J. B. Jackson (*A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*), John Elder (*Reading the Mountains of Home*), James Corner (“Recovering Landscape as a Critical Cultural Practice”), Pierce Lewis (“Axioms for Reading the Landscape”), Meinig (*Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*), Groth and Bressi (*Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*) McKibben (*The End of Nature*), Casey (*Getting Back into Place*), Malpas (*Place and Experience*), Heidegger (“Building, Dwelling, Thinking”), Vitek and Wes Jackson (*Rooted in the Land: Essays on Community and Place*), Sternberg (*Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History*), Snyder (*The Practice of the Wild*), and Worster (*The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination*).

Film resources: Two or three films will accompany the course, among works by Mark Rydell, Peter Weir, Carol Ballard, Christopher Monger, and Jim Sheridan.

**Class requirements:** Two or three shorter writing exercises/responses (1-2 pages); one longer essay (4-5), and a final term essay or project on place/environment/critical race theory studies, or place memoir (8-10 pages). Class members will be encouraged to take advantage of the films linked on the course's Moodle page.

**Class texts:**

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (Hill and Wang, 1983; 2003)

Thoreau, *Walden*, ed. Rossi (Norton Critical Ed., 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, 1997)

Norman MacLean, *A River Runs Through It* (Univ. of Chicago, 1976; 2001)

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (Harper Perennial, 1974; 2007)

Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (2011)

An anthology of contemporary American poems that are especially revealing expressions of place, and/or which emerge from specific places (Moodle document)

William Least Heat Moon, *Prairyerth* (Mariner Books, 1999)

William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (Norton, 1996); our general "textbook" with 18 assembled essays and 5 albums of visual resources.

Edward O. Wilson, *The Future of Life* (Vintage 2003)

## Topics in American Literature: Trauma and Its Others

The emergence of “trauma studies” has made it possible to reenlist psychoanalysis in the work of cultural critique. Viewed as the issue most valuable for showing the blindness and insight of Freud’s legacy, trauma theory has also become a vehicle for rethinking social and literary histories.

Trauma's meaning in Western medicine extends from a surgeon's description of a wound to the head in the early nineteenth century to a much more complex and puzzling narrative about a wound to the psyche toward the century's end. This transformation has about it a compelling social character: trauma becomes attached to psychic injury when train accident victims complain of lingering mental and physical disorders despite the fact that they emerge from accident scenes "unharmed." Certain questions of liability motivate this extension of trauma's meaning: who is responsible for the disability resulting from such accidents? Indeed, the question begins to be asked, what type of disability is it? And what are the social boundaries of such an inquiry?

Trauma's value can be said to have extended in this way at a conscious level, with interested parties pulling its representation to suit specific needs. Yet the transformation of trauma's meaning reaches into deeper levels of the shared symbolic register we call culture, both in Europe and in this country. In the United States, the traumatic injuries of slavery (and mastery) are converted into elaborate psychic enclaves having both horrific and healing ideological power. Freud's mention of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to explain beating fantasies in twentieth-century Vienna is only one example of the elaborate route trauma's meaning seems to have taken in the Circum-Atlantic world.

This course will expose students to recent trauma theory and the segregated traditions of literary history. Thinking about trauma theory *before and after* Freud, we will look again at authors attempting to bring together (and sometimes keep apart) cultural traditions irrupting into literary form from the late 18th to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will also explore how satire and humor cross wires with traumatic experience. The role of heightened emotional states, including fugue or hypnotic experiences, and the shifting currency of the words "terror," "freedom," and "shock" will be part of our focus. At the same time, we will explore how questions of environment impact theories of trauma. How does scale alter our sense of traumatic response? What is the relationship between "hyper-objects" and "micro-aggressions." How do conditions of the environment, or even shocks of a pandemic like Covid-19, alter and revise those theories. Can we get beyond the categories of victim and perpetrator? What is the relationship between humor and trauma and how does it work?

Theoretical readings in Freud and other theorists of trauma, historical memory, and the environment will be central and extensive. Our literary readings may include fiction and poetry from Poe, Du Bois, Hemingway, Baldwin, Porter, Brooks and recent writers like Terrence Hayes, Ken Liu, Claudia Rankine, Tommy Orange, and Colson Whitehead.

Many of the readings for this course are supplied on Moodle, but you will need to purchase or find a copy of the following (available at bookstore):

Terrance Hayes, *Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin*  
Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*  
Katherine Anne Porter, *Collected Stories of Katherine A. Porter*  
Tommy Orange, *There There: A Novel*  
Colson Whitehead, *The Intuitionist*

Topics in British Literature:  
Modernist Narratives

This course aims to study the historical, aesthetic, and epistemological features of literary modernism in Britain, and devotes particular attention to the narrative strategies writers develop to bring coherence and resolution to the experience of crisis and fragmentation associated with modernity or to evoke the perceived malaise of the modern world. The term "modernism" has supported a critical tradition that understands early twentieth century literature as a self-conscious, programmatic attempt to forge a cultural practice and theory by a coterie eminently positioned to reflect and address a rapidly changing world. Another feature of modernism that has been recently getting attention is its cross-cultural and transnational character as travel, technology, and mass media radically disrupt established notions of space and time.

This course will be an opportunity to examine the contours and limits of this rich and varied tradition. In the hands of many of the writers we will encounter during the semester, the modern becomes the focal point of cataclysmic change that threatens with dissolution all that is familiar and established in western culture. As such, the modern is wrought with the ambivalent potential for regenerative destruction, and the aesthetic becomes increasingly important as the still point of truth and the only reliable reference point in a world of flux. Our concern will be to investigate and pressure this reading of modernism through our encounters with the stubborn contradictions and vexatious questions posed by the texts we will be reading.

Our focus will be the compensatory function of the aesthetic and its historical emergence in modernist texts as the distinctive experience of uniquely presented objects. Taking the narrative as an instance of the aesthetic, we will explore the historical and political content of this form, paying attention to the strategies modernist narratives adopt as they attempt to synthesize and resolve the unsettling experience of modernity. To this end, we will study the formal experiments writers adopt to narrativize: the experience of time, the workings of the unconscious, the mutations wrought on lived experience by memory, and the perceived disruption of the sensorium by emerging technologies.

**Texts:**

Jean Rhys, *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939)

Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (1935)

Elizabeth Bowen, *A House in Paris* (1926)

Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes* (1911)

Ford Maddox Ford, *The Good Soldier* (1915)

James Joyce, *Portrait of An Artist as a Young Man* (1914-1915)

Rebecca West, *Return of the Soldier* (1918)

Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* (1931)

Critical essays by Watt, Cohn, Benjamin, Frank, Woolf, James, Morretti, Jameson, Williams, among others.

**Course Requirements:**

1. One short paper (5-7 pages long), a book report (5 pages long); a class presentation leading up to a research paper (10-15 pages); active participation in the seminar.

**Pre-requisites:** 2 200-level courses or consent of instructor.

English 389a  
T, TH 1-2:30 p.m.

Kim Benston  
HU III

## Interpreting Lyric Poetry: Love, Loss, and Transcendence

The most obvious but also most generative feature of lyric poems is that they address something not present: a person; an experience; an ideal; another poem. As demonstrated by lyricists from Sappho to Selena, the lyric therefore cannot but be about that toward which the heart yearns, the will strives, the imagination flows, and the voice calls, seeking to make present (to re-present) what or who one desires, one has lost, or one projects as alluring or necessary. For good reason, then, lyric poetry is always simultaneously about two subjects: what the singer misses and craves, demands and conjures; and the power of the word to summon, restore, transform, and refresh. Lyric poetry is thus both the most passionate form of literary en-visioning and a site of reflection about literature's very capacity to create and realize vision ... and it is no wonder that its major forms (the sonnet; the elegy; the ode; the ballad; the dramatic monologue) have persistently focused on themes of desire, bereavement, sublimity, purification, and transfiguration—put more directly: themes of love, loss, and transcendence.

The lyric's defining dynamic of desire and self-reflection means that to engage its subject matter is always also to probe its formal capabilities, and vice versa. Therefore, this course will be at once an exploration of the lyric's expressive, imaginative passions and an examination of theoretical issues and presentational strategies in various verse structures from Ovid to Komunyakaa, focusing on poetic means for conceiving and representing love, loss, and transcendence. Through close readings of strategically grouped texts, the course will explore the interplay of convention and innovation with close attention to rhetorics of desire, power, and transgression; external and internal form; and recurrent lyric figures, tropes, and topoi (e.g., in Narcissus, Orphic, and Ulysses poems; in the dramatic monologue; in the sonnet and elegy; in the sublime; in vernacular traditions and their literary revisions). Issues for study will include: allusion and intertextuality; genre and/as 'meaning'; convention and cliché; invention and subversion; absence and restitution; origination and self-presentation. Practical criticism and discussion of the tools needed for explication will lead us to theoretical analyses of interpretive modes and the stance of the interpreter—and, in the process, we will conceive of fresh ways of "doing" literary history opened to us by lyric performance, allowing conventional, seamless linear narratives to dissolve into the often more cacophonous, polyvocal, and surprising soundings of lyric genealogies.

### Course Requirements:

- brief exercises; journal; one short paper (5-7 pp.); one longer paper (12-15 pp.)
- a desire to engage in collective meditation about a wide range of poetic texts and conceptual issues
- participation in communal convulsions of close reading and spasms of surmise

NOTE: This course fulfills the pre-1800 requirement