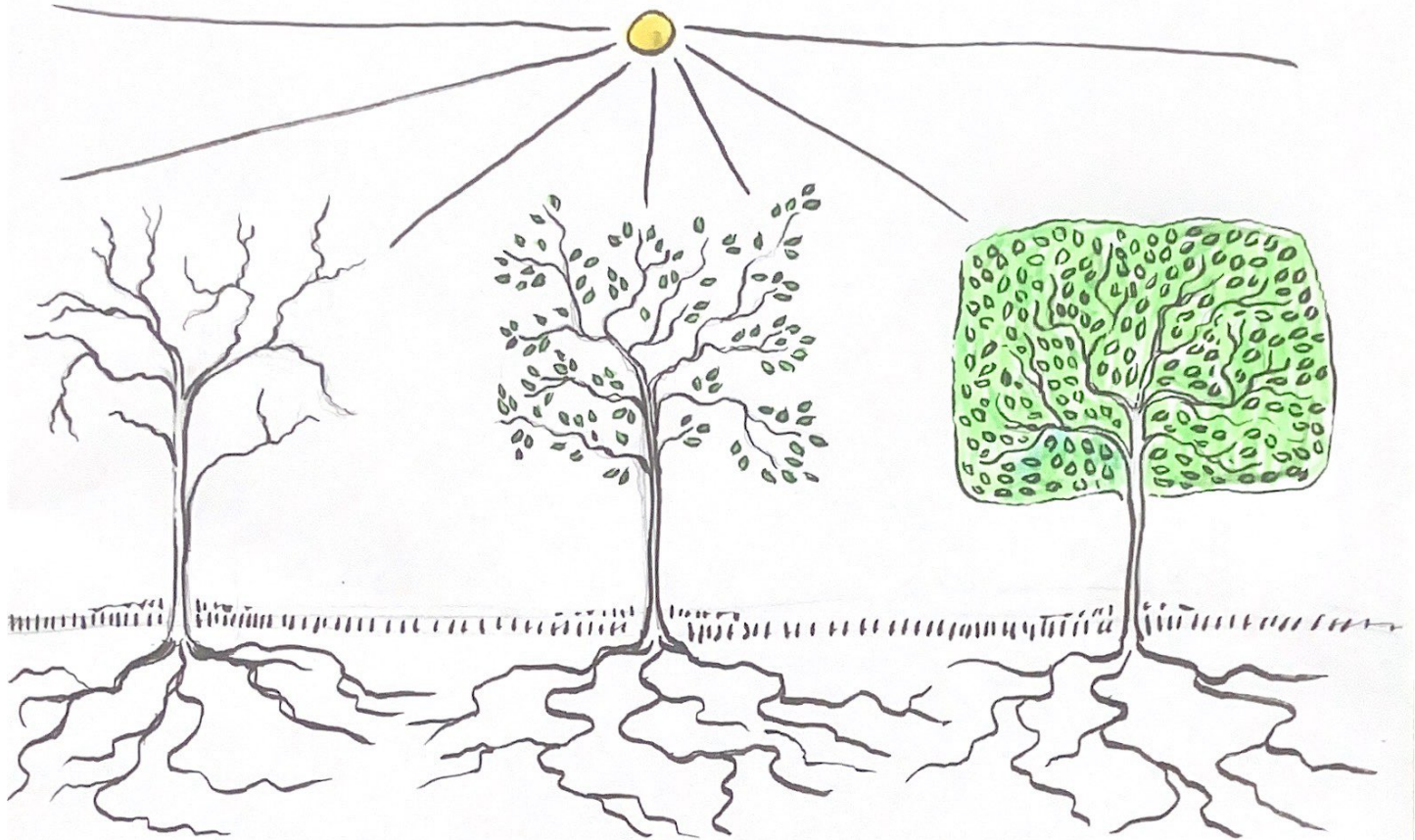


# HVERFORD COLLEGE

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

SPRING 2024 COURSE GUIDE



CONTAINING DESCRIPTIONS OF  
readings, approaches & course conduct  
of  
ALL DEPARTMENTAL OFFERINGS

COVER ART BY: LIESL BALDAUF '25

## Major Requirements

Admission to the major requires completion of at least two courses, WRPR 150 or a 100 level English course and 1-2 English courses at the 200 level, by the end of the sophomore year.

### **In total the major requires eleven credits**

- Seven courses at the 100, 200 and 300 levels of which
  - At least two must be in literature written before 1800
  - At least two must be in literature written after 1800
  - At least one (and no more than two, including WRPR 150) must be at the 100 level; two or three at the 200 level; 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 tutorial 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 UPenn 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.

- 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 their junior year
- The concentration involves 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

**Department of English**  
**Course Offerings**  
**Spring 2024**

**English 120 The Epic in English | Maud McInerney | MW 1-2:25pm**

This course begins by exploring three epics from ancient oral traditions: Homer's *Iliad*, the anonymous Old English *Beowulf*, and *Sunjata*, the great praise poem by the griots of Mali. From these heroic, pagan beginnings, we will turn to the great Christian epics of Dante and Milton, *Inferno* and *Paradise Lost*. Finally, we will consider the extent to which the themes and energy of epic poetry have survived into our own times, in works as formally diverse as Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, M. NourbeSe Phillip's *Zong!* and Ryan Coogler's *Black Panther*, three epic narratives confronting in very different ways the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. Questions to be considered include but are not limited to the formation of heroic (?) masculinities, the role of women and of magic, the creation of cultural identity, issues of transmission, appropriation and recreation. It will be...epic. Cross-listed with Comparative Literature; fulfills pre-1800 requirement.

**English 212 The Bible and Literature | Stephen Finley | T 7:30-9:55pm**

The course features a diverse and wide-ranging collection of materials that draws from traditional and contemporary sources in order to illustrate the continuing life of Biblical narrative and poetry. We will hope to map the interchange between sacred and secular text, in works by Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, Vaughn, Traherne, Milton, Dryden, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Ruskin, Newman, Patmore, Hopkins, Owen, T. S. Eliot, James Weldon Johnson, Ammons, Merwin, James Wright, Robert Bly, Hollander, Denise Levertov, Alice Walker, Sharon Olds, Eleanor Wilner, Breece Pancake, and others. We will also read modern and contemporary Jewish and Israeli poetry through its Biblical context, including Yehudi Amichai, Avraham Ben-Yitzhak, Hayim Nachman Bialik, Uri Zvi Greenberg, Rose Drachler, Haim Guri, Linda Zisquit, Amir Gilboa, Rachel Korn, Leonard Cohen, and Robert Mezey. The Bible source texts will be selected, in English, from both Hebrew scripture and the Greek New Testament. There will be many critical supplements, theological, philosophical, and theoretical.

**English 226 Disability and Literature | Danielle Allor | TTH 1-2:25pm**

How are bodies and minds depicted as “normal” or “abnormal,” and how have these categories changed over time and place? This course examines representations of disability in literature from Biblical scripture to modern critical memoir, including disabled saints and saints providing miraculous cures; a fifteenth-century poet's account of his own madness; William Shakespeare's depiction of “deformed” king Richard III as choosing to “prove a villain”; and a novel featuring a protagonist disabled by the 1984 Bhopal chemical spill, the world's worst industrial disaster. We will address how bodily differences and impairments are given social meaning as disability, and how these disabilities are portrayed in literary genres including scripture, hagiography, poetry, drama, novels, short stories, and memoir. We study these depictions from the perspective of disability studies, a discipline that seeks to understand the cultural meanings and material realities of disability with respect to systems of oppression. We will interrogate the definition of the “normal” human

body and mind and how this category has been formed, both historically and in the present.  
Prerequisite: first-year writing seminar.

**English 230 Poetics of Abolition | Lindsay Reckson | TH 1:30-3:55pm**

This course explores how incarcerated writers shape expansive life worlds within and beyond racial capitalism, white supremacy, and the carceral state. Together with a robust set of collaborators, we will study the role of poetry and other forms of creative expression in the history of abolition and social justice movements, and approach art-making as a practice of imagining abolitionist futures. We'll ask questions like: how does poetry operate in relation to state power? What is (and has been) the role of poetry in organizing? How does poetry resist surveillance? We'll explore how creative work happens in and beyond the prison-industrial complex, how it inhabits/names/refuses carceral logics, and how it provides methodologies for the critique and dismantling of carceral institutions (including but not limited to correctional facilities, Native American boarding schools, internment camps, immigration detention centers, and military prisons). Together we will read poetry in part to better understand these systems, and (more centrally) to learn how creative artists enact alternative ways of being and being together. Cross-listed with Peace, Justice, and Human Rights.

**English 265 Black Horror | Asali Solomon | MW 11:30am-12:55pm**

This course will explore the artistic genre of horror and its tendencies, with a particular focus on representations of Blackness. We will consider affinities between horror and literary modes such as realism and naturalism, attentive to the distinction between the fear of Blackness with the terror associated with being Black in America (often a fear of whiteness). The central focus of this course is the creative work of African American and Afro-Caribbean artists, but we will also consider a few white American representations of racial otherness in foundational literary horror, feature film and a documentary about a relatively recent historical horror, the 1985 MOVE fire in West Philadelphia. Cross-listed with African and Africana Studies.

**English 272 Topics in Irish Literature: Joyce/Beckett | Debora Sherman | TTH 2:30-3:55pm**

Writing for *The Guardian* in 1991, Seamus Deane characterized Irish writing in general and Beckett's writing in particular as caught between "silence and eloquence": "Yet time and again the rhetoric of their work enacts a movement that begins in aphasia and ends in eloquence." We will want to test this critical formulation against the work itself, in this case a comprehensive reading of Joyce, in the most prolix, the most carnivalized of texts, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, and Beckett, where texts border upon or court in silence their own undoing. We will want to press issues of language, of text, of reading, of narration, and the experimentalism in form that produces these as issues that exfoliate from these texts. As an alternative or possible corrective to readings which seem to isolate language and theory, we will also want to recuperate Joyce and Beckett as Irish writers in the postcolonial readings that are much underway in the critical community, looking for the inscription of and marking of that colonial experience in the language itself. More provocatively, perhaps, we will want to suggest that those experiences of a (post)colonial language are not unrelated to but form a radicalized space in which to explore seemingly theoretical issues of language entailed in the philosophically rich problematic of language as it mediates (or fails to mediate) consciousness.

**English 273 Modern British Literature: Mixing Memory and Desire | Alexander Millen | MW 1-2:25pm**

The artistic and social movement commonly termed “modernism”—dating roughly from the late nineteenth century through the interwar period—was described by some of its earliest theorists as a “rebellion against authority,” a “revolution of the word,” “kicking over old walls,” and the “breaking of ‘Do Nots.’” Often characterized by a radical break with existing artistic and social forms, an acute sensitivity to psychological subjectivity and individual consciousness, a preference for the aesthetic fragment over the whole, modernist artworks offer inside-out critiques of a rapidly transforming social world. The unprecedented rupture of the First World War; the collapse of nineteenth-century narratives of progress and historical destiny; the New Woman and feminist critiques of Victorian domesticity; the rapid decline of British imperialism; the long and uneven arrival of universal suffrage; new discoveries in the sciences and the social sciences (including Freudian psychoanalysis)—all these social phenomena brought with them fresh artistic problems and challenges. This course focuses primarily on poetry and novels, although over the course of the semester we will study plays, paintings, film, and radio broadcasting (focusing on the early years of the BBC). By what imaginative and critical means could artists conjure a world that they saw as radically new and yet hopelessly broken? What opportunities for social critique—feminist, Marxist, queer, anticolonial—did this search for new modes of expression make available? And just how radical a break was modernism from earlier social and narrative forms—and how do writers in our own time play with them? Alongside our literary historical investigations we will read essays by and about modernists. We will also be paying particular attention to important developments in recent scholarship, especially the salutary rewriting of literary modernism’s own self-mythologizing as a narrow set of white, male writers. Possible authors include: Ethel Carnie, E. M. Forster, James Hanley, Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, Una Marson, Jean Rhys, Sam Selvon, Zadie Smith, Rebecca West, and Virginia Woolf.

**English 292 Creative Writing: Poetry II | Thomas Devaney | F 1:30-3:55pm**

The course is an advanced creative writing workshop. The course 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 writers including Ross Gay, Ada Limón, Charles Simic, and Anne Carson. We will analyze and investigate issues of the lyric form related to entire books and poetry collections. We will workshop in both small and large groups. Students will come out of the course with a collection of their individual work submitted as a final portfolio.

**English 294 Creative Writing: Fiction II | Emma Copley Eisenberg | TH 1:30-3:55pm**

The focus of this course will be on understanding and honing your style—taking ownership of your choices as a writer, pushing your revisions further, developing a greater awareness of what decisions you are making in writing fiction and why you are making them. In workshop, we will seek to articulate the pattern, the meaning and the why of the stories under discussion. We’ll discuss these stories with a particular eye towards the shapes they are making, the rules they set up and break, and the ways in which they create and build movement. The goal is to have a discussion about craft that will deepen and expand our understanding of the mystery of fiction, to find the structures in which our stories can express their beauty, their most fundamental self-ness. Students will also study and discuss published stories by writers such as Justin Torres, Jamel Brinkley, Miranda July, Kristen

Valdez Quade, Carmen Maria Machado, as well as craft essays relevant to our explorations. You will write and substantially revise two short stories and become an active member in a community of engaged writers. By the end of course you will be able to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the components of short fiction, offer increasingly detailed, layered commentary on peer stories and identify other contemporary writers who speak to and inform your work and integrate lessons from those writers into your own craft and process. This course has a limited enrollment of 15 students. To be considered for admission, you must have already taken a college creative writing workshop course, and submit a writing sample of no more than 10pp. Please send writing samples to CW Program Director, [Asolomon@haverford.edu](mailto:Asolomon@haverford.edu), by the end of pre-registration.

### **English 295 New Media Performance Project | Matt O'Hare | TTH 11:30am-12:55pm**

New Media Performance Project (NMPP) incorporates processes of devised and experimental theatre with the creative use of digital media technologies for the realization of an evening-length performance. In response to topical cultural issues, students will engage with a variety of audio-visual media, interactive systems, and each other through sessions of improvisation, theatre games, and other creative research. While acting experience is not necessary, all students should be comfortable with public speaking at a minimum. Experience with other performance disciplines including dance, music, puppetry, etc. are welcome and encouraged. Students with a background or interest in video production, sound design, interactive art, video game development, and related areas are also welcome.

### **English 299 Junior Seminar II | Benston and McInerney | TTH 10-11:25am**

Junior seminar is a year-long intensive seminar in the theory and methodologies of literary studies. Through class readings, discussion, and writing tutorials, this course engages students in the study of (1) a series of texts representing the range and diversity of Anglophone literatures (2) critical theory and practice as it has been influenced by hermeneutics, feminism, psychology, semiotics, critical race theory, decolonial theory, queer theory, and cultural studies, among other fields.

### **English 358 History and/in Fiction | Alexander Millen | F 11:00am-1:25pm**

History is not (or not always) story-shaped, but novels are. Historical fiction has always been popular, though in recent decades it has been enthroned as the form of prestige. Book prizes aside, the question bears asking: how do writers impose narrative structure on historical episodes or events? Are some events, figures, or moments deemed more historic than others? Long understood to be bound up with nationalistic mythmaking, historical fiction has proven an especially attractive vehicle for writers to mount social and political critiques of their own time. This course focuses on British historical fiction of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. If historical novels typically tell the story of the nation, how might writers wrest its imaginative power away from the regimes of Official History, especially as that history bears upon ways of thinking about gender, race, and class? What does the weight of historical fidelity do for our understanding of character, plot, style, and genre? Does the historical recency of the narrated action matter for the tone and texture of storytelling? Much more speculatively: what will the historical fiction writers of tomorrow draw on to bring out the vividness of their past, our present? Possible authors include: Pat Barker, Kazuo Ishiguro, Andrea Levy, Hilary Mantel, and Virginia Woolf.

**English 361 Topics in African American Literature: Representations of American Slavery | Asali Solomon | W 1:30-3:55pm**

For the past three centuries, Black writers have mined the experience of chattel slavery in the cause of literal and artistic emancipation. Slave narratives, poetry, essays and novels depicting slavery constitute a literary universe so robust that the term subgenre is an injustice. In this work spanning the 19th-21st centuries, the reader will find pulse-quickenning plots, gruesome horror, tender sentiment, heroism, degradation, sexual violation and redemption, as well as resonant meditations on freedom and the human condition. This course is focused primarily on prose representations of slavery in the Americas beginning with non-fiction narratives and moving into the genre of the “neo-slave narrative,” which is fiction. We will also watch one feature film and look at examples of visual art. Our discussions will incorporate history, but will foreground literary and cultural analysis. Cross-listed with African and Africana Studies.

**English 362 Writing About Other People | Gustavus Stadler | M 1:30-3:55pm**

This class explores the challenging project of writing about another person, examining approaches both literary and non-literary, aesthetic and institutional. We’ll begin by looking at the methodologies of disciplines like psychoanalysis and sociology, especially the notion of the “case history,” then move on to look at a genealogy of literary work by (mostly) US writers (and to a lesser extent photographers and filmmakers) that both feeds off of these forms of knowledge production and proposes counter-methodologies, many of which challenge the “portrait” genre as a mimetic/realist form of representation (i.e. the conventional understanding of biography as a genre). Some of the modes of experimentation that we’ll encounter: literary impressionism, textual collage, archival plunges, explorations of the erotics of portraiture, portraiture as a mode of retelling and repairing historical and personal trauma, collective portraiture, and others. We’ll routinely make reference to visual forms of portraiture, especially photography and cinema. A significant portion of the writing we do will be our own experiments with literary portraiture, including occasional imitations of other writers’ mode of portraiture. We’ll also consult a range of critical and theoretical works (broadly construed) and construct a collective bibliography of theories of portraiture (again, broadly construed). Prerequisites: Two English courses or permission of instructor.

**English 366 Topics in American Literature: Asian American Hybridity | Elizabeth Kim | TTH 1:00-2:25pm**

In Lisa Lowe’s influential essay, “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences,” she defines hybridity as “the formation of cultural objects and practices produced by histories of uneven and unsynthetic power relations,” often within the context of colonialism, and frames the concept as “the process through which [Asians in the US] survive those violences by living, inventing, and reproducing different cultural alternatives.” In this course, we will study a range of experimental and hybrid works by contemporary Asian American writers to consider in particular the relationship between form and content. How do works of mixed genres and media address the hybrid identity marker “Asian American”? How do the works’ hybrid form, structure, and construction open up possibilities for alternative modes of representing and responding to the specific social, political, and historical conditions of ethnic/racial hybridity? Through examining works of fiction, poetry, essay, comics, radio story, and film, paired with critical texts, we will

explore how authors blend and blur categories of genres and media as well as what this reflects about Asian American identity, experience, and survival.

**English 399 Senior Conference (Time TBA)**

In Senior Conference, English majors work closely with a faculty consultant over the course of their senior year in the research and writing of a 25-30 page essay or a piece of creative writing accompanied by a critical preface (for the creative writing concentration). The course culminates in an hour-long oral examination that covers the thesis and coursework done for the major.