

# Literature Core - Spring 2020

## **ENGL1080.02 Literature as Testimony**

**T TH 1:30**

This section of Literature Core will explore how literary texts bear witness to historical events and address social issues. Through the study of poetry, fiction, drama, autobiography, and graphic narrative, we will examine how writers have used a variety of literary genres and forms to transform traumatic memories and the experiences of displacement and oppression into art. Topics include slavery, the Holocaust, and 9/11.

*Lori Harrison-Kahan*

## **ENGL1080.04 Love and Other Difficulties**

**MWF 12**

In the classical era and up to the Renaissance, love was considered an appropriate topic for study, even academic study. The assumption was that just because we all have feelings that does not mean we know how to love, or to love well, and that therefore we need to study it, discuss it, practice, in order to become better at it. This class will study various theories and practices of love via readings in Plato, Goethe, Eugene O'Neill and others, in order to learn how it's done.

*Thomas Kaplan-Maxfield*

## **ENGL1080.06 Island Fiction**

**MWF 10**

This course ponders the significance of islands, literal and figurative, in the human condition and in the human imagination. Starting with Thomas More's *Utopia*, we will move through some early travel narratives, fictional utopian and dystopian island experiments, and we will finish with some offshoots of the "island genre" that may include JG Ballard's *High Rise* or stories about space exploration.

*Allison Cotti-Lowell*

## **ENGL1080.08 Utopia/Dystopia**

**T TH 3**

How do we describe or imagine our world at its best and at its worst? From Thomas More's *Utopia* to Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, this course will examine literary re-imaginings of human society and the ideas that inform them. In this course we will consider what parts of human society emerge as constant or essential including ideas of power, politics, gender, religion, and art. We will explore how utopian and dystopian literature allows us to make meaning in our own cultural moment and potentially shapes the way we will create or change our world in the future.

*Rachel Ernst*

## **ENGL1080.10 Zen and Literary Writing**

**MWF 10**

This course provides an introduction to literary study by looking at how Zen (Chan) Buddhism has been represented, understood, and expressed through various forms of literature over the past 1400 years. We will read works translated from Chinese and Japanese as well as works originally written in English. Literary genres will include haiku and other poetic forms, travel memoirs, short stories, and at least one novel. We will also consider the Zen koan as a literary form. No previous knowledge of Buddhism is required or expected.

*Alan Richardson*

## **ENGL1080.12 On the Margins**

**MWF 1**

This class will look at what it means to tell stories from a place of marginalization, both in terms of identity and location. Why do we write these stories, and to what end do we read them? What does it mean to think about identity from a place that is not central to conventional ways of thinking or being? To think through these questions and others, we will focus on works of nonfiction and memoir, discussing issues of nationality, gender, sexuality, and race through the words of our writers. This course also investigates the connection between writing from these historically marginalized positions from historically marginalized spaces--borders, suburbs, and outskirts.

*Chandler Shaw*

## **ENGL1080.14 Soul Struggles**

**T TH 3**

Moral dilemma. Spiritual crisis. When faced with internal conflict, how do we decide which direction to take? This section of Literature Core will examine novels, drama, and short stories (along with a few poems) focusing on characters navigating conflicts of passion, reason, faith, doubt, truth, deception, forgiveness, and revenge. We will think specifically about how personal convictions and religious belief, as well as indifference and uncertainty, shape characters' choices, action, inaction, and identity formation. We will also examine how language, genre, and form work to shape readers' experience and expectations of these texts. Authors might include Charlotte Brontë, Robert Louis Stevenson, C.S. Lewis, Marilynne Robinson, Chaim Potok, and John Patrick Shanley.

*Megan Lease*

## **ENGL1080.16 Utopia/Dystopia**

**T TH 10:30**

How do we describe or imagine our world at its best and at its worst? From Thomas More's *Utopia* to Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, this course will examine literary re-imaginings of human society and the ideas that inform them. In this course we will consider what parts of human society emerge as constant or essential including ideas of power, politics, gender, religion, and art. We will explore how utopian and dystopian literature allows us to make meaning in our own cultural moment and potentially shapes the way we will create or change our world in the future.

*Rachel Ernst*

## **ENGL1080.18 Variations on the Witch**

**MWF 11**

From rebellious Puritan girls of colonial New England to practitioners of obeah and vodoun in the Caribbean, this course examines the figure of the witch in the Americas, from the seventeenth century to the present. We will explore why communities invent witches, what self-identified witches signify about changing attitudes toward race, gender, and power, and how artistic representations of witches continue to evolve in our present day. Course content may include the following authors: Arthur Miller, Maryse Condé, Jean Rhys, Michelle Cliff, John Updike, William Shakespeare, and Cotton Mather, and the following films: *The Witch* (2015), *Eve's Bayou* (1997), *The Craft* (1996), and *The Love Witch* (2016), as well as paintings, engravings, print ephemera, and other primary sources. *Sabina Sullivan*

## **ENGL1080.20 Misfits**

**T TH 12**

Literature is full of misfits, outsiders, drifters, square pegs--characters who struggle to find or escape their place in the world. In this course we consider a variety of literary approaches to telling these characters' stories, imagining the social and cultural contexts in which they move, and working out the dynamics of possibility and constraint. Likely texts include Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, Don De Lillo's *Libra*, Annie Proulx's *Accordion Crimes*, Quevedo's *The Swindler*, Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, and Hunter Thompson's *Fear and Loathing In Las Vegas*.

*Carlo Rotella*

**ENGL1080.22 Modernity, Aesthetics, Ecology** **T TH 10 30**

A concern for the environment has recently become a fixture in literary studies. However, there are some difficulties in the task of fusing literature and ecology. One of them is that literature and art, at least since the industrial revolution and the advent of “modernity,” gradually began defining itself in opposition to nature. The more that modern art and literature began to reflect the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century experience—defined by rapid urbanization, psychological introspection, massive political unrest—the more that a concern for ecology slowly faded into the background until, suddenly, it seemed to have disappeared from literature completely.

Our starting point in class will be to investigate this “disappearance,” to ask what may have caused this turn away from the natural world and what it might say about the relation of modernity to ecology. Yet, the purpose of investigating this disappearance will not only be a way of criticizing literature’s failure to address environmental issues. We will also explore how modernism and the legacy of literature following in its wake can help us redefine and rethink a series of issues touching on the ecological.

*Matthew Mersky*

**ENGL1080.24 Plastic Literature: Reboots & Remakes** **MWF 1**

The term “literary canon” conjures up a body of works that are so well-wrought that they are almost sacrosanct. Creators through time and across culture, however, engage themselves with such giant receptacle of literary history by rewriting, revising, or even retorting. Focusing on the ideas of world literature and intertextuality, this course explores the dynamic interactions between “source” texts and literary (and sometimes film) revisions. In particular, we will track the ways that writers follow or depart from the traditions they engage and understand what is at stake in those literary inheritances.

*Alicia Oh*

**ENGL1080.29 The Art of Knowledge** **MWF 2**

(Sequenced with FWS class ENGL 1010.15)

The quest for knowledge has inspired all kinds of literature, from Erasmus Darwin’s poems about plant love to novels like Carl Sagan’s *Contact*. Texts including the Newtonian poetry of the eighteenth century or Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* have showcased the imaginative possibilities, limitations, and pitfalls of deep inquiry. In this course, we will consider how art and the quest for knowledge have historically depended on one another, and how together they have influenced our beliefs about truth, our cultural values, and even our perceptions of reality. The reading list includes works by Alexander Pope, Mary Shelley, Pauline Hopkins, Karel Čapek, and Barbara Kingsolver.

*Rebekah Mitsein*

**ENGL1080.30 Literature of the Fantastic** **T TH 4:30**

This course will examine literature that explores themes of “the fantastic.” We’ll consider that term rather generally, and use it to frame our discussions of William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* and other novels, plays, poems and short stories. Ultimately, this exploration will lead us to questions about why writers use invented or skewed realities to explore political, social, cultural or theological issues, and whether these texts’ fantastic nature might even allow writers to reach “truths” that are otherwise unattainable.

*Chris Boucher*

### **ENGL1080.32 Literature of the Apocalypse and the End of the World MWF 2**

In contemporary tv, film, and literature, we are fascinated by stories of the apocalypse. From *The Walking Dead* to *The Last Man on Earth*, *Oryx and Crake* to *Zone One*, these stories of disaster, social collapse, and survival seem to enthrall us. Yet such stories are not new. In this course, we will be investigating texts from a variety of historical periods and in a variety of literary forms that share an interest in imagining the apocalypse and its aftermath. We will wrestle with questions concerning how and why we tell these stories and how historical, cultural, and artistic context impact representations of the apocalypse. Potential authors include: W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Tony Kushner, Haruki Murakami, and Octavia Butler.

*Kristin Imre*

### **ENGL1080.34 Memory and Forgetting T TH 9**

This literature core course will explore the theme of memory in fiction, poetry, essays and film: the manipulation of time in stream of consciousness and in flashbacks, the way that trauma or deep emotion can “freeze” moments in our minds to which we recur again and again, the exquisite pleasure of nostalgia as well as the liberating numbness of amnesia. We will read works from a range of historical periods with attention to neuroscientific theories of memory, Freudian notions of repressed memory, and the role of photography in the creation of memory. Authors may include Wordsworth, W. B. Yeats, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Julian Barnes, among others.

*Clare Dunsford*

### **ENGL1080.36 Alienation as Literary Motif T TH 3**

This is a close-reading of literature course. Certain themes, alienation, for instance, or the role of women in society will be stressed, and examined. Narrative strategies, points of view, characterization, are discussed as well, as will the connection between literature and society as a whole; matters of aesthetics are also emphasized. Readings may include *Madame Bovary*, *All the King's Men*, *Where I'm Calling From* (Raymond Carver). There are quizzes, hourly exams and three 7 page essays.

*George O'Har*

### **ENGL1080.38 Poetry and Memoir MWF 10**

In this course we will examine two literary genres: poetry and memoir, to understand the lyric impulse—what makes a person want to express his or her life on the page. The motives are not always clear, possibly not even relevant, but examining these texts for an understanding of the artistic, psychological, and even spiritual dimensions of the work will help us see the relevance and endurance of these forms, as well as their social and possible political implications. We'll read the work of poets Anne Bradstreet, Phyllis Wheatley, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ada Limon, and Walt Whitman; books by poets Allen Ginsberg, Edward Hirsch and Claudia Rankine; and memoirs or excerpts by Tobias Wolff, Lucy Grealey, Saint Augustine, Harriet Jacobs and Ta-Nehisi Coates.

*Sue Roberts*

### **ENGL1080.40 On the Road MWF 11**

This section of Literature Core will examine the theme of travel in American literature. Through the exploration of literary nonfiction, novels, and films, the course will consider the significance of mobility in the American psyche. We will investigate how the pathways available to our characters capture a portrait of America and how this portrait changes over time. Moreover, we will study the communities that are fashioned within the texts and their relative isolation or interconnectivity within the nation. Readings and films may include works by Jack Kerouac, Mark Twain, James Baldwin, Vladimir Nabokov, Hunter S. Thompson, Nella Larsen, and Alfred Hitchcock. Students will

develop strategies for close reading and analytical writing.

*Jocelyn Rice*

## **ENGL1080.42 Rule Breakers**

**T TH 1:30**

This section of the Lit Core will examine the issue of "Rule Breakers"

We will be looking at literature that deals with the act of breaking the rules and the social and moral consequences that result from rule breaking. And we will be looking at the way this is done in various literary forms.

We have to begin with some key questions:

Why and how, do societies create rules?

Who enforces the rules and how are they enforced?

Why do people decide to break rules?

What are the social consequences of breaking rules?

What are the individual consequences for the rule breaker?

Do men and women deal with rules and rule breaking differently?

*Bonnie Rudner*

## **ENGL1080.44 Serial, Series, Adaptation**

**MWF 9**

This class looks at how stories are told through time and refashioned over time, from the Victorian serial novel to contemporary television to retellings and adaptations. What stories do we keep telling, and why? How does a story keep us coming back for more? As we investigate these questions, we will think about form (serialized novel, television, novel-in -Twitter), genre (detective fiction, fairy tale), character, and adaptation. In addition to using class readings as a way to examine literary form, we will consider questions of gender, history, and culture. Texts may include works by Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, Angela Carter, Anne Sexton, and Kamila Shamsie, television episodes, and critical essays.

*Lauren Wilwerding*

## **ENGL1080.46 Food For Thought**

**T TH 10 30**

In this course, we will study a diverse range of fictional and nonfictional texts that explore the social, cultural, political, and ethical dimensions of food. How do novels, short stories, poetry, autobiographical writings, recipes, essays, letters, films, and visual art imagine the relationship between food and identity, heritage, and community? What do they suggest about the intersections between food and race, food and class, food and gender? How do these forms engage with and mediate issues related to dietary choices, hunger, and food production and consumption? Our class discussions of these topics will be enriched by several activities that allow us to engage with our community – touring the dining hall kitchens at Boston College, preparing and serving a meal at a homeless shelter, taking a trip to Haymarket and the Boston Public Market, and visiting a local farm.

*Deanna Danforth*

## **ENGL1080.50 Island Fiction**

**MWF 11**

This course ponders the significance of islands, literal and figurative, in the human condition and in the human imagination. Starting with Thomas More's Utopia, we will move through some early travel narratives, fictional utopian and dystopian island experiments, and we will finish with some offshoots of the "island genre" that may include JG Ballard's High Rise or stories about space exploration.

*Allison Cotti-Lowell*

## **ENGL1080.52 Food For Thought**

**T TH 9**

In this course, we will study a diverse range of fictional and nonfictional texts that explore the social, cultural, political, and ethical dimensions of food. How do novels, short stories, poetry, autobiographical writings, recipes, essays, letters, films, and visual art imagine the relationship between food and identity, heritage, and community? What do they suggest about the intersections between food and race, food and class, food and gender? How do these forms engage with and mediate issues related to dietary choices, hunger, and food production and consumption? Our class discussions of these topics will be enriched by several activities that allow us to engage with our community – touring the dining hall kitchens at Boston College, preparing and serving a meal at a homeless shelter, taking a trip to Haymarket and the Boston Public Market, and visiting a local farm.

*Deanna Danforth*

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## **Class below fulfills both Literature Core and Diversity, Justice, and the Common Good (Cultural Diversity)**

**ENGL1182 Literature Core: Just Literature: Reading for Good (T TH 10:30)**

**Satisfies Cultural Diversity, Literature Core Requirement**

We know that literature can transport us. But so too can literature transform us. Dislocate us. And provide challenges and shifts in thinking. In this course, which meets the goals of the Literature Core at Boston College, as well as the core requirement in Difference, Justice and the Common Good, students will encounter injustice within literary works. In reading treatments of injustice across time and literary genres, students will encounter powerful depictions of structural inequalities and ultimately will imagine and name alternate pathways toward a more just world. Literature in this course will bring readers close to the pain of injustice and inequality; research, writing and discussions of context will prompt greater understanding as well as a vision of transformative compassion and greater equality. We will read short stories, essays, speeches and poems, and authors including Allison Bechdel, Octavia Butler, Art Spiegelman, Bryan Stevenson. Reading selections will influence the style and content of the student work. Student experience and student questions regarding justice, injustice and ethics will provide a skeleton for the coursework.

*Eileen Donovan-Kranz*

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**Classes below are part of the Enduring Questions Program and fulfill the Literature Core. The partner course fulfills an additional Core Requirement as indicated.**

**ENGL1710 Family Matters: Stories of Adoption and Kinship (T TH 9/TH 6-7:50)**

**Corequisite: SOCY1715 Family Matters**

**Satisfies Literature Core Requirement**

**Enduring Questions *For Freshmen Only***

What makes a family? Why does kinship matter? How can reading stories of adoption inform our response to such questions? In this course students will examine adoption as narrative event (exploring its relationship to the bildungsroman, the rags-to-riches story, memoir), as image (the orphan, the abandoned waif, the unmarried mother), and as metaphor (of dependence and independence, of separation and affiliation, of origins and fresh starts). And because adoption foregrounds fundamental issues of identity (constructed and inherited), we will investigate the role(s) of nation, empire, and religion in regulating childhood and family life.

*James Smith*

**ENGL1721 Finding the Animal: Beasts and Boundaries in Literature (MWF 10/T 6-7:50)**

**Corequisite: PSYC1092**

**Satisfies Literature Core Requirement**

**Enduring Questions *For Freshmen Only***

What is a human, and who is an animal? Humanism has questionably attributed reason, morality, speech, ritual, and the capacity to imagine future worlds to humans alone. All major philosophies and religions try to separate humans from animals: in Genesis, God distinguishes Adam and Eve from the beasts, then instructs Adam to name them. Humans still grapple with the ethics of eating, wearing, and experimenting on animals, as well as understanding how various mental abilities are represented across species. These courses use comparative psychology and literary study to interrogate the blurry and problematic boundaries between human and non-human animals.

*Robert Stanton*

**ENGL1724 Nature and Power: Reading the American Place (T TH 12/TH 6-7:50)**

**Corequisite: HIST1710**

**Satisfies Literature Core Requirement**

**Enduring Questions *For Freshmen Only***

Writers since Meriwether Lewis have tried to know the great diversity of American landscape through acts of language. In this course we'll ask how poems, essays, and fiction depict American encounters with nature: As the unknown other to be conquered? As access to a spiritual dimension? As a site of contested claims for use and power? How have these many meanings we've assigned our landscapes shifted in the face of environmental degradation? Our

readings, discussion, and writing will focus on how the American psyche has been influenced by both a fear of, and a love of, what is "wild."

*Suzanne Matson*

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**FREN3315 Madmen, Hysterics & Criminals: Inventing Deviance (M W F 2)**

**Satisfies Literature Core Requirement**

**Conducted in English. Counts toward German major, German minor, and German Studies minor.**

In this seminar we address three major questions, guided by a broad selection of readings from German, French, British, and American literature and theory from 1800 to the present: How do we as readers define the abnormal and the deviant? What aesthetic practices does literature employ to represent these threshold experiences, and what is their history? How might we rethink our own notions of normality when faced with their artificiality? Literary, theoretical, and musical texts by Balzac, Bernhard, Büchner, Freud, Genet, Kracht, Plath, Stevenson, and others help us establish a history both of abnormality and our own cultural self-understanding.

*Daniel Bowles*

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**The classes below are designed for English Language Learners and fulfill the Lit Core Requirement. They are a continuation of the ELL FWS classes.**

**ENGL1079 Literature Core for English Language Learners**

**Satisfies Literature Core Requirement**

**Offered in the spring only Limited to 15 students Department permission required**

This course, offered in the spring, is part of a year-long sequence of English language support and follows the First Year Writing Seminar offered in fall. ENGL1079 may be taken in place of ENGL1080 and fulfills BC's literature Core requirement. Similar to ENGL1080, students explore a variety of literary genres including fiction, poetry, and drama with an emphasis on post-1900 American literature to enhance the development of diction and syntax that is contemporary and idiomatic. Support for students from linguistically diverse backgrounds in speaking, reading, and writing is an important component of the course.

*The Department*

ENGL1079.01	T TH 10 30	ANDERSON
ENGL1079.03	M W F 11	PUENTE
ENGL1079.09	M W F 9	HOLLY
ENGL1079.11	M W F 10	ZIMMERMAN
ENGL1079.13	M W F 12	IMRE
ENGL1079.15	T TH 1 30	RUTLEDGE
ENGL1079.17	M W F 1	HOLLY



## Literature Core in Other Departments - Spring 2020

### SLAV2173.01 **Twentieth-Century Russian Literature** T Th 12

Study of landmarks of Russian literature in light of Russian and Soviet history in the twentieth century. Works by Akhmatova, Babel, Brodsky, Bunin, Venedikt Erofeev, Gladkov, Sologub, Solzhenitsyn, Trifonov and others. Readings and lectures in English.

*Maxim Shrayer*

### FREN3315.01 / GERM2221.01 **Madmen, Hysterics & Criminals: Inventing Deviance** MWF 2

In this seminar we address three major questions, guided by a broad selection of readings from German, French, British, and American literature and theory from 1800 to the present: How do we as readers define the abnormal and the deviant? What aesthetic practices does literature employ to represent these threshold experiences, and what is their history? How might we rethink our own notions of normality when faced with their artificiality? Literary, theoretical, and musical texts by Balzac, Bernhard, Büchner, Freud, Genet, Kracht, Plath, Stevenson, and others help us establish a history both of abnormality and our own cultural self-understanding. Conducted in English.

*Daniel Bowles*

### EALC3166.01 **Classical Chinese Literature** T Th 12

The history of classical Chinese literature from the earliest times to the end of the imperial period in 1911. English translations of major literary classics such as *Book of Songs*, *Encountering Sorrow*, *Zhuangzi*, *Daodejing*, *Records of History*, early and medieval records of anomalies, Tang dynasty poetry and short stories, Song dynasty song lyrics, Yuan drama, and Ming-Qing novels. Special emphasis placed on acquiring analytical skills and critical perspectives in literary criticism through close reading of texts and in their philosophical, religious, and historical contexts.

*Sing-Chen Chiang*

### ITAL3314.01 **Literature and Business** T Th 12

The course looks at businessmen as they are portrayed in short stories, plays, a novel, and films from the Middle Ages to the present. It takes as a premise the revolutionary nature of the businessman, and literature will serve as the microcosm to explore society's evolving ideas about business. Questions include the role of businessmen in urban development, the arts and philanthropy, business and meritocracy, reputation and the need for privacy/secretcy, price vs. value, the ambivalent symbolism of currency, the commodification of the human body, nature, the anxiety of poverty and of wealth, and inherited vs. earned money. Conducted in English.

*Laurie Shepard*

### SPAN3395.03 **Contextos** MWF 10

Contextos introduces students to the analysis of a wide range of Hispanic texts, including genres such as poetry, narrative, drama, essay, and film. Special attention to written work and discussion allows them to become familiar with the concepts and terminology essential for original critical thinking. Conducted in Spanish.

*Martha Castano*

**SPAN3395.04 Contextos****MWF 11**

Contextos introduces students to the analysis of a wide range of Hispanic texts, including genres such as poetry, narrative, drama, essay, and film. Special attention to written work and discussion allows them to become familiar with the concepts and terminology essential for original critical thinking. Conducted in Spanish.

*Martha Castano*

**SPAN3395.05 Contextos****MWF 1**

Contextos introduces students to the analysis of a wide range of Hispanic texts, including genres such as poetry, narrative, drama, essay, and film. Special attention to written work and discussion allows them to become familiar with the concepts and terminology essential for original critical thinking. Conducted in Spanish.

*Martha Castano*

**SPAN3395.02 Contextos****T Th 12**

Contextos introduces students to the analysis of a wide range of Hispanic texts, including genres such as poetry, narrative, drama, essay, and film. Special attention to written work and discussion allows them to become familiar with the concepts and terminology essential for original critical thinking. Conducted in Spanish.

*Humbert Delgado-Velazquez*