Literature Courses
FALL 2010

NOTE: Effective fall 2010, courses in literature, formerly designated by ENGL, are now listed as LITS.

Basic Literature Courses

NOTE: Core Curricula

ENGL 2001 and LITS 2001 fulfill the humanities requirement as basic literature courses in the Becton College of Arts and Sciences general education curriculum. They are also applicable to the literature requirement in Silberman College of Business. Advanced literature (LITS 2000-3000-level) courses can fulfill the Becton and SCB requirements. Writing (ENGW) courses do not fulfill these requirements.

ENGL 2001 INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY STUDIES
2001.31B TF 12:45-2:00 PM Calabresi
*2001.32B W 2:10-4:40 PM Daniel (CRWR majors only)

What is literature? By reading short stories, poetry, plays, some essays and a novel, we will consider some definitions and learn to distinguish among the genres of literature, as well as learn to analyze and write about them, using the vocabulary of literary criticism. This course will introduce students to the magic of literature by exposing them to a variety of genres and themes. Attention will be paid to close readings of texts and to the possibilities of meanings inherent within texts. Besides learning about the mechanics, stylistics, and terminology within literary studies, the course will address the explorations made possible by imaginative literature. All sections are blended courses that will meet both in person and online.
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102
*Section 32B is for Creative Writing majors only

LITS 2001.31B WORLD LITERATURE I: ANCIENT WORLD
MTH 9:55-11:10 AM Green

Reading and analysis of representative works from the ancient world, focused around common themes of heroism, love, duty, and moral virtue. Readings include selections from Homer, the Greek playwrights, Vergil, and Ovid, along with works from the world context, including the Ramayana, the Bible, the Koran, and writings of the Taoists, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. This is the new introductory course for the revised Literature major; students in the old major may use this as an elective in place of Classical Tradition.

This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online.
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

LITS 2004.31B INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY CRITICISM
MTH 2:10-3:25 PM Ghosh

Critical theory encompasses all the schools of literary and cultural criticism that have developed in the last half of the 20th century and in the first decade of the 21st—new criticism, psychoanalysis, feminism, Marxism, semiotics, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and environmentalism. These theories emphasize that class, racial, gender, sexual, national or
religious identities create interlocking systems of interpretation and define the interpretative frameworks we use when we read literary works or newspapers and magazines, view films, or consume media products. In addition to reading the works of major theorists, we will consider texts drawn from literature and popular culture that illustrate aspects of these theories. This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online.

Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

Advanced Literature Courses

LITS 3051.31B MEDIEVAL LITERATURE
MTH 11:20 AM -12:35 PM Green

The literature of the Middle Ages spans nearly 800 years if not more and spans a variety of genres including lyric poetry, heroic epic, Arthurian and other romances, and religious visions. We hope to catch the high points of much of this variety and range by reading selections, including Beowulf, an Icelandic saga; selections from Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, and Provencal poetry; Dante’s Inferno; Piers Plowman; and Lady Muraski’s The Tale Genji

This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online.

Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

LITS 3054.31B ROMANTICISM
TF 9:55-11:10 AM Schiffman

Writing in the wake of revolution and reform, the Romantic writers we will study are among the most outspoken, problematic, versatile, and complex in the history of literature. We will begin a little bit before 1789, the traditional date of this movement’s beginning, to investigate its European origins and influences, and continue our examination past 1832 (the deaths of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Sir Walter Scott), the tradition marker of Romanticism’s end. We will also see how this period gives way to the Victorian Age. Alongside, we will pay attention to the contemporary attendant historical, artistic, intellectual, and scientific discussions that border our literary readings. Our primary task this semester will be to understand what the term “Romantic” even means. Though poetry is the engine of Romanticism, and we will of course study the great six British ones (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, P. Shelley, Byron, and Blake), we will also study the novel (M. Shelley, Austen) and other prose forms, such as the novella and the fairy tale by German masters (Goethe, Hoffmann, Keller, and Kleist). We might also consider how the Romantics are our contemporaries through, for example, the use of film and opera.

This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online.

Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

LITS 3061.61B CONTEMPORARY WORLD LIT.
MTH 5:00-6:15 PM Ghosh

The twentieth century has seen a profound reconfiguration of the world. With the disintegration of European empires, countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have struggled to define themselves as modern national entities. This has been further complicated in the late twentieth century by a new “postnational” order of neoimperialism. Global processes of change are embodied in what are popularly known as global cities. These cities are the local sites where diverse social and cultural geographies collide and become the symbolic spaces associated with the making of collective subjectivities. This course will examine changing literary conceptions of the world through predominantly through discussions of urban landscapes in contemporary fiction, poetry, drama, and film from various parts of the world. These literary texts will be read
in tandem with recent cultural criticism drawn from fields as diverse as history, economics,
literary criticism, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. The course will also analyze how the
narrative techniques employed in these novels fuse the political with the aesthetic in constructing
identities that are national and global at the same time.
This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online.
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

LITS 3071.31D CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE
WEB Benson

Drama, poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction from the African continent, in English and
English translation, with emphasis on the colonial and post-colonial periods, the African
aesthetic, African liberation movements, and African religious and cultural values. Texts studied
may include works by writers such as Mariama Ba, Wole Soyinka, Naguib Mahfouz, and J.M.
Coetzee.
This course is fully online.
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

LITS 3101.31B GREEK AND ROMAN DRAMA
TF 12:45-2:00 PM Pastorino

The course analyses some of the seminal works in Greek and Roman tragedy and comedy,
looking at the historical, political, and philosophical circumstances that inform the plays. A
history of stagings through the centuries and attention to contemporary productions will be part of
the course as well. Authors considered include Aeschilus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, Aristotle,
Menander, Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, and Seneca.
This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online.
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102
This course is cross listed with THEA 3101.

LITS 3102.31B STUDIES IN DRAMA: Sets and the City: Urban Drama from Aeschylus
to Wilde
TF 11:20 AM-12:35 PM Calabresi

This course focuses on the theater’s role in the creation of an urban culture in three important
cities—Athens, London, and Paris—at significant moments in the development of drama. We
will look in particular at the ways in which plays, opera, and early film defined and reflected
changing images of city, court and country for their urban audiences. Topics include the mapping
of civic and religious space; plague and pollution; the city as site of corruption or delight; women
and strangers on stage and in the playhouse; cross-dressing and consumption; criminal
underworlds and civic justice; work, technology, and identity; the city and the nation. We’ll look
in particular at how genres depict urban life—including classical tragedy, city comedy, opera and
silent film—in relation to changing historical circumstances and concerns. In their final projects,
students are encouraged to explore similar topics applied to other urban centers and dramatic
genres (i.e. Rome, Bombay, the Broadway Musical, the Sitcom).
This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online.
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

LITS 3155.31B GOTHIC IN FICTION AND FILM
MTH 9:55-11:10 AM Bazan-Figueras
Course focuses on a careful analysis of the Gothic narrative from the early nineteen through the mid-twentieth centuries and its film adaptations. Through the reading of crucial texts such as The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Dracula, Frankenstein, Wuthering Heights, and Mary Reilly, we will create a working definition of the genre and seek to better understand the place of the Gothic in the history of literature. This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online. 
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

LITS 3202.31B  AMERICAN WRITERS: Love and the Erotic
MTH 12:45-2:00 PM Steinke

In this course, we’ll investigate themes of romantic love and the erotic in poetry and fiction by American writers, including Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, T.S. Eliot, Toni Morrison, Flannery O’Connor, Mary Gaitskill, William Goyen, Elizabeth Bishop, Anne Carson, the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, e.e. cummings, and others. Over the course of the semester, students will give two presentations and write two essays. This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online. 
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

LITS 3213.31B  SHAKESPEARE I
TF 2:10-3:25 PM Calabresi

A survey of Shakespeare’s works coupled with an introduction to the historical conditions of writing and producing for the theater in Shakespearean England. We will discuss a range of genres—tragedy, history, comedy, sonnets and pamphlet poetry—as we investigate what it meant to perform and publish Shakespeare’s plays and poetry in the early modern period. We’ll also look at current (late 20th - to early 21st-century) versions of several plays on screen to discuss how Shakespeare’s plays are being imagined for current audiences (Hamlet 2000; Baz Luhrmann’s Romeo and Juliet; Julie Taymore’s version of Titus Andronicus, among others.) Works include but are not limited to: Comedies: The Taming of the Shrew, As You Like It. Histories: The History of Henry the Fourth (1 Henry IV), The Life of Henry the Fifth. Tragedies: Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth. Roman plays: Titus Andronicus. Poetry: Sonnets and The Rape of Lucrece. Other: The Tempest.
This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online. 
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102, LITS 2001 or LITS 2002

LITS 3215.31B  CERVANTES
MTH 3:35-4:50 PM Corces

Students will study selected works by Cervantes. The relationship between genre and meaning will be explored in selected plays and novels (one short novel and Don Quijote). Moreover, specific techniques will be reviewed to better understand how these innovations serve the text and how they have inspired other writers. We will also survey the historical and cultural context in which these works are inscribed. This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online. 
Prerequisite: ENGW 1102, LITS 2001 or LITS 2002
This course is cross listed with SPAN 3600.

LITS 3311.31B  CHILDREN’S LITERATURE
TF 8:30-9:45 AM Schiffman
Children’s literature, in distinction to other kinds of literature with an adjective in front of it, is defined by its audience rather than by its creators (for example, American literature is literature written by Americans and women’s literature is literature written by women). In this survey of select classics and very modern children’s literature, we’ll examine how this literature reflects theories and notions of childhood as well as the growing changes within American society. We will read picture books, novels, watch film adaptations, and read some criticism in an attempt to construct a definition of the genre and to chart the changes this relatively young genre has undergone throughout literary history.

Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online. This course is open to juniors and seniors only.

LITS 3312.31B YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE
W 9:00-11:30 AM Schiffman

The protagonists of YA literature exist somewhere in the spectrum of adolescence and deal with, in the course of the narrative, typical adolescent issues: e.g., transition to adulthood, sexuality, conflicts between youth and parents, fantasy, responsibility, and authority. In this survey of select young adult literature of the mid to late 20th century, we’ll examine how this genre reflects mostly American culture and society. We will read classics, standard high school reading, other coming of age stories, watch film clips, and question the very notion of this genre as distinct from regular and even popular literature.

This is a blended course that will meet both in person and online.

Prerequisite: ENGW 1102

This course is open to juniors and seniors only.

Humanities

HUMN 2201.31B HUMANITIES SEMINAR I: Vampires, Bloodlines and Tales of Modernity
MTH 3:35-4:50 PM Ghosh

Vampire stories have been around for centuries during which time they have been used transculturally to express different ideas about life and death, mortality and divinity. In recent decades, these have become a staple commodity of the late-capitalist global world through a resurgence of vampire stories in various forms of media, literature, and pop culture. What qualities does the vampire incarnate? Does it embody the promise of the transgressive? What is the role of the monstrous in our cultural imaginations? If vampirism is the exchange both of bodily fluids and blood, does vampirism express an ambivalent, even sympathetic Other? Do these blood narratives expose contrasting ideas about kinship, community, and globalization? How do these shapeshifters embody conditions of liminality, unbridled consumption, forbidden sexuality, and alternate gender identities? The course examines the phenomenon of vampirism in different cultures through a variety of literary and cultural texts and critical perspectives.

This is a blended course that will meet in person and online.

Prerequisite: ENGW 1102 or equivalent