

English Department Course Offerings

Spring 2025

Undergraduate Courses

English 12S-01: Reading for Gender

Dr. Doyle, TR 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM, SSC 229

This class introduces students to LGBTQ and feminist reading tactics, especially when reading work that predates categories we use to orient our understanding of sex/gender/sexuality/intimacy/attachment. How do we find ourselves in books that do not feature characters quite like us? How do novels which depict a hostile world nevertheless operate as powerful guides for living in it? For imagining queer and trans futures? How does fiction anticipate us? Most of our reading is canon: classics in English and American Literature which have a long history of supporting gay, lesbian and trans reading practices. *Little Women* (1868-9) is arguably the straightest novel ever, as it tracks the straightening of Jo March, the novel's protagonist. In spite of the plot's drive towards marriage, generations of readers have identified with Jo — and experienced the novel as a handbook for how to be a feminist and a lesbian, and as a text rich with trans possibility. We'll be listening to episodes of [the podcast Jo's Boys](#), which offers an episode for every chapter, and is dedicated to reading *Little Women* as a trans text, by a trans author. We'll also consider film adaptations of the novel. Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) similarly asks hard questions about how women relate to one another, and how their attachments to each other can be mediated, warped by white patriarchy. Sensuously written, Larsen's novel is a study of the relationship between desire, fear, and difference. Woolf's *Orlando* (1928) is an experimental novel about a character who lives hundreds of years and who, one night, goes to bed as a man and wakes up in the morning as a woman. Written as a love letter to Vita Sackville West, *Orlando* inspired Paul B. Preciado's film, *Orlando: My Political Biography* (2023) which we will watch at the beginning of the term and use as a key. Reading is paced to be very doable, writing assignments encourage creative thinking and close reading. We will discuss the political contexts for the work we do in this class—book banning, harassment and firing of librarians, bans on access to healthcare and information supporting trans/queer life as well as reproductive freedom—it's all relevant to these readings.

English 12S: The Short Story

Dr. Stapely, TR 3:30 - 4:50 PM, MSE 116

The short story is notoriously difficult to define. How short is short enough? And at what point does short become too long? Can myths be short stories? Can short stories be historical fictions? What happens when a short story gets adapted into a long form, like a feature-length film? In this class we will ponder these and other questions of time in a selection of American short stories. Readings will include works by authors such as Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Chesnutt, Herman Melville, Henry James, E. Annie Proulx, Philip K. Dick, and George Saunders, with forays throughout the quarter into 20th and 21st-century adaptations of short stories into film and television.

English 016 Literary Adaptations

Dr. Davis, MW 11:00-12:20PM, SSC 308

This course will study literary works and their adaptations into different mediums. We will address questions of what different mediums make possible, demand, and limit, how the context of the production of a text affects its reception, and how these possibilities and contexts interact with genre conventions—which Black art often subverts. While thematized mostly around Black horror, many of the texts in the course exceed genre categorizations. We will look at how horror, fairy tale/folklore, historical and speculative fiction works by authors such as Tananarive Due, Toni Morrison, Rosa Guy, Octavia Butler and Victor LaValle have been adapted into graphic novel, musical, television, and film. While some reading and viewing selections are set, students will have the opportunity to make some choices about what we cover. We will learn how to do critical analysis of different mediums not only in academic prose but also public-facing and creative forms. Assignments may include media reviews, movie pitches, and digital content creation.

ENGL 20C: Intro to Alternative Critical Perspectives on Literature and Culture

Dr. Harris, MW 2 - 3:20 PM, INTN 1020

This course will use film adaptation, literature, and visual culture as a means of introducing alternative critical perspectives. The underlying assumption regarding adaptation is that it is not only a means of transforming the written to the cinema, but also a means of acculturation, translation, and critique—among other things. We will look at five texts and their cinematic adaptations. The texts will include a novel, autobiography, crime novel, and short story. We will spend a week on the written text and a week on the cinematic film adaptation. In doing so, students will engage literary and cultural theory and film and visual theory, including adaptation theory, deconstruction, African American literary, cultural, and film theory, queer theory, feminist theory, and gender theory among them. The texts are as follows: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (Thomas Hardy)- *Tess* (Roman Polanski); *Lady Sings the Blues* (Billie Holiday)- *Lady sings the blues* (Sidney J. Furie); *Clockers* (Richard Price)- *Clockers* (Spike Lee); *Billy Budd* (Herman Melville)-*Beau Travail* (Claire Deni); *What we talk about when we talk about love* (Raymond Carver)- *Short Cuts* (Robert Altman) (titles subject to change).

ENGL 23 Introduction to African American Literature: "Introduction to Black Writing"

Dr. carrington, TR 9:30 - 10:50 AM, SSC 316

An introduction to African American literature, focusing on how literature in the United States has been shaped by cultures of the African Diaspora and responses to racism. We will cultivate familiarity with different varieties of Black expressive culture—fiction, poetry, music, film, and comics. We will connect literature to historical and geographic contexts, such as rural and urban environments, the institutions of slavery and segregation, and social movements. And we will examine the roles played by literature in the everyday lives of people of African descent, including education, pleasure, and commerce. Works by major authors including Toni Morrison and James Baldwin will feature along with some recent and contemporary writers.

ENGL 25 Introduction to LGBTQI Literatures and Cultures: Self-Fashioning and Collective Making

Dr. Tobias, MW 5:00-6:20PM, SSC 316

An introduction to diverse histories and practices of cultural expression by LGBTQI people from ca 1850 to the present, including novels, poetry, diaries, essays, film and video, costume, physique, and interactive digital media, with an emphasis on themes of liberation, writing, self-fashioning, and acts of making community or individual self-naming. Through our explorations, we will identify the changing ways in which queer folk have navigated the need to relate personal ethics to a larger politics of community, often in terms of sense and sensation, and of aesthetic experience.

ENGL 102W 002: Introduction to Critical Methods: Knights and Critics: Analyzing Contemporary (Re)presentations of Pre-Modern Literary Figures

Professor Valle, MW 3:30 - 4:50, INTS 2130

In this course, we will learn how to apply theoretical approaches and critical methods to in-depth analyses of the formal features of several genres, with an emphasis on research writing. In doing so, we will take a detailed look at "neo-Medievalisms" in books, movies, comics, video games, and non-fiction sources: contemporary works utilizing medieval elements (such as iconography or literary characters—no previous knowledge required!) to critique modern concerns. By the end of this course, students should understand various critical methods to apply to different genres, resulting in an 8 to 10-page research paper on a neo-medievalism examined through a theoretical or critical lens of their choosing.

ENGL 102W 002: Introduction to Critical Methods

Professor Persinger, TR 12:30 PM-1:50 PM OLMH 1126

An in-depth analysis of the formal features of several genres, as well as an introduction to theoretical and critical approaches.

ENGL 104: Film and Media Theory

Professor Tyler, TR 5:00-6:20 PM, INTN 1006

Film emerged as a major new medium at the turn of the 20th century and as a result was of great interest not just to businessmen and technophiles but artists and intellectuals, whose debates about its nature and role in a modernizing and globalizing world gave rise to film theory as a field of scholarly and creative inquiry within the emerging discipline of film studies. Like theories of the other arts, popular culture, and mass-produced commodities, film theory has drawn on and contributed to many of the aesthetic and philosophical currents of the day. We engage the long and rich tradition of theorizing cinema and spectatorship, from classical film theory, debates on medium specificity, realism, montage, and auteurship; post-classical theory of the post-war era including cine-semiotics, apparatus theory, the notion of "the male gaze" and its counterparts, anti-colonial "third cinema," and feminist, queer, and other fan and reception studies; "post-theory" and recent developments; and finally digital media. Throughout, we consider film spectatorship as a mode of social relation and means of social control as well as resistance to it, and we practice analyzing films from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Each week, we read one or two essays and watch a film, including Hollywood productions, "indie," "avant-garde," or "art" films. Course work in addition to required readings and screenings includes weekly social annotation of assigned texts, regular class attendance and participation, a close-reading of a film sequence grounded in a theory (5 pages in MLA 9 style), and an open-note final exam. By the end of the course, students should be able to identify some of the major figures, ideas, and debates in film theory; test theory concepts against films, shots, and sequences; discuss film's role in society according to different theories; and analyze individual essays and films, developing a thesis about them and supporting it in clear and persuasive speech and writing.

Rhetorical Studies 114: Rhetoric and the Nature of Reality and Life

Dr. Nunley, TR 12:30 - 1:50 PM, WAT 2240

Society is wrong about *rhetoric*. Therefore, it is wrong about the nature of reality, of truth, of meaning, and of life itself. Like Ursula K. Le Guin, this class, through rhetoric, is for, "Realists of a larger reality." Petrified notions of *Reality* clutch the status quo; while *Rhetoric* embraces change. Narrow notions of reality anchor themselves in comfort; while rhetoric commits to life. Institutionalized concepts of reality authorize religion; rhetoric affirms spirituality, without which religion is stale and empty. Practicality denies imagination; while rhetoric understands that the practical emerged from the imagination. If you are invested in the future rather than the past, in possibility rather than fear, in a something else rather than more of the same, and finally, in transformation rather than stagnation; through

literature, fiction and speculative fiction, movies, videos, media, spiritual texts, visual culture, myth, music, quantum physics, history and current events, this class will inspire you.

English 115 Public Humanities

Dr. Davis, MW 2:00 - 3:20 PM, SPR 2339

This course will expose students to the possibilities of public humanities careers as we focus on the work of grassroots literary and arts organizations in Southern California communities. Students will hear directly from leaders—some of whom straddle academic and public humanities spaces—on how they built, fund, staff, and manage their organizations and projects. Students will complete case studies, learn to write public-facing essays and grant applications, tailor their resumes to specific job and internship opportunities, and expand the [ArcGIS Storymap](#) of Riverside-area public humanities institutions created by last year's class. We will also move beyond the Storymap to begin developing possibilities for collaboration between UCR students and these local organizations.

ENGL 138A African American Literature to the Harlem Renaissance

Professor Arellano, TR 5:00 - 6:20 PM INTS 1121

This course explores early writings by Black authors in North America to the Harlem Renaissance. We will pay close attention to sound, music, embodiment, the collective, and queerness as modes of resistance to white supremacy. We will focus primarily on the silencing of Black humanity under the law and how Black writers respond to this inhumanity ascribed by the US official story through embodied cultural productions of knowledge-making. In our analysis of these texts, we will discuss the social and imaginary construction of race and patriarchy, focusing on how Black thinkers have responded to not only racist stereotypes but slavery, injustice, lynching, and homophobia through literary counterhistories. These forms of artistic self-representation demystify the racialized image of the Black subject via its archive of Blackness.

ENGL 138B African American Literature since the Harlem Renaissance

Dr. Baker, TR 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM SSC 121

A critical survey of African American literature since the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s with particular attention to the development of African American literary traditions in the novel, essay, drama, and poetic forms. The development of African American literary criticism, including Black feminism, queer studies, and politics of representation will also be discussed.

ENGL 140 Special Topics in Literary Genres: Lyric Poetry

Dr. Brayman; MW 3:30 - 4:50 PM, OLMH 1136

This in-person course will take Renaissance lyric poetry as its touchstone, examining the experiments and ambitions of 16th- and 17th-century poets to craft the form and scope of the English sonnet. We will read English songs and sonnets on a range of topics (romantic love, mortality, insects, atoms, child loss, warfare), focusing on short poems by Thomas Wyatt, William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, John Donne, Mary Wroth, Ben Jonson, and Hester Pulter, and listen to ballads and early musical settings. With Renaissance lyric as our point of departure, we will then explore what followed in the Anglophone tradition. How does a poet write within and against an established tradition? How do later poets challenge, emulate, and change the English lyric? What perspectives can we gain by considering lyric poems in other languages and cultures? Among the poets we will read to understand these continuities and ruptures are Phyllis Wheatley, William Blake, William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily Dickinson, WB Yeats, Frank O'Hara, Richard Brautigan, and several contemporary poets.

English 142: Sports Spectacles

Dr. Doyle, TR 2:00 - 3:20 PM SPR 2343

In this class, we will study a wide range of works of art — poetry, fiction, memoir, visual art, film — which approach sports/athletic practices as complex phenomena. We will explore the poetics unique to specific sports, and the insights gained from writing closely with sports and athletic/physical practices. We'll be talking about soccer, wrestling, basketball, bodybuilding/weightlifting, running and more. This class is designed for athletes and sports fans of all kinds. This class is also designed to support students thinking about ability, disability, and capacity—the relationship between athleticism and injury, capacity and debility, and the extractive logics which structure events like the World Cup, the Olympics, and the Super Bowl.

ENGL 145 Film and Visual Culture: African American Visual Culture

Dr. Baker; TR 3:30 - 4:50 PM, SPR 2343

This course examines the histories of African American photography, motion picture stereotypes, and contemporary art. Major scholars, artists, artworks, and figures will be presented for critical analysis. Students will practice formal and cultural analysis of visual images and acquire a sense of the enduring significance of visual culture to the representation of African Americans, Black women, and popular and fine arts practices.

ENGL 147 Studies in a Major Work: *Moby Dick*

Dr. Stapely, TR 9:30 - 10:50 AM, SPR 2343

In this class we will spend the whole quarter reading Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), a text that D.H. Lawrence once called "one of the strangest and most wonderful books in the world." Difficult to summarize and virtually impossible to classify, *Moby-Dick* could be described at once as documentary on whaling, a dissenting theological treatise, a tragedy in prose, a piece of political theater, a queer ethnography, and/or a meditation on the nature of representation. Our task will be simply to read *Moby-Dick* as much on its own terms as possible, with focused excursions into the critical afterlives of this text as they have been elaborated by writers, artists, scholars, and filmmakers.

ENGLISH 172T STUDIES IN VICTORIAN LITERATURE: *DECADENCE*

Dr. Zieger, F 8:00 - 10:50 AM, INTS 1121

This course explores the British literary and artistic movement of the 1890s known as Decadence, which desired to set art free from the claims of life. Its literature was characterized by world-weariness, a sense of social decline, and spiritual dispossession. Who were the Decadents, and what was their cultural contribution? How did they reconceive Victorian aesthetics and politics? How did their writings reconfigure gender, sexuality, and class identity? What was their relationship to the British Empire? The class begins with their roots in Aestheticism and ends by considering their cultural demise. We'll read Decadent poetry, essays, short fiction, and the movement's most powerful statement, Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. You will work in small groups to research and write or edit Wikipedia entries on Decadent figures and artworks through the Student Program at Wiki Education. Our public writing will produce knowledge beyond the course and UCR. Our work together emphasizes collaboration and empathy; please be ready to work with your classmates. The class is experimenting with new pedagogical techniques and unfamiliar web interfaces, so openness to learning new skills and improvising will be helpful. This course takes place in person without hybrid modality. Plan to attend each class in person. **Required Text:** Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Edited by Robert Mighall. Penguin Classics edition, ISBN-10 : 0141439572. All other reading material will be posted to the course website. You will need to create a Wikipedia account.

ENG 189-001 Senior Capstone: *Hamlets* across 400 years

Dr. Brayman, MW 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM, SPR 2225

Designed for English majors nearing graduation, this capstone seminar will center on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, giving us time to linger with a single play as we consider a range of theoretical approaches and performance practices. We will study digital facsimiles of the 1603 first printed edition and engage with performances, translations, and adaptations across cultures in the more than 400 years since. Each member of the seminar will be invited to bring an adaptation of *Hamlet* to the seminar, and I hope we will consider a dazzling array of *Hamlet* "afterlives," including toys and games, illustrations and paintings, lyrics in pop music, fragments in other literary works, and translations and performances around the world. While our core, common text was written over 400 years ago, its many afterlives invite students to craft research topics in conversation with the interests and approaches they have developed as English majors. This small, in-person course will require your active participation as we work together on a number of exercises leading to your individual final research projects (a 12-15 page paper for most of you).

ENGL 189-02: 19th-Century Environments: Reading the Age of Coal

Dr. Rangarajan, TR 9:30-10:50 AM



In the late nineteenth century, scientists began to describe an "anthropozoic era" in which humans dominated and altered the landscape. Over the course of the previous hundred years, rapid industrialization and the introduction of large-scale coal and petroleum production, along with the development of geological, climate, and evolutionary sciences, meant that people's comprehension of the natural world expanded along with their ability to manipulate it. Britain, the center of the Industrial Revolution and the world's undisputed imperial superpower, effected and was affected by environmental change on an unprecedented scale. In this class we will read an array of poems, journals, essays, and short stories to study how nineteenth-century literature captures fundamental shifts in the relationship between humans and the environment. We will study large-scale issues like pollution in industrial

towns, the environmental hazards of imperial space, and the loss of traditional agriculture. But we will also study more personal, intimate reflections on sunsets, city trees, swamps, and local flowers.

Graduate seminars

ENGL 265: Romantic Literature: Romanticism and Ecology

Dr. Rangarajan, TU 11:00-2:00, HMNSS 2212



Das Eismeer ("The Sea of Ice"), Caspar David Friedrich, 1823-1824

In 2024, the Subcommittee on Quaternary Stratigraphy voted against recognizing the Anthropocene as an official geological era. And yet, the "Anthropocene"—with its variable starting date and debatable implications— retains its usefulness as an indication of the desire for climate change narratives, and for demonstrating the role of fiction in shaping scalar imaginaries. In this class we will study British literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century. The Romantic era is one of the Anthropocene's proposed starting points, but it has also served as a major inspiration for the modern environmental movement. It is also a crucial inflection point in the Capitalocene and Plantationocene; two temporal concepts that have sharpened critical analyses of planetary transformation. Reading the Romantics and reading about the Romantics, we will examine a crucial period in literary history and its continuing legacy. Primary authors include: Dorothy Wordsworth, James Hogg, Charlotte Smith, John Clare, John Keats, Helen Maria Williams, William Jones, and Percy Shelley. Secondary authors include: Jonathan Bate, Kate Rigby, Dipesh Chakravarty, Theresa Kelley, Amitav Ghosh, Timothy Morton, and Greg Gerrard.

ENGL 272 Critical Theory: Theorizing Infrastructure in Literature and Film

Dr. Zieger, F 11:00-2:00 PM, HMNSS 2212

"Infrastructure" may sound more appropriate for an engineering or urban planning seminar, but the emergent field of critical infrastructure studies is re-energizing literary, visual, cultural, and media studies. Expanding our sense of infrastructure beyond the expected roads, bridges, and ports, this approach asks what resources and networks are needed for life to flourish. The answers tend toward the social: as Abdou Malique Simone theorizes, people can be infrastructure; for Lauren Berlant, infrastructure points us to the public space of the commons; Daniel Nemser theorizes race as an infrastructural technique of colonization seen in the Spanish conquest of Mexico; and for Deborah Cowen and Winona LaDuke, infrastructure points toward a decolonized future for Indigenous people. This course will give you expertise in critical infrastructure studies as we study these and other approaches, applying them to three contemporary novels (Chris Abani's *GraceLand*, Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, and Colson Whitehead's *The Intuitionist*) and four films (*How to Blow Up a Pipeline*, *Le Vent Tourné*, *The Wages of Fear*, and *Silkwood*). In the process, you will learn how to prepare and deliver a conference paper by workshoping your creative process from the beginning, compiling an annotated bibliography, composing an abstract, and finally, writing and delivering the paper on the last day of class. In addition, you will lead discussion once during the quarter for a portion of the class session. Required Texts: Chris Abani, *GraceLand*, Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*, Andreas Malm, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*, Rich, Rizzuto, and Zieger, eds. *The Aesthetic Life of Infrastructure*, Colson Whitehead, *The Intuitionist*.

ENGL 275: Seminar in Film and Visual Culture: Film Theory

Dr. Tyler, F, 2:00-4:50 PM, HMNSS 2212

Film emerged as a major new medium at the turn of the 20th century and as a result was of great interest not just to businessmen and technophiles but artists and intellectuals, whose debates about its nature and role in a modernizing and globalizing world gave rise to film theory as a field of scholarly and creative inquiry within the emerging discipline of film studies. Like theories of the other arts, popular culture, and mass-produced commodities, film theory has drawn on and contributed to many of the aesthetic and philosophical currents of the day. In a brief survey like this, we can only engage with a fraction of texts in a long and rich tradition of theorizing cinema and spectatorship. We begin with classical film theory, focusing on the debates about medium specificity, realism, montage, and auteurship. We next take up the post-classical theory of the post-war era, including the "linguistic turn" and developments associated with decolonization and New Left social movements, which gave rise to cine-semiotics, apparatus theory and suture, the notion of "the male gaze" and its counterparts, anti-colonial "third cinema," and feminist, queer, and other fan and reception studies. We then turn to "post-theory," including work influenced by cognitivism, and more recent developments, and we finish by engaging with debates about the import of digital media, which some have claimed portends the "end of cinema." Throughout, we consider film

spectatorship as a mode of social relation and means of social control as well as resistance to it, and we practice analyzing films from a variety of critical perspectives. Each week, we read 2-4 essays in film theory and watch a film, including some Hollywood productions and some “indie,” “avant-garde,” or “art” films. Course work in addition to required readings and screenings includes some social annotation of assigned texts, regular class attendance and participation, occasionally leading class discussion, a close-reading of a film sequence grounded in a theory (5-6 pages in MLA 9 style), and a conference-length research paper (9-12 pages in MLA 9 style). By the end of the course, students should be able to identify some of the major figures, ideas, and debates in film theory; test theory concepts against films, shots, and sequences; discuss film’s role in society according to different theories; and analyze individual essays and films.

ENGL 410: Pro-seminar: Placement

Dr. Baker, W 3-450PM, HMNSS 2212

This workshop will concentrate on the academic job market with a particular focus on the post-application stage, including interviews, job talks, and teaching talk/sample classes. Time will be dedicated to mock sessions for students currently or intending to go on the academic job market, including liberal arts colleges, research universities, and community colleges. Additionally, the workshop will provide insight into the academic job search process and an overview of the stages.