

Department of English

Winter 2026

Undergraduate Program Course Descriptions

ENGL 12S-1: Introduction to Latinx Literatures

Dr. M. García, INTN 1020 11:00 AM-12:20 PM TR

An introduction to the study of topics, themes, and types of U.S. Latinx literature. Texts will be selected from a combination of several time periods, genres, and forms. Topics may include ethnicity/race, U.S. Latinx LGBTQ+ literature, and disability in U.S. Latinx literature. Intended primarily for non-majors.

ENGL 12S-2: Introduction to Genre

Dr. Zieger, BRNHL B118 8:00-09:20 AM TR

Romance, horror, crime: these genres of fiction and film developed over time to shape popular culture. Their tropes – the cute meet, the haunted house, the murdered body – influence the way we think and feel about relationships, violence, and the past. But who came up with these genres, with their recognizable heroes, villains, plots, and settings? How have they changed and sometimes combined over the centuries? What makes them so consistently entertaining? How do they generate the subgenres of romantic comedy, noir, and Black horror? In this course, we will unlock the secrets of genres, describing and analyzing how they give narrative form to specific kinds of social energy. By reading and creatively engaging English-language texts from these genres, you will develop your memory, creativity, and critical thinking skills, and acquire tools to identify and analyze other genres. Authors and directors include William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, Carmen Maria Machado, Silvia Moreno-Garcia, Jordan Peele, and others. Lectures are in-person with no hybrid modality; please plan to attend each one ready to discuss the reading and collaborate with your classmates. Assessment takes place through a 100-point, labor-based system of “un-grading,” which includes an ongoing series of reading quizzes, participation in lecture and discussion section, and two projects. Students are expected to perform the reading on schedule as outlined in the syllabus, and to share their thoughts in conversation. Intended primarily for non-majors.

ENGL 20B: Introduction to US Literary and Cultural Studies

Dr. Stapely, SSC 329 11:00 AM-12:20 PM MW

This course examines long nineteenth-century American literature through the lens of labor, from Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography* to Yankton Dakota author Zitkala-Sa’s “School Days of an Indian Girl.” We will put pressure on the Franklinian myth of the prudential “self-made man” by studying writings that engage with the materially specific experience of unjust, forced, or exploitative labor as well as its systemic conditions of possibility. How do the corporeal realities of work inflect or produce certain kinds of literary form? What are the social and political worlds conjured by work, and especially by gendered and racialized economies of labor? How do the rhythms of work in different zones of production—domestic,

agricultural, bureaucratic, or industrial—give shape to time? Throughout, we will reflect on the nature of reading and writing as forms of labor and consider the relationships between the workspace of the university and the nineteenth-century labor environments that we will read about together. Additional readings will be drawn from authors such as Olaudah Equiano, Rebecca Harding Davis, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Herman Melville, Samson Occom (Mohegan), and Phillis Wheatley.

ENGL 21: Asian American Literatures

Dr. Yamamoto, INTN 1002 9:30-10:50 AM TR

This course introduces students to some of the fundamentals of literature: how to close read a text and write critically, interestingly and insightfully about it – and we will be doing so through the particular lens of Asian American literary production. We will be concentrating on the genre of the short story. The writers we will read range from canonical writers to contemporary authors who have only recently published their first collections. Often, there are a set of assumptions and presumptions about so-called ethnic literatures (a phrase that is itself increasingly under question): that it is always in the realist mode, concerns itself with recounting historical events (immigration, discrimination, etc.), and is generally autobiographical. What we will be reading will complicate and upend such notions. These writers grapple with questions of self and its performances, the vagaries of memory, the ethics of knowability, the ways in which sexualities are constructed and deployed, how language is not a transparent vehicle for thought, and much more.

ENGL 20B [23S]: Introduction to Black Writing

Dr. carrington, SSC 316 3:30 PM-4:50 PM TR

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. Examines autobiography, fiction, poetry, and expressive culture.

ENGL 100F: Ancient Scriptures and the Literature of the African Diaspora

Dr. Nunley, SPR 2343 5:00-6:20 PM MW

This class explores the use and circulation of literature, ancient scriptures and myth by major African American/African diasporic writers. We will examine how their works require the reimagining and rethinking of limited commonsense views of reality, truth, myth religion, and their relation to everyday life. Class will address how literal readings of scripture and myth are revived, enhanced, and made more spiritually relevant through the deployment of symbols, images, tropes, and rhetoric. No rhetoric, no stories, no meaning, no meaning, no life: “Where there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. Where there is meaning, there is persuasion.” -Kenneth Burke

ENGL 102W-1: Introduction to Critical Methods

Dr. Denny-Brown

This course will introduce students to critical vocabularies and skills available for reading, writing, and analyzing literary and cultural texts. We will discuss major critical methods of analysis including feminism,

decolonialism, critical theories of race, and queer theory, as well as a variety of other ways to approach literature and culture such as eco-theory and game theory. How does an English major approach reading, writing, and literary analysis in today's world of instant, ever-accessible information? How can literary methods be used to analyze other kinds of creative expression, such as film, music, and the visual arts? Are there critical methods that examine everyday objects and everyday life? At the heart of this course is a study of the relationship between literature and culture, and how readers build skills to navigate that relationship. The loose theme of this course's readings will be "medievalism," or modern creative works that use the Middle Ages as a creative inspiration, intertext, or point of cultural critique. While we read and discuss these works together from different critical perspectives, each student will also record their ideas in regular journal entries, with an eye toward building specific critical skills to further their own interests and goals. Do you want to write reviews for books or movies, or start a podcast? Are you interested in personal essay writing or blogging? Is your plan to enrich your research and analytical skills for a future job in research and writing? Or develop communication skills for a future in pedagogy or activism? Throughout the course students will work and rework a self-designed final project that builds those specific skills.

ENGL 102W-2: Introduction to Critical Methods

Prof. Valle, INTS 2138 8:00-8:50 AM MWF

This course will introduce students to critical vocabularies and skills available for reading, writing, and analyzing literary and cultural texts. We will discuss major critical methods of analysis including feminism, decolonialism, critical theories of race, and queer theory, as well as a variety of other ways to approach literature and culture.

ENGL 104: Film and Media Theory: Screen Fantasies

Dr. Rodríguez, SPR 2225 3:30-4:50 PM MW

This course will draw from psychoanalytically-informed film theory to examine cinema and its engagement with the subject of fantasy. While reading key critical texts by Sigmund Freud, Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, Stephen Heath, Laura Mulvey, Elizabeth Cowie, Teresa de Lauretis, Homa King, David Marriot, and Damon Young, we will view a range of films that allow us to consider the politics of fantasy in relation to the production of racial and sexual difference, spectatorial identification, visual pleasure and desire, *mise-en-scène*, and private and public fantasies. Films may include *A Touch of Evil* (dir. Orson Wells), *Gilda* (dir. Charles Vidor), *Dance, Girl, Dance* (dir. Dorothy Arzner), *Rebel Without a Cause* (dir. Nicholas Ray), *Barbarella* (dir. Roger Vadim), *The Velvet Vampire* (dir. Stephanie Rothman), *Mala Noche* (dir. Gus Van Sant), and *Quinceañera* (dir. Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland).

ENGL 110: Non-fiction

Dr. Macias, SPR 2343 11:00 AM-12:20 PM MW

An advanced study of forms, histories, and theories of nonfiction writing. Includes the essay, criticism, biography, creative nonfiction, and other types of expository writing.

ENGL 124: Reading Gender: Women's Fiction Since 1900

Dr. Tyler, INTN 1006 12:30-1:50 PM WF

The course considers a few important examples of British and American women's fiction from the very late 19th to the end of the 20th century representative of the three aesthetic movements dominating the period: realism, modernism, and postmodernism. We will draw on a variety of feminist theories (humanist, psychoanalytic, historicist, poststructuralist, and African-Americanist) to develop close readings and analyses of the fiction and to respond to the key questions scholars of feminism, gender, and sexuality have raised about reading and writing fiction, which concern the meanings and effects of representation of gender and sexuality; gender, sexuality, and the elements of fiction (plot, character, setting; style and point of view, theme); and the impact of the author's and the reader's gender on writing and reading fiction. We will practice "intersectional feminist analysis," taking into account other aspects of identity besides gender because gender intersects with race, class, age, "sexual orientation," etc. Required reading in addition to some feminist literary theory and criticism includes Chopin's *The Awakening*, Morrison's *Sula*, and some modernist and postmodernist short stories. Required writing includes short essays and exercises completed in class individually or with a group, quizzes and surveys, and an in-class midterm and final exam.

ENGL 126: US Fiction: The US BIPOC Gothic Horror Novel

Prof. Hernandez-Bachman, INTN 1006 5:00 PM 6:20 PM TR

Focused study of Gothic horror novels by BIPOC authors from diverse locations of the US, with attention to the genre's form, interventions and reshaping of the genre in historical and contemporary contexts, ways of reading Gothic horror in terms of "disidentification," and exploration of these novels' cultural, social, or political relevance.

ENGL 127A: American Poetry Before 1900

Dr. Axelrod, WAT 1101 2:00 PM 3:20 PM TR

Welcome! We will read and discuss a range of American poems, representing the amazing cultural diversity and imaginative visions of our land. We will look at the poems both as verbal constructions and as psychological, cultural, and political interventions. We will focus much attention on Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Paul Laurence Dunbar. We will focus on collective Native American, African American, Mexican American, and Asian American texts as well as texts by individual poets such as Anne Bradstreet, Phillis Wheatley, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Frances Harper, Emma Lazarus, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Sadakichi Hartmann.

Required text: *The New Anthology of American Poetry, Volume 1*, edited by Steven Axelrod, et al. (Rutgers University Press, ISBN 0813531624). Please obtain an unmarked copy or digital copy from an online site or the bookstore. Bring it to class every day.

With beauty all around me, I walk.

—Navajo "Night Chant"

The brain is wider than the sky.

—Emily Dickinson

ENGL 128-1: Major Authors: Toni Morrison

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

This course examines the authorship of Toni Morrison. We will conduct close readings of a selection of her works, with an attention to the craft of writing and to Morrison's play with language and form. We will explore the functions of storytelling and of the storyteller within the context of the novel form, American literary traditions (including African American literature and women's writing), and the work of the authorial persona. Works to be studied include Morrison's trilogy, comprised of the novels *Beloved*, *Jazz*, and *Paradise*. Morrison's non-fiction writing and editorial labor at a major publishing house will also be considered

ENGL 128-2: Major Authors: Carmen Maria Machado

Dr. M. García, SPR 2343 3:30-4:50 PM TR

Intensive study of major author Carmen María Machado's body of work, which ranges from memoir to a graphic series.

ENGL 131: Early American Literatures: Ideas of American Literature

Dr. Stapely, SSC 216 1:00-3:50 PM W

The period between 1830-1865, sometimes described as "the American Renaissance," has long been identified with the flourishing of a distinctively democratic U.S. American literary culture. Our class will approach this period instead as one of removal, expansionism, and slavery through three historical flashpoints: the Indian Removal Act (1830), the Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo (1848), and the Fugitive Slave Act (1850). We will approach the "American Renaissance" not as an era of birth or re-birth, therefore, but rather as one of division, unfreedom, and protest whose contours linger in the present. As we trace the underpinnings of U.S. American democracy in settler colonialism and slavery during this period, our readings may include works by authors such as William Apess (Pequot); Bamewawagezhikaquay, or Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (Ojibwe); Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak, or Black Hawk (Sauk and Meskwaki); Henry "Box" Brown; William and Ellen Craft; Ralph Waldo Emerson; Frederick Douglass; Harriet Jacobs; Henry David Thoreau; David Walker; Walt Whitman; and Yellow Bird, or John Rollin Ridge (Cherokee).

ENGL 136A: Latinx Literatures

Dr. Macias, SPR 2343 :30-4:50 PM MW

A critical survey of U.S. Latina/o/x literature focusing on aesthetic achievements, recurrent forms and themes, and interrelations with other American literatures.

ENGL 138A: African American Literature to 1940

Dr. carrington, SPR 2355 9:30-10:50 AM TR

A critical survey of African American literature with particular attention to the development of an African American literary tradition and the challenges it has posed to the traditional canon of American literature. Scope includes writing in English (in North America and the Caribbean) by Black authors prior to the 1940s. Devotes particular attention to relationships between race, nation, speech, rhetoric, and reading; multiple genres; the significance of Black literacy; the formation of reading publics.

ENGL 140: Autobiography and Memoir

Dr. Yamamoto, SPR 2343 12:30-1:50 PM TR

Autobiography has a long and varied tradition in the literature of the United States. It has been variously used to delineate the exemplary American subject (Benjamin Franklin, John Adams), question the reality of espoused American values (African American slave narrative), and trace the trajectory of the immigrant subject in response to ever-changing definitions of whiteness (Jewish and Irish American autobiography). Marginalized and minoritized communities have often first been represented in American literature through the autobiographical form – though the form itself has shifted in ways that suggest rich formulations of the self and our apprehension of it. This course will focus on 20th and 21st century autobiographies that evoke questions of class, the concept of home, the “American Dream,” immigration, and the ethics and aesthetics of becoming and “upward mobility,” particularly through education. What is lost, gained or exacted in that process? What happens when formal education seems to put one in conflict with family, or when educational institutions seem hostile to everything through which one understands oneself? And how does the scene of writing constitute both a site of self-making and of (painful, but also healing) departure? We will pay particular attention to the conflicts between subjectivity and identity, the process of writing oneself into being, and the tensions that underpin concepts of cultural belonging and national identity.

ENGL 141M: Literature and Disability Studies

Dr. Mazzio, SPR 2355 11:00 AM-12:20 PM TR

This course offers an introduction to the study of literature (and other media) and Disability Studies, with special attention to the political and imaginative work of literature and close analysis in relationship to historical and ongoing forms of ableism. This course will also introduce students to relationships between disability studies and transgender and queer studies, decolonial and critical race studies, and economic and environmental studies.

ENGL 143: Feminism and Film Studies

Dr. Tyler, SKYE 172 5:00 PM 6:20 PM MW (Screening: CHUNG 142 1:00 PM 1:50 PM T)

Film emerged as a major new medium at the turn of the 20th century, after several decades of feminist activism (the “first wave”) that culminated in the “New Woman,” then the “flapper” as the “Golden Age” of classical Hollywood cinema dawned. It wasn’t long before women were found not only in front of but behind the camera, working as directors, editors or “cutters,” and in other capacities in the new film industry, helping to shape the representation of gender and sexuality on screen that in turn shaped the

experience of gender and sexuality off-screen. The course is a necessarily brief and selective survey of feminist film history and theory. We will balance discussion of feminist film theory with analyses of films that helped inspire its development, in the process learning how to develop close readings of films as films, rather than treating them as more or less indistinguishable from literature, theater, or the static arts like painting or photography. We will explore topics of central importance for feminist theory in general: the social construction and deconstruction of sex, gender, and sexuality; the body and pleasure in seeing and hearing, being seen and being heard; "feminine" authorship, genres, and spectatorship; identity as "intersectional." We also will view films from different points in what is now a long film history and in a variety of genres, including *Vertigo*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Imitation of Life*, *Klute*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *The Piano*, *The Watermelon Woman*, and some documentaries and early cinema shorts. Required writing includes short essays and exercises completed in class individually or with a group, quizzes and surveys, and an in-class midterm and final exam.

ENGL 144: Race, Ethnicity, and Visual Culture: Problems of Representation

Dr. Rodriguez, SKYE 171 11:00 AM-12:20 PM MW

Drawing from W.E.B. Dubois's famous inquiry in *The Souls of Black Folk* regarding what it feels like to be a problem, the late queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz argues that "there may be considerable value in thinking about the problem of feeling like a problem as not simply an impasse but, instead, an opening." This course, then, focuses on a number of Latinx film figures who may be understood as problems in a generative sense. While reading scholarship on the social problem film alongside criticism that extends beyond positive-versus-negative appraisals of cinematic portrayals, we will view various feature films whose protagonists function as invaluable problems of representation. Films may include *The Ring* (dir. Kurt Neumann), *Boulevard Nights* (dir. Michael Pressman), *Gun Hill Road* (dir. Rashaad Ernesto Green), *Mosquita y Mari* (dir. Aurora Guerrero), *La Mission* (dir. Peter Bratt), *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (dir. Aitch Alberto), *Blue Beetle* (dir. Angel Manuel Soto), and *Problemista* (dir. Julio Torres).

ENGL 147: Major Works: Spencer's *Faerie Queene*

Dr. Brayman, INTN 1006 3:30 PM 4:50 PM MW

Students in this course will read Spenser's epic romance, *The Faerie Queene*, a beautiful narrative poem full of knights, quests, and moral challenges. This course should be a good fit for students interested in poetics, ethics, gender/sexuality, romance, and fantasy, or with prior familiarity with classical epics, Arthurian romance, or Shakespeare. This course fulfills the pre-1900 major requirement.

ENGL 151B : Medieval Romance

Dr. Denny-Brown, SPR 2343 11:00 AM-12:20 PM TR

This course will introduce students to the literary genre of medieval romance, from its beginnings in twelfth-century Europe to its reimaginings in contemporary film and novels. Medieval romance is well-known for its age-old normalizing discourses about chivalry, knightly adventure, courtly love, and damsels in distress. Less well-known is that the same genre also give us some of the earliest literary expression of non-conforming characters and plotlines: werewolf-husbands, mermaid-queens, bird-lovers, same-sex romance, asexual romance, and characters that in various ways cross cultural boundaries of race, gender, class, religion, and ethics. In this class we will ask how the genre of medieval romance provides a

space for thinking the unthinkable and saying the unsayable—a space for crossing the threshold of established categories and behaviors, and for exploring the cultural stakes and literary pleasures of transgression.

ENGL 161: Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literatures: *Paradise Lost* and Selected Works

Dr. Briggs, SPTH 2200 11:00 AM-12:20 PM MW

Focused study of Milton's *Paradise Lost* along with study of additional works, the historical context and contemporary relevance.

ENGL 166B: Romantic Literature: Mad, Bad, and Dangerous to Know: Late Romantics

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

How do you deal with the failure of revolution? After the triumph of Waterloo Britain fell into a terrible slump, with a devastated economy, a flood of wounded soldiers, and the end of visions for a more democratic and egalitarian future. In this class we will study the British imperial world post-Waterloo. Texts include *Don Juan*, Byron's shocking and comical recounting of the exploits of the infamous libertine; *The Cenci*, Percy Shelley's drama of familial and political violence; *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Thomas de Quincey's autobiography of drug addiction; and *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, James Hogg's bizarre story of double identities and unsolved murders.

ENGL 172T: Victorian Literatures: Victorian War

Dr. Rangarajan, SKYE 172 11:00 AM-12:20 PM TR

In Britain, the period between the fall of Napoleon and the beginning of WWI has often been regarded as a century of relative peace. In fact, it was an important turning point in Britain's war culture, encompassing the first modern war and endless "savage wars of peace" in Britain's expanding imperial territories before culminating, finally, in the trenches of the Great War. In this class, we will study various manifestations of war's presence in British literary culture. Texts include Mary Seacole's memoir of nursing during the Crimean War, Rudyard Kipling's stories of mutinies and rebellions in India, H.R. Haggard's novel of adventures in South Africa, and H.G. Wells's dystopian vision of alien invasion. We'll also consider war's influence on children's literature, including J.M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy*.

ENGL 179A: History of Speculative Fiction: The AI Imaginary

Dr. Vint, ONLINE 3:30 PM 4:50 PM MW

This course will examine the relationship between science fiction and the way we imagine interacting with artificial intelligence, exploring how ideas first articulated in fiction shape the ways we interact with systems labeled AI today. We will begin looking at foundational authors such as Arthur C. Clarke and his "three laws" of robotics and Philip K. Dick's androids, move on to cyberpunk's vision of the human mind fused with IT infrastructure, and conclude by examining more recent short fiction that revisits science

fiction's AI tropes in the context of existing technologies of generative AI and predictive algorithms. Throughout we will be interested in asking questions about how the history of science fiction conditions us to understand AI in specific ways and what this framework means for our ways of using this technology. We will supplement our reading of fiction with work by scholars who situate the history of robotics and AI technology within larger sociopolitical and economic frameworks.

ENGL 189-1: Capstone Seminar: Shakespearean Drama, Then and Now

Dr. Brayman, OLMH 420 11:00 AM-12:20 PM MW

This capstone seminar, designed to support advanced undergraduates on an individual research project, will likely center on a single play of Shakespeare's, studying the language of the play closely and exploring adaptations and productions stretching into the current moment. Works studied may include *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, or *King Lear*.

ENGL 189-2: Capstone Seminar: Mysteries of the Nineteenth-Century City: Walter Benjamin and *The Arcades Project*

Dr. Zieger, HMNSS 1404 9:30-10:50 AM TR

: This course explores the literature of nineteenth-century Paris, London, and Berlin through the writings of Walter Benjamin, a principal theorist of western modernity. *The Arcades Project* was Benjamin's great, unfinished analysis of nineteenth-century European urban life, commodity culture, technology, media and fashion. The arcades were glass-roofed commercial enclosures similar to shopping malls, where flâneurs could idle and people-watch. From this starting point, Benjamin wrote the modern history of Paris, and of the nineteenth century, when consumerism and technology seemed to have revolutionized everyday life, turning the urban environment into an enticing mystery, and presenting challenges for authentic social change that resonate today. To develop Benjamin's insights, we'll read literature of the nineteenth-century city by Charles Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Robert Louis Stevenson, along with Benjamin's magnum opus, and his important essays, such as "The Storyteller," "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility," and "Theses on the Philosophy of History," as well as theoretical work by Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Tom Gunning, Miriam Hansen, and others. Ranging through literature, history, and theory, the course introduces you to key terms Benjamin has given to the cultural conversation, such as the aura, the angel of history, the interior, the flâneur, and "collective innervation." Course requirements will include one session in which you lead class discussion, short assignments, and a final project; for this, you may choose to write a 10-page research paper, or to undertake a creative project in consultation with me.