

# ENGLISH DEPARTMENT COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## SUMMER 2021

Note: all courses are online, with synchronous sessions as indicated, unless “asynchronous” is given as the scheduled time.

### Summer Session I:

ENGL 120 (TU, TH) 8:00 am-12:10 pm

Literature and Identity: Truth, Lies, and Telling Tales

Jalalzai

This class examines the role of storytelling through various genres and eras to consider the questions of how stories have both brought people together and pushed them apart. How does telling stories shape our sense of reality and of ourselves? What expectations of truth have we had of our stories, and how have those changed in a post-truth world? We will start with Classical ideas about truth and representation and medieval epics to more contemporary forms of storytelling including social media and conspiracy theories. Can we find common truths even though we may not share the same stories? Is using the same social media platform enough of a shared reality? Requirements include midterm paper, final paper, and weekly reading quizzes.

ENGL 123 (M, TU, W, TH) 1:00-3:10

Studies in Literature and Genres

Realists of the Greater Real

Potter

This semester we'll look at what might be the greatest divide in literary genres: the ways that writers — both of modern “realistic” fiction as well as science fiction and fantasy — approach the problem of the contemporary. Why are writers of fantasy and science fiction — those that Ursula K. LeGuin called “Realists of the greater real” — so often thought of as the lesser of the two? And are there books that trouble this boundary? Our texts will include short works by Edgar Allan Poe, J.R.R. Tolkien, Ursula K. Le Guin, Octavia Butler, and Shirley Jackson, as well as selected films and essays. There will be weekly online response paragraphs, as well as a midterm and final paper (4-6 pages each).

ENGL 209 (M, TU, W) 1:00-3:56 pm

## American Literature: The Making of Americans Shonkwiler

This course aims for the impossible: to survey American literature from the colonial period to the present. We will take a sampling of voices, touching on some (but not all) key texts and authors, emphasizing what one writer termed the “trans-national” character of our national literature and national identity. Students will be introduced to major literary movements and historical contexts of the seventeenth through twentieth centuries, including Puritanism, colonialism, Native American contact, eighteenth century republicanism, Transcendentalism and Romanticism, slave narratives, American poetic voices, Realism and Naturalism, the Harlem Renaissance, Modernism and Postmodernism, and finishing with literary responses to the Vietnam War, the conflicts of the 1960s, and their cultural resonances today. Requirements include a substantial amount of reading; regular participation in online forums and in our three weekly class meetings; an exam; and a multi-step course paper.

## ENGL 210 (asynchronous) Children’s Literature Abbotson

Over the session we shall look at a variety of texts produced for children, including poetry, fairy tales, picture books and novels and consider, throughout, the authors’ attitudes toward and depictions of children, alongside issues of identity, gender, and race. As a literature course, the primary aim is to help you develop the necessary critical understanding and skills to allow you to examine and evaluate children’s literature on your own, and to reach a better awareness of how our culture views, and, in a sense, creates the child. Requirements include participation in discussion forums, reading quizzes and response papers, 2 critical essays (4-6 pages), and final exam.

## ENGL 230 (M, W) 5:00-9:45pm Workplace Writing Grund

Students explore the social and rhetorical dimensions of workplace writing. Emphasis is on the rhetorical situation. Genres may include letters, memos, proposals, presentations or reports.

## ENGL 262 (TU, TH) 8:00am-12:20pm Women, Crime and Representation Reddy

This connections course examines representations—in fiction, non-fiction, film, and television—of women as criminals, as crime victims, and as detectives. We will consider texts of several national origins and time periods, paying close attention to the similarities as well as differences in their portrayals of women. We will draw on research and analyses done by scholars from a variety of fields, including film

and media studies, gender and women's studies, sociology, history, and literature to help us make sense of these representations and what they might tell us about our society and ourselves. Course format will be discussion, with occasional brief lectures by the professor and presentations by students. Each student will write two formal papers of varying lengths, participate in a group presentation, and be responsible for frequent assignments on Blackboard and during Zoom meetings. About 2/3 of the work of the course will be asynchronous, with synchronous meetings roughly 1/3 of the time.

### ENGL 301 (TU, TH) 1:00-5:20pm

#### Reading American to the Civil War: American Literature and the Racial Frontier Jalalzai

This early American literature course explores the concept of *frontier* as a contested space between settlement and wilderness, between distinctive cultures, and between divergent understandings of race, gender, family, and community. We will start with the contact between Europeans and Native Americans through images of America as a sexualized space and move through the Colonial and pre-Civil War periods to think about how war and settlement affected the boundaries between people and contributed to competing ideas of the nation. Frontiers, like any border meant to regulate interaction, are also places where divisions are regularly breached and customs sometimes flouted. We will, therefore, examine literary instances of border crossing and racial/ethnic intermixing. Course requirements include active participation and Discussion Board posts as well as a multi-step research paper project.

### ENGL 432 (M, TU, W, TH) 10:00am-12:10pm

#### Studies in the English Language Hawk

This course serves as an introduction to the study of language generally (linguistics) as well as the history of the English language specifically. We will examine key moments of language development from Old, Middle, Early Modern, and Present-Day English. We will explore questions like:

Why are English grammar and spelling so strange?

Where do words come from and where do they go?

How does language relate to gender, class, and race?

Requirements include engagement in class discussions (via Zoom), informal presentations, short essays, and a research assignment.

### ENGL 477 (by arrangement)

#### Internship in Rhetoric and Writing Michaud

What do English majors do after they graduate? What role does writing play in 21st-century “knowledge economy” workplaces? What will you need to know to navigate the transition from writing-for-the-teacher to writing-for-the-boss? The Internship in Rhetoric and Writing is an opportunity for English majors to gain exposure to professional workplaces and professional writing. Students identify a site at which to intern, work with Dr. Michaud to secure a position, and then work 14 hours per week on writing projects at their field site. In addition, they participate in a classroom component (2-3 hours per week) in which they keep an internship journal, read professional literature about workplace writing, and produce two short reflective reports on their learning. The classroom component of the course is conducted entirely online. If you are interested in an internship, please contact Dr. Michael Michaud ([mmichaud@ric.edu](mailto:mmichaud@ric.edu)) to set up an informational meeting during the semester before you plan to intern.

**ENGL 531 (TU, TH) 4:00-8:20 PM**

**Topics in British Literature, 1660-1900: Infection in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century British Novel**  
**Reddy**

As we struggle through this pandemic, the Victorians' fictionalized depictions of the major public health crises of their time—among them smallpox, cholera, typhoid, and whooping cough—have a special interest, particularly in the connections writers make between disease and extreme social class differences. This course will focus on Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, with additional selections from other Victorian novels, including *Dracula*; we will also read theoretical and critical articles. Although the course is planned as synchronous, we will meet together on Zoom for roughly 25% of the class time, with the rest of your work taking place asynchronously on Blackboard. In addition to active participation, each student will be required to complete one formal paper and multiple shorter informal writing assignments, as well as give at least one class presentation.

### **Summer Session II:**

**ENGL 121 (M, W) 1:00-5:43 pm**

**Studies in Literature and Nation: Literature of the Contact Zone**  
**Duneer**

In *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt defines “contact zones” as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other.” In this course students will encounter contact zones from a variety of time periods and perspectives, beginning with Columbus’s descriptions of America and Shakespeare’s imagination of the New World in *The Tempest*. We will then view the contact zone through the eyes of 20th- and 21st-century African, Caribbean, American, Native American, Asian, and Pacific Rim writers. Students will consider the particular and universal aesthetics of storytelling, as well as the power of stories to shape the way readers view themselves and understand people of other cultures. Requirements include participation, online discussion and quizzes, and two short papers (4-6 pages each).

**ENGL 208 (M, TU, W, TH) 1:00-3:10**

**British Literature**

**Knights Errant: The Heroic Traditions of British Literature**

**Potter**

This summer section of ENGL 208 will focus in on the histories of what some call “high fantasy” – the world of valiant warriors, monsters, and magic, of mighty deeds and tragic falls. Our approach will be historicist in nature, looking at literature’s embedded connections with material culture, daily life, social change and upheaval, and politics generally. Our texts will include Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (in translation), excerpts from Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*, the fairy tales of George MacDonald, Howard Pyle’s Arthurian yarns, and the early writings of J.R.R. Tolkien.

**ENGL 261 (M, TU, W, TH) 4:00-6:10**

**Arctic Encounters**

**Potter**

This class examines narratives of cultural contact both “factual” and “fictional,” between European explorers of the Arctic and its indigenous peoples in the comparative context of European colonialism, visual representation, and emergent literatures. Material will include historical accounts, fiction, and film, as well as music and other performative arts. Requirements include attendance, active participation in discussion, a weekly response paragraph, and two 4-6 page critical essays, each of which will go through a draft reading process.

**ENGL 336 (TU, TH) 1:00-5:20 pm**

**Reading Globally: Narrative Experimentation and Global Identities**

**Duneer**

In our current age of economic and cultural globalization, postcolonial writers have been telling stories that experiment widely with narrative voice, perspective, and form. What do these postmodern narrative choices tell us about the intersections of global, national, ethnic, racial, and gendered identities? And in what ways is the prefix “post” helpful or inadequate as we consider the stylistic experimentation in a range of genres from around the world? Readings will include a sampling of poetry, short stories, novels, memoirs, and films by African, Caribbean, Native American, and Asian writers.

Requirements include in-class and online participation, quizzes, a presentation, and two papers (6-8 pages each).

\*\*