

## SPRING 2025 COURSE TOPIC DESCRIPTIONS \*

### **ENGL 203 Creative Writing: Study and Practice (T/TH 4:00-5:15)**

An introduction to concepts and approaches in writing fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Students read works by published authors and produce their own work, using the processes of drafting, sharing, and revision that writers practice. Assignments include a variety of short writing activities designed to explore possibilities for developing creative work, and also include opportunities to attend on-campus literary events. The course prepares students for further study in creative writing, including 300-level courses.

Instructor: Nguyen

### **ENGL 204 Foundations of Literature & Culture (M/W 2:30-3:45)**

This course prepares students for advanced work in literary studies. Students will learn skills necessary to read, analyze and write critically about multiple genres using field-specific nomenclature while engaging with methods in literary and cultural studies. They will have opportunities to use UMBC's library resources, such as special collections materials and digital archives, and to explore the role of English studies outside the classroom.

Instructor: Yoon

### **ENGL 205 Debunking Myths about Good Writing (M/W 2:30-3:45)**

This course explores myths about "good writing." Despite the emphasis schools place on the importance of writing, many students still describe themselves as "bad writers," and employers often lament the quality of writing that their employees produce. As a result, many people have argued that literacy is in crisis and that students can't write. This course will examine myths that have contributed to this perceived crisis about writing. These myths include "some people are just born good writers," "rhetoric is merely empty words," and "good writing only involves mastering the rules of grammar and punctuation." Students will read scholarship from the field of writing and rhetoric to counter these myths and examine how writing is used across contexts for various purposes and audiences, including private life, public spaces, and the workplace. Students will gain skills using multiple kinds of writing technologies, from print to AI, and produce texts that explore what it means to be a "good writer."

Instructor: Brooks

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\* This document primarily lists courses with topic descriptions. Please check the online Class Search for the complete list of English courses offered in Spring 2025.

## **ENGL 243 Currents in American Literature (T/TH 10:00-11:15)**

### Baltimore Poetry and Politics

This class will investigate the connection between poetry and politics in the communities surrounding UMBC. We begin with historical background of Baltimore and readings about what it means to be what Langston Hughes calls a "social poet." Then, to focus on the relation between local events, social justice, and literature, students will engage Black Arts Movement literature, recent work about the 2015 uprising, Baltimore #BlackLivesMatter, queer and trans\* rights, and red-lining and underinvestment in the city. Students will have the opportunity to contribute to *The Soul of the Butterfly*, a traveling exhibition about Baltimore's Black Arts Movement magazine *Chicory*, which will be on display at the AOK.

Instructor: Finberg

## **ENGL 307 American Literature: From New World Contact to the Civil War (M/W 1:00 – 2:15)**

### Crime and Tropes of Transgression

This course will examine crime and tropes of transgression in American literature from the colonial period to the emergence of the detective fiction genre in the early nineteenth-century. We will attend to the historical and cultural contexts that shape notions of criminality and how criminality intersects with race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality. Topics we will explore include cannibalism, piracy, the Salem witch trials, so-called crimes of sexual conduct, among others. Through an engagement with a wide range of literary mediums including poetry, novels, memoirs, and epistolary narratives, we will also consider how American writers transgress formal and generic conventions.

Instructor: Tran

Fulfills: Period D, Literature Track; Secondary Education Certification

## **ENGL 308 American Literature: The Civil War to 1945 (T/TH 2:30-3:45)**

### American Realisms

Realism was the principal mode of American literature after the Civil War and is still arguably the dominant mode of literature, film, and television today. This course will examine the many varieties of American literary realism from the late nineteenth through the twentieth century, looking at middle class realism, documentary realism, social or proletarian realism, the realism of the Harlem Renaissance and the great variety of realisms created by immigrant and minority authors. Authors will include Henry James, Charles Chesnutt, Willa Cather, Zora Neale Hurston, Ernest Hemingway, Dorothy Allison, Dinaw Mengestu, among others. We'll also consider the realisms of film, TV, and music.

Instructor: Berman

Fulfills: Period E, Literature Track; Secondary Education Certification

## **ENGL 315 Studies in World Literature (M/W 9:00-10:15)**

Medieval Literature Survey

This course, a survey of major works of European and English medieval literature, offers a transhistorical panorama of individuals defining themselves in or against a range of cultural moments, from the Roman philosopher Boethius' protests from prison in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, to the defiance of holy women toward pagan emperors in Anglo-Saxon saints' lives. We'll consider the extreme manifestations and absurdities of courtly love in Marie de France's and Chretien de Troyes' Arthurian romances. We'll contrast Dante's sacred journey in the *Divine Comedy* with Chaucer's secular dream vision (including a lecturing eagle) in *The House of Fame*. We'll conclude with Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, on the fall of the Round Table.

Instructor: McKinley

Fulfills: World Lit, Period A, Literature Track; Secondary Education Certification

## **ENGL 320 Topics in Communication and Technology (W 4:30-7:00)**

The Discourses of Happiness

Many people believe that the goal of human life is happiness. Philosophers, psychologists, and literary writers have explored ideas about happiness for 2500 years. What do they mean by happiness? How do they tell us we should achieve and maintain it? In this class students will explore answers to these questions offered by philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, Dewey, and Thich Nhat Hanh; psychologists, including Diener, Argyle, and Seligman; and writers of literary texts, including Willa Cather, Tolstoy, and Alice Walker.

Instructor: McCarthy

Fulfills: Category B, CT Track

## **ENGL 324 Theories of Communication & Technology (T/TH 1:00 – 2:15)**

This course focuses on important theories and issues in communication and technology studies, exploring them from various historical and contemporary perspectives. Students will become acquainted with the major movements in the field and the scholars who have shaped them.

Instructor: Holladay

Fulfills: CT Requirement

## **ENGL 332 Contemporary American Literature (M/W 4:00 – 5:15)**

### Contemporary American Comics

This course explores the growing popularity of comics in America from the 1930s onward. We will examine how artists turn to this image-text based medium to tell a wide range of stories. In addition to analyzing the superhero comic—the most popular and legible genre of American comics, we will discuss how artists push the boundaries of traditional literary genres by engaging in graphic storytelling. We will also consider how comics have been used to document and re-present history and to explore contemporary social issues from immigration to climate change. Together, we will develop the critical vocabulary for thinking, talking, and writing about comics by engaging with scholarship from comic studies.

Instructor: Tran

Fulfills: Period E, Literature Track; Secondary Education Certification

## **ENGL 350 Major British and American Writers (M/W 10:00-11:15)**

### William Blake

Described variously as a visionary, a mystic, a rebel, and even, by a contemporary, as "an unfortunate lunatic," the Romantic-era poet and multimedia artist William Blake was in many ways the quintessential Romantic artist and revolutionary thinker, privileging the imagination over reason and declaring that "I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's." This class will study Blake's poetry and images, focusing on the connections between his works and the turbulent period in which he lived.

Instructor: Smith

Fulfills: Period B, Literature Track and Secondary Education Certification

## **ENGL 364 Perspectives on Women in Literature (T/TH 2:30-3:45)**

### Jane Austen and the Romantic Novel

No one is indifferent to Jane Austen. A crucial figure in the history of the novel and a powerful figure in English literary history generally, Austen is venerated or despised with peculiar intensity—for being a brilliant stylist or a provincial bore, an instrument of commonplace repression or of ironic subversion. We will test these and other views by studying Austen's fiction (*Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*) within the sociohistorical context of the Romantic era, and reading her work alongside other novels written by women writers in this period including Frances Burney, Ann Radcliffe and Maria Edgeworth. (Cross-listed with GWST 364)

Instructor: Smith

Fulfills: Literature Track, Secondary Education Certification

### **ENGL 383 Science Writing (T/TH 10:00-11:15)**

Learn how to write about science in a lively engaging manner that will capture the interest of non-scientists by translating research results into clear compelling prose. You will identify story ideas, read and decode research papers, and interview scientists to produce science news and features. We will also explore ethical, social and political issues raised by media coverage of basic science, medicine and the environment.

Instructor: Rudacille

Fulfills: C/T track, Category D

### **ENGL 384 Topics in Journalism (T/TH 11:30-12:45)**

Reporting the Local: News & Views

Curious about what's going on around you and want to share what you learn with others? Confused by how to differentiate real news from disinformation and misinformation? Learn the skills required to accurately report the news and assess news coverage by covering a campus beat. Students will practice both objective reporting and subjective opinion writing, and will learn how to ethically produce both types of content in an honest and transparent way in today's challenging media environment.

Instructor: Rudacille

Fulfills: C/T track, Category D

### **ENGL 386 Adult Literacy Tutoring: Theory and Practice (M/W 2:30-3:45)**

The focus of Engl 386 this semester is on the languages and literacies of recent immigrants and refugees. We will read narratives by and research reports about the literacy challenges of this population. We will also explore best practices for teaching English to speakers of other languages. Students, in collaboration with the Shriver Center, will then choose a Baltimore center in which they will apply what we have discussed in class, actually tutoring recently arrived adults and youth. Class will meet in person once a week, Wednesdays from 2:30 to 3:45. The tutoring will require approximately two hours per week.

Instructor: McCarthy

Fulfills: Category B, CT Track; Diversity

### **ENGL 448 Seminar in Literature and Culture (TH 4:30 – 7:00)**

Caribbean Literature and Media

This course introduces students to some of the diverse literature of the Caribbean from the mid-twentieth century to the present and explores its relation to the media that was emerging at the same time. We will look at the ways texts and other media represent the multifaceted social,

cultural, and political life of the Caribbean region and explore the development of key theoretical frameworks in the period. Possible authors to be considered: Jamaica Kincaid, George Lamming, Louise Bennett, Edouard Glissant, Frantz Fanon, Derek Walcott, C.L.R. James, Samuel Selvon, Merle Hodge, Edwige Danticat. (Combined with ENGL 648 and AFST 440)

Instructor: Berman

Fulfills: 400 Level, Literature Track and Secondary Education Certification; Diversity

### **ENGL 469 Studies in Race and Ethnicity (M 4:30 - 7:00)**

Comparative Racialization

Comparative Racialization is the study of various racial formations as relational and mutually constitutive. These social, political, and historical processes whereby racialized groups are created, regulated, and contested in relation to other racialized groups at once reveal the structural inequities of white supremacy, colonialism, and global capitalism while also providing opportunities for alternative coalitions and kinships. In this course, we will enter this critical conversation through contemporary literature that compels us to think about race and ethnicity both nationally and globally. We will be attuned to the intertwined histories of race, class, gender, sexuality, and national identity as we explore various modes of literary analysis. (Combined with ENGL 669)

Instructor: Yoon

Fulfills: 400 Level, Literature Track and Secondary Education Certification; Diversity

### **ENGL 471 Advanced Creative Writing: Fiction (M/W 1:00-2:15)**

In this advanced course, students will choose one of two paths: either producing just one substantial short story, nurturing it through multiple revisions, or producing two linked short stories that have overlaps in both character and setting, also involving multiple revisions. With either option, the work will end up around 20 double-spaced pages or longer, after sharing the drafts along the way and getting feedback from the instructor and other students. We will also read works by published authors, with regular reading responses for these, and do a variety of short writing activities, all with the goal of expanding students' experience with fiction writing and deepening their practice.

Instructor: Shivan

### **ENGL 493.01 Seminar in Communication and Technology (M 4:30 - 7:30)**

African American Rhetoric

This course introduces students to the field of African American rhetoric, which covers the central debates within African American history and culture. Issues such as segregation vs. integration, class, race and technology, or Black feminism and masculinity will be examined in conjunction with traditional African-American rhetorical themes (such as racial uplift and the African-American Jeremiad) and specific rhetorical practices (call and response, signifying, African American vernacular

English, etc.) This course will also discuss current social movements, online networking activity (Black Twitter), and Black popular culture (TV, film, and music) (Combined with ENGL 631)

Instructor: Brooks

Fulfills: 400 Level, CT Track; Diversity

## **ENGL 493.02 Seminar in Communication and Technology (T 4:30 – 7:00)**

Minds, Madness, and Power: Rhetorics of Brain and Behavior

Philosopher Roland Barthes wrote that the brain of physicist Albert Einstein became a "mythical object" in the popular imagination as a "machine of genius" (Mythologies 68). While for Einstein the brain signifies intelligence and humanity's dominance over the secrets of nature, the brain is also a symbolic vehicle for collective fears and associated with all kinds of socially deviant behavior. In this course, we will explore from a disability studies perspective the myriad ways that brains have appeared in public discourse: as puzzle and solution, mystery and machine, the source of civilization and of madness. Our readings will consider the brain as a centerpiece of debates about human behavior and intelligence and analyze its history as a scientific and cultural icon. Throughout the course, we will pay particular attention to discourses of behavioral and cognitive deviance as they have materialized in the institutional practices of psychiatry. Discussions and assignments will emphasize the rhetorical-historical processes that have structured current conceptions of the brain and the work of activists who critique the logics and social effects of psychiatry and neuroscience.

(Combined with ENGL 671)

Instructor: Holladay

Fulfills: 400 Level, CT Track