

English Department Course Descriptions

Fall 2026

Undergraduate Courses

Lower Division Courses

MHHS1: Introduction to Medical and Health Humanities

Dr. Wang

This introductory course to the MHHS program will highlight the brilliant work of scholars from UCR's interdisciplinary medical and health humanities collective. As we read, discuss, and write about this creative, nonfiction, and academic work, we will develop the tools to think about medicine, health, disease, disability, and treatment from an engaged humanities perspective. The course may feature several departments here at UCR, including but not limited to Creative Writing, Hispanic Studies, English, History, Art History, Media and Cultural Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Ethnic Studies, and Dance. In the end, you will be encouraged to seek out additional elective courses in MHHS taught by the very same scholars that you will have studied in this introductory course.

ENGL 012 - 001 Introduction to Literature: Introduction to Science Fiction: Creatures Featured!

Dr. Davis

This course understands science fiction as an expansive creative form that is uniquely positioned to explore human hierarchies and ethical paradoxes through its frequent depiction of non-human beings. Both the course units and discussion sections will be organized around recurring SF archetypes such as the mad scientist's monster, the alien, the zombie, and the aquatic humanoid in their historical, political, and cultural contexts. Surveying short selections from the 19th century through 21st century, the course will give special attention to contemporary fiction, television, and film by women writers and writers of color.

ENGL 012 – 002 Introduction to Literature: Introduction to Latinx Literature

Dr. A. García

This course introduces students to the writings of U.S. Latinx authors from the 1960s to the present. It studies a range of literary texts, from fiction and poetry to drama and essays, by Chicanx, Caribbean, and Central American U.S. Latinx writers. We will explore how these writers have navigated the U.S. political arena by creating a literary tradition that has represented and shaped the social realities and cultural identities of Latinx communities since the Civil Rights Movement. Our discussions will examine Latinx literary representations of race, gender, sexuality, class, immigration, citizenship, and language, paying close attention to how this body of literature continues to reflect the U.S. cultural and political landscape. Authors will include Tomás Rivera, Helena Maria Viramontes, Pedro Pietri, Angie Cruz, and Francisco Goldman, among others.

ENGL 14 North American Literature: Canadian Literature and Culture

Dr. Tyler

This course introduces students to Canadian literature and culture from the early twentieth century to the present. We will read poetry, short fiction, drama, a novel, and graphic fiction by writers such as Earle Birney, Alistair MacLeod, Margaret Atwood, Tomson Highway, Thomas King, Dionne Brand, Madeleine Thien, Kim Thúy, and Ivan Coyote, and we will view one film and study some visual art. We will explore how Canadian writers imagine landscape, identity, migration, and belonging, and how the idea of "Canada" has been shaped and challenged by Indigenous, multicultural, diasporic, and Québécois voices. We will practice thinking and writing critically about literature. Major assignments include two in-class exams and a final exam; additional coursework includes a short revision assignment and low-stakes accountability and engagement activities. Attendance is required.

ENGL 020B Introduction to American Literature and Cultural Study: Labor

Dr. Stapely

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 Franklinitian 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, Herman Melville, Samson Occom (Mohegan), and Phillis Wheatley.

ENGL 22 Writing Red: Native American Literature

TBD

Acquaints students with a range of Native American literatures. Discusses mass-mediated images of Native Americans and how "Indianness" is constructed, contested, and embodied in poetry, film, autobiography, fiction, and photography.

ENGL 25 Modern and Contemporary LGBTQI Arts and Media: Writing LGBTQ Lives

TBD

In this course we will introduce narrative, poetry, or essays composed by artists non-conforming in terms of sexuality or gender expression, and taking up themes of freedom, desire, law, ethics, subjectivity, and social belonging, from roughly 1850 to the present. Print works will be supplemented by considering photography, film, video, or digital media, on the course themes.

ENGL 33: Multimodal Literacies

Dr. Tobias

With recent developments in generative artificial intelligence, digital media expression is characterized as having gained "new powers": new abilities to tell stories, and to tell new kinds of stories - new stories that will answer ancient questions about consciousness, creativity, and the meaning of life. The hype, of course, is countered by downsides: deepfakes, viral conspiracy narratives, drone warfare. Claims, then, that "AI is creative" are powerful fictions in a transforming world. In this class we will think about how narrative fiction uses AI or data to tell stories. And what is data, anyway, as opposed to fiction, or fact? How have data and the computation of data come to be so crucial in understanding what is true or fictive about life in contemporary culture: our profiles, our online personas, our desires, our worlds? In this course, we will read a series of narratives about information and data that can provide lessons about the way information and data as cultural forms have "slid into" our private and public lives. The narratives we will study in this course teach us how we use or abuse data in textual, visual, computational, or other modes of expression: they are allegories of data and of information, but also, lessons on multimodal reading and writing - lessons about the ways we write self and world using information machines. We will learn what counts as literacy, knowledge, desire, power, and meaning in a moment in which data competes with fact to be valued as truth. Texts include: *Luster*, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, *Perfection*, and *Signs Preceding the End of the World*, along with additional keyword and historical essays about information, data, networks, and computer culture.

ENGL 40: Introduction to the English Department

Dr. Tobias

This course provides an online introduction to the Department of English faculty, course offerings, English major and minor, and more, via synchronous online video. We will learn about English Department faculty members' research agendas and teaching approaches; we will explore English Department course offerings; and we will introduce approaches to doing undergraduate research in literature, culture, history, and the world around us through interdisciplinary and often multimedia forms of narrative, poetry, autobiography, rhetoric, and other forms of expression. We focus on the meaning and value of criticism, and on critical humanities research currently happening in the department. This course equips students with some of the most important skills you will need to succeed in the all-important upper division courses required of majors. Finally, we introduce students to different pathways to graduation for English majors along with the career possibilities these pathways may support. Students will gain a better understanding of how to relate personal interests to course offerings in the department, and to public life beyond the research university.

Upper Division Courses

ENGL 101 Critical Theory

TBD

This survey of analytical methods introduces students to the major paradigms of critical and cultural analysis applied in qualitative study of expressive materials.

ENGL 102W-1 Introduction to Critical Methods

Dr. Stapely

This class will introduce students to the critical analysis of literary texts by considering how authors use certain types of punctuation to create and contest meaning in their writing. How does William Apess turn the question mark into a mirror? What does it mean that Phillis Wheatley's poetry often dwells on the comma's capacity to both assert and traverse categorical distinctions? Does David Walker's use of the exclamation point turn his text into a score? At the same time, we will apply theoretical lenses and approaches drawn from Marxism, gender and sexuality studies, Black Studies, and Indigenous Studies to help nuance our engagement with our sources and help articulate their stakes. By the end of the course, you should have grounding in how to apply critical materials to the analysis literary texts, a deeper skillset for producing close readings sensitive to even the smallest elements of composition, and renewed appreciation for the conceptual work that punctuation can carry in your own critical writing.

ENGL 102W-2 Introduction to Critical Methods

TBD

This class introduces students to the critical methods typically applied in upper division English Department courses. By the end of the course, students will be able to apply a range of critical materials to the analysis of literary as well as other kinds of cultural expression, and understand the importance of close reading practices for unlocking and revealing meaning in expressive works.

ENGL 111 Studies in Environment, Embodiment, and Health

TBD

In this course we will explore the ways literature contributes to or otherwise illuminates the shaping of our constructed environments, to policed norms determining ideas of proper embodiment, to institutionalized models of health, and to historical or emergent alternatives to these conditions.

ENGL 120A Native American Literature to 1900: Rock, Paper, Scissors: Earlier Native American Literature and Literacy

Dr. Raheja

This course centers Indigenous visual and literary narrative production from 20,000+ years ago to the 19th century to think collectively about intellectual, visual, and literary sovereignty, imagine Indigenous futurities, and grapple with the legacies of "early American" scholarship. Genres and writers will include: autobiography, poetry, political speeches, sermons, photography, William Apess, residential/boarding school students, Black Hawk, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Samson Occom.

ENGL 128 Major Authors

TBD

This course focuses on the study of a major literary work; examples have included *Pride and Prejudice*, *Moby Dick*, *Ulysses*, *Invisible Man*, *Dhalgren*, etc.

ENGL 137 Literatures of Displacement “That Damned Fence”: Literature of the Japanese American Incarceration

Dr. Berardino

Nearly seventy years after the closure of the ten concentration camps that incarcerated over 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans during the Second World War, there remains little consensus within Japanese American communities about the long-term social and cultural effects of this racially motivated imprisonment. Much public discourse has emphasized narratives of cultural silence; however, Japanese Americans have produced a substantial and diverse body of incarceration literature, some of it published in the immediate postwar period. This course examines representative texts written between 1945 and 2002, including memoirs, fiction, poetry, and sociological studies. Together, these works articulate varied and deeply felt responses to incarceration and often contain subtle or coded critiques of the camps and their aftermath. In addition to exploring this literary tradition, the course emphasizes the development of collegiate writing skills. Through group discussion, analysis of cultural and historical contexts, and close examination of narrative form and authorial choice, students will strengthen their abilities as critical readers and writers. Course requirements include active participation in discussions, formal essays, class presentations, and creative projects. By the end of the term, students will be equipped to approach every piece of writing as the product of deliberate rhetorical and aesthetic decisions.

ENGL 138B African American Literature Since the Harlem Renaissance

Dr. Baker WF 12:30 - 1:50

This course offers critical survey of African American literature since the 1940s with particular attention to the development of African American literary traditions in the novel, essay, drama, poetic, and musical forms. We will discuss the development of African American literary criticism, including Black feminism, queer studies, and politics of representation. Through close study of critical genealogies, we will consider trends in readerships, individual authors, and literary movements in relation to historical and cultural considerations of US-based Black literary production. Writers under consideration include Toni Morrison, Audre Lorde, Kiese Laymon, James Baldwin, and Octavia Butler.

ENGL 151SC Studies in Medieval Literature: Medieval Knighthood and Masculinity

Dr. Denny-Brown TR 3:30 - 4:50

This course will introduce students to the medieval knight: a figure central to medieval literature and society as well as to our own popular understanding of the Middle Ages. In particular we will focus on perceptions of gender, race, and chivalry that develop around the concept of knighthood in the European Middle Ages and the residual effects of those perceptions today. How have current notions of masculinity and femininity been shaped, either in perception or in reality, by the stories and myths of medieval knights? What was “the code of chivalry” and how has it influenced today’s codes of behavior? Who was King Arthur, and which writers made him famous? How has the figure of the medieval knight been used in historical race-making and in recent calls for racial justice? With an eye toward these questions and others, we will read and discuss a variety of texts focused on knightly behavior as well as on our culture’s popular engagement with medieval knighthood through the ages.

ENGL 186 Intersectional Feminisms: Black Feminism

Dr. Davis

This course will focus on Black feminist thought and movements from the 19th through 21st centuries, with a particular focus on 1980s-current theory, literature, and performance. May include selections by thinkers such as Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, Barbara Smith, the Combahee River Collective, Alice Walker, June Jordan, Ntozake Shange, Audre Lorde, Lamonda Horton Stallings, Jennifer Nash, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, and Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley to frame the fiction and art of creatives such as Julie Dash, Kasi Lemmons, Toni Morrison, Terri McMillan, and Beyoncé. We will engage in critical, creative, collaborative, and public-facing modes of learning and theorizing how Black feminism can interpret our world and inform our lives.

ENGL189 English Capstone Seminar: Comics and Graphic Novels from Southeast Asia

Dr. Gui

Comics studies scholar Katherine Kelp-Stebbins argues in a 2012 essay that “comics employ hybrid image/text in a formal capacity that is decidedly impure” and that their status “as a popular medium further reveals seams between formal purity and cultural hierarchies.” What this suggests is that comics and graphic novels can combine and mix different kinds of artistic, literary, and discursive elements. In doing so they can challenge or critique apparent divisions or hierarchies of society, culture, and power. This section of ENGL189 will explore the formal and thematic hybridity of comics from Southeast Asia or by creators of Southeast Asian background. In the first half we will read comics focusing on migration and refugee narratives by creators of Vietnamese background. We will discuss these comics in terms of the socio-political and cultural issues surrounding war, violence, exile, and racism. In the second half we will look at comics that deal with city space and urban life. We will discuss how these comics address problems related to urban modernity, such as psychological alienation, economic disparity, and socio-political corruption. Possible primary texts include: Thi Bui’s *The Best We Could Do*, Matt Huynh’s *MA and Cabramatta*, Felix Cheong and Arif Rafhan’s *Sprawl*, and selected comics from the *Liquid City* comics anthologies. No prior knowledge of Southeast Asia or comics studies required for this course.

ENGL 189 English Capstone Seminar

Dr. Berardino

Champloo is an Okinawan word used to describe a local style of panfry, meaning “stirred together,” or “mixed up.” In addition to exploring major works, themes, and authors of twentieth-century and contemporary Asian American literature, this course will examine textual spaces where Asian and American cultures are “stirred together” in an effort to articulate what a uniquely hybrid Asian American culture might look like. Although this is primarily a literary course, students will be expected to engage with other forms of media such as film and music. The class will focus on the development of collegiate writing and will consist of group discussions, consideration of cultural contexts, and examination of narrative constructions. Requirements include contributing to group discussions, writing papers, making class presentations, and completing creative projects. This course aims to teach students to think of every piece of writing as the product of a series of conscious choices by the author.

MHHS 191 MHHS Capstone Seminar

Dr. Mazzio

This course provides the culminating capstone experience for students enrolled in the MHHS program.