

2017 Fall EH Courses
Literature Course Descriptions

EH 165: Poverty and the American Dream (or “American Inequality”) (ES)

Ashe, TTH 9:30-10:50

America has tended to view itself as a society without deep divisions of social class, a “land of opportunity” where everyone is given an equal opportunity for success. Even now, as economic inequality has become a major part of the national discussion, most people tend to overlook the role of socio-economic class in everything from educational opportunities to what they buy or watch or listen to. In her book Nickel and Dimed, Barbara Ehrenreich claims that “some odd optical property of our highly polarized and unequal society makes the poor almost invisible to their economic superiors” (216). This course will mix literary depictions with economic, sociological, and journalistic discussion—along with hands-on service work with Birmingham city high school students—to try to make poverty and the class underpinnings of society visible to incoming freshmen.

EH 210-A: Introduction to Fiction—*Everyone’s a Storyteller*

Archer, MW 12:30-1:50

Storytelling was crucial to the development of human beings as a species. Early human beings used storytelling to pass on their culture, spread the news, and gather in groups for entertainment. Storytelling plays an important role in our own prehistory as individuals. Parents and other adults read us storybooks and pass on family and lore cautionary tales. We ourselves are storytellers as we recount our day to friends.

In Introduction to Fiction, EH 210A, we will read fiction that does some or all of these things. Stories will include classics, contemporary fiction, and even graphic fiction. We will also read one novel.

The primary intent of this course is to make reading fiction enjoyable. Of course, you will write two short papers (there is that) and take two exams. But class experience depends on student opinion and your honest response to the readings.

EH 210-B: Introduction to Fiction

Ullrich, TTH 9:30-10:50

This course is designed to introduce the student to the study of short fiction and the novel at the college level. The primary goals of the course are (1) to introduce the student to the pleasures and rigors of sophisticated literary analysis, (2) to develop the skills necessary to appreciate literature, (3) to participate in the class discussion by voicing thoughtful, informed opinions.

Regular attendance and class participation are required. Typically, this course does not require a lot of reading, just one, or perhaps two, short stories per class. But students **MUST** read each

short story at least twice, if not three times, before coming to class. Otherwise, the student has not spent enough time with the text—not studied it sufficiently—to (1) know the text in a meaningful way, (2) answer the assigned question thoughtfully, and (3) contribute to the class discussion.

EH 212: Alternate Worlds: Reading Science Fiction (IA)

Cowan, MW 11:00-12:20

This course is designed to introduce students to methods of literary analysis and close reading while becoming “well read” in classics of the science fiction genre. Major authors/works include: Isaac Asimov, Margaret Atwood., Arthur C. Clarke, Philip K. Dick, Ursula K. LeGuin, Joanna Russ, and H.G. Wells.

EH 229: Protest Literature: The Slave Narrative and Its Legacy (CI)

Cowan, TTH 12:30-1:50

This iteration of Protest Lit will take the slave narrative as its starting point and move through African-American literary forms until we reach the 21st century. Along the way, we are likely to read works by Richard Wright, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Malcolm X.

EH 250: Survey of British Literature

Tatter, MWF 9:30-10:30

This course is a chronological review of selected major works of British literature from the Anglo-Saxon period to the 20th Century. It serves both as an introduction to literary study and as a foundation course for upper-level literature classes. As such, its principal goal is to give students practice reading literary texts in detail and with sophisticated fashion. In an effort to reach this goal, the course has the following specific objectives, the success of which are measured by student performance on reading and writing assignments and on three examinations.

EH 280: Greco-Roman Literature in Translation

McInturff, TTH 2:00-3:20

Major Works of Greco-Roman Literature is a course intended for all students, non-majors, English Minors and those majoring in English. We will cover selected works of Greco-Roman literature, including the earliest of epics, actually from Sumeria and Babylon, *Gilgamesh*. We will explore those great monuments of Greek literature- Homer’s epics, Sappho’s lyrics, and the drama from Athens. We will explore other voices from ancient Greece, yielding, I expect, to the siren song of philosophers, historians, and satirists. Then we voyage to Rome. We will begin with some great comedies before we encounter Virgil and his *Aeneid*, that epic that most influenced European literature. We move on to Catullus and lyric poetry, followed by lively

Roman prose and satire. If we keep to schedule, we will finish with Augustine's *Confessions*, selections actually. So our conclusion will bring us from the ancient world to the rise of the West, from the epic journey to the inward struggle to master the self, from the lyrics of Sappho to the lamentations of the fallen. We will work quickly, but thoroughly and systematically. We will define and refine key terms and ideas. We will develop themes and questions. We will work toward some comprehensive thoughts about our literature and the cultures that come with it. Lots of reading, but when it is this good, who doesn't ask for more?

Now the basics: two papers, a midterm and a final, some shorter activities, and lots of dialogue in class. The final will be comprehensive.

CATEGORY 1

EH 381, Victorian Literature and Culture (Cat. 1)

Ullrich, TTH 12:30-1:50

The Victorians have a terrible problem with PR. Often simplified as repressive, Victorian England was a time of impressive cultural change. The Victorian era was the first era to call into question institutional Christianity on a large scale. Many distinctively "modern" innovations and cultural concepts made significant strides during this time period, including democracy, feminism, unionization of workers, socialism, Marxism. This is the age of Darwin, Marx, and early Freud, as well as Queen Victorian, the Oxford Movement, and Utilitarianism.

This course is designed as a survey of the major Victorian writers and the cultural events which transformed the era. The course covers the time period from 1832-1900. Victorian literature excels in three traditional literary genres: prose, poetry, and fiction. We will examine, in particular, the dramatic monologue, the prose essay, and the novel, this last the pre-eminent genre of the period.

The cultural context of the Victorian period—the era's many transformations—is also an important topic of investigation. Like all literary periods, the Victorian Era is rich, diverse, and complicated. Thus, we will focus on the literature and culture of the era, not theoretical criticism. As always, the primary goals of this course are to introduce the student to the pleasures and rigors of reading, to develop the skills necessary to be able to appreciate sophisticated works of literature, to ask the reader to become engaged the text, and to participate in the class by voicing thoughtful, informed opinions.

Requirements include regular attendance and class participation, individual assigned worksheets on the specific texts, midterm, research paper, and in-class presentation.

CATEGORY 2

EH 360: Shakespeare (Pre-1900)

McInturff, MWF 12:30-1:30

EH 360- the Shakespeare class- explores selected plays by Shakespeare with a focus on a number of connected issues. We will engage in a close reading of the plays themselves and of the critical and textual traditions. We will be attentive to genre and style. We will give some attention to historical and intellectual context. We will not neglect the theatrical elements in the plays. We will be surrounded by challenges and delights that will reward us every day.

READINGS: Seven plays will form the basis of our in-class discussion. You will be asked to read additional plays in conjunction with some of our basic seven. You will thus read a total of twelve plays. That works out to not quite one a week. You should have time to reread each play twice, or more. You will be required to show your reading on EXAMS and during class discussion.

PLAYS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Titus Andronicus
Merchant of Venice
As You Like It
Hamlet
Macbeth
King Lear
Winter's Tale

PLAYS FOR COLLATERAL READING

Richard III, to be finished by the end of our discussion of *Merchant*
Twelfth Night
Julius Caesar

Antony and Cleopatra
Tempest

2 short papers
One long paper
Midterm and final

CATEGORY 4

EH 396: Contemporary Poetry

Sprayberry, TTH 9:30-10:50

The objectives of this course are to survey current trends in poetry and poetic theory. Because the lyric and narrative continue to be the predominant poetic forms, the course will be focused on theories of the lyric and narrative and on representative writers. This focused study will also be broadened and framed by a survey of other postmodern trends and a reading of a variety of anthologized poems. Emphasis will also be placed on the “unplugged” performative elements of contemporary literature. This is a RISE 3 project, with an emphasis on experiential learning through research and through service.

CATEGORY 5

EH 410: Studies in the Novel

Archer, MW 2:00-3:20

In this course, we will undertake a necessarily limited study of the history and theory of the novel. We will read articles and excerpts from works of criticism on the novel as well as four or five novels from various stages and categories of the genre's development. The course will balance theoretical readings with readings of literature. Some of the novels are in critical editions or case studies. Other critical readings do not directly apply to the specific novels but explore the genre more generally. Students will seek out additional criticism and report to the class; they will also write two short papers practicing the application of theory. There will be a longer final paper in which students will apply the theory we have explored to a novel or group of novels of their choice. Since it is a category 5 course, 'Studies in the Novel' focuses on theory.