DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH

SPRING 2018
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
How do babies learn language? What accounts for your ability to understand something you’ve never heard before? How are thought and language connected? Why do people swear? Why do people have accents? And who gets to decide what “proper grammar” is anyway?

These questions and more are part of our inquiry into language and the field of linguistics. Intro to Linguistics is a survey course designed to give you an overview of language as a system of communication. We will examine the structure of language, consider how people acquire and use language(s), and discuss language variety. As time allows, we will consider how language is encoded into writing systems and how literacy skills relate to language. We will consider examples from many different languages as we seek to understand how language works, however, English will provide the basis for most discussion and analysis.

Students interested in both the sciences and the humanities will find the subject matter appealing and relevant. Students in this course are encouraged to see the connections between linguistics and other fields of study.

Students should expect to complete regular readings, quizzes & homework, and at least 2 exams or projects.

Required Text:
Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It endeavors to answer the question—what is language and how is represented in the mind? Linguists focus on describing and explaining language and are not concerned with the prescriptive rules of the language. The underlying goal of the linguist is to try to discover the universals concerning language; thus, this class will explore the nature of human language. Topics include the intricate system that governs language, how it is acquired, the similarities and differences among languages, and how spoken (and signed) language relates to written language, among others. Some topics we will touch on include: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and language acquisition. It is important to recognize that linguistics is a social science that shares common ground with other social sciences, but also influences other disciplines such as English, communication studies, and computer science.
This is an Essential Studies course and will count towards your distribution requirement in Arts and Humanities.

The novelist Haruki Murakami likens writing to training for a marathon. Like running, the art of writing requires practice, patience, and an openness to new experiences. Open to students from any major or discipline, English 226 is an introductory course that offers students an opportunity to channel their creative visions and to practice their art in a community of like-minded readers. Students will exercise their creative and critical abilities by writing and analyzing poetry, flash fiction, short fiction, and radio/podcast scripts. This discussion-based class is complemented by in-class writing prompts and take-home writing assignments. Students will share and critique their writing in small-group workshops, so that they may be revised for the midterm and final projects. Students will also collaborate on recording, editing, and producing their own podcasts using the English Department’s portable MacBook lab.
This is an Essential Studies course and will count towards your distribution requirement in Arts and Humanities. This course also meets the Global Diversity special emphasis area.

We will begin by acknowledging that understanding literature is a species of the humanities, and humanistic knowledge has lurked in the shadows of other types of knowledge for some time. One of the primary goals of this course will be to persuade you that literature isn't just a trivial, recreational, or solely subjective enterprise but one of active inquiry. It yields knowledge, but mostly of a different kind from science.

The novel and non-fiction that we will read will treat colonialism—the phenomenon of powerful countries expanding into empires, conquering less powerful ones in order to achieve their goals, often the extraction of natural resources (including humans used as slaves or low-wage laborers). Colonialism usually also involves the imposition of the conquerors' values and beliefs upon the conquered. Paramount among them is a belief in the superiority of the colonizer. We will figure ourselves as Odysseus, who navigates around the Mediterranean in his lengthy quest to arrive home. Odysseus himself can be figured as a proto-colonialist. As we travel upon our life's journey, we must take account of the colonizing ideology.

Our primary tool for the journey is a method known as close reading. This will require us to take words seriously and literarily. It will take some time to learn. Another method will be to understand writers, characters, and ourselves as practitioners of rhetoric: that is, we will ask ourselves who is speaking to whom in what way and for what reason and within what environment. If we navigate as well as Odysseus, we will surely come upon many surprises, to say the least. What constitutes "home" may be the first one.

**Texts**
Homer's *Odyssey* (Book IX)
Cavafy's "Ithaka,"
NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*
David Gann's *Killers of the Flower Moon*
This is an Essential Studies course and will count towards your distribution requirement in Arts and Humanities. This course also meets the United States Diversity special emphasis area.

President Donald Trump intends to build a wall on the US-Mexico border to prevent border crossing. Despite numerous examples of fervent anti-immigrant rhetoric on the national stage, one cannot deny that the United States is a nation peopled primarily by the descendants of immigrants and immigrants themselves. This course will argue that reading narratives depicting the processes of individuals becoming recognized as American and starting to feel like American themselves can help clarify the current social, cultural, and political complexities associated with legal and illegal immigration.

The types of texts we read for this course will be as diverse as its subject matter. We will study short stories, novels, films, television, poetry, music, and graphic novels covering themes such as Americanization, assimilation, alienation, globalization, dislocation, integration, ghettoization, identity, hybridity, trauma, and cultural loss.

Students will be expected to read for each class session, actively participate in class discussion, and produce a variety of short critical interpretations. The final project for the class will ask students to create a digital map charting the movement of characters across national borders in order to ask what it means to belong in America today.

Possible literary texts include:
Cather, Willa. My Ántonia (1918)
Cole, Teju. Open City (2011)
Mengestu, Dinaw. All our Names (2014)
Ozick, Cynthia. The Shawl (1989)
Tan, Shaun. The Arrival (2007)
Whitehead, Colson. The Underground Railroad (2016)

Possible filmic and televisual texts include:
Children of Men (dir. Alfonso Cuarón, 2006)
Fresh Off the Boat (creator Nahnatchka Khan, 2015).
Master of None (creators Aziz Ansari and Alan Yang, 2015).
This is an Essential Studies course and will count towards your distribution requirement in Arts and Humanities. This course also meets the United States Diversity special emphasis area.

In this course, we will study a range of literary and artistic representations of various 20th and 21st century Civil Rights movements. We’ll study historical contexts for the movements themselves, but our key focus will be the ways that writers, film directors and visual and new media artists portray these movements in creative works aimed to reach audiences during and after the historical events themselves.

We will do much close reading and careful analysis of fiction, essays, film, poetry/song, music, visual art and various “new media”: i.e. digital and multi-media artistic works, web pages, archives projects, etc.

We will spend considerable time on the American Black Civil Rights movement circa 1945-1970 and its artistic representation in more recent film and new media (e.g. Raoul Peck’s 2016 film I Am Not Your Negro). We will look at recent new media related to the Black Lives Matter movement and take a look at social media productions emerging from the Repairers of the Breach, a “Third Reconstruction” movement of today which specifically invokes the legacy of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement.

We will also analyze literature, film and new media related to other human rights and civil rights movements emerging in the United States in the 20th century and continuing on to today: American Indian activism starting with organizations like the National Congress of American Indians and the American Indian Movement up to recent events at the DAPL protests at Standing Rock; the United Farm Workers of America across several decades; the Poor People’s Campaign; Voting Rights as civil rights; early Gay Pride and later GLBTQ movements. And we will research and critique a range of current writings and new media productions dealing with the civil rights of religious minorities in the United States (especially Muslim and Jewish Americans) as well analyzing recent debates concerning human rights and civil rights of immigrants and refugees.

This class blends the study of history, political philosophy, literature, film and multi-media art. It is intended as an introductory level class in all of these fields, and is a good choice for experienced students as well as for students new to any of these subjects. It is also a great class for working on your writing and analytical skills at any level. The main requirement is strong interest in learning to analyze literature, film and other media/art in relation to social and historical questions.
This is an Essential Studies course and will count towards your distribution requirement in both Humanities and Advanced Communication.

How do we “do” English? And why? When put like that, it’s clear that we need to think about what “English” means to answer those questions, and that’s what we will do in this course. Designed as the first part of your introduction to the major and minor, this class will develop the thinking and communication skills you need for future coursework and beyond. Through learning the analytic tools that every thoughtful reader draws on, this course will improve your ability to read critically and to write effectively in order to produce and share knowledge. We will learn by practicing and by reflecting on that practice through careful revision of ideas, but we will also reflect on the practices that ground English as a discipline. We will find that reading and writing about texts extends far beyond the classroom.
This course provides an introduction to literary theory. Specifically, it is an introduction to reading, writing about and applying literary theory to the texts that you might read in a course on English literature. We will be guided by basic questions, including the following: what distinguishes theory from criticism? What problems in reading or interpreting literary texts does theory address? Why are there so many models and approaches to theory; and where do they come from? Do theoretical frameworks change the way we approach reading, interpreting, or writing about literary texts?

As you quickly will discover, our field is too large to lend itself to anything like a survey. Therefore, we will read an assortment of texts, selected to give you as much of an introduction as the limitations of a single semester course impose. They do not provide a comprehensive overview. They should excite you and stimulate your thinking about our subject well beyond those limits. As you can see from the list below, some of our texts are recognizably literary. Others are recognizably theoretical. Many are neither fish nor fowl.

- T. S. Eliot, *Selected Prose*
- Oscar Wilde, *The Soul of Man under Socialism and Selected Critical Prose*
- Charles Baudelaire, *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*
- Edgar Allan Poe, *Selected Poetry, Tales and Essays (Case Studies in Critical Controversy)*
- Mark Twain, *Huck Finn (Case Studies in Critical Controversy)*
- Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*
- Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station*
- Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*
- Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*
- Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation and other Essays*
“The proper function of a critic,” observes author D.H. Lawrence, “is to save the tale from the artist who created it.” This course, which is designed to serve as the second part of the introduction to the English major, explores the dominant ways in which literary critics have, historically, approached “the tale” in question. These approaches, as we shall see, range from variations on a theme of appreciation, to investigations of a text’s political messages, to in-depth examinations of an author and questions about the role of authorship in general. Many of these approaches are grouped under the heading of “literary theory” and, in this class, we will be learning about the uses of theory, studying how it works, and assessing its significance.

Theory and criticism will, therefore, be our guides in this course. We’ll practice techniques for reading and responding to literary criticism while covering basic concepts and definitions associated with the practices of critique. Theory and criticism provide writers and readers alike with a basic, core vocabulary that they can use to talk to each other, and we’ll be examining that vocabulary in detail in this class. We’ll also practice putting this vocabulary to use in relation to a number of literary texts, and we’ll be thinking reflexively, considering the ways in which the books that we already read and the writing that we already produce might be informed by critical traditions, standards, or expectations.

This class is discussion-oriented and will require active participation in addition to regular reading and writing assignments and a digital project.
This course is an introduction to British literature written after 1800 – to the periods known as Romanticism, Victorianism, Modernism, and Postmodernism. The last two centuries have seen a dramatic growth and a subsequent fragmentation of the reading public in England, and authors writing during this time have had to struggle with the consequences. Is a writer “a man speaking to men,” or a hero to be worshipped? Should authors engage the world around them, or escape into their own imaginations? Can writers reconcile art with popularity, or must they choose one over the other? Do poetry and prose have natural or appropriate places in the growing split between artistic and popular literature? Since the proliferation of writing over the last two centuries means that no one can ever read it all, has literary tradition lost its importance?

This course will examine a handful of major authors since 1800 as they ask and answer these questions. Since it is a broad survey, we will not be able to read every writer of importance in the four periods under consideration. Instead, we will read selected works in order to get a sense of the general characteristics of those periods – a sense of what Romantic authors have in common, for example, or of the ways in which Modernist literature is a rejection of Victorian values and aesthetics. Such grounding in historical and literary contexts is useful for students planning to take upper-level courses in English, but the writers we’ll be studying are also of broad humanistic interest, and their answers to the questions above have helped shape the cultural experience of everyone living in the English-speaking world today.
In 1868, John William DeForest raised a number of questions about the literature of the United States: where were America’s Thackeray and Balzac? Where were the authors that could paint “the picture of the ordinary emotions and manners of American existence?” Where were the writers who could speak not just to New Englanders, but also to “Southerners and Westerners and even New Yorkers?”

As an introduction of literature of the United States from 1865 to the present, this course tries to answer some of these questions, as well as identify what makes literature distinctively “American.” During the semester, we will investigate the various movements of this time period that worked to create an American literary tradition that could be representative of our culturally diverse nation, including regionalism, realism, naturalism, modernism, postmodernism, and beyond.

As this is a broad survey, we will not be able to read every significant author who wrote during this period. However, we will examine a number of major writers who exemplify the various literary movements to obtain an understanding of the general characteristics of each. Because we will situate these works in their historical and social context, this course will be useful not only to students planning on taking upper-level courses in English, but also those who are interested in expanding their understanding of American culture.
This is an Essential Studies course and will count towards your distribution requirement in Arts and Humanities and Advanced Communication.

This course is intended for students who want to better understand creative nonfiction, to improve their own writing, and to have fun exercising the creative parts of their brain. Whether you’re a sophomore who wants better grades on papers or a senior who has ambitions of becoming a professional writer, the goal of the course is to make every student a stronger, more descriptive and thoughtful writer. To that end, we will read a lot of good writing, will read about good writing, and hopefully will do some good writing ourselves. We will spend a lot of time in workshop, reading each other’s drafts and giving advice—both to hone our skills as readers and to help our fellow writers. We will also practice the art of rewriting (and rewriting and rewriting) in order to improve our final product. Finally, we will write pieces reflecting on our own writing, critically examining our individual voice, style, and practice.

This course’s focus will be the creative essay. We will read “creative” essays by noted writers and will write our own masterpieces modeled on what we’re reading and analyzing. By semester’s end, you will have produced three polished essays: either a personal narrative or biographical sketch, an opinion or reflective essay, and an essay either describing a place or an historical event. We will also spend a good amount of time working on stylistic skills, trying to make our writing smoother, more powerful, and more effective on the sentence and paragraph level. Course grading will come from the three formal essays, from daily writing prompts, and from grades on participation in class and in workshops.
This is an Essential Studies course and will count towards your distribution requirement in Arts and Humanities and Advanced Communication.

This course will serve as an introduction to the analysis and craft of non-fiction writing. We will explore a range of genres including travel and science writing, literary journalism, memoir, criticism, observational and argumentative essays, and humor and satire. While reading a range of genres of non-fiction texts, we will work to understand how authors use rhetorical and creative strategies to write compelling non-fiction. We will then use what we learn about effective reading strategies to work through the process of crafting your own essays in several genres and on a variety of topics, mostly of your choosing.

Through close readings and workshops, we will spend the semester trying to understand and recreate the tension between traditional creative writing strategies (plot, narrative, character development, conflict) and the accuracy that creative non-fiction writers must balance in order to maintain the distinction of non-fiction. You will practice developing an eye for writing techniques and methods, while also testing out your own voice as an essayist, in order to help build confidence and authority in your ideas and perspectives as readers and writers.

This course will be discussion based, and will require regular participation through active and engaged reading and writing.
This is an Essential Studies course and will count towards your distribution requirement in Arts and Humanities and Advanced Communication.

I have a theory that the truth is never told during the nine-to-five hours.

Hunter S. Thompson

“There is no such thing as truth,” the writer Jeanette Winterson observes. “There is only art and lies.” The term nonfiction encompasses a variety of writing styles and genres, but it is defined by its connection to a single concept: the truth. In this course, we’ll survey the ways that writers go about getting at “the truth.” We’ll read examples of nonfiction writing, which can include everything from journalism and investigative reporting to memoirs and personal essays. But the vast majority of our time will be spent exercising and experimenting with modes of true, or truthful, storytelling. At heart, our goal will be to gauge and understand the moves that writers make when they want to convince their audience that something is true. We’ll practice researching and gathering evidence, constructing well-reasoned arguments, reflecting on true stories about the world that we live in, and representing the truth of our own lives via personal essays and creative nonfiction writing.

Our studies throughout the semester will be underscored by critical investigations of “truth” and “lies,” which will form the thematic bedrock of this class. We’ll begin by reading authors who rose to fame in connection with the movement known as New Journalism, including the notorious Hunter S. Thompson and also Truman Capote. Capote’s landmark “nonfiction novel,” In Cold Blood (1966), offers a narrative account of a true event, but it has been criticized for its stylized approach to the telling of real facts. We will expand upon these studies by reading more contemporary works of creative nonfiction in preparation for the 2018 UND Writers Conference, the theme of which is, likewise, “Truth & Lies.”

This class is discussion-oriented and will require active participation in addition to regular reading, writing assignments, and in-class workshops.
This is an Essential Studies course and will count towards your distribution requirement in Arts and Humanities and Advanced Communication.

This course invites students of all majors and backgrounds to explore the notion of disability as a social, political, and cultural phenomenon, which changes over time. Disability Studies, as it is called, is a new and attractive academic discipline in many universities and activist circles operating all over the globe. Historians, social scientists, artists and musicians, have joined clinical professionals, physicians, and therapists to reframe this field of study. Disability activists have shifted public awareness from a charity/medical model to a civil rights/social model, from pity to confrontation and creation. Artists, dancers, athletes, actors, and architects are making spaces and microphones for themselves, on stage and in the arena. Current issues such as prenatal testing, euthanasia, accessibility in public transportation and the workplace, post-traumatic stress, American Sign Language, cochlear implants, and sex education will be explored. Anyone who wonders how people organize and work for meaningful change, whether through Communication Disorders or Civil Engineering or Aerospace Studies or Psychology or Education or English or Medicine or Law is welcome in this course. Film, guest speakers, and videos will appear. Experiments and performances will be conducted.

Required Reading:
Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin, eds. *Keywords for Disability Studies*. NYU Press, 2015
Berube, Michael. *Life as We Know It: A Father, A Family, and an Exceptional Child*. Pantheon, 1996

Required Writing:
Weekly response papers (2-3 pages, typed and double-spaced) and short essays (250-350 words)
One long research paper (12-15 pages)
One group project or performance or staged debate
This course examines a wide range of female-authored texts from the Ancient, Patristic, Medieval, and Early Modern eras, ranging in date from 2200 BCE through 1700 CE. This body of work is remarkable for its size and its range, given the limitations often placed on women’s writing. Indeed, one of the major problems we will confront is the nature of women’s writing. We will also examine several male-authored, or male-collaborated, texts as contextual reference, but the focus is predominantly on woman-authored literature from across the globe.

Much of our time will be spent on how women viewed themselves, their social and economic situations, and their own bodies, and on how they responded to descriptions imposed upon them. Female (and male) bodies have always been constrained by a complicated network of social, economic, and political forces, and these intersected with activities that we think of as historical, literary, and theological. Together, we will explore what this means in multiple cultures during the pre-modern era.
Katniss. Harry. Bella. No last names necessary: everyone knows who they are. Figures from Young Adult Literature have entered our cultural consciousness like never before. Why? How do these texts reflect and shape society? What does their popularity tell us about ourselves? About our world? And about “literature”? We will explore these questions in a range of contemporary novels, focusing especially on the issues of identity and love central to the genre.
As Latino populations continue to burgeon in the U.S., literary production follows suit. As we examine novels, poetry, short stories, drama, criticism, and theory, we will focus on the diverse voices and experiences that populate Latino/a literary production, reading across genres and traditions. We will simultaneously track Latino/a literary history and analyze articulations of Latino/a everyday life and politics grounded in distinct geographical and social contexts. Issues related to migration, segregation, violence, poverty, gentrification, and struggles for social justice will figure prominently in our discussions.

Guiding questions include: Does Latino/a writing challenge commonly held perceptions of Latino/a life or sustain them? What are the conversations between and conflicts within Latina/o literature and among its writers? How do these works negotiate identity, self-representation, and hybridity? How do aesthetics, politics, and community intersect? How do race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class consciousness manifest within texts? Finally, we will consider how Latino/a literature converses with broader traditions of U.S. and Latin American literatures. Work for the course will include in-class writings, three papers, and active participation in class discussion.
We know different groups speak different dialects, but these differences extend to ways of practicing and valuing reading and writing, too. How do culture and language shape people’s relationships with texts? How do social, economic, and linguistic forces determine what counts as “literacy”? How do different ways of practicing and valuing reading and writing affect children’s success in school? English 370 considers these questions, using analytical methods and texts drawn from sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and literacy studies.

No prerequisite. Required for the English Language Learner endorsement in the UND teacher education program.

Questions? Email kim.donehower@und.edu
This course fulfills the goals of Written Communication and Information Literacy. This course is approved for graduate credit.

The reports of reading’s death have been greatly exaggerated; most reading today just happens to be done on a screen, not in print. In this course, we will confront this reality head-on by experimenting with writing in and for digital platforms. Assignments for the class include designing an infographic, creating and editing a short video or audio essay, and writing a release for social media.

This class is not only for English majors, but any student who would like to learn new techniques for producing and distributing their writing. Likewise, the projects for this course do not presume advanced technological literacy, but they will require students to practice new skills and develop new proficiencies. Learning to write in “medium-specific” ways will help hone your writing for professional contexts and/or graduate or professional school by encouraging you to communicate to new audiences in a variety of formats.
This course is approved for graduate credit.

In a conversation with Ben Marcus, George Saunders rankled at the idea of the “Cross Old Men” of fiction, who make literature and literary communities exclusive. Saunders goes on to defend young writers who seek to innovate fictional forms: “for those thousands of young people [...], the process is still a noble one—the process of trying to say something, of working through the craft issues, and the world view issues, and the ego issues—all of this is character-building.”

In this section of English 414, students will put Saunders’ principle to the test for themselves. Students will explore the possibilities and limits of fiction through the study and practice of recent formal and genre innovations in literary fiction. Course readings will include subtler experiments in form, like novels-in-stories such as Melinda Moustakis’ *Bear Down, Bear North*, but students will also encounter texts that further blur distinctions between forms, like the poetic prose forms of Claudia Rankine and Carolyn Forché or the so-called “nonfiction novels” of Maggie Nelson or Francisco Goldman. Students will further their knowledge of creative techniques and strategies by reading and analyzing craft books, like selections from Graywolf’s *Art of* series. During the semester, students will craft and share their work for in-class peer critiques, which will aid students in revising their work for a final portfolio. The course will also emphasize creative writing as a profession in the age of digital media, by instructing students in the preparation of submissions to undergraduate, graduate, or national-distribution literary magazines.
This is an Essential Studies Capstone course. This course is approved for graduate credit.

In this course we will read novels that are often included on lists of the “best” American novels of the twentieth century. As we read and discuss these works, we will also ask larger questions about the literary canon and literary value: what makes these works “American”? Why are they still read? Is there a national identity that they still speak to?

At the same time, class members will be asked to consider the cultural and historical issues that animate these works: the role of social and economic class in a society that wants to identify itself as classless; how to define regional identity in an increasingly national culture; fears about the cost of urbanization and modernization; and the challenge of coming to terms with a US past that has not always lived up to its promises of equality and justice for all.


The class will be very discussion-oriented and students should be prepared to participate through regular writing, through class presentations, and through active reading. As an ES Capstone course, the class will pay particular attention to research strategies: students will discover more about these novels through both literary and cultural/historical research. The final project of the class will involve writing a researched critical introduction to one of the novels for a twenty-first century audience.

*Sixth Avenue Elevated at Third Street* by John Sloan (1928)
This is an Essential Studies Capstone course. This course is approved for graduate credit.

The novel is such a dominant feature of today’s literary landscape that it can be hard to imagine a time without it. But as its name indicates, the genre is a relatively new one; while the epic poem and the tragic play, for instance, have histories stretching back thousands of years, the novel has only been around since the early eighteenth century. Genres, like biological organisms, develop rapidly in their youth, and the novel has evolved at an astonishing pace in the last hundred and fifty years. Victorians who read their age’s “large loose baggy monsters” to while away the hours on railroad trips would have been bewildered by the artfully constructed and densely experimental texts being written just a few generations later.

This course is the second of two that will survey the history of the English novel, and will trace the genre from 1850 into the postmodern period. We’ll talk about the novel’s division into two disparate branches – pop lit and art – a division inescapable today because of the specialization of publishers and the shelving strategies of libraries and bookstores. We’ll discuss the emergence of short fiction and the novella, a process which occurs more than half a century later than it does in America. And we’ll watch the novel respond to the rise of modern psychology, to the growing influence of moral and epistemological relativism, and to the emergence of poststructuralist theories of language.

The first course in the sequence was offered in the fall, and traced the career of the English novel from its emergence in the 1710s up to about 1850. But this course will stand on its own, and students are more than welcome to take it whether or not they enrolled in the first.
This course is designed to introduce students to the theory and practice of teaching college English. We will discuss both what we do as teachers of English and why we do it. To that end, students will read and write about a range of sources on the teaching of composition, literature, and creative writing. Students will also conduct a hands-on research project involving the teaching of English. Through these various assignments, students should be able to articulate a number of different approaches to the teaching of college English and support their particular stances on these approaches using both existing scholarship and original research.

ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY TEACH COLLEGE ENGLISH
This seminar will engage us in close encounters of far-ranging kinds with the depth and complexity of biblical texts as works of literature. We’ll be working with a number of literary-critical approaches to biblical literature in this seminar, with a “survey” approach to some of the critical options available to literary interpreters of biblical texts. This initial overview of possibilities will allow students to pursue in more depth a project of particular interest to them for a final essay project.

Our collaborative work with these critical approaches will be based in close work (in English) with the (translated-to-English) following biblical texts:

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Segments of Leviticus
- Job
- Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John
- Galatians
- Philemon
- James
- James

Those of you who bring a background in either biblical Hebrew or Greek can also, if you are interested to do so, work with the original language within your essays.

We will also be taking some time to work collaboratively with particular critical approaches including:

- “violence and the sacred,” and the textual representations of the “scapegoat mechanism” (Rene Girard)
- philosophical hermeneutics and literary analysis (Gadamer, et al);
- political criticism and biblical narrative

And we’ll also be taking a critical look at the ways that some recent writers, visual artists and filmmakers have worked with biblical tropes, images and narratives in their own art.

The seminar will be of interest to students having a range of previous experience with biblical texts, from none at all to familiarity via other study/contexts. The seminar requires serious and sustained study, but does not require previous experience with the texts or subject matter.

Our texts will likely include: (in addition to digital sources and article handouts)

Robert Alter  *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation and Commentary*
Richmond Lattimore  *The New Testament* (Literary translation from Greek to English)
Gabel, Wheeler and York  *The Bible As Literature*
John Barton, editor  *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*
Science fiction, feminism, the green movement, socialism, the Declaration of Independence, social movements, the English Renaissance: all can be linked to *Utopia* (1516), the work of Thomas More that customarily marks the beginning of the English Renaissance and prompted myriad versions in that early modern period. Few concepts carry as much meaning in the history of thought as utopia, which will enable this course to serve both as an in-depth exploration of early modern literature and culture and as “ou-topos” or “no place”: a space in which to explore your own personal and intellectual interests and experiences beyond the confines of the historical period. As constructed places that refract real contexts, utopias allow us to engage with any issue: government, social structure, law, gender, sex, family, career, class, nation, education, ecology, commerce, humanism, science, technology, race, religion, ethics, medicine, arts, authorship, colonialism. And by calling attention to themselves as imagined, they insistently question the very process by which anything is called “good” or “eu-topian.” In this spirit, we will use our study of utopias to question the terms of the course, including divisions between historical periods and categories like “literature” and “genre.” We will read a mix of texts, including some proposed by students: verse, fictional and nonfictional prose, and drama; canonical and lesser-known; recognized “classics” and works not usually classified as utopias such as romance, epic, or travel writing. We will also read a variety of scholars and theorists, some focused historically or generically and some like Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Zizek who explore contemporary resonances. Thus our reading, thinking, talking, and writing will be itself utopian, by which I mean wide-ranging and self-reflexive, attending to structures and intersections.
This course is designed to further explore the rhetorical strategies of academic writing in the discipline of English and to support students through the development of the Portfolio project.