

## **FALL 2014 - English Department Course Descriptions**

### **ENG 147: Acting I**

**Prof. Eileen Dugan**

*English elective; Theater Minor; Core Field 3 and Oral Communication Attribute.*

If you enjoyed acting in high school, (or ever) this is a course for you. Using theatre games, improvisation, technique exercises, scenes and monologues, students explore how an actor trains, rehearses and performs. The atmosphere is relaxed and supportive, a great place to express your inner "ham," or to gain confidence if the idea of public speaking or performing terrifies you.

There is NO prerequisite, and FRESHMEN ARE WELCOME!!!! Acting I is taught by Eileen Dugan, a professional actor, director and theatre instructor for more than twenty years, and director of Canisius College's Little Theatre.

### **ENG 201: Poetry**

**Dr. Sandra Cookson**

*200-level English course; Core Field 3 and Advanced Writing Intensive*

This course is an introduction to reading, understanding, and interpreting poetry through analysis of its basic elements. Students will learn, through close reading and paraphrase, to identify the subject matter, speaker, and situation of a poem. They will learn to analyze its technical elements (e.g., image, rhythm, rhyme, diction, structure, figures of speech). Writing assignments evolve from exercises and brief papers on the elements noted above, to longer essays and a final project that incorporates one or more critical perspectives. Regular oral reporting, reading and discussion of poems make up much of the class work.

### **ENG 202: Drama**

**Dr. Mark Hodin**

*200-level English course; Core Field 3 and Advanced Writing Intensive*

This course surveys a range of drama in order to analyze, interpret, and appreciate this diverse literary genre. Although our reading list emphasizes work done in the twentieth century, the selected plays should get us to think broadly about essential dramatic concepts (i.e. tragedy, comedy, tragic-comedy) and important theater movements and theories (like Naturalism, Expressionism, Absurdism, Epic Theater, and Postmodernism). Along the way, we consider how the various styles selected by our playwrights may have looked in performance to particular theater audiences.

### **ENG 219: Literature & Psychology**

**Dr. Jane Fisher**

*200-level English course; Core Field 3 and Advanced Writing Intensive*

Literature and psychoanalysis share a common history of interpretation, narration, characterization, and focus on symbols with psychoanalysis eventually defining itself as a science. Here we will focus on the early tradition of psychoanalysis and the daring

questions it asked about what makes us human. We will also be aware of the errors and dangers of psychoanalysis; in our class, we will aim to use Freudian techniques without necessarily reaching Freudian conclusions. We will also consider more contemporary work on trauma and think about which traumas allow recovery and which traumas may not. Assignments will include a number of portfolio essays, two longer graded essays, an oral research presentation, and a cumulative take home final exam. Readings for this course include Freud's Case Studies: The Rat Man Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (selections); Hitchcock's film *Spellbound*; Freud, *Fragment of an Analysis* (Dora); Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (selections); Jonathan Kellerman, *Bad Love*; Edwidge Danticat, *Farming of the Bones*; Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*; Brian Castner, *The Long Walk: A Study of War and the Life That Follows*.

**ENG 222: Vampires in Literature and Culture**

**Dr. Rachel Greenberg**

*200-level English course; Core Field 3 and Advanced Writing Intensive*

This course will examine the figure of the vampire in English and American literature over a broad historical period. We will focus particularly on the vampire's literary roots and traditions, as well as on the various cultural meanings we tend to associate with vampires and which continue to evolve. Indeed, the vampire has proven to be an especially adaptable and therefore persistent figure in literature, television, and film, and thus, a reliable gauge of a range of cultural anxieties, ranging from deviant sexualities to xenophobia to HIV/AIDS, to name just a few. In reading the vampire through a range of cultural metaphors, the course will provide a partial history of the vampire in literature, while also considering the place of vampires in literature and culture today.

**ENG 225: Journey in American Literature**

**Prof. Eric Gansworth**

*200-level English course*

*Creative Writing contemporary literature course*

*Core Field 3 and Advanced Writing Intensive*

This class will explore the concept of the journey in American literature from a number of cultural and intellectual perspectives, as manifested in both literary and mainstream texts from different genres. This foundational story type exists in stylistically broad works, from a diversity of voices, and our selections will reflect this reality. Our texts will be primarily contemporary, and we will focus on more loosely defined interpretations of a traditional theme. The narrative journeys will frequently be as much internal as external, though the external is certainly present in most. We will contextualize and examine this theme in the work of such disparate figures as Stephen King, Stewart O'Nan, and Lynda Barry, among others. In addition, because this is a writing-intensive course, you will be expected to invest intellectual energy (and considerable class time) into writing, revising, peer responding, and researching, using the theme of the journey as a mode for developing writing, thinking, and communication skills.

**ENG 233: Quest in Medieval Literature****Prof. Johanna Fisher***Pre-1800 British Lit. requirement; Core Field 3 and Advanced Writing Intensive.*

Themes that recur in medieval literature include in various manifestations, the voyage, the quest and the pilgrimage. These themes are reflected in both the physical and spiritual experiences of characters in medieval texts. This course will focus particularly on the theme of the quest in a survey of medieval texts that include Anglo-Saxon poetry, the French Lais, as well as in the Arthurian legends. We will also consider how these texts have been adapted in our contemporary world to film and stage.

**ENG 294: Introduction to Creative Writing****Prof. Janet McNally***Creative Writing Requirement**English Major Writing requirement;**Core Field 3 and Advanced Writing Intensive*

This course will allow students to explore the fundamental skills of fiction and poetry writing, and is designed around the belief that one must read widely and closely in order to write well. This is an intensive writing course, meant for students who are dedicated readers and serious about the process of writing. We will examine the works of both established and emerging writers in hopes of discerning and emulating the qualities of good poetry and fiction. Frequent writing exercises will provide the opportunity to practice, to imitate, and to experiment. Class members will work together to create a welcoming and productive workshop, including extensive in-class discussion of both published writers and student work.

**ENG 299: Introduction to English Studies****Dr. Jean Gregorek***Required for English majors*

ENG 299 is a gateway to 300-level courses and required of all English majors. This course introduces students to the essentials of literary analysis and interpretation. Focusing on the rigorous close reading of poetry, prose narrative and drama chosen from different historical periods, the course will stress writing with critical awareness about literature. Throughout the course as well, I will use framing pieces of critical theory to define specific strategies of close reading. Expect to participate actively in class discussion and to write three analytical essays, six to eight homework assignments, and a major revision for the final exam.

**ENG 319K: Hawthorne Tradition in American Literature** **Dr. Roger Stephenson***Pre-1900 American Literature requirement*

This course examines the literary achievement of Nathaniel Hawthorne and the profound impact that his work has had on the development of American Literature from 1850 through the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. We'll treat his sketches and short stories as well as three of his novels and we'll center on such themes as the impact of the past (The "Sins of the Fathers" motif), for example, and the balanced ambiguity of experience—both in the light of the Puritan-Transcendental dynamic. Of particular concern, too, will be Hawthorne's notion of "romance" and its effects on his longer works, as well as the significance of that notion for later writers.

We will treat at least one major work each by four of Hawthorne's literary descendents: Melville, James, Wharton, and Faulkner. We'll handle both direct and indirect connections between these writers and their ancestor...which is to say that we'll look at biographical connections as well as ways in which Hawthorne influenced their respective angles of vision, central concerns, and styles. Our format will be primarily discussion; works treated will be supplemented with videos—both in and out of class. Expect three formal papers.

**ENG 322: Shakespeare I**  
*Shakespeare requirement*

**Dr. Rachel Greenberg**

"All the world's a stage" is probably one of Shakespeare's most famous lines, but what kind of world did Shakespeare live in, and how do his plays represent that world as well as negotiate or challenge it? The course will serve as an introduction to a selection of Shakespeare's plays. Much of our focus will be on close-reading and exploring Shakespeare's dynamic language. But we will also explore the ways in which the plays both represent and comment upon early modern views of gender and sexuality, nationhood and imperialism, kingship (or queenship), social class, and race, as well as other issues that were pivotal in the period Shakespeare was writing. We will read examples of all of Shakespeare's dramatic genres—comedy, tragedy, history, and romance, as well as discuss how the plays often problematize or break down generic distinctions. Additional readings (literary criticism and excerpts of primary historical texts), and occasional film clips will accompany the plays themselves. Requirements will likely include: regular attendance, active participation, response papers, a group presentation, a final exam, and or a final paper. Assigned plays may include: *Titus Andronicus*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Measure for Measure*.

**ENG 331: Studies in Irish Literature**  
*English 300-level elective*

**Dr. James Pribek, S.J.**

The entire island of Ireland is slightly larger than the state of Maine in area, and is just ahead of Arizona in population. Yet it can boast of the oldest vernacular literature in Western Europe, and in the last century, four winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Beginning with the early modern era and moving to the present, this course examines

what makes Irish poetry and prose distinctive, in general and among literatures in English. Students will consider and employ ten “lenses” on Irish literature offered by major writers and critics. They will also give presentations on their own family stories of migration and ethnic identity. Come and explore this literature of satire, wordplay, character, instability and possibility, as it takes readers to a place beyond (in James Joyce’s words) “wideawake language, cutanddry grammar and goahead plot.”

**ENG 339: Southern Literature & Culture**

**Dr. Thomas Reber**

*English major elective; Core Diversity attribute*

The American South has been fertile ground for literary art. Southern writers have achieved a prominence that seems out of proportion to the population of their region. An important context for understanding the work of these writers is the Southern past and its traditions, including plantation life, with its institution of slavery and all of that institution's historical effects. The trauma of the Civil War (or the War Between the States) had a strong impact on the Southern economy and culture for many decades. While we will focus mainly on the literary art of this region, our study of it will be informed by the study of Southern culture, from early times to the present. We will certainly be reading works by William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor; we will also examine works by other authors, who may include James Dickey, Eudora Welty, or Toni Morrison. In addition, we will be reading and discussing some key critical articles about these writers' work.

**ENG 342: Writing Young Adult Fiction**

**Dr. Mick Cochrane**

*Creative Writing course.*

*English major Writing requirement or 300-level elective.*

Great young adult fiction is at its core great fiction, pure and simple. The books that engage young readers do so with complex and memorable characters, an authentic voice and fresh subject matter, vivid description and convincing dialogue. YA fiction often explores dark material—death, abandonment, evil—but likewise celebrates the capacity of love, courage, and friendship to sustain us. Essential, deeply resonant stories skillfully told—that’s what the best YA fiction gives its readers. This course will combine the study and the practice of YA fiction. Together we’ll analyze some examples of good work in order to gain a sense of the variety of approaches and techniques available. Among the questions we’ll consider through class discussion, informal writing, and essays: What distinguishes YA fiction from adult literary fiction—are there any ways it is thematically or technically distinctive? How do its writers both observe and challenge the genre’s conventions? How do skillful YA writers avoid the most common pitfalls of the genre—didacticism, for example, stock characters, formulaic plots, and clichéd language? In a workshop setting, students will propose, draft, revise, and edit their own stories. Possible texts include work by Sherman Alexie, Nick Hornby, Julia

Alvarez, Salman Rushdie, Louise Erdrich, Michael Chabon, Joyce Carol Oates, Julie Schumacher, and Edwidge Danticat.

**ENG 365D: Core Capstone: Post-Colonial Studies**

**Dr. Jean Gregorek**

*English majors may count one core capstone as an English major elective course  
This course should be of interest to students of Literature, History, International Relations, Political Science, and Religious Studies*

One of the most dramatic world-historical shifts in the twentieth century has been the political liberation of three-fourths of the planet from European domination. The new 'interdiscipline' of postcolonial studies examines this shift, the complexities of the process of decolonization, and the hybrid culture of peoples and places emerging from European colonial rule.

This course seeks to introduce students to the field of postcolonial studies, drawing primarily on examples from the Islamic world of North Africa and the Middle East. Through the study of literature, film, and history, as well as of current events, we will investigate encounters between the West and the Middle East, including ways in which twentieth-century European artists and writers have represented these lands, as well as how some Middle Eastern artists and writers have responded to these representations. Reading and viewing works from North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, we will consider some important postcolonial themes: the paradoxes of assimilated or hybrid identities; the place of tradition; the public role of women; debates around revolutionary violence; healing the scars of war; the possibilities for cross-cultural understanding; what modernity looks like outside of the West. This course should be of interest to students of Literature, History, International Relations, Political Science, and Religious Studies.

**ENG 373: Jane Austen**

**Dr. Amy Wolf**

*English major 300-level elective*

Jane Austen is as popular as ever in the twenty-first century, the subject of fictionalizations, adaptations, films, books clubs, and fan clubs. Her lively characters, social realism, and pointed satire still fascinate and move readers. We will read six of Austen's novels and some of her letters and juvenilia, along with literary criticism and other eighteenth-century texts that will help us understand her and her time. We will consider the role biography, history, and culture play in our interpretations of texts as well as the meaning and significance of her novels individually and as a body of work. Requirements include active discussion, in-depth close reading, three literary analysis essays, including a long compare/contrast paper, as well as regular homework assignments.

**ENG 396U: Heroes & Anti-Heroes in American Literature Dr. Robert Butler**

*English Honors Course; 300-level English elective  
All English majors are welcome to take this course*

A study of the problems and possibilities of modern heroism from the end of the nineteenth century to the present. Our course will begin with the emergence of the new woman in Chopin's *The Awakening* and will conclude with the quest for a revival of traditional heroism in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The course will be international in scope, examining works from American, English, and European traditions. Individual masterpieces such as Silone's *Bread and Wine*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Ellison's *Invisible Man* will be studied in careful detail. Great care will also be made to view this rich body of material in its historical context. World War I, The Great Depression, and the development of the bureaucratic society will be studied in terms of how they have both discredited many forms of traditional heroism, while creating new forms of uniquely modern heroism. This course is open to all Canisius students as a free elective.

**ENG 411: Playwriting**

**Prof. Kurt Schneiderman**

*Creative Writing Course.*

*English major Writing requirement elective;  
Core Field 3 and Advanced Writing Intensive*

UNLEASH THE PLAYWRIGHT WITHIN! Those who write plays are called playWRIGHTs – like cartWRIGHTs – because playwriting is a craft. Plays are not simply written; they are WROUGHT through a process of blood, sweat, and tears. In this course, we will study that process in depth. We will explore techniques for developing all the ingredients of dramatic writing: conflict, character development, monologue, dialogue, plot structure, and much, much more. We shall wring wisdom from the greats by analyzing some of the most famous plays of the American Theatre. And, naturally, we will write. We will write, write, and write some more. Students will be called upon to perform a number of in-class and out-of-class writing exercises while simultaneously developing dialogue of their own creation. Ultimately, all students will emerge with at least one fully crafted scene of theatre. Don't deny your muses a moment longer, come spread your playwriting wings!

**ENG 450: Capstone – Forbidden Knowledge**

**Dr. Jane Fisher**

*English Capstone Seminar*

*\*\*ENG 450 is required for all English majors graduating in 2015 and after.*

In this capstone course, we will build on students' writing from other English courses and read original works as well. We will focus on questions central to the Western literary tradition: limitations to human knowledge and power, mystery, as well as the on-going issue of censorship. We will consider how different authors respond to the challenges of these essential limitations. Do they make them central issues in their works? Do they accede to censorship and avoid taboo subjects? How does mystery function both as a popular narrative convention and a response to political repression?

Required texts are Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I; Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*; Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*; Toni Morrison, *Beloved*.