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ENGL 1524: Language and the Mind

Why You Should Take This Course
No other species seems to do language like humans do, and in this class you’ll learn allllll the things you’re doing when you produce and perceive language. In doing so, you’ll learn a lot about the structure of language, the nature of communication, and also about how researchers figure this stuff out.

This course is cross-listed with PSYC 1524, CRN 19506.
Why You Should Take This Course

Do you like things that go bump in the night? Do ghosts and ghouls and creepy crawlies excite you? Did you ever dance with the devil in the pale moonlight? (sorry, that’s The Joker)

In the world of cinema, horror movies are a multi-million dollar a year industry. In 2022, the genre alone accounted for 9% of total profits. So, why are we so fascinated by fear? In this class, we will explore what scares us and how short fiction is an excellent medium for stories that raise the hairs on the backs of our necks. From the monsters of mythology to Poe’s Roderick Usher to Faulkner’s Miss Emily Grierson (just to name a few), we will examine the structural elements of this genre and delve into the darkness together to determine why horror is so popular.

Why I Am Teaching This Course

From Abby Walker

The things we talk about in this course still blow my mind, even after many years of teaching about them. I think it’s because part of me will never really fathom the amount of information we’re synthesizing, or how really fine-grained our sensitivity is, especially because for many of us, producing and perceiving language essentially feels effortless. I’m just a total nerd for this stuff.
I love spooky stories and am intrigued by how much we like to be scared. On any given evening, you can
find me either curled up with Gothic horror or some sort of British murder show. My kids say I may have a
problem, but I just enjoy good writing.

Why I Am Teaching This Course

From Ingrid Johnson

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find me either curled up with Gothic horror or some sort of British murder show. My kids say I may have a
problem, but I just enjoy good writing.

ENGL 1614: Intro to Short Fiction

Why You Should Take This Course

Comics and graphic narratives are a vital part of today's literary landscape. In this course, you'll learn how
to read them, how to talk about them, and how to appreciate the creative work that goes into making them.
The course offers footing in the history and theory of the comics medium—it's cultural positioning, and
how it functions on the level of form—before embarking on a tour of contemporary practice. Focusing on
the heterogeneous American tradition, our survey will include a broad range of formats and their associat-
ed genres: syndicated comic strips, superhero comic books, alternative comics and graphic narratives, and
more. Along the way, we'll be testing the boundaries of "fiction" as a category: as Lynda Barry's cartoon self
asks, "Is it autobiography if parts of it are not true? Is it fiction if parts of it are?"

Comics and graphic novels today have won the Pulitzer Prize (Maus); their adaptations fill Broadway
theaters (Fun Home), while their film versions represent some of our biggest box office hits; they stud the
shelves of every bookstore; they hail from dedicated publishing imprints; they grace the covers of elite jour-
nals; and—yes—they populate university syllabi. Guiding questions for the class include:

• How can we understand and talk about the formal language, or "grammar," of comics?
• What distinguishes comics from its neighboring forms in the world of film, painting, photography,
  prose, and poetry?
• What are the dominant genres in today's comics/graphic narrative scene?
• How have comics borne witness to historical catastrophe? How does the hand-drawn image function
  as "evidence"?
• How can comics provide a medium of self-expression for a range of ethnic, racial, gendered, queer,
differently abled subjectivities and identity formations?
• How can comics respond to our contemporary moment?

CRN: 15127
Asynchronous Online
CRN: 15123
M W | 2:30–3:45 p.m.
Instructor: Emmy Waldman
3 Credit Hours

Pathways Area 2: Critical Thinking in the Humanities
ENGL 1614: Intro to Short Fiction

Why I Am Teaching This Course
From Emmy Waldman

I didn’t grow up reading comics. I’d never even heard of graphic novels until I got to graduate school. On a whim, I joined a “Graphic Novel” seminar taught by a visiting professor, Hillary Chute. We had to read Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* and Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home*, alongside a range of other texts I now teach in my own classes. I was completely hooked, and it’s my hope that I can now introduce you to this versatile, subtle, supple, and so often denigrated and misunderstood storytelling medium.

ENGL 1624: Intro to Detective Fiction

Why You Should Take This Course
From the dread of nuclear annihilation to ecological collapse, amid so much disagreement and division, ours is an era of seemingly slipping human certainties. So exploring how we’ve seen and narrated crime, innocence, justice, human psychology, and our often desperate search for evidence, is especially relevant, especially crucial. As anguished as all this sounds, it will also be fun and funny—partly because being able to laugh about and within such stories is crucial both for coping and problem-solving. In fact, one steady solace here is that our traumas aren’t new. Many of humankind’s earliest and most ingenious narratives involve figuring out who did what, to whom, and how, and why, and what that all means about human nature, survival, and justice. Dusting for fingerprints can point our way onward...
The short answer is that it’s because I didn’t go to law school. Meaning that I was very tempted to do so to become a prosecutor, having worked with many victims of violent crime during my years as a social worker. So, my urge to make justice happen remains, fueled by a probably-for-the-best career frustration. (I also have some expiating to do of the non-violent but dicey deeds I myself did as a rebellious teen). Plus, I plain love both well-made narratives and tracing how we track down evidence, patterns, crimes, criminals, and that elusive, beautiful thing called “justice.”

**ENGL 1624: Intro to Detective Fiction**

*Why I Am Teaching This Course*

*From Bob Canter*

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**ENGL 1704: The Harry Potter Phenomenon**

*Why You Should Take This Course*

Harry Potter books are, quite simply, a joy to read. Maybe you have read them before and are interested in revisiting them from a more academic, literary viewpoint. Maybe you have always meant to read them and are now ready to dive in. Whatever level of familiarity you have with the Potterverse now, this course will be incredibly fun. We will go through all seven novels and discuss them as readers, fans, and literary scholars.
Why You Should Take This Course

You should take this course because language, too, is among the ways food is seasoned. Our writing projects will be food-focused; we will write, engage in dialogue, eat, and develop a vocabulary for food writing practices while practicing food writing.

ENGL 2014: Food Writing

Why I Am Teaching This Course

From Lily Corwin

I am teaching this course because I love these books. I have read them several times for my own pleasure and am currently reading them to my 9-year-old son (we are just starting Book 6), and I find new things to enjoy or puzzle over every time I read them. In addition to being fun, the books are a perfect way to start discussing literary criticism. I am very much looking forward to leading students through them this Spring!

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My background in writing and rhetoric spans technical and creative pursuits, and these encompass interests in everyday food writing, experimental cooking, and the kinds of writing that circumscribe food (food sources and production, food awareness, consumption habits, and cultural meaning).

ENGL 2014: Food Writing

Why I Am Teaching This Course
From Derek Mueller

ENGL 2664: Being Human
War & Human Violence

Why You Should Take This Course
You should take this course, because war and violence are always with us, from front-page conflicts like the wars in Ukraine and Israel, to violence consumed as entertainment in true-crime podcasts and video games. Given its ubiquity, it is worth exploring humans’ capacity for, and relationship with, violence. We will read and discuss literature that help us to consider key questions:

• How does violence affect a text’s literary aspects, such as plot and character development?
• How do we judge whether or not depictions of violence are gratuitous?
• How should we feel about consuming violence through games and media?
• How is violence defined, and who defines it?
• How does violence impact the people involved, both perpetrators and victims?
• How is violence justified?

ENGL 2664
CRN: 15148 with Jared Gibbs
T R | 12:30–1:45 p.m.
3 Credit Hours

Pathways Area 2 - Critical Thinking in the Humanities
ENGL 2664: Being Human

Why I Am Teaching This Course
From Jared Gibbs

I am teaching this course, because I love reading and discussing books with students. I am particularly drawn to literature that explores the limits of human experience, because engaging with such challenging literature is one of the best ways to discover our world and consider our places in it.

ENGL 3654: Latinx Literature, Art, and Environments

Why You Should Take This Course
You should take this course because not only will it be fun and educational but because Latinx experiences and stories and environmental issues are becoming increasingly relevant in our contemporary world.

This course offers us an overview of the relationships that Latinx people (people of Latin American descent, primarily inhabiting the U.S. but with ties to countries around the world) from diverse ethno-racial groups have with their environments. It will carry us throughout the U.S. and the globe to expose the socio-historical and natural processes that shape Latinx people's experiences with their environments. During our time together, we will work to uncover Latinx people's cultural relationships to various natural and geopolitical spaces, and in our travels, we will find ourselves on soccer fields, in chicken houses, gardens, agricultural fields, mountains, highways, sweatshops, and factories, among other places. Along the way, we will also study film, art, and music.
ENGL 3684: Literature and the Law

Why You Should Take This Course
You should take this course because we will explore exciting, important literary fiction, films, and drama—from multiple cultures and time periods—regarding what the law means, how it is applied, and what it does (or does not) have to do with justice. We will think about crime and punishment, guilt and innocence, order and chaos, retribution and redemption. We will hold a mock trial, with witnesses and argument, of Antigone, a surprisingly modern heroine of a classical Greek play. The law itself is a work in progress, a work under investigation. And literature itself is one of the ways in which it is investigated, interrogated, and explored.

ENGL 3684
CRN: 15196 with Shoshana Milgram Knapp
T R | 3:30–4:45 p.m.
Instructor: 3 Credit Hours

ENGL 3654: Latinx Literature, Art, and Environments

Why I Am Teaching This Course
From Geovani Ramirez

I am teaching this course because it combines my interests in and commitments to promoting ecological awareness (and sustainable practices) and sharing cultural productions and histories by diverse ethno-racial groups.

I love to share the transformative power of literature with others, and I continue to marvel at the ways literature can bring about positive change and connect and unite diverse peoples.
I am teaching this course because I’m very interested in questions of justice (what it is, why we need to have an idea of justice and why we need it in the world) and in questions of truth (what is so, how we know, and what we should do). I love considering these issues, in the company of inquiring students. It is better to raise an issue without settling it than to settle it without raising it. We ask questions, but we do not answer them once and for all. There is room for words other than last words. Also, I love literature. As you will see in the photos of me in front of my undergraduate university library and in front of my current Shanks office library, I hold all the books I can, and I hug them to my heart.

**ENGL 3684: Literature and the Law**

**Why I Am Teaching This Course**

*From Shoshana Milgram Knapp*

I am teaching this course because I’m very interested in questions of justice (what it is, why we need to have an idea of justice and why we need it in the world) and in questions of truth (what is so, how we know, and what we should do). I love considering these issues, in the company of inquiring students. It is better to raise an issue without settling it than to settle it without raising it. We ask questions, but we do not answer them once and for all. There is room for words other than last words. Also, I love literature. As you will see in the photos of me in front of my undergraduate university library and in front of my current Shanks office library, I hold all the books I can, and I hug them to my heart.

**ENGL 3754: Advanced Writing & Research**

**Why You Should Take This Course**

You’ll get to ask questions about topics you care about and learn how to thoroughly and efficiently find answers to your questions through qualitative research methods. To start, we’ll consider how diverse social and cultural identities impact not only the questions we ask, but also the results we find and the way we write up and disseminate our information (hello positionality, goodbye objectivity!). You’ll then get practice in doing research the way most of your faculty do it: annotated bibliographies? Nah. Useful reference management software (like Zotero and Mendeley) with highlights and notes? Yes! Along the way, we’ll play around with language and style to best communicate the answers to our questions to diverse audiences, including ourselves. Ultimately, we’ll get real acquainted with academic genres and also turn them upside down.
I hope to show just how important the content of this class is to students’ everyday lives. I’m a curious person, and I ask a LOT of questions. I love to know a little bit about a lot of things because it helps me connect with new people I meet and find new internet rabbit holes to fall down in my spare time. Making sense of the overload of information we receive on a daily basis through analysis and synthesis is fascinating to me! I also love to play with language, upend academic writing conventions, and find new ways to communicate academic findings to wider audiences who care about the same things I do; and if they don’t, I enjoy trying to persuade them to care!

Why I Am Teaching This Course
From Megan Weaver

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ENGL 4054: History of the English Language

Why I Am Teaching This Course
From Joe Eska

I like teaching this course because it’s multiple courses in one. It’s a language sciences course, it’s a history course, it’s a sociology course, and it’s an anthropology course. There’s always something to talk about and from multiple perspectives.

ENGL 4204: Hybrid Forms

Why You Should Take This Course
This is an advanced workshop for writers interested in contemplating the often messy but delightful terrain of blurring genres across poetry and prose. From the musicality of a lyric fragment in spoken word to the crossing of visual theory, art, and performance writing, this class strives to ignite a bountiful spirit of experimentation in your work. Alongside breaking formal constraints, reading and writing assignments will offer new ways of thinking about hybridity. There will only be one required book: *Dictée* by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha.

ENGL 4204
CRN: 20660 with Sophia Terazawa
T R | 9:30–10:45 a.m.
3 Credit Hours
ENGL 4204: Hybrid Forms

Why I Am Teaching This Course
From Sophia Terazawa

I’m excited to teach this course because of my own shape-shifting practice as a poet and performance artist. The classroom space, for me, transforms into a non-hierarchical space of collaboration where playful modes of creation arrive through conversations and writing prompts catered directly to student interests. Please bring your obsessions and your animal selves!

ENGL 4374: Special Topics in Professional & Technical Writing

Writing on Social Behavior in Digital Games, Simulations, & Virtual Environments

Why You Should Take This Course
You can learn about applying and critiquing social research on games and related technologies, preparing you for work in the games industry, science writing, and scholarship.

ENGL 4374
CRN: 20627 with James D. Ivory
T R 11–12:15 p.m.
3 Credit Hours
ENGL 4374: Special Topics in Professional & Technical Writing

Why I Am Teaching This Course
From James D. Ivory

I want to share more than two decades of experience with social and behavioral research related to games, simulations, and virtual environments with students who can apply that knowledge to careers in professional writing and the games industry.

ENGL 4664: Contemporary Fiction
Empire and Resistance Fiction

Why You Should Take This Course
It will feature some of the world's best fiction of the last few decades, which happen to be wrestling with the legacy of empire and how literature can be part of resistance.

ENGL 4664
CRN: 20663 with Rebecca Weaver-Hightower
T R | 9:30–10:45 a.m.
3 Credit Hours
This course involves literature that I read for fun, just because it’s so complicated, passionate, and sometimes funny. There’s a reason why the Booker Prize (given every year for the world’s best novel in English) is so often given to writers from formerly colonized countries. They have some of the best stories to tell!

**Why You Should Take This Course**

The important role of communication in science is becoming increasingly recognized. In many ways, writing enables the rapid progress of scientific research through information sharing and correspondence. Good writing can improve access to scientific information and to a wider net of thinkers with diverse perspectives. This course will help you better understand the ecosystem of writing in and about the sciences. You will learn theoretical concepts of scientific communication and gain skills in collaborative writing, reporting on experimental and other empirical studies, displaying data visually, and communicating to publics. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which writing can enable or impede equitable scientific information sharing. This course is writing intensive, but it will not feature graduate-level writing genres because of its focus on foundational concepts.

The course will be relevant to students in the College of Science or Engineering and to English or other liberal arts majors alike, as we will divide the course into units on internal writing among experts and on public communication of science to non-experts. You will benefit from working with students from diverse disciplines. Moreover, this course will be taught in an asynchronous but interactive format, allowing for flexibility in your schedules while still enabling meetings with the instructor and discussion with classmates.

Finally, this 4000-level class will lead to writing samples for future job searches or graduate school applications.

**ENGL 4824: Science Writing**

**Why I Am Teaching This Course**

From Rebecca Hightower-Weaver

This course involves literature that I read for fun, just because it’s so complicated, passionate, and sometimes funny. There’s a reason why the Booker Prize (given every year for the world’s best novel in English) is so often given to writers from formerly colonized countries. They have some of the best stories to tell!
I am deeply concerned with the historic and damaging chasm between the sciences and the humanities. I believe that scientists and communicators are stronger together, and I see this course as a means of bridging the disciplines. Outside of teaching, I work with scientists on a near-daily basis as a researcher trained in rhetoric and writing. This work is fulfilling, theory-driven, and yet practical. Scientific information pervades contemporary social and cultural lives and impacts much of what we understand about our worlds. I hope that Virginia Tech learners will walk away from their educational experiences empowered to be change makers. I am passionate about the role of science in our society, and I want to share that passion with you!

You should take this course because you thrive on creativity and want experience in an industry that values everything it encompasses. As a member of the Words & Pictures Team, you will write stories, take pictures, produce videos, design a variety of materials, and assist with social media for the Virginia Tech Department of English. This field study course is for the person who wants professional examples for their portfolio, has an interest in higher education communications, and a desire to increase their skill set to meet industry standards. For the first half of the semester, we will have weekly workshops to make sure you have the skills you need for success, while the second half will allow you to focus on a specific area that interests you most based on what we have explored.

This course serves as a Bridge Experience. While it is a class, it is also an internship.
Ever since my first photography course as an undergrad, I have self-identified as a photographer. Over the years, I have done portrait, commercial, and editorial (and fine art) photography as the mainstays of my career. But an early mentor once gave me advice that opened up my world. He knew I had an interest in writing. To help further my career, he suggested that I do both: photography and writing. This quickly also included honing my graphic design, audio storytelling, and moving pictures skill set. Working at the intersection of words and pictures is where I have found much joy and fulfillment. I would like to share this passion with students and help them thrive in a world where they are writers, photographers, video-creators, and designers, often in combination. The job market is also very competitive for writers and communicators. I want to provide opportunities for students to explore and build a skill set that will help them have a leading advantage for their future employment.