

ENGLISH

For First-Years



The English department offers an exciting array of small, seminar-style classes, each focused upon a compelling theme, to introduce students to the study of literature. First-year students will find that the reading, thinking, and writing skills taught through close instruction in these intensive introductory English courses will serve them well in many different disciplines throughout their college careers. We therefore encourage all entering students to consider enrolling in ENGL 103 (fall) or ENGL 104 (spring) their first year.

Each section of ENGL 103 and ENGL 104 is writing-intensive and discussion-centered. Each will introduce students to texts from a range of historical periods and to genres including the epic, the novel, drama, lyric poetry, film, and the short story. Here is the list of courses available Fall 2025 (see below for full descriptions and scheduling information):

ENGL 103.03: *Health and Healing* (Fernando)
ENGL 103.04: *Health and Healing* (Fernando)
ENGL 103.05: *The Assault of Laughter* (Grace)
ENGL 103.06: *Making a Life* (Heidt)
ENGL 103.07: *Seductions* (Lobanov-Rostovsky)
ENGL 103.08: *Writing the Mind* (Matz)

ENGL 103.09: *Writing the Mind* (Matz)
ENGL 103.10: *Medical Practitioners as Authors* (Scanlon)
ENGL 103.11: *Writing the Race* (Schoenfeld)
ENGL 103.12: *Waste Lands* (Tierney)
ENGL 103.13: *Waste Lands* (Tierney)
ENGL 103.14: *Time and Science Fiction* (Yeager)

***Students may proceed to 200-level courses after taking ENGL 103 (or ENGL 104). Pre-med students should be sure to enroll in ENGL 103 or ENGL 104 in their first or second year, since these courses are typically not open to juniors and seniors. Students who intend to complete their humanities distribution requirement in English during their first year of study may do so by taking two courses at the 100 level or one course each at the 100 and 200 levels. Potential English majors should take a 100-level course (required for the major) right away. Students hoping to take ENGL 103 or ENGL 104 should have the CRNs of at least two alternates along with their first choice when they enroll online. Spring-semester creative-writing courses are open to first-year students; please see "Creative Writing Courses" below.*

***Students may take any two sections of ENGL 103 or ENGL 104 to fulfill their humanities distribution requirement or they may complete their humanities requirement with either ENGL 103 or ENGL 104 plus another ENGL course. These courses (ENGL 103 and ENGL 104) are not typically open to juniors and seniors without permission of the department chair. Courses are offered annually in multiple sections.

English 103.03 *Health and Healing*

Professor Fernando

MWF 9:10 – 10:00

Lentz House 104

By professing the Hippocratic Oath, every physician swears to “do no harm”. In this course, using the oath as a point of departure, we will explore short stories, novels, essays, and poetry and expand our understanding of medicine, health and healing. How is the relationship between a doctor and a patient imagined? How is illness – psychological and physical – codified in various social and geographical contexts? What are the affective/emotional experiences that accompany illness and the practice of medicine? If in the oath, a physician promises to “do no harm,” what qualifies as ‘harm’ and who decides the ‘best interests’ of the patient? How do the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality shape and challenge the practice of medicine? And, more broadly, what are the geopolitical implications of medicine and public health? We will examine these and other such questions as they figure in a range of fictional and non-fictional writings. The novels we will read include, Mary Shelley’s, *Frankenstein*, V.V. Ganeshananthan’s “Brotherless Nights,” Brit Bennet’s *The Mothers*, and Sarah Moss’s *Bodies of Light*. We will read essays by Atul Gawande, Susan Sontag, Silvia Federici, Sheri Fink, and Audre Lorde. Our poetry and short story selections will include works by Gwendolyn Brooks, Fady Joudah, Ursula Leguin, and Lucille Clifton.

English 103.04: *Health and Healing*

Professor Fernando

MWF 2:10 – 3:00

Lentz House 104

By professing the Hippocratic Oath, every physician swears to “do no harm”. In this course, using the oath as a point of departure, we will explore short stories, novels, essays, and poetry and expand our understanding of medicine, health and healing. How is the relationship between a doctor and a patient imagined? How is illness – psychological



and physical – codified in various social and geographical contexts? What are the affective/emotional experiences that accompany illness and the practice of medicine? If in the oath, a physician promises to “do no harm,” what qualifies as ‘harm’ and who decides the ‘best interests’ of the patient? How do the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality shape and challenge the practice of medicine? And, more broadly, what are the geopolitical implications of medicine and public health? We will examine these and other such questions as they figure in a range of fictional and non-fictional writings. The

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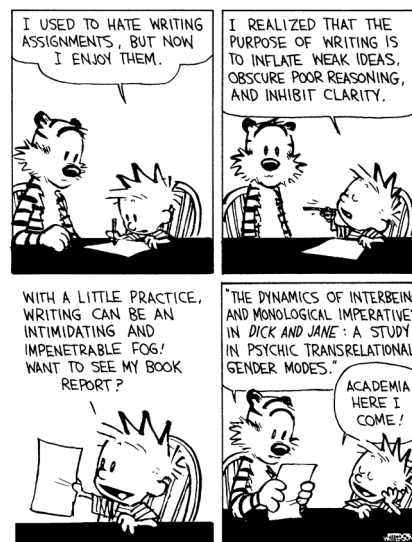
English 103.05: *The Assault of Laughter*

Professor Grace

MWF 12:10 - 1:00

Lentz House 104

Mark Twain once said, “Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand.” Comedy can entertain, but it can also be an agent of sweeping societal change. In this course, we will look at a wide variety of comedic texts in multiple genres from William Shakespeare to Eddie Izzard in an effort to determine how laughter has changed the way we think about our world. How have writers used comedy as a form of political or social protest? How do comedic literary devices such as irony, satire, parody, exaggeration, and gender-bending do the serious work of forcing us to question the status quo? Does making fun of each other bring us closer together, or drive us apart, and does making fun of ourselves lead to self-awareness or misery? These are the types of questions we will attempt to answer as we develop our critical reading and writing skills as we analyze the books on our reading list, which will include works by Shakespeare (*As You Like It*), Jane Austen (*Pride and Prejudice*), Zora Neale Hurston (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*), Alexander Pope (*The Rape of the Lock*), and poems by Sylvia Plath and Dean Young, Danez Smith, Jose Olivarez, Fatimah Asghar, Jamila Woods and others.

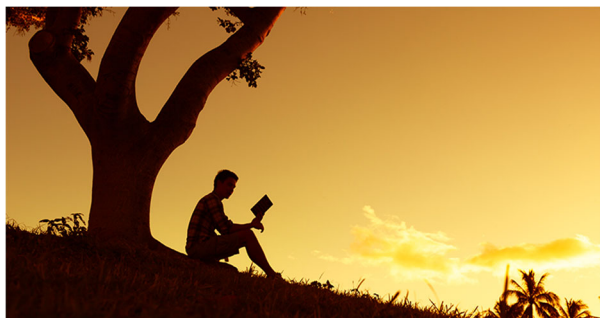
**English 103.06: *Making a Life***

Professor Heidt

MWF 2:10 – 3:00

Lentz House 204

How do we go about making our lives? How do we know whether we’re making them well? And how can literature help us ask (and possibly begin to answer) those questions? In this course, we’ll strengthen our abilities to read



poetry, fiction, non-fiction prose, graphic narratives, and films, as well as to speak, listen and write with clarity and nuance. We’ll also explore how the beauties and difficulties of literary and cinematic works can challenge us to richer, more complicated ways of understanding our lives and the lives of others. What can a poem teach us about how to perceive, feel, and live more fully and

deliberately? What can we learn from a play about how our lives shape the conditions in which others make their lives? Can a science fiction film lead us to rethink our assumptions about the limits and possibilities of human lives? Can memoirs and novels help us understand how to connect to others around and through experiences of joy, love, suffering, and death? To explore such questions, we will read works by Emily Brontë, Walt Whitman, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Toni Morrison, Rebecca Solnit, Ruth Ozeki, Claudia Rankine, Nick Sousanis, and Maggie Nelson, among others.

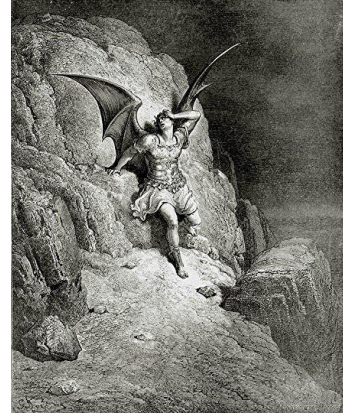
English 103.07: Seductions

Professor Lobanov-Rostovsky

MWF 9:10 – 10:00

Lentz House 204

This course explores the literature of seduction from Ovid's *Art of Love* to *The Usual Suspects*. To seduce, at its root, means "to lead astray." But many literary texts use this image of wandering off the path as a structuring metaphor for narrative. Are all narratives based on an act of seduction? Can one ever be seduced toward good? We will examine this theme – from Satanic temptation to erotic conquest – in such early modern texts as *Dr. Faustus*, *Othello*, and *Paradise Lost*, but also in love poetry, modern drama, and contemporary fiction. The course will include a film series, and we will discuss the uses of seduction in film from classic film noir to *Memento*.

**English 103.08: Writing the Mind**

Professor Matz

MWF 10:10 – 11:00

Lentz House 104



"Not I, but the poets discovered the unconscious": so wrote Sigmund Freud, in recognition of literature's role in psychological discovery. Poems, plays, and stories have long been our main way into the human mind; more than that, they have even shaped the mind, creating possibilities for thought and feeling that would only later come to seem natural. This course will study crucial examples of "writing the mind," their motivations, and their implications for our understanding of the nature of literature. Stream of consciousness narration, confessional poetry, double consciousness characterization, the Shakespearean soliloquy, and the autism memoir will be some of our concerns. And we will explore them with

the help of certain key theories about the relationship between literature and psychology—psychoanalytic theory, for example, and also more recent studies of the ways storytelling drives cognition and deals with trauma. Our primary focus will be the psychological ingenuity of literary languages and forms as we explore the many ways literature has represented and shaped human consciousness.



English 103.09: *Writing the Mind*

Professor Matz

MWF 2:10 – 3:00

Acland House Seminar

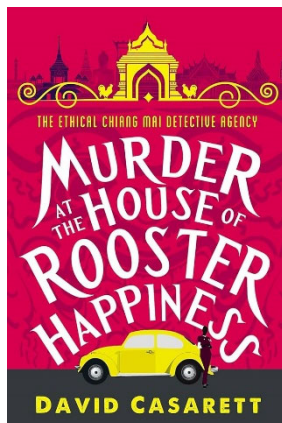
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**English 103.10: *Medical Practitioners as Authors***

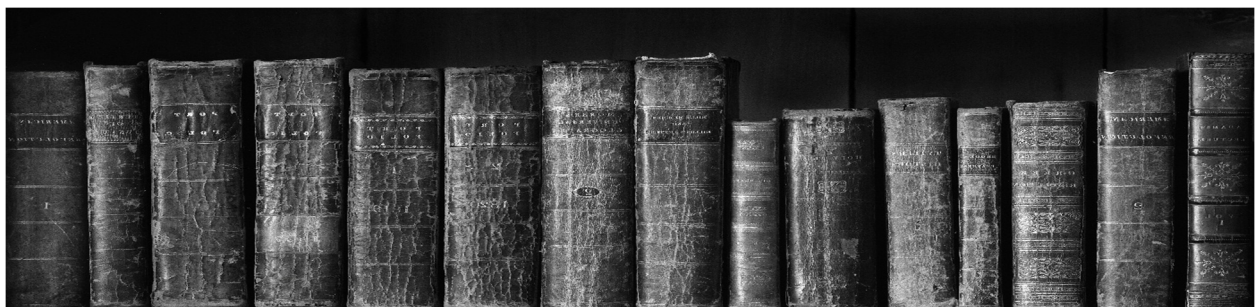
Professor Scanlon

MWF 2:10 – 3:00

Timberlake House 5



In this course, students will critically examine the methods through which medical writers and patients explore the intersectionality of race and gender in relation to illness. This course asks: how do practitioners use figurative language, shifts in perspective, and literary topoi to negotiate questions about the racialized and/or gendered body? Fictional and nonfictional readings that students must purchase include the mystery *Murder at the House of Rooster Happiness* by David Casarett, the autobiographical graphic novel *Taking Turns* by MK Czerwiec, and the play *Nurse Evers Boys* by David Feldshuh. Short stories and supplemental readings will be provided through Chalmers Library’s catalog.



English 103.11: *Writing the Race*

Professor Schoenfeld

MWF 11:10 – 12:00

Acland House Seminar

What makes a person or a piece of writing “Black”? In the twenty-first century, the idea that we can answer this question by looking at skin color or even at a family tree has been complicated, if not dismissed, by science. The question, however, was never really a simple one. This course will concentrate on ways in which writers on both sides of the color line have imagined Black identity and/or Black writing. Readings will begin in the eighteenth century with selections from Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, and selected poetry by Phillis Wheatley, continue through the nineteenth century with texts by Harriet Beecher Stowe, W.E.B. DuBois, and Booker T. Washington, the twentieth century with texts from the Black Arts Movement and Toni Morrison, and extend into the twenty-first century with Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen*. The course will examine, among other things, the relationship between “minority” literature and the dominant culture. We will discuss, for example, debates about the criteria by which Black artistic production should be judged, considering the relationship between, and relative importance of aesthetics and politics, as well as questions of assimilation and distinctiveness.

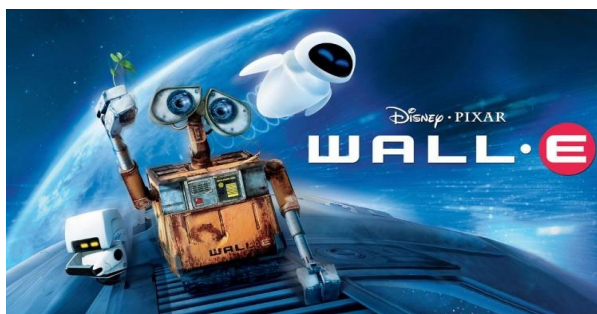
**English 103.12: *Waste Lands***

Professor Tierney

TR 8:10 – 9:30

Lentz House 104

Filth, garbage, trash, rubbish: literature is full of waste. This course explores the sticky, the disgusting, the discardable, and the recoverable through the lens of waste, discard, and sanitation to unpack the meanings



underlying the things we throw away. We will attend carefully to the representations of pollution and cleanliness in poetry, nonfiction, and fiction and consider how writers have approached topics of sustainability and excess in their works. We will read texts that address the racial and gendered politics of the discardable as well as the larger effects of garbage upon more-than-human

worlds. Course texts may include works by Tommy Pico, Allison Cobb, and Chen Qiufan, among others.

English 103.13: *Waste Lands*

Professor Tierney

TR 1:10 – 2:30

Acland House Seminar

Filth, garbage, trash, rubbish: literature is full of waste. This course explores the sticky, the disgusting, the discardable, and the recoverable through the lens of waste, discard, and sanitation to unpack the meanings underlying the things we throw away. We will attend carefully to the representations of pollution and cleanliness in poetry, nonfiction, and fiction and consider how writers have approached topics of sustainability and excess in their works. We will read texts that address the



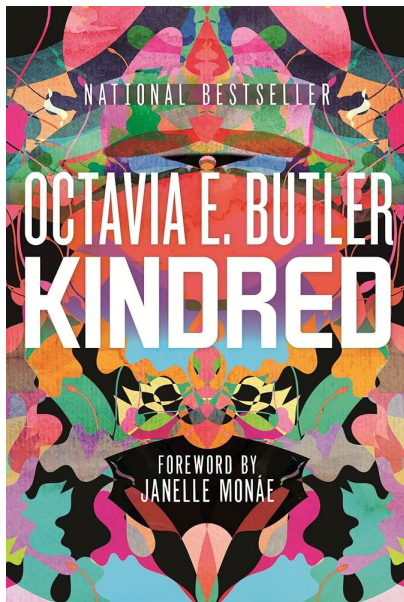
racial and gendered politics of the discardable as well as the larger effects of garbage upon more-than-human worlds. Course texts may include works by Tommy Pico, Allison Cobb, and Chen Qiufan, among others.

English 103.14: *Time and Science Fiction*

Professor Yeager

TR 1:10 – 2:30

Hayes Hall 215



In this introductory literature course, students will study “science fiction” (SF) narratives which have unusual timelines. We will not be particularly concerned with whether or not any given narrative is “really” a work of SF; for our purposes, this acronym might just as well stand for “speculative fabulation” or “surrealist fantasy” (Haraway, 2016). Instead, our goal is to leverage SF’s status as “the ontological genre *par excellence*” (McHale, 1985) to do philosophical work by studying texts like: *Story of Your Life* by Ted Chiang; *The Dispossessed* by Ursula K. Le Guin; *Slaughterhouse 5* by Kurt Vonnegut; and *Kindred* by Octavia Butler. We will study SF texts with unusual timelines because they are thought experiments for pondering an ancient question about our own world: what is the nature of time? Students will consider this question from a variety of angles, through writing assignments which range from weekly discussion posts to a final paper.

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**Students who wish to begin or to continue study in English at the 100-level in the spring 2026 may choose to enroll in one of the following sections of ENGL 104:**

- ENGL 104.01: *Bodily Matters* (Lau)
- ENGL 104.02: *Seductions* (Lobanov-Rostovsky)
- ENGL 104.03: *Literary Locations* (Murthy)
- ENGL 104.04: *Science, Fiction, Science Fiction* (Brown)

## 200-Level Courses

Students exploring English as a possible major should consider enrolling in one of the intermediate-level courses designated ENGL 210-299 as soon as they have completed ENGL 103 or ENGL 104. 200-level English courses are small, discussion-centered and writing-intensive literature classes that may focus on particular formal or generic studies, on individual historical periods and national traditions, or on specific critical problems. Future English majors are especially advised to consider enrolling in ENGL 213: *Texting: Reading Like an English Major* (spring semester), which will introduce them to key skills, methods, and critical approaches in the study of literature.

### 200-level courses offered in Spring 2026:

ENGL 206: *Introduction to Science & Nature Writing*  
(Brown/Petersen)  
ENGL 217: *Writing Center Colloquium* (Scanlon)  
ENGL 266: *Decolonization and Violence* (Fernando)

ENGL 267: *Literature, Medicine, and Culture* (Lau)  
ENGL 271: *Books and the Booker* (Murthy)  
ENGL 291: *Spectres of Empire* (Murthy)

## Creative Writing Courses

Students are eligible to register for 200-level creative writing workshops **beginning in the spring semester of their first year**. They should enroll in only **one** 200-level creative writing course at a time. A number of seats will be reserved for students in each class year (i.e., sophomore, juniors, and seniors in the fall, and all four class years in the spring). Each semester, the department offers one or more sections of ENGL 200: Introduction to Fiction Writing, ENGL 201: Introduction to Poetry Writing, and ENGL 202: Introduction to Creative Nonfiction Writing.

