UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND: ENGLISH COURSES SPRING 2023 DESCRIPTIONS

ENG 107a College Writing  MWF 10:20-11:15  Prof. McDonald
Our course focus is contemporary culture and current controversies. Specific topics include: the influence of popular culture, on-line culture, gender in advertising, documentary films, and music. You will advance your writing skills and utilize the various steps involved in the writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, organization and style, revision, editing, and proofreading. My goal is for you to comprehend and work comfortably with the steps mentioned above, and with various modes and academic essay styles. Since this course is designed to advance your college writing skills, you will be researching and integrating sources into some of your work. Our class will be a mix of discussion, workshops, in-class writings, peer reviews, and conferences.

ENG 107b College Writing  MWF 11:25-12:20  Prof. Brassard
This section of College Writing emphasizes reading, thinking, researching, and peer reviewing as essential components of a successful writing practice, with short essays in different modes (descriptive, narrative, analytical, persuasive) building toward a research project with the primary goal of investigating the impact of the climate crisis on various fields or professions.

ENG 107c College Writing  MWF 9:15-10:10  Prof. Hannon
With the support of an encouraging writing community, this course is designed to help students become intrepid crafters of essays. By tapping into their experience, imagination, curiosity, and daring thinking, and by ‘lifting the hoods’ and exploring model essays by established essayists, students will learn to compose original essays that reflect a distinctive voice and appreciate how various rhetorical modes give essays their impetus, structure, and direction.

ENG 107d College Writing TR 9:45-11:10  Prof. Ward
ENG 107e College Writing TR 11:20-12:45  Prof. Ward
This course focuses on the essay, its form, its structure, its art. We'll read essays on a multitude of topics in this course, and our discussions will be wide-ranging. We'll think about what makes the essay such a compelling, durable form of communication, and we'll write essays on topics of your choosing — ones you find interesting and want to explore. Learning to write a college-level researched argumentative essay is a skill that will serve you in the courses you take at UP. You'll also write a work of creative non-fiction, which will allow the freedom to explore your own unique voice and expression. And you'll analyze arguments in various group presentations, including an oral debate, which will allow you to practice argumentation in real time. #argumentation #rhetoric #criticalthinking #creativenonfiction

ENG 112a Thinking Through Literature TR 2:30-3:55  Prof. McDaneld
ENG 112b Thinking Through Literature TR 4:10-5:35  Prof. McDaneld
Headlines today are saturated with talk of “burnout”—workers are exhausted, caregivers are fatigued, young people are labeled the “burnout generation,” and seemingly everyone is anxious. Whether it’s the unrelenting pressures of the gig economy, or the exhaustion created by systemic racism, or the widespread pandemic fatigue caused by the last 18 months, it would seem that in our particular moment in 2021 we have reached “peak burnout.” But while burnout might appear to be a modern condition of the 21st century, American literature shows us that it in fact has a long history. This section of English 112 provides an introduction to literature through the lens of burnout: how can literature help us understand this phenomenon? More broadly, how might reading literary texts in relation to their historical context illuminate how we think about the past and our present? In this discussion-based course we’ll explore these questions through novels and short stories by Melville, Gilman, Porter, Larsen, and Plath.

ENG 112c Thinking Through Literature MWF 9:15-10:10  Prof. Swidzinski
Humans are, fundamentally, poetic and narrative creatures: we use metaphors and stories to make sense of the world in which we live. This course explores how literature—in the form of lyrics, myths, and thought experiments—shapes our everyday lives. We’ll do this by reading and listening to Mitski, Shane McCrae, James Baldwin, Valeria Luiselli, Ted Chiang, and others.

ENG 112d Thinking Through Literature TR 11:20-12:45  Prof. Weiger
“Speculative Literature in Dystopian Times:” This course introduces imaginative literature that explores the relationship between humans and the natural world. While its topics are supernatural, dystopian, and strange, they can all be considered works of “speculative” literature: literature that takes off from the real world, asking big questions about where things go from here. As such, their fantasies have the texture and the stakes of reality, their imagined worlds the terrain and the troubles of
our own. As we read these texts, we'll ask questions including: What does it mean to be a reader in the 21st century? Why write – and read – speculative literature? How does literature help us recognize – and perhaps even change – our world?

ENG 112e Thinking Through Literature MWF 11:25-12:20
Prof. Buck-Perry

ENG 112f Thinking Through Literature MWF 12:30-1:25
Prof. Buck-Perry

ENG 112g Thinking Through Literature TR 9:45-11:10
Prof. Buck-Perry

What might stories tell us about the many ways we interpret our experiences? How might language and literature stretch our “perceptual systems” and serve as another means to help us “see” more and think through significant questions? Course readings will explore these questions and invite us to examine the complex process of “knowing” ourselves and the world around us.

ENG 112j Thinking Through Literature MW 2:40-4:00
Prof. Sutter

ENG 112k Thinking Through Literature MW 4:10-5:35
Prof. Sutter

For this course, we will conduct close study of the science fiction of Octavia Butler, the transformative justice work of adrienne marie brown, and the indigenous botanical wisdom of Robin Wall Kimmerer. These writers will provide a foundation from which we will explore apocalypse alongside visions for a post Covid-19 and climate change society. We'll sit with critical questions: What must be grieved in these times? What changes can we imagine now that we are here? What will racial and ecological justice look like in the future? We will apply these lenses to our personal experiences and dreams in order to envision a most responsible path forward. #transformativejustice #writinganewfuture #emergentstrategy #godischange

ENG 112l Thinking Through Literature MWF 12:30-1:25
Prof. Duncan

ENG 112m Thinking Through Literature MWF 1:35-2:30
Prof. Duncan

This course invites students to approach the practice of reading literature as a vehicle for thinking through life’s larger questions and to cultivate fundamental habits of critical thinking, dialogue, and expression. A writing-embedded course.

ENG 112n Thinking Through Literature MW 4:10-5:35
Prof. Walker

Voices From the Other Side: Examining Borders, Crossings, and Travel Through Visible and Invisible Lines
Where are you from? It’s a question often asked within moments of meeting someone. It’s also a question that can lay bare troubling assumptions about who belongs in a space. Because the question “where are you from?” can have a dark side, a shadow, an inverse, a silent but forceful hidden question: “what are you doing here?” “Where are you from,” although common, is never a small, simple question. In this class, we’ll be thinking about the places we come from, the places we travel to, and the visible and invisible borders we cross to go from here to there, through the lens of fiction. We'll be reading three short novels by an international cast of authors whose characters cross borders of all kinds: national, regional, physical, metaphysical, spiritual, and cultural, to name a few. As we read, think, discuss, and reflect, we'll be challenging our own assumptions about how place shapes identity and culture, the light and the dark, and how individuals can grow beyond the assumptions and expectations inherent in places.

ENG 225 Introduction to Literary Studies MWF 12:30-1:25
Prof. McDonald

Students will be introduced to the history of literary criticism and theory and will be invited to read texts through various lenses, including, but not limited to New Criticism, Reader-Oriented Criticism, Feminism and Queer theory, Post Colonialism, and African-American Criticism. Students will engage in conversation with literary critics through the use of the academic library and of online literary resources as part of the research process.

ENG 301 British Literature Survey I (medieval through 1800s) TR 12:55-2:20
Prof. Swidzinski

A survey of over a thousand years of British poetry, drama, and prose, ranging from the medieval period (ca. 700 AD) to the end of the eighteenth century. Special attention paid to innovations in literary form and genre (epic, romance, tragedy, novel, etc.) and their social, political, and material contexts. Authors and/or texts may include Beowulf, Marie de France, More, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Behn, Pope, Haywood, Swift, Johnson, and Equiano.

ENG 308 Writing Workshop: Screenwriting (crosslisted w/FA308) R 4:10-6:55
Prof. Willis

Study of the aesthetics and techniques involved in the written dramatic form for video and film production. Emphasis upon writing, workshop critiques, and discussion of students’ screenplays.

ENG 309 Writing Workshop: Fiction MW 2:40-4:00
Prof. Walker

In this class, we’re writers, whether for the semester or a lifetime. As writers, we’ll read model texts for the mechanics of fiction and to marvel at their many wonders. We’ll experiment with prompts, processes, and daily practices. We’ll talk about how we writers get our work done. Each of us will workshop at least one short story or novel excerpt and study one writer who matters to us. Most of all, we’ll write.
ENG 311a Writing Workshop: Nonfiction TR 11:20-12:45  
Prof. McDonald

ENG 311b Writing Workshop: Nonfiction TR 12:55-2:20  
Prof. McDonald

ENG 311c Writing Workshop: Nonfiction MW 2:40-4:00  
Prof. Hannon

Students will be exposed to various techniques and devices for writing in the non-fiction genre. Some of these include narrative essays, travel writing, profiles, braided or collage essays, topical essays, flash non-fiction, and more. The class is a workshop setting in which we read essayists, both published and non-published. Students will engage in various workshops and peer review groups.

ENG 326 Shakespeare: Page, Performance, and Perceptions TR 9:45-11:10  
Prof. Hersh

This course focuses on the plays of William Shakespeare. We will complement our analysis and close-readings of the Bard’s language by examining contemporaneous literature, art, and other social documents and by discussing critical models and theories as they relate to each play. We will thus explore themes across and within these works such as authority, gender, colonialism, race, nature, economics, and subjectivity (to name just a few). We will also pay close attention to timeless literary concerns such as love, war, betrayal, jealousy, and friendship. Finally, we will explore the performance aspects of these works as we consider what happens when the words Shakespeare wrote on the page are spoken by living, breathing actors by attending performances and viewing movies. We will develop critical research skills in this class, which are important for your life outside of college, and one of your main projects of the semester will be a “Research Notebook” delving into the multifaceted world of Shakespeare.

ENG 343 Studies in Nonfiction TR 11:20-12:45  
Prof. Hannon

Intensive analysis of the methods, modes, and manipulations of nonfiction prose. Readings may draw from such nonfiction works as essays, memoirs, political documents, documentaries, and reportage to explore topics of truth and falsehood, representation and reality, medium and message.

ENG 391X Literatures and Cultures of Food TR 12:55-2:20  
Prof. Buck-Perry

(note: all seats go to students taking the course as a Core Exploratory Course) “Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are,” declared the famed French gourmet Jean Antheilme Brillat-Savarin. This course will enthusiastically pursue Brillat-Savarin’s delicious approach to studying human nature. By examining the meals on our plates and those in literature, we’ll explore food as a means to learn more about the self and our ties to family, our society, our past, cultures around the globe, and to the natural world that sustains us. Through our exploration of a diverse assortment of texts and experiences, we’ll engage two habits of UP’s new Core Curriculum, “Literacy, Dialogue, and Expression,” and “Global and Historical Consciousness.” Authors and texts will include The Edible Woman by Margaret Atwood, High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America by Jessica B. Harris, The Gastronomical Me by M.F.K. Fisher, The Language of Baklava by Diana Abu-Jaber, and the poetry of Li-Young Lee, Joy Harjo, and Gary Soto. Class sessions will incorporate regular gatherings around the table to share food and drink.

ENG 403 Seminar in Topic I: Posthumanism T 4:10-6:55  
Prof. Weiger

In this course our challenge will be to imagine the world beyond or outside the “human.” Thinking outside the human and its many alternatives (including the “animal”) may prove difficult, since such concepts are foundational to the way we think about ourselves and the environment. We will begin by attempting to understand what is meant or implied by concepts including the human and the animal, subjectivity, agency, sympathy, and affect. Our investigation will extend even into what we mean when we call something an “object” or “thing.” Along the way, we will ask questions including: Who – or what – counts as a “subject”? What rights and responsibilities do subjects have? Can humans “speak for” nonhuman things? Should we eat animals? In what sense do inert materials and nonliving things participate in the world? The literary texts and literary theory we will engage attempt to think non-anthropocentrically; they are, in many ways, “posthuman.”

ENG 499 Senior Capstone Seminar MW 4:10-5:35  
Prof. Brassard

The purpose of this seminar will be to both look back on students’ skills development across their English major, and to look forward toward professional applications of those skills post-graduation. Activities and assignments will include research into literary studies as a professional field; the critical reception of specific authors and/or texts of the student’s choice; and alumni outcomes, among key topics. Writing as a thinking and learning process will be emphasized through informal and formal assignments, including peer review and instructor feedback, and the seminar’s final product will take the form of either 1) a ‘traditional’ literary analysis paper or creative portfolio; 2) a website presenting the project visually; or 3) a podcast capturing the project in audio format. Regardless of format, projects will demonstrate each senior’s ability to read closely and analytically; write clearly and persuasively; evaluate a range of secondary sources; and synthesize analysis and research (or creative portfolio) into a compelling project of potential interest to a curious, general audience. The capstone experience culminates with public presentations of final projects to the English and UP community.
Also: Summer 2022 English offerings:

Session 1 (May 16-Jun 23): ENG 112 Thinking Through Literature  MTWR 10:50-12:30 Prof. McDonald

Session 2 (Jun 27-Aug 4): ENG 107 College Writing MTWR 10:50-12:30 Prof. Buck-Perry