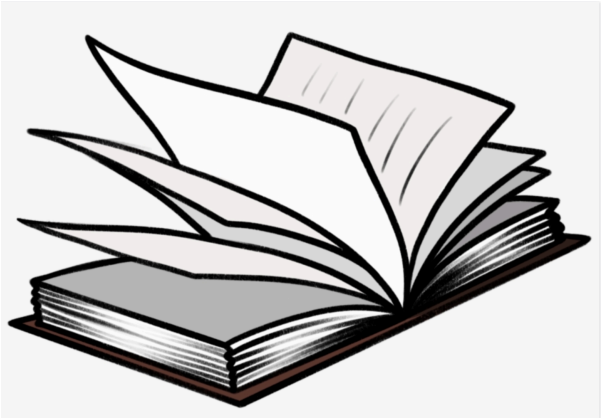
Literature Core Sections
Fall 2025



ENGL 1080.01 Season of the Witch TTh, 3

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." This single line from the book of Samuel has been the end of many women over the centuries. But what is a witch? Is she an old crone? A wise woman? A temptress? In its earliest iterations, a witch was simply one who practiced magic–good or bad. In the early modern period, belief in witches and their malevolence became widespread, and witch hunts began across Europe and eventually migrated into the British colonies in the Americas. In recent years, witches have become trendy. There are books, movies, and television shows about witches of all stripes. In this class, we will track the popular understanding of witches and witchcraft through literature from the early modern period to the present. Texts may include: Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Silver Moreno Garcia's *Mexican Gothic*, Edgar Wright's *The Witch* (film), and television series like *Lovecraft Country*. There will also be an opportunity to visit Salem and observe the lasting legacy of the infamous Salem Witch Trials.

Crotty

ENGL 1080.02 Bright College Days: Campus Stories TTh, 9

Many arrive for their first year of university with visions of what college life will be like. We might imagine ivy-covered buildings, late nights in the library, grassy knolls filled with lounging students reading their assigned texts, nutty or maniacal professors, and, perhaps above all, the curricular and extra-curricular freedom to discover who we are and what interests us. Yet, beyond these idealized conceptions of collegiate life, what is college really for? Who is college for today, and who was college for in the past? And how do university experiences interact with larger societal infrastructures of class, race,

gender, and sexuality? What are the stakes of discovering who one is as a young adult? To answer these questions, we will read historical documentation about the inception of the university, as well as study fiction and film that interrogate the social and societal functions of campus life. Likely authors of interest will include F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ralph Ellison, Sylvia Plath, Sally Rooney, Vladimir Nabokov, and John Williams.
Tetzlaff

ENGL 1080.03 American Dream/American Nightmare TTh, 9
The term "American Dream" is so common that it has become a household term. But what does it really mean? The common response is that it stands for going from rags to riches. But that is only part of it. Like an enormous umbrella, the term shelters everything in American life that typifies the rise of the United States from a small, dependent British colony to the major world power that it is today. Is the American Dream a political vision? Some think that it represents the democratic vista itself, a classless society in which every person's vote is equal to everyone else's vote, regardless of race, color, sex or creed. And yet the term is now used in campaign speeches as an anti immigration platform, arguing that the American Dream is being stolen from “real” Americans. Does the dream stand for religious freedom? Or the does the American dream stand mainly for commercial, and economic success? This semester we will examine many questions about the "American Dream". We will read novels, short stories and plays that illuminate some dreams, or challenge them, including F. Scott Fitzergerald, Toni Morrison, Sherman Alexie, Arthur Miller, Louise Erdrich, and Kurt Vonnegurt. At the end of this semester, will you know the ONE definition of the "American Dream?" No, but you will understand some wide and culturally diverse approaches and reactions to it.
Rudner

ENGL 1080.04 Experiments With Time MWF, 1
How does our conception of time shape our relationship to identity and history? Can ideas like time travel, time loops, parallel universes, or deep time work to change our understanding of the world? This course will explore these questions through the study of films, novels, graphic novels, and philosophical meditations that creatively bend the fabric of time. As a class, we will consider how these literary experiments can be creatively reapplied to our own lives and interests. Authors studied may include H.G. Wells, Octavia Butler, Jorge Luis Borges, Ted Chiang, and Solvej Balle; films may include *Groundhog Day*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, and the television series *Severance*.
Paul

ENGL 1080.05 Trapped! MWF, 10

Feeling stuck? This course will explore literature about entrapment—physical, psychological, societal, and existential. From characters confined by oppressive institutions to those ensnared by their own minds, we will examine how writers use imprisonment, isolation, and constraint to develop themes of freedom, fate, resistance, and identity. We will discuss how literary genres and forms shape our understanding of agency and entrapment and how different historical and cultural contexts influence these narratives. Readings may include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Martian*, and "The Yellow Wallpaper."

Clay

ENGL 1080.06 On the Run: Refugees, Fugitives, Outlaws MWF, 11

Outlaws, escaped slaves, refugees, and rebels are all on the run in the pages of American literature. In a nation founded in the name of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," stories of the fugitive making a break for freedom have been both troubling and enchanting. In this course, we will examine narratives of flight by American writers from the early days of the Republic through the present. We will consider how, in widely different cases, fugitivity is both an affront to the law and also a product of it. How do literary authors represent life that exists beyond, without, or against the law? Texts will include fiction, folklore, slave narratives, graphic novels, film, political writings, and memoir.

Dichter

ENGL 1080.07 Read: Dead Redemption MWF, 11

What is redemption? What is justice? Revenge? How do these concepts overlap and define one another? How are any of these achieved in death or life, if at all, and who is responsible for them? From the mythology of Hercules to the 2018 game *Red Dead Redemption II*, tales of reclamation and vindication (of the self, of morality) have persisted, but has the notion of redemption changed? Are we telling the same story over and over, or can something new be offered from each text? How has Christian ideology impacted understanding of redemption, of reclamation? This section will explore how characters, form, and even settings approach the topic of redemption. In this class we will engage with a variety of works that probe questions of agency, morality, absolution at intersections of political turmoil. Potential texts include Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, and James Joyce's "The Dead" among others.

Wilson

ENGL 1080.08 Paths of Passage: Migration Narratives in American Literature TTh, 3
This course explores American literature through the lens of migration and the movement of bodies, focusing on how mobility—whether forced, voluntary, or contested—shapes identity and community. Through novels, essays, and poetry, we will explore themes of belonging, displacement, and transnational connections through the experiences of immigrants, migrants, and displaced individuals within and beyond US borders. Students will also examine how migrants interact with their destination, navigating various cultural, social, and political landscapes. This course invites students to think about how literature reflects the forces that drive migration and the ways bodies move through geographic, social, and cultural boundaries in pursuit of safety, opportunity, and self-determination.
Wang

ENGL 1080.09 What's the Point? TTh, 3
This is the future I want. This is the experience I want. This is the person I want to be with. As strange and contradictory as some of our decisions might be, we can generally trace them back to an internal drive. If that drive is missing or incomprehensible, the results can be catastrophic–both for our sense of self and for our position in society. This course examines the ways in which literature has engaged with absences and perceived deficiencies in motivation and desire, grappling with the experiences of boredom, apathy, resistance, and asexuality. Texts include Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, Nella Larson's *Quicksand*, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Remains of the Day*, and Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club*.
Adler

ENGL 1080.10 Love and Other Difficulties MWF, 1
This is a literature class in which we will read about and discuss various ideas of love as imagined and practiced through the ages. Unlike today, in past ages there was a tradition of considering love as a proper subject for academic study. Our goal is to revive that tradition by first considering love as something one does not naturally know how to do well, and therefore that one needs to study in order to become better at it. Thus our subject by definition connects the theoretical (ideas of love) with the practical (how to love). In addition to reading and class discussions, you will write papers analyzing works and ideas that we read. One of the primary goals of this course is to learn how to analyze and write about literature, which we'll talk more about in detail as we go.

Kaplan-Maxfield

ENGL 1080.11 Artful Transitions TTh, 12

How do we make sense of transitions? When do we notice something—ourselves, others, our world—as shifted or shifting in some crucial way? What does art got to do with it? Transitions abound in literature and in you: physical and emotional, geographic and relational, transcendent and mundane, sudden and prolonged. Our course will engage literature that unearths the possibilities and power of transitions. Together we will investigate how transitions (re)imagine identity, desire, and power, paying particular attention to how social identities (e.g., gender, race, dis/ability, sexuality) ripple across such moments. A variety of genres and media enliven the syllabus, with pride of place going to the short story with works by Ted Chiang, Nalo Hopkinson, Samuel Delany, Flannery O'Connor, Ursula Le Guin, Carmen Maria Machado, and others. You will be invited to reflect on transitions informing your life and the ways you make sense of them, such as those of college and young adulthood. Close read literary texts on their own terms and develop habits of mind to help you navigate future transitions with greater ease and aplomb.

Brown

ENGL 1080.12 On the Run: Refugees, Fugitives, Outlaws MWF, 12

Outlaws, escaped slaves, refugees, and rebels are all on the run in the pages of American literature. In a nation founded in the name of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," stories of the fugitive making a break for freedom have been both troubling and enchanting. In this course, we will examine narratives of flight by American writers from the early days of the Republic through the present. We will consider how, in widely different cases, fugitivity is both an affront to the law and also a product of it. How do literary authors represent life that exists beyond, without, or against the law? Texts will include fiction, folklore, slave narratives, graphic novels, film, political writings, and memoir.

Dichter

ENGL 1080.13 TBD TTh, 1:30

Roberts

ENGL 1080.14 Love and Other Difficulties MWF, 2

This is a literature class in which we will read about and discuss various ideas of love as imagined and practiced through the ages. Unlike today, in past ages there was a tradition of considering love as a proper subject for academic study. Our goal is to

revive that tradition by first considering love as something one does not naturally know how to do well, and therefore that one needs to study in order to become better at it. Thus our subject by definition connects the theoretical (ideas of love) with the practical (how to love). In addition to reading and class discussions, you will write papers analyzing works and ideas that we read. One of the primary goals of this course is to learn how to analyze and write about literature, which we'll talk more about in detail as we go.

Kaplan-Maxfield

ENGL 1080.15 Self-Help, Self-Making TTh, 1:30

The bookstores and Youtube are full of authors and speakers offering us to make a new, improved version of ourselves, by ourselves: improved brains, improved minds, improved fashions, improved bodies, even improved souls. The term "Self-Help" is a nineteenth-century invention by the author Samuel Smiles. To what extent can one change oneself? How much is built-in, how much is fungible? Does plastic surgery or extreme weight loss really change you? Can making your bed every morning realign your life? To what extent is change or development internal, to what extent does it rely on a power outside yourself (God, or a 'Higher Power'), and to what extent does it only count in the eyes of others? This section of literature core, "'Self-Help,' Self-Making," looks at the history of the idea of the "self-made man" (or person). We read some of the literature of 'self-help' from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as novels, short stories, essays, and memoirs that both endorse and are skeptical of the notion that one can create oneself anew independent of upbringing or inheritance. Our texts include selections from the Greek and Roman Stoics, a number of American autobiographies from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries (Benjamin Franklin, Elizabeth Keckley, Mary Antin, and Mary Paik Lee); a well-known narrative by a former African slave (Olaudah Equiano), a memoir of a young nurse from the First World War (Vera Brittain), one novel, and several essays, poems and short stories.
Najarian

ENGL 1080.16 Marginal in America TTh, 1:30

In this course we will examine a range of texts for their depictions over time of life on the margins or the peripheries of American society. One emphasis in our reading will be to distinguish between the many stages and states of marginality, i.e., between visible and invisible marginality, permanent and transitory, voluntary and involuntary. Therefore, the marginal experiences we will encounter include that of the urban working-class, the African American, the first-generation European immigrant, the regionalist voice, the "New" woman, among others. Marginality, in other words, will be encountered in terms

of class, race, gender, ethnicity and geography, and, in many cases, these conditions will overlap.
Smith

ENGL 1080.17 Literature of the Fantastic TTh, 1:30
This course will examine literature that explores themes of "the fantastic." We'll consider that term rather generally, and use it to frame our discussions of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and other novels, plays, poems and short stories. Ultimately, this exploration will lead us to questions about why writers use invented or skewed realities to explore political, social, cultural or theological issues, and whether these texts' fantastic nature might even allow writers to reach "truths" that are otherwise unattainable.
Boucher

ENGL 1080.18 Literary Feelings TTh, 10:30
This class will explore how literary texts use narrative and poetic strategies to communicate emotional experiences that seem to defy translation into words. How, in other words, do poems, stories, plays, and novels gesture toward feelings that can't be reduced to language or logic? What is the role of beauty in pulling the reader into an experience they might not otherwise relate to? How are literary strategies, including imagery, repetition, lyrical language, humor, and narrative voice, used to inspire shock or identification? We will read a selection of works by Keats, Dickinson, Plath, Limon, Faulkner, Hemingway, Robinson, Erdrich, and others.
Tanner

ENGL 1080.19 TBD TTh, 10:30
Roberts

ENGL 1080.20 TITLE Imagine Your Future TTh, 12
What's in store for us? For you? And how did people in earlier times imagine the world of today? It's no wonder that some of the most weird, most frightening, most awe-inspiring writing emerges from our fascination with that ever-evolving question. Sci-fi, space-fiction, fantasy, utopias, dystopias…and now, AI: it's scary stuff. But we'll explore it in novels, graphic novels, poetry, and film – from the awesome imagination of Fritz Lang to the shocking tales of Mieko Kawakami ; from the utopias of Ursula K. Le Guin, to the dystopian horrors imagined by Kazuo Ishiguro and Margaret Atwood. We'll also actively try to imagine our own futures: underlying and informing our fictional readings will be the startling

predictions of historian, philosopher, and futurologist Yuval Harari in *Homo Deus*. This will be a serious course, with serious intent: your active participation is expected.
Nugent

ENGL 1080.21 American Dream/American Nightmare TTh, 12
The term "American Dream" is so common that it has become a household term. But what does it really mean? The common response is that it stands for going from rags to riches. But that is only part of it. Like an enormous umbrella, the term shelters everything in American life that typifies the rise of the United States from a small, dependent British colony to the major world power that it is today. Is the American Dream a political vision? Some think that it represents the democratic vista itself, a classless society in which every person's vote is equal to everyone else's vote, regardless of race, color, sex or creed. And yet the term is now used in campaign speeches as an anti immigration platform, arguing that the American Dream is being stolen from “real” Americans. Does the dream stand for religious freedom? Or the does the American dream stand mainly for commercial, and economic success? This semester we will examine many questions about the "American Dream". We will read novels, short stories and plays that illuminate some dreams, or challenge them, including F. Scott Fitzergerald, Toni Morrison, Sherman Alexie, Arthur Miller, Louise Erdrich, and Kurt Vonnegurt. At the end of this semester, will you know the ONE definition of the "American Dream?" No, but you will understand some wide and culturally diverse approaches and reactions to it.
Rudner

ENGL 1080.22 *Philosophical Novels, Plays, and Films* TTh, 12
This course will focus on literary works that include a philosophical dimension. We will read mainly modern or modernist novels by authors such as Kafka, Camus, Larsen, Lispector, Kundera, Cusk, and Kang. Their complex narratives tend to contain main characters unsure of their identity and even their existence, figures who inhabit worlds in which conventionality has lost its hold on behavior. These novels pose questions such as: is life absurd or meaningful? do ties with others push back against the notion that life is empty? what are the conditions for actually grasping that one is having an experience? is there an immutable truth in the universe, or is truth what one creates for oneself? is human life superior to other forms of life, such as animals or even plants? which is better, lightness or weight? what is true art? does it capture reality or the unreal? We will put the novels into relation with plays, films, and philosophical as well as

psychoanalytic texts that seem to complement them and illuminate their philosophical claims. Three papers will be required; writing will be one of our major emphases.

Restuccia

ENGL 1080.23 The Literature of Loneliness and Connection TTh, 12

It is likely that all of us have been or will be lonely at some point in our lives. Ironically, loneliness is a unifying aspect of the human condition. In recent years a number of government officials have recognized loneliness as a public health crisis, with U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy describing loneliness as an epidemic, and the UK appointing an official Minister of Loneliness. But what is loneliness, exactly, and how might we respond to it? Literature has often explored loneliness of various kinds—psychological, societal, and existential, to draw on the terms of physician and public health practitioner Jeremy Nobel's book *Project UnLonely: Healing Our Crisis of Disconnection*, which we will read in this class. And, while reading is generally thought of as a solitary activity, many report that it can spawn the kind of human connection that makes us feel less alone. This section of LiteratureCore will consider literary art in various forms (the novel, poetry, drama, short story, personal essay, song lyrics, and film) to help us think through the causes, experience, and consequences of loneliness. We will ask: What might reading, writing about, and discussing literature have to teach us about loneliness and connection? And, can these activities themselves be part of the solution?

Franzino

ENGL1184.01 Literature, Testimony, and Justice (EDJ) TuTh 10:30

This section of Literature Core explores how literary texts bear witness to historical events and address social issues in order to engage with questions of difference and justice. Through the study of poetry, fiction, drama, and autobiography, we will examine how writers have used a variety of literary genres and forms to expose inequality and injustice; to call for justice, solidarity, and inclusion; and to transform experiences of trauma, displacement, difference, and oppression into art. Part of this course is devoted to considering how Black American writers such as Frederick Douglass and Toni Morrison have used literature to testify to the history of slavery and its legacies in the United States. We will also read literary works that address topics such as class and gender inequality, illness and disability, and religious persecution.

Harrison-Kahan

ENGL1186.01 Working Class: Stories of Labor, Class, and Privilege in America (EDJ)

TuTh 9

We will read American literature about work, especially blue-collar work, service work, and “women’s work.” In reading working lives, we will also be reading national narratives about class, gender, race, and immigration. Our literary versions of labor will range from Henry David Thoreau’s 19th-century account of “living deliberately” so he can work as little as possible, to Ocean Vuong writing about his mother washing the feet of white ladies in a nail salon. We will listen for the pressing questions and issues behind the narratives: how are power and privilege exercised in these stories? What are the underlying assumptions in them? How have contemporary class divides taken root from our history?

Matson