

**VCU**  
**Department of English**

**Course Descriptions**

**Summer 2018**

Updated 4/20/2018

# Department of English

Course Descriptions

Summer 2018

Credit Distribution

Writing.....305, 307

Linguistics.....390

Criticism.....N/A

Literature Prior to 1700.....326, 361

Literature 1700-1945.....372

Diversity.....353

**\*\*Note:** Upper level classes not listed above count as English elective credit.

**These distributions are current as of 2/5/18. If instructor or class times change, check with your advisor to make sure the distribution has not changed.**

### Summer 2018 Classes

*UNIV 111 and 112 or the equivalent is a prerequisite for all 200-level literature courses; a maximum of three credits of 200-level literature may count toward the 36 credits for the major.*

#### **ENGL 215-002**

#### **Reading Literature**

An inquiry into literary texts, emphasizing critical thinking and close reading. Individual sections will focus on a unifying question or problem. Students will study selected texts and their times with an emphasis on developing skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, research and/or oral communication.

**Prichard**                      **July 23- Aug 10**                      **MTWRF 9:00-11:50am**                      **CRN: 31826**

#### **ENGL 215-003**

#### **Reading Literature**

This **online** ENGL 215 (textual analysis) is an introduction to poetry that audiences interpret through visual means. No prior expertise or familiarity with poetry is expected or required; we will use technology and social media apps to ease ourselves into a better rapport with poetic genres. We will study poems that rely heavily on imagery for their effects, poems that respond to other visual arts like painting and sculpture, and poems that manipulate the relationships between form, meaning, and space. This is a skills course that requires **daily** participation and collaboration in an online environment. We will illustrate and annotate poems as a way of sponsoring critical thinking about the genre. The final project will involve the construction of either a critical or a creative multimedia edition of a poem.

**Coats**                      **May 21-July 11**                      **Blackboard (Online)**                      **CRN: 32049**

#### **ENGL 250-001**

#### **Reading Film**

The primary aims of this course are to introduce you to various formal elements of film composition, to develop your "visual literacy," and to hone your ability to watch, assess, think and write about film and/or its component features analytically. In short, the course seeks to make you an active, informed, conversant and participatory consumer of film and visual media. We will explore the medium of film as a vehicle for storytelling, and more specifically, we will explore the component elements of this medium to understand how they function to support the broader, thematic goal(s) of the medium. We will screen a number of films, or parts thereof, in our exploration and development of proficiency with technical and analytical vocabulary associated with film.

**Ashworth**                      **July 23- Aug 10**                      **MTWRF 9:00-11:50am**                      **CRN: 37927**

#### **ENGL 250-002**

#### **Reading Film**

This course introduces you to film as a medium. We will develop our skills to analyze films closely through a survey of elements, such as mise-en-scène, sound, editing, and

cinematography. The course aims to foster a deeper understanding of visual language and literacy. Through this language, we will engage film as a medium for socio-cultural criticism and propaganda, as well as a medium for pure spectacle. As a summer session, the condensed nature of the course will present students with a lot of in-class information and longer outside readings. Much of the session will be devoted to analyzing multiple clips from across nationalities and film history; however, we will watch one or more of the following films to see how it all comes together: *Get Out*, *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, *The Great Dictator*, and *Lost in Translation*. The assignments will range from short tests, quizzes, a take-home essay, and final exam.

**Greene**                      **May 21-June 21**                      **MTWR 10:30-1:45pm**                      **CRN: 38036**

**ENGL 305-001**                      **Writing Poetry**

English 305 is a creative writing workshop; students will write drafts of poems--some in response to assignments and will bring copies for discussion and critique. The class also includes a thorough reading component of mostly contemporary poems, as well as essays about poetry. The final grade is based on a portfolio of revised poems, as well as studio work such as freewrites, written critiques, imitations, image lists, notebook entries. Daily attendance is crucial. Instructor will email students about required texts a week before the class begins.

**Shiel**                      **June 25-July 26**                      **MTWR 10:30-12:45pm**                      **CRN: 34715**

**ENGL 307-001**                      **Writing Fiction**

Writing Fiction is an introduction to the techniques of fiction writing, both traditional and contemporary. We will view fiction from a writer's perspective rather than from a reader's, discussing such topics as setting, point of view, character, dialogue, plot, and conflict, and we will put what we discuss into practice as each student begins to create a portfolio of new work.

**Lodge**                      **May 22- July 12**                      **TR 3:00-5:40pm**                      **CRN: 34718**

**ENGL 326-001**                      **Shakespeare in Context**

In this course we will study four plays by William Shakespeare, in the four major genres in which he wrote: comedy, tragedy, history, and tragicomedy. Through close attention to Shakespeare's language and dramaturgy, we will examine how his plays reinforce and challenge cultural and social norms about topics such as power and authority, love and sex, justice and revenge, and race and religion. Each week we will focus also on one aspect of Shakespeare's plays, such as his language and rhetoric and his texts and theaters. Our goal is to develop your mastery of the tools of critical analysis, historical research, and close reading so you may become expert critics and fully enjoy the artistry of Shakespeare's language, ideas, and narratives. Your main

responsibilities will be to share your own insights and interpretive arguments about the plays, paying close, critical attention to style, form, content, and history.

**Pangallo**                      **May 21- June 21**                      **MTWR 1:00-3:15pm**                      **CRN: 37231**

**ENGL 353-001**

**Women Writers:**

**Women Writers and Religion**

In this course, we will examine fiction, poetry, and essays written by British and American women from the 1890s through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will pay particular attention to the relations among spiritual, artistic, and feminist practices of writers such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Anna Julia Cooper, Virginia Woolf, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Rhys, Sylvia Townsend Warner, and Leonora Carrington. Critics have long defined both modern literature and feminism by their rejections of religion. On this view, art becomes modern when it excludes matters of faith, and women's liberation requires emancipation not only from patriarchy but also from patriarchal religion. With help from critics ranging from Woolf to Saba Mahmood, we will question these conventional narratives by attending to women writers' engagement with religion and spirituality. How might the writings of less familiar women writers help us conceive a different relation between religion and literature? How might women writers' aesthetic practices help us formulate ideas of modern life beyond the binary of religious and secular? Our course will explore these and other questions through discussion, oral presentations, scholarly research, and critical writing. Please contact mpwinick@vcu.edu with any questions.

**Winick**                      **May 21- June 8**                      **MTWRF 9:00-12:00pm**                      **CRN: 37230**

**ENGL/RELS 361-002**

**The Bible as Literature**

In this course students will gain an understanding of different genres of Biblical literature as well as a sense of the literature's historical development and context. Attention will be paid to the differences between reading the Bible as a sacred text versus a literary text, the significant influence Biblical literature has had on non-Biblical literature (both secular and religious), and the types of literary criticism that non-religious scholars and theologians apply to Biblical texts. Through class lectures and discussions, the reading of Biblical, non-Biblical, and critical literature, and the writing of papers in which literary criticism will be applied to Biblical texts, students will become familiar not only with key Biblical texts and themes, but possible interpretations and understandings of them.

**Smith**                      **June 11- July 19**                      **MTWR 10:30-12:10pm**                      **CRN: 35199**

**ENGL 372-001**

**U.S. Literature: 1820-1865**

This upper-division course will focus on American authors writing in the decades prior to the Civil War (roughly 1820 – 1860). Throughout the course, an emphasis will be

placed on examining how the authors under consideration responded to the changing economic, cultural, and political marketplaces of the antebellum period. Authors covered may include Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, Stowe, Whitman, Hawthorne, and Melville as well as a selection of antebellum periodical writings. Assignments to include daily commonplace book / journal entries, 2 exams, and a final paper.

**Harrison**                      **May 21- June 8**                      **MTWRF 9:00-12:00pm**                      **CRN: 31912**

**ENGL/LING 390-001**                      **Introduction to Linguistics**

This course is a general introduction to the field of linguistics, the scientific study of language. It will introduce you to the biological, cognitive and social basis for human language and communication with an emphasis on basic, formal methods of linguistic description. Basic areas covered under formal linguistics includes phonetics (the properties of speech sounds), phonology (the systematic sound patterns of language), morphology (the grammatical structure of words), syntax (the structure of phrases and sentences), and semantics/pragmatics (the meaning and use of words and sentences). This course will also cover areas such as historical linguistics (language change and language relationships), language acquisition (how languages are acquired in children vs. adults) and physiological basis of language (language and the brain). This course is designed to give you a brief but broad overview of the methods used in linguistic description and analysis and to familiarize you with the main areas of inquiry within the field of linguistics.

Topics and issues covered include:

- The biological basis and evolutionary origins of human language
- Relations of language to cognition, communication, and social organization
- Sounds, forms and meanings of words, phrases, and sentences
- The reconstruction of linguistic history and the "family tree" of languages
- Dialect variation and language standardization
- Language learning by children and adults
- Brain structures and language functions

**Griffin**                      **May 21-June 21**                      **MTWR 10:30-12:45pm**                      **CRN: 37972**