English Department upper-level course descriptions: Fall 2015

For information on lower-level courses (course numbers under 300), see the Pitt State catalog.

ENGL 301: Technical/Professional Writing
Dr. Greene or Dr. Hermansson or Ms. Caldwell
English 301 Technical/Professional Writing is designed for those students who will be writing in the professional, business, and technical professions. In addition to reading professional writing case studies in order to learn rhetorical strategies used in common business writing situations, you will also learn how to create correspondence, descriptions, instructions, reports, and electronic presentations; how to design documents; and how to incorporate graphics into your documents.

ENGL 304: Introduction to Writing about Literature
Dr. Green
English 304 will introduce students to strategies for writing about literature in an academic setting. The class will discuss necessary skills for the study of literature such as close reading, working with scholarly sources, and placing a literary text in its historical context. We will also review the field of literary theory and its current significance for scholars. The class will be divided into units on poetry, drama, and fiction and will likely include four major papers and several shorter writing assignments.

ENGL 320: Literature and Film
Dr. Hermansson
This course introduces students to literary analysis and the basics of film "grammar" used in storytelling in order to make sense of the complex processes of adapting a work of literature into film. Students study a range of literature from at least two genres (for example: a number of short stories and a section of a Shakespearean play studied across multiple film adaptations) and methods of analyzing their adaptations in an informed way. The issues with fidelity (how "faithful" or "true" a film adaptation is) are contextualized in order to understand the limits of fidelity as an evaluative tool and a more neutral, descriptive language for adaptation is implemented. The course studies early, historical examples of film adaptation as well as up to date examples and introduces students to the many reasons why film has turned to literature for material. Students learn also to implement many of these techniques themselves in other media by way of storyboards, short screenplays, film pitches including casting and locations work, and even short film. This course does not require previous knowledge of literature or film. It can be taken for General Education credit. It can be taken by English majors even after having taken ENGL 304. It has obvious benefits for BSE students as well, who will be teaching in English classrooms using film as a resource.

ENGL 346: The Craft of Poetry
Prof. Washburn
Elements of poetry, emphasizing contemporary applications of traditional and experimental techniques. (Catalog description. Contact instructor for more details about this course.)

ENGL 351: Fiction Writing
Prof. Martin
This is our initial upper-level courses on fiction writing. Students will discuss stories by professional writers, study the characteristics and theories of contemporary fiction, and write their own stories. A significant portion of the semester will be spent in a workshop format in which students will critique one
another’s stories, offering feedback, advice, and encouragement. Thorough revision of one’s stories will be expected.

**ENGL 451: Advanced Fiction Writing**
Dr. De Grave
In this course, you will be honing your skills as fiction writers and becoming secure in your personal voice and vision. We will work on ways to make your writing fresh and many-layered by looking at work by professional writers from around the world, by learning some advanced-fiction theory, by critiquing one another’s work, and by writing and revising continually throughout the semester. One goal is for you to become better readers, since perceptive reading is the foundation of original writing. Another is for you to take a solid step forward in your writing—as you write fiction more clearly, fully, and powerfully.

This face-to-face course is a mixture of discussion and workshop. We will be looking at one another’s stories and exercises to give constructive, detailed criticism. We will also spend some time reading professional writing, in our text and in literary journals, and talking about how the writers make use of the craft. In our discussion of theory, we’ll be guided by the Alice LaPlante (*Method and Madness*) and Charles Baxter (*Burning Down the House*) texts. But the most important text for this course will be the stories you write. You will be writing three stories and commenting on the stories of the other class members. In addition, we’ll do some exercises in class, as needed. This class is open to anyone who has completed English 351, Fiction Writing, or equivalent.

**ENGL 479: Techniques for Teaching English in Middle/Secondary Schools**
Dr. Morgan
Concepts and strategies for teaching in the middle and secondary English classroom; roles and functions of non-verbal, written, and spoken media of communication. To be taken before the professional semester. (Catalog description. Contact instructor for more details about this course.)

**ENGL 480: Internship**
Dr. Franklin, coordinator
Experience for students planning to become teachers. Field experience in the secondary classroom to complement competencies addressed in departmental methods courses. Prerequisites: Concurrent enrollment in ENGL 478 Literature for Middle and Secondary Schools or ENGL 479 Techniques for Teaching English in Middle and Secondary Schools is required. Must be taken immediately prior to ENGL 579 Supervised Student Teaching and Follow-Up of Teachers.

**ENGL 501: Document Design**
Dr. McDaniel
In this class, we will focus on the analysis and design of technical / professional documents, both printed and electronic. In this class, “document” takes on a comprehensive meaning to include print (posters and forms), audio (podcasts), audiovisual (videos), and digital (websites). We will study both the theory of and the practice of creating these documents.

This course should help you achieve the following goals:

- Recognize visuals, type and space as the building blocks of graphic design as visual communication.
- Approach functional graphic design as capturing attention, controlling eye flow, conveying information, and evoking emotion.
• Practice the researching, brainstorming, concepting, and sketching that go into effective design work.
• Demonstrate basic design and layout skills, including grid structure, across a variety of formats and platforms from electronic to print.
• Apply the fundamentals of working with typography, color and visuals, such as photos and illustrations.
• Familiarize yourself with prepress and pre-production processes.
• Appreciate visual aesthetics as historically and culturally contingent.
• Make a habit of considering the ways visual and symbolic communication can be inclusive, cover the under-covered, and mitigate bias and prejudice.
• Practice constructive design criticism.
• Apply the best practices of instructional design and usability.
• Produce some work for your portfolio using a content management system.

ENGL 504/704: Advanced Technical and Professional Writing
Dr. Patterson
Advanced instruction in applying technical writing style and in creating hypertext documents, software documentation, and Controlled English (for translation into other languages).

ENGL 555/755: Topics in Literature—The Graphic Novel
Dr. Cox
This course invites students to participate in an investigation of a growing literary genre that fuses image and text, and is proliferated throughout geographic locales and across rhetorical purposes. As we read widely in the genre—covering narrative fiction, memoir and non-fiction—we will attempt to answer some key questions about this body of art and literature, including:

What are the tropes of graphic literature? Can a “comic book” be literary? If so, what are the qualities that separate “literary” graphic works from “popular” ones? Where, if anywhere, does graphic literature fit into the literary canon?

What narrative strategies does graphic literature borrow from more traditional textual genres (e.g. the novel, the short story collection, the memoir, the socio-cultural argument essay, the investigative report)? How does the addition of visual rhetoric and storytelling complicate, compliment or disrupt more traditional narrative strategies in these texts?

What analytical and critical practices does the graphic novel demand from its readers? What interpretive approaches are most productive in analyzing and responding to graphic literature? How should we read and respond to this growing body of literature and what is its importance?

ENGL 558: Topics in Film—The Children’s Film
Dr. Hermansson
Studies in a period, movement, genre, theme, or director. May be repeated if topic varies. (Catalog description. Contact instructor for more details about this course.)

ENGL 561: British Theme—Postmodern Victoriana
Dr. McDaniel
This course examines the ways in which culture and history affect British literature and film’s form and content. The lens that will focus our study of British literature and film is the way in which this particular textual form has become a site of postmodern culture’s preoccupation with the Victorian
period. Many critics have termed this trend the “afterlife” of the nineteenth century; the numerous adaptations, references, rearticulations, and recontextualizations of nineteenth century novels are growing exponentially every year. A number of questions will guide our discussion: How do novels represent history? How do novels interrogate or encapsulate the zeitgeist of a period (and what does our obsession with another period say about our own time)? What exactly constitutes an “afterlife,” and will our own time have one? What characteristics of the Victorian novel do postmodern novels choose to adopt and adapt or choose to ignore? How have rapidly changing visual technologies in both periods played a role in the formation of the novel?

Some readings/viewings might include books by Charlotte Brontë, Jean Rhys, Elizabeth Kostova, Bram Stoker, Olive Schreiner, A. S. Byatt, John Fowles, Oscar Wilde, Tom Stoppard, and Margaret Drabble, relevant criticism, and several digital and cinematic works.

ENGL 565: American Genre—American Short Story
Dr. Anderson
This course will study the history and characteristics of the short story as a literary genre, with primary attention to how the styles, themes, and subject matter of short stories have evolved in the United States in relation to American culture and literary history. We’ll cover a wide range of material, beginning with the origins of the short story in the early 19th century and concluding with living authors publishing their work in the 21st century. Readings are to be determined, but will likely include well-known figures such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman; lesser-known authors of the past such as Anzia Yezierska and Mary E. Wilins Freeman; and contemporary writers such as George Saunders and Z. Z. Packer.

ENGL 570: International Literature Genre—The Norse Sagas
Dr. Judd
This course will introduce students to Norse and Icelandic sagas and the cultural beliefs and practices that serve as backdrops to the sagas. Students will also propose and write a research paper. Possible areas of research might center on exploring the relevance of historical influences to a specific saga, tracing a theme or motif through a variety of sagas, analyzing a saga from a particular critical perspective, or exploring the connections between a saga (or sagas) and a modern work of literature or film.

ENGL 579: Supervised Student Teaching and Follow-Up of Teachers
Dr. Franklin, coordinator
Supervision for students engaged in student teaching. Departmental representatives will visit each student teacher during the professional semester. Additionally, departmental representatives will follow up with each area student during the first year of teaching with assistance and support. Concurrent enrollment in the professional semester is required.

ENGL 603: History of the English Language
Dr. Rudd
This course deals with the development of the English language from its origins to present-day British and American English. The course follows the evolution of the language in its main aspects of sound; word formation, syntax, and vocabulary; the cultural influences on change, and their reflection in the language; and social attitudes affecting language usage. The objective is to introduce you to the history of the English language, and the focus will naturally be on language change. Not only will we examine how English has changed phonologically, morphologically, syntactically, and lexically, but also, from a social perspective, why the language changes may have occurred. By the end of the semester, you should
have a good understanding of the evolution of English from its Proto Indo-European roots to its worldwide varieties at the present.

**ENGL 619: Shakespeare**  
**Dr. Morgan**  
An intensive reading of selected comedies, histories and tragedies. (Catalog description. Contact instructor for more details about this course.)

**ENGL 699: Senior Seminar in English**  
**Dr. Patterson**  
An assessment seminar for senior English majors. Exploration of career opportunities. Required of all senior English majors. Prerequisite: 85 credit hours or more. (Catalog description. Contact instructor for more details about this course.)

**ENGL 704: Advanced Technical/Professional Writing**  
**Dr. Patterson**  
See description under ENGL 504.

**ENGL 752: Senior Poetry Writing**  
**Prof. Washburn**  
Further advanced work in poetry writing. (Catalog description. Contact instructor for more details about this course.)

**ENGL 755: Topics in Literature—The Graphic Novel**  
**Dr. Cox**  
See description under ENGL 555.

**ENGL 771: Major Authors—Joyce and Woolf**  
**Dr. Carlson**  
Study of one or more major British or American authors. (Catalog description. Contact instructor for more details about this course.)

**ENGL 772: Periods in Literature—American Romanticism**  
**Dr. De Grave**  
The period from 1820 to 1865 was one of the most prolific and radical eras in American literature. When we think about the great American writers of the 19th century, we automatically think of such names as Melville, Hawthorne, Whitman, Emerson, Thoreau, Douglass, Jacobs, Poe, and Stowe. The Romantic era includes the time known as the American Renaissance, the five or six years in which many of the most memorable pieces in American fiction, poetry, and prose, were written. America had just been born—a great political and social experiment. But it had not yet created a literature of its own. Romantics gave us that literature, the new American voice. This course will help you appreciate and recognize the revolutionary forms and themes that arose in the first half of the 19th century in American literature. That literature will be put in context of what came before, in Puritan and Enlightenment literature, and we will talk about how it points toward the future. The course will also put the literature in historical context. In order to understand the themes, the biases, and the shapes of what the writers give us, we have to understand what the expectations and assumptions of the time were. We will be reading works by men and women, white and black, European-American and Native American in an attempt to define the parameters of what might be called the American voice at the time.

**ENGL 810: Research Methods**  
**Dr. McCallum**
No single class in Research Methods can impart all the knowledge the student is ever going to need for conducting research at the graduate level and beyond. Such a course can, however, acquaint the student with many of the methods professional scholars use when they conduct their own inquiries. Method is the key word here, for though the course will acquaint the student with the resources available here at PSU and elsewhere for those conducting literary research at the graduate level, it will place at least an equal emphasis upon giving the student practice in framing questions relevant to such research, in organizing his or her research, and in compiling and reporting upon the results of that research.

**ENGL 845: Problems in Teaching Composition**  
**Dr. Morgan**  
A consideration of the problems of teaching composition, with emphasis on rhetorical theory, current research in the teaching of composition, and evaluation of student writing. (Catalog description. Contact instructor for more details about this course.)

**ENGL 850: Creative Writing—Poetry Workshop**  
**Prof. Washburn**  
Advanced work in writing fiction, poetry, or another genre. (Catalog description. Contact instructor for more details about this course.)

**ENGL 875: Seminar—British Comic Novel**  
**Dr. McCallum**  
The reading list for this seminar includes one of the great early novels of English fiction, *Joseph Andrews*, and nine of its twentieth-century descendants. As we work our way through the semester, I want you to develop a definition of “comic” comprehensive and flexible enough to apply to each of these highly distinct works. Your definition, aided by discussion of and outside research into the semester’s works and authors, will necessarily take into account the distinctions between “the comic,” “comedy,” “satire,” and “farce.” And you should consider the more general problem of laughter: Why do we laugh? How may we be provoked to laughter? To what uses may laughter be put? My hope is that by semester’s end you’ll come to an appreciation of the psychological, social, and political mechanisms of laughter, and be able to explain why there’s more involved with the comic than just being funny.