

Spring 2025 Special Topics and Themed Courses

Course descriptions for all other courses can be found at the [NCSU Course Catalog](#)

ENG 394/WL 394: Studies in World Literature: Masterpieces of French Lit in English Translation - Inas Messiha

Reading and discussion of representative works and attention to literary analysis as well as to historical and cultural background. An overview of French Literature from the Medieval period to the twenty-first century.

All: Core - World Literature

All: Literature or English elective

ENG 394/WL 394: Studies in World Literature: Success and Its Discontents - Michael Garval

In our modern, ostensibly egalitarian, meritocratic societies, "success" seems the measure of all things. But from the outset there have been doubts, questions, matters of discontent. How does or doesn't the pursuit of success align with goals and ideals like wealth, power, fame, happiness, love, or justice? And in what ways does success intersect with a sense of either individual identity or collective belonging through such categories as race, class, gender, or sexual orientation? Our course tackles these questions and more through reading and discussion of works by Voltaire, Mary Shelley, Honoré de Balzac, Nikolai Gogol, Henrik Ibsen, Franz Kafka, Horatio Alger, Emily Dickinson, Willa Cather, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gwendolyn Brooks, Arthur Miller, and Rita Mae Brown. The course is taught in English with the option of doing the work in French to earn credit towards the French minor or major.

All: Core - World Literature

All: Literature or English elective

ENG 395/COM 395: Rhetoric and Digital Media: Musical Culture, Sound Rhetoric, and Digital Media - Michael Fennessey

In this course, we will explore the impact of digital media on musical culture through rhetorical analysis and critique, emphasizing influences from materialist media theories on the way we understand soundscapes and their relationship to everyday life. We engage with an interdisciplinary collection of theoretical work from sound studies, music studies, media studies, and rhetorical theory to unpack the role of power relationships in digital media and musical culture, particularly the way power relationships form through communicative technologies, which connect audiences, meaning, and positions of authority. In this class music is understood not only as an art form, but also as a cultural form involved in the production of subjectivity. Understanding how subjectivity forms at the intersection of everyday listening practices, musical culture, and digital media allows us to critique our positionality in social spaces which form around popular culture and emergent technologies.

All: Core - Rhetoric

All: English elective

LWR/RWP: Methods

ENG 438 (crosslisted as ENG 587): Interdisciplinary Studies in English: Responsible AI and Society - Huiling Ding

This class examines the applications of artificial Intelligence systems in multiple domains of society and the fundamental challenges and concerns introduced by such AI tools, which include but are not limited to accountability, biases, explainability, fairness, liability, privacy, and transparency. To tackle these challenges, we will take an interdisciplinary approach by first obtaining a non-programmer's overview of AI and data science before delving into the life cycle

of AI systems, ethics, social justice, and rhetorical theories. Then, we will apply these interdisciplinary lenses to critically examine AI applications in multiple sectors to examine how AI can deepen racial and economic inequalities. We will explore how AI systems should be held accountable to communities and application contexts and how interdisciplinary research can be done to encourage public engagement, inform public discourses about the social impacts of AI, and help create more responsible AI.

All: Core - Rhetoric

All: English elective

LWR/RPW: Methods, Strategies, & Context

ENG 490: Studies in Medieval: Dreams and Visions - Timothy Stinson

The dream vision was one of the most popular and important literary genres of the Middle Ages, as attested by such masterpieces as Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, Langland's *Piers Plowman*, the *Roman de la Rose*, and *Pearl*, among others. In addition, the period saw a flourishing of religious visionary writing in a variety of other genres, including autobiography and devotional writings. This course investigates the significance of dreams and visions in medieval literature and in culture more broadly. Topics to be considered include the following: Do dreams possess the ability to reveal knowledge and truth to which we otherwise have no access? How does dreaming relate to vision and to other kinds of seeing, such as prophecy and allegory? What is the significance of the large variety of narrators found in dream visions, from classical poets to talking birds and crosses?

All: Core - British Literature

All: Literature Elective or English Elective

Lit: Pre-1800 co-req

ENG 491: Honors in English: Revenge Tragedy: Violence and Justice in the Age of Shakespeare - Christopher Crosbie

For all the high-minded ideals espoused during the Renaissance, one form of popular drama enjoyed remarkable success by appealing to sensational displays of violence: the English "revenge tragedy." Set among dangerous courts where enemies hide in plain sight, revenge tragedies feature fantastic displays of the grotesque: ghosts of the murdered, the insane rantings of the bereaved, poisoned skulls functioning as both death tokens and weapons of retribution, and other excessively violent images that would rival today's popular culture. But, paradoxically, for all their sensationalism, plays of this genre feature some of the most memorable and moving pieces of poetry, as even a brief glance at *Hamlet* would attest. How does the artistry of these plays cut against the macabre, even grotesque, thematics? And what forces in England during the Renaissance gave rise to such a remarkable confluence of artistry and brutality? What, exactly, should we make of a culture and an art form that so prominently and unashamedly represents heroes dismembering their enemies, killing innocent bystanders, and even, in one grotesque case, feeding a mother the corpses of her sons? If the Renaissance represents a period of "rebirth" and philosophical revolution, where precisely do revenge tragedies fit within this strange and tumultuous era? This course will take up these and other related questions as we consider what we might learn of our own culture through this intriguing literary archeology.

All: Core - British Literature

TED/LIT: Genre/Author

All: Literature Elective or English Elective

Lit: Pre-1800 co-req

ENG 492: (crosslisted as ENG 592) Special Topics in Film Styles and Genres: Religion and Technology in Sci-Fi and Fantasy Films – Anu Thapa

Science-fiction and fantasy genres imagine and represent other worlds and alternate

dimensions. These imaginations are often fueled by greater religious and philosophical questions: What does it mean to be human? What 'higher power' exist? Will technology change humanity? Will religion exist in our futures?

The responses imagined to these questions almost always have a technological bent, wherein new and imagined technologies function symbolically, metaphorically, and literally. Technology and techniques, such as special effects, also are at play in imaging the imagined of sci-fi/fantasy narratives.

In effect, fantasy and sci-fi worlds enlist religion and technology into the process of mythmaking, worldmaking, sensing, and sense-making. This course examines the relationship between religion and technology in sci-fi/fantasy genre. We will discuss the overt and covert ways in which religion and religious belief are embedded into sci-fi/fantasy narratives and aesthetics. We will examine how religion and technology intersect in this genre, both on- and off-screen. Through these examinations we will learn to question the oppositions that are the foundation of Western modernity, i.e. religion and technology, sacred and secular, and belief and disbelief.

All: Core - Film

All: English Elective

ENG 494: Special Topics in Linguistics: Sociolinguistics - Robin Dodsworth

Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society. This course is an in-depth introduction to one especially broad area of sociolinguistic inquiry: language variation. Elements of language at all levels of linguistic structure – phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics – vary between social groups and between individuals. We will discuss the questions that have guided the study of language variation, including questions about the linguistic reflexes of social class, race and ethnicity, gender, geography, and social networks. As we look closely at data and conclusions from variationist studies in North and South America, Europe, Southeast Asia, and New Zealand, we build a critical understanding of the basic principles of sociolinguistic variation and consider their ongoing reappraisal. One part of the course focuses on North Carolina, taking a close look at communities where social change has catalyzed language variation and change. Throughout the course, we learn and apply quantitative methods for studying linguistic variation by analyzing naturally occurring data.

All: Core - Linguistics

All: English elective

Ling: Linguistics Elective

Ling: Linguistics Core

ENG 494: Special Topics in Linguistics: Sociolinguistics for Speech Language Pathologists - Walt Wolfram & Jeannene Matthews

This seminar focuses on language variation and mainstream American English under the lens of speech-language pathology. Students will learn about prevalent dialects in the US and the course offers an introduction to how language norms manifest in settings like education and healthcare.

All: Core - Linguistics

All: English elective

Ling: Linguistics Elective

ENG 495: Studies in Literature: Literature & Magazines in 20th Century America - Jennifer Nolan

By the end of WWI (in 1918), the American media landscape was rapidly changing and would continue to do so throughout the rest of the century and beyond. The impact of this shift is reflected by the first recorded use of the term "mass media" in 1923, which was created to

describe one of the primary drivers of popular culture at that time - popular magazines. As the century progressed, other forms of media such as film, television, radio, and more, increasingly impacted American homes and lives, but magazines remained an important driver of cultural trends and a primary form of entertainment for millions of Americans. By attracting and publishing the work of our most accomplished writers in the early-mid twentieth century, magazines and the literature published there had considerable influence on American culture and life.

In this class, we will consider the intersections between literature, popular magazines, and American culture in two eras: the 1920s when popular magazines mirrored modern-day streaming services in terms of how many American homes subscribed to them and the broad range of entertainment options they provided, and in the suburban era (1945-1965) when the magazine market shifted post WWII. Authors whose work we will read include F. Scott Fitzgerald, Shirley Jackson, writers of the Harlem Renaissance, and James Baldwin, and the magazines we will consider include the *Saturday Evening Post*, smart magazines like the *New Yorker*, women's magazines like the *Ladies Home Journal*, and Harlem Renaissance magazines like the *Crisis* and *Fire!!* These sorts of inquiries are inherently interdisciplinary and students will also be introduced to the tools and methods facilitating scholarly research in the field of Periodical Studies and conduct their own research with or into American magazines from this period.

All: Core - American Literature

All: Literature Elective or English Elective

LIT: Capstone

ENG 505: Writing Program Administration: Theory, Practice, and Research – Chris Anson

Almost everyone who earns a post-graduate degree in writing or communication studies and pursues a career in higher education will at some point be involved in the administration of a writing program, writing center, or writing-or communication-across-the-curriculum effort, and many will become its director. Yet graduate curricula seldom focus on the complex theoretical, pedagogical, political, and managerial dimensions of such work, leaving the new WPA or future writing department chair or director of graduate/undergraduate studies at the mercy of inherited practice—and much trial and error.

ENG 505 focuses on current theories, research, and practices of writing program administration, including curricular design and assessment, faculty development, assessment of student achievement, budget oversight, the politics of administration in higher education, and historical studies of writing program administration and related administrative work such as the directing of writing centers. The course is designed for all interested MA and PhD students but will be particularly valuable for those considering administrative work in first-year writing programs, writing centers, or WAC/CAC programs at a range of institutions (community colleges, small liberal arts colleges, and large research universities). Those with other higher-education interests may also find the administrative focus useful for career enhancement and job preparation.

Students choose a writing program to study based on a list of volunteers. Thereafter, they communicate weekly with the director or other administrative personnel in the program, matching their inquiries to the course focus for that week, then give brief reports to the class. Projects include a final overview of the program and an exploratory “design your own” project focusing on some aspect of writing program administration.

Undergraduates requesting registration for this class should have an interest in teaching writing at the university level. Doctoral students may wish to register for the course as ENG 798 with slightly different requirements. Students in other programs are welcome to join us. Contact Chris Anson at canson@ncsu.edu for further information. Professor Anson's c.v. is at www.ansonica.net

All: Core - Rhetoric
All: English Elective
RPW: Methods, Strategies, and Context OR Core Concepts

ENG 539: Seminar In World Literature: Autobiography & Speculative Biography – Jim Knowles

“It’s me, hi, I’m the problem, it’s me.” As usual, Taylor Swift’s lyrics go to the heart of the matter. When a self speaks, or writes, or sings about itself, it is both subject (“I”) and object (“me”). Never mind the grammarians who will object that “it’s me” is not properly objective at all. That’s part of the point. This course explores a wide range of textual genres under the rubric of the autobiographical, including: confession, memoir, autofiction, autography, speculative biography, dream vision, revelation, and lyric. Our objects range in time from the seventh century BCE until yesterday, and across multiple linguistic and cultural traditions. Together we will work out how to articulate the aesthetic, historical, philosophical, political, and theological stakes of this extraordinarily heterogeneous and persistent mode of writing. What are the stakes? As Fredric Jameson has said (writing about Karl Ove Knausgaard), the goal is nothing less than to express “the great reality, the great mystery, of the world, which has little enough to do with nature, death, or whatever other grand metaphysical themes ... It has to do with the hapless attempt of a biologically incomplete being to claim some mental or spiritual completeness; as well as with the inevitable failure of a group of these beings ... to constitute some kind of whole.” In other words, the problem is never just me, it’s we. Readings will be arranged neither chronologically nor generically, but rather in pairings and clusters of affinities that cut across time, place, language and genre. Examples might include: Ovid’s *Tristia* and David Malouf’s *An Imaginary Life*; Teju Cole’s *Open City* and William Langland’s *Piers Plowman*; Tu Fu and Eliot Weinberger’s *Life of Tu Fu*; Boethius and Christine de Pizan; the *Book of Margery Kempe* and the songs of Kabir; Augustine’s *Confessions* and Karl Ove Knausgaard’s *My Struggle*; Sappho, Wordsworth, and Whitman. There are many more possible permutations. Student projects will do the work of curating and/or creating their own clusters, their own affinities.

All: Core - World Literature
All: English or Literature Elective
Lit: Diversity/Globalization or Capstone

ENG 543: Introduction to Digital Humanities - Paul Fyfe

This course invites students of all technical abilities to explore the ongoing digital transformation of resources, tools, and methods in the humanities. As an introduction, this course is a gateway into a variety of representative subfields in digital humanities. It is designed to generate curiosity about how this emerging arena of scholarly activity might intersect with students' own disciplines, research interests, and pedagogies. It aims to provide a working knowledge of: 1] backgrounds of new media and humanities computing, 2] debates and outlooks for the digital humanities today, as well as 3] hands-on experience collaborating on, creating, and critiquing digital humanities projects. ***Interested undergraduate honors students should reach out to the instructor to see if this course is a good fit.***

All: English elective
RPW: Methods, Strategies, and Context

ENG 560: British Victorian Period: Re-Forming Victorian Literature – Anna Gibson

What is “Victorian literature”? What does it mean, in our 21st-century present, to study the period of Queen Victoria’s reign? Our semester will begin with these questions as we both aim to understand the characteristics of nineteenth-century British literature from the 1830s to the end of the century, and take up recent calls to “undiscipline” the field of Victorian Studies. Such calls

have asked us to “move away from narrow versions of disciplinarity” and take a race-conscious approach to literature from a period that consolidated our modern ideas of race (Chatterjee, Christoff, & Wong). This class seeks, then, to “form” and “reform” our understanding of Victorian literature. We will study the function of form in the novel and poetry as it contributes to particular conceptions of selfhood and society; explore how nineteenth-century British texts both formed ideas of the “Victorian” and challenged those ideas through their own attempts at reform; and consider how media in our present imagines or reimagines our understanding of the Victorian past.

We'll begin by examining our cultural ideas of the Victorian and canonical examples of Victorian literature, with a particular focus on the form of the novel (*Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*) as it shaped modern conceptions of a (white, liberal) self. We'll move on to an in-depth analysis of four Victorian poems (by Christina Rossetti, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Toro Dutt) that promoted various types of social reform. We will take a frank look at Victorian imperialism and ideas of race (the statue of the Greek Slave in the Great Exhibition, writings by Mary Seacole and Olive Schreiner). And we'll end the semester by considering the phenomena of adaptation and neo-Victorian fiction: how have we reimagined the Victorians in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries?

All: Core - British Literature

All: English or Literature Elective

Lit: Capstone

ENG 582: (001) Studies in Literature: The 21st Century British Novel – Laura Severin

Our course will focus on the changing dynamic of British identity and its relation to the 21st century British novel. Through an examination of a diverse set of voices, we will explore how the contemporary British novel is both grounded in the stylistic movements of the 20th century and representative of new modes of expression. As contemporary readers, we will enter into the process by which these novels are selected and evaluated for “canonization.” Readings include: Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans* (2000), Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001), Zadie Smith's *NW* (2012), Ali Smith's *Autumn* (2016), Anna Burns's *Milkman* (2018), and Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019), as well as additional critical readings. Assignments include: forum posts, two oral presentations, and a long paper (10-12 pages) completed in several stages (topic proposal/annotated bibliography, draft, and final). MA students in all concentrations and MFA students are encouraged to enroll. This course fulfills the British Literature after 1660 requirement in the MA in Literature and a literature requirement in other degree programs.

All: Core - British Literature

All: English or Literature Elective

Lit and TED: Genre

Lit: Capstone

ENG 582: (002) Studies in Literature: Machines, Media, Marginalization in 19th C America – Justin Tackett

Nineteenth-century America's fascination with the increasingly mechanical and diverse material culture of the time has become a central concern for literary studies. We will focus on the numerous technologies that interact with and in writing of the period. Literature, which is itself a kind of technology, existed long before these developments, but treated them as valuable disseminators, rival media, sources of inspiration and lamentation, and everything in between. This course investigates what constitutes “technology” and “literature” as they evolve together, and the politics and theorization that inevitably accompany such evolution. The course's aim is to investigate how these artifacts contribute to understanding nineteenth-century American literature and culture, especially regarding gender, sexuality, race, and disability. While literature

is the dominant focus of the course, we will also examine machines, tools, sound recordings, art, automatons, and other objects. This course will emphasize engagement with the material archive as a means of thematizing literature and will require students to think deeply about the material archive's relationship to literature and scholarship.

All: Core - American Literature

All: English or Literature Elective

Lit: Capstone

Lit: Interdisciplinary Approaches

ENG 585/798: Special Topics in English Studies: Non-Academic Writing About Film and Media – Marsha Gordon

This class will provide the opportunity for students to develop their voices as non-academic writers about film and media. We will study an array of different modes of writing—reviews, articles in general readership magazines and newspapers, memoir, social media, blogs, poetry/fiction/creative nonfiction, and other media about media (such as podcasts and video essays). This class will encourage experimentation and new approaches, as well as developing a set of skills in the final part of the semester focused on a mode (or modes) of writing you choose for your final project portfolio. As should be apparent from its title, this class will be writing-intensive, with regular draft deadlines, workshops, and revision, as well as peer editing of student work both inside and outside of class. Although we will engage with some shared moving image subject matter, much of the course will allow students to select their own objects of study—films, television, streaming media, nontheatrical media, video games, video art, a YouTube channel, modes of media delivery, and so on.

All: Core - Film

All: English Elective

ENG 587 (crosslisted as ENG 438): Interdisciplinary Studies in English: Responsible AI and Society - Huiling Ding

This class examines the applications of artificial intelligence systems in multiple domains of society and the fundamental challenges and concerns introduced by such AI tools, which include but are not limited to accountability, biases, explainability, fairness, liability, privacy, and transparency. To tackle these challenges, we will take an interdisciplinary approach by first obtaining a non-programmer's overview of AI and data science before delving into the life cycle of AI systems, ethics, social justice, and rhetorical theories. Then, we will apply these interdisciplinary lenses to critically examine AI applications in multiple sectors to examine how AI can deepen racial and economic inequalities. We will explore how AI systems should be held accountable to communities and application contexts and how interdisciplinary research can be done to encourage public engagement, inform public discourses about the social impacts of AI, and help create more responsible AI.

All: Core - Rhetoric

All: English elective

LWR/RPW: Methods, Strategies, & Context

ENG 590: Studies in Creative Writing: Writing as Ritual - Destiny Hemphill

How can ritual deepen the way we engage our craft as creative writers? In this course, we will consider how tools and practices commonly used in ritual (i.e. tarot cards, oracle cards, dreams, bibliomancy, and more) might open portals for generating new work but also for revising our work. How can ritual help us intuit needs regarding character development? Or support us in stirring up more cogent images? To anchor our exploration, we will engage texts from scholars considering ritual, mysticism, and the psychic; texts from creative writers who had / have a relationship to mysticism and ritual; and texts from those writers who primarily situate

themselves as ritual practitioners. Authors that we might engage include Walter Benjamin, Jayna Brown, RM Haines, Toni Cade Bambara, Lucille Clifton, M. Nourbese Philip, Cecilia Vicuña, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Toni Morrison, and more. (Honors students wishing to enroll in this class must have taken ENG 488 or 489).

All: English Elective

CRW: Advanced Creative Writing Elective

ENG 592: (crosslisted as ENG 492): Films Styles Genre: Religion and Technology in Sci-Fi/Fantasy Films - Anu Thapa

Science-fiction and fantasy genres imagine and represent other worlds and alternate dimensions. These imaginations are often fueled by greater religious and philosophical questions: What does it mean to be human? What 'higher power' exist? Will technology change humanity? Will religion exist in our futures?

The responses imagined to these questions almost always have a technological bent, wherein new and imagined technologies function symbolically, metaphorically, and literally. Technology and techniques, such as special effects, also are at play in imaging the imagined of sci-fi/fantasy narratives.

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