

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

**Course Descriptions**

**Summer 2015**

# Department of English

Course Descriptions

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Credit Distribution

Writing.....305, 307

Linguistics.....390, 450

Criticism..... N/A

Literature Prior to 1700.....361

Literature 1700-1945.....341, 372

Diversity..... N/A

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

**These distributions are current as of 2/4/15. If instructor or class times change, check with your advisor to make sure the distribution has not changed.**

## Summer 2015 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 215-001                      Textual Analysis: "The Old Brag of My Heart":  
Coming of Age in the U.S. in the Latter Half of the Twentieth Century**

In this course we will examine what it means to come of age in the United States during the latter half of the twentieth century. We will begin with a discussion the *bildungsroman*, a sub-genre of the novel that dates back to Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century, and then examine more recent examples (and perhaps non-examples) of this type of narrative in order to understand the form as it appears in a more recent and local context. Our first text will be Jeffrey Eugenides's *The Virgin Suicides* (originally published in 1993), from which we will work backward towards William Maxwell's *The Folded Leaf* (originally published in 1945). We will end the course with a discussion of Justin Torres's *We the Animals* (published in 2012). In the course of our discussion we will examine the similarities and differences in the works with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, region, sexual orientation and/or an intersection of these social identities.

**Comba                      May 18-June 5                      MTWRF 9:00am-12:00pm                      CRN #: 31827**

**ENGL 215-002                      Textual Analysis**

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 20- Aug 7                      MTWRF 9:00-11:50am                      CRN #: 31826**

**ENGL 215-901                      Textual Analysis**

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 18-July 8**            **Blackboard (Online)**            **CRN #: 32049**

**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 and possibly one short essay. Required texts: *The Poet's Companion* by Addonizo and Laux and *Best of the Best American Poetry: 25th Anniversary Edition*, edited by Lehman and Pinsky.

**Shiel**            **May 18-June 18**            **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 18- July 8**            **MW 6:00-8:40pm**            **CRN #: 34718**

**ENGL 307-002**                            **Writing Fiction**

In this course, we will explore what a story is, how to discover and develop the stories you want to tell, and the narrative techniques to create and shape them and make them wonderful. You will read and discuss published stories as models, write exercises designed to develop your narrative skills, as well as write original stories. Much of the class will be conducted as a workshop. This means that you provide the audience for each other's work, reading and commenting in class and in written critiques.

**Danvers**            **June 8- July 29**            **MW 3:00-5:40pm**            **CRN #: 34846**

**ENGL 341-001**                            **British Literature & Culture After 1945**

"To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," Theodor Adorno declared in his apparent disallowance of literature following the Second World War. Poets, Playwrights, and novelists continued to explore how they might compose legitimate works (or anti-works), just as Adorno (who'd planned to devote his final volume on aesthetics to Samuel Beckett) later insisted his claim implied they

must. This class will explore how postwar British authors confronted the atrocities executed during that war and Britain's postcolonial position in a world now dominated by cold war politics and American hegemony.

**Wells**            **May 18- June 18**            **MTWR 1:00-3:15pm**            **CRN #: 35359**

**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 8- July 16**            **MTWR 10:30am-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 18- June 5**            **MTWRF 9:00-12:00pm**            **CRN #: 31912**

**ENGL 380-001            Southern Literature**

A survey of the fiction of the American South, tracing its development from the Civil War to the present in both the novel and short story forms.

**McCown**            **July 20-Aug 7**            **MTWRF 9:00-11:50am**            **CRN #: 36006**

**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**            **June 22- July 23**    **MTWR 1:00-3:15pm**

**CRN #: 34463**

**ENGL/LING 450-901**            **Modern Grammar**

This course is an introduction to the study of grammar, focusing on the nature and structure of human language (syntax) from the perspective of the Minimalist Program, the current version of the Principles and Parameters approach within Generative linguistic theory. This course will focus primarily on the grammar of Standard American English but other dialects of English and other languages will also be examined. This course is designed to give you a brief but broad overview of the issues and analytical methods in current grammatical theory and a comprehensive understanding of the basic structure of English and human languages more generally. No prior coursework in linguistics is required.

**Griffin**            **June 8- July 29**    **MW 6:00-8:40pm**

**CRN #: 10718**

**HUMS 250-001**            **Reading Film**

This course aims to introduce you to some of the formal elements of film—the building blocks of motion pictures—that are necessary to understand for a close or detailed analysis of cinema. As such the course aims to increase your “visual” literacy and make you more savvy consumers of visual images more generally. You should also gain a more well-developed technical and critical vocabulary with which to talk and write about the films and other visual media you watch.

We will watch and analyze scenes (and a few full-length films) drawn from both the American and world cinemas. Overall, this course should help you think, talk and write more effectively about your viewing and make you a more confident and knowledgeable "consumer" of the moving image in all its forms and media. Class itself will present you with a lot of information about these film elements, and given the short term in summer session, attendance is really necessary. Although most of the time we will be analyzing short clips from films, we will watch at least three feature length films (including one or more of the following: *Citizen Kane*, *The Godfather*, *Amélie*, *Chinatown*, *Grand Illusion*.). There will be 20-30 pages of reading most nights, six short written tests, and a final exam that will include a take-home essay.

**Fine      May 18-June 5      MTWRF 9:00am-12:00pm      CRN # 31306**

**HUMS 250-002      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 20- Aug 7      MTWRF 9:00-11:50am      CRN #: 32794**