

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
Undergraduate Course Descriptions
Winter 2012

Submitting papers approved by instructors from two different upper division courses may meet the departmental Upper Division Writing Requirement.

EGL 191.01-B Introduction to Poetry
Defining and Defending Poetry

For students, reading poetry often occasions feelings of anxiety and confusion. Ambivalence and even hostility toward poetry is hardly new, however. Detractors, starting with Plato, have complained that poetry is useless, pointless, or even dangerous.

This introductory course will consider the major debates that have gone on for centuries over the usefulness, purpose, and aesthetics of poetry. Students will learn how to approach new poems and gain the confidence to evaluate and analyze poetry. We will read and discuss a wide variety of poems from the Middle Ages to modern times, with an eye to understanding what makes a poem a poem (or, perhaps more importantly, what makes a great poem). Our primary goal will be to become careful readers of poetry, understanding the forms and devices used by poets and how poetic form interacts with meaning. Finally, we will read several poems and essays defending and defining poetry as an art form and consider to what extent authors enact or live up to their theory in their poetry.

The course will be primarily run as a seminar and will therefore require regular participation. Assignments will include a brief presentation, several short papers, one longer paper (approximately 15 pages of writing total) and a final exam. Authors will include Horace, Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Browning, Collins, and a variety of others.

Prerequisite: Completion of D.E.C. category A

SEC 01

TWRF 1:30-4:55 PM

K. FORET

EGL 192.01-B Introduction to Fiction
Unraveling the American Dream: An Exploration of Identity, Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

In an age where our lives are increasingly influenced by technology and media, how do we define ourselves? Who or what constitutes being an American and what does it mean to achieve “The American Dream”? In this course, we will explore the work of several writers of fiction that have shaped our thinking about identity, particularly our understanding of ethnicity, race, gender, and class. We will consider how these writers have chosen to represent identity and lived experiences, and how they have responded to popular belief in the promises of the American Dream.

Through textual analysis and lively discussion, we will identify and map out ideas, attitudes, and beliefs surrounding the American Dream, as well as the consequences of lost dreams and silenced voices. We will examine the relationship between the American Dream, racism, and sexism, and how writers, especially those of immigrant descent, have dealt with the realities of failed dreams and isolation. In looking at stories that rewrite past histories and remake identity, we will explore a variety of texts, including multimedia and graphic novels. As a class, we will consider how these texts help change, resist, and renew ideas about identity, conformity, and belonging.

Possible authors include Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, Maxine Hong Kingston, Leslie Silko, Gene Luen Yang, and Jhumpa Lahiri. Course requirements include several short response papers, a literary analysis paper, a multimedia project, and a final paper.

Prerequisite: Completion of D.E.C. category A

SEC 01 TWRF, 9:30-12:55 PM L. ESPOSITO

EGL 192.02-B Introduction to Fiction

Victorian Ghost Stories

Tales of disembodied terror were quite common in Great Britain during the latter half of the nineteenth-century, yet these tales did more than frighten and entertain. This course is designed to provide you with a brief overview of Victorian ghost stories, as well as how those tales betray larger questions concerning labor and industrialization (we also consider role of the body, race, and colonialism in relation to labor and production). Additionally, this course will introduce you to the techniques of close reading and analysis, and will be relatively writing intensive. We will read mainly short stories, and authors may include Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Rhoda Broughton, Sheridan Le Fanu, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Oscar Wilde. Requirements will include weekly readings, in-class analyses, and several response papers and/or exams. *Prerequisite:*

Completion of D.E.C. category A

SEC 02 TWRF 5:30-8:55 PM K. COX

EGL 390.01-G Topics in Literary and Cultural Studies

The Adventure Story

The goal of this course is to explore the adventure stories that were being written during the late 19th and early 20th century. Using Stoker's *Dracula* as our Victorian starting point, we will interrogate the adventure story through several lenses. First, we will look at the works of authors such as H.G Wells and H. Rider Haggard and examine their works as they relate to important ideas of the day, ranging from anthropology, biology, and evolutionary science. We will also see how these works reflect idea about religion, both traditional Eastern and Western religions, as well as some of the "spiritualist" beliefs that emerged around this time period. Finally, we will explore how the adventure story existed on the margins of "high modernism" and see in what ways, if any, "high modernists" engaged the adventure story. Course requirements include a midterm exam, final paper and periodic quizzes.

Prerequisite: U3 or U4 standing

Advisory Prerequisite: A literature course at the 200 level or higher.

SEC 01 TWRF 1:30 – 4:55 PM R. CAPUTO