

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH GRADUATE COURSES**

**FALL 2024**

**ENGLISH 500 A01      RESEARCH METHODS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
(1.5 units)  
Dr. Janelle Jenstad  
Thursdays 1:00-3:50pm**

English 500 is the foundational course of the English graduate program, orienting students to the broad field of the discipline of English studies and forging a collegial student cohort. The course primarily enables students to develop and learn about methods of research, diverse modes of research dissemination, academic conversation and professional goals, and established and emerging trends in English studies. Occasional visits to Special Collections will allow students to draw upon the rich materials in UVic Libraries as they practice advanced research methods, and guest speakers will model different ways of engaging the discipline. Note: ENGL 500 is compulsory for all English graduate students without equivalent previous credit.

**ENGLISH 533 A01      TOPICS IN GENRE IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA: THE  
MODERN AMERICAN NOVEL  
(1.5 units)  
Dr. Michael Nowlin  
Tuesdays 3:30-6:20pm**

This course will survey important American novels from the early decades of the twentieth century. We will be following the trajectory of modern American realism on both sides of what W.E.B. Du Bois called “the color line.” Themes include the possibilities of self-making in a society structured by class, gender, and especially racial differences; immigration and changing American demography; the First World War; constructions of American authorship; literature’s relation to emerging popular art forms.

**Texts:**

- Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives* (Norton Critical Edition)
- Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country* (Broadview)
- James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (Penguin)
- Willa Cather, *My Antonia* (Norton Critical Edition)
- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Broadview, 2nd edition)
- Nella Larsen, *Passing* (Penguin)
- Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (Harper Perennial)
- William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (Norton Critical, 3rd ed.)
- Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Harper Perennial)
- Richard Wright, *Native Son* (Harper Perennial)

## Assignments and Evaluation

Research essay (20 pp, 50%); Research essay proposal with annotated bibliography (10%); two seminar presentations (oral + written up version, 20% each).

### ENGLISH 532 A01

### TOPICS IN LITERARY HISTORY: TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRISH LITERATURE

(1.5 units)

Dr. Magdalena Kay

Wednesdays 11:30am-2:20pm

Modernism and postmodernism; Irish Literary Revival; anti-Revivalism; fidelity to the local versus cosmopolitanism (a false dichotomy?); “difficulty” versus popular appeal; the avant-garde; the Easter Rising and fight for independence; Irish Civil War; impact of the two world wars; colonialism, anti-colonialism, and postcolonialism; intertextuality and originality; the importance of Irishness; gender and canonicity; outsiders and coteries; critiques of nationality and Irishness; ecological anxiety; catastrophism; critique of capitalism. Authors to be studied include Yeats, Joyce, Synge, Bowen, Beckett, Heaney, Boland, Friel, Mahon, and McCourt.

#### Tentative Text List:

- W. B. Yeats, *Selected Poems* and *The Countess Cathleen*
- J. M. [John Millington] Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*
- James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- Patrick Kavanagh, *The Great Hunger*
- Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*
- Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
- Eavan Boland, *Collected Poems*
- Seamus Heaney, *100 Poems*
- Derek Mahon, *New Collected Poems*
- Brian Friel, *Translations*
- Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes*
- Daniel Corkery, “Rock-of-the-Mass” (short story to be provided as PDF)
- Edna O’Brien, “The Creature” (short story to be provided as PDF)

#### Tentative Assignments

- 2 presentations (one focused on history and culture; one focused upon summary and critique of a scholarly article) (25% each)
- Essay workshop participation (preparing a written synopsis, sharing it with the class, and providing feedback on other students’ synopses) (5%)
- Attendance and participation in seminar discussions (5%)
- Final essay (40%)

**ENGLISH 546 A01 TOPICS IN RELIGION IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA: “THE  
ERRANT VERSE AND VISIONS OF LANGLAND’S *PIERS  
PLOWMAN*”  
(1.5 units)  
Dr. Allan Mitchell  
Wednesdays 3:30-6:20pm  
ONLINE**

William Langland’s *Piers Plowman* (c. 1370-90) depicts the spiritual struggles and disturbed social conscience of “Will.” He is a pilgrim soul on the move; but the poetry is just as elusive and itinerant. Students will acquaint themselves with the work’s multiple genres and rhetorical strategies (e.g., dream vision, social satire, allegory, homily, fable, and debate), and some of the source materials (biblical, patristic, and so on) that went into its creation.

**Tentative Text List:**

*Piers Plowman by William Langland: A New Annotated Edition of the C-Text*, ed. Pearsall (U of Exeter Press), ISBN-10: 0859897842

**Assignments (be specific and include percentage values):**

Language and translation tests: 15%  
Response Papers x 4: 20%  
Presentations x 2: 20%  
Research Paper: 45%

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**SPRING 2025**

**ENGLISH 544 A01 TOPICS IN ETHICS IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA: NARRATIVE  
ETHICS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE**

**(1.5 units)**

**Dr. Corinne Bancroft**

**Mondays 1:00-3:30pm**

Across the United States people—politicians, parents, and others—have expressed a vested interest in the ethics of teaching literature. What should and should not be taught? What can and cannot be said in the classroom? Although these popular debates may reduce literature to another political battleground, narrative theorists have long considered narrative ethics in a more sophisticated way: how can literature raise ethical issues, and potentially, influence audiences? This course will train students in the field of narrative ethics and work through those theories in relationship to major works of American literature. The plots of many seminal American novels stage ethical questions on the interpersonal level of the characters that don't always neatly map onto the broader political debates that those novels also engage. I hope that students will be interested in this course both because of its theoretical frame and because of the opportunity to read great American novels by diverse authors.

**Primary texts may include:**

*The Heroic Slave* (1852) Frederick Douglass

*Invisible Man* (1952) Ralph Ellison

*LaRose* (2016) Louise Erdrich

*Benito Cereno* (1855) Herman Melville

*Beloved* (1987) Toni Morrison

*The Sympathizer* (2015) Viet Thanh Nguyen

**Theoretical texts may include experts from the following:**

*The Company We Keep* (1988) Wayne Booth

*Love's Knowledge* (1990) Marth Nussbaum

*Narrative Ethics* (1995) Adam Zachary Newton

*Ugly Feelings* (2005) Sianne Ngai

*Narrative Empathy* (2007) Suzanne Keen

*Living to Tell About It: The Ethics of Character Narration* (2005) James Phelan

*On Anger: Race, Cognition, Narrative* (2014) Marie Hammond and Sue Kim

*The Ethics of Storytelling* (2017) Hanna Meretoja  
*Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018) Daniel Heath Justice  
*Reading Contemporary Black British and African American Women Writers : Race, Ethics, Narrative Form* (2020) Jean Wyatt and Sheldon George

### **Tentative Assignments:**

- 25% Short oral presentations— At three points during the term, a student will introduce one of the readings. These presentations should summarize the main argument and relevant points of a given piece. Students should present on one piece of literary theory and one piece of criticism. The third presentation can be either theory or criticism. This assignment is intended to mimic responding to a Q&A session at a conference, teaching an undergraduate class, or answering a question during an oral qualifying exam.
- 40% Term paper (5,000-6,000 words)— While this class focuses on American literature, ethical analysis may be relevant to any narrative. This final assignment asks you to analyze a text of your choice through the lens of narrative ethics. Your paper should communicate your own original insight and be well-supported by critical research. If you do not submit this paper, you will receive an incomplete 'N' for the course.
- 10% Term paper abstract (500 words)— This assignment will give you the opportunity to practice the art of writing abstracts (which will be useful if you plan to apply to conferences or submit papers for publication). Additionally, your abstract will give me an opportunity to ensure your paper meets the expectations of the course and point you in the direction of useful sources.
- 10% Term paper outline and sources (1-2 pages)— For this assignment, you can sketch out the basic trajectory of your argument and identify 2-4 key sources you plan to use. While I recognize that everyone has their own writing process that may or may not include outlines, I see this as an opportunity for us to be on the same page about your project. The outline will give me idea of what you plan to do, and my feedback will let you know you are on the right track, so you can write and research with confidence.
- 15% Class participation— Graduate students attend all class periods and participate actively in class. I expect you to have completed all the assigned readings before class time, and to arrive with questions or insights. For each text, you should come to class with at least one thing to discuss such as a question, an idea, something that stood out, something that confused, etc.

**ENGLISH 545**

**TOPICS IN PLACE IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA:  
PYROCRITICISM  
(1.5 units)  
Dr. Nicholas Bradley  
Tuesdays 6:00-8:50pm  
ONLINE**

“Remember: Only *you* can prevent forest fires!” Thus Smokey Bear, since 1947. But in 2023, in the time of climate crisis, the question of prevention is less an individual than a collective concern. In western Canada and the United States, summer has become “fire season,” the effects of massive wildfires ranging from the disorienting but relatively minor—haze on the horizon, the

taste of smoke in the air—to the utterly catastrophic, as in the destruction of Lytton, BC, in 2021 and the evacuation of entire communities in the Northwest Territories in 2023. Focusing on contemporary Canadian literature, this course will examine selected works of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction that variously represent the inescapable presence of fire in the way we live now. Recent writing will be contextualized by selections from literary works, from the twentieth century and before, that put fire to various figurative uses; we will therefore wander from the distant mythological and geological pasts to the Atomic Age, reading the fires of birth and death, creation and destruction. The course will serve as an introduction to ecocriticism in general, but will draw in particular on scholarship exploring the emotional impact of environmental crisis, as in *Affective Ecocriticism* (2018), edited by Kyle Bladow and Jennifer Ladino, and *Climate Lyricism* (2022), by Min Hyoung Song. Time and interest permitting, we may seek out examples of Australian literature—Alice Robinson’s *Anchor Point* (2015), perhaps—for purposes of comparison. Students will be invited to reflect on their role as literary and cultural critics in public discourse about forest fires and other environmental subjects. My hope is that students from History (with interests in cultural and environmental history) might take the course, joining students from English in an interdisciplinary meeting of phoenixes and salamanders.

### **Tentative Text List:**

R. Bringhurst, *The Ridge* (2023) (Poetry)  
M. Fandrich, *Burning Sage: Poems from the Lytton Fire* (2023) (Poetry)  
M. Prior, *Burning Province* (2020) (Poetry)  
S.J. Pyne, *Awful Splendour: A Fire History of Canada* (2007) (Non-fiction)  
E. Struzik, *Dark Days at Noon* (2022) (Non-fiction)  
J. Vaillant, *Fire Weather* (2023) (Non-fiction)  
S. Watson, *The Double Hook* (1959) (Fiction)

Selections from, inter alia, The Bible; G. Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*; W. Berry, *The World-Ending Fire*; W. Blake, poems; M. Desmond, *On the Fireline*; T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*; R. Jeffers, poems; D.H. Justice, *Our Fire Survives the Storm*; J. Kerouac, *Desolation Angels*; J. Kogawa, *Obasan*; D.H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse*; J. Milton, *Paradise Lost*; G. Snyder, *Riprap*; K. Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*; W. Wordsworth, poems.

### **Tentative Assignments:**

Seminar presentation (15%) with subsequent short paper (15%)  
Public or creative contribution (e.g., an op-ed, book review, blog post, etc.) (20%)  
Major research paper (40%) with proposal and bibliography (10%)

**ENGLISH 522 A01**

**TOPICS IN CULTURAL STUDIES: LITERATURE AND ART OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

**(1.5 units)**

**Dr. Eric Miller**

**Thursdays 10am-12:50pm**

A wide-ranging survey to investigate how, as a matter of literature and art no less than of politics, the French Revolution isn't over (though historians reckon it lasted 1789-1799); revolutionary and reactionary literature and art as continually renewed *acts*, not just "texts"; the role of allusion in ensuring canonicity; the role of allusion in producing originality; how genre shapes revolution and reaction—drama, caricature, history painting, film, novel, essay, history, polemic, theory, biography, poem.

**Tentative Text List:** Authors and artists *may* include Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Xavier de Maistre, Georg Büchner, Simon Schama, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Germaine de Staël, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elisabeth-Louise Vigée-Le Brun, Jacques-Louis David, William Blake, Edmund Burke, Charles Dickens, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Karl Marx, Penelope Fitzgerald, Antonia Fraser, René-François de Chateaubriand, Erich Rohmer.

**Tentative Assignments:**

Three or four presentations: 40%; final paper: 40%; attendance and participation: 20%

**ENGLISH 552 A01**

**TOPICS IN CRITICAL AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES: CRITICAL ARCHIVES, HOSTILE ARCHIVES**

**(1.5 units)**

**Dr. Adrienne Williams Boyarin**

**Thursdays 3:00-5:50pm**

Exploration of the methodologies of critical archive studies, focused on archives of dispossessed, minoritized, or racialized subjects. What do archives destroy, distort, and misrepresent? how might we develop strategies for reading them against the grain of their hostilities and inherent power dynamics? Students encouraged to develop new methodological approaches to a range of UVic Special Collections and Archives, based on their own interests, and to produce projects that eschew traditional scholarly approaches to primary sources.

**Tentative Text List:** Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (Verso, 2019); Caswell, "'The Archive' is not an Archives" (*Reproduction* 16, 2016); Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Penn, 2016); Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (revised ed., Norton, 2022); Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (Norton, 2019); Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits" (in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed Hamilton et al., Kluwer, 2002); Miyashiro, "Our Deeper Past: Race, Settler Colonialism, and Medieval Heritage Politics" (*Literature Compass* 16, 2019); as well as a number of article-length case studies that will be collected in a (digital) coursepack.

**Tentative Assignments:** seminar lead on chosen methodology (10%); presentation on chosen UVic archive (15%); project proposal (10%); final project (design, methodological approach flexible, 55%).