

***COURSE DESCRIPTIONS ENGLISH DEPARTMENT***  
***Fall 2024***

**ENGL 1728/HIST2909**

Kincaid, Rachel Cusk, Jesmyn Ward, Lyn Hejinian, Yiyun Li, and Natalia Ginzburg (in translation.) You will also read Mary Karr's book on the craft of personal life writing, *The Art of Memoir*.

Requirements for the course include: one 5-7 page analysis paper, three reading response papers (2-3 pages), a number of short creative responses to in-class prompts, and one final memoir piece (7-10 pages) in two drafts. There is no midterm or final.

Interpreting Literature and the Arts, IIA Intro & Cross-list for Creative Writing Fulfills Women's Studies Minor.

## LITERATURE COURSES

### **ENGL 2000 Ways of Reading**

**T/Th 11:50AM-1:05PM L slot**

**Prof. Nora Nachumi**

Who decides what texts mean? Are some interpretations better than others? Does the author's intention matter? How does language work? In this foundational course, we will study texts of the culture around us, as well as literature, and will consider the major debates about meaning and interpretive practices that have emerged throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21

Psalter always at hand [and] beneath my pillow when I sleep and when I come to die.” During the Renaissance, the Psalms served as a touchstone for poets exploring the texture, edges, and impediments of human experience, which infused their art with the lyricism and wisdom of ancient Israel that has profoundly shaped Western literature and culture to this day. This course will explore the virtuosity of verse and by what means poetry yields sacred insight and secular wisdom. For Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, who taught English literature at Stern College after completing his Ph.D. in English at Harvard in the late 1950s, “[q]uite apart from the precision, economy, suggestiveness, and force, great poetry may be imaginative and passionate—and, as such, inspiring, exhilarating, and ennobling.” In seeking to understand the value(s) of verse, we will study a variety of poets including Ovid, Dante, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Bradstreet, and Goethe, among many others.

Taught under the auspices of the English department and the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, this course will feature occasional guest lectures by affiliated humanities faculty. This course is an introductory level “traditions” course in English. It fulfills a II requirement for the English major. It fulfills the “Interpreting Literature and the Arts” general education requirement. It counts toward the American Studies minor. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

### **ENGL 2901-N/WMNS 1020-N Introduction to Women’s Studies: Theory and Practice**

**T/Th 3:00-4:15PM N slot**

**Prof. Nora Nachumi**

This course is an introduction to Women’s Studies, an interdisciplinary field that grew out of the twentieth-century women’s movement. In its early years, those in the field concentrated on the “absence” of women (from literature, history, science, etc.) and worked to add them to the curriculum. Today, Women’s Studies is a vast and still growing field of study that draws on many different disciplines in the humanities and the sciences in its efforts to describe, understand and – in many cases – improve women’s lives.

This particular course is organized around diverse representations of female experience. Drawing on a variety of sources—including essays, short fiction and visual media—we will ask how different categories of identity (i.e. race, class, gender, age, ability, etc.) impact each other. We will theorize and articulate our own positions regarding the issues we discuss and engage with positions that differ from our own. Students do not have to define themselves as feminists—or even be sympathetic to feminism as they currently define it—in order to take this course. Like all good conversations, the ones in this class generally benefit from a variety of reasoned opinions. Requirements: class participation, 2 essays, 1 presentation, weekly forum posts, occasional quizzes.

This course is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English designed to pose questions about who reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It is an introductory-level course that fulfills a III D requirement for the English major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisites: English 1100 or FHS. It is required for students pursuing Women’s Studies Minor.

### **ENGL 2971 Literature and Social Change: Countercultures**

**M/W 1:40-2:55PM/1:25-2:40PM D slot**

**Matt Miller**

The word “counterculture” probably first calls to mind the countercultures of one’s own generation, usually music-related, whether hipster DIY culture, goth, hip-hop, or, if one is a bit older, grunge, punk, or even hippies and beatniks. Counter-cultures, however, have existed for as long as there have been groups of people unhappy with their present society. They have attracted musicians, artists, activists, poets, philosophers, rebels, and young people. Together, they have created alternate forms of culture that have profoundly affected

both their own movements and the mainstream societies they rebelled against.

This course focuses on the literature and countercultural expressions of Americans from the nineteenth century to the present. We will explore different formulations of cultural rebelliousness and redefinition: whether from the “proto-goth” of Edgar Allen Poe or today’s techno-horror and “steampunk” culture, from free-thinking, transcendentalist radicals like Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman to the beatniks and hippies of the 50s and 60s, or from the jazz countercultures of the 1920-40s to the cultural redefinitions of popular music. Students in this course will examine and analyze the ways Americans have both rebelled and, what’s harder, created alternate forms of society and the culture that shapes it.

This course is an introductory level “traditions” course in English. It fulfills a II C requirement for the English major. It fulfills the “Interpreting Literature and the Arts” general education requirement. It counts toward the American Studies minor. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

### **LITERATURE COURSES: Category III (Topics) Courses**

**ENGL 2710 Introduction to Fiction**  
**M/W 10:25-11:40AM B Slot**

**Prof. Seamus O’Malley**



This is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English, designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It fulfills a III Intro. requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Pre-requisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

## **ADVANCED LITERATURE COURSE: Category III (Topics)**

### **ENGL 3400 Irish Renaissances**

**M/W 11:55AM-1:10PM C slot**

**Seamus O'Malley**

What is a Literary Renaissance? In the year 1890 Irish literature was barely a blip on the radar. By 1922, W.B. Yeats and James Joyce were towering figures of world literature. The first half of this course will explore the period of the Irish Renaissance by reading the poems, plays and fiction of Yeats, J.M. Synge and Joyce. These writers faced many paradoxes: writing about Ireland in English; writing about Ireland from London or Paris; writing about an Irish nation that did not yet exist. These contradictions, rather than stymying artistic growth,

