

THE LITERARY EXPERIENCE
ENGLISH 1050

Course Descriptions
All sections are writing intensive

Fall 2018

1050-001

MWF 8:30 AM - 9:20 AM

Cathleen Velez

An Existential Journey

The concepts of man's struggle to find justice in a world of injustice and his need to search for self are addressed in *The Stranger*, the 20th century work of Albert Camus. In Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit*, the conception of an afterlife is explored, questioning the existence of hell and its impact on the human mind. In Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, the relationship of man to a superior being is addressed while underscoring the need to believe. The course is interdisciplinary and while focusing on the literary experience will delve into the areas of philosophy, theology, sociology and psychology. It is a writing intensive course. In this course you'll improve your writing and critical thinking skills by reading, discussing, and writing about literature. You will also gain confidence and pleasure in your reactions to literature and related arts. You'll give close readings to selections of fiction, poetry, drama, and memoir and respond to them in class discussions, formal papers, and informal writing. To enhance the coherence and interdisciplinary nature of the course, we will focus on the explosion of literature created by American, Irish, British, and French writers living in Paris between WWI and the Great Depression: the so-called Lost Generation. We will examine how the artistic, financial, and social freedoms of this milieu led to creative surges not only in literature but also in art and music. We will visit the art museum to see literary innovations mirrored in art. To widen our perspective of literary modernism, we may also read works from contrasting historical periods.

1050-002

MWF 9:30 AM - 10:20 AM

Robert Duggan

Apocalypse Now/Then: A-Ha! Moments in Literature

Say “apocalypse” and people think of the end of the world, but the ancient Greeks knew it as meaning a “revelation” or “uncovering.” From Kate Chopin’s short gem “The Story of an Hour” to Alan Moore’s musings on time and eternity in the graphic novel *Watchmen*, we’ll uncover great “a-ha!” moments of knowledge—both good and bad—and reveal their impact on both characters and readers. We’ll time travel to experience the Greeks’ original tale of (not) seeing and (not) believing, Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*. Together, we’ll drift down the Congo River towards “The horror! The horror!” in Joseph Conrad’s novella *Heart of Darkness* and watch how Francis Ford Coppola reinterprets that tale in the film *Apocalypse Now*. From these literary experiences, we’ll discuss not just the works themselves, but also the intertwined nature of reading and writing to generate both informal and formal essays incorporating the writing process from thesis to draft to final (not necessarily finished) product.

1050-003

MWF 9:30 AM - 10:20 AM

Cecilia Ready

The Beats and Their Spawn

Kerouac, Cassidy, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, DiPrima, Snyder...

These artists and many more exploded onto the post-World War II American literary scene. From Columbia University in New York to City Lights Book Store in San Francisco, they spread out across the country--beat, downtrodden; beat, moving to the rhythms of jazz; beat, seeking the beatific vision of America. Fueled by French Existentialism, Zen Buddhism, Catholicism, hungry for "kicks, joy, darkness," they voiced the dreams, fears, and obsessions of their generation. And they spawned a revolutionary aesthetic in literature, music, and film which lives on after them. Some of it is beautiful, some of it not, but none of it is boring. Can you dig it?

1050-004

MWF 10:30 AM - 11:20 AM

Cecilia Ready

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1050-005

MWF 11:30 AM - 12:20 PM

Robert O'Neil

High Heels and Machine Guns

In this course we will survey different genres of literature including short stories, novels, journalism, documentaries, and Hollywood films in order to further understand the dynamic relationship between American culture and American war making. The course will open with readings from *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories*. This collection of stories will serve as the base for our understanding of the dominant themes that permeate American culture, including social class, race, gender, and identity. We will, for example, read stories by Joyce Carol Oates, Tobias Wolff, Russell Banks, Kate Braverman, Anne Beattie, and Richard Ford. How do these themes affect American war making? We will then transition into books that explore how American citizens and soldiers experienced the War on Terror. A veteran of the war in Iraq, Phil Klay, won the National Book Award for his collection of short stories entitled *Redeployment*. Both Klay's work and Ben Fountain's novel *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* will highlight the struggles soldiers experience in trying to transition back home. Fountain's novel is set in an NFL stadium where a unit of soldiers is being celebrated for bravery during a halftime show that includes Beyoncé and all the pageantry of professional football and big business. At the end of the course, students will be expected to argue their own conclusions about the relationship between culture and war, and the responsibility citizens should bear for both fighting and returning American soldiers.

1050-006

MWF 12:30 PM - 1:20 PM

Robert O'Neil

High Heels and Machine Guns

In this course we will survey different genres of literature including short stories, novels, journalism, documentaries, and Hollywood films in order to further understand the dynamic relationship between American culture and American war making. The course will open with readings from *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories*. This collection of stories will serve as the base for our understanding of the dominant themes that permeate American culture, including social class, race, gender, and identity. We will, for example, read stories by Joyce Carol Oates, Tobias Wolff, Russell Banks, Kate Braverman, Anne Beattie, and Richard Ford. How do these themes affect American war making? We will then transition into books that explore how American citizens and soldiers experienced the War on Terror. A veteran of the war in Iraq, Phil Klay, won the National Book Award for his collection of short stories entitled *Redeployment*. Both Klay's work and Ben Fountain's novel *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* will highlight the struggles soldiers experience in trying to transition back home. Fountain's novel is set in an NFL stadium where a unit of soldiers is being celebrated for bravery during a halftime show that includes Beyoncé and all the pageantry of professional football and big business. At the end of the course, students will be expected to argue their own conclusions about the relationship between culture and war, and the responsibility citizens should bear for both fighting and returning American soldiers.

1050-007

TR 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Cathleen Velez

An Existential Journey

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1050-008**TR 2:30 PM - 3:45 PM**

Rena Potok

This American Life

This course will allow us to hold a mirror up to ourselves and to each other, as we explore central issues at the forefront of current discourse in American life today: American identities; immigration; gender and sexuality; 9/11 and its aftermath; war and homecoming; religion and faith; race and racism. The literature we'll read is a mix of contemporary novels, short stories, plays, written poems, and slam poetry, in addition to TED Talks, podcasts, and other media resources. Our approach to reading literature will include full-class discussions, small discussion groups, in-class response writing, and one-on-one text study. In addition to focusing on the literature, we'll dedicate class time to discussing and practicing the art of writing through writing workshops; clinics on prewriting, thesis writing, and self-editing; and opportunities to write and share personal and creative responses to our readings. The culture of the class will be one in which we develop a community of learners guided by trust and curiosity to guide and support us in difficult and enlightening conversations about this American life.

1050-009**TR 2:30 PM - 3:45 PM**

Moira McCole

Voices in American Lit

Who is an American? This class will explore American voices from the past and present, from various regions and ethnicities. Not a survey course, the class is arranged by theme to enjoy how writers use a variety of genres (poetry, short story, essay, novel) to express similar concerns: identity, the American Dream and its nightmares, the joys and pains of assimilation. Writers from Washington Irving to Jhumpa Lahiri help us investigate the promises and problems of our past that reverberate today. Through their voices, we explore others' lives and thoughts as well as our own. The class will read and analyze their works in great detail, will discuss the literature with clarity, and will write with precision and purpose.

1050-010**TR 4:00 PM - 5:15 PM**

August Tarrier

End World - Feel Fine

Every generation produces its own idea of the world's end. That vision often tells us a lot more about what preoccupies us at the time than it does about what the future might be like. If a utopian impulse leads us to imagine a better world, a dystopian one elicits a cautionary tale: if we continue in this direction, we're in deep trouble. We'll be studying some of these cautionary tales in order to discern what might bring about our downfall or enslave us, but also to examine the ways in which memory serves as a tool of resistance and a first step toward collective action against authoritarian or repressive regimes. We'll be reading and/or viewing *The War of the Worlds*, *The Road*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Children of Men*. In addition to our class discussions, expect that you'll be participating in small group discussions, and writing and revising three papers.

1050-100

TR 6:00 PM - 7:15 PM

Joseph Edgette

Viewing Human Condition

Literature has often been described as the written record of the human experience. This course will explore the literary account of the impact of nature, society, and self on the individual from a humanistic perspective. Through the examination, analysis, and discussion of selected literary examples, and films, the student will have the opportunity to become better acquainted, more accurately informed, and more keenly aware of literature's overall influence on and by its human creator. A rich sampling from the writings of selected authors, poets, and dramatists, and others will shape the topics that comprise this excursion into the human condition.