English Department Fall 2016 Course Descriptions

ENGL 100 – English for Non-Native Speakers
4 semester hours
MacDonald, Ian

Prerequisite: Departmental permission required
English for Non-Native Speakers is an introductory course in reading, writing, and speaking skills for students whose first language is something other than English. Course work will include essays, presentations, and a research project, but will be adjusted to meet the needs of the current group of students. The class emphasizes an introduction to American culture and college life as well as language skills. Departmental permission required.

ENGL 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing: Theme: “So they say…”
4 semester hours
Askeland, Lori

“That’s what she said,” is, of course, a punchline—an oft-repeated phrase that can turn almost any innocent statement into a mildly bawdy joke. It works by turning the innocent statement into a conversation, a quotation. The joke reminds us that even when one person alone seems to be talking, even at length—say in a long lecture—they are actually responding to things that others have said. In academic work, writers frequently test things that “they say,” things that have been said so repeatedly that we have come to see as “truth” or “common sense.” Even if we end up disagreeing with the writer’s challenge to conventional wisdom, the process of any belief (one that we may not have even realized that we shared) makes our thinking better, more self-aware—we have a better sense of why we believe what we believe. That process is, in effect, critical thinking. The writing we’ll be doing all term will help you to make your writing more relevant and engaged as you come to see your writing as part of an on-going conversation with other writers and thinkers in our world. You’ll write 3 papers, complete a midterm revision portfolio, and revise one of your papers into a longer paper that incorporates independent research. Writing Intensive.

English 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing: Rap and Rhetoric
4 semester hours
Battle, Sha’Dawn

This course is aimed at acclimatizing students to themes, cultural connotations, and political agendas in rap music. It will mainly center the embedded rhetorical functions of rap music, linking them to conversations pertaining to race, identity formation, and cultural appropriation. The course will discover the ways in which rap music—both the lyrics and the culture—might foster the basis for learning modes of critical analysis, argumentation, and research. As such, rap music will be used as a cultural artifact to explore the multiple dimensions of academic writing.

English 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing
4 semester hours
Davis, Robert

This course is an introduction to composition. We will cover many of the foundational skills of expository writing in class, and we’ll work with style and revision exercises from writing handbooks. But ultimately better writing comes from practice, practice, and more practice. Writing is not a matter of chance or good luck. It’s
not a matter of first-draft inspiration. Successful prose in all disciplines is based on specific techniques any writer can master. We discover these techniques, in part, by analyzing prose we admire and by applying what we learn in that analysis to our own developing style. For this reason, I'll urge you to become an active reader as well as an active writer and to study the essays and narratives in the course as a source for techniques you can use yourself.

ENGL 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing  
4 semester hours  
Fallon, D’Arcy

“Tell me what you eat and I’ll tell you who you are.”—Renowned gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, 1825 Food. We all eat it. We all need it. Whether our favorite meal is tofu or a big beef burrito from Chipotle’s, food is the engine that keeps us alive. But how much do we really know about what we’re putting in our bodies? It’s complicated. As the filmmakers note in the award-winning documentary film Food, Inc., “The way we eat has changed more in the last 50 years than in the previous 10,000.” In “Food for Thought,” we’ll look at the role food plays in agriculture, big business, ethics, culture, gender, politics, and cooking shows.

English 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing  
4 semester hours  
Heaney, Brian

English 101 introduces writing on the college level. Its purpose is to foster the skills necessary to produce coherent, persuasive prose: developing ideas thoroughly, using rhetorical strategies appropriate to subject and audience, focusing and supporting a thesis, structuring well developed paragraphs, generating mature and effective sentences, choosing precise and expressive language, and observing the conventions of written prose. Individual sections employ a variety of techniques for inculcating standards of good prose; but all 101 classes require a variety of writing assignments including paragraphs and short essays written in and out of class (about 4000 words in total) and a short research paper designed to introduce techniques of library research and documentation (about 2000 words).

ENGL 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing  
4 semester hours  
Hinson, Scot

Taking intellectual and emotional risks lies at the heart of writing. Testing your limits, stretching your intellectual and creative abilities, expanding the boundaries of your intellectual and emotional lives—this is the writer’s project. You will only realize your full potential as a thinker and writer by doing more and better work than you ever thought possible, and, above all, by learning to take risks. This course provides you the opportunities and the environment in which to take the risks necessary for thinking analytically and writing well. English 101 is a composition course designed to give you intensive practice in the art of expository writing. The course emphasizes the writing process and the development of clear and purposeful, well-focused writing, which addresses a well-defined audience. English 101 will call on your analytical and organizational skills, as well as provide opportunities for you to enhance your ability to design and structure writing and to improve your technical expertise. The course will focus on the conventions of academic discourse and selecting, integrating, and documenting sources. This course is also designed to teach you how to read and write effectively at Wittenberg. Also, it will help you to discover that reading and writing are not separate activities, but closely related ones. The course is founded on the belief that learning to read, see, and think analytically is essential to becoming a proficient, accomplished writer. Writing Intensive.
ENGL 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing: Writing About Place
4 semester hours
Inboden, Robin

Have you ever felt deeply attached to a place? Felt awed by the history or beauty of a building or a wild place? Felt energized by community development or wanted to make a difference? We’ll be thinking about all those things as a focus of our reading and writing in this course. Our primary goal is, of course, to improve your skills as a writer of expository prose. To that end, we will write various kinds of essays, focusing on concrete language, critical thinking, organizational skills, sentence structure, style, and argumentation. Assignments will include a personal essay, an informative essay with research, an argument with research, and an analytical paper. Success in the course will depend on thoughtful reading, active participation, and serious work through the process of revision in order to produce excellent final papers. Writing Intensive.

English 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing: Writing in a Global Community
4 semester hours
Incorvati, Rick

This writing course wrestles with controversial topics, in part because subjects that divide us can also challenge us to sharpen our writing skills. These topics require us to navigate the potential for offense, assess critically the facts as our readers might receive them, seek out common ground with indifferent or unfriendly audiences, and judiciously use rhetorical techniques that shape the way readers will hear our message. In this writing-intensive course, we'll read a steady stream of articles to help us better understand free speech issues and social justice claims, we'll tackle five papers that test our argumentation skills, and we'll regularly seek out feedback from our peers to help us become effective and responsible global citizens. Writing intensive.

ENGL 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing
4 semester hours
Mattison, Michael

In this course, students will work to produce mature, coherent, persuasive prose on a range of topics. There will be a blend of assignments, from smaller ones that allow students to focus on the finer points of their writing process to larger ones that allow them to practice their research skills and interpretive abilities. Texts include M.T. Anderson’s *Feed* and Gerald Graff’s *They Say, I Say*. For this section, students will also be required to hold one-to-one sessions with advisors from the Writing Center.

ENGL 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing: The Digital Humanist
4 semester hours
Polak, Katharine

This course will examine what it means to be a human, and a humanist, in the digital age. By approaching a range of texts and conceptions of what it means to interact textually and culturally, we will explore the interplay between the physical and digital landscapes we encounter daily. By offering an introduction into writing across different types of media, we will engage with how we position our own identities differently in digital and physical space, we will lay the groundwork for discussions of how we receive, interpret, and produce both digital and traditional texts. As this is a Composition course, writing will be our primary emphasis, but we will pay particular attention to the ways in which compositions take shape in a variety of ways across media. How does our unique personality, background, and perspective influence the way we consume digital media? What do we do with that media? How do our choices in searches and the way we present ourselves online constitute rhetorical choices? How do these choices in turn influence our future? What use is a traditional text in
the digital age? When are the tools provided by a digital text preferable, and when are they unnecessary? How have reading and writing in a digital environment changed the way we see ourselves? We will consider these questions and others as we explore Digital Humanities with a focus on writing clear, interesting, precise, evocative essays that can be adapted to both traditional and digital formats. We will use our inquiry about the interface between humanity and technology to explore poverty and privilege.

ENGL 101E – Introduction to Expository Writing: Memory, Memorial, and Restitution
4 semester hours
Richards, Cynthia

All writing is an act of memorial. When we write, we record what has happened, give shape and meaning to the past, and name what often feels elusive in the immediacy of the present. This course will use this natural connection between the act of writing and the act of remembering as a broad thematic rubric for developing the skills in writing you will need to succeed in college, and even more importantly, begin to make meaning out of the experiences of your life. The course will include a personal essay, an interpretative/analytical essay, a research paper, and finally the writing of a descriptive essay that memorialize some person, place or object that is important to you.

Along the way, we will read compelling essays and works of literature, including essays by Edward Said and Patricia Hampl, the novels The Dew Breaker and Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, and various articles that explore the nature of memory and the act of memorializing. We will also debate issues surrounding the theme of restitution; how do we make right the past, particularly when some injustice has occurred? In the process of exploring these themes, you will be asked to reflect on your own process of writing, to work through several drafts of each paper, and to remember the value of careful editing in all writing projects. We will meet in conference, work together in small groups, participate in class discussions, and engage in daily class freewriting exercises. The goal of this course is nothing less than persuading you that you are all writers and that writing can help shape a meaningful life.

ENGL 180A – 20th Century African American Protest Literature and Music
4 semester hours
Battle, Sha’Dawn

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E

How do we situate African American music and literature in the context of protest and resistance? How, for example, might cultural critics uncover historical and thematic parallels between undergirding ideals of the Harlem Renaissance and Kanye West and Jay Z’s “Murder to Excellence?” Does Rihanna’s famous tagline, “Bitch better have my money” echo Black American sentiments regarding the failures of Reconstruction? This course is designed to investigate the relationship between 20th century African American literature and musical forms of expression, with respect to how both respond and have responded to multiple forms of oppression. We will discuss, analyze, and critique the historical and cultural conditions that led to the production of both the literature and the music as viable modes of protest. While we will discuss the importance of the “Sorrow Songs,” the Blues tradition, and Jazz, this course will focus on arguably the most expressive art form of contemporary African American culture: hip hop. Furthermore, we will cover the literary periods spanning the Antebellum era to the 1980s.
ENGL 180A – Our Vampires, Ourselves: Vampires in Fiction and Film
4 semester hours
Hinson, Scot

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E
For millennia, creatures of the night have descended upon us to drink our blood, drain the life from us, and ignite our imaginations. Succubi, lamiae, great white worms, and debonair counts all want one thing and one thing only—blood, for "the blood is the life." Vampires have fascinated us from their first appearances as creatures of our nightmares, to their manifestations as the undead, swollen with grave gases, to the reluctant, beautiful, and sensitive outcasts we find in today's vampire novels and films. This course will study vampires across time and cultures in fiction and film with a special emphasis on understanding what our obsessions with vampires can tell us about our cultures and ourselves. What explains our obsession with vampires? Why are we seeing an epidemic of vampire stories and movies? And what explains the evolution of the vampire from a bloated, soulless corpse to a brooding, romantic hero? Writing intensive. Cross-listed with Women's Studies.

ENGL 180A – Chick Flicks: From Melodrama to Rom-Com
4 semester hours
Inboden, Robin

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E
From Bette Davis’ eyes and Joan Crawford’s shoulders to Rita Hayworth’s legs and Judy Garland’s ruby slippers, classic Hollywood stars defined, for better or worse, American ideas of modern womanhood. But how much has really changed? This course will interrogate women’s changing roles as stars, as filmmakers, and as audience members. We will begin by learning some basic terminology and approaches to analyzing film as an art form. Centering on the Classical Hollywood Cinema (1930-1960), with comparisons to contemporary films, we will then turn to a thematic and historical consideration of the various kinds of roles assigned to women in different films and film genres, from classic melodrama, screwball comedy, and film noir to today's rom-com. We will see how many classical Hollywood movies have created conformist role models for women even while subverting them. Readings may include work by Jeanine Basinger, Molly Haskell, Laura Mulvey, Mary Anne Doane, and Mick LaSalle, among others. The graded work of the course will consist of a shot-by-shot analysis, quizzes, several tests, and a final exam. Counts towards Cinema Studies minor and Women’s Studies minor.

ENGL 190A/C – Native American Literatures
4 semester hours
Askeland, Lori

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E
In this course we will read American Indian and First Nations literatures from origin stories (which continue to be told today) to contemporary poetry and prose, as well as some artwork, music, and film. As we experience these diverse cultural works, we will address a number of questions: How should Native American literature be taught and read, given its diversity and its roots in the oral tradition? How do these texts challenge what we think of as storytelling, "America," and even ourselves? How is the unique legal relationship between American Indians and the United States (and Canadian) government represented in Native writings? How do Native artists and writers contest and revise stereotypes of Indians? Students will be expected to keep up with current events via newspapers and the Internet and to become more acquainted with issues affecting indigenous people. (You can start now, if you wish! This news source is great: http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/). The writing intensive course will involve several short writings (1-2 pp), two longer papers (5-7 pp), at least one presentation, a midterm and a final exam. Cross-listed with Women’s Studies. CLAC-friendly.
ENGL 240 – Introduction to Creative Writing
4 semester hours
Polak, Katharine

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E
The process of creative writing always rests on a contract between the writer and the work that states plainly “we don’t know where this is going.” An introduction to creative writing is an introduction to finding new ways to experience the world and an introduction to some ways to communicate those experiences to others. This class will provide a very basic introduction to four forms of creative writing—poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and graphic narrative—and will provide the rudimentary tools and habits of thought that create successful creative writers. Requirements include experimentation, humor, failure, discussion, provocation, movement, delight, frustration, re-thinking, re-framing, reconsidering, and (of course) writing.

ENGL 241 – Beginning Journalism
4 semester hours
Fallon, D’Arcy

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E
This course provides a basic introduction to the practice and principles of journalism, with an emphasis on writing for newspapers. We will discuss news, features, entertainment stories, opinion and sports writing, as well as interviewing skills, ethics, copy-editing, headline writing, and other related topics. Students will be expected to meet deadlines, do frequent in-class writing exercises, and to thoughtfully and constructively respond to their classmates’ stories. Grades will be based on stories produced, occasional quizzes, and class participation. Students will be required to write at least two stories for The Torch, Wittenberg’s weekly student newspaper.

ENGL 270A – Literary Form and Interpretation
4 semester hours
Polak, Kate

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E
Life writing can take many forms: poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and graphic narrative are only a few of the ways in which people attempt to communicate their various realities. These forms open up different methods of telling the story of a life, of a lesson learned, and of the beauty, wonder, dread, and delight that are a part of human existence. By examining life writing in various forms and studying the literary devices that allow these forms to re-create the world, we will develop a foundation for the study of literature. To this end, we will focus form and style, literary criticism, historical context, and theoretical interventions in order to better understand how interpreting place is central to both literature and life.

ENGL 280A – British Literary Genealogies: Justify the Ways of God
4 semester hours
Incorvati, Rick

Prerequisite: ENGL 180A or ENGL 190A/C or ENGL 270A
The poet John Milton used the expression “justify the ways of God” to announce his aim in Paradise Lost, and while not all the writers in this course took up this ambitious task in their texts, imagining our relationship to a higher being—or lack thereof—seems to have been of sufficient concern to have left its mark on the poetry, plays, essays, and fiction that we’ll encounter. Our reading schedule brings together these texts to pursue several goals: to examine and test convictions, to practice a genealogical perspective, and to develop an understanding of and an appreciation for British literature across many centuries. Writing intensive.
ENGL 290A – American Literary Traditions
4 semester hours
Davis, Robert

Prerequisite: ENGL 180A, 190A/C, or ENGL 270A
“Writers don’t simply look at nature, or into their own hearts, and transcribe what they find there,” Robert Scholes argues. “This is so because for them the very act of looking is already shaped by the art and writing of the past. Once we realize that all texts are reworkings of other texts, that all writing is really rewriting, we can see that originality doesn’t mean creating something out of nothing but rather making interesting changes in what’s been done before.” The technical word for what Scholes is describing is “intertextuality”—which comes from the Latin word, intertexto, meaning “to intermingle while weaving.” In this way of thinking, writers do not create their books out of thin air but intermingle their experience and ideas with other texts and authors, “making interesting changes,” as Scholes says, “in what’s been done before.” The more we know about the literary and cultural materials writers work with, then, the better we can judge what they’re doing that’s new. That idea is the premise of this course. English 290 takes in a wide sweep of American literature. We’ll study Puritanism, rationalism, transcendentalism and the gothic, and look carefully at the works of individual writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Flannery O’Connor, and Louise Erdrich. But the goal of this course is not just to expose students to the range and variety of American writing or to cover its historical periods. I’m more interested in teaching students how to think intertextually about literature—understanding how writers play off one another as they re-work and re-write the literature of the past.

ENGL 327 – Advanced Rhetoric and Grammar
4 semester hours
Mattison, Michael

Prerequisite: Departmental permission required
This course examines the rhetorical canons of invention, organization, and style, using the last as a reason to investigate current syntactic conventions (how words, phrases, and clauses are combined into sentences). We will also consider how and why language use has changed through the years.

ENGL 335 – Writing for Social Change
2 semester hours
Incorvati, Rick

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E
This Words at Work course has several assumptions at its core: first, good writing can persuade people to do good things, and second, talented writers serve their communities mightily when they speak truth to power or advocate forcefully on behalf of those unable to speak for themselves. This course will challenge you to identify real shortcomings in the world around you, and then it will sharpen your writing and rhetorical skills as you become a voice for change. You’ll also learn to adapt your writing to suit a range of venues where ideas encounter an audience, venues like social media sites, newspaper and magazine editorials, blogs, press releases, talking point memos, and open letters. Writing intensive.
ENGL 342 – Advanced Creative Nonfiction
4 semester hours
Fallon, D’Arcy

Prerequisite: English 240
Essayist Vivian Gornick once said, “Good writing has two characteristics. It’s alive on the page and the reader is persuaded that the writer is on a voyage of discovery.” This course is designed to help launch you on that voyage by studying, discussing, and writing creative nonfiction, also known as literary nonfiction. It’s a branch of writing that employs some of the same literary techniques that novelists use (dialogue, narrative, scene setting, exposition, story arc, shifting point of view, characterization, etc.) to describe actual persons, places, and events. For fall 2013, this creative nonfiction course in particular will focus on nature, memoir, travel and the lyric essay.

ENGL 343 – Screenwriting
4 semester hours
MacDonald, Ian

Prerequisite: ENGL 240, THDN 240 strongly recommended
Think of your favorite film—the way characters always seem to say just what you’d expect them to, the tricks and feints that move the plot forward, the exciting climax and fitting conclusion. Where did that film begin? Every film starts as a skeleton: the screenplay. Screenplays provide dialogue, plot and setting to directors who then mold and shape the script to fit their visions. Since so many details of a film lie in the hands of directors, cinematographers, and editors, the film/TV screenplay is a particularly challenging genre to write in. In this class we will read a number of screenplays and assess their adaptations into film. This course will thus mix features of the traditional workshop and the craft-study classroom. Students will research and practice the traditional construction of cinematic screenplays; their vagaries of formatting; the subtleties of dialogue, setting, and scene change; and finish by writing either a full-hour treatment for TV or half a cinematic screenplay.

ENGL 352 – Reading the Body in Eighteenth-Century Literature
4 semester hours
Richards, Cynthia

Prerequisite: ENGL 270A and 280A
This course will focus on the body in eighteenth-century literature, be it the ravaged bodies of war or the “othered” bodies we, as readers, often refuse to acknowledge. It will look at the cultural refusal to stage the torture and execution of Oroonoko, to acknowledge the effect of combat duty on the work of John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester, to name the violence at the core (and even in the title) of The Rape of the Lock, to resist the impulse to laugh when the vulnerable female bodies of the young and aged are made the target of satiric attack in Frances Burney’s Evelina, or express anything but disdain for William Godwin’s clinical description of his wife’s dying body in The Memoirs of the Author of the “Vindication of the Rights of Woman.” It will also spend considerable time looking at an important novel that defied this trend: Laurence Sterne’s Tristram Shandy, which insists on reminding us of both the wounds of war and the infirmities of disease. To engage these texts, the course will engage some of our most transformative contemporary, theoretical perspectives, including disability studies and trauma theory. Students will lead class discussion, engage the texts using both theoretical and applied methodologies, and produce a range of written work—formal and informal—culminating in a final research project geared toward the student’s interest. Cross-listed with Women’s Studies.
ENGL 365 – Keats: Beauty, Love, and Lyric
2 semester hours
Incorvati, Rick
Prerequisite: ENGL 270A and 280A or permission
At 21, John Keats left his medical training behind to devote his time and energy to poetry. At 23, he contracted the tuberculosis that would end his life. And at 24, he became too ill to continue in his ambitions. He died at 25. A short life, but in his few vital years of creativity, Keats wrote poetry that made heads spin, scribbled ideas in manuscripts that would shape the practices of writers in decades to come, and wrote love letters that would become the stuff of twenty-first century movies. This literary immersion course is devoted to the poems and letters of Keats. There will be reading quizzes, short response papers, and a final exam as we take up a writer known for his love of beauty, his zest for life, and his unique talent for expression.

ENGL 373A – Women in Literature II: British
4 semester hours
Inboden, Robin
Prerequisite: ENGL 270A and 280A or permission
In the last two centuries, the enforced silence of women in the preceding millennium has been broken, sometimes indignantly and sometimes joyously, by a chorus of important women writers. These women begin to give not only a feminine perspective on the "universal" (often mostly male) experience of humanity, but also their accounts of specifically feminine experience. Many of the themes we will explore are continuations and expansions of those in Women in Literature I, but this course is not dependent on that one. We will be looking at such common themes as the domestic sphere, the stereotyping of women as either virgin or whore, the education of women, the repression and degradation of women's writing, and the creation of the feminine self. In exploring these themes, we will, I hope, recognize the roots of many of our own ideas about gender, both positive and negative.

We will read a broad selection of British, Irish, and Commonwealth writers, beginning with Jane Austen and including authors such as the Brontës, Barrett Browning, C. Rossetti, George Eliot, Woolf, Rhys, Boland, and Byatt. Graded work will include two short papers, a longer researched paper (12-15 pages), and a final examination or project. Writing Intensive. Fulfills the requirement in upper-level British literature or women's literature for the teaching licensure track. Counts towards the Women's Studies minor.

ENGL 380 – Learning to Live: Contemporary American Fiction
4 semester hours
Hinson, Scot
Prerequisite: ENGL 270A and 290A
In the 21st century is it naïve to believe that literature can teach us something about how to live better lives? At various times throughout history, critics have believed that imaginative literature was mere lies, fabrications, distracting us from reality and more often than not, the work of the devil. So, why do we read imaginative literature? In recent decades, literary scholars have taken up, again, the question of morality and literature. What is the relationship between a “good” book and its inherent moral value—are beautifully written books always moral? Can reading imaginative literature help us to become, in Henry James’ words, “people on whom nothing is lost,” people whose moral sensibilities and empathetic powers are finely tuned? What, if anything, changes when we read literature in search of moral principles that might help shape our values and beliefs? In Contemporary American Fiction, we’ll try to answer this question by reading some of the latest fiction being written in North America. We’ll read in a variety of genres, including magical realism and speculative fiction, and from a range of ethnic literatures. The course will include writers like Louise Erdrich, Don DeLillo, Joyce Carol Oates, Toni Morrison, Cormac McCarthy, Margaret Atwood, Thomas Pynchon, Marilynne Robinson, Ann Patchett, Jhumpa Lahiri, Susan Straight, and others. Reading and writing intensive, this course requires frequent reading quizzes, a series of short essays, a comprehensive final examination, and a final research project.