ENGL  UN3001  Literary Texts, Critical Methods  
Jenny Davidson

Students who register for ENGL UN3001 must also register for one of the sections of ENGL UN3011 Literary Texts, Critical Methods. This course is intended to introduce students to the advanced study of literature. Students will read works from different genres (poetry, drama, and prose fiction), drawn from the medieval period to the present day, learning the different interpretative techniques required by each. The course also introduces students to a variety of critical schools and approaches, with the aim both of familiarizing them with these methodologies in the work of other critics and of encouraging them to make use of different methods in their own critical writing. This course (together with the companion seminar ENGL UN3011) is a requirement for the English Major and Concentration. It should be taken as early as possible in a student's career. Fulfillment of this requirement will be a factor in admission to seminars and to some lectures.

ENGL  UN3920  Medieval English Texts: Chaucer  
David Yerkes

The focus will be on Chaucer's long poem Troilus and Criseyde. You must contribute to class discussions.

CLEN  GU4015  Vernacular Paleography  
Christopher Baswell

This class is designed to introduce graduate students (and some advanced undergraduates) to the paleography of English vernacular manuscripts written during the period ca. 700-1500, with brief excursions into Latin and into French as it was written on the Continent. Students interested in a broader introduction to Latin and the national hands of the Continent should also consider taking Dr. Dutschke's Latin Paleography course, usually offered in alternate years to Prof. Baswell’s.

The purpose of the course is fourfold: (1) to teach students how to make informed judgments with regard to the date (and sometimes place) of origin, (2) to provide instruction and practice in the accurate reading and transcription of medieval scripts, (3) to learn and use the basic vocabulary of the description of scripts, and (4) to examine the manuscript book as a product of the changing society that produced it and, thus, as a primary source for the study of that society and its culture.

In order to localize manuscripts in time and place, we also examine aspects of the written page besides the script, such as the material on which it is written, its layout and ruling, the decoration and illustration of the text, the provenance, and binding. We also examine the process of manuscript production itself, whether institutional, commercial, or personal. The history of book production and of decoration and illumination are thus considered part of the study of paleography, as is the history of patronage and that of libraries. Manuscripts are among the most numerous and most reliable surviving witnesses to medieval social and intellectual change, and they will be examined as such.

To become proficient in the study of manuscripts it is necessary to look at manuscripts, as well as to read about them. The more time you are able to spend looking at manuscripts critically, in the manuals and in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the greater will be your first-hand experience and hence your reliable knowledge.
Heroes, Lovers, and Visionaries: Eng. Lit. to 1500
Hannah Weaver

This course will introduce some of the most fascinating texts of the first eight hundred years of English literature, from the period of Anglo-Saxon rule through the Hundred Years’ War and beyond—roughly, 700–1500 CE. We will proceed by exploring the role of some crucial figures in medieval writing: heroes, lovers, and visionaries. These key players relate in complex ways to the major genres of the Middle Ages, such as epic, romance, and spiritual writing; part of our work will be disentangling these relationships. We’ll hit on some texts you’ve heard of—Beowulf and selections from Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales—while leaving time for some you may not have encountered—Marie de France’s Lais and Margery of Kempe’s Book. Along the way, we’ll also hone skills of reading, writing, and oral expression crucial to appreciating and discussing literature in nuanced, supple ways.

If you take this course, you’ll discover how medieval literature is both a mirror and a foil to modern literature. You’ll explore the plurilingual and cross-cultural nature of medieval literary production and improve (or acquire!) your knowledge of Middle English. You’ll discover sources for famous texts, like King Lear, and see the posterity of other famous texts, like the Aeneid. Plus, you’ll flex your writing muscles with two short textual analyses (2-4 pp.) and one longer research paper (8-10pp).

Shakespeare I
Lauren Robertson

This course will cover the histories, comedies, tragedies, and poetry of Shakespeare’s early career. We will examine the cultural and historical conditions that informed Shakespeare’s drama and poetry; in the case of drama, we will also consider the formal constraints and opportunities of the early modern English commercial theater. We will attend to Shakespeare’s biography while considering his work in relation to that of his contemporaries. Ultimately, we will aim to situate the production of Shakespeare’s early career within the highly collaborative, competitive, and experimental theatrical and literary cultures of late sixteenth-century England.

Environmental Crisis on the Shakespearean Stage
Bernadette Myers

Our current environmental crisis has fractured familiar narratives about the relationship between humanity and the natural world. To begin reimagining this relationship, this seminar will turn back the clock to the Renaissance and the birth of the English theater industry, where Shakespeare and his contemporaries were still attempting to understand what counts as “nature” within the confines of the playhouse. We will explore the forest of Arden with its “tongues in trees” and “books in the running brooks” from As You Like It, the stormy heath beset by “cataracts and hurricanos” in King Lear, and the “wild waters” of the Mediterranean agitated by Prospero in The Tempest alongside environments that might not seem immediately “natural” to us today, including the ruins of Catholic cloisters, bloody battlefields, polluted fountains, smoke-spewing hell mouths, and the empty streets of a city wracked by plague. By considering these diverse environments together, this seminar will not only complicate our modern distinction between nature and culture, but it will also trace the many ways that environmental crisis materialized both on and off stage in the early modern period.
To deepen our conversation about premodern environments, this seminar will also engage with current scholarship in ecocriticism—a growing critical field that investigates the representational problems posed by our current environmental crisis. Our course will consider what the settings, conventions and resource management strategies of the early modern stage might have to teach us about the ways we think of, interact with, or use “nature” today. As we make our way through some of the period’s most experimental plays, we will also consider how the theater, due to its generic variety, its embodied form, and its material dependencies, might be uniquely positioned to model living within and reckoning with environmental crisis or change.

**ENGL UN3351**

Donne, Herbert, Marvell

Molly Murray

**CLEN GU4723**

Comparative 18th C. Novel

Jenny Davidson

This course encompasses a series of readings in the eighteenth-century European novel. Style, narratology, the “rise” of realism and the history of novel criticism will all figure in our discussions; the seminar offers a theoretical rather than a thoroughly historical survey, and should serve as groundwork for considering questions about style and the novel in other periods and national traditions.

**ENGL UN3824**

Jane Austen and the Poets

Marianne Giordani

Austen relished contemporary verse as did her readers. Studying her perfectly structured novels together with, for example, William Cowper’s rambling, loco-descriptive, blank-verse meditations on nature and society, or George Crabbe’s biting couplets about miserable village life, would no doubt enrich our appreciation of the atmosphere in which Austen cultivated her sensibility, anticipated the taste and moral tenor of her readers, and exercised artistic control. We shall study three of her novels—Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, and Persuasion—alongside such poets as she and her readers loved and whose poems she and they enjoyed hearing recited by characters in her novels. Our poets include Johnson, Cowper (her beloved favorite) Crabbe, Smith, Barbauld, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, among others.

**ENGL UN3398**

Odd Women in Victorian Literature

Sharon Marcus

How do people find freedom within restrictive norms and laws? Victorian England, known for its rigid definitions of femininity, nonetheless produced a remarkable number of female outlaws, eccentrics, and activists: spinsters, feminists, working women, cross-dressers, women in “female marriages.”

“Odd Women in Victorian England,” an undergraduate seminar, will explore the pains and pleasures of gender non-conformity through the lens of nineteenth-century literary works, historical documents, and foundational texts in gender and sexuality studies. Readings will include the diaries of Anne Lister, a lesbian libertine; a slander case involving accusations of lesbianism at an all-girls school; the diaries of Hannah Munby, a servant whose upper-class lover fetishized her physical strength; the autobiographies of Annie Besant, socialist and birth-control
activist, and Mary Seacole, a nurse who traveled the world; and three major works of Victorian fiction: Aurora Leigh, a narrative poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning; Villette, a novel by Charlotte Brontë; and Little Dorrit, a novel by Charles Dickens. The course will end with a late 20th-century historical novel that draws on several of the works we will read in the course: Affinity by Sarah Waters.

ENGL UN3451      Imperialism and the Cryptographic Imagination
Gauri Viswanathan
This course focuses on plots of empire in the British novel of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It examines not only how empire was represented but also how the novel form gave visibility to the strategies of empire and also showed the tacit purposes, contradictions, and anxieties of British imperialism. The seminar is structured around the themes of: the culture of secrecy; criminality and detection; insurgency, surveillance, and colonial control; circulation and exchange of commodities; messianism and political violence. Specifically, the course will focus on how the culture of secrecy that accompanied imperial expansion defined the tools of literary imagination in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While most studies of culture and imperialism examine the impact of colonial expansion on the geography of narrative forms, this seminar looks more closely at the language of indirection in English novels and traces metaphors and symbols to imperialism's culture of secrecy. It begins with the simple observation that both colonizers and colonized felt the need to transmit their communications without having their messages intercepted or decoded. Translated into elusive Masonic designs and prophecy (as in Kim), codes of collective action (as in Sign of Four), or extended dream references (as in The Moonstone), the English novel underscores the exchange of information as one of the key activities of British imperialism. Forcing hidden information into the open also affects the ways that colonial 'otherness' is defined (as in The Beetle). How espionage and detection correlate with impenetrability and interpretation will be one among many themes we will examine in this course. The seminar will supplement courses in the nineteenth-century English novel, imperialism and culture, and race, gender, and empire, as well as provide a broad basis for studies of modernism and symbolism. Readings include Rudyard Kipling, Kim and "Short Stories"; Arthur Conan Doyle's Sign of Four; Wilkie Collins, The Moonstone; Richard Marsh, The Beetle; RL Stevenson, Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; Rider Haggard, She; Haggard, King Solomon's Mines; Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent.

ENGL GU4619     African American Literature I
Robert O’Meally
This lecture course is intended as the first half of the basic survey in African-American literature. By conducting close readings of selected song lyrics, slave narratives, fiction, poetry, and autobiography, we will focus on major writers in the context of cultural history. In so doing, we will explore the development of the African-American literary tradition. Writers include, but are not limited to, Wheatley, Equiano, Douglass, Jacobs, Harper, Dunbar, Chestnutt, Washington, Du Bois, and Larsen.

ENGL GU4391     19th C. Thrillers
Monica Cohen
This lecture will investigate the ways in which the nineteenth-century novel is shaped by the forces of horror, sensation, suspense and the supernatural. We will ask how the melodramatic imagination, the rhetoric of monstrosity, and the procedures of detection mark high narrative realism with the signs of cultural anxieties building up around nineteenth-century revolution,
Looking at representative samples of the Romantic neo-gothic novel, mid-century ghost stories, the highly popular and controversial sensation novels of the 1860’s along with their spectacular iterations on the Victorian stage, we will come away with a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the intersection between the novel and popular entertainment. Readings will include Austen’s Northanger Abbey, Brontë’s Villette, Braddon’s Lady Audley’s Secret, Collins’s The Woman in White, Dickens’s Bleak House, Stoker’s Dracula, and plays by Boucicault, Hazelwood, Lewis, and Wood.

**ENGL GU4400**

**Romanticism**

**Joseph Albernaz**

This course is designed as an overview of major texts (in poetry and prose), contexts, and themes in British Romanticism. The movement of Romanticism was born in the ferment of revolution, and developed alongside so many of the familiar features of the modern world—features for which Romanticism provides a vantage point for insight and critique. As we read authors including William Blake, Jane Austen, John Keats, Mary Shelley, and many others, we will situate our discussions around the following key issues: the development of individualism and new formations of community; industrialization and ecology (changes in nature and in the very conception of “nature”); and slavery and abolition.

**CLNR GU4822**

**19th C. European Novel**

**Nicholas Dames**

The European novel in the era of its cultural dominance. Key concerns: the modern metropolis (London, Paris, St. Petersburg); the figures of bourgeois narrative (parvenus, adulterers, adolescents, consumers) and bourgeois consciousness (nostalgia, ressentiment, sentimentalism, ennui); the impact of journalism, science, economics. Authors to be drawn from: Goethe, Stendhal, Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Turgenev, Zola.

**CLRS GU4011**

**Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and the English Novel**

**Liza Knapp**

We will read works by Dostoevsky and Tolstoy in conjunction with three English novels. Although we will be looking at cross-fertilization between the works on our reading list (both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky read and reacted to Jane Eyre; Middlemarch is an important inspiration for Anna Karenina; Woolf fervently acknowledged her debt to “the Russian point of view”), the course is not primarily focused on literary influence. As we read, we will also be devoting attention to different forms of the novel and to the poetics of the novels.

**ENTA UN3942**

**Drama and the American Dream**

**Zander Brietzke**

The best works of all three major dramatists were produced within a twelve-year period (1945-1956), but each playwright responds quite differently to changes in American society that resulted from the US emergence after WWII as a global Super Power: Tennessee Williams laments the passing of an old order under the glare of modernism; Eugene O’Neill charts the heartbreaks of desire in a greedy, materialistic world; Arthur Miller decries the erosion of moral responsibility under the reign of rampant capitalism. Collectively they dramatize irreconcilable conflicts between society, family, and individual interests that still resonate with many of our hopes and dreams and fears today.
ENGL UN3224 British Modernism and Empire
Alex Fabrizio
From Conrad’s Congo to Forster’s Marabar Caves, representations of imperial sites pervade key works of high British literary modernism. Yet this interest in the global reach of British imperialism was not one-sided. Writers from Africa, India, and the Caribbean rigorously engaged with modernist aesthetics and polemics, as collaborators and as fierce resisters. In this course, we will examine the centrality of empire to British modernism by examining the presence of colonial sites and themes in global Anglophone literatures. The course is organized by imperial region, examining literature of and about Africa (including Joseph Conrad and Amos Tutuola), India (including E.M. Forster and Mulk Raj Anand), and the Caribbean (including Jean Rhys and Una Marson). We will also take advantage of the resources available to us through Columbia’s Center for Spatial Research. Through hands-on studio time, we will explore digital humanities tools such as open-source mapping software and QGIS. Through these critical methodologies, we will discover innovative avenues for literary study, producing rich analyses grounded in attention to space on multiple scales.

ENGL UN3637 Poetry and Catastrophe
Jeremy Stevens
This seminar begins with a simple paradox: why is it that poetry is inconsequential to our day-to-day lives, but when faced with catastrophe—war, environmental disaster, personal loss—it is so common to turn to poetry? As W.H. Auden wrote in response to the death of W.B. Yeats and in the shadow of a new war, "poetry makes nothing happen," and yet "it survives/ ... / A way of happening, a mouth." Our task will be to understand what Auden meant as well as to explore alternative views of poetry's resources for responding to catastrophe. After a brief introduction to interpreting poetic form, both in single-author works and also in groups of poems from different poets written in response to specific catastrophes (World War I, the Holocaust, and 9/11). We will study works from a variety of schools and movements, mainly British and American, with all readings in English. Some of the poets considered are Wilfred Owen, W.H. Auden, Jorie Graham, T.S. Eliot, Seamus Heaney, Derek Walcott, H.D., and Paul Celan.

ENGL UN3725 W. H. Auden
Edward Mendelson
Auden’s poems and prose. To apply, please send Prof. Mendelson an e-mail message with the heading "Auden Seminar"; include your name, the year you expect to graduate, the names of any possibly relevant courses that you have taken, and a truthful one-sentence explanation of why you want to join the seminar.

ENGL UN3306 Eight Ways of Looking at Beckett
Valerio Amoretti
The work of the Irish writer Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) defies categorization. To some, he is primarily a playwright: his most popular plays Waiting for Godot and Endgame have helped define the controversial term “theater of the absurd”. To others he is a novelist: his Trilogy represents the zenith (or nadir, depending how you look at it) of the modernist novel. To some, Beckett is the last modernist writer, but to others he is the first postmodernist. To some, he is a quintessentially Irish writer (not only was he born in Ireland, but he did work with, and was influenced by, James Joyce) yet he mostly wrote in French and spent his life — indeed, risked his
life, participating in the Resistance — in France. His most famous texts are clearly a form of literary philosophy (but which kind of philosophy exactly? Many have claimed Beckett for their own field!) unless they are a form of psychology, as others — including some psychoanalytic theorists — would claim, or even perhaps a form of history that never calls places and events by their name. This course is an unorthodox survey of Beckett’s oeuvre and an introduction to the splintered world of Beckett Studies. We will read all major prose works, including Murphy, Watt, the Trilogy and How It Is, the major plays, including Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Happy Days and Not I, as well as many of his shorter pieces in prose, for TV and theater. We will look at Beckett as a philosopher, a satirist, a historian, a psychologist, a modernist, a postmodernist, a follower, a precursor, and some variants of the above. Readings by Beckett — mostly — as well as Joyce, Kafka, BS Johnson and JM Coetzee. Secondary readings by many authors, including Adorno, Anzieu, Badiou, Bion, Blanchot, etc.
All required reading in English.

ENGL UN3398
African American Literature: The Essay
Farah Griffin
According to literary critic Cheryl A. Wall, African American writers have done their most influential work in the essay form. This course explores essays by a distinguished group of writers from Frederick Douglass to June Jordan to consider the centrality of this understudied form to African American writing.

CLEN UN3944
The Big Ambitious Novel
Bruce Robbins & Orhan Pamuk
Critic James Wood has cast doubt on the accomplishment of those contemporary novelists who have tried to carry what Wood calls the "Dickensian" ambition of 19th-century realism to the higher geographical scale of today's globalized society.
This seminar will try to assess both their ambition and their success. Readings by Kazuo Ishiguro, Roberto Bolaño, Elena Ferrante, Karl Ove Knausgaard, and Chimimanda Ngozi Adichie. This seminar proposes to read 5 works of important recent world fiction that are so long, so ambitious, and in some cases so forbidding that they are difficult to work into an ordinary syllabus. The seminar will give each one 2-3 weeks, thereby permitting students the time both to read them with care and to discuss them in detail.

ENGL UN3791
True Crime: Fact and Feeling, 1927-Present
Julia Sirmons
What’s true in true crime? Often dismissed as trashy, true crime not only evokes strong emotional responses (revealing truth about social mores), but also has a philosophical dimension in search for truth. Defining true crime as a mode in many media (drama, film, graphic novels, and podcasts), this course explores how true crime expresses affective reactions to crime, and how it crafts narratives to make sense of shocking events. Works discussed include In Cold Blood, OJ: Made in America, and Serial.

ENTAI UN3783
US Theatre in the 21st Century
Danielle Drees
In this seminar, we will read and view plays that tell new stories—some that took Broadway by storm and others that had only a brief life onstage. We will ask how a moment of unprecedented diversity in US playwriting responds to earlier eras of theater, what it suggests for the future, and what it leaves us still wanting. Can playwrights still experiment with new forms—and can audiences still be surprised or shocked by theater? How does the US history of settler colonialism, slavery, and changing immigration policies show up in playwriting today? Who is represented onstage, who is pulling the creative strings behind the scenes, and who is doing the work of getting the show on its feet every night? We will encounter some of the most innovative American playwrights and performers of the 21st century—including Suzan-Lori Parks, Annie Baker, Taylor Mac, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, and Peggy Shaw—through play texts, videos of performances, and one class trip to see a new play together. This course is open to English and Theater majors, as well as non-majors with an interest in theater.

ENGL  GU4669  Hollywood's Countercultural Cinema: Movies of the 1970s
Maura Spiegel
You will be asked to watch a lot of movies for this course. Some of the films will be assigned primarily to provide background and will receive only glancing attention in class; others (as indicated) will be the focus of our discussion. Your postings on Courseworks will draw from both categories of assigned films.

CLEN  GU4739  World Poems
Mara de Gennaro
This is a course on 20th- and 21st-century world poetry—poetry in dialogue with literature from other cultures, or poetry that reflects on experiences of coming into contact with other cultures. Our main focus will be long poems and poem cycles written in the wake of imperial incursions and diasporic resettlements. Some of these poems have engrossing plots and rounded characters, such as a novel in verse about yuppies in San Francisco. Others complicate narrative development in favor of more cyclical or disjunctive effects, such as a postcolonial epic inspired by the Odyssey, or a poem cycle that fractures and transforms legal language on the Zong, an 18th-century slave ship whose captain tried to maximize his company’s profits by throwing 150 Africans overboard to their deaths. We will examine the rich array of lyric, narrative, and dramatic forms that poets have developed over the last century to evoke the many kinds of crossings—cultural and textual, personal and communal, voluntary and forced—peculiar to our globalizing age.

We will read long poems by Aimé Césaire, Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, Michael Ondaatje, M. NourbeSe Philip, and Vikram Seth, with additional short poems, essays, and excerpts by St.-John Perse, T. S. Eliot, Elizabeth Bishop, Édouard Glissant, Louise Glück, Patrick Chamoiseau, Khal Torabully, and Immanuel Mifsud.

ENGL  UN3520  Asian American Literature and Culture
Denise Cruz
This course is a survey of Asian North American literature and its contexts. To focus our discussion, the course centers on examining recurring cycles of love and fear in Asian North American relations from the late nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries. We will first turn to what became known as “yellow peril,” one effect of exclusion laws that monitored the entrance
of Asians into the United States and Canada during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the corresponding phenomenon of Orientalism, the fascination with a binary of Asia and the West. The second section of the course will focus on how Asian North American authors respond to later cycles of love and fear, ranging from the forgetting of Japanese internment in North America and the occupation of the Philippines; to the development of the model minority mythology during the Cold War. The final section will examine intimacies and exclusions in contemporary forms of migration, diaspora, and community communities.
Latour echo the ancients in their debates about hate speech regulation, the purpose of higher education, and the ability of the sciences to arrive at truth. We will discover that rhetoricians who are writing during eras of unprecedented expansion of democracies, colonization, and empire have a great deal to say about the workings of language in our globalizing, digitizing age.

ENGL GU4793  English Translations of the Bible
David Yerkes

English translations of the Bible from Tyndale to the present.

ENTA UN3701  Drama, Theatre, and Theory
Austin Quigley

Theatre typically exceeds the claims of theory. What does this tell us about both theatre and theory? We will consider why theatre practitioners often provide the most influential theoretical perspectives, how the drama inquires into (among other things) the possibilities of theatre, and the various ways in which the social, spiritual, performative, political, and aesthetic elements of drama and theatre interact. Two papers, weekly responses, and a class presentation are required. Readings include Aristotle, Artaud, Bharata, Boal, Brecht, Brook, Castelvetro, Craig, Genet, Grotowski, Ibsen, Littlewood, Marlowe, Parks, Schechner, Shakespeare, Sowerby, Weiss, and Zeami.

ENGL UN3579  Castaways and Containers: Modernity at Sea
Allison Turner

In this course, we’ll explore the ambitions, challenges, and failures of globalization through the lens of castaway literature, with works spanning from the seventeenth century to the present. In today’s postindustrial economies, labor has been outsourced to other parts of the world, and we depend on global shipping networks to supply us with commodities and to relieve us of our massive outputs of waste. Manufactured goods, raw materials, trash, people, and nonhuman species all circulate the globe via container ships and shipping networks that we rarely consider when we purchase something at a local Target. This course moves back and forth between early modernity and the present to consider the wastes generated by global economic circuits. We’ll begin by locating the origins of the global capitalist imaginary in texts written by proponents of colonial exploration and expansion. We’ll then turn to the transatlantic slave trade and to the archives of the black Atlantic to investigate forms of racialized violence and anticolonial resistance in the history of finance capital in the Atlantic world. Finally, we’ll bring our observations to bear on the forms of globalization that sustain contemporary postindustrial economies: from the containerization of shipping to the uneven environmental harms endured by nonhuman ecosystems and the poor in the global South.

CLEN GU4567  Du Bois, Gramsci, Ambedkar: Three Men on Emancipation
Gayatri Spivak

Selected texts of W.E.B. Du Bois, Antonio Gramsci, and B.R. Ambedkar will be read to compare and contrast their points of view on the emancipation of the subaltern. The issue of gendering will be investigated.

CLEN GU4771  The Literary History of Atrocity
Bruce Robbins
Sometime around the publication of Garcia Marquez’s classic novel One Hundred Years of Solitude in 1967, novelists who wanted to make a claim to ethical and historical seriousness began to include a scene of extreme violence that, like the banana worker massacre in Garcia Marquez, seemed to offer a definitive guide to the moral landscape of the modern world. This course will explore both the modern literature that was inspired by Garcia Marquez’s example and the literature that led up to this extraordinary moment—for example, the literature dealing with the Holocaust, with the dropping of the atomic bomb, with the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s, and with the Allied bombing of the German cities. It will also ask how extraordinary this moment in fact was, looked at from the perspective of literature as a whole, by inspecting earlier examples of atrocities committed in classical antiquity, in the Crusades, against Native Americans and (in Tolstoy) against the indigenous inhabitants of the Caucasus. Before the concept of the non-combatant had been defined, could there be a concept of the atrocity? Could a culture accuse itself of misconduct toward the members of some other culture? In posing these and related questions, the course offers itself as a major but untold chapter both in world literature and in the moral history of humankind.

ENGL GU4636 Science Fiction
Paul Grimstad
What is the relation between literature and science? Is fiction a form of knowledge, and if so how is it different from the knowledge arrived at in the natural sciences? What is the role of the “thought experiment” in scientific and literary writing? Are novels or stories thought experiments? The course will explore such questions through a focus on science-fiction as a genre, broadly construed. In addition to reflection on what is meant by genre, we will consider how science and the scientist are represented in works of fiction, the idea of time travel, artificial intelligence, and imagining different kinds of dystopia. Students write essays making claims and using evidence from works on the syllabus, with emphasis on writing clear prose in support of an original argument. Writers and filmmakers may include Mary Shelley, H.G. Wells, Phillip K. Dick, Edgar Allan Poe, William Gibson, Isaac Asimov, Stanely Kubrick, Jorge Luis Borges, Samuel Delany, Stanislaw Lem, Susan Sontag, William S. Burroughs, Margaret Atwood, H.P.Lovecraft, Kurt Vonnegut, Saul Bellow, Octavia Butler, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Alan Turing, Rivka Galchen, Jonathan Lethem, Steven Speilberg and television shows like Black Mirror and the Twilight Zone.

ENGL GU4637 Literature and Health Humanities
Arden Hegele
Literature and medicine have always been in dialogue: Apollo was the god of physicians and poetry, while some of the greatest writers, such as John Keats and Anton Chekhov, were trained as doctors. In our time, literature and medicine have become ever more entwined in the burgeoning field of “health humanities” that bridges the practices of writer and caregiver. In this lecture course, we will consider how creative literature enriches our understanding of health and illness by exploring contemporary narratives about health and medicine in a global context. We will read literary writing by physicians in genres such as the short story, the case history, the satirical novel, and the medical memoir. As we move through shifting paradigms in healthcare, we will attend to how prose fiction can excavate and illustrate conflicts in the medical encounter—power struggles between doctors and patients, science and superstition, and cultural contexts—along with the challenges of war and trauma. We will consider, too, how medical fictions create generative space for motifs of alterity—physical disability, aging,
cognitive differences, and gender fluidity—in contemporary global literature in English. As we read, we will attend to how the study of literature creates a series of critical methods that can be applied to problems across the health humanities. Writers include Atul Gawande, Oliver Sacks, Paul Kalanithi, Emma Donoghue, Michael Ondaatje, Indra Sinha, Ian McEwan, and Maggie Nelson, among others. Both literature and pre-med students are invited to register. This lecture will particularly suit students who are interested in literature post-1800, prose fiction, social justice, and the health humanities.

ENGL GU4901 History of English
John McWhorter
A survey of the history of the English language from before Old English to 21st Century Modern English, with no background in linguistics required. Grammar, dialectal variety, and social history will be covered to roughly equal extents. Requirements include three examinations, one of them an extended take-home exercise. Lecture format with some discussion depending on the topic.