

Undergraduate Special Topics course offerings 2022-2023

2nd Year Special Topics Courses:

ENGL 2010 FA/FDE – Special Topics: *Marvel Superheroes* – Drs. Judith Leggatt and Monica Flegel – on campus/Zoom

An overview of Marvel superhero comics from the foundations in the 1960s through to the controversial "Secret Empire" event, in which Captain America stages a fascist takeover of America. Superheroes and teams will range from the central to the marginal, and will include Spider-man, the Avengers, the Fantastic Four, the X-Men, Daredevil, Echo, Mockingbird and Squirrel Girl. We will study the formal conventions and cultural importance of superhero comics, the innovations made by specific Marvel creators, the role of "Marvel" as a corporate author, and the controversies and issues raised by over half a century of continuity and retroactive continuity.

ENGL 2010 WAO - Special Topics: *The Fantastic* – Dr. Kathryn Walton – on campus

Fantasy literature allows readers to escape the mundanity of the everyday world and experience new and remarkable things. It takes aspects of everyday life and remakes them in marvellous and evocative ways. In so doing, it asks readers to question seemingly fundamental aspects of reality. Fantasy has, as a result, become one of the most popular genres, and series like *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* are among the most popular works of all time. This course introduces students to this wonderous genre. It begins with the origins of fantasy literature in the medieval, early modern, and Victorian periods before moving to focus on the contemporary fantasy of the 20th and 21st centuries. It touches on everything from foundational works of fantasy literature (like J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*), to works of fantasy for children (like Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*), to critical/political works of fantasy (like Tomi Adeyemi's *Children of Blood and Bone*), and it looks at examples in all kinds of different media (at books, films, and television shows). Throughout the course, students will both develop a detailed understanding of the complexities of the genre and come to recognize and critique fantasy's unique ability to reflect and question the everyday world.

3rd Year Special Topics Courses:

ENGL 3011 FAO – Special Topics in Writing – Public Writing – Dr. Sarah Olutola – on campus

This course will introduce students to freelance writing for the public in online venues on a variety of topics ranging from politics to entertainment. Bridging the connection between academic writing and non-fiction editorials, the course will offer students a look into why public writing matters as well as how to identify the public they are writing for,

respond to calls and craft pitches, adjust their voices and writing styles for particular publications, and to revise their work based on editorial feedback. Students will be given professionalization tips and insight into an ever-changing industry.

ENGL 3011 WA – Special Topics in Writing – *Life Writing* – Dr. Scott Pound – on campus

A community service learning writing course in which students partner with hospice volunteers and their clients to conduct life review exercises and create legacy projects. Students will learn the fundamentals of the memoir genre and work to develop their writing skills on two fronts: by writing a personal memoir and by completing a legacy project for their community client.

ENGL 3810 FDE – Special Topics in Women’s Writing: *Global Women’s Writing* – Dr. Anna Guttman – Zoom

This course examines work by contemporary female postcolonial writers – women of African, Caribbean, Indigenous and South Asian heritage. As we examine these diverse texts, we will grapple with a number of questions. What challenges and rewards come with studying texts decidedly outside the literary canon? How is gender and its articulation culturally-specific? How can women relate to one another as women across cultures?

Note: cross-listed with WOME 3810FDE

ENGL 3050 WAO: Special Topics in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: *Robin Hood* – Megan Arnot

This class examines the tradition of the English medieval outlaw Robin Hood. In particular, we will pay attention to the political nature of this literature, including the politics of nostalgia, and escapist literature. Centering around an outlaw, many Robin Hood traditions revel in the upending of the social structure; at other times, Robin Hood stories confirm the existing institutions, as Robin and his merry men come to represent a forgotten idyllic time. Often the radical and the conservative ideas exist at the same time in the same text. While still maintaining the same basic story line, Robin Hood is also continuously updated for new generations, taking on the political dilemmas of each subsequent age. Throughout the semester, attention will also be paid to critical texts, focusing on ones that discuss the politics of the Robin Hood literature.

Note: English 3050 counts toward fulfillment of the Area 1 requirement.

ENGL 3810 FDE – Special Topics in Women’s Writing: *Global Women’s Writing* – Dr. Anna Guttman – Zoom

This course examines work by contemporary female postcolonial writers – women of African, Caribbean, Indigenous and South Asian heritage. As we examine these diverse texts, we will grapple with a number of questions. What challenges and rewards come with studying texts decidedly outside the literary canon? How is gender and its articulation culturally-specific? How can women relate to one another as women across cultures?

4th Year Special Topics Courses:

ENGL 4010 FA Seminar I: *Literary Prizes & Canadian Literature* – Dr. Douglas Ivison – on campus

In the 21st century, awards and prizes are central to the celebration and promotion of all cultural products (and beyond). From the Oscars and Grammys to awards for videogames and adult films, from prizes for visual art to literature, awards and prizes are a valuable marketing tool as well as an indicator of the dominant aesthetic and ideological values of the cultural industries that award them. Awards and prizes reflect and shape critical and commercial success, and also play a role in canon formation, the production of celebrity, the reception of texts, and the determination of value. In this course, we will examine the role that literary prizes have played and continue to play in Canadian Literature. In particular, we will focus on the 2021 Giller Prize, reading the five books nominated for the award and discussing the media coverage of the nominees and the Giller Prize ceremony.

ENGL 4010 FB Seminar I: Contemporary Poetry & Poetics – Dr. Scott Pound – on campus

An in-depth survey of eight recently published collections of poetry and the critical conversations surrounding them.

ENGL 4013 FDE – Special Topics in Medieval and Early Modern Literatures: *Scots Makars* – Dr. Douglas Hayes – Zoom

This seminar will focus on some of the major poets of the lowlands of 15th and 16th-century Scotland who, beginning in the 18th century, have been constructed to represent the “Golden Age” of Scottish literature. Indeed, even today their work is widely read and discussed in terms of Scottish identity, culture, and national independence, and the language of their poetry, “Inglis” in their own term and “Middle Scots” from a modern scholarly perspective, has often been at the centre of these discussions. We will read selected works from King James I of Scotland, Blind Harry,

Robert Henryson, William Dunbar, and Gavin Douglas in an effort to see their work both within its own literary and cultural context and that which has grown up^[1] around it in the centuries since.

Note: English 4013 counts toward fulfillment of the Area 1 requirement.

Note: cross-listed with ENGL 5117 FDE

ENGL 4014 FAO – Honours Seminar in 18th and 19th Century Literatures: Mary Shelley & Gender – Dr. Alice den Otter – on campus

This course will focus on gender construction in various texts by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, including *Frankenstein*, *Mathilda*, *The Last Man*, and several short stories and essays. Alongside Shelley's texts, we will be reading from *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, by Shelley's mother Mary Wollstonecraft, which critiques contemporary gender constructions. We will also be examining a variety of other historical, theoretical, and critical texts examining topics such as femininity, masculinity, performativity, identity politics, normative gender relations, and queer bodies.

Note: English 4014 counts toward fulfillment of the Area 2 requirement.

ENGL 4013 WA - Special Topics in Medieval and Early Modern Literatures: Race & Gender in Early Modern Literature - Dr. Rachel Warburton – on campus

The recent series of critical interventions, #raceb4race, has sparked a new set of questions about how to read race in early modern literature. This course will introduce students to some recent critics of early modern literature and will examine race, gender, nation, and religion as intersecting and mutually constitutive and mutually informing axes of social differentiation in early modern England. Both “race” and “nation” are highly protean concepts in early modern English culture, and early modern strategies of racialization and the racial categories they delineate are not the same as modern ones.

Note: English 4013 counts toward fulfillment of the Area 1 requirement.

Note: cross-listed with ENGL 5211 WA

ENGL 4014 WA/WAO – Honours Seminar in 18th and 19th Century Literatures: Victorian Animalities – Dr. Monica Flegel – on campus & Zoom

In this course, we will examine literature of the Victorian period concerned with animal/human relationships and the animal/human divide. We will be reading primarily literary texts, in concert with non-literary representations of the "animal other," in order

to address the following questions: What are the ethics and politics of animal representation? What role do different discourses play in shaping the Victorian conception of “the animal”? What were the primary modes of representing animals? And, how does animality operate discursively in representations of the human “Other” in the period?

Note: English 4014 counts toward fulfillment of the Area 2 requirement.

Note: cross-listed with 5430 WAWAO

ENGL 4017 WAO – Honours Seminar in Ecocriticism: *Contemporary Ecopoetry* – Dr. Cheryl Lousley – on campus

A study of how contemporary poetry and poetics approach the ecological challenges of our time, with a twofold attention to how poetic writing is itself challenged by the often estranging and inhuman scales of climate and other ecological emergencies, and to how poetic attention to words, text, perception, and (re)mediation re-shapes environmental understanding and practice. A range of poetic practices will be studied, including process poetics, experimental, and conceptual poetry. Poets will include Daphne Marlatt, Evelyn Reilly, Julian Spahr, Sina Queyras, Jordan Abel, Kaie Kellough, and more.