English

Note: As of August 1, 2021, we are no longer accepting students into this program.

Because it speaks to our imagination, literature allows us to approach the moral, ethical, social and political dilemmas of the human situation in an integrated way. The beautiful and the well-argued, the felt and the reasoned, the actual and the possible, the message and the medium: students of literature do not treat these spheres as distinct aspects of human existence, rather — especially in our department — they bring these disparate ideas together. The result is that an English degree is recognized as a strong foundation for careers in communications, business, law, social work, the fine arts and teaching.

Course work introduces students to important literary texts, to the development of the English language, and to the origins of Western literature and culture. Students develop reading and writing skills, rigorous critical thinking skills, and the ability to communicate complex ideas persuasively, all while obtaining a broad liberal education.

Contact: Victoria Thomas
Phone: 314-935-5190
Email: english@wustl.edu
Website: https://ucollege.wustl.edu/programs/undergraduate/bachelors-english

Degree Requirements

Bachelor of Science in English

All University College undergraduate students must satisfy the same general-education requirements (http://bulletin.wustl.edu/undergrad/ucollege/bachelors/#degereerequirements).

English majors are required to take 10 courses as described in more detail below: two required introductory courses, four required 300-level courses, and four 300-level electives. Before enrolling in any literature course, students must satisfactorily complete Analytical Writing (EComp 111).

Two Introductory Courses

Intended to be taken first, these courses are critical surveys of the literary history of the major literatures of the English language. Along with an understanding of the historical movements in literature, these courses will help students to develop a vocabulary of critical analysis and literary criticism:

- Literature in English: Early Texts and Contexts (ELit 261)
- Literature in English: Modern Texts and Contexts (ELit 262)

Four 300-Level Courses

Students are required to take the following course:
- Introduction to Literary Theory (ELit 3552)

They must also take three historical courses. Students must select at least one course from each of the following groups:

- Group 1: Medieval, Early Modern
- Group 2: The 18th Century, the 19th Century, the 20th Century and later

Four 300-Level Electives

Students select four advanced-level courses in English.

The Minor in English (15 units)

Required Courses (6 units)
- Literature in English: Early Texts and Contexts (ELit 261)
- Literature in English: Modern Texts and Contexts (ELit 262)

Elective Courses (9 units)
- Advanced-level courses in English, one of which must be in literature pre-1700

Courses


U65 ELit 211 Chief English Writers I
Introduction to major writers: Chaucer through Milton in U65-211; post-Milton to Joyce in U65-212.
Credit 3 units.

U65 ELit 212 Chief English Writers II
Introduction to major writers: Chaucer through Milton in U65-211; post-Milton to Joyce in U65-212.
Credit 3 units.

U65 ELit 257 The Art of Poetry
We will examine the tools of the trade from rhyme to reason in an effort to understand the value of poetry: how it works as an art form, why it is the purest expression of human feeling and thought, why and how its message is rendered in pictures made out of lines, stanzas, and musical sounds. We will learn how to explicate, maybe to imitate. Writers of fiction and the personal essay should benefit from our emphasis on the sense of concretion and condensation. Poets will get to study and practice.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENE, ENL

U65 ELit 261 Literature in English: Early Texts and Contexts
How did what we now call English literature emerge? How did such literary activity reflect the world, and how did the world shape this writing? How can literature help us understand the history of art, race, religious identity and sectarian conflict, nations and empires, gender, sexuality, and class? We will address these questions by studying the early history of literature in English, from the Middle Ages through the late 18th century,
as well as the tools, vocabularies, and critical practices of contemporary literary studies. We will learn about both the material forms of English literature (manuscript, print, and performance traditions) and major poetry and prose forms (sonnet, epic, blank verse, romance, letter, slave narrative, and more). In addition to Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, John Milton, and Ignatius Sancho or Olaudah Equiano, the syllabus may include authors and texts such as "Beowulf," "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Julian of Norwich, Edmund Spenser, Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe, and Eliza Haywood.
Credit 3 units. Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H UColl: OLI

U65 ELit 262 Literature in English: Modern Texts and Contexts
This course provides beginning students of English with a chronological outline of modern literature in English from Romanticism to the present. It introduces them to the central themes, genres, and forces that have shaped the modern history of literature as well as the tools, vocabularies, and critical practices of literary studies. We will organize our semester around five themes: literary revolutions; questions of genre; subjectivity and authorship; gender, sexuality, and identity; modernism. We will study texts from Britain/Ireland, the United States, and at least one example of global literature in English.
Credit 3 units.

U65 ELit 300 Independent Study
Credit 3 units.

U65 ELit 301 Practical Criticism
Poetry and short fiction serve as texts for practice in close reading. Class discussions and frequent though brief papers encourage students to explore a variety of interpretive approaches. Strongly recommended for English majors.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL

U65 ELit 305 Topics in Literature and Culture
Topics vary by semester.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL

U65 ELit 307 The Writing of the Indian Subcontinent
The Indian subcontinent has in recent years yielded a number of writers, expatriate or otherwise, whose works articulate the postcolonial experience in the "foreign" English tongue. This course is designed to be an introductory survey of such writing. Students will compare and contrast the writing of the subcontinent with that of South Asia and the UK; the contexts, seeking a deeper understanding of form and meaning through close reading and scholarly engagement with a full range of his writing. Readings include poems from the volumes Death of a Naturalist, Wintering Out, Door Into the Dark, North, Station Island, Seeing Things, The Spirit Level, Human Chain, and others.
Credit 3 units.

U65 ELit 310 Topics: How Medieval is Game of Thrones?: Fact and Fiction in Modern Medievalism
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL, OLI

U65 ELit 311 Topics in English and American Literature
Topic varies by semester.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL, OLI

U65 ELit 312 Topics in English and American Literature
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENE, ENL

U65 ELit 3122 American Literature after the Cold War
We will read "Beowulf," Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, The Mabinogion, The Tain, Margery Kempe, and Malory's Morte d'Arthur.
Same as L14 E Lit 3122
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM

U65 ELit 313 Topics in English and American Literature
This course explores the complex historical and experiential relationship between the United States and France. During the first part of the course, we examine how literary Americans responded to Paris during the first part of the 20th century, during the period known as "The Lost Generation." Through readings and films, students will compare journalistic and literary accounts of Paris and examine such themes as the "doubleness" of the expatriate writer; the question of "home"; and alternative (sexual, racial, and creative) identities made possible in the City of Lights. We end the course with a glance forward, on the cusp of the new millennium and beyond, as we attempt to grapple with social and cultural differences that have contributed to misunderstandings between France and America. Specifically, we examine the role of France in the formulation of a radical politicizing of "tradition." How does "l'exception française" shape the current international dialogue regarding social class, the economics of globalization, and values?
Credit 3 units.

U65 ELit 3131 Seamus Heaney
By the time Seamus Heaney was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995, he had already built a reputation as one of the foremost poets of his generation, a leading figure in 20th- and early 21st-century verse, widely seen as the true successor to W.B. Yeats as the national bard of Ireland. This course examines the arc of his literary career, working our way chronologically through the poetry, exploring texts in conjunction with their contexts, seeking a deeper understanding of form and meaning through close reading and scholarly engagement with a full range of his writing. Readings include poems from the volumes Death of a Naturalist, Wintering Out, Door Into the Dark, North, Station Island, Seeing Things, The Spirit Level, Human Chain, and others.
Same as U47 IRISH 317
Credit 3 units.

U65 ELit 3142 "What's Love Got to Do with It?": Investigating the Love Poem
Just what is a "love poem"? Does it have to be romantic? In this course we will use these questions to develop a more nuanced appreciation of love poetry across cultures and ages. From the fragments of Sappho, the mystic poetry of India, and the erotically-tinged sonnets of Shakespeare and Donne, to modern and contemporary poets like William Carlos Williams, Sharon Olds, and Maya Angelou, this course will examine not only the varied conceptions of love across time and context but how the love poem has assimilated a vast diversity of verse forms and styles. Combining periodic on-campus meetings with a Telesis
virtual platform, this course will not meet on a weekly basis. Instead, the course will proceed as a hybrid of online and in-class environments. A mandatory introductory class will be held at the beginning of the term. For more information and a course syllabus, contact instructor in the weeks preceding the start of the semester.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENE, ENL

U65 ELit 3153 Topics in American Literature: Contemporary American Narratives of Dislocation and Loss
Topics: themes, formal problems, literary genres, special subjects (e.g., the American West, American autobiographical writing). Consult Course Listings for offerings in any given semester.
Credit 3 units. BU: HUM UColl: ENL

U65 ELit 316 Topics in American Literature
Topic varies. Writing intensive.
Same as L14 E Lit 316W
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM; WI Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

U65 ELit 317 Topics in English Literature: Gothic Traditions: From Frankenstein to Dracula
Same as L14 E Lit 317
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

U65 ELit 3181 Topics in American Literature: The Cultural History of the American Teenager
Same as L14 E Lit 318
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

U65 ELit 319 Topics in Women and Literature
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL

U65 ELit 320 Major American Writers
Introduction to basic American texts: The Scarlet Letter, Moby Dick, Huckleberry Finn, The Great Gatsby. Readings by such authors as Poe, Whitman, Dickinson, James, Crane, Hemingway, and Faulkner.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL

U65 ELit 321B American Literature to 1865
Same as L14 E Lit 321
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM

U65 ELit 328 Gender and the Victorian Heart
"Gender and the Victorian Heart" will explore the intersections of gender and Victorian literature, autobiography, and fiction, specifically with regard to the representations (or lack of representation) of emotions, and the ensuing perceptions of power and/or weakness that result from these intersections. We will read a variety of work from multiple genres in order to investigate how a number of major Victorian writers construct emotions, emotional characters, and unemotional characters. Emotions to be contemplated include platonic, romantic, maternal/paternal loves; desire; fear; shame, guilt, and embarrassment; pride; anger and rage; grief and joy; envy and jealousy. We will be particularly interested in the interactions and constructions of emotions and gender roles. How do these authors construct, envision, and re-envision emotions in the 19th century, and how do historical gender roles get reified or revised by these authors?
Same as U92 WGSS 318
Credit 3 units. UColl: OLI

U65 ELit 330 Greek Drama
The first great age of drama, both for tragedy and comedy, both in practice and in theory, was in ancient Greece. We will read representative plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, as well as Aristotle's Poetics.
Credit 2 units.

U65 ELit 334 The Golden Age of Children's Literature
A comprehensive survey of the major works for children written during this period.
Same as L14 E Lit 334
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

U65 ELit 336 Topics in English Literature
This course will treat as a starting point the shooting of Michael Brown and the civil unrest that followed in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014 to trace the representation of African-American lives from the Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision in 1897 to the present. We will investigate how literary representations of African-American experience have changed — and remained the same — over the past 120 years. Our inquiries focus on the ways that essays, poems, and novels depict oppression, inequality, violence, and race. We read, among others, W.E.B. Du Bois, Nella Larsen, George Schuler, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, John A. Williams, Ishmael Reed, Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, Percival Everett, Colson Whitehead, and Ta-Nehisi Coates.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL

U65 ELit 346 Topics in English Literature
Masterpieces of Western literature in English translation: the 17th century through the 20th century.
Same as L14 E Lit 348
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD BU: HUM

U65 ELit 351 Topics in English and American Literature
This course will take a broad view of the satanic in Western literary and cultural traditions. We will explore premodern beliefs concerning demons before reading excerpts from Dante's Inferno and Milton's Paradise Lost. Students will study how the Romantics adopted and adapted the satanic as a counterforce to rationalism and political repression. Often defining by negation, the devil in these books will expose us to core concepts in Western thought including servitude and freedom, cosmic evil and redemption, discipline and justice, possession and liberation. Authors will include Goethe, Blake, Byron, Shelley, Lewis, and Hoffmann. Finally, we will consider a few 20th-century manifestations of the satanic, each borrowing from earlier works and traditions, including Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita and Rushdie's The Satanic Verses.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL
U65 ELit 3552 Introduction to Literary Theory
This course introduces students to some of the most influential theoretical approaches to interpretation applied to English-language literature; to significant conceptual and historical debates about literary and cultural theory; and to the keywords used in these debates. Students will learn how to write and speak about theoretical texts and how to recognize the theoretical assumptions that underlie acts of literary interpretation. Theoretical approaches to be featured may include formalism; Marxism; psychoanalysis; gender and sexuality studies; structuralism and post-structuralism; postcolonial studies; critical race studies; new historicism and cultural materialism; cultural studies; affect theory; neurocognitive approaches; and disability studies. This course fulfills the literary theory requirement for the English major; no substitutions will be permitted. In order to preserve necessary seats for English majors, the course will be enrolled through the wait list.
Same as L14 E Lit 3552
Credit 3 units. Arch: HUM: EN: H UColl: HUM

U65 ELit 357 American Poetic Experience
This course, conducted completely online, introduces students to the reading and appreciation of American poetry. We consider the importance of the poetic form as well as the significance of the contexts informing the poetic experience.
Credit 3 units. UColl: OLI

U65 ELit 3602 Topics in Film and Literature
Topics course in film and literature.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL

U65 ELit 365 The Bible as Literature
Extensive reading in English translations of the Old Testament and the New Testament, with emphasis on literary form and ideas. Some attention is paid to the backgrounds of the Bible and to biblical influence on various aspects of Western thought and culture.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENE

U65 ELit 370 The Writing and Representation of Pain
This course explores a range of discourses about pain, including theoretical and technical ones.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENL

U65 ELit 380 Rebel Poets: Verses of Dissent
From the "of-the-rough" Walt Whitman to the censored Anna Akhmatova, poets have long rebelled against authority — whether it be sociopolitical, academic, or the literary traditions of their times. This all-online course will examine an eclectic array of "rebellious verse" by Americans and, on occasion, their global counterparts. Literary greats like Emily Dickinson, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Gertrude Stein, and other moderns will be paired with contemporary voices such as Lyn Hejinian, Claudia Rankine, and Thomas Sayers Ellis. Poets often excluded from the canon, such as Patti Smith, Saul Williams, and Taylor Mali, will be considered in connection to a poetry thriving outside the "ivory tower." Rejecting monolithic conceptions of dissent, we shall consider the term "rebel" beyond its immediate connotations to include matters of experimentation with voice and form. Need a "rebellious poem" to be by a "rebel poet"? What constitutes poetic dissent, and how can this change over time?
Credit 3 units. UColl: OLI

U65 ELit 387 African-American Literature: Early Writers to the Harlem Renaissance
Same as L14 E Lit 387
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SD BU: HUM

U65 ELit 395 Shakespeare
Detailed discussion of a number of plays representative of different types: comedy, tragedy, history, romance. Shakespeare as a poetic dramatist and the plays as functioning stage pieces.
Credit 3 units. BU: HUM UColl: ENE

U65 ELit 3992 Honors Research II
This course is tailored to the needs of students who are pursuing honors in English in their senior year. It will develop students' ability to gauge how different approaches affect the research and the outcome of a project in literary studies. It will guide them in their research by analyzing and discussing research design, the construction of an archive, and the assessment and use of sources. Assignments will include annotated bibliographies, summaries of the critical debate on student topics, abstract writing, research presentations, as well as drafts and final versions of chapters or essays. We will workshop many of these assignments in the classroom and practice peer review. The seminar will stretch over two semesters, ending before spring break, when honors work is due in the college. It is required for students who pursue honors by course work and by thesis.
Same as L14 E Lit 3992
Credit 2 units.

U65 ELit 400 Independent Study
Credit variable, maximum 3 units.

U65 ELit 424A Topics in American Literature II: Modernisms in America
This course offers an advanced introduction to both the literature and the concept of modernism, the "ism" used to mark the experimental verve of early 20th-century writing and to grasp its ties to modernity, or the modern social world. As the course title suggests, we will devote most of our time to the career of modernism in the United States, a place imagined as both the modernist nation par excellence and the desert modernism escaped to be born. Three groups of primary texts — early modernist experiments, 1920s modernist landmarks, and Great Depression revisions — will illuminate the grand ambitions of eccentric literary forms and sequestered avant-garde movements; the public disputes and buried alliances between "high" expatriate and Harlem Renaissance modernisms; and the influential Depression-era reinterpretation of modernism as reactionary self-indulgence. The syllabus will feature fiction, poetry, and drama by old and new literary celebrities: Djuna Barnes, John Dos Passos, T.S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mike Gold, Ernest Hemingway, Nella Larsen, Meridel LeSueur, Claude McKay, Clifford Odets, Tillie Olsen, Ezra Pound, Jean Toomer, and Richard Wright. A shorter list of critical essays will highlight modernism's tendency to theorize itself while introducing 21st-century perspectives from the "New Modernist Studies." Satisfies the American requirement. For underclassmen, junior or senior standing is required.
Same as L14 E Lit 424
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM: Art: HUM: EN: H
Though we often read Shakespeare in isolation, he developed his art in the vibrant theatrical culture of late 16th- and early 17th-century London, whose audiences discovered his distinctive qualities in comparison with other playwrights. In this course, we will read plays both by Shakespeare and by some of his most interesting contemporaries — including Kyd, Marlowe, Jonson, Webster, Beaumont and Fletcher — and consider why some plays are “of an age” and others “for all time.” This course will count toward the major in English literature for day students.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENE