

SPRING 2021 - ENGLISH THEMED LITERATURE SURVEYS

EH 215.105 and EH 215.107 - British Lit before 1785 (Frye)

Monsters and Monstrosity

From Grendel to Voldemort, British literature is littered with monsters. While we will not make it all the way to the 20th century, this course will examine the depictions of monsters in British literature before 1785. In particular, we will investigate how different cultures define monstrosity and how "evil" connects to ideas of gender, class, race, and nationality. We will explore the changing views on just what makes someone or something a monster as we move from Anglo-Saxon literature, through medieval, renaissance, and early eighteenth-century texts.

EH 215.109 and EH 215.110 - British Lit before 1785 (Halbrooks)

Masks and Identities

From the mysterious Green Knight to Milton's shape-shifting Satan to Shakespeare's cross-dressing Viola, writers have been interested in the ways in which we use masks, both literal and metaphorical, to create identity, to deceive, and to protect the self. As we all wear masks during our current crisis, we will use the idea of the mask as a starting point for our study of identity in literature from the Middle Ages through the eighteenth century.

EH 216.107 and EH 216.108 - British Lit after 1785 (Hollingsworth)

British Fantasy and Imagination

This course is a survey of British fantasy and imaginative literature from Romanticism to the present. We will discuss the literary significance and cultural contexts of works such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Our perspective will be that works of fantasy literature are much more than mere entertainment: these works of the imagination constitute a kind of history of feeling that can help us understand ourselves in relation to the world.

EH 225.104 and 225.105 - American Lit before 1865 (McLaughlin)

American Fanatics and Heretics

The story we tell ourselves about our Puritan forbears is one in which a courageous band of faithful Christians create a "city upon a hill" as a beacon of religious tolerance and good will. But, in fact, from the 17th century's three "crime waves"—the Antinomian Controversy, the Quaker Persecutions, and the Salem Witch Trials—to the three Great Awakenings of the 18th and 19th centuries, religious controversy and intolerance have been the order of the day. This course examines the highs and the lows of our spotted religious history and their impact on American literature.

EH 225.108 - American Lit before 1865 (Cowley)

Economic Crisis and Industrial Revolution

Hard Times! Panic! Going Bust! Collapse! Crisis! Down with Machines! Revolution! Workers Unite!—this course examines the birth of American capitalism and its historical discontents as represented in literary work from revolutionary period to the Civil War. We will investigate how the industrial revolution, bourgeois culture, and market crisis transformed American society on both the level of the individual and the social, and how American authors both celebrated and criticized these historical transformations.

EH 226.103 and EH 226.106 - American Lit after 1865 (Owsley)

2021: A Space Odyssey

This course is inspired by the expansive genre of speculative fiction, work that imagines—even reimagines—our past, present, and future. Speculative fiction is intentionally undefinable; it's a shape-shifting genre that seeks to challenge our worldviews by reconfiguring our conceptions of place, space, and time. Science fiction, utopias, dystopias, the supernatural, and Afrofuturism are particularly useful for contemplating who we are, by displacing where we are. We will utilize speculative fiction to investigate how American authors envision an inclusive and diverse national identity through the creation of mythical, but recognizable, landscapes.

EH 235.104 - World Lit before 1650 (Dail)

Animals and Humans

Some we love, some we hate, some we eat. Our relationship with animals has been in flux since the beginnings of human society to the present day. Writers have explored the human-animal boundary throughout history and considered questions like, what does it mean to be animal? What does it mean to be human? What do our differences say about our similarities? In this section of EH 235 we will examine how animals are portrayed in early literature and what this says about the animal itself, but also about the human and how we view ourselves and our place in the natural world.

EH 235.105 and EH 235.106 - World Lit before 1650 (Roddy)

Myth and Meaning

How did the world begin? How can we understand our mortality? Are there gods or a God who orders our world? Or are we simply following a script of our own making? In this survey, we'll take a comparative look at seminal religious, philosophical, and literary texts to see how burgeoning civilizations around the globe explore big questions to understand humanity's place in the universe. We'll examine legends of early world literature, like Confucius, Sappho, Vālmīki, and St. Augustine, as well as texts born out of the communal consciousness of tale-telling across the ages.