

## Descriptions of Depth of Study Areas

A. Medieval Literature: Medieval literature is capacious in its forms, striking in its innovations, and wildly diverse in its interests. Medieval writings are multi-lingual, spanning centuries and ranging from epic poetry to lyric, from drama to prose narrative. They bear witness to the invasions, inventions, religious controversies, and assimilations that inaugurated key concepts such as human rights and romantic love. Courses focus on our language's Old English beginnings and extend through the late medieval period, incorporating British, European, and global literature.

B. Renaissance/Early Modern Literature: The Renaissance/Early Modern period in Britain is not only the age of Shakespeare and other unforgettable dramatists, but the source of some of the funniest, strangest, smartest and most beautiful lyric and epic poetry in English. With course topics ranging from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* to Shakespeare on film, a concentration in Renaissance/Early Modern literature allows students both to study the history and culture of the past and to become familiar with works and genres that have remained influential for subsequent writers to the present day.

C. 18th and 19th Century Literature: Literature of the 18th and 19th centuries saw the emergence and rise to dominance of the novel. Along with the novel, the period saw dramatic transformations in poetry, drama, and non-fiction (including essays, speeches, pamphlets, letters, etc.). These transformative literary works reflected the times themselves, which were filled with revolutions of many kinds (political, technological, cultural, philosophical and religious). Courses in this area often focus on the emergence of women's writing, the problem of slavery, the consequences of urbanization, and the promises and perils of global expansion.

D. 20th and 21st Century Literature: 20th and 21st Century Literature is shaped by the increasingly rapid changes that define modernity—changes in technology, in national and geopolitics, in the ways in which the world's cultures and peoples are more connected and more divided. Studying 20th and 21st century literature means trying to appreciate and understand the ways in which the fiction, nonfiction, poetry, film, and even popular music of the times reflect and reflect upon this changing world. Courses in this area focus on a wide range of topics from history to economics to racial, gender, and sexual identity to the experiments with form that characterize much of the artistic production of the period.

E. African Diaspora Studies: African Diaspora literature celebrates, interconnects, and critically explores the histories, as well as the flourishing literary and cultural productions, of the Black Atlantic. Covering the creative, theoretical and critical terrains of Africa, African America, Afro-Caribbean, Black Britain, and emergent discourses of Black Asia, African Diaspora literature illuminates and deepens the folk and oral traditions, life-writings, poetry, fiction, drama, films, and intellectual exchanges by authors and other cultural workers of African descent. In their cross-referentiality, African Diaspora Studies courses recognize the geographic discreteness but also underscore the broader intersections of the lived experiences, thought, and creativities of peoples of African descent.

F. Postcolonial & Global Literatures: Postcolonial & Global literatures is a transhistorical and transnational category of writing that appears in a variety of forms, ranging from novels, drama, and poetry to film, music, and digital media. Focusing on courses in this area will allow you to read texts from North America, the Caribbean, Africa, South Asia, Hawaii, Australia, and New Zealand. It encompasses various perspectives on empire building and its aftermaths and explores themes such as race, gender, sexuality, indigeneity, migration, sovereignty, and diaspora. The courses offered in this area provide opportunities to examine how a history of empire and capitalism is central to literary developments around the world, while learning about theoretical concepts like colonialism, postcolonialism, neocolonialism, Orientalism, nationalism, transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, and globalization.

G. Literary, Critical, or Rhetorical Theory: What is distinctive about the works that we read in English classes and what methods are available for interpreting them? Most of our courses focus on a specific genre or period, which means that we are engaged in defining a relatively narrow category, such as silent film, medieval mystery plays, or modern poetry. Drawing on ancient traditions of rhetoric and poetics as well as other disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, and gender studies, courses in the Theory area ask broad questions concerning interpretation, the aesthetics of reading, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion—questions that are relevant to almost every other course in English and to the practice of interpretation in everyday life.

H. Creative Writing: Creative Writing offers students the opportunity to practice a literary art form (fiction, poetry, and/or creative nonfiction) with the guidance of published writers. Our courses involve a wide variety of activities, such as reading classic and contemporary literature, reporting on literary magazines, journaling, collaborating with peers, and experimenting with various formal structures from sonnets to podcasts. Other assignments might involve imitation, word games, experiential and archival research, performance, book arts, author visits, Skype interviews, peer editing, workshop, and revision. Students work to develop technical skills specific to each genre and enter into aesthetic conversations with the literary community. Note: Students choosing to satisfy Area H (Creative Writing) for their depth of study requirement will take an additional 3 hours (33 total) to complete their coursework and satisfy the requirement for 24 hours at the 3000+ level because several courses in this sequence are numbered below the 3000 level.

I. Composition & Studies in Writing: Classes in Composition and Writing Studies give students the chance to expand the possibilities of what it means to write. Some classes will provide opportunities to write in new genres, while others will introduce you to different ways of approaching the process of writing.

J. English Language & Linguistics: Linguistics provides a new perspective on something we normally take for granted: language. Courses in this area investigate the English language by considering its contemporary structure and historical development as well as the broader principles that shape English and all languages. How are sounds different from letters? Why do children overgeneralize grammatical rules (e.g. “foots”)? Why do some of Shakespeare’s rhymes not work today? These illustrate the kinds of questions students may explore as they refine their understanding and appreciation of language.

K. Film & Digital Studies: The study of film and digital media involves attention to a tremendous range of electronic forms, their historical development in the U.S. and globally, and diverse theories accounting for human interactions with our many kinds of screens. Courses in these areas often focus on visual and sonic film language, film genres (documentary, westerns, animation, zombie films, film noir, television dramas, etc.), the cinema of particular groups (such as women in film, African American cinemas, Indigenous media), and film and media theory. In addition to these critical studies courses, Digital Storytelling courses include camera-based and animated production as well as audio storytelling and writing for digital media.

L. Gender & Sexuality Studies: Gender and sexuality studies introduces students to an exciting array of cultural narratives and critical perspectives about gender and sexuality and their intersection with race, class, nationality, and other dimensions of diversity. Crossing boundaries and challenging traditional categories, courses invite students to explore a myriad of voices, literary traditions, genres, and themes that illuminate how gender is constructed in literature and culture. Courses may focus on African diaspora women writers, gender and poetics, feminist and queer theories, women's self-expression, LGBTQ representation, and women and film.