English 5320: English Renaissance Literature
CRN: 15832
Fridays, 11:00—1:20
Dr. Grace Tiffany
Fulfills: M.A.- and Ph.D.-level elective

In this class we will study selections from the prose, poetry, and drama that shaped art and thought during the English Renaissance and for centuries thereafter. Students are expected to have prior experience in literary analysis, to read carefully, and to participate in discussion.

Assignments: General participation (20%), three two-page papers (10%), one team-presentation/discussion (20%), one final paper 12-15 pages in length for undergraduates and 17-20 pages in length for graduates (30%).

Text: The Norton Anthology of English Literature IB. Major authors include Sidney, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, Donne, Herbert, Marvell, and Milton.

English 5550: Fitzgerald(s)
CRN: 15831
Tuesdays, 6:30—9:00
Dr. Scott Slawinski
Fulfills: M.A.- and Ph.D.-level elective

The Fitzgeralds “didn’t make the twenties; they were the twenties.”—Lillian Gish

“You are creating the contemporary world much as Thackeray did his in Pendennis and Vanity Fair and this isn’t a bad compliment.”--Gertrude Stein praising The Great Gatsby

Bathtub gin and breadlines, Coolidge and Roosevelt, “Ain’t We Got Fun” and “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off,” bootleggers and g-men, Valentino and Gable, the Charleston and the Foxtrot—Are these what you think of when you picture the ’20s and ’30s? This new year’s day, the Roaring 20s will become a century old, and March 26 marks the 100th anniversary of the publication of This Side of Paradise. F. Scott Fitzgerald’s wildly popular first novel, the book that catapulted him to fame and won him the hand of Alabama belle Zelda Sayre. Often called the decade that ushered in modern America, the 1920s and 1930s were a time of immense change, and F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald symbolize the era, not just the boom years before the Crash of ‘29,
but of the Depression years as well. This course will look at the writings of both Fitzgeralds.

The class will focus primarily upon F. Scott’s and Zelda’s prose writings, looking at as many novels as time will afford and a healthy selection of their numerous short stories and essays. If time permits, we’ll take a peek at the plays they wrote. Participants can expect to read the novels *This Side of Paradise, The Great Gatsby, Tender is the Night, Save Me the Waltz*, and possibly *The Love of the Last Tycoon*. We’ll read as many short stories from Scott and Zelda as will be manageable during the semester, naturally covering some of the most famous, such as “Winter Dreams” and “Babylon Revisited,” but looking at the more obscure ones as well—ever hear of “The Unspakable Egg”? Short story selections will be drawn from F. Scott’s four collections, his many uncollected stories, the Basil and Josephine and Pat Hobby series, and Zelda’s stories.

**Assignments:** Undergraduates and graduate students will write two essays—a shorter first essay and a longer second essay—and conduct a fifteen-minute presentation. Graduate students will also be responsible for a ten-fifteen minute “teaching moment,” during which they will teach a small portion of the week’s reading assignment.

**English 5550: Jane Austen**

CRN: 15830  
Wednesdays, 6:30—9:00  
Dr. Christopher Nagle  
*Fulfills: M.A.- and Ph.D.-level elective*

*Austen Alive: Adaptation & Originality, 1811-2020*

To the shock of some and the delight of others, Jane Austen remains the most influential novelist in English across the globe—but why? Many people are familiar with the boom in film adaptations and TV mini-series in the 1990s, which surely contributed to renewed interest in Austen’s fictional world. But fewer have noticed that the 2000s have ushered in a true renaissance of live performance for Austen adaptations on stage in myriad forms—to date, well over 100 original works ranging from plays and musicals to opera, ballet, and improv comedy. Appearing on high school, community theater, and professional stages of all kinds around the world, these new creative engagements reimagine what we can see happening in Austen’s novels, bringing spectacular new life to familiar stories for yet another generation.

We will read four of Austen’s most popular and influential novels and experience a wide variety of the best and most innovative adaptations of the 21st century. We’ll focus on live performance and stage adaptation but try to include some important samples of film, TV, and web series adaptations along the way. And because Austen fandom has global dimensions—Indian cinema, Brazilian soap opera, and a Russian world premiere musical are just a few examples—we will try to expand our focus to consider adaptive incarnations outside the familiar spaces of Anglo-American pop culture. If possible, we’ll include an excursion into Chicago to see the regional premiere of a major new Austen musical at the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, which promises to
be a highlight of the semester (details TBA).

For more information, feel free to email: cnagle@wmich.edu

**English 5660: Creative Writing Workshop—Fiction**
CRN: 11678  
Fridays, 2:00—5:30  
Professor Thisbe Nissen  
*Fulfills: Creative Writing Ph.D. or M.F.A. workshop requirement*

This class will be run as a traditional graduate-level fiction workshop. Each student will put up two pieces for workshop during the semester. Class members are responsible for reading peers’ weekly workshop stories (likely three per week, depending on enrollment), making detailed editorial line notes for the authors, and writing thoughtful and substantive end notes on every workshop piece. We learn better to edit ourselves by carefully and conscientiously editing others. Workshop stories will be the texts from which broader conversations on craft and technique will spring. This is a course for serious and advanced practitioners of the form of fiction; there will be no prompts or directive assignments. Students must produce two original pieces of fiction (each usually 10-20 pages) on their own during the semester, and must be well-versed enough in workshopping and workshop culture to assume a place within a community of dedicated fiction writers. Attendance is mandatory and active class participation is required of all students.

**English 5680: Creative Writing Workshop—Playwriting**  
CRN: 14944  
Mondays, 6:30—9:50  
Dr. Steve Feffer  
*Fulfills: Creative Writing Ph.D. or M.F.A. workshop requirement*

**Catalog Description:** A workshop and conference course in playwriting, with emphasis on refinement of the individual student’s style and skills.

**English 5770/6970: Advanced Readings in Old Norse**  
CRN: 15829/CRN: 15828  
Thursdays, 4:00—6:20  
Dr. Jana Schulman  
*Fulfills: Ph.D. Language requirement (if taken with Engl 5760, “Introduction to Old Norse” and each course is passed with a “B” or better); M.A.-level elective (if taken with Engl 5790, “Introduction to Old Norse”)*

Ethics and Morals in *Hrafnkels saga Freysgöða*

Although *Hrafnkel’s Saga* is one of the shortest Icelandic sagas, it is jam-packed with events that force the reader to think about ethics, morals, and behavior. The saga asks us to think about diverse matters such as: is it better to stand by one’s oath or break it? Is devotion to the gods a good thing or a bad? How should we understand the rejection later in the saga of Frey, of pagan gods, by Hrafnkel? What role does Icelandic law play in the saga? How do or did Icelanders
view torture?

In this course, we will translate *Hrafnkel’s Saga*, reading some, if not all, of the scholarship on the saga, and selections of laws and other texts in order to discuss and appreciate the saga’s subtleties.

**Prerequisite:** One semester of Old Norse-Icelandic.

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**English 5970: Immigrant, Refugee, and Slave Experience in Graphic Novels**

CRN: 12849  
Tuesdays, 4:00—6:20 **Hybrid (7 In-class meetings)**  
Dr. Gwen Tarbox  
**Fulfills: M.A.- and Ph.D.-level elective**

In addition to learning the basics of comics interpretation, participants will read and discuss a wide variety of contemporary graphic novels that focus on the immigrant, refugee, and slave experience worldwide. There will be a take home mid-term, and in-class final, and a semester project. The course is hybrid, meeting 7 times during the semester in person, with the rest of the course taking place in WMU’s E-Learning site. The class will meet in person on: January 6, January 13, March 16; March 23, March 30, April 6, and April 13. Tentative text list: Bessora and Barroux, *Alpha: Abidjan to Paris*; Brown, *The Unwanted: Stories of Syrian Refugees*; Bui, *The Best That We Could Do*; Neyestani, *A Short Guide to Being the Perfect Political Refugee*; Okorafor, *LaGuardia*; Prum, *The Dead Eye and the Deep Blue Sea: The World of Slavery at Sea*; Sacco, *Journalism*; Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis*; Tan, *The Arrival*; Yang, *American Born Chinese*.

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**English 5970: Careers for English Majors**

CRN: TBA  
Thursdays, 2:00—3:40  
Dr. Monty Ernst  
**Fulfills: M.A.- and Ph.D.-level elective**

*Work is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor, in short for a sort of life rather than a Monday to Friday sort of dying.*  
– Studs Terkel

Every English major has heard the dreaded question at least once—most likely more times than is tolerable—from friends, family members, and even acquaintances at parties: “What are you going to do with a degree in English?” It is usually expressed with an air of incredulous, dismayed bewilderment. This course is designed to provide a guidepost for students to establish a direction for themselves and reply to those various voices in their life with a firm, self-assured
(and non-profane) answer. Students will develop an understanding of who they are and what they like to do by identifying the personality traits, skills, and desires that can point them to a career on the borders of or outside of academia. In addition to in-class participation and attendance at career fairs and Career Services, students will be graded on weekly but brief self-reflective assignments and a final five page reflective essay. Lastly, students will read two books out of the list below. (At this point, I am still in the process of deciding which specific two.) By the end of the course, they will be prepared to envision a path forward that works for them and their unique set of interests and skills.

1. *Succeeding Outside the Academy: Career Paths beyond the Humanities, Social Sciences, and STEM*
2. “*So What Are You Going to Do with That?: Finding Careers Outside Academia*”
3. *The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success*
4. *You Majored in What?: Designing Your Path from College to Career*
5. *The Quarter-Life Breakthrough: Invent Your Own Path, Find Meaningful Work, and Build a Life That Matters*
6. *You Can Do Anything: The Surprising Power of a “Useless” Liberal Arts Education*

**English 6100: Postcolonial Literature**

CRN: 15104
Mondays, 4:00—6:20
Dr. Todd Kuchta

*Fulfills: M.A.- and Ph.D.-level elective*

This seminar will provide an introduction to postcolonial literature and theory, as well as a foray into some of the field’s most recent developments.

During the first half of the semester, we’ll read canonical fiction from Africa and the Middle East in relation to key concepts from “classic” postcolonial theory. Primary texts may include Chinua Achebe’s *Arrow of God* (Nigeria), Ferdinand Oyono’s *Houseboy* (Cameroon), Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*, (Zimbabwe), Sahar Khalifeh’s *Wild Thorns* (Palestine), J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* (South Africa), and Sembène Ousmane’s *Xala* (Senegal). Secondary readings will likely include Frantz Fanon on national culture, Edward Said on Orientalism, Homi Bhabha on hybridity, Gayatri Spivak on the subaltern, Anne McClintock on gendered nationalisms, and Fredric Jameson on national allegory. As a “crash course” to the field of postcolonial studies, this section will also help interested PhD students prepare for the qualifying exam in postcolonial literature.

The second half of the semester will focus on one of the fastest growing areas of recent postcolonial literature and theory, which considers issues of environment, ecology, climate change, and the Anthropocene. Primary readings may come primarily from South Asia, such as Romesh Gunesekera’s *Reef* (Sri Lanka), Indra Sinha’s *Animal’s People* (India), Mohsin Hamid’s *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (Pakistan), and Arundhati Roy’s nonfiction work *The Cost of Living* (India). Secondary readings will include Rob Nixon’s *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Amitav Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, and Dipesh Chakrabarty’s writing on the Anthropocene.
Assignments will include weekly written responses, a class presentation, a 5-page essay, an annotated bibliography, and a 15-20-page seminar paper. Feel free to email me at todd.kuchta@wmich.edu with questions.

English 6110: Literary Forms—Playwriting
CRN: 13117
Wednesdays, 4:00—6:20
Dr. Steve Feffer
Fulfills: M.F.A. in-genre (Playwriting) or out-of-genre (Fiction, Poetry) Creative Writing Forms requirement; in-genre (Playwriting) Ph.D. Creative Writing Forms requirement

Good Stories Going:
Creating Theatre and Performance from Existing Materials
(Adaptation, Docudrama & Collage)

“Theatre itself is much less high-minded than those who keep a watchful eye on its purity; the stage has always cheerfully swiped whatever good stories were going.”

-- Philip Pullman

“Character A: Adaptation is a profound process. It means you figure out how to thrive in the world.
Character B: Yeah, but it’s easier for plants. They have no memory. They move on to just whatever is next. But a person though—adapting is almost shameful. It’s like running away.”

-- Charles and Donald Kaufmann
Adaptation (screenplay)
Based on Susan Orlean’s The Orchid Thief

“Adapt… or die.”

-- Charles Darwin

This semester’s forms class in drama will focus on theatre and performance that is created, developed, written and staged from existing materials. These performance texts may include (though are certainly not limited) to stage adaptation of existing literary works, documentary theatre, collage, translation, re-assemblage, non-fiction performance and autobiographical work. The purpose for this exploration will be of interest to those working as playwrights, and for those in any genre who have wished to experiment with playwriting and/or discover how the dramatic form may inform their current artistic practice, especially in regards to narrative, corporeality, hybridity, voice and language. Additionally, working with texts from existing materials can be a very efficacious way to consider and reconsider some of the assumptions writers may have about their own work and genre.

Our class will consider how creating texts from existing materials, such as adaptation, docudrama or collage, establishes an increased awareness of genre’s role in the use of point-of-view, a change of frame or context, a shift in ontology, or the move from real to fictional (and vice-versa). Additional emphasis will be placed on the creative and interpretive act of
appropriation and salvaging, such as re-envisioning old stories so that they speak to a new audience, contest the values of prior work, or pay homage to an established text. We will also consider the ways that our intertextual engagement with existing materials can highlight or illuminate the palimpsestuous nature of memory and literary creation for artist and audience.

The semester will be divided into (highly uneven) thirds. In the first third we will read, do exercises and develop short writing projects in adaptation. In the second we will read, do exercises and develop short writing projects in docudrama. And in the brief last third, we will read, do exercises and develop (very) short projects around collage.

The nature of our study will be three-fold. 1) We will read widely (or look at video where available) in contemporary dramatic writing and performance texts that are examples of the exciting work being done in the areas of adaptation, docudrama and collage: These will include playwrights, performance artists, or theatre companies such as Tony Kushner, Len Jenkin, Anna Deavere Smith, Doug Wright, Annie Baker, Emily Mann, Yoko Ono, and The Wooster Group. In each section we will be guided and informed by a theoretical text exploring that unit: [Adaptation] A Theory of Adaptation by Linda Hutcheon; [Docudrama] Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present by Alison Forsyth and Chris Megson; [Collage] Cutting Performances: Collage Events, Feminist Artists and the American Avant-Garde by James Harding. 2) You will do a series of in-class writing and performance exercises and workshop a five-minute dramatic text to experiment with each of these dramatic forms (much shorter for collage). 3) Each writer will develop one of these shorter pieces, or some other work of his or her interest, into a longer more developed twenty to thirty-page piece, as her or his final project.

For questions and information: Dr. Steve Feffer, steve.feffer@wmich.edu

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**English 6660: Graduate Writing Workshop—Poetry**
CRN: 12345
Wednesdays, 4:00—6:20
Dr. Nancy Eimers
*Fulfills: Creative Writing Ph.D. or M.F.A. workshop requirement*

Muriel Rukeyser wrote that "All things change in time; some are made of change itself, and the poem is of these. It is not an object; the poem is a process." Ideally, our workshop will be a place to consider the poem as it is poised between what was intended and what might possibly be. Our task as a workshop will be to help instigate that change, or help the writer to imagine her/his way to the poem's next, ever more crucial version. Our discussion will be informed by collections by at least three contemporary poets.

**English 6900: Scholarship and Writing in the Profession**
CRN: 11158
Wednesdays, 4:00—6:20
Dr. Meghann Meeusen
*Fulfills: M.A. requirement; M.F.A. and Ph.D. elective*

ENGL 6900 is a graduate-level seminar that will aide students in developing their skills as academic writers. Students will spend the semester studying the conventions of academic
writing in venues specific to their field of interest, analyzing and evaluating journals and articles in order to produce an article-length academic text and present a conference-paper version of this work at a formal academic Colloquium. For students pursuing an MA in English, this capstone essay acts as the culminating requirement for the degree, but any student who wishes to improve his/her ability to write for academic publication and engage in academic discourse is welcome to use this opportunity to devote specific attention to writing technique and academic scholarship. Students will also develop a relationship with an outside faculty mentor, participate in “workshop”-style review and editing of their writing, and consider how one might best overcome the challenges of academic publication in their field of study.