ENGLISH LITERATURE

Please consult the online class schedule for specific days and times of these courses.  
https://sunspot.sdsu.edu/schedule/search

ENGL 220  INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE  T. ASIM

“Murder on the Page” will examine a broad range of literature dealing with crime, justice, and death to explore human nature. These works represent multiple genres (poetry, drama, short story, film and novel) and will span multiple eras to demonstrate humanity’s pervasive (and at times, perverse) fascination with criminality and murder. In life and literature, issues of guilt and innocence are often obscured by extenuating circumstances, subtle nuances both in and out of the courtroom, and varied voices (gendered voices, racial/ethnic voices), and we will probe the gray areas of free will and consciousness through the lens of law and crime. We will confront controversial issues that make us uncomfortable as we press upon that which is difficult and distressing in our world. In this way, we will investigate our values as a society, our institutions and power constructs, and our roles within those establishments.

ENGL 220  INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE  S. COOLICAN

Description Not Available

ENGL 220  INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE  E. DRAKE

Description Not Available

ENGL 220  INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE  A. KADE

Description Not Available

ENGL 220  INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE  M. MARSHALL

For centuries, literature, music, and film have served as gathering places for Others and Outsiders: those who are perceived as being different in some fundamental way, deemed inferior, and judged accordingly—as Claudia Rankine asserts, those who are both “invisible and hypervisible.” In this course we will celebrate and examine various forms of ‘Otherness’ and how these forms manifest in novels, short stories, poems, film, and music. Through textual analysis, spirited discussion, and thoughtful inquiry, we will hone our critical reading, thinking, and negotiating skills.

This ENGL 220, Model #2017 features texts by Mary Shelley, Matt de la Peña, Allen Ginsberg, Louise Erdrich, Kurt Cobain, Jericho Brown, Beyoncé, and Claudia Rankine. Batteries included.

ENGL 220  INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE  J. MINNITI-SHIPPEY

What better way to enter the study of literature than by reading & meeting the writers of contemporary works? In this wide-ranging course, read new work by local & international writers, and then have the chance to learn from them in person! We’ll study literary techniques in poetry and prose, with a special focus on how individual experience is made into art. Texts to include new work by Karla Cordero, James Matlack Raney, Matvei Yankelevich, Ishion Hutchinson, Elena Karina Byrne, and others. The class will consist of lectures and structured, student-led, panel discussions, as well as performances and guest lectures from our writers. Ideal for committed readers who want to learn more about the writing life!

Revised December 12, 2016
ENGL 220  INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE  
K. PHILLIPS

Description Not Available

ENGL 220  INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE  
S. SHAMOON

Description Not Available

ENGL 250B  LITERATURE OF THE U.S.  
C. COLQUITT

Description Not Available

ENGL 260A  ENGLISH LITERATURE  
M. GUTHRIE

This course is a survey of significant British literary texts from the medieval period through the 18th century. Readings will include a variety of genres including poetry, essays, drama, and fiction read in their historical and cultural contexts. We will also read one contemporary novel, Philip Pullman’s *The Amber Spyglass*, from His Dark Materials trilogy, as a response to Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.

Course Requirements: The course will require active class participation, one exam, and two papers.

ENGL 280  INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING  
M. DIFRUSCIO

Description Not Available

ENGL 280  INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING  
R. GREENBERG

Description Not Available

ENGL 280  INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING  
J. SPENCER

Description Not Available

ENGL 301  PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL  
W. NERICCIO


In this 2017 version of ENGL 301, we will use the concept of nakedness to explore the minds, bodies and art of women and men throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. We will concern ourselves with individuals who are anything but normal and by the end of the semester we may well decide that “normal” is the last thing we want when we are looking at fiction, at storytelling.

The various naked minds, bodies, and psyches we encounter this term will teach us to rethink what it is we think of when we imagine the dimensions of the human mind—in the process we will learn just how instrumental literature can be in exposing the riches and excesses of this mind. We will not limit ourself to the written word in this seminar, as we will explore also naked eyes/I’s from the visual arts and cinema. Odds are your eyes and “I” will be moved by these encounters.

This course is open to all undergraduates without regard to your selected major and assumes no expertise in literature, film or fine art. If you are curious about naked artists, naked souls and naked eyes, then hold on to your hats. With your dynamic participation, our adventure promises to be one hell of a spectacle.

The working list of authors/works include: Ballard's *Crash*, Garcia's *Photography as Fiction*; Benjamin's *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*; Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*; Daitch's *LC*, Allmer's *This is Magritte*; Emmerling's *Basquiat*; Mayer's *The Hurt Business*; Yuknavitch's *Chronology of Water*; Hernandez's *Human Diastrophism*, Powell's *Peeping Tom*, Hartley's *Flirt*, and Ware's *Acme Novelty Library*. 
ENGL 306A  CHILDREN'S LITERATURE  M. GALBRATH

Children's Literature (Liberal Studies majors; taken with 306W)

This historical review of children's literature covers fairy tales, novels, picture books, and graphic narratives, with an added movie or two. Weekly reading responses and group discussions. This semester’s focus: nonverbal experience in children's literature. Some proposed readings:

Charles Perrault, *Fairy Tales*
Brothers Grimm, *Household Tales*
Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Books*
Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*
Felix Salten, *Bambi*
Wanda Gag, *Millions of Cats*
Mildred Taylor, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
J K Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*
Hayao Miyazaki, *Spirited Away* (movie)

ENGL 306A  CHILDREN'S LITERATURE  K. SHUMATE

Description Not Available

ENGL 306A  ADVANCED COMPOSITION  M. GALBRATH

(Liberal Studies majors; taken with 306A)

In this composition course, you will write papers based on the readings and lectures in 306A. In addition, you will learn—or review—basic sentence structure and punctuation.

Course Requirements: Grammar quizzes, editing workshops, picture book presentations, three papers.

ENGL 306W  ADVANCED COMPOSITION  K. SHUMATE

Description Not Available

ENGL 308W  LITERARY STUDY  T. CUMMINGS

Description Not Available

ENGL 308W  LITERARY STUDY  M. GUTHRIE

The aim of this course is to teach you how to write about literature. You will learn how to close-read texts, how to master techniques of literary-critical research, and how to identify different literary critical approaches, some of which you will apply to the primary texts chosen for the course. We will also cover the more basic elements of writing: grammar, mechanics, and citation.

Course Requirements: Will include active class participation, short written assignments that you will be expected to revise in response to instructor and peer critiques, and a final research paper.
Spring 2017
Course offerings listed below are subject to change. All courses may not be listed here.

**ENGL 308W  LITERARY STUDY  E. FRAMPTON**

*Word Power: Literary Analysis, Research, and Writing*

This class will answer all of your questions...or at least those of a literary nature. Who is Terry Eagleton, anyway? What is the M.L.A.? When do I need an apostrophe? Where can I find a "peer-reviewed" essay? Why do some essays earn good grades and others earn bad ones? How can I write brilliantly about literature and other things? In short, there are no dumb questions in this class. In order to answer these questions and to have fun at the same time, we will read some excellent poems, essays, and novels, thinking about how different literary theories can provide useful tools for our own analysis of such work. We will also attack the nuts and bolts of academic writing, from grammar and punctuation to research and citation. There will be brief written assignments, a final research essay, a midterm, and a final exam. Generous and tolerant participation in class discussions, debates, and exercises is essential to success in the course, helping to further develop your interpersonal and public speaking skills. By the end of the semester, you will be empowered with a clearer understanding of methods of literary analysis, concepts and terminology of literary study, research techniques...and some wild ideas! Knowledge is power, so don’t leave your questions unanswered!

**ENGL 308W  LITERARY STUDY  L. CHAMPION**

*Description Not Available*

**ENGL 401  CHILDHOOD’S LITERATURE  M. GALBRAITH**

*Semester theme: Venturing out alone*

Little Red Riding Hood, Huckleberry Finn, Pippi Longstocking, Paddle-to-the-Sea, and Matilda are just a few of the characters you will meet in the fairy tales, picture books, novels, and other narratives for children you read for this class.

**Course Requirements:** Our primary class activities will be reading and discussion, and your grade will be based on five study questions and completion of weekly writing assignments.

A historical and investigative approach to the literature of childhood. Weekly responses and study questions. Some planned readings:

The Brothers Grimm, *Little Red Riding Hood*  
Hans Christian Andersen, *The Red Shoes*  
Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*  
Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*  
Maurice Sendak, *Outside Over There*  
Mildred Taylor, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*  
Orson Scott Card, *Enders Game*  
Hayao Miyazaki, *Spirited Away*

**ENGL 450  LGBT LITERATURE AND CULTURE  Y. HOWARD**

This is a cultural studies course that will examine the broad field of LGBT studies by engaging with a body of scholarship and cultural production that seeks to understand queerness as a disruption of sexual, gender, and artistic norms. In considering historical developments of non-heteronormative sexualities and gender non-conformity alongside contemporary understandings of queer thought, we will explore the politics of queer sexuality in its many aesthetic and personal forms. Texts and contexts will include (but are not limited to) queer comix by Alison Bechdel and Diane DiMassa, Queercore as a musical genre, art in the age of AIDS, Samuel Delany’s autoethnographic meditation on sexual space, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, and Kortney Ryan Ziegler’s documentary, *Still Black: A Portrait of Black Transmen*.

**ENGL 498  SEM: ENGLISH HONORS THESIS  C. COLOQUITT**

*Description Not Available*
ENGL 501  LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN  J. THOMAS

Because children's literature, perhaps more than any other literary genre, operates directly in the process of interpellation, of inscribing gender roles, class consciousness, etc., ENGL 501 (Children’s Literature) constructs children's literature as a cultural apparatus that creates for its readers representations of race, class, and gender that are often problematic, often laudable. Thus, in addition to attending to structural and aesthetic matters, we will investigate the historical moment in which the texts on this syllabus were produced as well as the implicit and explicit ideology within them. Furthermore, we will discuss how the reception to these texts may have changed over time. I will encourage oppositional reading strategies in order for you to cultivate how to read with and against canonized texts and the institutions that canonize these texts.

ENGL 502  ADOLESCENCE IN LITERATURE  M. GALBRAITH

Explore the ways in which adolescence has been represented through poetry, novels, short stories, graphic memoirs, and drama. The emphasis will be on close reading using textual evidence. Proposed readings: Hamlet, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Their Eyes Were Watching God, Go Tell It on the Mountain, Fun Home, Kafka on the Shore, Drown.

ENGL 502  ADOLESCENCE IN LITERATURE  J. THOMAS

Adolescence in Literature is rooted in the cultural studies model of inquiry, and shall explore how adolescence is represented in texts written for young adults in the late 20th, early 21st century. We will consider the progressive and conservative ideologies represented implicitly and explicitly in our assigned texts, figuring young adults as subjects enmeshed in complex ideological and cultural systems working to interpellate them into various social roles. This process (and its mixed results) is especially interesting when one considers the adolescent, for while the adolescent is often expected to be rebellious, our culture also expects those adolescents to put that rebelliousness behind them, to learn "how the world works" and, ultimately, shed youthful contrariness and become "good," well-mannered adults whose principle charge is to adopt the dominant ideologies of our nation. As much pedagogical theory has shown, learning best takes place when students are active participants in knowledge making. So I will try to eschew long lectures. Instead, class time will consist of discussion, group-work, and in-class and out-of-class writing assignments. These activities will put the responsibility of creating knowledge largely on your shoulders.

ENGL 503  TOPICS IN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE  M. DE LA PENA

The Changing Landscape of Contemporary Children’s Literature

Over the past fifteen years, children's literature has exploded commercially. In this course we will explore the tremendous range of works that currently fall into the category of children’s literature. We’ll examine contemporary picture books, chapter books, middle grade novels, young adult novels and new adult. In many cases, we will meet the author (either in person or via Skype) after reading and discussing his or her work. We will pay special attention to recent shifts in the field, such as the call for more diverse representation and the puzzling fact that adults now make up the majority of the YA readership.

ENGL 508W  WRITING OF CRITICISM  E. FRAMPTON

Joys of the Keyboard

Academic writing can be a struggle. It can also be fun. This class will provide you with some tools and strategies that will help you to take more pleasure in the process of writing about literature and, as a result, to be more successful with it. Since literary scholars today must have an understanding of “theory,” we’ll take a tour through aspects of this challenging field via British critic Terry Eagleton. Experience with techniques of research and citation are equally important to critics, and so we’ll cover that too. Also essential is a thorough command of standards of English grammar, and we’ll therefore review a few basics that often get neglected. As a part of the entire process, we’ll read some wonderful poems, essays, and two novels, applying our studies to the analysis of these.
ENGL 508W  WRITING OF CRITICISM  E. FRAMPTON

Course Requirements: There will be brief written assignments, a final research essay, a midterm, and a final exam. Generous and tolerant participation in class discussions, debates, and exercises is an essential component of the course, helping to further develop your interpersonal and public speaking skills.

ENGL 510A  EARLIER LITERATURE HISTORIES  T. CUMMINGS

In this class, we'll read early modern ancestors of blockbuster he-men. In our own day, we can go to the theater and enjoy Superman and Doctor Strange, Deadpool and Wolverine, protagonists whose courage is incomparable and glory is obtainable only through the purchase of our theater tickets. So too, in the early modern era, authors from Chaucer to Mallory wrote about heroes who belonged to distant eras and who achieved what must have seemed like marvels to their readers.

We'll explore those marvels and the ingredients for heroism through close readings of Beowulf, Troilus and Cressida, Pericles, Morte Darthur, and Robin Hood. In our own inquiries into these early modern parallels to modern-day blockbusters, we'll discover how great champions fall like Ironman, that being heroic means discovering and healing from wounds as deep as Wolverine’s, and that the wit of these ancients is as sharp as Deadpool’s.

Course Requirements: Written and in-person requirement include a review of the literature, a research paper, group work, discussion, and presentations.

ENGL 510B  LITERATURE AND TECHNOLOGY  P. HERMAN

The purpose of this class is to look at how literature, from the past to the present, has dealt with the promise and perils of technology, a theme that closely correlates with the problem of utopian literature, since technology is so often promoted as a means of achieving the perfect society. But as we will see, neither the claims made for technology nor the sense that technology can create an ideal society, are new. This class will start by looking at Thomas More’s Utopia, and then on to texts that deal more overtly with technology, such as Sir Francis Bacon’s New Atlantis, Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, and Aldous Huxley, Brave New World. We conclude with two books, M. T. Anderson, Feed, and the very controversial novel by Dave Eggers, The Circuit, that ask us to reconsider our reliance on the web and computers.

ENGL 522  INVENTING AMERICANS: 19TH CENTURY LITERATURE  M. BORGSTROM

What might the nineteenth century teach us about the cultural world of the twenty-first? And how might the twenty-first century help illuminate the work of earlier eras? This class will consider such cross-temporal connections by focusing on four keywords central to both eras: Liberty; Movement; Innovation; Progress. Through readings by Hannah Crafts, Rebecca Harding Davis, Frederick Douglass, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry David Thoreau, Julia Ward Howe, Herman Melville, Harriet E. Wilson, Walt Whitman, and Nathaniel Hawthorne (among others), the course will pay particular attention to the underlying tensions between the desire to affirm a democratic self and the social realities of the early nineteenth century—challenges we continue to wrestle with today. In so doing, we will look closely at the ways that literature itself helps us to navigate these questions by virtue of the affective attachments it engenders and the social potential it makes possible.

ENGL 523  LITERATURE OF THE US 1860 - 1920  C. COLQUITT

Description Not Available
ENGL 525  LITERATURE OF THE US 1960-PRESENT  Y. HOWARD

Under the theme “Bodies and Experiments,” this course will approach late-twentieth and early-twenty-first-century American culture by investigating the varying degrees of cross-pollination between embodied experiences and experimental practices. We will read, watch, and listen to a selection of written, visual, and auditory examples that focus on corporeal topographies and radical textual qualities. Responding to and reflecting contemporary politics of the body, the experiments under consideration will include (but are not limited to) William Burroughs’s *The Soft Machine*, Catherine Lord’s *The Summer of Her Baldness*, and Erika Lopez’s *The Girl Must Die: A Monster Girl Memoir*. While we will approach these texts in loose chronological order, they should be thought about in terms of their affinities, conflicts, and contradictions in shaping and being shaped by contemporary gendered, racial, and sexual subjectivities.

ENGL 526  CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SHORT FICTION  S. MARTIN

What’s happening right now? What kinds of stories are being written as your eyes move across this page, reading these words? You already know the famous names of the past—Hawthorne, Chekhov, Maupassant, O’Connor. But what about the writers who share the 21st century with you? What kinds of stories are they writing? What can you learn about the absurd, complex, and dangerous society you confront each day as you try to make sense of what you’re doing? What do writers like Junot Diaz, Jennifer Egan, Percival Everett, Nam Le, Karen Russell, Julia Elliot, Ron Curie, Shelley Jackson, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Lydia Davis, and Miranda July have to say about the real, not so real, more than real place we call the world? What aesthetic strategies have writers like these developed to address the experience of being alive right now? Take this course and find out.

ENGL 528  DAVID FOSTER WALLACE  E. HICKS

*Description Not Available*

ENGL 533  SHAKESPEARE  E. FRAMPTON

*Shakespeare Comes Alive!*

British Renaissance writer William Shakespeare wrote plays to be seen and heard in live, collaborative, public performances, rather than to be read silently in private. In this course, we will attempt to experience Shakespeare’s plays as they were intended to be appreciated, by listening to, watching, and performing them, in addition to reading them. The emphasis will be on dramatic works as blueprints for performance and on performance as the realization of dramatic scripts. We will therefore be attentive to Early Modern language, theatrical spaces, performance techniques, social hierarchies, and cultural practices. While we will thus situate Shakespeare’s writing within its original historical contexts, we will also address ourselves to the ways in which it is read, performed, and understood today. In addition to reading six of Shakespeare’s plays, we will have the opportunity to watch acclaimed professional productions captured on tape. Generous and tolerant participation in class discussions, debates, and projects is an essential component of the course, helping to further develop your interpersonal and public speaking skills.

Course Requirements: The class includes a semester-long collaborative group project, which involves the analysis of a selected play text, historical research, the creation of a production plan for staging the play, and a half-hour performance by your group, excerpted from your selected play. There will also be short essays, a midterm, and a final exam. Come enjoy the fun, in a class that many have described as their favorite ever at SDSU!
ENGL 537  MILTON  P. HERMAN

Students often mistake Milton for a boring misogynist whose works are, to put it kindly, less than relevant to the 21st century. Nothing could be farther from the truth, and in this course, we will discover how Milton’s poems function as an “interrogation machine.” His earlier poems (Lycidas and L’Allegro / Il Penseroso especially) ask important questions about the role of poetry and what sort of life one should lead, and his prose will intervene in some of the hottest topics of the day, which remain some of the hottest topics of our day, such as the limits of freedom of expression and worship, and exploring the best form of government, since the present one seems to be collapsing. The majority of the course will focus on Paradise Lost. But rather than reading viewing PL as versified dogma or, as an earlier critic so memorably put it, as a “monument to dead ideas,” we will see how this epic, as a result of the Restoration and the subsequent collapse of everything Milton worked for, risked his life for, and lost his vision for, puts everything on trial, with results that are neither conventional nor expected. Students are advised that this will not be a class in theology or in worshipping the transcendent text. We will not be looking at Milton as the culmination of a seamless and apolitical Christian tradition, or as an exemplar of orthodoxy. Instead, this class will look at John Milton as a historically situated author whose works intervene, and were meant to intervene, in the politics of his time, and whose major poetry is animated by the “poetics of incertitude.” In addition to Milton’s works, you will also be introduced to some of the major currents of Milton criticism by way of selected essays (all available on Blackboard).

ENGL 563  INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL HUMANITIES  A. HAMMOND

This course offers a practical and theoretical introduction to the new creative and interpretive possibilities opened up by digital forms of literature. Reading novels, graphic novels, short stories, videogames, and media theory by writers such as Jennifer Egan, Dash Shaw, Jorge Luis Borges, Davey Wreden, and Marshall McLuhan, we will ask what is at stake in the shift from print to digital forms. Engaging with digital libraries and computational techniques in literary analysis, we will ask what new insights we can gain into literature once it is digitized. Is the digital age making literature more accessible, more inclusive, and more interactive? Or will the digital age, with its many multimedia distractions, make literature obsolete? We will seek answers to these questions not only by analyzing existing literary objects, but also by making literary objects of our own, using platforms and languages such as Twine, HTML, and CSS. Note: this class will teach you basic programming and web coding skills, but no previous programming experience is required or expected.

ENGL 571  TECHNIQUES OF THE SHORT STORY  S. MARTIN

This class will be a fiction-writing workshop in which the basic techniques of short fiction will be studied in the works of contemporary writers like Percival Everett, Dagoberto Gilb, ZZ Packer, George Saunders, Jhumpa Lahiri, Junot Diaz, Edwidge Danticat, Ron Currie, Sherman Alexie, Leslie Marmon Silko, Tao Lin, Dennis Johnson, Jonathan Lethem, Haruki Murakami, and many other authors whose work has come into prominence over the last twenty years. Student writing will be prominently featured in a workshop conducted by an award-winning literary editor who has been called “North America’s foremost master of the short story.”

ENGL 576B  LITERARY PUBLISHING & EDITING WORKSHOP  J. MINNITI-SHIPPHEY

Learn to make books! This advanced publishing workshop, a required course for the Creative Publishing & Editing certificate and minor, is designed to give motivated students the opportunity to work as editors of a professional press. The course will build on the work of ENGL 576A, as editorial boards create thematic anthologies of literary work, design print & digital books, and work with professional programs such as InDesign and CreateSpace. We’ll host several publishing industry professionals during the semester, from book designers to small press founders.

While ENGL 576A is listed as a prerequisite for this class, graduates of ENGL 576 are eligible to enroll, and other interested students are encouraged to reach out to the professor. Don't miss out on this unique professional publishing opportunity!
ENGL 579          LIVING WRITERS                              M. MARSHALL

Derek Walcott’s Fortunate Traveler asserts, “…literature is an old couch stuffed with fleas.” This course aims to counter his assertion by examining the texts of living writers who are working to maintain literature’s livelihood. Guest authors such as Ishion Hutchinson, Christian Wiman, and Aimee Nezhukumatathil will visit the class to conduct discussions, writing workshops, and readings centered on their work and experience in the literary world. This course provides the rare opportunity to work closely with visiting authors while exploring multiple genres and mediums, including poetry, prose, creative nonfiction, and criticism. Active participation and inquiry will expand your perception of literature and strengthen your ability as a writer and reader. This course promises to shake the fleas from static written word. Writers of all experience-levels and genres are welcomed and encouraged.

ENGL 579          FICTION WORKSHOP                            M. DE LA PENA

This class will function mostly as a writing workshop in fiction. Additionally, we will look at a range of contemporary works for inspiration, from children’s literature to adult, focusing mostly on voice, tone and the role of the narrator. Each meeting will begin with a short discussion of the various tools in our fiction-writing toolboxes such as POV, pacing, plot and revision. Some exploration of the current market and trends in commercial publishing. Writers of all experience-levels are welcome.

ENGL 581W          THE WRITING OF FICTION                               K. SHUMATE

This course will explore a wide range of short fiction and the techniques involved from conception to revision. Through various writing exercises, guided discussions, and workshops, we will examine ways in which writers translate their impulses to invent and imagine into compelling prose that engages readers’ attention from first line to last. It is through this ancient genre that the human spirit finds its voice—during the semester we will find and develop our own voices. Writers of all experience-levels and genres are welcomed and encouraged.

ENGL 584W          WRITING INFORMAL ESSAYS                                    D. MATLIN

Exploration of the Art of the Essay

Students will have a chance to discover the range, care, and resonances this most provocative of forms can offer. There is no articulation that can be at once more challenging and unpredictable than the essay. Its ranges of address can encompass the deeply personal and private to the most public and even experimental voicings. The essay can be a form of criticism, a probing historical scrutiny of one's own life, an improvisation focusing on travel, science, birth, death, portraiture, the arts, sports, politics, and the chaotic fascinating times in which we live. Students will be encouraged to write, to probe, and to participate in the act of imagining how to speak for oneself in the actual writing and energies of sustained attentions that are a record of things felt, heard, and lived. The course will also include a series of readings that may help to suggest, to define, and to offer the gain of confidence and nerve to try to make narratives that are new, fresh, and immediate. The writer wants to be aware that an essay, particularly, involves the management of knowledge as a central act of focus and that narrative, is this instance is also an object that can arise by making language come alive through a coherent identity determined by the story itself.

A significant portion of this course will involve reading for the first month. I have provided pieces that I feel are at once provocative, resourceful, funny, imaginative, brave, and deeply inviting in terms of each their inventions of language and intimate address. These books are also provided as guides and to help give you the courage to walk into your own imaginations and make those urgent discoveries which will matter to yourselves and to your fellow writers and perhaps influence and give substance to your professional lives. How do you make the language that is yours and the mind that is yours come alive and be full with a nerve peculiar to yourselves?

With this sense of possibilities in mind I’ve ordered three books:

Rae Armantrout, True
James Baldwin, Nobody Knows My Name
Mary Ellicott Arnold and Mabel Reed, In the Land of the Grasshopper Song