

Fall 2025

English 309/509: Approaches to Teaching Composition

Dr. Sarah Morris (smorri10@mail.wvu.edu)

Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30-12:45

“I won’t be ruled by tests I don’t believe in. I won’t be told how to teach writing by people who never write. My students and I are the most powerful forces in the classroom, not the tests.”

—Penny Kittle, *Write Beside Them*

English 309/509: Approaches to Teaching Composition is a combined level methods course designed for certifying future teachers of writing, in which graduate students take a leadership role. In it, we will explore underlying theories and foundational principles that inform what we know about writing instruction; we will research attitudes and techniques for pedagogy; we will experiment with methods of teaching and responding to writing; we will develop our own processes and identities as writers and teachers of writing.

Because writing helps us to know what we think, to articulate what we know, and to make meaning in a community, will write daily, individually and collaboratively. Because accountability standards pervade teaching realities today, we will prepare for working toward those standards and still preparing students as writers in the classroom and in the world.

Course themes:

Being a writer; teaching writing
Process and practice
Modeling and mentoring
Assignment and unit design
Responding to and assessing writing
Writing workshop and peer response
Digital literacy and argument writing

Course work:

Writer’s notebook
Practice teaching and responding
Reflective writing
Process model/mentor texts
Classroom mentoring project
Book groups
Unit plan OR Classroom ethnography

“Engaged writing and reading, practical minilessons, close reading of poems, a diversity of genre studies, letter-essay critiques of books, editing protocols, and individual editorial conferences more than satisfy, for example, the Common Core State Standards.”

—Nancie Atwell, *In the Middle*

“Because writing can support a high level of learning in all subjects, it matters in any classroom where inquiry, knowledge, and expression are valued and recognized by students and teachers.”

--National Writing Project, *Because Writing Matters*



Thursdays, 4-6:50pm | Fall 2025

WRIT 507, The Writing of Health and Medicine

This class fulfills degree requirements for graduate programs in PWE, Creative Writing, and Lit/Cultural Studies.

**CURIOUS ABOUT HOW
WRITING SHAPES OUR
EXPERIENCES OF
HEALTH, ILLNESS, AND
DISABILITY?**

Join us!

For details, contact
Professor Gouge
cgouge@wvu.edu

ENGL 601

Studies in Composition & Rhetoric

Fall 2025 | Tuesdays, 4:00–6:50 PM | Colson G06

ENGL 601 focuses on historical developments in the field of composition and rhetoric as it relates to current issues and practices. This fall, we will interrogate questions like:

- What is rhetoric, and how does it relate to the teaching of college composition?
- What is the relationship between rhetoric, democratic deliberation, and postsecondary writing instruction?
- What is the relationship between rhetoric and culture?
- What is the relationship between rhetoric, language, equity, and writing assessment?
- How does rhetoric work in and through institutions?
- How does rhetoric evolve with the development of emergent technologies like Google, Facebook, TurnItIn, and ChatGPT?
- How will we consider all of these questions in light of our own reading, writing, teaching, and learning practices?

Questions? Contact Dr. Sano-Franchini at jennifer-sano-franchini@mail.wvu.edu.



English 618: Creative Writing, Poetry

Mondays, 4-6:50 p.m.

Location: TBA

Professor: Mark Brazaitis

“I Have Wasted My Life.”

Don't! Take English 618, where you'll be doing the opposite of wasting your life—you'll be writing poetry! Expect to write (and re-write!) at least twelve poems. And expect to read dozens of great poems such as the one by James Wright quoted above:

LYING IN A HAMMOCK AT WILLIAM DUFFY'S FARM IN PINE ISLAND, MINNESOTA

Over my head, I see the bronze butterfly,
Asleep on the black trunk,
Blowing like a leaf in green shadow.
Down the ravine behind the empty house,
The cowbells follow one another
Into the distances of the afternoon.
To my right,
In a field of sunlight between two pines,
The droppings of last year's horses
Blaze up into golden stones.
I lean back, as the evening darkens and comes on.
A chicken hawk floats over, looking for home.
I have wasted my life.

In English 618, you'll practice what you love to do—and have an eager, thoughtful audience.



“You were wild once. Don’t let them tame you.”

—Isadora Duncan

Bring your wild, wonderful writing to...

English 618A: Graduate Writing Workshop, Fiction

Wednesdays, 7:00-9:50

Location: TBA

Professor: Mark Brazaitis

You’ll write up to five works of fiction, which will be discussed in a workshop of your peers.

You’ll also read and discuss your classmates’ work as well as the work of published authors.

By the end of the semester, you will be closer, much closer, to being the writer you want to be.

“It’s none of their business that you have to learn to write. Let them think you were born that way.” — Ernest Hemingway



**ENGL 646
American
Literature,
beginnings to 1865**

Fall 2025
Tuesday 4:00-6:50

Tim Sweet
tsweet@wvu.edu

Frederick Church,
*Our Banner
in the Sky*
1861

Overview

We'll balance close and distant reading as we address four interrelated topics: "American" (what does that mean?) literary and cultural history, canon formation, the function of the survey in the present state of the discipline, and practical matters of designing and teaching a survey. Although the primary readings are period- and nation- specific, the practical and theoretical questions are broadly applicable to other literatures.

Texts.

Robert Levine et al., eds., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 10th ed., vols. A and B (2022) 9780393884425 (Please buy the hard copy.)

Derick Spires et al., eds., *The Broadview Anthology of American Literature*, concise edition vol. 1 (2023) 9781554816194 (Please buy the hard copy.)

Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken" (1989)

Joseph Csicsila, *Canons by Consensus* (2004), excerpt

Ted Underwood, *Why Literary Periods Mattered* (2013), Introduction

John Guillory, "Uses of the Survey Course," *ADE Bulletin* (2015)

Assignments

Weekly reading responses.

A presentation on the current scholarship on a week's primary readings.

Anthology project: identify an early (pre-1820) text that is not in the *Broadview* or *Norton* and argue for its inclusion (1000 words + text to be printed), locating it with respect to the *Norton's* organizational scheme and table of contents.

A sample syllabus for an undergrad survey course, plus 1500-word rationale.



Premodern Genres (ENGL 661)

Monday, 4:00-6:50

Romance! Dream Vision! Scientific Poetry! Avian Debates! Cattle Raids! Wait...what?

Early European literature was replete with genres that you won't find in bookstores today, from miracle-laden saint's lives to the raunchy comedy of fabliaux. But the tropes, forms, and representations invented in late Antiquity and the Middle Ages have profoundly influenced literary history and even writing in the present day. Premodern genres are both strange and strangely familiar.

This course surveys the great diversity of vernacular literature from the medieval period, with an eye to the relation of literary form and social history. While we will prioritize the literature of Britain, medieval genre development was very much an international phenomenon, and Britain itself was multilingual and multicultural. For this reason, we will be mostly reading translated works, though the class will include a gentle introduction to late Middle English.

Possible readings include: *The Táin Bó Cuilagne*, *The Mabinogion*, Gerald of Wales' *Topography of Ireland*, *The Romance of the Rose*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Pearl*, *Mandeville's Travels*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (a veritable smorgasbord of medieval genres), the *Life of Christina of Markyate*, the *Book of Margery Kempe*, and some truly hilarious medieval drama.

English 682: Recent Literary Criticism

W 4-6:50

Professor Christine Hoffmann

cehoffmann@mail.wvu.edu

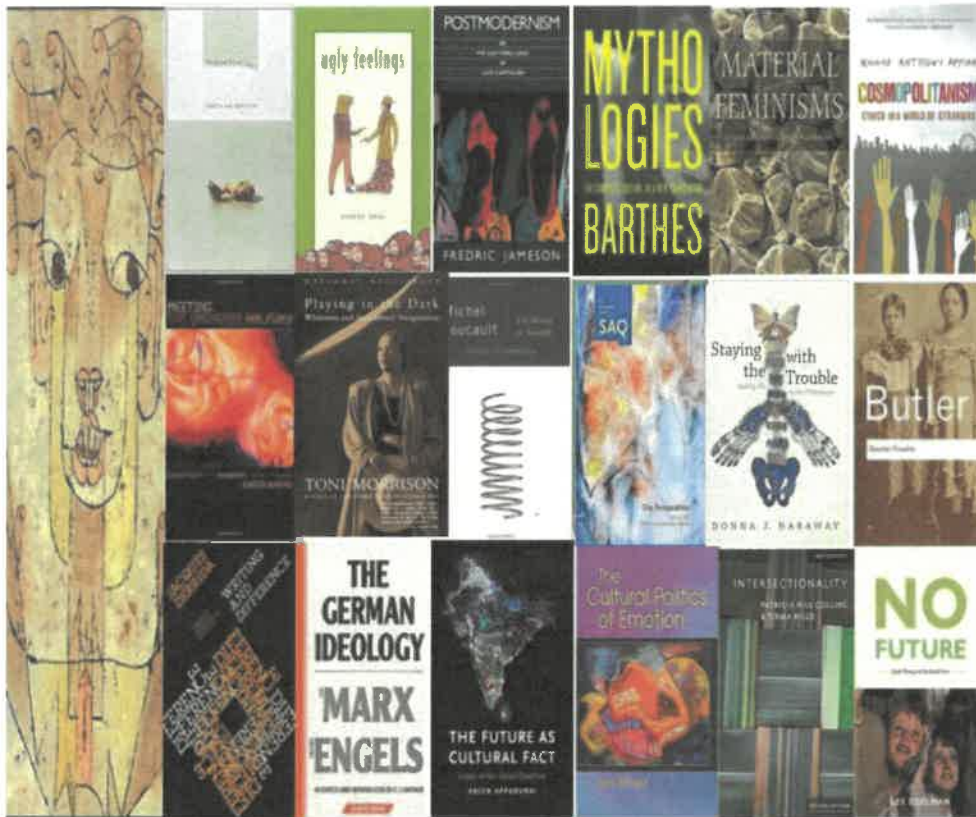
Course Objectives

To distinguish between major schools of recent literary criticism.

To articulate the applications of theoretical criticism to literary texts as well as to social & civic circumstances.

To write professional, persuasive and artful interpretations of literary texts.

To discover and investigate the possibilities of thinking, speaking, feeling, advocating, resisting and otherwise maneuvering through 21st-century culture with both intellectual sophistication and a practical commitment to ethics, social justice, and resistance to tyrannical incompetence.



English 682 surveys the theories of major schools of criticism, including post-structuralism, new formalism, critical race theory, Marxism, postcolonial studies, affect theory, cultural studies, queer studies, ecocriticism, disability studies, and probably whatever Professor Hoffmann gets into over the summer. Participants will have multiple opportunities to apply these theories to a curated selection of texts, including

A GAME (Sam Barlow's *Her Story*)

A FILM (Jordan Peele's *US*)

A WEB TEXT about football except it's really about love & mortality & possibly everything (Jon Bois's *1776*)

A SHORT STORY COLLECTION (Carmen Maria Machado's *Her Body and Other Parties*)

AN OLD (something by Shakespeare)

Expect to design pedagogical or public-facing materials that introduce theoretical terminology; respond to the writing of your colleagues; and compose a 15-20 page paper that applies a specific critical approach to a literary text. And read. A lot.

ENGL 782—Current Directions in Literary Study—Fall 2025

Adam Komisaruk

W 7:00-9:50 PM

Trans*

gender
national
human
ecological
corporeal
disciplinary

As nonconforming sexualities become an increasingly visible and contentious subject of public discourse, theory seems sometimes to scramble to respond, sometimes to be ahead of the curve. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle's landmark anthology *The Transgender Studies Reader* was published in 2006, a second volume in 2013, and a "remix" in 2022; *The Transgender Studies Quarterly* (TSQ), partly funded by a Kickstarter campaign, is now in its eleventh year. In this course, gender and sexuality will be our primary but not our exclusive focus, hence the preferred orthography "trans*." At once a prefix, an adjective, a noun, and a verb, trans* helps to name crossings within and among embodied phenomena that challenge identitarian limits, binary or otherwise: race and ethnicity, place and nationhood, caste and class, ability and disability, the human and the nonhuman, the virtual and the "real", the public and the private, even the fields and methods of scholarly inquiry themselves.

In the first half of the course, we will read theoretical works, both foundational and recent, both firmly situated within and in productive dialogue with trans* studies; authors may include Sara Ahmed, Stacy Alaimo, Anjali Arondekar, Moya Bailey, Judith Butler, Mel Chen, Claire Colebrook, Jack Halberstam, Cleo Wölfe Hazard, José Esteban Muñoz, Andrew Pilsch, Jay Prosser, Gayle Salamon, C. Riley Snorton, Susan Stryker, others. The second half will be dedicated to an historical cross-section of literary texts; these may include works by Geoffrey Chaucer, Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, Lord Byron, the Chevalier d'Eon, Henry Fielding, Richard Marsh, Virginia Woolf, Angela Carter, Caitlin Kiernan, Carmen Maria Machado, Arundhati Roy, Juliet Jacques, others. The reading list will be flexible enough to accommodate student recommendations and requests based on their particular fields of interest. Requirements will include 1-2 oral presentations on an assigned text, plus a final project that may take a variety of forms (an article-length essay, a syllabus and lesson plans for a hypothetical course, an edited anthology, a grant or fellowship application, a public-humanities project, etc.).