

Summer 2022 English Course Descriptions

Summer Session I (May 23-June 29)

Sherlock Holmes and Victorian Detective Fiction

ENG 150 A (CRN 52919)

Prof. Jenny Pyke

Online MTWRF 1:40-3:55

Victorian detective literature was popular entertainment at the same time that it took on the anxieties and hopes of its historical moment, including those around capital, nation, otherness, authority, domesticity, and theories of knowledge. Through historical readings and current theory, we will examine the double work of this literature. Arthur Conan Doyle and his institution Sherlock Holmes will provide a central focus through which we will read influences and afterlives, which may include works by Poe, Wilkie Collins, Dickens, R.L. Stevenson, and Georges Perec, as well as current writing on television and film adaptations and the fanaticism of steampunk.

Literature Interprets the World: Dreams

ENG 150 B (CRN 52920)

Prof. Judith Madera

Online MTWRF 12:15-1:30

Authors, inventors, and explorers have long pursued the possibilities of dreams. Dreams are a powerful resource for the human imagination. They are our most compelling ambitions; they make feats of innovation possible. Dreams also connect us to our deepest reserves. Some dreams are dangerous. Modern history's darkest tragedies have been about people chasing the wrong kinds of dreams or the corrupted dream.

As we will see, dreams are productions of the mind. By examining dreams we are investigating the structures of perception.

In this short course we will look at the ways dreams animate modern literature and film. Students will be introduced to magical realism, dystopic fiction, psychological literature, and avant-garde film. We will also consider feature films like *Perfect Blue*, *Donnie Darko*, *Mulholland Drive*, and *Shutter Island* to learn more about what dreams reveal. Class requirements include scheduled reading, short reflections, and discussion.

No New Worlds: A Survey of American Nature Writing

ENG 175 A (CRN 52158)

Prof. Guy Witzel

MTWRF 10:50-12:05

*"There's no new world, my friend, no
New seas, no other planets, nowhere to flee—
You're tied in a knot you can never undo
When you realize Earth is a starship too."
— C.P. Cavafy, as quoted in Kim Stanley Robinson's Aurora (2015)*

What becomes of Henry David Thoreau's injunction to "live deliberately" when it confronts the climate emergency? Can we still ask Annie Dillard's question – "why is it beautiful?" – when parts of the natural world have been ravaged? Do we continue to find "something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature," as Rachel Carson once put it, when we cannot be

assured of those patterns, when the seasons themselves seem out-of-whack? In this course we will survey U.S. nature writing from its nineteenth century beginnings to the present. Key works will be examined as we strive to achieve a rich understanding of this significant branch of American literature. But as we proceed with this task, we shall also keep in mind our own circumstances, asking what it means to study, make use of, and contribute to this body of work amidst our increasingly pressing ecological crisis.

Readings will include selections from *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau* edited by Bill McKibben as well as the efforts of writers like Kate Aronoff, Lauret Savoy, Elizabeth Rush, Nick Estes, and Kim Stanley Robinson. Assignments will include response papers, discussion questions, a critical essay, and a regularly maintained nature journal.

Summer Session II (July 6-August 10)

The Will to Survive

ENG 150 C (CRN 52921)

Prof. Rian Bowie

Online MTWRF 10:50-12:05

Human beings possess highly developed survival instincts and imperatives. We adapt, strategize, and act against natural and unnatural forces that threaten our existence. We endure so that the sacrifices that we or others have made will not have been in vain. Books selected for this course will challenge us to think critically about the lengths that individuals will go to ensure that they or others survive during times of uncertainty or impending disaster. What sacrifices will people make to survive, what happens if/when one's survival is contingent upon another's destruction, and how will their actions or sacrifices be remembered? Each work will raise important questions about the lasting effects that decisions made in discrete moments can have upon the future.

Texts May Include:

Frederick Backman, *Anxious People*
Brit Bennet, *The Vanishing Half*
Laila Lalami, *The Other Americans*
Julia Phillips, *Disappearing Earth*
Charles Yu, *Interior Chinatown*
Evaristo, Bernadine, *Girl, Woman, Other*
Owens, Delia, *Where the Crawdads Sing*

Global Strivers and Entrepreneurs

ENG 185 A (CRN 52922)

Prof. Siddarth Srikanth

Online MTWRF 12:15-1:30

The figure of the born-poor striver who makes good on the opportunities offered by the modern capitalist world is familiar to many of us. Predictions of an "Asian century" by economists and political pundits have been accompanied by an abundance of tales of strivers and entrepreneurs in East Asian and South Asian literatures. As once colonized countries across Asia integrate their markets with the global economy, it appears inevitable that the world's poor are about to harness their entrepreneurial energies and march to crazy riches—or will they?

This course will think through ideas of striving, entrepreneurship, and capitalism in the global peripheries through a range of late 20th and early 21st century novels and non-fictional narratives set in South and East Asia. We will also ask how these literary narratives imagine the place of strivers and entrepreneurs within an unequal global economic and geopolitical order where some countries are wealthy and others are not, and some countries are politically and culturally dominant and others are not. As we compare these diverse representations of strivers and entrepreneurs, we will pay close attention to the many valences of successful—and unsuccessful—class mobility within the cultural imaginary of global capitalism.