

Department of English

Graduate Course Descriptions
Spring 2027



ENGL 5360: Romantic Literature

CRN 15340 | Mode: In-person | Mondays, 4:00-6:20 | Dr. Christopher Nagle

Fulfills: M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D. elective



“In the wake, the past that is not past
reappears, always, to rupture the present.”
—Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness
and Being*

What would it mean to study Romanticism
not as a collection of “great works” by a
handful of writers who took inspiration from
nature and from the political fervor of the
French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, while
crafting new contours for a modern sense of
self in poetry and novels? Instead, we could

center the world in which both its critics and creators were constantly navigating the tensions
and stresses of formal and aesthetic innovation as well as the profoundly disturbing contours of

slavery, subjugation, and human annihilation, all of which was part of what we call the Romantic movement.

This incarnation of the department's core Romanticism course spans the broad range of rich literary offerings produced in Britain and its colonies from approximately 1770-1830 and will include the use of digital resources, especially to enrich our experience of the vast archive of visual culture (painting, illuminated manuscripts, illustrated "keepsake" volumes, satirical political cartoons, artistic works that inspired ekphrastic writing, etc.). We will center the debates within the period about the slave trade and its abolition, and incorporate the voices and perspectives of people of color who lived in this period or who wrote about it subsequently (e.g., Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, the anonymous novella *The Woman of Colour*, the eponymous *History of Mary Prince*, 20th-century historian CLR James' study of the Haitian Revolution – the first successful slave revolt against European colonizers, which took place in the wake of the French Revolution—and one of the most innovative and influential 21st-century works, m. nourbeSe philips' *Zong!*, a genre-defying monument to history, lyric, law, and testimony).

This recentering of historical dynamics once seen as peripheral to the period should enable us to see anew what is "Romantic," while we also explore a broad survey of diverse readings from across the traditional genres of British Romanticism—poetry, prose fiction, drama, essays, life-writing, along with the visual art created to illustrate some of these literary texts—representing the contributions of both canonical and non-canonical figures. We are likely to include at least one important film adaptation and view selected performances of *Zong!*. This course should be ideal for graduate students considering this exam area, or for those who simply lack familiarity with some of the most important influences on later writing—both creative and critical—of the 19th and 20th centuries, for advanced undergraduates considering graduate school, and for anyone wishing to be prepared for teaching Romantic literature. This course will provide a broad representation of material essential to the field in the 21st century.

This 5000-level course will be conducted seminar-style, foregrounding shared class discussion and other forms of collaborative learning, with brief supplementary mini-lectures introduced when necessary. Students will be expected to make at least one presentation during the course of the semester (including both a written and oral component), to write at least one short response paper and one longer research project, and—most importantly—to contribute actively to class activities every week. Students will be encouraged to tailor their research work to an area of individual interest that directly connects with their broader field of study as scholars of literature, creative writing, education, or a combination of these (or other) areas.

ENGL 5660: Creative Writing Workshop—Fiction

CRN 15079 | Mode: In-person | Mondays, 6:30-9:00 | Professor Richard Katrovas

Fulfills: Creative Writing M.F.A. or Ph.D. workshop requirement

This will be a traditional workshop in which the group critiques one another's short stories and novel chapters. Some of the writing for the course may be in response to assignments, though this will be negotiable. Each student will generate a minimum of thirty pages of prose fiction. An aspect of the course will be a far-ranging conversation on the state of the art, and where it is going.

ENGL 5820: Studies in Children's Literature

CRN 15080 | Mode: In-person | Fridays, 1:00-3:20 | Dr. Meghann Meeusen

Fulfills: M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D. elective

The field of children's and adolescent literature offers a vast array of critical perspectives, including traditional literary study, historical and archival research, theory-focused explorations, and pedagogy-based work. Yet one of the most popular approaches to children's literature in recent years is **cultural studies**, which offers a distinctive look at children's media as cultural artifacts, considering the ideological and social impact of texts and their ability to affect our perceptions of and engagement with the world around us. The Spring 2027 section of ENGL 5820 *Studies in Children's Literature* will delve into this approach by examining children's spaces, and in particular, the Walt Disney World theme parks.



This Spring, we'll study the nature of cultural studies criticism as a unique analytical approach, and to do this, we'll engage with the huge array of digital media that connects people to the WDW parks without ever stepping foot in Orlando. However, students will also have a chance to put a line of inquiry of their choosing into practice, as the course will have a **hybrid component**, including seven online meetings (in addition to seven in-person class meetings). During many of these digital meetings, Dr. Meghann Meeusen will be on site at the Walt Disney World parks to connect students with the artifacts they wish to examine, allowing them to have the opportunity to build from their online and other research to delve even more deeply into cultural studies.

So why take ENGL 5820 in Spring 2027? If you **love Disney**, here's a chance to spend an entire semester studying it! If you're excited about **social media and influencer culture**, we'll examine such texts in depth, as well as how this kind of media overlaps with critical and academic research spaces. If you are **interested in cultural studies research**, a field that is growing in importance on the academic job market, you can not only learn about this approach,

but also complete a study that demonstrates your ability to deftly traverse multiple critical and research approaches. Or, if you just want a **really fun hybrid class** with a professor who is over-the-moon excited to try out a new type of pedagogy, ENGL 5820 is right for you.



ENGL 5970: Memoir and Autofiction

CRN 15081 | Mode: In-person | Thursdays, 4:00-6:20 | Dr. Jil Larson

Fulfills: M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D. elective

In 1977, Serge Doubrovsky coined the term “autofiction” to describe writing that occupies a place in between memoir and fiction. Some writers find themselves caught, as it were, between the two genres (or they feel at home in that indeterminate space). In this course, we will explore a variety of contemporary writers who are difficult to categorize simply as novelists or memoirists. Obvious examples are Rachel Cusk and Ocean Vuong. Cusk, who began as a memoirist, has commented on memoir’s lack of legitimacy, which became even more apparent to her when she went on to gain regard as a novelist (while clearly still writing from life). Vuong remarked that as a poet truth was invariably his starting point and so it is in *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous*, a book he calls a novel even though it feels very much like a memoir. In this course, we will read some work categorized as literary memoir and some as fiction by writers thought of as experimenting with autofiction (e.g., Elizabeth Hardwick, James Baldwin, Ben Lerner, Annie Ernaux, J.M. Coetzee, Rachel Cusk, Ocean Vuong, Matt Young, Chris Kraus), and together we will explore the ideas of these writers as well as the questions of genre, style, and approach their work provokes.

ENGL 6100: Old English Poetry

CRN 15082 | Mode: In-person | Wednesdays, 4:00-6:20 | Dr. Jana Schulman

Fulfills: M.A., M.F.A., and Ph.D. elective; Ph.D. world language requirement (coupled with English 6760: Old English)

[Course description](#)

Join me in an exploration of Old English poetry. In this class, you will review the fundamentals of Old English grammar and language learned last semester; translate Old English poems from

various manuscript collections (“Dream of the Rood” from the *Vercelli* manuscript; “Judith” from the so-called *Beowulf* manuscript; poems (riddles, “The Wife’s Lament,” and more) from the *Exeter* manuscript; and at least one early medieval saint’s life (from Ælfric of Eynsham’s Catholic Homilies); read secondary material on the poems; and finally learn more about Old English poetry *qua* poetry. Metrics, anyone?

Prerequisite: At least one semester of Old English.

ENGL 6100: Milton

CRN 15347 | Mode: In-person | Tuesdays, 4:00-6:20 | Dr. Grace Tiffany

Fulfills: M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D. elective



In this seminar we will read and discuss the poetry and prose of the seventeenth-century political, religious, and social visionary John Milton. Readings will include sonnets, the elegy “Lycidas,” Milton’s political tracts on divorce, monarchy, and freedom of the press, the play *Samson Agonistes*, the masque *Comus*, several longer poems, and the epic *Paradise Lost*. Assignments will include a presentation, several short-essay tests, and a final exam.

Texts:

Milton’s Selected Poetry and Prose, Norton

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Norton Critical Edition

ENGL 6110: Literary Forms—Poetry

CRN 13114 | Mode: In-person | Wednesdays, 6:30-9:00 | Dr. Alen Hamza

Fulfills: M.F.A. in-genre (Poetry) or out-of-genre (Playwriting, Fiction) Creative Writing Forms requirement; in-genre (Poetry) Ph.D. Creative Writing Forms requirement

In this course we’ll look at a number of poetic forms and consider their evolution over time. The overarching question we’ll be asking is what is the use of paying attention to and writing in traditional forms in an age in which free verse reigns supreme. Students will practice composing formal poems, as well as give a presentation on a form of their own choosing, one not otherwise discussed by the class. For the collections of poetry we read, students will write either a 2-3 page response paper or an influence poem. Some class time will be set aside for workshop. A portfolio will be due at the end of the semester.

ENGL 6300: Professionalization in English Studies

CRN 15083 | Mode: In-person | Tuesdays, 6:30-9:00 | Dr. Scott Slawinski

Fulfills: M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D. elective

Considering a career in academics? Planning to apply to doctoral programs? Wondering what lies ahead in your doctoral program once you complete your coursework? Thinking about the academic job market?

English 6300 focuses on professionalizing graduate students and preparing them for a career in English studies at the college and university level. Invited guests will cover topics such as the various sub-fields within English studies (literature, rhetoric and writing, creative writing, English education), conference going and other public readings, scholarly and creative publishing, academic administration, textual editing, and searching and interviewing for an academic job. Discussion topics will also include library research, alt-ac careers, graduate- and professional-level writing, qualifying examinations, and dissertations and other genres of academic composition.



If the schedule allows, the English library liaison will join us for portions of some class periods to discuss research techniques and other library-related skills.

Assignments are designed to mirror writing in the field beyond the scholarly journal article and include an annotated bibliography, an essay on prose conventions, a conference abstract, a short encyclopedia article, and a book review. There is no seminar paper in this course, and students will find that the most-demanding work occurs in the first six weeks of the semester before gradually decreasing.

Any M.A.'s, M.F.A.'s, or Ph.D.'s considering pursuing a career in English studies will find this course useful.

ENGL 6900: Scholarship and Writing in the Profession

CRN 10690 | Mode: In-person | Mondays, 6:30-9:00 | Dr. John Saillant

Fulfills: M.A. requirement; M.F.A. and Ph.D. elective



In this seminar, students will analyze and evaluate journals and articles in areas relevant to a research topic, revise and edit a scholarly essay with the support of their peers and a faculty mentor, and prepare for oral presentation and discussion of the work in an end-of-semester event. This course also acts as the culminating requirement for the M.A. in English, wherein students produce a capstone essay and present it at the public colloquium.

Moreover, this seminar allows for a discussion of academic writing more broadly, for much of our class time is spent unpacking the nature of academia, academic writing, and ways to engage with research from a variety of perspectives. Thus, in addition to the tangible results of the course—production of an article and conference presentation—this class can enrich your ability to navigate your chosen field of study in an increasingly complex and challenging market.

While ENGL 6900 is a requirement for MA students in their final year of study, I am especially encouraging students from creative writing and literature, both at the MFA and doctoral level, to consider the course as an elective option. For many students with interest in pursuing futures in academia, scholarly publication or conference experience can be valuable in successfully applying for doctoral programs or entering the academic job market. This course provides an opportunity for focused attention these important projects as well as increased expertise in academic writing more broadly. ENGL 6900 provides a formal avenue to improve your research writing and pursue publication and conference presentation options, as well as build your relationship with a member of the faculty with expertise in your area of interest.



Additionally, for doctoral students considering an article for publication as the modality for one of the qualifying exams, this course is highly recommended—it can give you the chance to begin work on your exam article in a structured way, helping you move confidently toward your exams (and toward timely graduation).

Class-time will include group discussions about academic writing/publication and as well as some opportunities to engage with guest speakers. Other class periods will be reserved for individual conferencing and work in small groups. The course is pass/fail.

ENGL 6970: Grant Writing

CRN 15216 | Mode: In-person | Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:15 | Dr. Brian Gogan
Fulfills: M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D. elective

Make an impact. Improve your community. Write grants.

Grant writing is a kind of writing that has social impact. It turns ideas into reality by convincing stakeholders to build a program or fund a project.

And grant writing is a unique and increasingly marketable skill sought by employers in today's competitive job market. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, grant writing jobs are expected to grow 7% in the next eight years, a rate that is "faster than the average for

all occupations.”

In this class, you’ll learn how to make positive social impact through grant writing and improve your professional writing skills. You’ll study successful grant proposals, practice grant writing strategies, and produce a grant proposal for a community organization.

This designated service-learning course features experience-driven learning: Class participants will engage in a major grant writing project with a Kalamazoo-area community partner, and a site visit to the nonprofit will be required of all class participants.

During this course you will:

- Investigate the habits of successful grant writers
- Examine the motivation behind giving
- Apply theories of rhetoric and writing to grant writing
- Practice crafting conventional parts of a grant proposal and a project pitch
- Conduct research to identify funding opportunities and stakeholder needs
- Produce a complete grant proposal and project pitch for a community organization

Major assignments include grant convention analyses, a case study, and a community-engaged, research-based grant proposal project for a Kalamazoo-area nonprofit.

This course satisfies elective credit for all English Department programs of study and counts toward the core concentration for Rhetoric and Writing Studies majors and minors.