

## VCSU Fall 2015 Course Descriptions

**ENGL 220: Introduction to Literature (3 Cr.) MWF 1:00-1:50, Dr. Brister** - What reason is there to study literature? To be entertained by a good story? To gain some degree of “culture?” To get a sense of history? Certainly. But more importantly, literature provides us with the opportunity to develop multiple strategies of reading and interpretation—and to employ these strategies of interpretation in our everyday lives. This course is premised on the belief that literary study should not be devoted solely to the appreciation of great works or authors, but rather, that as we read and discuss poetry, fiction, drama, and film, we’ll develop a more meaningful understanding of ourselves and the world.

**ENGL 261: American Literature I (3 Cr.) TR 12:30-1:45, Dr. Brister** - In this course, we will look at the origins and development of American literature and culture to 1865. According to Benjamin Franklin, America began as a “great mixing of peoples from the whole Atlantic basin”; as “a many-sided process of influence and exchange that ultimately produced the hybrid cultural universe of the Atlantic world.” As a “hybrid” culture, America’s early literature is defined, to a great extent, by the people and politics it both endorsed, ignored, and enslaved. While this is a survey course meant to introduce students to a wide range of early American literature, we will not necessarily adhere to a chronological reading of texts through the Civil War; instead, we will consider the way American literature emerged in relation to its “hybrid” culture and what it has to teach us about living in America today. In what ways did America construct a sense of national identity through its literature? How did American fiction and poetry develop after Puritanism? How and where did marginalized people contribute to or challenge the emerging national literature and culture? How does our contemporary digital culture relate to American foundational literature? As we read authors like John Smith, William Bradford, Mary Rowlandson, Washington Irving, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, and Walt Whitman, we will approach their texts not only as “great works” to be appreciated and enjoyed, but also as historical documents that coincided with and commented on the pressing social and philosophical issues of their time (and ours): racism, equal rights for women, economic inequalities, and individual subjectivity.

**ENGL 322: English Literature II (3 Cr.) TR 9:30-10:45, Dr. Chao** - ENGL 322 provides an overview of the principal authors and significant movements of literary and cultural thought in English from the romantic period to the present. We will discuss the development of literary styles and the changes in popular taste as we read the works roughly in the order they are dated. The primary considerations of the course include: 1) the development of literary form and style over time; 2) literature in its historical context; 3) a thoughtful and informed reader response. Major writers will include: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley; Bennett, Hardy; Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield; George Orwell, and W. H. Auden.

**ENGL 409: Language and Culture (3 Cr.) Online, Dr. Chao** - ENGL 409 examines the relationship between language and culture. We will especially consider the significance of culture in communication; dialect, gender, and cross cultural studies of linguistic preference; acquisition of communicative competence, and bilingual/multilingual issues. In simple words, students will learn, through reading and practical research, how people use language (i.e. their choice of different forms or language varieties), what they use it for (situations or factors affecting such choice), and the kind of social information that sociolinguists ascribe to different forms in a language or different varieties. The VCSU catalogue best describes this course as “An examination of the basic sociocultural variables in the acquisition of first and second languages. Theories in language use, language learning, types of bilingual and multilingual education situations, and social determinants of dialect and style will also be discussed. Pre-Req. ENGL 309” (*Catalog* 142).

**ENGL 420: Online Communication and Documentation (3 Cr.) Online, Shorma** - This course examines the types and rhetorical demands of online communication, focusing especially on writing help documentation, FAQs, directions, manuals, video tutorials, software documentation, etc. Through team projects, students will analyze audience needs and determine the appropriate medium and format for support and then design, develop, test and implement the help documentation.

The below link provides a “real-life” example of a team project from fall 2014.

<http://www.vcsu.edu/academics/learning/vp.htm?p=3303>

**ENG 440: Comparative Literature: Myth in Contemporary Literature (3 Cr.) 11-11:50 MWF, Kruger** - By definition, Comparative Literature ranges far and wide, often exploring not only literary texts but the cultural contexts in which they occur and the themes they share. In this course, we’ll be looking specifically at how authors use and modify myth-related systems and themes in contemporary works from a relatively broad range of cultures. In short, we’ll examine classic myth studies, as well as more modern takes from religious studies, comparative anthropology, and psychology, to enliven our understanding of the evolving importance of myth in the contemporary world, and then apply what we find, learn, and surmise to specific works from the last fifty years or so, including novels by Gabriel Garcia Marquez (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*), John Gardner (*Grendel*), Jose Saramago (*The Cave*), and Margaret Atwood (*The Penelopiad*), a play by Peter Shaffer (*Equus*) and a Terry Gilliam film starring Robin Williams (*The Fisher King*), and a smattering of poetry and short stories (namely Carlos Fuentes’ “Chac Mool” and George Saunders’ “The Semplica-Girl Diaries”). In doing so, we’ll read some of the best authors in the world as we seek a more universal understanding of where we’re at, and what we might want to do now we’re here.

**ENGL 490: Methods of Teaching Communication Arts (3 Cr.) MWF 1:00-1:50, Shorma** - This course is designed to provide students with the theoretical knowledge and the practical experience necessary for the beginning English/Language Arts teacher. The course is also intended to assist students in developing some specific techniques for teaching and planning lessons and units. The reading assignments and course activities will include discussions of speaking, listening, reading, and thinking. Issues related to classroom management and discipline will also be addressed. At the completion of the course, students should demonstrate their abilities to think, discuss, and plan as teachers

*A grade of C or better in ENGL 490 is required before student teaching.*