

English

The teaching of English at Exeter is shaped by the conviction that language is the essential means of gaining self-knowledge and of participating in community. The emphasis may vary from course to course, but the goals of instruction are constant—the development of skills of expression and of listening and understanding. The courses in our required sequence (English 120 – English 420) are differentiated primarily by the increasing complexity and sophistication in the writing we expect and in the works we read. At every level, students are likely to write in various forms and to read works representing diverse voices and experiences.

Each year, the Academy sponsors a writer-in-residence, the George Bennett Fellow. In addition, poets and prose writers regularly visit campus to read from their own work and to meet with groups of students. Two student publications, *Pendulum* and *PIP*, feature student prose and poetry.

► Junior Year

ENG120/130

This sequence of courses focuses on the observation and selection of the concrete details that make writing vivid. Students practice the use of such details in a variety of assignments that may include descriptions, narratives, letters, journal entries, and expository paragraphs, and they gain experience in distinguishing showing from telling. They also write short in-class or overnight responses to their reading. Those readings often complement the emphasis on writing from experience.

► Lower Year

ENG210/220/230

In this sequence of courses, readings introduce broader and more complex personal and social issues. The writing assignments—ranging from personal narratives and personal essays to letters, editorials, poetry projects, and responses to the readings—encourage awareness of audience and exploration of perspective. In the spring term, students are likely to produce a sustained piece of writing based on research into their family history. The reading list includes a play by Shakespeare. A student normally has the same teacher for the second and third terms.

► Upper Year

ENG310/320/330

In this sequence of courses, written assignments tend to shift from personal narratives and essays to various forms of analysis in which the exploration and articulation of ideas increasingly influence content and structure. Readings continue to grow in complexity of subject matter and style. In the winter term, students produce a sustained piece of narration and exposition based on an extensive observation and interview. The reading list includes a play by Shakespeare. A student normally has the same teacher for the second and third terms.

► Senior Year

ENG410/420

This two-term course gives students the opportunity to refine skills developed in previous courses. They exercise both their power of invention and their analytical skills in a variety of assignments that may range from the writing of poetry or fiction to the writing of expository essays, including literary criticism. In the winter term, many students compose and deliver a meditation inspired by those offered weekly in Phillips Church. The reading list includes a play by Shakespeare. A student normally has the same teacher for the two terms. *Offered: Fall and Winter Terms.*

ENG411/421

This two-term sequence focuses on student writing of short fiction and poetry. The reading list consists primarily of short stories, novellas, and poems. Students wishing to participate in the course submit their applications in the spring of their Upper year. In April, the designated teacher of the course selects the following year's class from that pool of applicants. The students normally have the same instructor for both English 411 and 421. *Offered: Fall and Winter Terms.*

ENGLISH SENIOR ELECTIVES

The English Department offers a variety of elective courses in the spring term to Seniors who have completed English 420 or English 421. Course offerings may focus on genres, literary periods, the history of ideas, individual authors, or writing.

ENG435: WILLIAM FAULKNER AND HIS INFLUENCE: TONI MORRISON AND GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ

Sherwood Anderson once advised the young and struggling William Faulkner to return to his own little “postage stamp” and to write about what he knew best—life in and around Oxford. Mr. Faulkner took that advice, returning home to shape fiction out of personal experience. Out of his own home landscapes he created Yoknapatawpha County and in 1949 won the Nobel Prize in Literature. More than 30 years later, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Toni Morrison, both destined to become Nobel Laureates, identified William Faulkner as a major influence on their work. What do these three culturally diverse authors have in common? How significant are their differences?

We will begin by reading a selection of short stories by Faulkner and Garcia Marquez, and we will read two novels, one by

Faulkner and one by Morrison. Our choices include Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* or *Absalom, Absalom* and Morrison's *Sula* or *Beloved*. In short, expect to read eight to 10 short stories and two major novels. Written work will include both analytical and personal writing.

ENG436: THE BEATS

Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* have become major influences on contemporary literature, film, and art. We shall read these two pieces and many other works from other Beat writers including Gary Snyder, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Bob Kaufman. Further, we shall examine film, music, and art in our efforts to define that American existentialist quality now known as Beat Literature. We shall put to rest Truman Capote's assessment of Kerouac's writing as mere "typing."

ENG439: READINGS IN BRITISH LITERATURE

This course allows students to read and discuss work from the British tradition, including poetry, drama, essays and novels. Authors might include Austen, Johnson, Dickens, Woolf, Pinter, and Stevenson. Students keep a reading journal that provides an opportunity for personal reflection and analysis.

ENG443: AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

Africa and the Diaspora in the Caribbean have a rich and varied literature. Immersion in this literature allows the reader to sense the soul of people and places whose cultures, beliefs, and perspectives are very different from those in "the West". Even Western languages and literary forms look different when writers use them to convey African linguistic patterns and ancient forms of storytelling. We'll also view films that these artists have created, from the high-spirited comedy *Life is Beautiful* (Congo) to the musical tragedy *The Harder They Come* (Jamaica).

ENG445: EXPLORING THE VOICES OF WOMEN WRITERS

Who are our female literary ancestors? To what extent are women's concerns, points of view, and even ways of expressing themselves different from men's? Reading may include fiction, poetry and essays by the Brontës, Virginia Woolf, Alice Walker, Maxine Hong Kingston, Leslie Marmon Silko, and other writers of diverse backgrounds.

ENG447: SHAKESPEARE: "PEACE, GOOD TICKLE-BRAIN"

"Look he's winding up the watch of his wit; by and by it will strike" (*The Tempest*). You've read several of Shakespeare's plays. Here's an opportunity to read several more. The teacher will choose the opening script; the class will select the remaining texts. When possible, we'll see plays performed on stage, and we'll watch productions on tape. Perhaps we'll even try staging a scene or two?

ENG449: MOBY DICK

This course consists of an intense reading of this novel, which over the years has come to take on greater and greater importance in American literature. The focus is on the novel and how the America that Melville describes anticipates the America to come and how the novel, in its design and energy, embodies what is finest in the American democratic spirit. Students will keep a journal.

ENG450: NOVELS INTO FILM

Students read novels and see their transformation into films. Through these comparisons and a short study of key film techniques, students learn how to "read" a film. The class chooses works such as *A Clockwork Orange*, *Children of a Lesser God*, and *Apocalypse Now* from hundreds of possibilities. Paper topics emerge from the material read and viewed.

ENG451: GREAT BOOKS

This course includes the reading of great books and the writing of critical responses. Novels and stories of varying length and degree of difficulty come from the European and American traditions. Students choose the books that make up the reading list. The following list is representative: Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*; Capote, *In Cold Blood*; Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*; Eliot, *Middlemarch*; Faulkner, *Light in August*; Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*; Ellison, *Invisible Man*.

ENG452: GREAT SHORT STORIES

This course examines how we live as individuals and as members of communities that attempt to define us, our values, and our outlook on the world around us. Readings include stories by Cheever, Gordimer, Llosa, Malamud, and O'Brien. In addition to reading and discussing stories, students have opportunities to write creative exercises and a short story.

ENG453: LITERATURE AND THE LAND

In this course, students read works of authors who have prized the land and write weekly short papers on related topics. In addition, the course offers regular short excursions focused on such aspects of the local environment as trees, human history, wildflowers, natural history, and land protection. The reading is drawn from authors such as the following: Annie Dillard, R. W. Emerson, Aldo Leopold, John McPhee, Mary Oliver, Charlie Pratt, Chet Raymo, H. D. Thoreau, and Terry Tempest Williams.

ENG456: CREATIVE WRITING

Students in this course will create polished examples of several literary forms during periods of sustained writing as well as discuss a small, diverse group of published texts. An awareness of issues pertaining to craft and aesthetics will be central to all of the writing assignments, as well as to the practice of peer editing. Our assignment will be to write our experiences; our teachers will be other writers. For all seniors except those who have taken English 411-421.

ENG461: ART OF PROTEST

From the grittiness of rap to the density of civil disobedience, this course examines a variety of literary-artistic protest. The approach is multicultural and interdisciplinary. Possibilities include: poets of color, gay playwrights, feminist novelists, foreign films. Students write extensively in journals and present a collaborative project.

ENG463: GAY VOICES AND THEMES IN LITERATURE AND FILM

This course explores the experience and self-definition of several major gay and lesbian writers—in fiction, poetry, and memoir. The course is intended for both gay and straight students who want to deepen their understanding of gay identity as expressed in literature and film. The films suggest the culture's evolving understanding of gay identity and relationships. Texts include poems by Sappho, Whitman, Adrienne Rich, Amy Lowell, Allen Ginsberg, Mark Doty; stories by Katharine Mansfield and others; Paul Monette's memoir, *Becoming a Man*. Films may include *The Wedding Banquet*, *The Incredible True Adventure of Two Girls in Love*, *Longtime Companion*, *Antonia's Line*, and *Strawberry and Chocolate*.

ENG468: CREATIVE NONFICTION: "JUST THE FACTS..."

"Creative nonfiction" is all the rage these days among writers, publishers, and readers. Works such as *Angela's Ashes*, *The Perfect Storm*, and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, top the current bestseller lists with their appealing blends of interesting information and well-crafted prose. This course will investigate and explore this literary phenomenon through both readings and writing. The reading list will include contemporary examples such as those already mentioned, but we will also do some wondering about how "new" this genre really is, perhaps looking backward at works such as Capote's *In Cold Blood*, e.e. cummings' *The Enormous Room*, and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*.

ENG470: THE WORK OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Students in this course read less familiar Hemingway texts such as *Torrents of Spring*, *To Have and Have Not*, *Green Hills of Africa*, and *Death in the Afternoon*. The course may also include selected short stories, poetry, the memoir *A Moveable Feast*, and the posthumous *True at First Light*, published in the summer of 1999. The course emphasizes Hemingway's development as a writer within various literary forms, and examines the gradual emergence of his writing style. Secondary material may be brought in to explore Hemingway's role within popular culture as a representative yet controversial American writer. Writing assignments evolve from class discussions.

ENG471: POST-COLONIAL AND POST-IMPERIAL LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Some of the most dynamic contemporary writing in English investigates the complex processes of colonization and decolonization, exploring such topics as identity, nationality, emigration, exile, and "otherness." Join us as we explore what such texts teach us about the legacy of colonization, the relation between colonist and colonized, and the project of writing in the language of the colonizer. We will build the syllabus according to students' interests, from the work of such writers as Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Margaret Atwood (Canada), Gopal Baratham (Singapore), Eavan Boland (Ireland), Anita Desai (India), Buchi Emecheta (Nigeria), V.S. Naipaul (Trinidad), Salman Rushdie (India, Pakistan), Sara Suleri (Pakistan), Derek Walcott (St. Lucia).

ENG472: SPRING IN LOVE

Literary lovers, it seems, break the rules, explore the boundaries set by family or society or religion or law. What can we learn from their defiance? Why does such love so often end in disaster? Is love socially constructed or universal? We will explore these and other questions through a variety of genres. Possibilities may include: cross-cultural myths and legends, something Shakespearean, Nabokov's *Lolita*, Hwang's *M. Butterfly*, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Woolf's letters and the films, *My Brilliant Career*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Students will keep a journal of reader responses and design a final project.

ENG473: POETRY PORTFOLIO

A writing workshop and literary seminar culminating with a final independent portfolio of both personal work and related textual analysis. We'll be studying poetry from the "inside"—as writers of poetry—and not from the "outside" as critics. Although students will be given the opportunity to be "analytical" and called upon to write annotations—close readings of poems—it will be for the benefit of their own craft, as practicing poets. Discussion of central issues of craft and aesthetics might include: poetic impulse, tensions between lyric and narrative voice, syntax and line, mystery and clarity, etc. Beyond the required sheaf of revised poems, students will also be required to write and speak about their peers' and their own work. For poets, aspiring and experienced, from any level of ability, beginners and veterans. Possible texts: Rilke's *Letters on Cezanne*, Hugo's *The Triggering Town*.

ENG474: VOICES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

From the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, written 1,000 years before Homer, to works written in 2004, this course will give students a view into the literary imaginations of Middle Eastern writers. The authors of fiction, poetry, memoir, essays, come to us from many cultures, in translation of many languages. We will explore what seems particular to this region of the world, as well as what seems to transcend geography, politics, religion. Students will write several short papers and design a final project based on their interest in an author or country or issue. Writers include: Tariq Ali, Marjane Satrapi, Nazim Hikmet, Naguib Mahfouz, and an anthology.

ENG475: MODERN IRISH WRITERS

Join us as we read Irish literature of the 20th- and 21st-centuries to explore how Irish writers north and south have been representing their diverse and rapidly changing Irelands. We will build the syllabus from a variety of genres (novel, short story, poetry, drama) by a wide range of writers. Though we will consider the work of Joyce, Yeats, Beckett, and Heaney, we will also venture beyond those recognizable names, to the work of such writers as Flann O'Brien, Sean O'Faolain, Eavan Boland, Paul Muldoon, Anne Devlin, Fiona Barr, and John McGahern, among others.

ENG476: ROMANTICISM AND ITS RISKS

This course will trace the evolution of the Romantic movement in literature, from the influence of the Greeks, to its rebellious triumph in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and finally to its critics and inheritors in the 20th century. The range of topics might include: nature as deity, emotion and self, misanthropy, solitude, and revolution. Texts might include: *The Bakkhai* (Euripides); British Romantic poets (Wordsworth, P.B. Shelley, Coleridge, Keats, Byron); *Frankenstein* (M. Shelley); *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (Goethe); *The Blue Flower* (Penelope Fitzgerald); *Homo Faber* (Max Frisch). Possible films: *Aguirre, Wrath of God* (Herzog), *Under the Volcano* (Huston), *The Thin Red Line* (Malik), *The Year of Living Dangerously* (Weir).

ENG477: BASEBALL: THE AMERICAN NARRATIVE

A. Giamatti, former president of Yale and commissioner of Major League Baseball (1989), believed that this game is “the plot of the story of our national life.” In this course we will look at how baseball reflects, embodies, illuminates modern American history, culture, politics, myth. We will also look at the game itself as a narrative—one that unfolds and reveals and surprises; one that demands close reading to understand its nuances, symbols and structure. And we will look at how various artists have used baseball as a central metaphor in their fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and film. Texts will be chosen from the works of Dubus, Malamud, Updike, Kinsella, Hall, Giamatti, Kearns-Goodwin, Moore, and Exley. Possible films: Ken Burns’ series, *Eight Men Out*, *Field of Dreams*, *Bull Durham*, et al. Students will write a number of short papers and complete a final project.

ENG478: NABOKOV

Aristocrat and artist, émigré and exile, lepidopterist and literature professor, Vladimir Nabokov was one of the most elusive and innovative writers of the 20th century. Private, opinionated, but with absolute faith in art and the imagination, he renounced his native Russian and chose English as the language of his written expression, became one of its most eloquent practitioners, and changed the novel forever. We’ll read at least two of Nabokov’s novels written in English (*Invitation to a Beheading*, *Pale Fire*, *Lolita* or *Invitation to a Beheading*) and a translation of an earlier work in Russian (*The Gift* or *Glory*). Also on the reading list, his classic memoir *Invitation to a Beheading*, *Invitation to a Beheading*. Written assignments will be a balance of critical analysis and experiments with fiction.

ENG479: VISIONS OF PARADISE? UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS IN LITERATURE

Fantastic societies have held a fascination for writers from Thomas More to the present day. Utopia, meaning “no place,” is the term for an idealized society whose inhabitants willingly embrace its difference from our own world. Dystopic visions are the disturbing flipside of this coin. Both genres inevitably cause readers to draw parallels between their own experiences and those of the protagonists. Scientific and technological advances are often at the root of the utopic/dystopic discourse and one of the main functions of this course is to explore the presentation of technology as narrative. The course seeks to examine some of these alternate worlds to explore the way writers of fiction and filmmakers have presented the impact of projected changes and developments on the fabric of society. We will build our visionary galaxy from the following: Aldous Huxley *Brave New World*, Carey ed. *The Faber Book of Utopias*, Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid’s Tale*, George Orwell *1984*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Bladerunner*.

ENG480: FELLOWSHIP AND FANTASY: J.R.R. TOLKIEN AND C.S. LEWIS

J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis were close friends and for decades shared the drafts of their current projects with a small group of writers known as “the Inklings.” This course will examine some of their well-known works that give insight into their contrasting literary styles and their differing views of myth. Readings will include: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Silmarillion*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and *Out of the Silent Planet*. Writing assignments will include reading responses, critical papers and a final term paper-length project.

ENG481: TRAGEDY AND THE FAMILY

What is tragedy? How is it distinguished, in literature, from events in life that we call “tragic”? And why have playwrights over the centuries, in composing tragedies, focused on the unit of the family—on fathers, mothers, daughters and sons? In this course, we will explore the form of dramatic tragedy, as set forward by Aristotle and exemplified in the plays of Sophocles, moving then to explore how the form changes over time. We will ask what it is about the family that attracts writers of tragedy. Primary texts may include plays by Sophocles, Shakespeare, Racine, Yeats, MacLeish, Miller, O’Neill and Wilson, with supplementary readings from Aristotle, *The Book of Job*, and various critical essays. Time will also be given to viewing versions of the plays we read and, occasion permitting, to attending area performances. Throughout, the emphases will be on generating informed critical discussion and on refining students’ analytical writing.