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Please note: For your convenience, here is a list of the English Department faculty and their contact information for spring '23. If office hours are not convenient, please make an appointment.

Note to Students:

is gender, actually? How is it constructed and maintained? In this writing seminar, we will analyze the way that biological and social definitions of gender

create change in the world. We'll look at work from writers and artists who actively work to make us see things their way, from poets to activists to visual artists. We'll pay special attention to how each artist crafts their work; using these same tools, you'll create powerful writing of your own. By the end of the semester, after drafting and revision, you'll have a portfolio of polished writing.

The title of this course isn't meant to describe a task—"writing at Skidmore"—but an action. What does it mean to write yourself? To make your way through writing? What does writing look and feel like when we transform it from _____ to _____? In this course, we will approach writing as an act of communal making. Students will spend the semester engaged in collaborative ownership of the writing process: the class will function as its own editorial board, working together to choose a central topic and produce a printed essay collection by the close of the term. Students will work together to plan, draft, and revise their contributions to the collection; the final product will be entirely student-driven, from the included essays to features like illustrations, order, and layout. The course will culminate in the production of physical editions, using Skidmore's printmaking studio, Idea Lab, and other campus resources.

When the essayist Joan Didion was in her twenties, she wrote editorial copy for _____ magazine on a wide range of subjects. In her forties, she noted that it is "easy to make light of this kind of 'writing,' [but] I do not make light of it at all: it was at _____ that I learned a kind of ease with words... a way of regarding words not as mirrors of my own inadequacy but as tools, toys, weapons to be deployed strategically on a page." Inspired by Didion's on-the-job apprenticeship, this course will ask you to undertake the work of a professional copywriter or ghostwriter. What might you be asked to compose? The introduction to the documentary "extras" for a television series. The "Our Story" blurb for the website of a local restaurant. A capsule biography for a mayoral candidate. A C.E.O.'s response to a request from _____: "Tell us about the biggest mistake you ever made as a leader." The instructor will furnish you with material; with her guidance, you will shape it into publishable or, as the case may be, presentable prose.

An introduction to nonfiction literature in its many styles and types, from essays and memoir to reportage and cultural critique. Students will explore the form's expressive range, including the relation to and distinction from other genres, its narrative strategies, its authors' means of achieving a distinctive voice, and its reflection of social contexts. Classic texts of the genre will be read and discussed alongside overlooked or forgotten wonders. Students will use creative nonfiction writing as a tool for exploring the genre in addition to writing critical essays about the works read for class.

Sally Munt refers to early women crime writers as "literary intruders" in a form long defined by male authors and paradigmatically masculine detectives. Since the heyday of Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, and Dorothy Sayers to later writers like P.D. James, Patricia Highsmith, Anne Holt, Ruth Rendell, Tana French, Barbara Neely, Nikki Baker, Sue Grafton, Natsuo Kirino, Sara Paretsky, Jean Hager, M.F. Beal (and so many more), crime has been crafted in conversation with—and opposition to—the supposed conventions of the genre. So what are the "feminist maneuvers" such authors have employed? How have they set the plot requirement of law and order against questions—maybe intractable social problems—of gender, race and ethnicity, disability, class, sexuality, and nationality? Whose laws are detectives charged with upholding, and what sort of order does an atypical sleuth restore? Requirements will include short papers and a longer final project.

This course provides an introduction to Shakespeare through the lens of premodern critical race studies (PCRS). PCRS is a scholarly movement that investigates how race was constructed in the premodern era, how it intersects with gender, sexuality, class, and disability, and how those intersections continue to inform the way that we think about race in the twenty-first century. In this course, we'll use PCRS as a framework for studying Shakespeare's plays and their larger cultural effects—within the early modern period and beyond. Our readings will include _____, _____, and _____, as well as essays by leading practitioners of PCRS to help us think more critically and capaciously about Shakespeare's representation of race.

Ian McEwan,
J.M. Coetzee,

Shakespeare's sonnets are texts that enjoy both a wide and vague familiarity; many may know a handful of anthologized examples from school, wedding ceremonies, or greeting cards, but few have had the opportunity to engage with all 154 poems together as a sequence. In this class, we will explore how our relationship with these poems changes when we approach the 1609 as a single, cohesive text. This course will offer students the opportunity to engage deeply with the poems, thinking carefully about how the collection operates as individual lyrics, as a sequence, and as a coherent whole. While doing this, we will also engage with the wide range of critical approaches the have attracted. Students will explore how scholars from fields such as bibliographical studies, disability theory, ecocriticism, genre theory, premodern critical race studies, poetics, queer theory, trans studies, and other fields have read and written about the poems.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that Jane Austen (1775-1817) is a keenly satiric writer whose work, deeply rooted in her time, resonates in ours. In this research-enriched course, we will read Austen's six novels in their order of publication:

(1811), (1813), (1814) (1816), (1818), and (1818).

Through virtual excursions and close reading, we will enter Regency ballrooms, country estates, and genteel parlors as we examine Austen's voice as a writer and pressing issues that she actively critiqued, such as the economics of marriage, social class stratification, primogeniture, entailment, and slavery. To situate Austen in her historical moment, students will write five of six briefs (short papers on each Austen novel) and a Regency life report (using the Collaborative Organization for Virtual Education [COVE] accompanied by an oral presentation). The course will culminate in a research paper on two or three Austen novels. Students should be prepared to read critically, participate actively, research deeply, and write analytically.

This course examines playwrights and artists who remade theater into a laboratory for artistic innovation during the early twentieth century. Across a broad network of countries and languages, modernist aesthetics leveled challenges to widespread norms of dramatic representation. How did modernism take shape in drama and how did the modern theater seek to reflect and intervene in the modern world? Seeking a comparative perspective, we will read texts in English and in translation from a range of other languages. Along the way, students will develop advanced undergraduate research skills in theater and drama studies through in-class presentations, annotated bibliographies, and research papers. Authors may include Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Bertolt Brecht, Thornton Wilder, Gertrude Stein, and others.

"Hypochondria" — once an ambiguous disease of the abdominal cavity, today a psychiatric diagnosis sometimes treated with anti-depressant medication, more often a term used casually to describe any apparently exaggerated fear about sickness — is also a rhetorical, readerly phenomenon, pitting patients against health care practitioners in a contest of interpretation and persuasion. Here, we'll engage with some of literature's famed hypochondriacs to understand what's at stake in the argument over bodily "noise," from ideas about authority and knowledge formation to attitudes about gender, race, class, nationality, and the deeply mysterious, often elusive status of "self." Likely texts that foreground conundrums of symptom, origin, and fear include Molière's

"imaginary invalid," Jane Austen's _____, Charlotte Brontë's _____, Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," Maxine Hong Kingston's _____, Toni Morrison's _____, and others soon to be "diagnosed."

By reading both poetry and nonfiction, creative writing students who are concentrating in each of the two genres will be able to

An intensive workshop for committed writers. Though there will be informal discussion of published writing, our primary task will be the critiquing of student work. Attendance, class participation, and thoughtful written response to student writing are of paramount importance. Main creative requirement: two to three short stories of approximately 10-20 pages each, both of which will be revised after being workshopped.

aesthetic-cultural phenomenon. The BBC Sherlock episode "Scandal in Belgravia" will be our last text. This course may substitute for EN-389.

Qualifying work will earn honors.

Claudia Rankine once said that "the / < oR cibibR T ov

