



English 102 Topics—Fall 2019

This list is current as of 5/07/2019. If the description of a 102 section in the Timetable of Classes is not listed below, please contact the English Department at 865/974-5401 to get it.

Each instructor's section of English 102 is organized around a distinctive topic; please choose one that appeals to you and your interests. All English 102 sections teach archival, qualitative, and secondary source research and writing.

All English 102 sections require 2 textbooks, *Rhetoric of Inquiry*, 5th edition, and *The Writer's Harbrace Handbook*, 5th edition. Each section may have additional required texts; please check with the Bookstore to see whether additional texts are required for *your* section.

The day/time for each instructor's section is listed in the online Timetable of Classes.

Akers: Inquiry into Monsters

In this section of English 102 we will explore a selection of monsters from popular legends, literature, film, television, and other cultural texts. Using the term "monster" expansively to include such examples as zombies, witches, vampires, dragons, literary creations like Frankenstein's monster, and legends like the Loch Ness monster, Bigfoot, and Sasquatch, we will consider what these creations represent in our culture. What makes each figure "monstrous"? What do these entities have in common? Are they signposts of a possible future that we should beware of? In what ways might they embody qualities that we disown in ourselves? What might we learn from these monsters, if we allowed them to speak for themselves?

The point of this course is to develop your academic research, writing, and communication skills. We'll learn about our course topic through each other's research and writing. You'll be able to investigate the topic from academic perspectives that interest you, including your major. You'll learn how to conduct archival, qualitative, and secondary-source research and will present what you've learned to academic audiences in traditional discipline-appropriate papers and a poster presentation.

Backer: Inquiry into Video Games and Gaming Culture

This course will allow you to develop your academic research, writing, and communication skills through one of the most multifaceted modes of learning and entertainment that we have: video games. Specifically, we will be examining the evolution of the gaming industry starting in the 1970s and moving forward from the arcade to personal computers and consoles. As we look at the evolution of the platforms and the games, we will also examine the social aspects of the gaming community and the increasing popularity of gaming over the last twenty years. You will have the opportunity to research the historical evolution of some of your favorite games or game series, examine the gaming culture as it stands today, discuss representation of games and gamers in the media, and explore how gaming has influenced your own field of study. Like all 102 sections, we will engage in archival, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.

Backer, M.: Inquiry into the Culture of Videogames

This course will allow you to develop your academic research, writing, and communication skills through one of the most multifaceted modes of learning and entertainment that we have: video games. Specifically, we will be examining the evolution of the gaming industry starting in the 1970s and moving forward from the arcade to the console. As we look at the evolution of the platforms and the games, we will also examine the social aspects of the gaming community and the increasing popularity of

gaming over the last twenty years. You will have the opportunity to research the historical evolution of some of your favorite games or game series, examine the gaming culture as it stands today, discuss representation of games and gamers in the media and in games themselves, and explore how gaming has influenced your own field of study. Like all 102 sections, we will engage in archival, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.

Conner: Inquiry into Myths and Monsters

Most of us grew up reading fairy tales about the Big Bad Wolf and hearing myths about the Loch Ness monster. The former are understood in our culture as being fantasy, but stories like the latter occupy an ambiguous space between fact and fiction. In "Inquiry into Myths and Monsters," we will investigate the transformation of cultural myths and monsters over time and in various genres. In our class readings, discussions, and individual research projects we will ask such central questions as how do myths, superstitions, and monsters function in our everyday lives? What is the relationship between myths, cultural anxieties, and individual fears? And, where do we draw the line between "rational" cultural beliefs, superstitions, and fantasy? Like all 102 sections, we will engage in archival, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.

Cooley: Inquiry into Food

We have all heard the phrase "you are what you eat," but do we realize what this phrase suggests about our health, our identities, and our culture? In this writing and research-intensive course, we will investigate the various and complex relationships that we have with that most essential but often unexamined part of our lives: food. In addition to our personal relationships with food, we will also explore the ways our food choices have larger social, political, and environmental significance.

The emphasis of 102 is research and, as such, students will research food through a number of distinct yet interrelated research methods. The course assignments will foster confidence in reading and researching about food through a variety of research processes. We will begin with historical research into food production and consumption; then we will move into qualitative inquiry about current food policies, practices, and preferences; and finally, we will position ourselves within current debates over food in students' disciplines or areas of interest by conducting traditional secondary-source research.

Dunsmore: Inquiry into the Paranormal

This course will launch an investigation into how individuals and society perceive and respond to the possibility of the paranormal. How do we, individually and as a culture, explain and grapple with something that may be scientifically unexplainable? Furthermore, how do we record our responses and perceptions and what genres do we use to explain paranormal phenomena? Broadly speaking, the paranormal may include activities and entities that fall outside the area of scientific explanation, such as ghosts, hauntings, extraterrestrial activities, supernatural occurrences, and malevolent forces. This class will investigate the numerous genres used to capture the paranormal, such as documentaries, music, television, oral and written stories, photography, newspaper articles, brochures, websites, and folk tales. Students will analyze selected readings from secondary source, archival, and qualitative research. Like all 102 sections, we will engage in archival, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.

Fennell: Inquiry into the South

Students will be asked to consider what "the South" is via guided and independent research. This class allows students space to think about issues related to the South that are worthy of in-depth research, scholarly writing, and careful engagement. Students will preform scholarly secondary source research as they write a survey of scholarship to get a consensus on how scholars talk about the South. Next, students will perform qualitative, first-hand research regarding what/how people think, feel, or act in regards to the South. Finally, students will execute an archival digital humanities project with objects from McClung Museum. (SP16)

Greene: Inquiry into the Memoir

In this section, we will launch an investigation of the memoir, and, through research and close analysis, develop skills that will enable us to look closer at ourselves through the lens of history and place. We will seek to establish preliminary definitions of what it means to write about ourselves and will pursue those definitions through different media and contexts. By the end of the course, we will be able to compare our original definitions with the more nuanced perceptions developed over the semester via our archival, qualitative, and secondary-source research projects. Our work should enable us to develop and demonstrate the critical reading, thinking, and writing skills that will serve us well in academic and other future pursuits.

Hanson: Inquiry into Satire

Inquiry into Satire examines issues of humor as a means to expose truth, which has received increasing attention because of social and political unrest in the United States. To accomplish this goal, we will conduct three kinds of research: secondary source, archival, and qualitative. The secondary source project will examine a debate about the effect of satire on members of specific discourse communities; for example, students will select a discourse community they identify with, such as people in their same major, and will examine how satire functions within the shared set of values of that group. In the archival project, students will work with primary sources to explore the historical significance of satirical works, looking at newspaper and magazine articles, political cartoons, and American television programs. Finally, we will conduct qualitative research by observing and interviewing participants in order to investigate experiences with and/or beliefs about satire as impetus for personal and/or social change.

Heath: Inquiry into Graphic Novel and Adaption

Graphic novels have circulated since the early part of the twentieth century, permeating the cultural fabric of American society, yet it is only recently that they have begun to gain ground as a respectable form of literature. We will use historical, qualitative, and secondary source research to examine the phenomenon of the increasing prevalence of graphic novels in popular culture, as well as the ways in which this medium represents and responds to contemporary issues and events. We will conduct three formal research projects, and there will be a variety of in-class activities and other informal assignments.

Kerr: Inquiry into Environmental Rhetoric

Since the Green Revolution in the 1960s and 70s, environmental issues have become increasingly important topics of public discourse at the local, national, and global levels. This course is intended to help students understand the rhetorical dynamics of public discourse concerning nature and environmentalism. It aims to increase students' awareness of how their own beliefs, attitudes, and values about nature and environmentalism are shaped by these discourses. Most importantly, students will learn how to apply techniques of rhetorical analysis to evaluate, question, and possibly resist the forces of tradition, power, and authority that shape current environmental epistemologies. Like all sections of English 102, students will conduct historical, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.

Langendorfer: Inquiry into Relationship and Relationship Advice

"Inquiry into Relationship and Relationship Advice" examines relationships (and the advice given about it) from a variety of perspectives, including gender, sexuality, religion, and race. To better understand these perspectives, we will read and discuss selected relationship advice dispensed by advice columnists in online publications and podcasts like Dan Savage's "Savage Love," Cheryl Strayed's "Dear Sugar," and Heather Havrilesky's "Ask Polly." We will conduct qualitative research, by interviewing and/or surveying others about their own knowledge of and advice about relationships. Our archival research will include an examination of selected historical advice literature or other depictions of relationships in the context of our readings on the history of relationships. Students will conduct academic secondary-source research into contemporary findings that support, debunk, or complicate the intriguing relationship advice they have uncovered in their reading and research.

Massey: Inquiry into the Hero(ine)

In this section of 102, students will conduct and present research related to the concept of the hero and how it has changed through time. We shall focus upon the epic hero in traditional literature as well as modern characterizations in popular culture. Through the study of epics such as the *Iliad* and *Beowulf*, folklore (including African American folktales), modern fantasy literature (*The Hobbit* and *Harry Potter*), and contemporary films (such as *Troy* and *Kingdom of Heaven*), we shall consider how images of the hero show continuity as well as transformation through different time periods, cultures, and media. We shall use qualitative, archival, and secondary source research to explore our topic through various essay assignments. Each student will also lead one class discussion and present research pertaining to the reading or film discussion for that day. A reading assignment of 20-30 pages or watching a film will be required before most class meetings.

Metz: Inquiry into Fairy Tales and Popular Culture

Fairy tales are some of the world's oldest stories, passed down from generation to generation and endlessly revised and adapted to reflect particular cultures in different historical periods. Initially the tales were not meant for children at all and in many cases were actually violent or grotesque. In this class we will use fairy tales as a lens through which to do various kinds of research into cultural attitudes and practices that have changed over time. We will look at a wide variety of fairy tales, from the original versions to those popularized by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, as well as modern-day movies, short stories,

and comic books. Like all 102 sections, we will engage in archival, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.

Saeli: Inquiry into Food

In this course, we will examine issues related to food, a topic which has always received attention due to reasons such as obesity, global hunger, food culture, and GMOs. We will use this topic to develop research and writing skills. To accomplish this goal, we will conduct three kinds of research: secondary source, archival, and qualitative. In the secondary source project, we will conduct academic research to examine current debates about food. For instance, we can explore genetically modified foods along with assessing their global importance and status. In the archival project, we will explore the historical significance of food, focusing on specific topics like the emergence of fast food chain restaurants in the US. Finally, we will conduct qualitative research by interviewing specific populations in order to investigate their experiences with and/or beliefs about a particular food-related topic. A possible example would be to interview several McDonald's employees about their perspectives on serving and preparing fast food. After the data are collected, we will work on finding underlying patterns among the responses to see what the respondents (do not) have in common.

Slayton: Inquiry into the Gendered Hero(ine)

"Hero culture" has thrived for centuries, manifesting in a range of genres. Mythic heroes such as Beowulf come to mind, as do modern heroes like Batman—and yet what about female heroes? In this course, we will explore to what extent depictions of hero(ines) rely on representations of masculinity/femininity in mythic, historic, and modern contexts. In pop-culture, how do hero(ines) make or break gender stereotypes? How do modern audiences perceive them? Do modern depictions of past heroes deviate or follow their primary-source descriptions? We will explore these questions through qualitative and archival research and will bring both skills together in a secondary source research project in which we will enter our own inquiries into ongoing conversations about hero(ines) and gender.

Todd: Inquiry into New Media

Have you ever argued with someone over whether video games "count" as art? Do you rely on Twitter for news? Do you write fan fiction or creepypastas, or sketch your own comics? As the forms art and communication can take change with time, so too does our understanding of both art and communication more generally. This class will investigate digital and internet-age forms of media, along with the conversation and debate about those forms. In the secondary source paper, we will look for current academic conversation about these genres, to understand the issues under consideration. The historical unit will then seek to compare the present-day concerns with other, well-established forms of communication in their early days, to see if the debates are specific to a particular genre or more universal in nature. Finally, the qualitative unit will seek out interviews with both die-hard fans and naysayers of current genres, to offer our own assessment of the nature of the debate for everyday people. Along the way we'll get to see some of the more entertaining, interesting, and stranger content the internet has to offer.

Wallen: Inquiry into Myths and Monsters

As she arrives in a cloud of orange smoke, Margaret Hamilton as the Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) cemented herself as one of the most recognizable villains in cinematic history. Clad in all black and her skin painted green, Hamilton extends her long finger into the cherubic face of Judy Garland's Dorothy and cackles that she'll not only take care of Dorothy but her "little dog too!" Almost 80 years later, children still cower behind pillows when the Wicked Witch appears on screen. However, through Gregory Maguire's book *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (1995) now the Broadway hit *Wicked*, the image of the Wicked Witch of the West has been transformed into a more radical and even sympathetic character as opposed the monster of our childhood nightmares.

In this section of English 102, we will explore the topic of monsters within our culture through an examination of fairytales, both original and reimagined, as depicted in movies and literature focusing specifically on the image of the female monster. But first we must ask what it means to be a monster. But moreover, what does it mean to be a human? Monsters are creatures that blur lines between fact and fiction, normal and abnormal, human and other. In this section of 102, "Inquiry into Myths and Monsters," we will investigate the ways monsters can provide insight into the social metaphors and cultural anxieties of a given time period. In our class readings, discussions, and individual research projects, we will ask such central questions as how do we define "monster" in our everyday lives? What does our own monstration of certain groups or individuals say about current cultural anxieties or biases? What is the relationship between on-screen monsters, cultural anxieties, and individual fears? And, where do we draw the line between "normal" and monstrous? During the semester we will explore these questions through

qualitative, archival, and secondary-source research methodologies and devote extensive time to learning how to write in those genres.

Wilkinson Inquiry into Ghosts and Hauntings

History may be written by the winners, but when it comes to capturing imagination and interest, it loses every time to its disreputable cousin: the ghost story. Populated by the embittered, confused and benign, these popular tales star those who have lost and cannot walk away from defeat. In this course, we will investigate the appeal of the haunted—from businesses that promise contact with the dead to horror films that touch upon our collective fears. In our explorations, we will engage in qualitative, archival, and secondary source research, looking at tales from Tennessee and elsewhere. By the end of the course, you will have a strong grasp on critical reading, research, and writing skills that will serve you well in your academic career and beyond.