



## English 102 Topics—Fall 2021

This list is current as of 6/9/2021. If the description of a 102 section in the Timetable of Classes is not listed below, please contact the English Department at 865/974-6418 to get it. Topics for sections that currently do not have an instructor listed in Banner will be updated closer to the beginning of the semester, or as sections are assigned.

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*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, and *The Writer's Harbrace Handbook*, 6th 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, H.: 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.

### **Backer, H.: 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.

**Bistline, E.:                    Inquiry into Animals and Nature**

Inquiry into Animals and Nature examines the relationship between animals, humans, and society, which has received increasing attention as the effects of climate change become more apparent. We will use this topic to develop research and writing skills. To accomplish this goal, we will conduct secondary source, archival, and qualitative research. The secondary source research will examine a debate about our current relationship with animals and/or nature. With archival research, we will explore the historical significance of animals and nature on society. For instance, we might look at the impact of the westward expansion of the US on buffalo populations at the end of the nineteenth century or our understanding of beach traffic on sea turtle breeding numbers in the early twenty-first century. We will also conduct qualitative research by interviewing or surveying to explore current feelings and/or beliefs about specific issues influencing animals and nature today.

**Bradshaw, K.:                    Inquiry into Pandemics**

In this English 102 course, we will be examining pandemics. The COVID-19 pandemic has made us all acutely aware of the widespread effects pandemics have upon our lives and communities, and pandemics have been shaping our societies and our histories for centuries—from the many recurrences of cholera that have circled the globe at least since 1817 to the disease that swept across continents during the Peloponnesian War in 430 BC to the plague that devastated Asia, Africa, and Europe during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In this course, you will develop research and writing skills by investigating pandemics, past and present. You will formulate your own research questions about the collective and individual effects of pandemics, which you will then investigate through secondary source, archival, and qualitative research. In the secondary source project, you will locate and analyze scholarly sources to explore a pandemic-related line of inquiry. You will continue that line of inquiry with your archival project by creating a digital museum exhibit that highlights and examines a pandemic's effect upon a particular community. For the qualitative project, you will gather your own data through interviews, surveys, or focus groups to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted a specific group of people or aspect of society.

**Butler, A.:                    Inquiry into Sports**

As a cultural phenomenon, sports are unparalleled their impact on celebrity culture, the entertainment industry, local economies, school budgets, and more have made them an ever-present reality of American life. But what can we learn from sports when we examine it as a mirror with which we may better understand ourselves? In this section of 102, we will dig deeper into sports as a projection and mirror of the society in which the games are played. In our class readings, discussions, and individual research projects, we will ask questions such as: What can sports tell us about labor, race, and gender? What can they tell us about our concept of meritocracy? How do sports tap into our deepest emotions? Why does the South love football so much? How has sports journalism and media shaped news media: The course's major assignments will consist of 1) archival research, where students will explore an issue of sports history as a means of understanding both the past and the present, such as the creation of free

agency or the 2005 NBA dress code, 2) secondary research which will explore contemporary academic questions about sports, such as the NCAA's amateur status for student-athletes or Major League Baseball's anti-trust exemption, and 3) qualitative research, where students will formulate and develop their own questions through field research.

### **Campbell, H.:                    Inquiry into Technology and Ethics**

This section of English 102 will explore the topic of technology and ethics. Advancements in scientific knowledge throughout history have led us to wonder about what impact such changes have on cultures, individual societies, and humanity at large. In this course, we will examine a selection of texts, both historical and modern, and complete research projects on ideas related to technology. Our goal in doing so is to investigate such questions as: How do we define "technology"? How does our personal or cultural history influence our understanding of the role of technology in society? To what extent should ethics play a role in technological development, if at all? And what does the future of technology hold in store for us?

### **Cooley, E.:                    Inquiry into Disability**

Inquiry into Disability will allow students to question what "disability" really is, how history, scholars, and contemporaries view and have viewed it and what our assumptions are about both disabled and abled people. You will learn and inquire about accessibility: how it affects both abled and disabled people and how it shapes our everyday lives. Throughout this course, you will conduct research for a final research project uncovering a disability- or ability-related topic of your choice. Along the way, you will write smaller, related assignments and papers that will allow you to practice college-level research and understand the research process as a whole, with the goal of creating a fully-formed longer paper at the end of the semester.

### **Dunsmore, R.:                    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.

### **Harrison, E.:                    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.

**Heath: Inquiry into the Graphic Novel and Adaptation**

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.

**Houle, M.: Inquiry into Humor**

William Hazlitt said, "Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are, and what they ought to be." Laughter and comedy are essential to the human experience. By examining historical/cultural perspectives on comedy through a variety of media and exploring issues such as what cultural factors affect the types of things that are funny throughout different decades/periods, what comedy is, why certain things are funny and others are not, why we laugh, and other related questions, we will develop research and writing skills. We will formulate research questions about these topics and pursue them through archival, qualitative, and secondary source investigative methods.

**Mangle, J.: Inquiry into Myths and Monsters**

Inquiry into Myths and Monsters examines the issues of myths and monsters in relation to cultural beliefs and superstitions. We will use this topic to develop research and writing skills. To accomplish this goal, we will conduct qualitative, archival, and secondary source. The qualitative research will require either interviewing or surveying participants. The purpose of this assignment is to explore the experiences, feelings, and/or beliefs about the effects of myths, monsters, or fairytales. With archival research, we will explore historical representations of myths, monsters, or fairy tales and what those representations mean for the historical context. Then, we conclude with the secondary source research; we will examine a debate about how myths and monsters shape our culture.

**McCue, K.: Inquiry into the 60s**

Tune in, turn on, drop out. Black is beautiful. Give Peace a chance. These and other slogans mark one of the most momentous decades in American history, encompassing significant cultural, political, and social transformations. The era has had a unique and long-lasting effect on our political views, society, and culture, and English 102: Inquiry into the 60s will explore these in research topics that can be as wide-ranging as the decade itself. Students might investigate social developments like the Civil Rights Movement, student protests, feminism, or counterculture lifestyles such as communes; they could look into the roots and impact of

cultural insignias like rock ‘n roll, long hair, spiritualism, or be-ins and happenings; they could research the role of Eastern religion and mysticism, perception-altering drugs like LSD, or rejection of material values; they might follow the effects of anti-war protests both peaceful and violent, an unprecedented generational divide, the sexual revolution, or the legacy that the era left on the generations after – even today.

The research projects will take different forms: archival research that examines original texts of the decade, secondary research that locates and compares the work of experts in a particular field of interest, and qualitative research that gathers and reports insights from surveys or interviews to shed new light on current understanding.

### **Nottingham, C.: Inquiry into Environmental Communication**

In 1962, Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring* blew the whistle on the disastrous consequences of DDT, a powerful insecticide once touted as a wonder-chemical for pests large and small. Carson’s book spurred revolutionary changes in the laws affecting our air, land, and water, and, ever since, issues concerning humans and the environment continue to be brought the public’s attention – through film, TV and online news, social networks, and even conversations within communities. Every day—whether we realize it or not—we encounter numerous and varied (even contradicting) kinds of environmental communications. From books like Carson’s exposing the harmful effects of toxins to scientific reports projecting the effects of climate change to advertisements for eco-friendly products and social media posts engaging with different environmental issues—all of these forms of communication work to shape the ways that people think, speak, and act in regard to environmental concerns. All of this to say, environmental communication is pretty important.

Throughout the semester, we’ll be using this topic as a focus to accomplish the main goals of our course: developing academic research and writing skills. To accomplish these goals, we’ll learn and apply secondary, qualitative, and archival research methods. And, since environmental communication is a broad and inter-disciplinary topic, we’ll be thinking critically about complex issues from multiple viewpoints in order to create informed arguments. My hope for you is that you’ll profit from and thoroughly enjoy the experience we are about to share together as a community of writers and thinkers. Welcome to English 102!

### **Saeli, H.: 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.

**Wallen, M.: Inquiry into Myths and Monsters**

Inquiry into Myths and Monsters examines the issues of myths and monsters in relation to cultural beliefs and superstitions. We will use this topic to develop research and writing skills. To accomplish this goal, we will conduct qualitative, archival, and secondary source research. Secondary source research will examine a debate about how myths and monsters shape our culture. Archival research will explore historical representations of myths, monsters, or fairy tales and what those representations mean for the historical context. Qualitative research will require either interviewing or surveying participants, and will explore experiences, feelings, and/or beliefs about the effects of myths, monsters, or fairytales. The purpose of this course is to develop your academic research, writing, and communication skills. We will learn about our course topic through each other's research and writing. You will 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.

**Slayden, V.: Inquiry into Myths and Monsters**

Inquiry into Myths and Monsters examines the issues of myths and monsters in relation to cultural beliefs and superstitions. We will use this topic to develop research and writing skills. To accomplish this goal, we will conduct qualitative, archival, and secondary source. The qualitative research will require either interviewing or surveying participants. The purpose of this assignment is to explore the experiences, feelings, and/or beliefs about the effects of myths, monsters, or fairy tales. With archival research, we will explore historical representations of myths, monsters, or fairy tales and what those representations mean for the historical context. We will also conduct secondary source research: we will examine a debate about how myths and monsters shape our culture.

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 any academic perspective that interests you (hopefully 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.

**Wilkinson, C.: 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. Inhabited by the embittered, confused and benign, these popular tales often star those who have lost and cannot walk away from defeat. In this course, we will investigate the enduring appeal of hauntings—from businesses that promise contact with the dead to horror films that touch upon our collective fears. We also will examine the neurobiology behind the physical sensations not only of being haunted by the dead but also of being “ghosted” by the living in contemporary business and dating culture. For our archival research, we will use mapping software to examine correlations between region, time period, and ghost-story narratives as reported in historical newspapers. We, furthermore, will engage in qualitative research through one-on-one interviews and analyses of online discussions about ghosts. Our secondary-source research will include the latest peer-reviewed findings about the implications of our lasting interest in hauntings. By

the end of this class, you will have a strong grasp on critical reading, research, and writing skills that will serve you well in your academic career and beyond.

**Yost, R.: Inquiry into Nature Writing**

In this section of 102, students will learn about the methods writers have historically used to write about the natural world. The inquiry starts with the eighteenth century—the age of Linnaeus, who introduced a framework for classifying living things—and will culminate with a look at contemporary concerns about the sustainability of the natural world within the American economic system. Different viewpoints regarding environmental conservation and the human use of natural resources will be encountered through essays, documentaries, films, at least one guest speaker, and a review of contemporary environmental issues as they are depicted in national politics. Part of the course is designed to encourage students to look closely at the natural world. As Gretel Ehrlich writes, “Keenly observed, the world is transformed.” Students will broaden their knowledge of the relationship between human activity and the natural world. Just as important, though, students will learn about the ways in which this relationship has been discussed in serious writing. Thus, students will develop the foundation from which they, too, can write about nature. In addition, students will be encouraged to craft their essays toward their majors or interests in life. Not only will this procedure offer a variety of perspectives to the class, but it will also encourage students to write about what they know—to a degree that is applicable, at least. Like all 102 sections, we will engage in archival, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.