English 102 Topics—Fall 2022

This list is current as of 8/1/2022. 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. 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*, 5th 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.

**Addicott, Randi Marie.: Inquiry into Textiles, Fabric, and Culture**

In this English 102 course, we will examine the role textiles and fabric have played in the human culture. We will look at things as diverse as the role of wool in Viking sail making; sheep farming and the cattle wars that shaped the American West; and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire in conjunction with the American labor movement. We will ask questions about how humans use fashion to shape individual identities, indicate group affiliation, and delineate socioeconomic status. We will also ask why certain older forms of fiber-based making (knitting, crocheting, and embroidery in particular) are having a cultural renaissance. Questions such as: What are people looking for in those fiber communities; why are we obsessed with what the rich wear; how do textile advancements affect everything from medicine to sports are among possibilities.

We are, to a greater or lesser degree, what we wear. Fiber and fabric affect every detail of our lives from how we live to how we dress. We will examine this intrinsic relationship between humanity and cloth to see in detail how it defines our lives. In order to so, this course will feature three kinds of research: secondary source, archival, and qualitative. The secondary source project will examine the impact of a modern textile creation or event and how it has impacted a field, such as how the rivalry between Puma and Adidas changed the landscape of sports culture. The archival project will explore the historical significance of fabric and its relationship to community identity. Finally, we will conduct qualitative research by surveying participants in order to investigate their experiences with and/or beliefs about fabric and fashion.
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 the 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.

Branum Thrash, C.: Inquiry into Heroes

There are many kinds of heroes. Some, like firefighters and veterans, are common in everyday life. Some are embedded in stories like comic books and legends. Others, like presidents and cultural figures, are memorialized in history. They all have similarities such as courage and responsibility, and in Inquiry into Heroism, we will develop research and writing skills by investigating the qualities of heroes and our cultural perceptions of heroism. In the secondary source project, you will select a hero type (societal, historical, or folkloric) and investigate their cultural value. In the archival research project, you will select a hero and examine either the historical circumstances that made them heroes or the trajectory of how their heroic behavior is depicted through time. Finally, in the qualitative study, you will gauge participant’s perceptions of heroes or heroism by conducting surveys, interviews, or observations.
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.

Dean, Lance.: __________ Inquiry into Food and Culture

This section of 102 will teach inquiry through one of the most essential and everyday aspects of life: food. If we are what we eat, then we will be studying who we are. A bodily necessity, food marks our days and is central to many of our rituals. As food is an economic engine, a connection to history and culture, and a moral or religious choice, it provides an excellent subject for inquiry from a variety of perspectives. The historical research unit will use archival sources to investigate how historical context affects assumptions about food. The qualitative research unit will look into how our choices about food reflect our lifestyles and cultures. Finally, in the secondary source research unit, students will use scholarly sources to investigate a food-related topic of their choosing, perhaps one related to their own disciplinary/major interests.

Gangl-Hudson, M.: __________ 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.

Guichard, S.: __________ Inquiry into Popular Culture

This section will investigate conceptions of popular culture and its role in our (and possibly others’) culture, both historical and contemporary. Students will read a variety of popular culture mediums, including argumentative essays concerning the topic of popular culture itself. The course will draw from a variety of written texts as well as visual, musical, technological, and other non-written forms. Like all sections of 102, students will conduct archival, qualitative, and secondary source research.

Harshbarger, S.: __________ TBD
**Lillie, B.: Inquiry into the Memoir**

In this section of English 102, we will focus on examining the history of the memoir and will be practicing personal writing with special attention to the roles of history, place, and identity in our lives. Using course readings as a guide, we will also be undergoing intensive instruction in writing, especially in analysis and argument.

The point 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 also learn how to conduct archival, qualitative, and secondary source research and will present what you have learned to academic audiences in traditional discipline-appropriate papers.

**Massey, Kelvin.: Inquiry into the Heroic**

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.

**McCue, Kristina.: 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.
Mckinstry, D.: Inquiry into American Mysteries

English 102’s Inquiry into American Mysteries will explore the subject of mystery in a variety of American lives, literary genres, academic disciplines/professions, historical events, and cultural artifacts. American mystery may be considered not only through literary, academic, and historical perspectives, but more specifically in light of individual and group psychologies, of racial and gender and social origins and experiences, of occult and metaphysical studies, and of philosophical and religious meanings.

Mcleod, J.: Inquiry into Food and Culture

If we are what we eat, then what do the choices we make on a daily basis say about us? This writing and research course is an investigation of the complex relationship that humans have with food. We’ll look at what, when, with whom, and how we eat and what these choices reveal about ourselves and our culture. Students will explore a food tradition in their family or hometown community and consider what that tradition says about the values that are passed along with it. Then we will choose a time period and investigate how a generation’s food choices and patterns reflect the values, stereotypes, and assumptions of their time. Finally, students will examine how food and consumption relates to their specific fields of study. This course is a tasty way to learn the research skills necessary for a successful academic career! Like all sections of English 102, we will conduct historical, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.

Saeli, H.: Inquiry into Food

In this course, we will examine issues related to food, a topic that 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.

Sheffield, C.: Inquiry into Fear and American Culture

In this English 102 course, we will examine the role of fear in American culture. It’s important to remember that fear isn’t a simple emotion; while emotions such as horror and terror are reliant upon fear, fear is not always correlated to emotions such as horror and terror. You may be afraid of the dark, spiders, heights, or ghosts. You may fear being hurt or dying. Although you may not realize it, fear drives nearly every choice we make. Fear of hunger encourages us to eat. Fear of failure encourages us to work hard. Fear of isolation encourages us to try to fit in with others. And our culture depends on these fears; they’re the underlying message of most of our commercials. Want to be safe? Drive a Subaru. Want to look pretty? Wear Cover Girl. They may as well say, “are you afraid of dying in a car accident?” or “are you afraid of not getting a date?”
Over the course of this semester, we will investigate the way fear has shaped, and continues to shape, what it means to be “American.”

We will also examine fear in relationship to the American political, cultural, social, religious, and historical landscapes. Likewise, we will consider the fears that drive us, make us who we are, inspire our life choices, and shape our personal and professional relationships. In order to do so, this course will feature three kinds of research: secondary source, archival, and qualitative. The secondary source project will examine a debate about political/politicized buzzwords used by current news media. The archival project will explore the historical significance of fear in relationship to American identity. Finally, we will conduct qualitative research by surveying participants in order to investigate their experiences with and/or beliefs about fear.

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

Inquiry into Myths and Monsters examines the issues of European Mythology, Legend, and Folklore, which has received increasing attention because of the pervasiveness of early mythology and legends today. We will use this topic to develop research and writing skills. The course will explore questions such as women in mythology, influences on pop culture, themes and morality tales in mythology, storytelling, mythology and early culture, and influence on modern culture. The course features secondary, archival, and qualitative research projects. You will use skills such as drafting, peer review, and revision to improve your work over the course of the semester.

**Spirko, Rob.: Inquiry into Disability**

This course will use research to investigate that most essential and everyday part of life: food. If we are what we eat, the current state of food production in the U.S. makes the old adage even more an admonition. At the same time, food is the center of many of our celebrations of life, and even T.S. Eliot includes “a very good dinner” as a peak experience near to spiritual enlightenment (in “The Dry Salvages”). It is an economic engine, a connection to history culture, and a moral and religious choice. It is also something that many of us pay far too little attention to. Because of food’s unique position at the intersection of so many disciplines, it provides an ideal subject for inquiry from a variety of perspectives.

We will investigate various aspects of our relationship with food, from qualitative inquiry into current food practices to a historical examination of past connections to food, to positioning ourselves within current debates over food in various disciplines or areas of interest. We’ll examine a variety of kinds of food writing, from restaurant reviews to news reports, from agrarian polemics to cookbooks, from food magazines to film documentaries. Students will produce a couple of these different kinds of writing themselves, in addition to the academic papers for the class. Like all 102 sections, we will engage in historical, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.

**Todd, A.: 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.
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.

**Turner, S.: Inquiry into the Titanic and its Legacy**

The Titanic began as an engineering puzzle, became a historical trauma, and by the end of its century had become both an archeological challenge and a case study in the modern Hollywood blockbuster. This course will examine both the ship and its legacy in all of these contexts. First students will study primary sources in the form of survivor accounts, photographs of salvaged artifacts, and fictionalized retellings. They will then research recent scholarship in a discipline of their choice to answer some question about the ship, the wreck, or people’s enduring fascination with both. Finally, groups of three will design a qualitative study that investigates the relationship between stress and anxiety in everyday life and cultural narratives of disaster and loss.

**Wallace, J.: 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.

**Wells, W.: Inquiry into Myths and Monsters**

Inquiry into Myths and Monsters examines the issues of European Mythology, Legend, and Folklore, which has received increasing attention because of the pervasiveness of early mythology and legends today. We will use this topic to develop research and writing skills. The course will explore questions such as women in mythology, influences on pop culture, themes and morality tales in mythology, storytelling, mythology and early culture, and influence on modern culture. The course features secondary, archival, and qualitative research projects. You will use skills such as drafting, peer review, and revision to improve your work over the course of the semester.