



## English 102 Topics—Fall 2018

This list is current as of 8/10/2018. 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.

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### **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.

### **Baggett:** 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.

**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.

**Hermes: Inquiry into Travel**

The best travel writing does not merely inform us about an unfamiliar place; it highlights alternative ways of being in the world and can reveal people's values, assumptions, and aspirations. In this section of English 102, we will investigate travel through both historical and contemporary accounts. The emphasis of this course is on research and communication, and our methods of inquiry will fall into three broad categories: qualitative, archival, and secondary source research. Readings will span a diverse range of genres and time periods and will include academic scholarship on travel and travel writing, popular magazine articles from the post-Civil War period to the present day, and excerpts from book-length works of narrative nonfiction. In addition to the written work of the course, students will create their own seven-minute video that draws on interviews and observations to illuminate a compelling research question related to travel.

**Jagers: Inquiry into Race**

Inquiry into Race examines the issues of race in our lives, which has received increasing attention because of recent discussions of police brutality, immigration reform, and the 2016 presidential election. We will use this topic to develop research and writing skills. To accomplish this goal, we will conduct three kinds of research: qualitative, archival, and secondary source. We will conduct qualitative research by interviewing or surveying specific populations in order to investigate their experiences with and/or beliefs about race. In the archival project, we will explore the ways that perceptions of race have changed throughout

history by analyzing historical documents, photographs, and advertisements. Finally, the secondary source project will use academic research to examine a topic of each student's interest, such as race and sports or racial profiling.

**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.

**McGrath: Inquiry into Popular Film and Popular Culture**

Inquiry into Film and Popular Culture addresses the relationship of popular movies to popular American culture. We will look at several well-known movies, examining what they tell us about our own attitudes to a variety of cultural, historical, and intellectual issues. Your course work will include both qualitative methods of inquiry, such as field research and data analysis, as well as traditional academic research. We will be paying close attention to how movies both represent popular culture and shape our responses toward it. There will be particular attention paid to the formal and aesthetic aspects of movies; for instance, by which standards do we make the claim one movie is better than another, or more pleasing than another. My primary goal for this course is to make you better writers and thinkers. My secondary goal for this course is to develop and intensify your awareness of how and why different individuals and groups respond differently to movies, and how and why these responses reflect differences in the popular culture. We will explore popular attitudes toward cultural trends as they are represented in movies.

**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.

**Nichols: Inquiry into Mountains and Mountain Culture**

Inquiry into Mountains & Mountain Culture examines cultural, religious, metaphorical, and ecological concerns surrounding mountains, especially as these concern human interaction with mountains across time. We will use this topic to develop research and writing skills by conducting three kinds of research: secondary source, historical, and qualitative. The secondary source project will examine current discussions about the state of mountains within broader cultural, religious, linguistic, and scientific discourses. The historical project will explore the historical significance of mountains in the 19th and 20th centuries. Qualitative research will investigate participants' experiences with and beliefs about mountains through surveys or interviews.

**Powell: Inquiry into Crime and Detection**

*Law & Order, The Wire, Sherlock Holmes, CSI, The Mentalist, Cold Case, Criminal Minds, Monk, Without a Trace*: The proliferation of crime shows on television evinces our fascination not only with crime but also in the method of detection and the persona of the detective. Indeed, there is much more to these crime shows than a morbid fascination with deviance. Crime shows illustrate not only what we fear but also what we value and what makes us feel secure. In this course, students will ask questions about how people perceive or react to crime, crime prevention, and methods of detection, as well as how crime is represented both in fiction and journalism. To answer those questions, students will conduct archival, qualitative, and secondary source research and will present their work in traditional papers as well as multi-modal formats.

**Powers: Inquiry into Myth and Popular Culture**

The transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next largely occurs through written communication. Our past as a nation and as individuals who are part of a larger system of meaning making is given significance through the recording of information and the passing down of that information. This communication unites people across time and cultures and often features repeating figure types and scenarios whose actions and character constitute myth. In this course, students will learn to write and research through an examination of traditional and popular myths such as the fairy tale, the folk hero legend, and its modern counterpart, the superhero. Like all sections of English 102, we will explore the topic through archival, qualitative, and secondary-source research.

**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.

**Shultz: Inquiry into the Representation of the End of the World**

What do diverse works like *Battlestar Galactica, Buffy, the Vampire Slayer, I Am Legend, Watchmen, and The City of Ember* have in common? Why is our culture fascinated by the end of the world? Is this phenomenon a recent development, or does it persist from our past? While this course will begin with broad ideas from both Western and Eastern religious sources, the emphasis will be on representations of the end of the world in various texts, films or television, and other media. Like all sections of English 102, we will conduct archival, qualitative, and secondary source research to investigate the course topic.

**Sockwell 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.

**Todd Inquiry into Dreams**

Dreaming has long been common material for cultural production. Despite attempts to explain their nature psychologically, spiritually, or supernaturally, dreams remain mysterious and entice largely through their open-ended possibilities. "Inquiry into

Dreams" will explore the use and representation of dreams in popular culture, in relation to people's real-world experiences of them and the different perspectives that have attempted to understand and explain those experiences. The course will move from historical research of first-hand, archival accounts into qualitative study of social trends in dreaming, and finally into secondary source research of cultural depictions of dreaming in art, literature, and film.

**Wallace: Inquiry into Cool**

What does it mean to be cool? Is cool just something you're born with? If not, who decides what's cool and what's not? Is "cool" the same thing as "popular," or are they completely different things? In this section of 102, we will practice our research and argumentative skills by examining a wide variety of supposedly cool people and things. We'll look at Apple's design team to ask whether a company can be cool; we'll read about popular stereotypes of "the cool girl"; we'll read the musician Questlove asking whether hip-hop is still cool. These discussions will enable you to investigate and write on your own, carrying out interviews and surveys, studying what people in the past thought cool was, as well as using the ideas of other scholars and writers to help develop your own views. P.S.: You do not need to be cool to take this class.

**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.