

ENGLISH 254, Themes in Literature SPRING 2022



Literature, Disability, and Deafness

Rob Spirko Section 001, TR 2:50-4:05, CRN# (20654)

Course Description: What does it mean to be human? To be “normal”? For people with disabilities, the answers to these questions can determine how well they are included in society—or sometimes the difference between life and death. We’ll look at representations of people with disabilities, most written by disabled people, including units on memoir, Deaf culture, the freak show and other problem-posing texts. The genres we’ll read include fiction, non-fiction, graphic novel, poetry, plays, and film. There will be four papers, and you’ll have the option to explore digital composition, including podcasts and video blogs, as ways to respond.

Queer Poetics

Erin Smith Section 002, MWF 1:00-1:50, CRN# (20655)

Course Description: In Queer Poetics, students will begin with the work of the “grandparents” of American poetry, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Both authors’ work shifted the focus of poetry from the Victorian, defined largely by its adherence to strict formal rhyming and syllabic consistency, to free verse and slant/off rhyme. By “queering” the focus of poetry outside the metric, rhythmic, and rhyming, one can argue that the history of American poetry is, by its definition, a queer one. As we work towards the work of contemporary poets, students will learn more about the history of LGBTQIA writers through essays, poems, and full-length collections by Audre Lorde, Danez Smith, Meg Day, Steven Sanchez, and Adrienne Rich.

Tennessee Women in Literature

Julia McLeod Section 003, TR 9:50-11:05, CRN# (20656)

Course Description: This course examines authors connected to the state of Tennessee by birth, employment, or subject matter and whose work explores the experiences of women from the late nineteenth century to today. Readings -- including poetry, along with local color, domestic, historical, modernist, and post-modernist fiction -- reflect the rich literary heritage of the state and engage with the important social and political questions of our time. Authors include Emma Bell Miles, Marilou Awiakta, Ida B. Wells, Wilma Dykeman, Amy Greene, and Dolly Parton.

Assignments: weekly reading journal entries, text/context presentation, one close reading essay, one research essay/webpage, final exam.

**All sections of English 254 satisfy UT’s General Education requirements
in both Arts & Humanities (AH) and Communicating through Writing (WC).**