**Department of English 2021-2022**

**Second-Year Seminar Descriptions**

Questions about these courses can be sent via email to the Undergraduate Director, Jennifer Blair, at engdiru@uottawa.ca, or to the professor who is teaching the course.

**ENG 2124 A (Fall 2021)**

**Title:** Renaissance Rebels

**Professor:** Jennifer Panek

**Course Description:** A wife who gangs up with her female relatives to transform a controlling husband. An English king who wants nothing more than to be with his male lover. A tough young woman on the streets of London who wins her community’s respect while dressing like a man and taking down her detractors in sword-fights. With two of these three plays based on real-life individuals and situations, these are the stories that Shakespeare never told—but his edgier, more daring rivals John Fletcher, Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Middleton did. This section of the second-year seminar uses these plays—two hilarious comedies (*The Tamer Tamed* and *The Roaring Girl*) and a most unconventional historical tragedy (*Edward II*)—as a basis for teaching the critical analysis skills your professors will require of you in future English courses. Class discussion and a series of short assignments build your skills in close reading, argument, contextualization, and engaging with literary criticism; the term concludes with seminar presentations and personalized instruction on the practice of in-depth revision that you will use to turn your presentations into excellent final papers.

**Method:** seminar and discussion

**Texts:**
John Fletcher, *The Tamer Tamed, or The Woman’s Prize* (Revels Student Edition)
Christopher Marlowe, *Edward the Second* (New Mermaids)
Course reader of contextual and critical readings

**Evaluation:**
Class participation: 15%
Short assignment one: 5%
Short assignment two: 10%
Short assignment three: 10%
Short assignment four: 15%
Seminar presentation: 20%
Final paper: 25%
Title: The “Orient” in English Literature

Professor: Ian Dennis

Course Description:

From the first translation of the *Arabian Nights* in 1704-14, a half-imaginary, half-actual “Oriental” world fascinated English writers and readers, as it did other Europeans. This seminar will trace the developing idea of this world in a sequence of influential works of fiction, poetry and travel-writing. We will ask if these works individually or collectively express the self-satisfaction and economic dominance of European Enlightenment civilization, or if they were challenges to that civilization. How does this literature relate to the Romantic-era celebration of the marginal, the authentic and the different, or to Romantic Nationalism? We will read selections of critical arguments on various sides of such questions, and survey some the methodological issues raised. Ultimately, we will be asking, how does literature help (or hinder) its readers’ understandings of other cultures and peoples? What is involved in the imagining of the Other? What is the status of narratives told by and for the outsider? What role is played by resentments and desires?

Each student will choose another work from a supplementary list, which will be the subject of an oral seminar presentation to the class. Class discussion questions related to the required readings will be provided in advance and students will be expected to participate in discussion of these issues. The term essay will go through a two-version process with an emphasis on strengthening scholarly writing skills.

Grading: Seminar and participation, 50%; Term essay (2 versions @ 25%), 50%.

Texts:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, “Turkish Letters” (selections, provided)
Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas* (Oxford)
William Beckford, *Vathek* (Broadview)
Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Missionary* (Broadview)
Lord Byron, *The Giaour, Don Juan* III - VI (Oxford)
James Joyce, “Araby” (provided)
Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (Penguin)
Wilfred Thesiger, *Arabian Sands* (Penguin)

Critical Readings (provided)
English 2124 C (Winter 2022)

Title: Literatures of Epidemic

Professor: Sara Landreth

Course Description: 2020-21 was an academic year like no other as COVID-19 forced us away from our campus communities and routines. We are all firsthand witnesses to loss, fear, and uncertainty as well as to the unexpected discoveries and joys of life under lockdown. As unprecedented as these events are in our lifetime, English literature has a long and rich history of engaging with global pandemics. This class will explore representations of infectious disease from 1722 to 2020 in poetry, prose, theatre, television and the autobiographical essay. Why are apocalyptic narratives so compelling? In what ways do pandemics spark conspiracy theories and fan the flames of prejudice? How will our current crisis change how metaphors of contagion and pestilence inform our work, travel, and social interactions? What does it mean to engage with literature in order to imagine or even fantasize about the breakdown of “modern society”? Our class discussions and a series of short assignments will develop your skills in close reading, argumentation, and engaging with literary criticism and theory. This work will prepare each student to write an excellent final essay; the writing process will include personalized feedback from the professor and hands-on guidance through a careful process of revision.

Texts Include:

Daniel Defoe, A Journal of the Plague Year (1722)
Tony Kushner, Angels in America (1992)
Emily St John Mandel, Station Eleven (2014)
ENG 2124 D (Winter 2022)

Title: Shakespeare Then and Now

Prof. Irene Makaryk
Makaryk@uottawa.ca

Course Description:
Today, in the twenty-first century, William Shakespeare is the most performed and translated playwright in the world, and the one with the most remarkable “afterlife.” No longer just an early modern English writer, Shakespeare is now a brand, a public symbol, even a tool that can employed for aesthetic, political, or other ideological ends.

And yet his works were not always so popular. How and why did his literary and theatrical pre-eminence come about? What can a study of his plays and their reception over the past 400 years teach us about concepts such as the classic; literary movements; the canon; nationalism and postcolonialism; propaganda; literary versus performance culture; gender and identity?

This seminar engages with such issues through a study of selected plays and their reception, including their adaptation, by critics, writers, artists, editors, and translators from around the world. Each week we will focus on a different key concept, methodology, or approach. While developing independent research skills, this seminar also emphasizes the ability to address, analyse, and employ different methodologies to a text through class discussion, presentations, and papers.
ENG 2124 E (Winter 2022)

Title: Allegory, Dragons, and Female Knights: Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1596)

Professor: Victoria Burke

**Course description:**
Designed to strengthen the skills required of English concentration students, this course takes as its core text the late-sixteenth-century epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, a celebrated work of English literature which recounts the adventures of several knights and ladies, and more than one female knight. We will use an edition of Spenser’s poetry that contains generous selections from the poem as well as some well-chosen scholarly criticism. We will spend a lot of class time analyzing the poem, considering some scholarly criticism of the poem, and putting the poem in context with its historical period and with other writings. Assignments include an oral explication of a passage, a written assignment integrating criticism and analysis, a seminar presentation, and a final essay based on the poem as a whole.