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This course focuses on the figure of the monster in literature and film from 19th century British literature to contemporary American and Korean cinema. We will begin by exploring classic literary monsters (,), before moving on to short works of American science fiction (Ray Bradbury, Octavia Butler, Kurt Vonegut). We will conclude the semester with two recent popular films (,) to reflect on the ways in which humans can become the monsters we fear.

This section Lit Core will focus on intersections between literature and philosophy—on literature’s ability to address philosophical problems and philosophy’s use of “artistic” forms of presentation. We will most likely read works of philosophy by such figures as Plato, Locke, Nagel, and Geuss; and we will read works of literature by Wordsworth, Keats, Dickinson, and Coetzee. Assignments will include active participation, weekly Canvas posts, and more formal papers.

Literature has long been used as a means of escaping and understanding pandemics, as well as their larger impact on society. In this course, we will read literatures across place and time to see what insights we can apply to our own situation. We will begin with Boccaccio's 14th century *The Decameron*, in which young people in quarantine told each other stories to pass the time, and end with stories from the *Plague Year*, in which contemporary writers were enlisted to do the same in 2020. In between, we will consider how literatures about pandemics help us create order and meaning out of chaos and uncertainty, and how sickness and death help us understand and appreciate what it means to be human. Texts include:

This course will examine literature that explores themes of “the fantastic.” We’ll consider that term rather generally, and use it to frame our discussions of William Shakespeare’s

What turns a story into a narrative? Can there be narratives without narrators? This course examines the relationship between story and narrative, or tale and teller. We will analyze various kinds of narrative likely including speculative fiction, slave narrative, graphic memoir, short fiction, contemporary drama, and film. We will also practice how to write a successful English essay based on “close reading,” the principal technique of literary studies. By the end of the course, you should have an increased appreciation for

An introduction to literature written in English from about 1599 to the present, primarily in England, Ireland, and America. Offering a survey of poetry, prose fiction (novels, short fiction), and drama, the course will be a mixture of lectures and discussions, with frequent reading quizzes and occasional memorization assignments, and with both formal essays and informal writing on Canvas. Seeking to make it possible for students to undertake careful literary analysis animated by their own preoccupations and interests, the course will aim to convey some concrete knowledge of literary genres and literary history and to cultivate detailed, focused attention to particular moments in texts.

This section of Literature Core will focus on literature that speaks to questions of slavery, incarceration, and freedom—both literal and metaphorical. The course will start with historical and political writings about slavery from the 1800s and the social contexts in which these writings were produced and consumed. We will then move on to historical and contemporary fiction and film that informs and challenges our historical understanding of slavery and the relationship between slavery and our current system of mass incarceration. Course texts will include:

(Yaa Gyasi),
-Excerpts (Harriet
Jacobs), (Toni Morrison), (Octavia Butler),
(Colson Whitehead), and (Bryan Stevenson).

This section explores how literary texts bear witness to historical events and address social issues in order to engage with questions of difference and justice. Through the study of poetry, fiction, drama, and autobiography, we examine how writers from Frederick Douglass and Charlotte Perkins Gilman to Toni Morrison and Tony Kushner have used a variety of genres and forms to expose inequality and injustice; to call for justice, solidarity, and inclusion; and to transform experiences of trauma, displacement, and oppression into art. Topics may include slavery and its legacies, Indigeneity, class and gender inequality, LGBTQ rights, disability, and religious persecution.

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Featuring film, visual art, and popular fiction, this course explores histories and legacies of slavery in the United States. In addition to looking at how our range of creative forms narrate US slavery, we will consider how creative depictions of the institution allow us to think differently—and more critically—about the racial and gendered identities defined by and refined in US slavery as well as intra-/inter-racial relationships shaped by it. In “Narratives of Slavery,” students will examine how “whiteness” and “white privilege” were made, defined, then organized to empower and serve the master class; how whiteness as a racial/class category made “blackness,” and how the resulting power/privilege dynamic is visible in our primary “texts” and reflected in our current social and political contexts.

Open to first-year students only

Check the [Core Renewal page](#) for updated information

What can literature tell us about the complex interactions between individuals and the law? What are the links between values, ethics, religious beliefs, and the law. How do various authors grapple with the complex interplay of these elements? In what ways can literary texts serve as an argument for justice or a polemic against injustice? In this course we will read a range of fiction and nonfiction narratives that examine the meanings of justice and the role of individuals within a legal system. We will work to understand why societies enact laws and whose interests those laws serve. We will also examine the role of lawyers, judges, and litigants and the complex dilemmas they face in both upholding laws and pursuing justice. In the context of the United States, we will

specifically examine texts that address the intersection of race, justice, and the legal

