The English Aggie

Spring 2018 Courses
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Confessions of an English Major
Everybody has a confession. Some people told us theirs. pg. 4

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ENGL 303.901: The Work of World Literatures - Professor Dworkin
English 303 is an introduction to English Studies for English majors. In this writing-intensive class, we will become acquainted with the many different methodologies professional scholars use to read, discuss, and write about literature and other important cultural texts. What kinds of questions do we ask in the discipline of English Studies, and what approaches and tools do we use to answer those questions? Moreover, we will consider the relevance of English Studies to the wider world within which readers read and writers write. What do the questions and critical methodologies we bring to texts have to offer to the culture at large? Throughout the semester, we will practice the basic skills essential to more advanced study in English: close reading, clear writing, and the formulation of fertile, well-informed research questions.

ENGL 303.902: Regency Aesthetics and Our Understanding of the Past - Professor Egenolf
Artifacts from the past, such as paintings, toy theatres, dishes, souvenirs from abroad, plans for landscape gardens, letters, coupled with literary texts, provide us with a rich understanding of a society far removed from our own, while simultaneously shedding light upon the ways in which our own culture has been constructed. This course will use Tom Stoppard’s 1993 play Arcadia as a touchstone in our own investigation of the literature and culture of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Stoppard’s play is very much about how we know about the past and how we make sense or make a narrative out of sometimes misleading traces of the past. It’s also a play about landscape aesthetics, courtship, Lord Byron, literary critics, and chaos theory.

ENGL 303.903: Cybercultures - Professor Pilsch
This course will introduce you to the English major through the lens of "cyberculture." Human culture is being digitized—video games make more money than movies, Twitter is the new commons, people read novels on their phones, entire library collections are being scanned and archived online—and the way this digitization changes or preserves cultural forms is a central question the English major can prepare you to answer. For this class, we will explore a variety of locations where cyberculture is happening and a number of methods you can use to study these changes as you progress through the major. We will likely look at science fiction texts, video games, and digital research methods (including digital ethnography, stylometry, and data visualization).
ENGL 303.904: Literary Approaches in Praxis - Professor Vasilakis
The purpose of the course is to introduce English majors to the field of English Studies. In this course we will study the history and the transformation of the field, and the different forces, traditions, and methodologies that have been instrumental in our approach or understanding of literature.

ENGL 481.901: New Asian Voices - Professor Bhattacharya
In this course we will read selected short and longer fiction and non-fiction by newer Asian writers who have recently been changing the landscape of global literatures and readerships.

ENGL 481.902: Law and Literature - Professor Collins
Crime, detection, trial, punishment, rehabilitation, freedom: This is the familiar cycle of justice in the United States and many other nations. The whole of this cycle, as well as the legal and theoretical framework in which the cycle unfolds, is the subject matter of the interdisciplinary subfield of literary criticism and legal studies that is known as “Law and Literature.” As a way of introducing “Law and Literature” (together with “Law as Literature,” which investigates the literary aspects of judicial opinions and other legal texts), this class will explore works that represent, theorize, or condemn all parts of this cycle. At a larger level, this class will explore the impact of legal systems and disputes on societies like that of the United States.

ENGL 481.903: How to Judge a Book by Its Cover: Paratexts, Book History, and Literary Studies - Professor Estill
This course offers a broad overview of the importance of paratexts—from advertisements to indices—from the middle ages to the present. Students will learn to analyze texts from a book historical and cultural materialist perspective, considering how works are presented affects their reception and meaning. We will consider texts from manuscript to electronic editions and think about the importance of anthologies and scholarly editions. Judging a book by its cover is not simple: it is a learned art.

ENGL 481.904: Anonymity and Authorship - Professor Griffin
This course claims that the history of authorship is incomplete without an understanding of the history of anonymity as a literary and cultural practice. The importance assigned to anonymity within the culture can be gauged by John Wilkes in the 1760s fighting a duel rather than divulge his authorship of a controversial pamphlet, and by George Elliot in the 1860s charging that a person who exposed her as the author of a pseudonymous novel without her permission was the equivalent of a thief who breaks into one’s home. We will take into account the various motives of anonymity, as well the legal history of statutes regulating print, such as those defining copyright, seditious libel, obscenity and blasphemy.

ENGL 481.905: The Middle Ages and Its Representation - Professor Warren
This course jointly considers medieval texts and cultural phenomena in their own historical moments and later representations of those texts and phenomena. We will investigate what sorts of literary, historical, and political questions get negotiated through engagements with the Middle Ages. We will ponder why particular characters, tropes, and themes recur so persistently in texts of various genres. We will consider such figures as Joan of Arc, Julian of Norwich, and King Arthur, among others. Students will be expected to participate actively, read both extensively and intensively, and conduct research using both primary and secondary sources.

For a full list of course descriptions please visit http://english.tamu.edu/course-descriptions/
“People think I read a lot just because I’m an English major. I usually lie and say that I do but the truth is I don’t. I’m actually not that good at analyzing books either.” - Anonymous
Since starting college, I realized that every major has its own reputation. For English majors, people think of bookworms who love classics, can quote Shakespeare from the top of their heads and spend most of their time in Starbucks writing their next novel. They think we earn our degree without a problem, but what they don’t see is the never ending essays, reading four books for three different classes, and constant ridicule for our choice of careers. Trust me. Being an English major is not all easy and we aren’t all trying to be the next J.K. Rowling. Our major is not perfect and we don’t all love everything about it, and it’s completely okay to blurt it out to the world. In fact, some of our students shared their not-so-popular thoughts about being in this major. Read if you dare!

"The Aggie English department doesn’t get the recognition from the university it deserves! It’s all about engineers and science majors! Just because you are in liberal arts, it does not mean you are dumb!...Whoop!"

"I sincerely hate Charles Dickens."

"Sometimes I hate that I’m an English major. Especially when people tell me it’s going to be hard to find a job outside of teaching, but I love my degree. And it has given me so many skills. I hate feeling so torn."

"I’m an English major and I still don’t know some of the basic grammatical rules."

"I didn’t start getting into literature and poetry until I was in college. I hated reading in high school because it was obligatory. It was almost a pet peeve of mine."

"I silently correct people’s grammar all the time.”

"I can spend all my money on books and have no shame."

"I had no idea who Faulkner was until college.”

"I didn’t know who Jane Austen was until college.”

"I am not currently writing a book, nor do I have plans to write one.”

"I can’t name all the elements on the periodic table, can’t divide 2018 by 86 in my head, but I can tell you what an Oxford comma is and the difference between ‘affect’ and ‘effect.’”

"If you ever hand-write me a letter I may just fall in love with you.”

"English majors can become something other than teachers.”

"No, I don’t love Shakespeare nor Hemingway.”

"I will pass on a night out if I’m reading a good book.”

"I’m graduating this May and I still don’t know how to write in APA format.”

"I am not an encyclopedia nor a dictionary.”

"90% of the time I feel like I’m not smart enough to be an English major.”

-Anonymous
This semester, AKS has settled on the broad intersection of warfare and art. So far, members are reviewing the relationship between representation and response to warfare and examining how the enemy is portrayed in these art forms. With time, these conversations will unravel a handful of different fields in their studies to discuss and criticize.

If you don’t have anything to do on your Thursday nights, the Aggie Kolbitar Society welcomes you to their weekly meetings at the Liberal Arts and Humanities building (LAAH 504) at 7:00 p.m. “We offer the opportunity for students to both nurture their interest in fields that they already love, and potentially be exposed to fields that they haven’t explored before,” McDonald shared. With hopes to grow in the future, AKS’s biggest goal is to see the society multiply in a variety of active cells, each with their own meeting host rotations, advisors, and basic activities. So what do you say, Ags? Are you ready to host the next AKS meeting?

Roughly two years ago, at an apartment off campus, four friends sat around a kitchen table. Eventually, four more chairs and a pair of Cocker Spaniel paws joined the party. ‘Twas how the Aggie Kolbitar Society was born. AKS’s original founder, Randal McDonald, is a graduate student who shared how the society began. “Many of the society’s original founders graduated after the first semester. Those who weren’t graduating (or were continuing their education at A&M) wanted the society to continue. To do that, we needed to recruit from the general student body,” McDonald expressed. Along with his friend, Laura Parrish, and Dr. Elizabeth Robinson, McDonald was able to keep the society available for future semesters. This trio works to ensure this society continues to help and inspire students.

Open to all majors, AKS offers students the opportunity to study a variety of fields and topics in the liberal arts without it pertaining to their academic studies. Generally exploring fields in visual arts, music, all sorts of literature, philosophy, and history, members get the chance to interact with the topics by attending the weekly discussions or performing research of their own and presenting their findings during their hosted meetings. McDonald believes that “beyond this, students who decide to volunteer as meeting hosts also gain experience in research and pedagogy, with our faculty advisor giving constructive feedback [that will benefit the student in perfecting their findings].”

For more information, visit: facebook.com/groups/Kolbitars or email rmcdonald1992@tamu.edu.
Literature in and of itself is an art. Carefully chosen words paint visuals upon a page for the mind, expressing what is in the human soul and how we construct our reality. We talked to Dr. Harris, an Instructional Assistant Professor in the English Department at Texas A&M University who, earlier this October, was excited to partner with the Forsyth Gallery to help bring literature and art closer and engage the public in personal recitings of his students’ poetry. This is a great way to educate on the importance of two arts coming together to demonstrate the culture of different time periods and occurring changes.

**How did this partnership come about?**

Amanda Dyer, Assistant Director at the Forsyth Galleries, contacted me earlier in the summer about the possibility of a collaboration. She heard I’d be teaching some creative writing students, and she had done an exhibit in the past called Forsyth Favorites where people had written labels about their interpretations of the pieces, but this was the first time she proposed having those labels contain full ekphrastics: poems and prose inspired by the artwork rather than analytic interpretations. So the stands created poems and microfiction based on the art they chose to write about.

**What can students expect from this exhibition?**

Students who visit the exhibit will get to view both 2D and 3D art along with the poems and microfiction produced by the creative writers of English 235 “Elements of Creative Writing.”

**The pieces are extraordinarily beautiful. How was the art chosen?**

Amanda Dyer made available a large amount of 2D and 3D images for students to pick. She provided thumbnails for students to make their initial choices, and then once as a class everyone came to their 2D and 3D selections, we went on a field trip to the Forsyth Galleries to go into the special storage area to view the actual works. That way the students were able to see new details that might not have been visible from the initial glimpses.

**Can you name one of your favorite paintings?**

This is always a hard question—to only pick one! I’ll say though there’s one piece from the eighteenth-century that is a “silk-padded picture,” so it’s not a painting but at first glance one would think it is. It’s called “stumpwork,” which involves stitching the figures, so they pop up—almost like a pop-up book, the texture is like that.

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**Forsyth Favorites: Students Select**

**Oct. 13 - Feb. 14**
**Why do something like this for your creative writing class?**

I’ve been interested in interdisciplinary collaborations before (and have made attempts at other institutions, such as trying to get film students and animators working with script writers or musicians working with prose and poetry writers), but this was the first time to work with an art gallery, and I was glad to have this opportunity to collaborate with the Forsyth Galleries, which has so much beautiful and interesting work to offer the public. Amanda Dyer did an excellent job of guiding our class through the deadlines, and I did my best to help students workshop their materials to get feedback as they moved forward with revision before submitting their final products. I’m proud of their efforts and results, and I hope people enjoy seeing the combination of art and literature.

**Why do you consider this important for students to experience?**

Students get the opportunity to engage cultural avenues not typically on the forefront of their daily consciousness, and they are able to bridge worlds. Ultimately, they shared their work with the public, as well as exploring visual art that they’d never seen before and history that also might not have been previously familiar; various paintings and vases depicted scenes from past centuries—even the ancient world.

The students ended up creating poems and microfiction that they would not otherwise have devised, so there’s a powerful set of connections here with the creation and sharing of art across mediums and disciplines. One of the wonderful experiences of Arts and Humanities is the interconnectedness of genres. Working with the art provided additional challenges in terms of spatial feasibility with the labels, so there were a range of hurdles for the students to overcome, which is also a valuable experience in terms of learning the realities of what goes into the design of an installment.

“**Literature is verbal art and offers a way to make sense of existence through a range of perspectives.**”

**What is the relationship between art and literature?**

Literature is verbal art and offers a way to make sense of existence through a range of perspectives. The methods of literary narrative may be very different technically than paintings and glass sculptures but the focus on setting and characters and images and themes are similar. When my students imagined a community with conflict and love and loss based on figures in a painting or on a vase, they participated in the empathetic work of asking questions about ways that people live and what they do and how that matters.

The gallery is open and free to the public: “People will enjoy the stunning art work and the surprising creative literature.” I couldn’t have said it better myself, Dr. Harris. Thanks and Gig’Em!

For more information, visit the Forsyth Galleries webpage at https://uart.tamu.edu/forsyth-current-exhibitions/.
Share your story with us!

Wishing you had more opportunities to use those excellent essays, creative fiction, and poetry that are languishing on your hard drive or in the back of your mind? Like “Texas A&M English Undergraduates” on Facebook and follow @TheEnglishAggie on Twitter to stay informed about contests, magazines, and journals to which you can submit your work. Email your work to EnglishAggieStories@gmail.com and you could end up published in The English Aggie!

Is a class you want full?

The Undergraduate Office saves a few seats in many English courses to help our majors and minors get into the classes they need. But, forcing is done on a first-come, first-serve basis. You must come to the Undergraduate Office during your preregistration time in order to be forced into a class. If you can’t get an appointment, please come as a walk-in. Just be prepared to wait in line for a bit if necessary.

Thanks & Gig’Em

This publication is brought to you by:

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Win cash prizes and perform your work at a Public Reading!

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Link to submit your story: https://goo.gl/forms/7yFHJF1gG4aSNNuT2

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