The English Aggie
March 2018

Featuring:

• 2018 Fall Courses
• Preregistration Reminders
• Short Story: The Hottest Day of the Year
• 6 Apps Every Writer Should Use

Illustrated by Liz Riccardi
ENGL 292: Introduction to Literature and Medicine - Jessica Howell

This course introduces students to literature and medicine studies through the analysis of autobiographies, novels, short fiction and poetry dealing with health and illness, specifically with a focus on how literature helps us imagine what ‘is’ - the day-to-day reality of those suffering with life-changing illness or injury - and what ‘could be,’ in terms of our humane treatment of one another. Students will also learn to evaluate sources from different disciplinary perspectives as a tool for critical thinking. We will read nursing narratives by Florence Nightingale and Louisa May Alcott; short stories such as the “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” and “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” poetry by Sylvia Plath, and excerpts from Isabel Allende’s memoir of her daughter’s death, Paula.

ENGL 303-902: The Work of World Literatures - Ira Dworkin

English 303 is an introduction to English Studies. 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. Moreover, we will consider the relevance of English Studies to the wider world within which readers read and writers write. 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 303-903: This is your brain on information: Philip K. Dick - Joshua DiCaglio

Philip K. Dick (PKD) is one of the most prolific yet strange writers of the 20th century. Although he wrote what was considered pulp science fiction, he is quickly becoming recognized as a brilliant writer whose works capture much of the convoluted nature of our hyper-technological, information-saturated world. As his work is being remade into blockbuster movies (from Blade Runner to Minority Report) and high-profile shows (A Man in High Castle), his impact on our culture is continuing to become more pronounced. But even more strange is the cult following that has gathered around his massive hand-written volume called the Exegesis, which he wrote obsessively after a transcendent vision of a higher power he called “VALIS”--the Vast Active Living Information System.

ENGL 303-905: Canons and Culture - Claudia Nelson

This version of ENGL 303 combines classic and contemporary texts. We will consider the impact of the edition that a text comes in by comparing the Broadview and Bedford/St. Martin’s editions of Jane Eyre_ (using these editions also as the basis for an introduction to gender criticism and historicist approaches); investigate questions of canonicity and academic approaches to popular culture (such as psychoanalytic criticism, reception studies, and reader-response theory) via discussions of the teen vampire film _The Lost Boys_ and the lowbrow classic _Pollyanna_; and use _The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay_ as the vehicle for discussions of postmodernism, surrealism, multicultural criticism, and queer theory. We will also consider issues of book marketing such as the book club, online book communities, and the impact of the book prize, with an eye to thinking about how marketing may affect issues of canonicity.

ENGL 303-970: Drugs, Literature and Medicine (Honors) - Michael Collins

The current opioid epidemic in the United States is only the most recent in a sequence of drug crises with which the United States (and, in sometimes parallel ways, other nations) have grappled. Debates about which drugs should be legal, which drugs should be prescribed despite their side effects, which drugs are “cool,” and which drugs aid or destroy creativity have been covered in various ways by the news media and have, in various ways, helped to shape literary works. This class will explore literary
representations of drug testing, medical and recreational drug use, drug abuse and addiction, and drug trafficking. Students will deepen their knowledge of literary and medical approaches to drugs as tools for healing, as sources of dangerous addictions, and as important parts of social rituals.

- **ENGL 343: Fairy Tales in the English Tradition - Elizabeth Robinson**
This course will explore the history of fairy tales, largely from Europe and the United States, from their oral (traditional) roots to modern re-tellings of traditional tales. Our study will include significant European publications of traditional tales such as those by Straparola & Basile (Italy), Perrault and d’Aulnoy (France), the Brothers Grimm (Germany), Andrew Lang, and Joseph Jacob (England). We will also read selected tales from other countries and cultures.

- **ENGL 481: Literature and Violence - Marian Eide**
Cultural critics convey a common worry about the moral and political repercussions of represented or aestheticized violence. Yet the practice of presenting violence in aesthetic form is nearly ubiquitous. Rigorous interdisciplinary study of violence and its repercussions promises to yield a renewed understanding of the multiple and complex intersections of political and artistic culture. Some of the questions this course will address will include: What draws the victims and perpetrators of violence to record or give voice to the experience of brutality? And why is violence aesthetically compelling for audiences?

- **ENGL 481-902: Literature of the Queen’s Court - Reading Queen Elizabeth I - Margaret Ezell**
This writing intensive senior seminar explores the writings by and about England’s most powerful Queen, Elizabeth I. Using texts from the 16th century, we will explore how she navigated a treacherous path to the throne, created the image of a female monarch through portraits, speeches, and royal pageants, and was an inspiration to writers including Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Esther Inglis, and the Countess of Pembroke.

- **ENGL 481-903: The Cultural Jane Austen - Mary Ann O’Farrell**
This course is designed to offer the manifest pleasures of reading Jane Austen and to help students develop the critical skills with which to examine these pleasures. Our readings will include Austen’s completed novels, as well as critical and biographical readings that raise recurrent issues in thinking about Austen (manners, marriage, families, knowledge, style, the largeness and smallness of worlds). We will also spend some time investigating the formation of Austen as a cultural icon (the kind of writer you find on websites, on tote bags, and in movie theaters with zombies, as well as in the library). Requirements may include online posts and one or two short papers, one of these about appearances of Austen in popular culture; because this is a senior seminar, we will also spend time preparing to write the course’s longer final paper about Austen, which will combine research with critical thinking and argumentation.

- **ENGL 481-904: After the Catastrophe: Literature, History and Memory in the 20th Century - Apostolos Vasilakis**
From Theodor Adorno’s famous declaration that “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric” to the traumatic return of slavery in Toni Morrison’s work (“it was not a story to passion” we read at the end of Beloved), there is no doubt about the impact of certain catastrophic and traumatic events on human consciousness, memory and artistic expression. In this course we will examine not only the ways that literary imagination and memory address and respond to these events, but also the possibility of resituating and understanding history and experience from a different perspective. Focusing on a variety of literary texts, we will address the possibility of knowing history in literature (and the ethical implication that arises from this possibility), the position of literature as a secondary witness to the event, and ultimately the relationship between history and fiction as it appears through these inquiries.

- **ENGL 489: Old English I - Britt Mize**
Beginning study of the Old English language through instruction in phonology, morphology, and syntax and the reading of various texts in verse and prose. The objective of the course is to bring students up to an intermediate level of reading ability in the English language as it existed prior to the Norman Conquest. The grade is based on student success in learning the language as evidenced mainly by translation exercises.

For a full list of course descriptions please visit [http://english.tamu.edu/course-descriptions/](http://english.tamu.edu/course-descriptions/)
Summer/Fall
Preregistration Reminders

English Majors:

- Be sure to check Howdy for your date and time to register.
  *Please check for registration blocks (through Howdy) and get them cleared before your registration date.

- For preregistration advising sessions, you must bring your updated degree plan with you in order to be advised. Fill out the degree plan using your degree evaluation before meeting with an advisor.

If you cannot find your degree plan, please come by LAAH 352 to pick up a blank plan or go to http://english.tamu.edu/degree-programs/, or http://english.tamu.edu/certificationsminors/ if you’re seeking a teaching certificate. (You will need to know your catalog term to pick up the correct degree plan. Your catalog term will be on your degree evaluation, which you can generate using the MyRecord tab at howdy.tamu.edu.)

Seniors:

- If you plan on graduating in December of 2018, we strongly recommend that you come in for advising before registering and check in with us after registering to make sure you will clear for graduation. Please do not assume you will clear your evaluation!

Forcing Procedures:

- If you would like to register for an English course that appears to be full, keep in mind that:
  - The Undergrad Office saves a few seats in many English courses to help our majors and minors get into the classes they need.
  - Forcing is done on a first-come, first-served 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.
  - We can only force students into our own courses (ENGL/LING); if you need to be forced into a class outside our department, you’ll have to speak with an advisor in that department.

Reminder:
- Advisors are now located in LAAH 202.
- The new appointment system can be accessed through our webpage (english.tamu.edu) or MyRecord tab in Howdy.
As the weather grows warmer, I find myself thinking quite often about the hottest day of last year. I was in my hometown of Sugar Land for the summer, and I found that it was 104 degrees Fahrenheit while I walked my dog. Checking the weather was something I did a lot last summer, and I knew this to be the peak of summer because the temperature before this day was steadily rising and after this day was steadily decreasing.

A most peculiar thing happened a few hours after our walk. Almost as if to balance out the brutal heat, a massive thunderstorm hit Sugar Land. I was mesmerized by the sublimity of the torrential downpour, and I tried my best to understand what was happening. It was obviously just the laws of thermodynamics doing what they always do, but I couldn’t stop my English Major brain from trying to project some greater meaning onto the sharp contrast created that day.

Perhaps it was a symbol of our struggles. Sometimes life feels like you are walking your dog on a 104-degree day. You’re doing all of the things that normally need doing, but for whatever reason it’s really getting to you today. You wonder what the point is of putting yourself through the stress of the futile goal of existence. Then, out of nowhere, something comes along that seems to balance it all out like cool rain on a hot day. Maybe you find a new hobby, or meet a new friend, or meet the love of your life. In any case, you still have to deal with those things you do to try and prevent your inevitable end, but suddenly it isn’t so bad anymore. Even though the heat will eventually be back, for now, everyday is a little bit more pleasant. As the weather cools off, you come to appreciate the fact that it wouldn’t feel anywhere near as good if it wasn’t preceded by the inferno of a Texas summer.
American writer Mark Twain once said “Writing is easy. All you have to do is cross out the wrong words.” Got it. *Crosses out every word of my sentence except for two.* Oh Twain, what humor you had. Turns out, writing is actually hard and one cup of coffee can only get you so far. From daily prompts to word track counters, you are probably going to need all the help you can get. But fear not! Here are five writing apps that will save your day, they sure have saved mine.

1. Coggle
Need to quickly map your thoughts for your research paper? Coggle has you covered. As a web-based app, you can organize and drop any complete or incomplete thoughts that will help you wrap up your writing process. This app lets you organize your thoughts and storylines. It even lets you share your thoughts with friends and create a real-time collaboration, letting each person draw their own views and see others’ opinions on the same map. Perfect for any major! Let the brainstorming begin!

2. Scrivener
Are you writing your next novel? A 10-page research paper? Whether you’re in the brainstorming, conclusion, or first draft phase, Scrivener can help! This functional app was built with a writer’s needs in mind. This app provides a place to create, edit, and organize all your work into sections. Use them to separate out chapters, create contents pages and synopses, and then rearrange everything later! Grow your manuscript organically, idea by idea.

3. Dailypage
Having writer’s block? Dailypage app is for those who aspire to write but find that the hardest thing about it is getting motivated. It is built to develop a daily writing habit. Every day, users get sent an email with a new prompt to help you build your writing. Users can either respond to it in private or make their response public. Writing every day is definitely a challenge undertaking so this app will definitely kick off a train of thought in your head. Enjoy the experience of writing regularly!

4. Write or Die
Procrastination is an eternal enemy for a college student. From getting distracted with a Buzzfeed quiz of what type of fruit fits your zodiac sign to cramming 400 words 20 minutes before the paper is due, Write or Die is made specifically to keep writers on task. It’s a simple program with the sole purpose of getting you to write quickly without a concern for editing during the initial composition process. You set the word count goal, as well as the time limit in which you have to complete the goal. Writer’s begin typing in the app’s window and when the typing slows to a stop there are consequences. You set them. The message is clear: Keep writing, or else.

5. Draft
This free site is meant for you to write and provide writers what they need to be better at what they do. With the ability to share your documents with other users and accept or decline their changes, Draft tracks how many words you write per day and will even send out a helpful email reminding you to meet your daily word count goal. You can even set it on Hemingway mode, meaning you can only move forward; no deleting, no going back. Its montra: write it now and edit later.

I’ve shared my secret weapons for becoming the writer I am today. Do you have some of your own? Share it with us at englishaggie.blogspot.com or englishaggiestories@gmail.com!
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? Email your work to EnglishAggieStories@gmail.com and you could end up published in The English Aggie!
JEFF VANDERMEER

Annihilation Book to Film: Narrative Choices and Reader Interpretations

April 9, 2018
Rudder Theater • 5:30 PM

Sponsored by the University Libraries, Department of English, and Department of International Studies.

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Joy Castro will read from her collections:

Joy Castro
*island of bones*

Joy Castro
*How Winter Began*

Tuesday, April 10, 2018
7:00 p.m.
Annenberg Presidential Conference Center

Book signing to follow reading

*The event is free and open to the public*

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Brazos Valley Reads

Organized and sponsored by Texas A&M University
Department of English
with support from:

Texas A&M University