ENGL110-080
The American West: The Romance and the Reality
Bruce Allen Heggen
The Spanish conquest, the Spanish missions; the Lewis and Clark expedition; the California gold rush and the Colorado mines; the dust bowl and the great depression: through all of these and more, continuing into the present, the American land west of the Mississippi river has continued to be a source of grand vistas, leading the imagination to visions of wide-eyed romance, of hard reality, and often both at once. This course will look at only a few “postcards” from the rich, fertile (and occasionally arid) historical and literary western panorama. We will frame our exploration by reading and writing in response to selections from scholars and writers, Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History or Wallace Stegner, Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West. We will further inform our conversation by reading narratives by such authors as Kent Haruf, Annie Proulx, Cormack McCarthy, Gretel Ehrlich and John Steinbeck; further authors may include environmentalists John Muir, Edward Abby or Terry Tempest Williams. To complement the assigned readings, class participants will be encouraged to see how “the romance and the reality of the American west” continue to be kept alive in popular portrayals of the west from “The Unforgiven” to the more recently rescreened “The Lone Ranger” or in artistic explorations by such artists as Georgia O’Keefe, Thomas Hart Benton, and Frederic Remington. Writing projects will include unstructured, in-class responses to readings and visuals, and shorter and longer essays; there will be a major research project. The course will encourage collaboration among classmates and the production of “alternative texts,” such as dramatic and video presentations.

ENGL110-081
The Theory and Practice of Nonviolence
James Burns
In a world seemingly racked by war and violent conflict there exists a little regarded alternative way of settling disputes. Nonviolence has a long (and effective) history in many parts of the world. The class will explore both the secular and religious origins of Nonviolence by examining writings by authors such as Gandhi, King, Tolstoy and Chavez. We will deal with those who are committed to Nonviolence as a principle, as a tactic, and as a personal practice. We will probe the connections of Nonviolence to contemporary political movements, such as feminism. We will see how Nonviolence is implemented, including specific examples drawn from different regions of the world. We will also explore how emerging technologies and social media have transformed nonviolent protest. The class will allow us to develop critical thinking about the nature and efficacy of both violence and nonviolence, and discover ways that nonviolence can be employed to achieve meaningful objectives. Students will write papers on the three areas of focus, cumulating with a research paper that may expand one of the three with significant research. The main text for the class will be Nonviolence in Theory and Practice by Barry Gan and Robert Holmes, along with other relevant materials from my own experience using nonviolence as a means of political change.

ENGL110-084
Rhetoric, Race, and Culture
Jessica Edwards
From music and movie award shows to the state of our educational system(s), we can see how language shapes views about difference and equity. In this course, we will analyze company statements and videos from Starbucks, the University of Delaware (UD), Urban Outfitters, and the Grammy Awards, to name a few, to better understand how professionals/organizations have created writings and responses to conversations about difference along the lines of race, class, and gender. Throughout the course, we will be working to answer questions like the following: Why might understanding the connections between race, rhetoric, and culture be important for those in educational and professional circles? How can writers, designers, and decision makers for businesses build responsible documents for specific and general audiences? Scholars will produce their own ideas about rhetoric and race via the application of rhetorical theory and critical race theory. By the end of the semester, scholars will hold a small conference to practice rhetorical awareness, critical thinking, and oral presentation skills.
ENGL110-085
A Menu for Writing: How food reflects personal and cultural identity and drives political and social policy
Claire McCabe

Food is cultural. It declares our ethnicity and social class. Food is political. Entire social movements are based on food preferences such as vegetarianism. Food has inspired scientists and artists, and will inspire this class with material for research and writing. We’ll explore such questions as: Is industrial food production ecologically sound? Why do some countries deal with illnesses of overabundance, while others deal with starvation? Is science corrupting the food supply with GMOs, or saving the planet? Is gourmet food an artistic endeavor or arrogant indulgence? Our menu of writing will include: appetizers of journal entries and reading responses on topics such as favorite food; a side dish short research paper that incorporates analysis and data collection; a main course in-depth research papers that allow each student to explore a compelling food-related topic; a dessert of final presentations will be shaped around reports on current programs, offices and facilities, whether public, private or non-profit, that serve to address food insecurity both at home and abroad.

ENGL110-086
Automobiles and American Identity
Lauren Hornberger

According to a recent study done by the Pew Research Center, 88% of today’s American households own at least one car, and more than one-third of us live in households that own three or more cars. Without a doubt, automobiles play an important role in many Americans’ day-to-day lives. Yet for some of us, cars mean so much more. In fact, few objects have altered the physical, economic, and social landscape of America as significantly as the automobile. In our culture, cars have represented values such as ingenuity, freedom, and status. This course will examine how representations of automobiles in the media reflect and may even help shape our personal and cultural ideals. Together, we will analyze various depictions of cars and driving—for example, in film and advertising—to figure out what they say about American values in areas such as success, family, gender, and race. Additionally, in light of recent speculation that we’ve reached a “car peak” in the U.S., we’ll consider the current and future roles of automobiles in American society and how our media are responding. To inform our discussions, we will read selections from books like Michael L. Berger’s The Automobile in American History and Culture: A Reference Guide, Cotton Seiler’s Republic of Drivers: A Cultural History of Automobility in America, and Deborah Clarke’s Driving Women: Fiction and Automobile Culture in Twentieth-Century America. This course will include a visit to the Hagley Museum in Wilmington, Delaware, to view a curated exhibit of car advertisements from various decades in the 20th century and to talk to local experts. Students can expect to write a series of response papers based on our readings and analyses. Each student’s course work will culminate in two unique projects: a research paper on the relationship between media portrayals of automobiles and an aspect of American identity as well as an original mock television or magazine advertisement based on what we learn about the ways in which cars are represented in our culture.

ENGL110-087
You Are What You Speak: Language and Identity
Caitlin Larracey

“We affirm the students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style.” So begins the Students’ Right to Their Own Language, a 1974 resolution from a leading group of university scholars of writing and language. But how is language connected to identity, exactly? And in what ways do we have a right to our “own” language(s)? Of course, everyone has their own manner of speaking, their own idiosyncrasies as a result of their home, their education, their geographic location, their religion and even other potentially large elements of their identity, such as their race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Like many other markers of identity, however, language is connected to both power and privilege as well as prejudice. The scholars and teachers in 1974 were responding to the privileging of “Standard English” at the expense of other dialects—particularly African American Vernacular English (AAVE). They argued that language is a key part of selfhood and the attempt to require students to write in a very particular English dialect, in an environment where other dialects were actively oppressed, represented the dominance of one group over others. The goal of this class is to explore language and identity through encounters with first-hand descriptions of linguistic prejudice, to consider some of the proposed methods to work toward an appreciation of linguistic diversity, and to ask our own questions, make our own arguments, and use our own languages to contribute to this conversation. The course contains three main units. In the first, you will write short responses to a series of primary materials talking about language. Next, you will write a slightly longer essay where we bring Students’ Right to Their Own Language: A Critical Sourcebook to this conversation, considering what scholars
and teachers have argued for in thinking about language and identity. Finally, you will locate a topic relating to language and identity and explore it through a research paper and a multimodal project of your own design. (This project may be a photo-essay, song, podcast, video, or social media project—and it may be composed either individually or collaboratively). We will bring our own languages to this discussion, allowing us to respect linguistic and cultural diversity. We will speak, write, and revise individually and collaboratively across written, verbal, and visual languages—both online and off. We will consider what’s at stake in writing when the words we use, and our right to use them, are in dispute. More importantly, we’ll get a strong sense of what we can’t yet understand and the numerous questions to be asked and actions to be taken.

ENGL110-088
Too Much Information: Novels on the Internet
Alice Boone
Who are the authors of the clickbait that you’re ashamed to say you read? Who wrote the tacky quiz about the color of your fairy wings or the name for your pet unicorn? Who wrote the confessional blog post that led to flaming, threats, judgments—and lots of pageviews and advertising eyeballs? Who moderated the offensive content so that you wouldn’t have to see it in your feed? These are the invisible authors and editors of our everyday digital experience: the authors of silly, forgettable stuff that structures our understanding of digital experience in unexpected ways. In this course, we will read contemporary novels about our lives on the Internet—including Rainbow Rowell’s Fangirl, Jennifer Egan’s A Visit from the Goon Squad, and Robin Sloan’s Mr. Penumbra’s 24-Hour Bookstore—as a way of thinking about how we deal with the sense of dislocation that comes from reading email, texts, blogs, ads, and clickbait all the time, even when we don’t necessarily enjoy or remember any of it. What is the place of the novel in an age of too much information? As a writer you will be asked to produce a multimedia research project in which you trace the “supply chain” of a form of digital content—say, of a form of clickbait, a fan video, a digital game play-through video, or a confessional essay. You will have to reach out to those “prosumers” and gather academic research about these forms of content are composed, edited, and produced. Such research will help you assess your own position as a reader, commenter, maker, and perhaps even future employee in the digital ecosystem.

ENGL110-089
In Numbers We Trust: Interpreting Small Data in a Big Scientific World
Carolyne King
“Numbers don’t lie” …Or do they? This course examines how data is created and how it persuades. We often emphasize ‘big data”—or the research that is conducted upon hundreds or even thousands of people; yet, this data is limited in its application and how these results can be applied to the individual. This course will interrogate data from several methods of collection through analysis and visualization. We will critically interrogate the ways that data is used to argue, particularly asking ourselves whether it is the responsibility of the reader to be wary, or the author to avoid manipulating the data presentation. Ultimately we will ask: What are the uses and limits of data? And as both creators and consumers of data, what is ethical data use? In the major assignments of this course, I’ll ask you to create and carry out a research study of your own; and, like a professional researcher, you will present your results at an end of semester research fair. While the primary readings and focus in this class will be related to the field of Writing Studies and the types of research carried out in it, students will be encouraged to apply these principles to research projects in their own areas of (growing) expertise.

ENGL110-090
Get Rich or Die Tryin’: Wealth, Poverty, & the Pursuit of Happiness
Délice Williams
What does it mean to be rich? What does it mean to be poor? What does it mean to be middle class? How are class and status represented and imbued with value in mass culture? (Why) does income inequality even matter? Beginning with these essential questions, this course embarks on an exploration class and status in the US, and in a larger global context. We will consider readings that deal with actualities: nonfiction pieces about the possibilities and constraints that people living at different income levels face. However, we will also consider some of the fantasies about wealth as they are depicted in advertisements, film, and short fiction. Our goal is to read the ways that class and status are represented in different cultural productions. Readings for the course include short fiction by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Karen Bender; the New York Times’ collection Class Matters, and excerpts from Katherine Boo’s Behind the Beautiful Forevers. Together, the three main writing assignments for the course will challenge you to develop creative analytical arguments about visual and verbal texts, and to articulate those arguments in rhetorically persuasive ways both in class and online.
ENGL110-091
Merging the Magical and the Mundane: Magical Realism and Latin American Culture
Paula Persoleo

“Surrealism comes from the reality of Latin America.” –Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Although the literary genre of Magical Realism has been adapted by writers all over the world, its most famous prose derives from Latin America and focuses on marginalized groups of people under extraordinary circumstances. This course will encourage students to examine how the voice of the “other” is acknowledged and amplified through this genre, especially when utilized by Latin American writers. Students will examine the culture that advanced Magical Realism in terms of its traditions, psychology, and landscape in order to better understand the genre. We will discuss novels, short fiction, essays, and art from prominent Latin American writers and artists. Texts will include the following novels: Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Isabel Allende’s *The House of the Spirits*, and Laura Esquivel’s *Like Water for Chocolate*. Essays with pertinent contextual information will be found in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, and Community*. Assignments will include short essays that respond to, critique, and analyze the role of Magical Realism in specific Latin American countries, especially those that suffer from political instability. A research project, including a 10-page essay and an oral presentation, will contribute to the conversation about Magical Realism as a necessary product of this cultural group at this particular time.

ENGL110-093
Creating Musical Taste
Ray Peters

This course will explore the connection between writing about music and creating musical taste. Thanks to the cloud, we have easy access to an almost limitless range of music. How do we decide what to listen to? Why is “bad music” for some “good music” for others? Are there good reasons for thinking some music is better than other music? How do we develop musical taste? Why do some musical tastes remain the same or change? What is the connection between creating music and developing musical preferences? How does social interaction influence musical taste? What role do recommender systems (such as Last FM’s audioscrobbler) and collaborative filtering (Spotify) play in creating musical taste? Are our musical tastes nothing more than a data profile? Our primary focus will be popular musical forms (rock, pop, punk, rap, hip-hop, country, blues, etc.), but we will also consider classical, musicales, jazz, experimental, and the difficult to classify. Throughout the course, the emphasis will be on the rhetorical analysis of texts. We will read Ben Ratliff’s *Every Song Ever: Twenty Ways to Listen in an Age of Musical Plenty* and Marc Woodworth and Ally-Jane Grossan’s *How to Write About Music: Excerpts from the 33 1/3 Series, Magazines, Books and Blogs with Advice from Industry-leading Writers*. We will also listen to samples of the music under discussion. Students will write brief response papers, critical reviews, analytical essays, and a research paper examining the creative process in the work of a composer or musician of their choice.

ENGL110-094
The Outlaw Mythos: Bad Guys (and Gals) as Heroes
Kevin Burke

From the time of the medieval Robin Hood and across virtually every culture, outlaws have been made into the heroes of ballads and tales, and, in modern times, films. In the popular imagination both legendary and real outlaws become symbols of freedom and resistance to unjust authority. This course will examine the phenomenon of the outlaw mythos in its varied manifestations. Readings will include the medieval *Gest of Robyn Hode*, chapbook biographies of 18th century highwaymen, and contemporary accounts of outlaws of the old West like Jesse James. Closer to our own time, we will consider Depression era outlaws like Bonnie and Clyde, and the adoption of the outlaw persona by country music, rap, and hip hop artists, and in Christopher Nolan’s massive *Dark Knight* trilogy. The object of our investigation will be an understanding of the construction of the outlaw archetype and of its use as both a means of social and political protest and as an expression of the human aspiration for freedom. Students will write several response papers, three short papers, and a research project in which they analyze the construction and use of a current manifestation of the outlaw archetype.