ENGL 202 Literature and Medicine Viewing physicians as writers, thinkers, and practitioners, we'll study texts that offer reflections from doctors on their craft. We'll also explore historical, economic, political, and ethical questions related to medical care such as: how are illness and caregiving depicted in literary texts? What kinds of emotional and social costs does illness have? How do writers grapple with the moral dimensions of medicine? These and other questions will be addressed through close textual analysis and discussion; in addition, our course will draw upon the expertise of practitioners within the Minneapolis medical community. Readings may include Jane Austen’s MANSFIELD PARK, Sarah Ruhl’s IN THE NEXT ROOM, Margaret Edson’s WIT, Atul Gawande’s COMPLICATIONS, and Mark Doty’s HEAVEN’S COAST. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 202 Reading Black Resistance This course, team-taught by a historian and a literary scholar, focuses on the long struggle of African Americans for justice and equality in the U.S. Analyzing literary and historical texts, students in this course will learn about and engage in research on African American history and culture. Utilizing historical, literary, and cultural approaches, this interdisciplinary course will immerse students into an exploration of the African American experience from multiple perspectives using dual disciplinary frameworks. For example, students may study Richard Wright’s NATIVE SON, but would read the text within the historical and cultural framework of the Great Migration, connecting Wright’s text not just to other literary texts, but situating it within an historical and cultural context vital to the novel’s creation and essential for its interpretation. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 202 Literature Looks at Faith There are multiple intersections of literature and faith—in this case, Catholic faith, with both a large and a small c. We’ll read both classic and contemporary writers, encountering texts as both evocations and provocations of faith; experiencing the faith (and doubt) of others vicariously—be they writers or characters; and exploring some theological implications which the elements of literary form at least sometimes entail. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Recent Tours of the Afterlife (ONLINE) Literature has a long history of imagining possible afterlives: Odysseus summons the dead in Hades; Virgil speaks to the spirit of his father in the underworld; Dante journeys deep into Hell before climbing the Mountain of Purgatory and ascending into Heaven. While acknowledging these and other precedents, this fully online course focuses on narratives of the afterlife since the late 19th century. We will discuss what recent depictions of the afterlife might reveal about the values of those still living. In what ways do afterlife narratives uphold or question dominant cultural trends? Is the afterlife exclusive or inclusive? Somber or joyful? Is it a courtroom, a ballroom, a vast field, a forest, a cloud city, an underground city, a maze, a mansion, a cosmic choir, a light at the end of a tunnel—what and why and for whom? We will begin with some representative short stories, such as Ambrose Bierce’s 1890 “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge,” alongside excerpts from Mark Mirabello’s historical survey of afterlife beliefs, A TRAVELER’S GUIDE TO THE AFTERLIFE. We will then read a set of novels: Kate Atkinson’s LIFE AFTER LIFE; Kevin Brockmeier’s THE BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEAD; and George Saunders’s LINCOLN IN THE BARDO. Our films will include HEAVEN CAN WAIT (Lubitsch 1943), DEFENDING YOUR LIFE (Brooks 1991), AFTER LIFE (Koreeda 1998), and clips from WHAT DREAMS MAY COME (Ward 1998) and THE SEVENTH SEAL (Bergman 1957). Students will write weekly short papers on guided topics and a final research essay, as well as work throughout the semester to develop a map of an afterlife setting. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Wartime: Literature vs. Reality (ONLINE) When writing about war, authors who have served in the military have a few literary options: a memoir, poetry, essays, or a work of fiction. This fully online course will focus on exemplary literature written by those who have been in war and the representation of war through writing. Through literature, we will come to understand how the psyche of veterans is altered via warfare and the impact it has on their lives and families, as well as society at large. We will also look at how contemporary culture, and historically, veterans have been received or perceived as they return home and how their voice has been implicit/explicit in understanding
their experience with war. In this course we will tease out the reality of war through those voices who tell us just what a "true war story" is. Literature we will likely focus on in this course includes Kurt Vonnegut's SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE, Tim O'Brien's THE THINGS THEY CARRIED, Jim Northrup's THE REZ ROAD, and Ernest Hemingway's A FAREWELL TO ARMS. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Final Frontier: Mars and Beyond How do global politics influence our desire to explore space? How does space exploration impact our theological viewpoints of the universe? What roles might nation-states and corporations play in future space endeavors? Focusing on the human yearning to explore space, as well as current efforts to put humans on Mars in the near future, this class will attempt to answer these questions by examining a variety of literary forms including fiction, science fiction, poetry, nonfiction prose, and biography. Likely works to be studied include Tracy K. Smith’s LIFE ON MARS, Mary Doria Russell’s THE SPARROW, and Andy Weir’s THE MARTIAN. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Ringmaster: Literature of the Circus This course explores performativity, exhibition, and exploitation in the circus through a series of texts told from multiple perspectives: ringmasters, sideshow acts, animal tammers, and acrobats. Moving back and forth in time, this class examines the origins of the circus in Rome, its transformation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in France, Britain, and America, and its triumphs and challenges in twentieth century America, particularly during the Great Depression. From non-fiction essays on carnies and famous bearded ladies, by Harry Crews and Joseph Mitchell respectively, to Toulouse-Lautrec’s depictions of the circuses of Molier and Fernando and the Nouveau Cirque, to excerpts from P.T. Barnum’s autobiography, THE ART OF GETTING MONEY, OR HINTS AND HELPS TO MAKE A FORTUNE, to guest speakers in the fields of magic and tattoo artistry, this course respects the extraordinary and redefines definitions of “normal.” Texts for the class include the collection, STEP RIGHT UP: STORIES OF CARNIVALS, SIDESHOWS, AND THE CIRCUS, which features works by Ray Bradbury, Mark Twain, Angela Carter, Flannery O’Connor, and Franz Kafka. Katherine Dunn’s GEEK LOVE and Erin Morgenstern’s THE NIGHT CIRCUS will be read in their entirety. Carol Birch’s ORPHANS OF THE CARNIVAL will be examined using Helen Davies theoretical approach to "Neo-Victorian Freakery." The film adaptation of Sara Gruen’s WATER FOR ELEPHANTS will also be screened outside of class. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Literary Villains In most cultures, readers tend to identify with heroes and hope that their goodness will triumph over the evil antagonist. However, every now and then, readers find the villain of the text far more appealing than its hero or heroine – the villain could be more intriguing than a hero, feature more human, relatable characteristics, could provide a reader with an opportunity to live vicariously through them, or a number of other reasons. Throughout the semester, we’ll read texts that future both classic and contemporary texts that are well-known for their villains, such as Iago (William Shakespeare’s OTHELLO), Tom Ripley (Patricia Highsmith’s THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY), Brigid O’Shaughnessy (Dashiell Hammett’s THE MALTESE FALCON), and Anton Chigurh (Cormac McCarthy’s NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN), examine the cultural context for each text and villain, and analyze what it is about these characters that makes readers want to root for them. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Clones, Doubles, & Alter Egos Whether it’s the idea of an evil twin, a shadow self, or an exact replica, the figure of the double has long fascinated humankind. More than just a staple of science fiction or daytime soap operas, doubles may express deep-seated fears about losing our sense of self or our capacity for self-determination and control. Doubles can also be figures of fascination and desire: the power to create, control, or extend life through a second self is a tantalizing prospect. In this course, we will examine a variety of narratives that feature doppelgangers, alter egos, clones, or related figures, and explore different moral, psychological, literary, and cultural frameworks for understanding the figure of the double. Potential texts may include DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, THE DOUBLE, HER FEARFUL SYMMETRY, NEVER LET ME GO, and selected films. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.
ENGL 203 Sharing the Nest: Siblings  Brothers and sisters are frequently best friends and most loyal champions. Yet, siblings can also be fierce rivals who struggle through jealousies, the concept of fairness, and the fear of parental favoritism. By considering how authors portray sibling relationships in literature, we can explore numerous intriguing dynamics including: the manner in which birth order and innate personality affect all the birds in the nest. Possible texts may include: LUCY GAYHART by Willa Cather, COMMONWEALTH by Ann Patchett, THE BURGESS BOYS by Elizabeth Strout, THE STRANGER IN MY GENES by Bill Griffeth, A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT by Norman Maclean, and selected poetry readings. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Wilderness and Adventure in Lit  We can learn much about ourselves by going out into the wilderness, wherever these “wild” spaces may be found. Pushing into what’s new and moving beyond what’s comfortable can reveal a clearer sense of who we are and what we value. This course explores the relationships formed when individuals step into unfamiliar places and examines what can be discovered when humans experience various “wilderness” experiences. The literature and film of our course--possibly including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's AMERICANAH, J.M Coetzee's FOE, Louise Erdrich's LA ROSE, Cheryl Strayed's WILD, Ernest Hemingway's IN OUR TIME, and Steven Spielberg's RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK--focuses on the idea of internal exploration and discovery gained through challenging experiences, and it considers the influence of so-called “wild” places on individual growth and community action. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 formal revised pages. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Classical Hero, Epic, & Film  This course focuses on analyzing and understanding Classical epic poetry, the ancient presentation of heroic figures and heroic exploits, and recognizing the influence of epic/heroic literature on the modern storytelling device of film. While the genre of epic is central to the course, other genres (both literary and cinematic) which present heroic figures, e.g., tragedy, history, comedy, action, fantasy, will also be explored. Analyzing the works read or viewed via writing and class discussion will constitute the primary course activities; students will engage in reading, viewing and writing outside of class, while class time will include some writing, viewing and discussion. In order to allow ample time for discussion and analysis, the majority of films in their entirety will be viewed outside of class. The course grade will be based substantially on written analysis (i.e., essays, papers) of the texts and films studied. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Sci Fi/Literary Worldbuilding  We will explore stories that engage in explicit acts of worldbuilding, a term first used to describe science fiction and fantasy writers' invention of languages, geographies, cultures, histories, and mythologies. We will focus on worldbuilding as it applies to writers of multiple genres, including both "literary" fiction and "genre" fiction. Along the way, we will begin to address questions raised by authors who engage in worldbuilding, such as: why diverge from the "real world" in the first place? Is there an ethical price that must be paid in order to imagine a new society? Should worldbuilding be seen as a useful tool for social critique, or is it at heart a practice of escapist entertainment? The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 De/Constructing Superheroes  What are superheroes? Pop culture super saviors? Low culture art? Colorful allegories with ties to the ancient past? This course will interrogate the rise of the superhero genre in response to World War II and the ensuing nuclear threats of the Cold War. Students will examine writers and artists like Alan Moore and Grant Morrison who deconstructed the genre in the 1980's, in addition to films like BLACK PANTHER or current creators Gabby Rivera and G. Willow Wilson who have resurrected superheroes with influence from gender studies, postmodernism, and more. Please note that students registered for this class will be expected to buy a few comics that are only available digitally. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 Literature of Anti-Racism  This course will investigate the recent upsurge in racially marked politics in the United States and the widespread opposition to its many manifestations. Students will get a brief sense of the long history of anti-racist writings in the U.S. and read contemporary works by writers such as Ta-Nehisi Coates, Claudia Rankine, Ana Castillo, Celeste Ng, and others. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages
of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Intensive requirement.