Fall 2019
English Department Texts in Conversation

ENGL 201- The Play’s the Thing: Drama
Get your ticket, merch, and concessions, because we'll be heading to the theater! In this semester's study of drama, we'll look at several genres of comedy. We'll go to see the battle of the sexes in Classical Actors Ensemble's production of William Shakespeare's MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. We'll look at the "laughing comedy" of the eighteenth-century, discuss the absurdist drama of Samuel Beckett’s WAITING FOR GODOT, and trace the evolution of the Broadway musical. We will analyze the relationship between teacher and student as we study Paula Vogel's AND BABY MAKES SEVEN and the work of her protégée, Sarah Ruhl in THE CLEAN HOUSE and DEAD MAN'S CELL-PHONE. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 201- The Coming of Age Memoir
Coming of age, particularly college life, as recounted by literary writers examining their own journey toward adulthood. We will read memoirs by Richard Wright, Mary Karr, Alex Lemon, and Mary McCarthy (BLACK BOY, CHERRY, HAPPY, and THE GROUP respectively) along with supplemental essays by Mary Karr and Patricia Hampl. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 201- Writers at Work
Writers at Work will examine fiction, nonfiction, and poetry from the point of view of both writer and audience, artist and critic. We will read contemporary literature in each genre, as well as some secondary materials written whenever possible by those same authors. For example, we might read Charles Baxter's novel THE FEAST OF LOVE and then his craft book THE ART OF SUBTEXT, or Richard Hugo’s poetry as well as his craft book THE TRIGGERING TOWN. Everyone will both write in and about each genre. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 202- On Trial: Law and Literature
"Before the law stands a doorkeeper. A man from the country walks up to the doorkeeper, and asks to be admitted to the law. But the doorkeeper says he can't admit him just now." In this parable-like story by Franz Kafka, the man never gains admittance and eventually dies at the doorstep. Kafka's story invites us to question the nature of laws and how we navigate through the "halls of justice" (if we even get inside). Kafka's seminal novel, The Trial, takes this a step further, as we examine a man who is (justly? unjustly?) accused of a crime that is never revealed. Laws come to us from various sources: and sometimes we obey these laws and sometimes we take the law into our own hands. How we live our lives within these systems of law is often dramatized in literature, and consequently we examine such texts to see how they challenge society's conventional notions of justice along with connections to guilt, responsibility, and punishment. Besides The Trial, texts may include BURIAL AT THEBES, Brecht's LIFE OF GALILEO, THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL, RAGTIME, "A Jury of Her Peers," "Bartleby the Scrivener," and Baldwin's GIOVANNI'S ROOM. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Writing Intensive requirement.
ENGL 202- Reading Black Resistance
This course 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 WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 202- Existential America
In this course we will examine a body of work that traffics in such existential themes as freedom and responsibility, authenticity and bad faith, anguish and abandonment, identity and subjectivity, and choice and commitment. While some of our readings will reach beyond our own shores (Sartre, Beauvoir, Camus, Kafka, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Kierkegaard), we will mostly focus on works by 20th-century American writers: Palahniuk's FIGHT CLUB, Krakauer's INTO THE WILD, O'Connor's A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND, Baldwin's THE FIRE NEXT TIME, Salinger's The CATCHER IN THE RYE, McCarthy's NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN -- to name but a possible few. In the words of Zadie Smith, we're going to read a selection of very good books in this course, concentrating on whatever is most particular to them in the hope that this might help us understand whatever is most particular to us. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 202- Literature Inspired By Science
Writers have long looked to the sciences for fresh metaphors, innovative structures, and conceptual models. In this course we will read fiction, poetry, and drama inspired by the sciences and explore how writers build on scientific models and methods to bring new vision to ideas about space, time, matter, and being. Texts may include THE ECOPOETRY ANTHOLOGY, Andrea Barrett’s ARCHANGEL, BEST AMERICAN SCIENCE AND NATURE WRITING, Hope Jahren’s LAB GIRL, Tracy K. Smith’s LIFE ON MARS, Mary Shelley’s FRANKENSTEIN, and Anne Patchett’s STATE OF WONDER. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC 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 WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 202- Medical Dramas
In medical schools you’ll now find doctors- and nurses-in-training reading literature and engaging in role-play to learn how to care. We’ll practice this, reading and writing about literature as a means of
understanding ourselves and others. The plays we’ll encounter illuminate questions about intimacy and care in relationships and the physical and mental traumas of racism, poverty, addiction, bipolar disorder, depression, and suicide. Through your writing you’ll be encouraged to examine further these questions for yourself. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 - Exploding the Hero in Literature/Film
ENGL 203- HONORS: Exploding the Hero in Literature/Film
What makes a hero, and how do we contribute to their construction? Are super powers enough? Do they have to be good? Do they have to be likable? Must they rescue someone? Which qualities matter to audiences, and what separates the passable hero from the truly Halloween-costume and lunchbox-worthy ones? This course explores the construction of “the hero” by considering its genesis, its development, and its (sometimes) eventual fall within various contemporary sources alongside older literal and visual touchstones. We will investigate what makes the hero so revered and then consider what these qualities reveal about the human condition. Possible texts include J.M. Coetzee’s FOE, Jonathan Eid’s THE LUCKIEST MAN, Gillian Flynn’s GONE GIRL, and Homer’s THE ODYSSEY. Possible films include BLACK PANTHER, SPIDERMAN, THE DARK KNIGHT and WONDER WOMAN. 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 WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203- Spooky: Supernatural Literature
This course will investigate how we use ghost stories to address complex issues such as memory, identity, moral responsibility, and fear. In doing so, we will explore some famous ghost stories in literature, and discuss why we continue to find ghosts and the supernatural so compelling and necessary in today's world. Possible texts: TURN OF THE SCREW, BELOVED, THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE, a selection of short stories/essays/poems, and/or possibly SPOOK: SCIENCE TACKLES THE AFTERLIFE (a collection of creative essays by Mary Roach). We will also view film clips and other media. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203- Classical Hero, Epic, and 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 WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 - Once Upon A Time: Fairy Tales
In this course we’ll study a small collection of fairy and folk tales closely, both in their early written sources and later literary re-imaginings. As we read different versions of the stories, we’ll ask ourselves how these tales are structured, what audiences they’re aimed at, what they might be telling us about the culture of the time, and what they might have to say to us today. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Writing Intensive requirement.

ENGL 203 - The Future of Global Humanity
In a world increasingly dominated by technology and science, what role will the humanities play in our lives? Can we program morality? Are we developing the creative and critical thinking skills necessary to adapt to new environments and careers? Using the seven "revolutions" outlined by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, this course will explore how literature and film attempt to make sense of these technological, environmental, and geo-political changes. Students will be encouraged to question how globalization will impact their lives and whether or not they are prepared to meet those challenges. Possible texts include the short story anthologies CONCERT OF VOICES and COMING OF AGE AROUND THE WORLD, and the books AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED and 21 LESSONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY. Films will include THE CIRCLE and ARRIVAL. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Intensive requirement. NOTE: This course is designated as a co-located class, meaning that students can take it in-seat or fully online, or mix-and-match both ways.

ENGL 203 - Saints, Spirits, and Spitfires
Saints guide us, spirits frighten us, and female spitfires wrote the book on behaving badly. In this course, we’ll explore these assumptions about cultural figures and myths emerging from Latinx culture by reading and discussing fiction, poetry, music, television, film, and visual art. We’ll look at the figure of the Our Lady of Guadalupe, her origins in pre-Columbian mythology, and her appearances in contemporary literature and art, including Sandra Cisneros’s WOMAN HOLLERING CREEK. We’ll investigate the Day of the Dead tradition in Mexico, watch film representations of the Day of the Dead, and glimpse the spirit world through reading about the ghostly mother spirit of La Llorona. We’ll meet La Loca, the young heroine who dies and rises again in Ana Castillo’s SO FAR FROM GOD, and Ultima, the mysterious healing woman in Rudolfo Anaya’s BLESS ME, ULTIMA. We’ll explore the spitfire bad-girl image through the figures of Frida Kahlo and others, and unpack both the limiting and liberating aspects of this image. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Writing Intensive requirement.
ENGL 203- Just Play: Sports Literature
ENGL 203- HONORS Just Play: Sports Literature

What is any sports event but a story--multiple stories--playing out before our eyes? Sports by definition involve drama: conflicts in decision making, in relationships, with nature, and, if we believe it possible, conflicts with the supernatural. It's not an accident that some of our greatest metaphors come from the arena of athletics. Through sports we have a way to look at human values--at the best we have to offer and sometimes the worst. We'll use sports literature to investigate what is just... and what is unjust... and how we discern which is which. In this class, we will read fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry. Books may include SWIMMING TO ANTARCTICA, THE REAL ALL-AMERICANS, TAKE ME OUT, and BEST AMERICAN SPORTS WRITING 2017. The writing load for this course is a minimum of 15 pages of formal revised writing. This course satisfies the WAC Intensive requirement. Please note that this course is open only to students in the Aquinas Scholars Honors program.