

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

COURSE DESCRIPTION BOOKLET

Fall 2026

REVISED **03/18/26**

Graduate Level Courses

Available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.english.unl.edu/courses/index.html>

Because of the long lead time, the descriptions should be considered to be rather tentative. Although it is assumed that most instructors will be offering the courses as described here, students should be aware that some changes are possible.

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This booklet should be used with the Schedule of Classes issued by the Office of Registration and Records. The English Department Course Description Booklet contains as many descriptions of courses as were available as of March 18, 2026. The Booklet may include descriptions of some courses not found in the official Schedule of Classes. If the course is described in this booklet, but not in the *printed* Schedule of Classes, it should be assumed that the course will be offered as described in this booklet. In every case the student should remember that in the interval between now and the start of the next semester, changes are inevitable, even though every effort is made to describe accurately in this booklet what the Department intends to offer.

800 – 900 LEVEL OF COURSES

Advanced undergraduates may register in 800 and 900-level courses with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies, provided that these hours do not count towards their baccalaureate requirements. Registration at the 900-level for undergraduates requires also the permission of the instructor. These 800 and 900-level hours may then count in a graduate program in English.

900-level courses are offered for variable credit, either three or four hours. Ordinarily students sign up for four hours credit. The three-hour option is for students whose workloads make it administratively impossible for them to sign up for four hours. Usually, the four-hour option does not require more work, but this is at the discretion of the instructor. Students should consult their instructors about their policies in this matter. Masters students should note that their program must contain a number of hours in courses open only to graduate students (i.e., 900-level, or special 800-level courses which are preceded by an asterisk [*] in the Graduate Catalogue or in this booklet.) Option I students (thesis) must have 8 such hours; Option II (with minor[s]), 12; and Option III students, 18. Masters students must also register for English 990 as part of their program.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Independent Study is intended for students who want to undertake readings or similar projects not available through regular course offerings. It is possible to arrange Independent Study at the graduate level. The reading list, written work, times of meeting, and basis of the grade must be worked out between the student and supervising instructor, in the form of a written contract, which you can obtain from the graduate secretary. When you have the signature of the supervising instructor on the contract, you may obtain the call number for English 897 or 997 from the English Graduate Office, where a record of your project, supervisor, and course number will be kept.

ENGLISH MINORS & UNCLASSIFIED STUDENTS

Graduate students with majors in departments other than English are welcome to enroll in any graduate course in English. It would be wise to check with the instructor about prerequisites and special requirements. A graduate minor in English must meet the requirements of the Graduate College and be approved by the student's major department and by the Graduate Committee of the Department of English. Before enrolling, a graduate student wishing to minor in English should consult the Chair of the Graduate Committee, 201C Andrews Hall.

NOTE: Non-degree graduate students are welcome in our classes, but should note the following information concerning registration:

The Graduate Studies Bulletin states: "**Non-degree students must obtain the permission of the instructor** of the class and may not enroll in master's thesis credits, doctoral dissertation credits, or doctoral seminars without permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies." Also, non-degree students can be "bumped" from a full course if other students need it to make timely progress in their programs.

STUDENT APPEALS COMMITTEE

Graduate students should consult the Bulletin of Graduate Studies for appeal procedures in academic matters.

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

The Graduate Committee solicits suggestions for the following year's course offerings during the fall of each year. In addition, any student may suggest a possible course at any time to the Chair of the Graduate Committee of the Department of English, 201C Andrews.

THESIS AND DISSERTATION HOURS

MA students pursuing their degree under Option I may sign up for 1-6 hours of thesis, English 899. PhD students may register for 1-15 hours of dissertation, English 999, within the limitations contained in the Graduate Bulletin. PhD students who have achieved candidacy must register for at least one hour of dissertation each semester until they receive the degree.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is a public university committed to providing a quality education to a diverse student body. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln not to discriminate on the basis of gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation in its educational programs, admissions policies, employment policies, financial aid, or other school administered programs. Complaints, comments, or suggestions about these policies should be addressed to the Chair of the Department.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Engl 801 - Drama..... 4 ENGL 845K - Topics in African Lit- “BIPOC Women & the Natural World” 4 Engl 845N - Topics in Native American Lit..... 5 Engl 853 - Writing of Poetry 5 ENGL 871—Lit Criticism & Theory: “‘Completely Useless for the Purposes of Fascism’: Critical Theory as Critique of Our Times” 6 ENGL 878- Digital Archives and Editions 7	Engl 880 - Writing Thry & Pract..... 8 Engl 890 – Adv. Research Skills in English..... 8 Engl 946 - Interdisc Rdngs Digital Humanities..... 9 Engl 953 - Smnr in Creative Writing..... 9 Engl 957 - Comp Theory&Practice 9 Engl 973 - Smnr in Literacy Studies..... 10 Engl 976 - Smnr Rhetorical Thry 10 Engl 986 - Apprch Engl Studies- “Publishing Blackness” 10
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ENGL 801 - DRAMA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0930-1045a	TR	001	Schaffert, T	16434

Description: Particular historical periods or other groupings of dramas. The relation of the writers both to one another and to the aesthetic and intellectual climate of their times. Examples: drama survey, modern drama, American drama, and Shakespeare's contemporaries in drama.

Popular culture plays a significant role in shaping queer identity, even as queer identity shapes the culture at large. We'll look at the history of queer representation in popular culture, queer influence on mainstream trends in art and entertainment past and present, and the intersection of literature, film, theater, and pop culture in forming identity. While the lecture and discussion-based class will examine many examples of popular culture dating from the mid-nineteenth century into the present day, we'll closely examine such cultural phenomena as *The Color Purple* and *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, tracing their representation/interpretation from novel, to film adaptation, to Broadway musical, to movie musical, all playing out over forty years. Students will also be asked to bring to class their own favorite examples of LGBTQ+ popular culture, and to write analytical and creative responses to course materials.

ENGL 845K - TOPICS IN AFRICAN LIT- “BIPOC WOMEN & THE NATURAL WORLD”

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
1230-0145p	TR	001	Muchiri, N	16439

Description: Topics in African poetry, fiction, and/or non-fiction prose.

Our course will transcend the “twin colonization of time and space” by engaging Black women's experiences in the natural world. The class unfolds in three movements. In the first section, we'll read colonial writers and examine the settler colonial gaze and its impulse towards acquisition and exploitation. In the second section, we'll delve into animal migrations to uncover how birds, fishes, as well as marine and land mammals travel long distances and shape varied ecosystems. Finally, we'll engage with the poetry and prose written by Black women in reflection of their experiences in the natural world.

ENGL 845N - TOPICS IN NATIVE AMERICAN LIT

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0930-1020a	MWF	001	Gannon, T	16440

Cross listed with [ENGL 845N](#), [ETHN 445N](#)

Prerequisites: Junior standing

Topics in Native American poetry, fiction, and/or non-fiction prose. Critical theory and cultural criticism.

AIM: The subtitle for this class, "Ideas & Visions," issues from Vine Deloria, Jr.'s intriguing assertion that the "white man . . . has ideas; Indians have visions." The value of these visions, in Native poetry & fiction, has often been lauded. And yet "Indians" have "ideas," too, often expressed in expository prose of great eloquence & wit & wisdom (& sometimes vehemence): this class, then, is an avenue into the cultural criticism of this "visionary" ethnicity, a body of philosophical thought that examines Native identity, Native spirituality, the Native relationship with "Nature," and the role of the—potentially postmodern—Trickster in all such debates.

TEACHING METHOD: Discussion, with some lecture and group work.

REQUIREMENTS: Attendance & oral participation; informal written responses to the readings and two formal research papers; graduate students will have more extensive research writing requirements, and will also orchestrate the readings/discussion of (part of) one class period.

TENTATIVE READING LIST:

- Nicholas Black Elk/John Neihardt: *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*
- N. Scott Momaday: *The Man Made of Words: Essays, Stories, Passages*†
- Vine Deloria, Jr.: *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America*
- Leslie Marmon Silko: *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today*
- Linda Hogan: *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World*
- Gerald Vizenor: *Shadow Distance: A Gerald Vizenor Reader*
- A good number of poems & essays in PDF format on Canvas

†: Assigned essays from this out-of-print book will be available as PDFs on Canvas.

ENGL 853 - WRITING OF POETRY

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
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0200-0450p W 001 Wabuke, H 16702

Description: For advanced students with previous experience in poetry writing.

Aim:

Teaching Method:

Requirements:

Tentative Reading List:

**ENGL 871—LIT CRITICISM & THEORY: “COMPLETELY USELESS FOR THE PURPOSES OF FASCISM”:
CRITICAL THEORY AS CRITIQUE OF OUR TIMES”**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0200-0450p	R	001	Abel, M	4919

Description: History, analysis and application of a variety of trends in literary and/or film theory

In *Necropolitics*, Achille Mbembe presents his theoretical intervention as a “critique of our time.” This notion evokes Michel Foucault’s famous genealogical principle of writing the “history of the present,” which seeks to inquire into the value of value itself—which in turn hearkens back to the Nietzschean notion of the “untimely,” that is, the need “to act counter to our time and [...] for the benefit of a time to come.” To act counter to our time, today, means to act counter to a time of renewed—no longer merely incipient but insurgent—fascism. The question, however, is how one might accomplish this. Lest one make the mistake of, as Theodor W. Adorno quipped in *Minima Moralia*, merely glorifying the system that makes underdogs splendid—i.e., of perpetuating the very system of oppression by dint of naively engaging in “pseudo-activity” (allegedly) in opposition to said system—it may be necessary to rigorously *conceptualize* what it means to act (including to speak and write) “counter.” Adorno’s friend and colleague, Walter Benjamin, suggested in his famous essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility” that, at least in their time, *acting counter* might be a matter of producing “concepts [that are] completely useless for the purposes of fascism.” My wager is that the history of critical theory can—and perhaps should—be first and foremost understood as an ongoing conversation about what concepts—and thus what practices that are based on them—might be *useless*: useless for the instrumentalist and violent purposes of fascism (in whatever guise it might appear, including, inter alia, the various historical iterations of colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism, such as our own era’s AI-driven technofascist capitalism).

Other thinkers have offered variations of these claims, not least also those writing in the Marxist tradition, starting with Karl Marx himself, who in his famous 11th thesis on Feuerbach proclaimed that “Philosophers [or: Theorists] have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it,” which has long been misunderstood as an uncritical privileging of praxis over theory (Marx, after all, was, if nothing else, one of the greatest *theorists* of all time!) by both political activists and politically-minded cultural (e.g., literary, film, art, or rhetorical) critics. However, what is also important about Mbembe’s intervention quoted above is his assertion that he offers a critique of our times *from a specific place*, namely “from Africa, where I live and work (but also from the rest of the world, which I have not stopped surveying).” Importantly, Mbembe foregrounds his positionality in terms that emphasize both the local (in so far as “Africa” can be seen as “local”) and the global; in so doing, he also implicitly offers an intervention in the debate between particularism (the idea that all knowledge is embodied and grounded in identity-based experience) and universalism (the idea that there is something about human experience that is universally shared)—and thus also about the role of the intellectual, which itself has a long history (e.g., Antonio Gramsci’s organic intellectual, Jean-Paul Sartre’s universal intellectual, Foucault’s specific intellectual, Étienne Balibar’s singular intellectual, or more recently Sayak Valencia’s transfeminist, Fred Moten’s fugitive, and Bernard Harcourt’s critical praxis theorist).

Taking its cue from Mbembe’s argument, this course will introduce students to (the history of) Theory—*theoria*, from its etymological roots in ancient Greek, connotes sight and speculation, seeing and conjecturing—by foregrounding the question of its relationship to socio-political practice in the age of resurgent fascism. Based on a selection of key theoretical movements, thinkers, and texts that have shaped theoretical and political debates over the last two centuries (this is meant to be an *introductory*-level graduate course, after all), we will ask in what ways (the history of) Theory—conceived of as a toolbox, as a pragmatics, and even as a provocation, rather than as primarily a hermeneutics—is not only capable of but also indispensable for offering a critique of our (fascist) time.

Among the thinkers we will likely read are Sara Ahmed, T. W. Adorno & Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze, Franz Fanon, Michel Foucault, Bernard Harcourt, Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, G. W. F. Hegel, the Invisible Committee, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Achille Mbembe, Chantal Mouffe, Fred Moten & Stefano Harney, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jacques Rancière, Sayak Valencia, & Slavoj Žižek—but I have not yet finalized our reading list.

Note 1: Our course will also directly engage with the “Humanities on the Edge” (HotE) speaker series, which I co-founded in 2010 and continue to co-organize. The topic for its 17th season (academic year 2026/27) is “On Fascism.” In the fall, our two speakers are, on Thursday October 8, Johannes von Molteke (University of Michigan) and, on Thursday, November 19, Roland Végő, who co-founded HotE with me but is now at the University of Georgia. We will read some of their work in preparation for their visit, engage them during our class time, and attend their public lecture immediately following our seminar, at 5:30pm at the Sheldon. (I understand if a student cannot attend the lectures because they are enrolled in a seminar that meets at that time, but otherwise I expect that students attend the two lectures.)

Note 2: I teach this course as a *reading* seminar. I do not expect any traditional seminar papers of any length, as I simply want students to focus on reading what are, at times, challenging (in multiple ways) theorists. I require that students use paper copies of books and essays, which means that I do not permit use of e-books or PDFs in class. I therefore expect that students print out PDFs that I will upload to our Canvas page and purchase assigned books via their preferred book sellers. The same “no-electronics policy” goes for notetaking. I will occasionally ask to see students’ paper notebooks so that I can review how students engage both the assigned texts as well as my lectures and our in-class conversations.

ENGL 878- DIGITAL ARCHIVES AND EDITIONS

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
1100-1215p	TR	001	Ramsay, S	4948

Description: The shift from printed to digital texts and its implications for the humanities. Practice in digitally representing texts, archival design, and analysis of representative electronic projects dedicated to a variety of authors and genres.

Aim:

This is an introductory course in the use of digital methods for literary study. We will briefly explore the UNIX operating system (variants of which are commonly used for hosting web-based projects) before moving on to a gentle exploration of Go -- a general-purpose programming language particularly suited to text analysis and web development. Though we’ll be using literary and historical texts as examples in the course, the methods discussed are broadly useful to anyone working with textual data in the arts and humanities.

Teaching Method:

Lecture (with lots of hands-on work and interactivity).

Requirements:

This course does not assume any previous knowledge of any of the technologies we'll be studying (and explicitly assumes you have never done any programming of any kind). Successful students in past years are those who feel generally comfortable as users of ordinary computing systems and are curious about technology and how it works.

The primary work for this course consists of a series of graded exercises designed to reinforce the material and to encourage exploration of the technologies we'll be studying.

Reading List:

There are no required texts for this course. All the resources necessary for success in the course are available online.

ENGL 880 - WRITING THRY & PRACT

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
1100-1215p	TR	501	Azima, R	4891

Blended course with 1 in person session and 1 web conferencing session each week

Introduction to writing center theory and consulting practice. Students engage in research that contributes to scholarly conversations in writing center studies. Successful completion of [ENGL 380](#) is strongly recommended for students seeking to work in the UNL Writing Center.

This course explores theoretical and practical questions around teaching and learning in the writing center, primarily within a one-to-one context. We will investigate the growing field of Writing Center Studies and examine theories and pedagogical commitments that inform and shape the practice of writing center consulting. This course also involves a substantial research component, inviting you to explore some aspect of writing culture within or beyond UNL and produce original scholarship. You will have the opportunity to observe consultations in the Writing Center, reflect on your own and others' writing processes and experiences, explore the theoretical foundations of writing center work, and consider how this work relates to social justice. Completing this course makes you eligible for (but does not guarantee) a position as a consultant in the Writing Center.

ENGL 890 – ADV. RESEARCH SKILLS IN ENGLISH

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0530-0650p	T	951	Simons, J	3863

NOTE: Class meets August 25th-October 27th

While focusing on their own research (typically a specific research project they have to complete for another course, or for their thesis or dissertation), students develop knowledge, skills, and proficiencies in many aspects of advanced research. The course emphasizes practical application of foundational theories and concepts to position students for success in high-level research in English and the humanities. We also investigate and critique assumptions of authority, knowledge systems, information ownership, and scholarly inquiry, as well as consider legal and ethical issues with bearing on research. Students cultivate and practice transferable problem-solving strategies for research in and beyond specific moments in time, environments, and infrastructures.

ENGL 946 - INTERDISC RDNGS DIGITAL HUMANITIES

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0230-0510p	M	001	Heitman, C	4465

Cross listed with ANTH 946, MODL 946, HIST 946

Aim:

Teaching Method:

Requirements:

Tentative Reading List:

ENGL 953 - SMNR IN CREATIVE WRITING

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0200-0450p	T	001	Castro, J	16703

Description: The course has three elements: workshop, seminar, and discussion of the teaching of creative writing.

Short Fiction and Creative Nonfiction. This course has three elements: workshop, seminar, and discussion of the teaching of creative writing. We will do generative writing exercises in class to jumpstart the production of new work, and we will read, analyze, and discuss distinguished examples of published short stories and personal essays. For the workshoping of your own fiction or nonfiction, you can select either the traditional ("Iowa") workshop method or Liz Lerman's critical response process, and we will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of teaching and learning with these and other feedback methods. Lastly, you will draft a syllabus for your own dream course in creative writing—one you would love to teach.

ENGL 957 - COMP THEORY&PRACTICE

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0600-0850p	R	101	Beckson, M	3171

PREQ: Permission. Contact the department Office.

Aim:

Teaching Method:

Requirements:

Tentative Reading List:

ENGL 973 - SMNR IN LITERACY STUDIES

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0600-0850p	M	101	Shah, R	16585

Aim:**Teaching Method:****Requirements:****Tentative Reading List:**

ENGL 976 - SMNR RHETORICAL THRY

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0600-0850p	W	101	Waite, S	16704

Aim:**Teaching Method:****Requirements:****Tentative Reading List:**

ENGL 986 - APPRCH ENGL STUDIES- "PUBLISHING BLACKNESS"

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
0200-0450p	M	001	Price, K	16587

Description: Emerging models of English studies that cross traditional boundaries. Traces disciplinary concerns across three registers: scholarship, curriculum, and pedagogy.

James Weldon Johnson's essay "The Dilemma of the Negro Author" (1928) notes "a special problem which the plain American author knows nothing about. . . . The moment a Negro writer takes up his pen or sits down to his typewriter he is immediately called upon to solve, consciously or unconsciously, this problem of the double audience." Black writers in the US face complex circumstances given that, historically, many prestigious publishing outlets have been white-controlled, and most potential readers are white even if a writer aims primarily for an African American audience. African Americans have navigated these challenges in various ways—through self-publishing; through sometimes fraught interactions with white patrons and publishers; and through working with Black publishers and publicists (including Oprah!). We will explore a series of case studies from early self-published pamphlet writing (most famously David Walker's "Appeal . . . to the Colored Citizens of the World") to the rise of African American newspapers and magazines. We will also examine Charles Chesnutt's breakthroughs into mainstream publishing in venues such as *The Atlantic Monthly* and, with his novel *The House Behind the Cedars* (Houghton Mifflin, 1900). The curious push-pull of support and suppression will be studied via white patronage during the Harlem Renaissance and through efforts to police and intimidate Black writers through FBI surveillance and the McCarthy hearings. We will examine how these issues have played out in recent decades by considering the careers of James Baldwin, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Toni Morrison. This course, located at the intersection of African American literature, Book History, and textual studies, does not pre-suppose prior background in these areas and should benefit students across our graduate program.

Writers and texts we are likely to study:

David Walker, "Walker's Appeal . . . To the Coloured Citizens of the World"

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

White and Black abolitionist newspapers: Wiliam Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator* and one of Frederick Douglass's several newspapers
Charles Chesnutt's stories in Black newspapers and magazines and his stories in *The Atlantic Monthly* and his relationship with magazine's parent company Houghton Mifflin
Pauline Hopkins, Booker T. Washington, and controversies over *The Colored American Magazine*
Nella Larsen, Passing, white patronage, and the Harlem Renaissance
Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues and Fine Clothes to the Jew*.
Zora Neale Hurston, "What White Publishers Won't Print"
Booker T. Washington, ed. *The Negro Problem*
Richard Wright, *Native Son* and censorship
James Baldwin, "The White Problem"
Toni Morrison, *Sula*

Teaching method: class discussion, lectures, presentations

Requirements: These are not yet finalized, but they are likely to include an annotated bibliography, a presentation and a seminar paper.