ENGLISH

The Loomis Chaffee English Department offers required yearlong courses for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. With departmental guidance, seniors may select a year’s slate of three discrete English term courses or the yearlong CL Senior Seminar in Literature. Throughout all the courses, students work to develop the skills they need to become proficient readers, independent thinkers, and effective writers.

In the freshman year, students investigate four basic genres: poetry, fiction, drama, and literary nonfiction. Sophomores focus primarily on American literature; juniors begin to study the techniques of rhetoric and argumentation and explore the literary traditions of tragedy while focusing increasingly on the writer’s craft in all genres. All students read a Shakespearean play in each of their first three years. Whether seniors choose the term electives or the CL Senior Seminar in Literature, the department offers a wide range of readings appropriate for college-bound students.

Since writing clear, logical, and persuasive prose is critical to academic achievement and to successful communication, the department teaches writing throughout the program. To accustom students to expressing themselves precisely, to teach proper usage and diction, and to foster creative sentence patterns and the use of figurative language, the freshmen work on personal narratives and short interpretive compositions. With the help of the Writing Workshop program, sophomores focus on expository and analytical writing based usually on required readings. Juniors continue to develop their expository writing while experimenting with argumentation, and in preparation for senior electives, they devote much of the year to writing analytical and personal essays that require substantial reading and deeper literary analysis.

The English Department expects students to accept increasing responsibility for their education and to participate actively in creating a classroom atmosphere in which they and their classmates will develop as scholars and independent thinkers.

To demonstrate their skills in reading, writing, and mechanics, all students take the Loomis Chaffee Achievement Test (LCAT). The test consists of two parts: reading/writing and mechanics. With departmental approval, juniors and seniors who have passed both parts of the test may choose respectively the CL English III Seminar or the CL senior electives, including the CL Senior Seminar in Literature. Most students in CL English III Seminar take the AP Language and Composition examination, while those in the CL Senior Seminar in Literature take the AP Literature and Composition examination. Students who do not successfully complete both sections of the LCAT in the sophomore year continue to work to meet departmental standards that will help them perform better academically both at Loomis Chaffee and in college.

For information on courses designated GESC, please refer to pages 5–6.

English I

freshmen

English I develops a student’s ability to read perceptively and to write accurately and effectively. Organized around genres, this course allows students to study short stories, memoirs, novels, dramas, and poetry. Writing progresses from the construction of single paragraphs to multi-paragraph compositions, developing students’ skills in crafting both interpretive essays and personal narratives. Throughout the year, the course emphasizes vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation. Representative readings include Homer The Odyssey; a Shakespearean play; poetry; short stories; classic and contemporary fiction.

English II

sophomores

The literature studied in this course covers a wide range, primarily of American authors. The writing instruction emphasizes close reading, encouraging students to work toward establishing and developing a clear, carefully focused thesis and toward achieving greater maturity in style. This course reviews the skills taught in English I and continues the emphasis on vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation. Representative readings include Shakespeare, Macbeth; Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter; Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God; poetry; and short stories.
Writing Workshop
*fall, winter, and spring/not open to freshmen*

As part of their work in English, sophomores take Writing Workshop, which meets once a week through the year. New juniors are enrolled for the fall term and may continue as needed in the winter and spring. The workshop program includes organized instruction in writing and a systematic review of grammar before students take the required LCAT.

English III
*juniors*

As they read more complex texts, juniors review, develop, and extend the skills taught in the first two years. The fall term begins with a focus on rhetoric, and the winter and spring terms lead to more advanced literary analysis. Students work on close reading and sustained analysis, considering a variety of literary techniques and themes. Writing assignments include both literary analysis and personal essays. Representative readings include Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*; Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*; Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*; poetry; short stories; essays.

CL English III Seminar
*juniors*

This course requires students to read major works of literature and to develop their skills for writing both analytical and personal essays. Benefiting students whose greater experience with language and literature allows them to succeed with more challenging reading and writing assignments, this course assumes significant student participation in class discussion. Readings include those listed for English III and additional works by Shakespeare, Hardy, or Austen, and other authors selected by the instructors. This course prepares students for the AP Language and Composition examination. Prerequisite: permission of the department and successful completion of the LCAT.

Elective English Courses

The English curriculum offers a variety of elective term courses that engage students in more specialized literary studies and continued development of verbal skills. Sophomores and juniors have the option to supplement the required English curriculum with elective coursework in creative writing. In their senior year, students choose from a variety of elective term courses to construct an interest-based course sequence for their final year. All courses stress substantial reading and writing.

English teachers help students to request senior term courses appropriate to interests and abilities. Fall term placement in CL English is determined by the department and requires successful completion of the LCAT; winter and spring placement in CL English IV term courses is determined by departmental recommendation only.

Term Course for Sophomores and Juniors

Introduction to Creative Writing
*half course*

*Introduction to Creative Writing* is an elective in which sophomores and juniors practice writing fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction in pursuit of artistic self-expression. The course follows a creative writing workshop model. Students will read and discuss the work of contemporary fiction writers and poets as examples, but they will spend most of their class time honing specific skills with creative exercises, working on long-term projects, and workshopping the writing of their peers. This elective encourages curious students to experiment with writing as an art form and supports them as they practice their craft. Representative texts include *Steering the Craft* by Ursula K. Le Guin and selected short stories and poems (possible inclusions: Margaret Atwood, Kelly Link, George Saunders, Kurt Vonnegut). This term-length elective does not count toward the English graduation requirement; the class is therefore an additional elective for students who are passionate (or passionately curious) about creative writing.

Term and Yearlong Courses for Seniors

English IV: Graphic Novel *(GESC)*
*term course*

Since the ground-breaking publication of Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* in 1993, graphic novels have entered the global cultural and academic mainstream, inspiring complex interdisciplinary and multicultural analyses. In this course students will survey the current field and read works of fiction (*Watchmen, Asterios Polyp, The Arrival*), autobiography
(Maus, Persepolis, Fun Home), and journalism (Safe Area Gorazde). In order to understand these works and the cultures that produced them, students will write essays using interpretive lenses focusing on history, gender, psychology, and class. Students will also explore the relationship between text and image in analyses as well as short sequential art sequences of their own.

**English IV: Notes from the Combat Zone Stories of War**  
*term course*

One of the unfortunate realities of human history is our species’ tendency toward conflict. This course will eschew the historical and political causes of war in an attempt to understand the mythological, symbolic, literary, and psychological perspective of the individual soldier. Sub-themes might include the transformative power of combat and violence, the brotherhood forged between fellow soldiers, the social ramifications on the homefront, or the cultural shifts in societies embroiled in war. Readings will focus on fictionalized accounts of wartime experience in combination with literary non-fiction produced by combat veterans and journalists. Students will be expected to grapple with the conflicting ideals of duty, honor, patriotism, exhilaration, fear, shame, regret, confusion, and betrayal. Potential texts include works by Ernest Hemingway, Sebastian Junger, Kristen Hannah, Uzodinma Iweala and others.

**English IV: Literature and the Environment (GESC)**  
*term course*

How does place shape identity? Is the natural world a physical resource to be exploited or conserved, a challenge to be conquered, or a sacred space to be preserved and revered? In more literary terms, what is the relationship between a story and its setting? Exploring the connections between literary texts and the history of environmental thought, this course will focus on the cultural, metaphorical, and symbolic values of the non-human world, while also investigating its ecological significance. From wilderness to the worked landscape, from suburban to urban environments, students will examine the ways that the language of literature, film, and popular media construct our awareness and appreciation of the non-human world. Potential texts include works by Henry David Thoreau, Leslie Marmon Silko, Wendell Berry, Octavia Butler, and others. In addition to analytical writing, students will write creatively about their own experiences in and with the natural world.

**English IV: Literature of Scientific Discovery**  
*term course*

As scientific discoveries have continually rocked and reshaped humans’ understanding of our world, literature has been there to serve as a journal for the recording of paradigm shifts, whether driven by fear, confusion, or excitement. This course will examine major revolutions in scientific history — the establishment of the theory of evolution, the onset of the Industrial Revolution, the development of genetic engineering, the generation of artificial intelligence, as examples — through the lens of contemporary and contemporaneous literature. With a special focus on utopian and dystopian novels, short stories, and films, we will seek a greater understanding of the intersection of science and literature and consider such questions as: What is it to be human? How can scientific progress help or hinder the common good? How does science change the way we see the world, and how does literature reflect the great hopes and horrors brought about by these shifting perspectives? Representative course texts include seminal works in fiction (e.g. H.G. Wells, The Time Machine; Philip K. Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?; E.M. Forster, The Machine Stops; William Gibson and Sterling, The Difference Engine), nonfiction (Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions), and film (Ridley Scott, Blade Runner; The Wachowskis, The Matrix; Pixar, WALL-E). Over the course of the term, students will produce a portfolio of analytical, creative, and research-based writing.

**English IV: Literature of the Sea**  
*term course*

In this course students consider various perspectives on the mysterious, beautiful, and threatening nature of the sea. Beginning with The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and continuing with readings selected from the works of Melville, Conrad, Hemingway, Crane, and Kipling, the course also involves contemporary works by Junger, Proulx, and Casey. Students deepen their understanding of literature of the sea as they consider both artistic and musical renderings.

**English IV: Race, Roles, and Religion (GESC)**  
*term course*

In our increasingly interconnected world, literature can provide insight into the broadest palate of human experiences. Exploring the fiction, poetry, essays, and drama of writers beyond the traditional Western canon, this senior elective will examine boundaries: race, age, ethnicity, gender, nation, physical ability, sexuality, religion. Topics will focus on questions of culture and identity from global and literary perspectives. Students will read and respond to a rich diversity in experience and traditions. Authors will vary according to the term and may include the works of Chinua Achebe, Aravind Adiga, Sherman Alexie, James Baldwin, Kate Chopin, Countee Cullen, Edwidge Danticat, Jonathan Safran Foer, Rebecca Gilman, Langston Hughes, Jhumpa Lahiri, Nella Larsen, Jonathan Lethem, Toni Morrison, Alice Munro, Téa Obreht, Maggie O’Farrell, Grace Paley, Ann Patchett, Amy Tan, Gene Toomer, Alice Walker, Wendy
Wasserstein, Virginia Woolf, and Richard Wright.

**English IV: Voices of Dissent** *(GESC)*

**term course**

Historically, one of the most powerful driving forces of change is the act of rebellion. This senior elective will explore literature representing previously marginalized voices that speak out against and ultimately impact the dominant society. Close literary analysis will help students enhance their understanding of the social and cultural forces at work in both the production and reception of such revolutionary literature. By way of short stories, poems, plays, and novels, this course could cover a range of topics: apartheid in South Africa (*Waiting for the Barbarians* by J.M. Coetzee), youth rebellion in the United States (*Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger), modern Japanese teen rebellion (*Crystal Buddha* by Jason Webb), rural Caribbean life (poetry by Claude McKay), conflicted modern Africa (*Redemption Road* by Elma Shaw), anti-Vietnam war sentiment, Civil Rights and Women’s Rights Movements, among others.

**English IV: The Essay**

**term course**

Rather than consider essays as things to be read, this course will focus on “to essay” (verb: “to try to do, effect, accomplish, or make”) – essays as process, as wrestling and reckoning. How do writers create relationships with audiences? How do thinkers engage on the page, shaping social discourse about politics, identity, art, and human nature? In short, they write essays. In this part survey, part creative nonfiction writing course, students will see that essays can do just about anything. “Not a regularly and orderly composition,” according to father of the modern dictionary Samuel Johnson, the essay ranges in length, scope, voice, subject — but rarely in scrutiny. Students will read a diverse array of 20th- and 21st-century century writers and thinkers at the forefront of the nonfiction essay genre and analyze the craft as well as the content. Developing the skills necessary to capture and intrigue readers, students will work toward a portfolio of non-fiction essays of their own, investigating and articulating the concerns of their own lives. Core texts may include the essays of James Baldwin, Joan Didion, Roxane Gay, Christopher Hitchens, and Virginia Woolf. Supplemental reading may include selections by Alice Walker, Wallace Shawn, David Foster Wallace, and Jenny Zhang and others.

**CL English IV: Creative Writing**

**term course**

This course gives students the opportunity to study the techniques and styles of professional writers; to study the work of other students; and to practice writing personal essays, short stories, parodies, narratives, and poetry. Substantial readings include essays by E.B. White and fiction by a variety of authors, both contemporary and traditional. Prerequisite: permission of the department and successful completion of the LCAT.

**CL English IV: Contemporary Literature** *(GESC)*

**term course**

This course offers a study of a variety of contemporary novels, short stories, plays, poems, essays, and articles. The course focuses on understanding the values and attitudes expressed by contemporary writers, including those who write about social issues and cultural development. Representative readings include works of Egan, Whitehead, Hoffman, Ndibe, contemporary short story writers, and essayists. Prerequisite: permission of the department

**CL English IV: Satire**

**term course**

As a literary genre, satire has been around as long as writers have had the audacity to address the foibles of humanity. Juvenal, the Roman satirist, once said, “It’s hard not to write satire,” suggesting that targets abound for those willing to poke fun at their fellow human beings and their many institutions. Focusing primarily on satirical novels, this course explores both how and why satire works, considering in the process the role of humor, irony, hyperbole, mockery, derision, and other tools of the trade. Students read works by authors such as Burgess, Heller, Lewis, Swift, Twain, Voltaire, Vonnegut, and Waugh. Prerequisite: permission of the department

**CL English IV: Shakespeare**

**term course**

This course provides an intensive study of selected plays and sonnets of William Shakespeare. The plays are considered both as they were presented and received in Shakespeare’s time and as they might be interpreted and produced for a modern audience. While attention is given to the conventions of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theater and of our own, the course emphasizes close textual analysis. At least one play of each type and of each period of Shakespeare’s development is included. Readings may include *Henry IV, Henry V, Much Ado About Nothing, King Lear, The Tempest,* and *The Merchant of Venice.* Prerequisite: permission of the department
CL English IV: Writing from the Arab World (GESC)

*term course*

The Arab world has a rich literary tradition that pre-dates Islam, and today, Arab writers continue to generate and maintain an equally rich intellectual culture. This course will explore different contemporary authors and different genres that depict a variety of characters, circumstances, and themes, the goal of which is to help broaden our understanding of a culture both modern, shaped by a complex history, and steeped in rich tradition. This cross section of literature in translation takes us beyond both stereotype and misinformation, and beyond our understanding of the Middle East as only a region of chaos, refugees, and terrorism. Possible texts include: Fadia Faqir, *Pillars of Salt*; and al-Rahman Muniz, *Endings*; Mahmoud Darwish, *Memory of Forgetfulness*; and a compilation of poetry and short stories by Naguib Mahfouz, Yusef Idris, Salwa Bakr, Adunis, and Nizar Qabbani. Prerequisite: permission of the department.

CL Senior Seminar in Literature

*year course*

This course offers the student a full year's study of important authors and significant works of literature as they relate historically, thematically, or artistically. The Senior Seminar is designed for students whose greater experience with language and literature enables them to succeed with more challenging reading and writing assignments. Assignments are rigorous, including analytical essays, creative writing, and personal essays. Representative readings include the work of Albee, Conrad, Ellison, Heaney, Plath, Proulx, Shakespeare, Stegner, Stoppard, Warren, White, and Yeats. Prerequisite: permission of the department and successful completion of the LCAT.

Independent Studies in English

*term course*

A student who wishes to undertake an Independent Study Project (ISP) in English must arrange for a project advisor from within the department, submit a written proposal, and obtain approval from the academic advisor, project advisor, department head, and dean of faculty. The ISP must be carried as a second English elective.