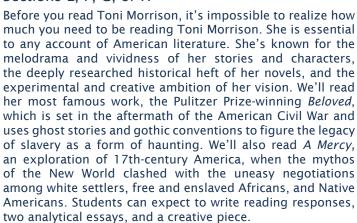


1. Toni Morrison

Becky Lu

Sections E, F, G, or H



Becky Lu teaches English at GFS, and her interests include poetry of the English Renaissance and the material histories of reading and writing. She's learning how to sew her own clothes and compiling a list of all the bookstore cats in Philadelphia. Alex Levin

Monday

In a dark, decaying manor, somewhere not too far from the GFS campus, the ghosts are stirring. I invite you to meet them! In this class, we will read a number of all-time greatest ghost stories from both the British and American traditions. We will begin with some delightful ghost poetry by Coleridge and Beddoes and move into short stories and novellas by Bram Stoker, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Virginia Woolf. Finally, we will study two short novels: *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson and *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James. In addition to reading these spine-tingling, haunted tales, we will try our hand at writing ghostly poems and stories of our own along with an analytical paper. By the end of the course, students will come to see that ghost stories are rarely only tales of supernatural hauntings; they are often reflections of societal and psychic concerns of a greater magnitude.

Alex Levin is persistently haunted by his past as a GFS student in the early 1990s. He is currently teaching in the English Department, which he co-chairs with Ceora Wearing-Moore.





3. Short Fiction Between Two Worlds: Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Refugees* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Interpreter of Maladies*

Joseph McGeary Sections E, F, G, or H

This course will examine themes of migration, exile, and the experience of being (dis)placed between two worlds. What is the relationship between geography and identity? How does it feel and what does it mean to be a refugee? How does diaspora create travail but also open doors of liberation and new dreams for the future? In answering these and other questions, we will read two collections of short stories: The Refugees by Viet Thanh Nguyen and The Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri. Nguyen, who himself fled Saigon at the end of the Vietnam war at the age of five, tells artful tales about Vietnamese who leave their homeland and assimilate to the strange new world of the United States; his stories are a richly textured blend of humor, pathos, realism, and magic. Jhumpa Lahiri's collection, The Interpreter of Maladies, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2006, traces the experience of characters who move between the Indian subcontinent and the United States. These lyrical, witty, and sensitive stories address the theme of hybrid identity, a feeling that Lahiri has herself described as "intense pressure to be two things, loyal to the old world and fluent in the new, approved of on either side of the hyphen." Students will write journal responses, do presentations, and write one short story about migration and identity.

Joseph McGeary's interests include the literature of social protest and the literature of the Vietnam War and its aftermath by both American and Vietnamese authors.

4. Reading Dostoevsky: The Agony and the Ecstasy

Adam Hotek

Sections E, F, G or H

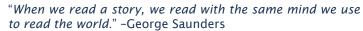
What would it be like to create art after you had faced an execution squad and lived? What would it mean to represent the conscience of a culture or the spirit of a national age? What does it mean for a writer to tunnel deeper and deeper into the human psyche? Fyodor Dostoyevsky's work answers these questions in unique ways. This class will explore how his writing responded to a range of social and existential questions in the midst of a tumultuous historical era. Dostoyevsky has been a literary model for generations of authors. Writers ranging from James Joyce to Marjane Satrapi have admired his stylistic innovations and social vision. We will examine these elements of his writing as a way to understand the 19th-century Russian world he lived in and our own. This class will focus exclusively on Dostoyevsky's monumental novel Crime and Punishment. Students will produce formal and informal writing as well as a classroom

Adam Hotek has taught Essentially English for many years. He is interested in existentialist philosophy and genre theory about the novel.

5. Reading and Writing the World: Contemporary Short Stories

Robin Friedman

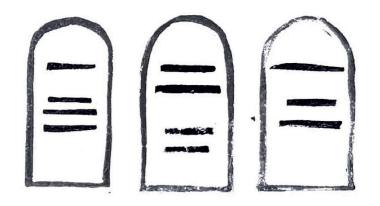
Section E, F, G, or H



In this course, we will read contemporary short stories written in the last 10 years by an eclectic group of writers, including Danielle Evans, George Saunders, Carmen Maria Machado, Anthony Veasna So, Lorrie Moore, Viet Thanh Nguyen, and Nana Kwame Adiei-Brenvah. During each class, we will focus on a particular aspect of craft, including plot, character, mood, tone, atmosphere, and dialogue. What makes a story sing? What makes a narrator believable, sympathetic, real? What details build tension and create momentum? Together we will engage in prompt-based exercises. Students will submit short stories of their own to workshop. We will also share and discuss inspirational book passages, songs, paintings, and movie excerpts so that we can better understand our inspirations and goals. Each student will write multiple drafts of a short story and will leave class with polished work. In addition to maintaining response journals, students will compose a short essay.

Please note: If you took this course in 2021-22 you may not choose it again.

Robin Friedman grew up in Washington, DC, and has lived in New York City, Seville, Spain, and San Salvador, El Salvador, where she worked with a women's organization. In her free time, she enjoys getting lost in the woods, reading, and writing poems.



6. We the People: Literary Modernism and Community

Adam Hotek

Wednesday

"I don't want to be part of a club that would accept me as a member." -Groucho Marx

This course will explore what conditions have to be in place in order for one to be accepted by a community. We will define community fluidly. For our purposes, "community" can signify nation, family, school, religious institutions, ethnic/racial affiliations, or geolocation. A prime tenet of "We the People" is that Modernist writers redefined ideas of home and, by extension, community in innovative, creative, radical, and even revolutionary ways. We will examine how 20th-century writers indexed the way technological innovations, demographic shifts, and new definitions of "art" and selfhood shaped the interface between notions of community and the desires, political agendas, dreams, and idiosyncrasies of individuals. Writers we may explore include Sherwood Anderson, Jean Toomer, W.E.B. Du Bois, Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Zora Neale Hurston, Hilda Doolittle, T.S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, William Carlos Williams, Hart Crane, and Marianne Moore. Students will write a formal essay, submit response papers, and complete a long reflection piece about their relationship to the idea of community.

Adam Hotek has taught Essentially English for many years. His interests include 20th-century Philosophy, the Harlem Renaissance, and Affect Theory.

7. Explorations in Fiction and Poetry

The English Department

Sections E, F, G or H

Have you ever wished you had more time to write short stories or poems? In this introductory course, students will read exceptional short fiction and poetry and borrow techniques from the texts in order to write their own short stories and poems. Taught by members of the English department, the class will draw from classic literature and more contemporary texts to inspire students to new heights of literary and creative sophistication. As you write, you will be invited to workshop your fiction and poetry. Teachers will pull from their favorite texts and authors to share with the class, and the course will culminate in an opportunity for students to share their writing with members of the classroom community and, perhaps, a wider audience.

8. Seventeenth-Century British Poetry

Alexander Guevarez

Monday

From about 1595, when John Donne is said to have written his first poems, to the death of John Milton in 1674, poets produced some of the greatest lyric and epic verse in the English language. What makes this body of work so good, enjoyable, and illuminating nearly 350 years later? In this course, we will study the poems, and some of the prose, of John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, and John Milton. All four poets shaped, and were shaped by, the Civil War of the 1640s, the republican experiment from 1649 to 1660, and the Restoration of the monarchy in that year. We will also read many other less well-known but equally fascinating women poets of the age, such as Amelia Lanyer, Anne Bradstreet, and Katherine Philips. Through lectures, seminar discussions, written responses, and longer essay assignments, students will learn the fundamentals of English literary history as well as the techniques of critical reading

Alexander Guevarez teaches English at GFS, where he focuses on poetry, rhetoric, and literary biography. He agrees with Emily Dickinson: "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry."

9. The Calypso Novel: Caribbean Literature of London

Sam Sullivan

Sections E, F, G or H

This course will explore the literature of the Black British experience through the lens of Caribbean authors who migrated to London. This course will explore the work of Sam Selvon, whose calypso-novels The Lonely Londoners and The Housing Lark trace the lives of the windrush generation of migrants to London from the British Commonwealth during the postwar period. These are hilarious and sad books, full of late-night escapades, pigeon entrapment, swindling, and more. Their musical interventions in standard English turn the novels into ongoing songs, subverting our expectations regarding plot and narrator. But they also pose penetrating questions about what it means for these writers to engage ironically or otherwise—with the aesthetics and values of the empire. These books help us understand the psychological, material, and ethnological effects of postcolonialism, and link them to the universal labor and housing struggles for all working people under capitalism. Essays by Jamaica Kincaid and George Lamming, as well as poetry by Miss Lou and Linton Kwesi Johnson, will aid us in our journey. Students will complete two analytical essays and a creative piece.

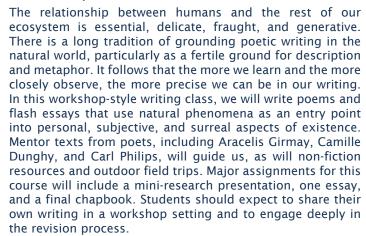
Sam Sullivan teaches in the English department and is interested in literary modernism and left wing politics. He writes poetry and music.

10. Writing Wild: Poetry as a Bridge Between People and

Nature

Chelsea Koehler

Wednesday



Chelsea Koehler has been teaching English at GFS for the past 10 years. She can be found out in the woods at all hours and in all weather.

11. Creative Nonfiction

Jared Levy

Monday

Real stories about real people in real places: that is the essence of creative nonfiction. But unlike the straight who-



what-where-when-why of journalism, creative nonfiction employs the techniques and tools of fiction. Using scene, character, setting, and dialogue, and often using a firstperson narrative voice, the creative nonfiction writer creates a world as vivid and resonant as a fiction writer. Beginning with the personal essay, the form has grown and morphed to comprise a wide range of subjects and points of view, from the "New Journalism" of the sixties to the current memoir boom. This class is structured as a seminar-workshop: We will read and analyze published work and we will produce a lot of original writing and offer generous, focused, and intelligent feedback on it. Occasional writing exercises will be assigned to help push us out of our comfort zone. Readings will include, but are not limited to, the following: "The School" by Donald Barthelme, "My Saga" by Karl Ove Knausgaard, "Goodbye to All That" by Joan Didion, "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved" by Hunter S. Thompson, "Consider the Lobster" by David Foster Wallace, "He and I" by Natalia Ginzburg, "Once a Tramp, Always..." by MFK Fisher, "Such, Such Were the Joys" by George Orwell, and "Hateful Things" by Sei Shonagon.

Jared Levy is a writer and teacher based in South Philadelphia. His work appears in various publications and he holds an MFA from Warren Wilson College.

12. Hero, Journey, Pilgrimage, Quest: This is The Way

Pierce Buller

Monday

Through enjoyment of exceptional literature that spans cultures and continents, we will engage in a whirlwind study of heroes, quests, and journeys. Reading excerpts ranging from Homer's Odyssey to Basho's Narrow Road to the Deep North, from the legends of King Arthur to Dante's "Inferno," and including more modern works such as Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man, Melville's Moby Dick, and Braverman's Welcome to the Ice Cube, we will examine the metaphors and allegories of friend and enemy, pilgrimage and homecoming, and how we wonder as we wander. We will also explore the inward journey, reading excerpts from Peter Matthiessen's *The Snow* Leopard, Thoreau's Walden, and other seekers of personal understanding. With a grounding in these works of depth and imagination, we will note how our present and popular culture imagines and reifies these perpetual ideas. Finally, we will find time to enjoy literature of personal significance that reflects ideas of journey, quest, and the search for selfidentity. Through a presentation, a creative project, and a short paper, students will reflect on our shared experience with this extraordinary body of literature.

Pierce Buller has taught in the Essentially English program since 2013. He received an undergraduate degree in English and history from Colgate, and has a master's in medieval history from Penn.

13. Screenwriting

Kathleen Van Cleve



This is a workshop-style course for those who have thought they had a terrific idea for a movie but didn't know where to begin. The emphasis will be on storytelling and how to best communicate your story using the tenets of classical dramatic structure as a backbone for your screenplay. Best part: reading and watching films like *Knives Out*, *Do The*

Right Thing, Juno, and Finding Nemo (among others)—and figuring out why they work. By the end of the course, each student must complete at least 25 pages of a screenplay.

Please note: If you took this course in 2021-22 you may not choose it again.

Kathleen Van Cleve is a novelist, screenwriter, and senior lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania, where she teaches in the Creative Writing and Cinema & Media Studies programs.

14. Emily Dickinson

Sam Sullivan

Wednesday



Emily Dickinson wrote some of her poems on the back of envelopes. Lines of verse trace the gummy seams in triangular patterns. Little symbols, asterisk-esque, next to words refer to places on the paper where she lists alternatives. These objects pose many questions to those who encounter them. What is the difference between a message and its envelope? Do others ever truly receive the messages we send? Does publication 'complete' a poem or does it auction it off, foreclosing on its possibilities, desecrating a personal, spiritual practice? How does language grate and squirm against its contexts? This class is an exploration of these questions through the poems of Emily Dickinson. We will read biographical criticism and do close readings of her poetry. This is a class for people who take poetry seriously who understand it as a sacred practice. People who take this class should enjoy reading complex and difficult writing about 19th-century New England.

Please note: If you took this course in 2021-22, you may not choose it again.

Sam Sullivan grew up in the Pacific Northwest and in New York. He teaches English at Germantown Friends School and plays in a family band.

15. Imagining the '80s

Alex Levin

Sections E, F, G, or H



The decade of the 1980s lives in our imaginations as a decade of prismatic pastels, fabulous hairdos, and unfettered opulence. In many ways, it remains a difficult decade to process: The Cold War, the AIDS epidemic, and the collapse of the social safety net under Reagan negatively impacted the lives of many, and yet there were glimmers even explosions—of hope and optimism, which you can hear reflected in the hip-hop and pop music of the decade. This class will explore three writers' visions of the 1980s. We will begin with Orwell's dystopian classic, 1984, which, to this day, feels eerily prophetic in its depiction of a severe surveillance state. Next, we will read Tony Kushner's powerful drama Angels in America, an experimental masterpiece about the intersecting lives of people living in the 1980s and contending with many problems, including the AIDS epidemic. We will end with a poetry project about some of the great poets of the 1980s. I can't wait to read these texts with you! Students can expect to write two pieces, a paper and a creative response, as well as a presentation on a favorite poem. Content warning: the texts in this course include frank depictions of violence and sexuality.

Alex Levin is the co-chair of the English Department. His favorite '80s musical act is Prince, but the pop band XTC is a close runner-up.

16. The Lonely Hunter: Queerness + Connection

Rachel Reynolds

Monday

How do we recognize queerness when it goes unnamed? What does it look like to rescue queerness from the shadows of the past and feel its glow in the present? How does the expansiveness of queerness intersect with the rigidity of genre? These questions and more will guide us as we explore Carson McCullers's iconic debut novel, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (1940), and Jenn Shapland's unruly *My Autobiography of Carson McCullers* (2020). We will unpack queer coding, examine queer literary lineage, and explore genre's capacity to participate in the communicative work of text. Along the way, we will dabble in queer theory and students will write a series of short responses and a final essay.

Rachel Reynolds teaches Middle School English and serves as faculty advisor to Middle School SAGA. This is their third Essentially English offering.



17. Can Poetry Save us? Reading and Writing Poems in Uncertain Times

Robin Friedman

Monday

Poets alone can't save us, or can they? In these chaotic and politically complex times, we need poetry for what it can do, what it has always done: take action in language, speak the complicated, multifaceted truth, and oppose silence and silencing. In this class, we will delve deeply into the work of a number of contemporary American poets, including Audre Lorde, Javier Zamora, Natalie Díaz, Ocean Vuong, Aimee Nezhukumatahil, Etheridge Knight, and Adrienne Rich. We will immerse ourselves in their work and will, as they do.

experiment with style and form. Our class will delve deeply into a wide selection and variety of poems that explore the following pressing topics: Freedom and Confinement (with special attention to poets writing from prison), Borders, Boundaries, Migration, and Ecopoetics and the Climate Crisis. We will write together, praise one another's writing, critique, and revise. Students will create a small volume of original poems, collaborate on a group presentation, and write a short paper focusing on the work of two poets.

Robin Friedman grew up in Washington, DC and has lived in New York City, Seville, Spain, and San Salvador, El Salvador, where she worked with a women's organization. In her free time, she enjoys getting lost in the woods, reading, and writing poems.

18. The Art of Persuasion: Rhetorical Moves for Writers

Alexander Guevarez

Section E, F, G, or H

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of rhetoric. Through a reading of selected treatises, soliloquies, speeches, and op-eds, we will learn to construct and defend effective arguments in writing and in speech—a skill that is essential to success in any academic, professional, or public setting. Our aim is to provide a grounding in the history of rhetorical principles; discover strategies and tactics of argumentation; analyze and apply effective presentation and organization of discourse; and develop power, grace, and felicity in written expression. By the end of the course, students will perform the *Progymnasmata*, a sequence of 14 classical composition exercises from the patristic age up through the Renaissance.

Please note: If you took this course in 2021-22, you may not choose it again.

Alexander Guevarez teaches English at GFS, where he focuses on poetry, rhetoric, and literary biography. He agrees with Emily Dickinson: "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry."

19. Jane Austen

Becky Lu

Sections E, F, G or H and Monday



In this class, we will span the literary career of Jane Austen, reading both her earliest published novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, and the last book she finished, *Persuasion*, published after her death. In the 200 years since publication, Austen's novels have been variably perceived as comedies of manners, romances, philosophical novels, women's novels, and satires. We'll trace Austen's development as a writer and her contributions to the history of the English novel through her experimentation with narrative voice, formal structure, and her dryly ironic gender and economic critique. This class will also ask students to engage with relevant philosophical and theoretical analyses and adaptations. Students can expect to write in-depth close reading responses, an analytical essay, and a creative piece inspired by Austen's work.

Becky Lu teaches English at GFS, and her interests include poetry of the English Renaissance and the material histories of reading and writing. She's learning how to sew her own clothes and compiling a list of all the bookstore cats in Philadelphia.

20. Visions of American Empire

Joseph McGeary

Section in E, F, G, or H and Wednesday

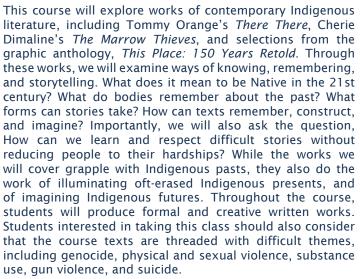
Students in this course will explore powerful and exciting works of fiction that raise questions about the foundational myth of American exceptionalism, the idea that America was created out of a rebellion against an oppressive empire and is therefore immune to any imperial designs of its own. In his seminal 1955 novel, The Quiet American, Graham Greene exposes the aggression concealed behind America's "innocent" efforts at anti-communist nation-building in 1950s Vietnam. Don DeLillo's 1988 novel, *Libra*, spins a conspiracy theory about the Kennedy assassination that is both wildly fantastic and highly credible in connecting the dots between Dealy Plaza in Dallas, the Cold War, and the CIA's secret meddlings in Cuba in the early 1960s. Eat The Document by Dana Spiotta (2004) links the culture of imperialism from the Vietnam era to the insidious effects of global capitalism at the end of the 20th century. Spiotta's narrative concerns a young woman who goes into hiding after becoming involved in violent protests against the war in Vietnam. It is a moving tale that raises questions about the complicity of all Americans in the culture of empire that has cast a shadow on the American Century. During the course, students will do presentations, write journal responses to reading, and write an essay and an original short story.

Joseph McGeary holds a Ph.D. in English from Duke University. His research interests include postcolonial studies and the history of resistance to American empire.

21. Contemporary Indigenous Literature: Reimagining the Narrative

Madeline James

Wednesday



Madeline James has a background in cultural anthropology and education. She is a lover of literature and currently works in Upper School writing support.



Art and Design by Mila Muñoz-Mazurkiewicz

ADULT REGISTRATION INFORMATION 2023

ESSENTIALLY ENGLISH at Germantown Friends School offers literature and writing courses in the months of April and May that are designed to bring people of different ages together in the classroom. Adults are invited to join these courses, which are composed primarily of our tenth- through twelfth-grade students, who must take one English elective each spring. We believe that sharing varied perspectives generates a special kind of learning, exciting for all participants. For both literature and writing courses, adults are expected to complete the reading and to participate in class discussions, but to do the writing only if they are enrolled in a writing course.

EVENING COURSES meet once a week for eight weeks, on either Mondays or Wednesdays. Courses scheduled for April 5th will be shifted to Monday evening, April 3rd, in observance of Passover. Classes meet weekly until Wednesday, May 24th, and begin promptly at 7 pm and end at 9:15 pm.

DAYTIME COURSES meet for 5 class periods in an 8-day cycle, with the first cycle beginning on Monday, April 3, and the last day of classes on Thursday, May 25 Some courses are offered in one section only (E, F, G, and H blocks on the schedule); others are offered in two or three. They will be taught in the section or sections in which there is the most demand. If you are interested in a daytime course, please indicate on the form which section you prefer.

DAY SECTIONS, ESSENTIALLY ENGLISH 2023

Section E	Section F	Section G	Section H
Day 2, 11:50-12:45	Day 1, 2:15-3:15	Day 2, 2:15-3:15	Day 1, 9:10-10:10
Day 3, 1:15-2 :15	Day 3, 11:50-12:45	Day 4, 11:50-12:45	Day 3, 2:15-3:15
Day 5, 8:15-9:10	Day 4, 1:15-2:15	Day 5, 1:15-2:15	Day 5, 11:50-12:45
Day 6, 9:10-10:10	Day 6, 8:15-9:10	Day 7, 8:15-9:10	Day 6, 1:15-2:15
Day 8, 2:15-3:15	Day 7, 9:10-10:10	Day 8, 9:15-10:15	Day 8, 8:15-9:10

TO REGISTER fill out the form below, and send it to:

Karen Barbarese, Germantown Friends School, 31 West Coulter Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144.

FEE FOR ADULTS is \$350 per course. Enclose a check payable to "GFS Essentially English," and include in the address c/o Karen Barbarese. If a course is oversubscribed or canceled, you will be notified in time to choose another. After sign-up is completed, a first assignment and information about books you will need to purchase will be sent to you by your course's instructor before the beginning of spring break. **Adult registrations** are **due no later than March 10**. Later registration may be possible if there is space available in a class.

Germantown
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31 West Coulter Street
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