Essentially English 2018

Germantown Friends School literature and writing courses for students, parents, alumni, and friends
It is fifty years since 1968, when the American war in Vietnam was at the point of highest intensity, as was the movement against the war in the United States and abroad. Americans had begun to see the war as a tactical and moral mistake of tragic scope, but it would be five more years before America’s involvement would end after enormous suffering and loss. Fifty years later, what can we learn from literature by Americans and Vietnamese alike who bore witness to and lived the war? How can the literature that came out of the Vietnam War help us to understand America’s military interventions since Vietnam and how to avoid future tragedies on the scale of Vietnam, or worse? Our focus will mostly be narrative fiction, but we’ll also look at how journalists, documentary filmmakers, activists in the peace movement, former combatants and ordinary citizens from all sides of the conflict saw, felt, and lived the war. We’ll read three novels, all pretty short and all compelling works of art: *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene; *The Sorrow of War* by Bao Ninh; and *In the Lake of the Woods* by Tim O’Brien. We’ll also read two story collections by contemporary Vietnamese American authors: *The Refugees* by Viet Thanh Nguyen and *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* by Le Thi Diem Thuy. Requirements: a reading journal, a critical essay, and a creative response (a short story, script, or graphic narrative). 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. He teaches in the English Department at GFS and directs Essentially English.

For nonfiction writers with poetic sensibilities, it is hard to choose a genre to call home. Why would we ask them to? This class explores those writers who inhabit two territories and perhaps two identities: essayist and poet. It also explores the new, hybrid form of “lyric essay” that has roots at least as old as the 1500s. According to Purdue University’s website, “Even professional essayists aren’t certain about what constitutes a lyric essay, and lyric essays disagree about what makes up the form.” Whatever we decide to call them, we will read personal essays written by professional poets. This will be a nonfiction course that involves some analytical reading and much personal writing. There will be readings in this course about grief and loss, though it will not always be so serious. Authors studied will include Michel de Montaigne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Eula Biss, Mark Doty, Claudia Rankine, Maggie Nelson, Heather Kirn Lanier, and Nina Riggs.

When Kazuo Ishiguro won the Nobel Prize for Literature last fall, he told the reporters who knocked on his door that he wrote about “the way countries and nations remember their past, and how often they bury the uncomfortable memories from their past.” Ishiguro, born in Nagasaki, Japan, moved to Britain at the age of five; his novels also shift in time and space as he represents how human memory both defines and deceives us. Ishiguro’s best-selling novels have been praised for being highly readable as well as thought-provoking. We will begin with *The Remains of the Day*, a short novel narrated by a butler who recalls his experiences in pre-second-world-war Britain, in a style that one critic called “P.G. Wodehouse meets Henry James.” The next novel we will read is *When We Were Orphans* (2000), written in the style of a ‘Golden Age’ detective novel, in which a British man searches in war-ravaged Shanghai for clues to the disappearance of his parents twenty years earlier. The novel recalls the life of Ishiguro’s Japanese father, who was born in Shanghai in 1920 and lived there until the outbreak of WW II. Finally, we will read *The Buried Giant* (2015), a fantasy set in Arthurian Britain, complete with knight and dragon, and which the Nobel Committee praised for exploring “how memory relates to oblivion, history to the present, and fantasy to reality.” In times of political instability and the media’s power to shape memory and history, Ishiguro’s novels ask important questions about how to see and respond in the world. There will be three short writing assignments.

**In this course, we will explore the impact of the advent of cinema upon a range of “Modernist” writings and discourse. Our first endeavor will be to carefully examine the content and style of the films of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and D.W. Griffith. We will then turn to such writers as Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, W.E.B. DuBois, John Dos Passos, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Jean Toomer as a means to look at the ways in which these writers developed a filmic sensibility in their discourse. In this context, we will consider how cinema gave such writers unique ways to reflect upon and produce ideas about race, class, gender, time, the body, history, sexuality, social structure, and vision. We will also utilize the 2012 Academy award-winning film “The Artist” as a way to think about some of the impacts of the silent film on ideas of culture and artistic production in the early twentieth century.**

**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. He teaches in the English Department at GFS and directs Essentially English.

**Sara Primo** fancies herself both a poet and a personal essayist, and she wouldn’t want to have to choose between the two. The teaching of poetry was her main focus in graduate school. Over the last ten years, she has taught poetry workshops in school settings and in nursing homes, hosted public poetry readings with high schoolers, and taught courses on the personal essay at both the high school and college level.

**Anne Gerbner** teaches eleventh grade English at GFS. She remembers that in her youth, she read historic fiction, fantasy, and detective fiction every evening, as soon as she finished her homework.

**Adam Hotek** is a long-time teacher in the Essentially English program. His interests include Modernism, the Harlem Renaissance and psychoanalysis.

**One or Two Day Sections in A, B, or D**

**One Day Section in A, C, or D**
Some of the most exciting literary innovations—both in content and in form—are coming from queer writers. In this course, we’ll read some of the writers who have shaped this landscape over the past twenty years, including Justin Torres, Eileen Myles, Ryan Van Meter, Alison Bechdel, and Danez Smith. We’ll also investigate the term “queer” and think about how it might be applicable beyond sexual and gender identities. This is a literature course with a creative writing component, so we’ll be using these writers’ works as springboards for our own creative inquiry. Weekly assignments include short critical reading responses and creative writing exercises. For final projects, students will have the choice of writing a longer critical essay or a sustained creative work.

Rahul Mehta is the award-winning author of a short story collection, Quarantine, and a novel, No Other World, both from HarperCollins. His essays have appeared in The New York Times Magazine, The International Herald Tribune, and Marie Claire India. He teaches creative writing in the BFA program at the University of the Arts.

Great science fiction literature brings to life the utopian dreams of prophets, scholars, and technologists, as well as the fractured and disturbing narratives of dystopian nightmares. As readers, we are drawn to the hope and fascinated by the fear that these stories offer; as citizens of the world, we deploy the storylines and metaphors of science fiction in the struggle for justice and freedom in the face of evil and social dysfunction. In that context, science fiction emerges as a form of literature to be taken seriously as socially and politically transformative. An author’s vision of a parallel universe or a future world provides a unique opportunity to reflect on how individuals make decisions within the constraints of political and social institutions, a subject at the core of Political Science. Our class will use three books as an entry point into that discussion: Ursula LeGuin’s The Dispossessed, Joan Slonczewski’s A Door Into Ocean, and Neal Stephenson’s Snow Crash. Assignments will include two short papers, asking the student to analyze how the characters in LeGuin and Slonczewski books assess their relationship to the dominant social and political institutions, and why they choose the route of obedience or revolt. The final assignment will ask students to reflect on Stephenson’s work by creating their own short story, depicting an individual’s decision to revolt against (or defend) a utopian or dystopian social hierarchy. Along the way, we will digress into discussions of elves and orcs, white walkers and lost boys, phasers and lightsabers, wizards and witches, and how to defend Germantown Friends against the inevitable zombie apocalypse. Expect numerous unnecessary references to Monty Python, long dead obscure philosophers, along with live and recorded musical performances by individuals of questionable talent.

Brian Regli holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Tufts University), and an undergraduate degree in Philosophy and Government from Georgetown University. When he is not running his family’s real estate company, he reads lots of science fiction, lots of books about politics, and has become very confused about which is which.

Africans have created and continue to create literary works that are rich and diverse and deeply rooted in their heritage. Their locations, whether in Africa, the Americas, or Europe, inform and determine the tropes tackled within their narratives. In many cases, some of these narratives exist in forms grounded in oral storytelling traditions. Their stories go beyond the prevailing construct of Africans in the Western imagination. Therefore, this course aims to reveal these obscured narratives and consider ways in which they offer a window into Africans and their varied perspectives. We will also consider the ways in which these narratives may silence those who don’t have access to tell stories using conventional western modalities. As we examine this idea of Hidden Africa, we will use both African and African American authors to speak to many of the prevailing issues in modern black lives.

We will consider an array of questions to help us navigate through these texts and our essential questions. To explore these essential questions and others, we will read short stories from Africa 39, Lusaka Punk and other Short Stories, Oyeyemi’s What Is Yours Is Not Yours, James Baldwin’s “Sonny’s Blues,” excerpts from Notes of a Native Son, Claudia Rankine’s Citizen as well as a collection of articles, essays and poems. We will also watch some video clips. Students will be asked to write short response papers for the duration of the course.

June Gondi and Kyle Traynham

How does a writer take chaotic personal experience and transform it into truthful, engaging and shapely narrative? The challenge of this course will be to discover significant events and experiences in your life and to tell them as autobiographical stories, written in a voice and style uniquely your own. To observe various approaches to this genre, we will read three or four excellent contemporary memoirs, including one graphic memoir, David Small’s Stitches. We will read chapters or excerpts from several other authors, including Amy Tan, David Sedaris, Mary Karr, bell hooks, and Karl Knausgaard. Warm-up writing exercises, journals, peer editing, and class discussion will be important to our class work, but the chief work for the course will be composing three substantial autobiographical stories.

Connie Thompson has been reading and studying memoir. Since 1994 when she first started teaching in the Essentially English program, she has taught several courses centered on the genre.
Heartland: Looking for America in the Writing of Carlos Bulosan

Sam Sullivan  Monday Evenings

Before Carlos Bulosan learns English, before his name was Carlos, before he leaves the Philippines for America, he is talking with his friend Dalmacio about the history of that place:

We were reading the story of a homely man named Abraham Lincoln. ‘Who is this Abraham Lincoln?’ I asked Dalmacio. ‘He was a poor boy who became a president of the United States,’ he said. ‘He was born in a log cabin and walked miles and miles to borrow a book so that he would know more about his country.’ A poor boy became a president of the United States! Deep down in me something was touched…I was fascinated by the story of this boy who was born in a log cabin and became president of the United States.

An organizer, a poet, a pea-picker, Carlos Bulosan’s book America is in the Heart poses the question to which its title is an answer. But the book also shows how these categories—America, heart—are fundamentally opposed in some way. In fact, they may present the universal dialectic of our current time. Re-tracing the route to the heart, describing the function as presented in this book as accurately as possible, is the object of this course. We will read, write, and discuss. Do not take this course if you do not enjoy those activities.

Sam Sullivan, a member of the English Department at GFS, has lived in the Pacific Northwest and along I-95. He has published a controversial and largely unread thesis on light-boxes, Chinese food, and still life called “Representations of Lo Mein.”

Four Frames of Mind: Four Contemporary Poets

Meg Goldner Rabinowitz  Two Day Sections in A, C, or D

“The writer must be able to feel words intimately, one at a time.”

—Donald Hall

“Reading poetry is an adventure in renewal, a creative act, a perpetual beginning, a rebirth of wonder,” according to contemporary poet Edward Hirsch. In this course we will focus on reading, listening to, writing in response to, reciting, and exploring the words of four contemporary poets. Mary Oliver, Billy Collins, and Naomi Shihab-Nye each invite us to consider the world through a vastly different way of seeing. We will discuss the variety in their voices and the forms their writing takes; we will delve into, dissect and delight in their commonalities and differences. In contrast to these contemporary writers, we will consider the writing of Rainer Maria Rilke and the work of Spoken Word poets, inviting guest poets to share their work. Writing exercises will invite students to explore their own modes of self-expression in a supportive, inspiring, and dynamic group. This is a class for anyone who is interested in discovering poetry on the page, on the screen, and in the world. In addition to writing poetry, students will write commentaries and analyses of selected poems. Students will select a fourth poet to explore as well.

Meg Goldner Rabinowitz loves to read all forms of poetry. She counts her attendance at the Dodge Poetry Festival as one of the most essential components of her professional development.

Myth and the Modern Imagination

Robin Nourie  Wednesday Evenings and One Day Section in B, C, or D

When Jesmyn Ward was asked why she incorporated the myth of Medea into her novel Salvage the Bones, she replied, “I wanted to align Esch [the protagonist], with that classic text...to claim that tradition as part of my Western literary heritage. The stories I write are particular to my community and my people, which means the details are particular to our circumstances, but the larger story of the survivor, the savage, is essentially a universal, human one.” Ward alludes here to what is a paradox of many great literary works—they are at once rooted in evocative detail and yet transcend that detail to address the larger mysteries of life. Ward’s novel and Behn Zeitlin’s film Beasts of the Southern Wild will serve as the two centerpieces for our analysis of how the novelist and screenwriter artfully weave mythic elements into their storytelling. We will anchor these explorations in our own reading of Euripides’ Medea, additional classic and modern myths, and critical essays which address the question of how myth lives in literature today. Students will keep a myth journal, write one critical essay, and one myth-inspired creative piece.

Robin Nourie has been teaching English and French at Germantown Friends School for over 20 years. She aspires to be a teacher of magical proportions (metaphorically speaking) in the not-too-distant future.

Bad to The Bone: The Outlaw Mythos in Literature and Film

Adam Hotek  One or Two Day Sections in A, B, or D

“If this is wrong, I don’t wanna be right.”

If one is an “outlaw,” such a designation can be filled with supreme consequences. An outlaw’s life and liberty can be severely compromised by various authorities. An outlaw can be immoral, unjust, and abjectly reckless. Hence, it would seem that being an outlaw would not be a condition to be desired. And yet civilizations have been flooded with outlaws that have been deemed to be desirable in one way or another. In this class, we will explore how outlaws are featured in a variety of literary texts and cultural contexts. Some of the queries we will examine in this course include: Why do the transgressions of the outlaw figure command so much attention in our imaginations? If the outlaw is an “outsider,” what precisely is his or her relationship to authorities and “insiders”? How do race, class, and gender shape the dimensions of what is inside and outside of the law? The authors we may look at include: Richard Wright, William Shakespeare, Sophocles, Flannery O’Connor, Audre Lorde, Franz Kafka, Gloria Anzaldua, Toni Morrison, Albert Camus, and Willa Cather. We also may examine the mythos surrounding such figures ranging from Robin Hood to Johnny Cash to Ice Cube (and other rappers and rock/pop stars). Finally, we may look at such filmic/televisual texts as Jane Got a Gun, Rebel Without a Cause, A Streetcar Named Desire, The Simpsons, The Fugitive, Mr. Robot, Breaking Bad, Bonnie and Clyde, Thelma and Louise, and Menace to Society.

Adam Hotek is a long-time teacher in the Essentially English program. His interests include psychoanalysis, African American literature, theories of the novel, and cultural studies.
From Page to Stage: Experimentation, Collaboration, and Production
Alex Levin and Jake Miller  Wednesday Evenings

In many ways, staging a scene from a play can be quite simple: throw some actors onstage, offer some boorish blocking, and you’re off. The results of such a process can be, well, wonderfully uneven. In order to do a good job of staging a scene, you need to do a bit more. First, you and your fellow actors must understand the words you are saying, as well as the historical context of the text. Then, you need to consider reasons for blocking the scene in a certain way. Costumes, tempos, physicality must be weighed. Finally, you need to be convinced of the truth within the scene you are presenting. This class will bring together many aspects of theater: research, staging, physicality, character study, and performance. We will meet in the library where we can research and rehearse to our hearts’ content. There will be two papers, some research, and journaling, and students will participate in the staging of scenes as directors, costumers, and actors. Ultimately we hope that students will bridge the text, the audience, and themselves through the joyous process of collaboration. Please note that due to the cumulative and collaborative nature of the course, attendance every week is a must.

Alex Levin discovered his love of theater as a GFS student in the ’90s. In addition to his work as Chair of the English Department, he researches obscure plays, poems, and novels.

Jake Miller is co-chair of the Theater Department at GFS. Outside of GFS, he has worked as dramaturge and/or director in the development of over 25 new plays. His work focuses on the movement and visual aspects of theater-making.

How to Tell the Truth
Rachel Reynolds  Monday Evenings

“Tell all the truth but tell it slant.”

—Emily Dickinson

Truth rarely follows a straight line, progressing in an orderly fashion until we’re left with a tidy package of certitude. Instead, the truth is messy: it is riddled with contradictions and tensions; it folds in on itself and it falls apart if we pull hard enough on any one thread. That doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist, though. Quite the contrary, in fact—in its complexities, truth is lush. So lush, in fact, that writers have been obsessed with capturing it for ages. In this course, we’ll explore modes of truth telling, engaging with texts that embrace unruliness through a variety of approaches, including mixed-genre writing. Along the way, we’ll read Ocean Vuong’s Night Sky With Exit Wounds, Zadie Smith’s “Elegy for a Country’s Seasons” and Audre Lorde’s Zami: A New Spelling of My Name, as well as a selection of articles, essays and poems. This will be part writing workshop and part genre exploration. In addition to writing short-response papers, students will engage with a text of their choosing from the course to generate a larger piece that tells a truth they’re itching to share.

In a past life, Rachel Reynolds ran a statewide community-based writing workshop program in California. These days she is the Middle School Administrative Assistant at GFS. Her work has appeared in VICE, Liminalities, Duende, The Nervous Breakdown, and more.

Playwriting
Bruce Walsh  Monday Evenings

This course is an introduction to the basics of playwriting, combining tools developed by experimental master playwrights, like Maria Irene Fornes, Sam Shepard, and Jose Rivera, with the practical story construction of traditionalists, like Marcia Norman, David Mamet, and Romulus Linney. The vast majority of dramatic writing how-to books focus almost exclusively on Aristotelian, causation-based narrative structure. On the other hand, many contemporary playwriting teachers offer a more intuitive, experimental, generative approach. But most produced playwrights do not operate out of this either-or mentality; they borrow from both. This class brings these sometimes countervailing approaches together in one space, offering playwrights an opportunity to discover their own way of mixing and matching tools of the masters.

Bruce Walsh’s plays include Berserker (Kennedy Center MFA Playwrights’ Workshop), Prospect Hill (Indiana University Theatre), and Whisky Neat (Azuka Theatre). Recent honors include The 2017 Gary Garrison National Ten Minute Play Award. He graduated from Indiana University in May, with an MFA in Playwriting.

Story Laboratory
Anne Gerbner  One or Two Day Sections in A, C, or D

Ernest Hemingway once wrote that the “laws of prose writing are as immutable as those of flight, of mathematics, of physics.” We will test out his hypothesis as we experiment with various writing styles. In-class activities will be a springboard for imaginative writing, and short exercises will encourage innovation in points of view, character, and dialogue. To guide us, we’ll read some short stories by rule-makers like Ernest Hemingway, Anton Chekhov, and Flannery O’Connor, and rule-breakers like Haruki Murakami, Junot Diaz, Jennifer Egan, and recently published authors in The New Yorker. Students will keep a writing journal, share their writing with classmates in a supportive workshop and develop a writing portfolio of short fiction.

Anne Gerbner, member of the English Department, studied fiction writing (but not physics) at the University of Pennsylvania. She keeps up with her own writing at summer workshops.

Screenwriting
Kathleen Van Cleve  Monday Evenings

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 Good Will Hunting, Little Miss Sunshine, The Godfather and Finding Nemo (among others) and figuring out why they work. By the end of the course, each student must complete at least twenty-five pages of a screenplay. Enrollment is limited to twelve students.

Kathleen Van Cleve is a novelist, screenwriter and Senior Lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania, where she teaches screenwriting.
Before World War II, the word “genocide” did not exist. The term was invented by Nuremberg trial lawyer Raphael Lemkin. Beginning with Elie Wiesel’s Night, we will study the voices that help us to gain an understanding of how the events that created the Holocaust came into being, and how history has since replayed itself in multiple iterations. How do you capture the history and the experience of the Holocaust? What are the essential facts? What are the patterns in human behavior that we have seen recur? Students who enroll in this course will have an enhanced understanding of how to convey the ineffable and how to appreciate the beauty of language and image to conjure deeply powerful moments in history. These are empowering tools for studying any genre or time period of literature or film. We will draw from multiple texts, including the authors Ida Fink, Cynthia Ozick, and Bernard Malamud. Films we will watch will be numerous and varied: excerpts from Triumph of the Will; Obedience: The Milgram Experiment; The Sound of Music; Shoah; Night and Fog; Europa, Europa; Schindler’s List; The Pianist; Sophie’s Choice; The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas; Life is Beautiful; and Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport. Students will write response papers, keep a journal, make presentations to the class, and design a memorial.

Meg Goldner Rabinowitz shares a lifelong intellectual interest in studying the Holocaust as a case study in human behavior. Meg has taught a series of film courses in Essentially English for the past several years. She was a 2010 recipient of the Facing History and Ourselves Margot Stern Strom Teaching Award for this course.

Are you invested in good writing? Do you want to improve your writing skills while helping others get better at theirs? This course trains you to work as a peer writing advisor during the 2018-2019 school year. This cohort will join the ranks of what many high schools and colleges are working on across the country. In preparation, we will read articles on “peer tutoring” and role play various scenarios. Peer tutoring is a constantly shifting field with a rich history of research and technique. We will ask the timeless questions: What kind of feedback is worth giving? What is the difference between critique and criticism; editing and correcting? What is the value of traditional composition writing in the first place? This is a different type of course. First of all, this course is only open to current tenth and eleventh graders. Second of all, there is a slightly extended enrollment process; if you are interested, please contact Sara Primo to schedule a brief meeting.

Sara Primo has been peer editing since 1996. She was awarded the Rose Fellowship of Brown University in 2004, during which she helped train dozens of Brown undergraduates to be Writing Fellows. She teaches in the English Department at GFS.

This class offers an introduction to the work of David Foster Wallace who, with the publication of his 1996 novel, Infinite Jest, established himself as one of the most innovative, hilarious, and compassionate figures in American letters. Part dystopian science fiction and part screwball comedy, Infinite Jest is an ambitious, intensely funny, and surprisingly moving satire of a millennial America stupefied by fast food, drugs and entertainment spectacles. As the novelist Dave Eggers described it, Infinite Jest “is an exuberant, uniquely American exploration of the passions that make us human—and one of those rare books that renew the idea of what a novel can do.” Our reading will be kept to a manageable level and will include the first half of Infinite Jest, selections from the short story collection, Girl With Curious Hair, and the anthology of essays, A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again. As part of our work in this class, we will engage in our own experiments in short fiction, literary journalism, and social commentary. Students will write one analytical paper, one short story, and one story-length piece of creative nonfiction.

Joseph McGeary, a self-confessed “howling fantod” (fan of David Foster Wallace), teaches in the English Department at GFS. His interests include postmodern fiction and the history and theory of the novel.

How can we use language to describe what feels too enormous or complex to satisfyingly fit into words? How can we resist and take apart the language that we hear and read? How do we know whose words to trust? This course considers how American poets from 2000 to the present have dealt with crises: national and personal, environmental and civic. We’ll read poetry by Douglas Kearney, Elizabeth Willis, Danez Smith, Eileen Myles, CA Conrad, and many others. We’ll think, too, about the work of language in public life as we read advertisements, news reports, press releases and government documents with a poet’s eye (and as we use their language in our writing). We’ll write our own poems each week, workshop and edit our writing, and conclude the course with a chapbook of our own new poems. This is a course that reads poets as language strategists, working to make sense of how we all use words and syntax to represent ourselves and our communities, and to recognize and resist uses of language designed to divide and control. This is a course for students who love poetry, and for students who are hesitant or unsure about poems. This is a course for anyone curious about how to look carefully at and make sense of the language they use and encounter every day.

Davy Knittle (’07) first became excited about poetry as a student at GFS. He holds an MFA from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and is a PhD Candidate in English at Penn. His poems have appeared recently in Fence, Denver Quarterly, The Recluse and Columbia Poetry Review.
Adult Registration Information

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, with the first Monday evening class on Monday, April 2, and the last Wednesday evening class on Wednesday, May 23. Classes start promptly at 7:00 and run until 9:30 p.m., with one ten-minute break.

Daytime courses meet for three 60-minute sessions each week. Some courses are offered in one section only; 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.

To register, fill out the form below, and send it before February 5 to:

Joseph McGeary, Essentially English Coordinator
Germantown Friends School
31 West Coulter Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144

The fee for adults is $350.00 per course. Enclose a check payable to “GFS Essentially English.” If a course is over-subscribed or cancelled, you will be notified in time to choose another. Later registration is possible if there is space in the class. 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. For further information, email Joseph McGeary at jmcgeary@germantownfriends.org.

Essentially English 2018 Day Sections

2018 Adult Registration Form

Name ____________________________

Email ____________________________

Address ____________________________

Please print legibly

First Choice Course ____________________________

Second Choice Course ____________________________

Home Phone ____________________________

Work Phone ____________________________

Your Child’s Name ____________________________

Circle One: Current Parent  GFS Graduate

Faculty  Friend

Please include course number

Pierce Buller received a master’s degree in Medieval History from the University of Pennsylvania and his undergraduate degree in English and History from Colgate. This is his fifth medieval literature course for Essentially English.

Medieval Literature: Monsters, Monks, Manuscripts, and Mayhem

Pierce Buller  Wednesday Evenings

The medieval period, lasting from the Fall of Rome to the Age of Discovery, produced an exceptional range of literature, including epic, poetry, romance, and chronicle. Our class will begin with Beowulf, an early medieval epic where the hero has the strength of thirty men. We’ll conclude with a text from the high medieval period; Chretien’s Yvain, Knight of the Lion, a vivid story of King Arthur’s court, one of his greatest knights, and his loyal lion. We will also enjoy medieval battle poems, chronicles of warring kings and powerful queens, and lesser-known works, taking care to understand their particular place in world literature. Close reading, discussion, and two projects of significance will allow us to fully enjoy and savor this literature of power, beauty, and continuing illumination.

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Faculty  Friend

Please include course number

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