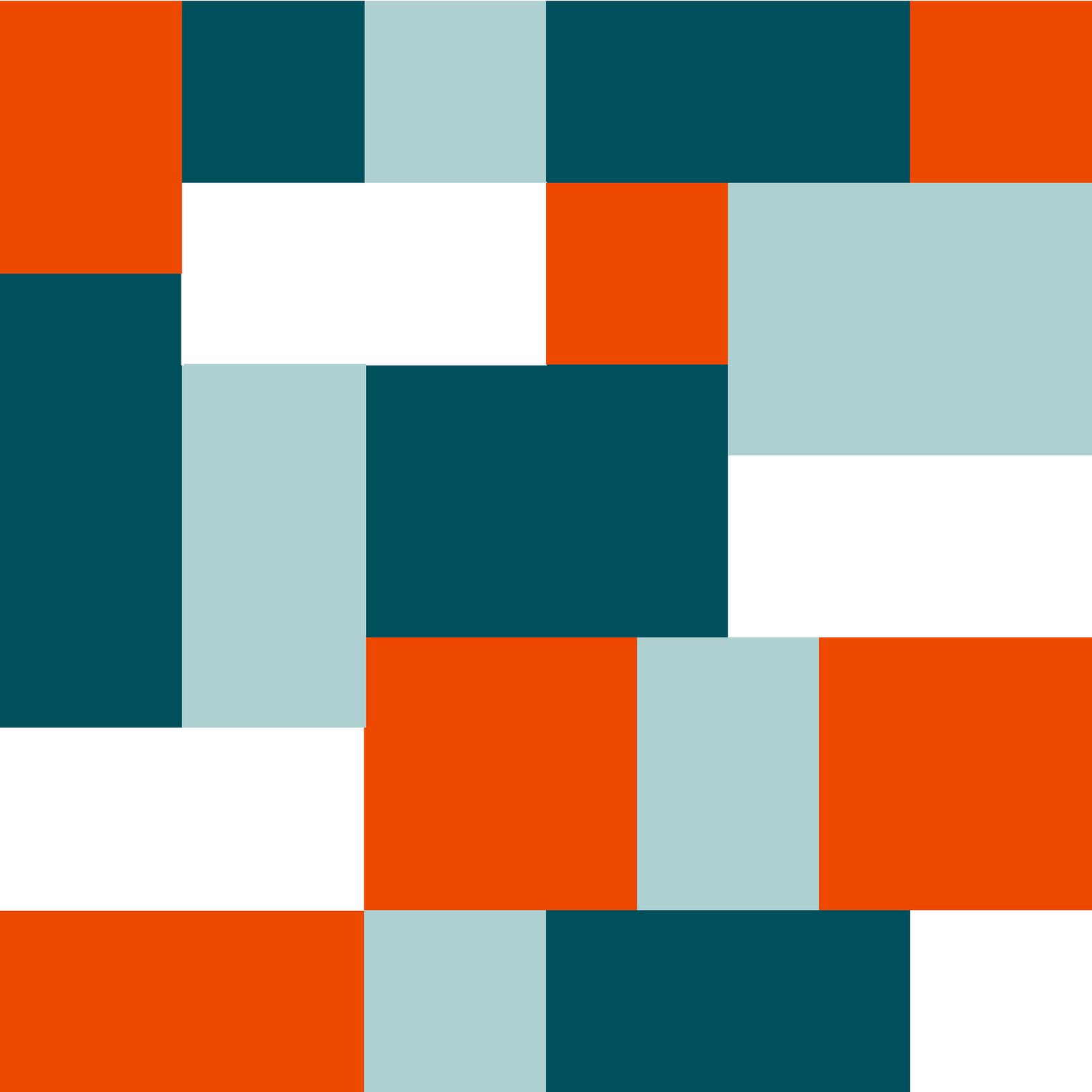


GERMANTOWN FRIENDS SCHOOL

# ESSENTIALLY ENGLISH 2019

LITERATURE AND WRITING COURSES FOR  
STUDENTS, PARENTS, ALUMNI, AND FRIENDS



During the months of April and May, Essentially English at Germantown Friends School offers literature and writing courses 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 exciting learning for all participants.

#### **EVENING COURSES**

Courses meet once per week for nine weeks, on either Mondays or Wednesdays, with the first Monday evening class on Monday, April 1 and the last Wednesday evening class on Wednesday, May 29. Classes start promptly at 7 p.m. and run until 9:30 p.m., with one ten-minute break.

#### **DAYTIME COURSES**

Courses meet for 5 60-minute sessions in an 8-day cycle, with the first cycle beginning on Monday, April 1. 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.

## 1. MUSIC AND THE EDUCATION OF BLACK PEOPLE

NJEMELE ANDERSON • MONDAY EVENING

This course is an analytical study of the essays of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. The purpose of the course is to examine the evolution of education in the lives of black people in America. This examination will be facilitated through the analysis of DuBois' book, *The Education of Black People*, while simultaneously studying music which speaks to the issues of education in the lives of black people and the social themes present in the book. The following is a sample list of possible artists that may be studied during the course: David Banner, Mos Def, Jay-Z, Lauryn Hill, James Brown, August Alsina, and J. Cole. In the words of Du Bois, "There must be great energy and initiative in education, for African Americans controlling their own lives, and for continued experimentation and innovation, while keeping education's fundamentally radical nature in view." Participants will answer the question, *How would Du Bois critique the current state of the education of black people in America?* Students will write two analytical essays and create a digital presentation.

Njemele Anderson is a high school AP English teacher. She holds a B.S. in Secondary Education from Temple University and a M.Ed. in Restorative Practices in Education from The International Institute of Restorative Practices.

## 2. THE SOUND AND THE FURY AND THE BLUEST EYE: TWO NOVELS

ALEX LEVIN • WEDNESDAY EVENING

*The Sound and the Fury* and *The Bluest Eye* share complexities in their structures and themes. When Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* was first published, he suggested that the novel ought to be printed in fourteen colors to represent the various timeframes within its first chapter. We will work with a black and white print edition of this endlessly fascinating and challenging work. *The Sound and the Fury* tells the story of the collapse of a southern family in an arresting style best experienced with a cohort of readers. When Morrison wrote *The Bluest Eye*, her first novel, she exploded onto the scene as an important new literary voice. Like *The Sound and the Fury*, *The Bluest Eye* is a meditation on a family's tragic trajectory, told through multiple perspectives. Be prepared: Both books deal with issues of race, gender, and incest, and feature plenty of existential angst. Together, these two texts reward close reading and comparison. We will write two papers, a short one and a long one, and at least one story and one poem.

Alex Levin, GFS '93, likes the feeling of reading a book that makes no sense until, at some point, it makes sense. He is Head of the English Department and a jazz musician.

## 3. CUT TO THE BONE: THE ART OF FLASH FICTION

JUNE GONDI • TWO DAY SECTIONS IN E, F

*If you would be pungent, be brief; for it is with words as with sunbeams. The more they are condensed, the deeper they burn.*

—Robert Southey

To capture the essence of a story, to let every word move the narrative forward is the task set before you. We will delve into the art of storytelling and find out what it takes to craft that phrase, that sentence that will embody the bare necessity of flash fiction. You will write and workshop your fiction. To guide us, we will read stories from a variety of sources that include the likes of *SmokeLong Quarterly*, *Flash Fiction Forward*, the *New Yorker*, and *Flash Fiction International*.

June Gondi teaches English at Germantown Friends School. She's also a writer whose work has appeared in *Kitu Kizuri*, a magazine for African women in the diaspora. Her work has also been published in *Death Knell V*, a collection of short stories by Delaware Valley mystery authors.

## 4. CHARLES MEE'S (RE)MAKING PROJECT

GEO DECAS O'DONNELL • WEDNESDAY EVENING

The playwright Charles Mee believes that there is no such thing as an original play. The Ancient Greek playwrights and Shakespeare based their work on existing stories, and contemporary playwrights are constantly creating work based on those classical plays. He argues that "whether we mean to or not, the work we do is both received and created, adaptation and original, at the same time. We re-make things as we go." During this course we will study the (re)making project as well as plays by Mee. We'll look at other examples of contemporary re-tellings, including works by Sarah Ruhl, Suzan-Lori Parks and Anne Carson. Students will then embark on their own (re)making of a classical play. We'll study a play, making notes and sketches and observations, then we'll make more notes and sketches on the previous notes and sketches, building a scaffolding around the classical piece. The more we create, the stronger our scaffolding becomes until we can slip the source material out and our new play will stand on its own.

Geo Decas O'Donnell is a playwright who teaches in the GFS Theatre Department. He has studied with Charles Mee and has (re)made several stories including versions of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *The Bakkhai*, and *Candide*.

## 5. COMIX AND SACRED TEXT

J.T. WALDMAN • MONDAY EVENING

This course engages multiple visual cultures and religions through the reading of comics that depict sacred traditions and ethos. We will consider the intersection of religious literature and sequential art and the ways in which these texts interact, merge, create, inform, and dynamically negotiate conceptions of religion. Together we will explore how visual media and notions of the sacred interweave to produce robust accounts of the religious experience. Readings will include excerpts from graphic novels like Crumb's *Genesis*, Waldman's *Megillat Esther*, and Ross's *Marked*. The rhetorical play of image and text that occurs when comics and religious literature coalesce will also be analyzed through essays in comics criticism found in *Graven Images: Religion in Comic Books & Graphic Novels* and the recently published *Comics and Sacred Text*. Students will produce a written response to one of the texts presented in class as well as create a text and image meditation (A.K.A. a comic) about a religious theme or experience. No drawing experience required.

JT Waldman teaches in the Theatre and Computer Science/Digital Media Departments at GFS. He is also a comic book creator and digital designer. His graphic novel, *Megillat Esther*, was published in 2005 by the Jewish Publication Society. His 2012 collaboration with Harvey Pekar, *Not the Israel My Parents Promised Me*, reached the *New York Times* Best Seller List.

## 6. IMMIGRANT POETS AND POEMS OF IMMIGRATION

SARA PRIMO • TWO DAY SECTIONS IN E, G, H

Perhaps poetry collections can't replace newspapers, but they do provide as valid a view into the contemporary landscape as any piece of nonfiction. The refugee crisis, immigration policy, and family separations are on my mind. This course will provide an artistic lens through which to look at what it means to immigrate, what it means to be undocumented, and what it means to be between homes. Poetry collections used (and countries of origin) will include: *Unaccompanied* by Javier Zamora (El Salvador), *Driving Without a License* by Janine Joseph (Philippines), *Citizen Illegal* by José Olivarez (Mexico), *Eye Level* by Jenny Xie (China), *If They Came for Us* by Fatimah Asghar (India), and *Not Here* by Hieu Minh Nguyen (Vietnam). Over spring break, students will read an excerpt from *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen* by Jose Antonio Vargas (Philippines). Over the course of the class, alongside the poetry collections, they will also read excerpts from America Ferrera's compilation, *American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures*. Students will also use journalism pieces such as "The Democrats Have an Immigration Problem" to explore where they stand on this topic. The

main assessments for this class will be an ongoing poetry journal demonstrating what new points of view students have considered and a final analytical piece pairing two of the poetry collections.

Sara Primo majored in American Civilization at Brown University with a focus on ethnic literature. Two of her favorite courses were "Chicano/a Literature" and "Poetry in Service to Schools and the Community." She has always loved examining politics through poetry. She teaches Upper School English at GFS.

## 7. MINDFULNESS AND MEMOIR: WITNESS AND WRITE YOUR LIFE STORIES

JENNIFER SCHELTER • WEDNESDAY EVENING

How does a writer see their own life as art, choose personal experiences and develop a stunning, impactful story and narrative? We can contain and understand our life through mindfulness and memoir. These two reflective creative practices can support the understanding of our selves. The beauty and challenge of this course will be to practice mindfulness while you discover the seminal events, influential relationships, themes and authentic voice of your memoir. We will delve into universal themes, reflect through guided meditation, and practice four basic writing and story structures. We will read three contemporary memoirs, including one graphic memoir, *100 Hundred Demons* by Lynda Barry, and micro-memoir, *Heating and Cooling* by Beth Ann Fennelly. We will read chapters and excerpts from mindfulness based authors and memoirist: Jon Kabat Zinn, Pema Chodron, Anne Lamott, Mary Karr, Tara Westover, Heather Sellers, Steven King, Colum McCann, Helen Macdonald, David Sedaris, and Abigail Thomas.

Class will include a short mindful meditation, writing prompts, discussions on memoirs, reading work out loud, and supportive feedback through edits. You may also include visual work (painting, drawing, collage, photograph, etc.) with your written work. Participants will be required to journal each week, write at least six scenes from life, revise the work, and conclude the course with either three completed, polished scenes or ten completed pages of your memoir.

Named "Best of Philly" multiple times throughout her 20 years of teaching mindfulness, yoga and writing, Jennifer Schelter, GFS '84, is passionate about art-making, reading, practicing and studying the connection between mindfulness, creativity, and memoir writing. Her one-woman show *Love Lessons* ran to sold-out audiences at Inter Act Theater in Philadelphia.

## 8. CARIBBEAN WRITERS OF LONDON

SAM SULLIVAN • TWO DAY SECTIONS IN E, F, G, H

George Lamming writes in his introduction to the *Pleasures of Exile* that his purpose for these essays is to interpret the present situation of the West Indian writer in London: “My subject is the migration of the West Indian writer, as colonial and exile, from his native kingdom, once inhabited by Caliban, to the tempestuous island of Prospero and his language.” He ends this chapter with a characteristic double-negative: “It will not help to say that I am wrong in the parallels which I have set out to interpret; for I shall point out that my mistake, lived and deeply felt by millions of men like me—proves the positive value of error.” *The positive value of error? Huh?* Through a close reading of writings like these (by George Lamming, Jamaica Kincaid, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, and others), and Sam Selvon’s seminal calypso-novel, *The Lonely Londoners*, our course will attempt to describe the ironic ‘value of error’ as represented in the works of West Indian 20th century writers in the Metropole.

Sam Sullivan has lived in the Pacific Northwest and all along I-95. He teaches English at GFS. His poems have been published in *Ploughshares* and *Hanging Loose Press*. He likes pick-up basketball and the Pointer Sisters.

## 9. AMERICAN PARADISE LOST: THE NOVELS OF PHILIP ROTH

JOSEPH MCGEARY • MONDAY EVENING

Philip Roth, a pre-eminent figure in American literary fiction, passed away in May of 2018 at the age of 85 after a prolific career in which he produced more than thirty novels. After his 1959 novella of Jewish-American middle-class life, *Goodbye, Columbus*, brought him fame and critical acclaim when he was not yet 27 years old, Roth for more than fifty years continued to push the limits of American fiction with his comic genius, imaginative bravado, and sheer eloquence. In this course we will explore novels that are fun to read while offering exceptionally thought-provoking depictions of American culture and society. Roth writes with powerful authenticity of the joys and terrors of childhood, the Faustian bargains and dark secrets that stain the legends of our heroes, and the tragedies that thwart the happiness of ordinary Americans in the 20th and (now) 21st centuries. Possible texts: *Goodbye, Columbus*; *The Plot Against America*; *American Pastoral*; *The Human Stain*. Assessments: short weekly response papers, a longer paper, and a short piece of original narrative fiction.

Joseph McGeary holds a Ph.D. in English from Duke University and has taught at GFS since 2005.

## 10. WRITING AND PAINTING

ANNE GERBNER & DEBRA HOFFMAN • MONDAY EVENING

This interdisciplinary writing workshop is designed for students who would like to explore the many ways that literature and art ‘speak’ to each another. Students will create their own writer’s sketchbook in response to a variety of visual and literary material. Students will write fiction, poetry and nonfiction for homework, and during class we will experiment with color theory, pen and ink, calligraphy, watercolor, oil pastel, and cut outs to connect with and inspire our writing. We will read highly visual fiction, poetry, and essays by writers such as Annie Dillard, Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, Gwendolyn Brooks, Flannery O’Connor, Junichiro Tanizaki, Antuan Sargent, Mark Strand, Lydia Davis, e.e. cummings, Walter Pater, and Kazuo Ishiguro. As we explore minimalism, fauvism, cubism, illuminated letters, typewriter art, and abstract expressionism, we will draw inspiration from Kara Walker, Mark Rothko, Agnes Martin, Helen Frankenthaler, J.M.W Turner, Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Cezanne, Victor Hugo, and Honore Daumier, among others. Critique and feedback will be essential components in our process. In addition to completing weekly reading and writing assignments and developing their artists’ journal, students are required to research an artist/writer and write a final paper.

GFS teachers Anne Gerbner and Debra Hoffman were inspired to team-teach this course after collaborating on their J-Term class, Painting with Words. Anne, a member of the English Department, currently teaches the Story Studio Advanced Writing Seminar and writes short fiction. Debra Hoffman, a member of the Art Department, teaches Foundation and Drawing and Painting and is a landscape painter.

## 11. SCREENWRITING

KATHLEEN VAN CLEVE • MONDAY EVENING

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.

## 12. THE AMERICAN TRANSCENDENTALIST

PETER DELAPLANE • MONDAY EVENING

This course will trace the roots of American transcendentalist thought through explorations of writings by Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Walt Whitman. We will look at the ways in which these texts resonate with later literary and social movements of the twentieth century, and in particular, with the Beat poets of the 1950's and 1960's. We will also read Jack Kerouac's *On The Road* and John Krakauer's *Into The Wild*. In addition to essay responses, the course will include creative writing and a Thoreau-style retreat.

Having graduated from Kenyon College with a degree in English, Peter Delaplane, GFS '87, moved into a career as a guitarist and music teacher in the Philadelphia area. He recently earned his Master's degree in classical guitar performance at Temple University's Boyer College of Music. He teaches instrumental music at GFS and has taught music and American Literature at Abington Friends School.

## 13. POSTMODERNISM AND ITS LITERARY AFTERMATHS

ADAM HOTEK • ONE OR TWO DAY SECTIONS IN E, F, G, H

Many literary histories suggest that after World War II, something called "postmodernism" emerged. This movement or artistic impulse has been described as embracing certain forms of moral relativism and consumer culture, while also challenging certain "truths" about human nature, reason, and language. We will begin this course by exploring some of the tenets of postmodernism. To achieve this end, we will read twentieth and twenty-first-century philosophy, as well as two canonical postmodern texts, Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* and Don DeLillo's *White Noise*. Our class will then explore a group of novels written in the wake of postmodernism including Colson Whitehead's *The Intuitionist*, and Rivka Galchen's *Atmospheric Disturbances*. We will also examine the writings of Judith Butler, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Ishmael Reed, Tracy Smith, Fredric Jameson, Jean Baudrillard, Brenda Shaughnessy, Steven Lopez, and Lewis Carroll. Students will produce formal and informal writing as well as a classroom presentation.

Adam Hotek teaches English at GFS and is a veteran teacher in the Essentially English program. He has taught at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of the Arts and has been a teaching instructor in the Breakthrough Philadelphia program. His interests include psychoanalysis, late twentieth-century philosophy, literary genre studies, and Afro-American studies.

## 14. FALLING UP: THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN MIGRANT EXPERIENCE

KYLE TRAYNHAM • WEDNESDAY EVENING

In his poem "One-Way Ticket," Langston Hughes writes: "*I pick up my life / And take it on the train / To Los Angeles, Bakersfield... / Any place that is / North and West— / And not South.*" American literary history features a vibrant strain of African Americans who have pushed and pulled on our nation to share their experience. Drawing on Hughes's poem, we will examine the impact of dislocation and urbanization, which will help us identify the resulting effect of the Great Migration narrative. Together, we will explore and unpack the self-made model, or the "new northern identity" as it pertains to African Americans who emerged from the South hoping for a prosperous life in the North. We will read James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on a Mountain*, Toni Morrison's *Jazz and Sula*, Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem*, and Rudolph Fisher's "City of Refuge." Furthermore, alongside appropriate criticism, we will explore these African American luminaries to further our understanding of the past as we question its impact, particularly post-Civil War. Students will be asked to submit response papers and will deliver a short presentation.

Kyle Traynham teaches English at the Haverford School and co-taught an Essentially English course last year. He is thrilled about returning this spring. His interests include late nineteenth and early twentieth-century American literature. He fancies Henry James and James Baldwin as superheroes.

## 15. THE NOVEL TODAY

JOSEPH MCGEARY • TWO DAY SECTIONS IN E, F, G, H

In this course, we will read, discuss, and write about some of the best novels being produced right now. In *Lincoln in the Bardo*, George Saunders weaves together fact, fiction, dreams, and the supernatural in his novel about the death of Abraham Lincoln's beloved 11-year-old son, Willie, who succumbed to typhoid fever in 1862. Saunders' novel is a beautiful meditation not only on Lincoln's personal grief and that of the nation during the Civil War, but also, as the critic Michiko Kakutani puts it, on "the more universal heartbreak that is part of the human condition." In *Super Sad True Love Story*, Gary Shteyngart brilliantly mixes comedy and pathos in a novel that is at once a sweetly moving tale of love and a hilarious satire of a futuristic America on the brink of financial collapse. Set during World War II, Jennifer Egan's *Manhattan Beach* is the story of Anna Kerrigan, a young woman who works at Brooklyn Navy Yard, where women are allowed to hold jobs that once belonged to men, now soldiers abroad. She becomes the first female diver, the most dangerous and exclusive of occupations, repairing the ships that will help America win the war. Egan's novel is also a mystery story, as Anna's father has turned up missing. The *Boston Globe* calls *Manhattan Beach* "a magnificent

achievement, at once a suspenseful noir intrigue and a transporting work of lyrical beauty and emotional heft.” Students will write two essays and an original piece of narrative fiction.

Joseph McGeary holds a Ph.D. in English from Duke University and has taught at GFS since 2005.

## 16. POETS RESPOND

RACHEL REYNOLDS • WEDNESDAY EVENING

*Now / make room in the mouth / for grassesgrassesgrasses*  
—Layli Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*

In fraught political moments, it isn't only politicians and the powers that be that are busy. Artists roll up their sleeves, too, using their talents and platforms to express the sentiments of ordinary people through song, dance, visual art, and more. In this class, we're going to focus our attention on poets, exploring the poet's capacity to respond to the political sphere through the page. Along the way, we'll read Layli Long Soldier's *WHEREAS* (which, among other things, responds to President Obama's 2009 congressional resolution of apology to Native Americans) and Muriel Rukeyser's *Book of the Dead* (written in response to the Hawk's Nest Tunnel disaster of 1931 in Gauley Bridge, West Virginia), as well as other poems (including Ross Gay's *A Small Needful Fact*). One part writing workshop, one part poetry course, students will compare narrative accounts of events to poetic documentation, cultivating an appreciation for the power and potential of different forms and ultimately writing their own series of poems that respond to a political reality of their choosing. Students will also keep reading logs and write an analytical essay.

Rachel Reynolds has been curious about poetry's potential ever since reading Sylvia Plath's Bee poems in high school. She holds a degree in Rhetoric from the University of California, Berkeley and has studied with Lidia Yunkavitch and Rae Gouirand. Her work has appeared in *VICE*, *Duende*, *Liminalities*, *The Nervous Breakdown*, and *Hip Mama*.

## 17. THE ART OF ESSAY WRITING

VICTORIA STITT • WEDNESDAY EVENING

In this course, we will traverse the literary universe of essays. Through reading exemplary pieces from *The New Yorker*, *Feel Free* by Zadie Smith, *Sister Outsider* by Audre Lorde, *A Human Eye* by Adrienne Rich, and select works from Ta-Nehisi Coates, students will explore the boundary of objective and subjective, of seeing with “an” eye and seeing with “your” eye. We will discuss the ways Smith, Lorde, Rich, Coates and others tell us about their own selves and our own selves simultaneously. While this course is reading intensive, it is also writing intensive. Students will

explore different genres of essay writing in their own essays. Assignments for this course will include one analytical essay and two creative essays. Students will workshop their essays with partners and in small groups to sharpen their editorial eye and learn how to become better peer revisers. The instructor will also hold individual writing conferences. And, finally, as in their writing, students will be at the center of the conversation.

Victoria Anita Stitt is an English teacher at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy. She often references Joy Harjo's *She Had Some Horses* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* in her poetry and, more recently, Elif Batuman's *The Idiot* and Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* in her essays. After attending three Quaker institutions and teaching the Harkness method at The Lawrenceville School, she has come to be a disciple of Dewey and a firm believer in the idea that the pupil teaches the class. She also loves to dance.

## 18. EXISTENTIALISM IN LITERATURE AND FILM

GREGORY WOLMART • WEDNESDAY EVENING

We have all asked basic questions about our existence in this world and how to live in it, such as: “Who am I, really?”; “Why am I here, in this point in time and space, as opposed to any other?”; “How should I live?”; “What purpose am I fulfilling, if any?” These are the kinds of questions posed, if not always resolved, by the so-called existential artists we will discuss in this course. Beginning with texts of the nineteenth-century and concluding with those of the present, we will discuss various fictional and philosophical approaches to the nature of human existence, the realities with which it is entwined, and our enduring struggle to make sense of it all. We will see how different texts tackled these issues in different ways at different times, including our own. In the process, we will cultivate our quintessentially human capacities to think and to write critically with weekly critical responses to the assigned texts, presentations, and a final project asking students to define themselves outside the labels placed on them. To fulfill our critical thinking and writing objectives, our primary focus will be on existential literature, with complementary investigations of film and philosophy to illustrate the finer points of the big questions we will tackle. Texts will likely include: Albert Camus' *The Stranger*; Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*; Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and its film adaptation, *Blade Runner*; the Wachowskis's *The Matrix*; Peter Weir's *The Truman Show*, among others.

Gregory Wolmart received his B.A. in English from Cornell University and his Ph.D. in English from the University of Pennsylvania. For over 20 years, he has taught a wide variety of courses in literature and film at the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, and the University of the Arts.

## 19. FICTIONS OF CHILDHOOD

ANNE GERBNER • ONE DAY SECTION IN F, G

In this course, we will read fiction written for adults about the nature of childhood. We will review several theories of childhood and discuss the influence of Grimm's Fairy Tales, but the course will focus on contemporary short fiction. We will read a variety of short stories about children by writers Flannery O'Connor, Jhumpa Lahiri, George Saunders, Kelly Link, Junot Diaz, Mo Yan, Ernest Hemingway, Walter Mosley, Dan Chaon, Z.Z. Packer, Tobias Wolff, Edward P. Jones, Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood, Philip Roth, and Ursula LeGuin. We will also look at excerpts from childhood memoirs by Tara Westover, Jesmyn Ward, and Tobias Wolff. In addition to reading the stories that adults have written about children, we will visit classes in GFS's early education program and Lower School to observe how children learn to tell and then write their own stories. Students will read a selection of stories for each class and during the course, will create a portfolio of writing on childhood composed of their own fiction, memoir, poetry, and essays.

Anne Gerbner is a member of the English Department and is always on the lookout for new contemporary short fiction. She is also particularly interested in how children learn to tell stories.

## 20. MOBY-DICK

SAM SULLIVAN • MONDAY EVENING

A book is like a contract. You buy in, read on, agree to something or other, and, assuming you finish it, you expect it to deliver a return. In this course, we will think about what Melville has to say about contracts and agreements and returns—what are the returns for the characters who embark on this whaling journey? What is our return for embarking on our journey as Americans? Before the hunt, before the trials and the tribulations, Ishmael, the main character and narrator of *Moby-Dick*, and his immigrant harpooner and newfound acquaintance Queequeg present themselves at the *Pequod*, after sharing a bed the night before in a New Bedford inn. When they meet the proprietors of the ship, Queequeg signs a contract entitling him to the 90th lay of the profits from their impending journey. This means that upon return from the whaling voyage, Queequeg the harpooner is entitled to one ninetyeth of the net gain. Wide-eyed young Ishmael, our hero, though a seasoned sailor in his own right, receives, after much haggling, a contract for the 300th lay. Queequeg does no such negotiating. In immediately offering him to 1/90th of the remaining profits from the whaling voyage, Captain Bildad suggests that, in whaling terms, one Queequeg is worth roughly three and one third Ishmaels. Because Queequeg is 'illiterate' he signs the contractual document with "his mark illustration of the infinity sign." But what

have we actually signed up for? Through our reading of this sprawling and at times gripping, at times barely legible novel, our course will interrogate the terms of our contract on our American journey, a contract we carry out beyond the margins of the state, beyond the margins of language, beyond the margins of the body, to "infinity," really.

Sam Sullivan has lived in the Pacific Northwest and all along I-95. He teaches English at GFS. His poems have been published in *Ploughshares* and *Hanging Loose Press*. He likes pick-up basketball and the Pointer Sisters.

## 21. AURAL COLLAGES/FRAGMENT POEMS

GEO DECAS O'DONNELL • ONE DAY SECTION IN E, F, G

When creating a collage, an artist will take all sorts of material: photos, drawings, articles, postcards, bits of little things from nature, etc., and glue them all together on a board or in a shadow box. The tension of disparate elements sandwiched next to each other creates a story through their juxtaposition. What if we limited the collage material to words and created collages meant to be listened to, not viewed, a surrealist podcast of words that we could stream as we walk down the street, disorienting us a bit, making our brains tingle a little? In this course we'll gain inspiration by researching surrealist collage artists like Max Ernst, and we'll also look to writers that received their words from different sources, such as James Merrill's *Ouija Poems*. Then we'll study absurd and surrealist texts, such as *Waiting For Godot*, by Samuel Beckett. We'll then experiment with creating collages. We'll tape together fragments of our writings, the writings of others, bits from papers and magazines, speeches, instruction manuals; as the glue dries we'll begin recording our collages. We'll then edit our surrealist work into podcasts that people can download.

Geo Decas O'Donnell teaches in the Theatre Department at GFS and is a writer and lover of collage. He has been inspired to experiment with collages after attending a play this past summer that involved lots of microphones and different voices and fragmented stories.

## 22. READING DOSTOYEVSKY: THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY

ADAM HOTEK • ONE OR TWO DAY SECTIONS IN E, F, G, 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 answered 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 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 presentation.

Adam Hotek teaches English at GFS and is a veteran teacher in the Essentially English program. He has taught at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of the Arts and has been a teaching instructor in the Breakthrough Philadelphia program. His interests include psychoanalysis, late twentieth-century philosophy, literary genre studies, and Afro-American studies.

## **23. SHOW ME THE MONEY: THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY IN BOOKS AND FILM**

**MICHAEL SILVER • MONDAY EVENING**

Every industry has a hidden side. Behind every song you listen to and every movie or TV show you watch there is a story of what went on before it reached the airwaves. This class will examine the entertainment industry from the inside out and try to answer questions like: what it means to succeed, how important is the role of the fan, and why some artists make it while others fail. We will discuss Jennifer Egan's *A Visit From the Goon Squad*, Roddy Doyle's *The Commitments*, and Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity*, as well as the movies *Almost Famous* and *That Thing You Do!* and some short excerpts from the non-fiction works *Our Band Could Be Your Life* and *So You Wanna Be a Rock & Roll Star*. Assessments include one creative writing assignment, one essay, and one short essay-style exam.

Michael Silver has had a unique view of the entertainment industry for over 30 years, first as a touring musician and later an entertainment attorney representing, among others, producers in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, songwriters in the Songwriters Hall of Fame, Grammy winners, record companies, actors, authors, and artists. He is the parent of two current GFS students and one GFS alumnus.

## **24. PEER WRITING ADVISOR TRAINING**

**SARA PRIMO & JUNE GONDI • MONDAY EVENING**

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 2019–2020 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 roleplay 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 and June Gondi teach English at GFS. Sara has been peer editing since 1996. She was awarded the Rose Fellowship at Brown University in 2004, during which she helped train dozens of Brown undergraduates as Writing Fellows. June is also a writer whose work has appeared in *Kitu Kizuri*, a magazine for African women in the diaspora. Her work has also been published in *Death Knell V*, a collection of short stories by Delaware Valley mystery authors.

# Adult Registration

## **TO REGISTER**

Go to [bit.ly/eeregistration2019](http://bit.ly/eeregistration2019)

The deadline for registration is February 15, 2019. The fee for adults is \$350, which will be billed once you are placed in a course. Late registration is possible if there is space in a course. 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. 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. For further information, email Joseph McGeary at [jmcgeary@germantownfriends.org](mailto:jmcgeary@germantownfriends.org).

## **EVENING COURSES**

Courses meet once per week for nine weeks, on either Mondays or Wednesdays, with the first Monday evening class on Monday, April 1 and the last Wednesday evening class on Wednesday, May 29. Because we will be closed for the Memorial Day Holiday on Monday, May 27, the last Monday evening class will instead meet on Wednesday, May 29. Classes start promptly at 7 p.m. and run until 9:30 p.m., with one ten-minute break.

## **DAYTIME COURSES**

Courses meet for five 60-minute sessions in an eight-day cycle, with the first cycle beginning on Monday, April 1. Some courses are offered in one section only; others are offered in two or three. Those courses 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 SECTION E**

Day 2, 11:30–12:30 or 12:00–1:00

Day 3, 1:05–2:05

Day 5, 8:15–9:15

Day 7, 2:30–3:20

Day 8, 10:30–11:30

### **DAY SECTION F**

Day 1, 10:30–11:30

Day 3, 11:30–12:30 or 12:00–1:00

Day 4, 1:05–2:05

Day 6, 8:15–9:15

Day 8, 2:30–3:20

### **DAY SECTION G**

Day 1, 2:30–3:20

Day 2, 10:30–11:30

Day 4, 11:30–12:30 or 12:00–1:00

Day 5, 1:05–2:05

Day 7, 8:15–9:15

### **DAY SECTION H**

Day 2, 2:30–3:20

Day 3, 10:30–11:30

Day 5, 11:30–12:30 or 12:00–1:00

Day 6, 1:05–2:05

Day 8, 8:15–9:15