

Summer 2026

Critical Studies of Disney: Media, Power, and Cultural Representation

Dr. Emily Aguiló-Pérez

This course examines Disney as a global cultural force across film, television, theme parks, merchandise, and digital media. Students will engage Disney not as entertainment alone, but as a site of ideology, identity formation, and cultural negotiation.

Chicken Little vs. The Gingerbread Man: Fake News and Mis/Disinformation in a Digital World

Dr. Vicki Tischio

In this seminar, we are going to study the problem of fake news and mis/disinformation (including forms of plagiarism and the roles that AI play in this problem). We are going to present this information to each other via discussions forums, videos and rare small group or individual Zoom meetings with the professor. We are going to begin building a peer-to-peer website that will be used nationally by college students to provide them with tools to deal with fake news/disinformation. Everyone will select a topic for a seminar paper that arises from their videos or discussion posts. The course will culminate in 2 projects. (1) A seminar paper will be historicized, theorized and/or contextualized using resources from this course and from library research and can become the basis for a conference presentation or publication with the professor and/or other students. (2) Portion of a website that will communicate what we have learned to other students so they can be better informed about the perils of fake news, dis/misinformation in a digital world. I think it sounds like a great learning opportunity for us all, and an excellent way to turn that learning into community action by educating others.

Fall 2026

Bad Bunny and the Politics of Reggaetón: Music, Culture, and Resistance

Dr. Emily Aguilo-Perez

Music is one of the most powerful forces shaping our global present socially, politically, and culturally. In an era defined by debates about migration, gender expression, colonial histories, racial justice, and economic precarity, popular music does more than entertain: it reflects, reframes, and often challenges the structures that shape our lives. Few contemporary artists embody this dynamic as vividly as Bad Bunny. From Puerto Rico to the global stage, his work has become a site where questions of language, masculinity, protest, and belonging are performed in real time.

In this ENG 400 seminar, we will examine Bad Bunny's music, performances, public persona, and activism as complex cultural texts. What does reggaetón make possible as a medium of critique? How do lyrics, fashion, and performance challenge traditional gender norms? In what ways does Bad Bunny confront U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico while operating within global capitalism? Drawing from reggaetón studies, Caribbean studies, literary theory, and media studies, we will analyze songs, music videos, concerts,

interviews, and fan discourse—treating his work as “equipment for living” that names contemporary anxieties and imagines new forms of identity and resistance. Interested students can learn more about Dr. Aguiló-Pérez’s research interests on the English Department’s website.

Hidden Stories of WWII in Youth Literature

Dr. Gabrielle Halko

A study of children’s and YA texts about counternarratives that subvert and complicate the consensus narratives of WWII. We’ll interrogate American mythology – how do we continue to claim that the U.S. fought to defend democracy when Black soldiers couldn’t vote and Japanese Americans were imprisoned? What happens when we broaden our concept of the war to include the beginnings of the Holocaust in Ukraine and the fearless female pilots who flew bombers for Russia? How can our efforts now keep these fascinating, necessary stories alive?

“We Are the Union”: Rhetorics of Work, Labor, and Organizing

Dr. Seth Kahn

This seminar will focus on contemporary rhetoric within and about unions in the US, ranging from higher ed and K-12 across a variety of white-collar professions, and to more craft/trade workplaces. Drawing on research from rhetoric, sociology, and labor studies, we will examine the exigencies, processes, and strategies for organizing unions; common tactics/strategies for discouraging or impeding organizing efforts; and mainstream rhetoric about unions and how it intersects with both of the above. Students’ research will focus on a particular workplace, union, or profession, investigating its history of organizing—both successes and failures—and the status of any current efforts, and juxtaposing that close attention to specific organizing efforts with mainstream representations of unions and unionism.

Environmentalism in English Studies: History, Language, Change

Dr. Cheryl Wanko

This seminar looks at how “nature” and environmental problems have been constructed in (mainly) Anglo-American writing. By examining a range of types of texts, we will consider questions related to ecocriticism, investigate sustainability, perform research related to the intersections of language, literature, science, and culture, and create texts that address environmental questions. We will complete and reflect on a series of sustainability action challenges so that we get out of our seats and away from our screens to do some empirical 1st-hand research.

As you know, we currently face a lot of problems. Affordability. Violence. Housing. Challenges to democracy. Racism. Etc.! So why spend a semester looking at other problems, those with the environment? Because they are all intertwined – you can’t address fracking, or polar bears, or climate without talking economics and human behavior – and because English majors have unique opportunities to intervene through language and stories. This seminar is for you, if you want to learn some ways to do that.