Course Description:
This course will ask you to think seriously about literary language so as to write better about literary and cultural texts. Our study will focus on the specialized vocabulary with which writers and scholars talk about lyric and narrative forms, and we will also think broadly and deeply about the historical purposes of literature. We will ask questions like: What constitutes “literary language”? Why do we read novels and poems? Why are they written? Why do writers choose particular forms and genres? What is the purpose of genres for readers and writers? What are the effects of literary figures? How does literary writing help us make sense of consciousness? of social organizations? of time? of place? of mind? What difference does style make? We will ask such big and small questions about texts so as to learn how to write passionately and eloquently about writing and the power of language and speculative imagination.

Course Requirements:
- **Regular and engaged attendance and participation.** This class will be run as a seminar and so your attendance and participation are crucial. I expect you to complete each reading assignment before our class meeting on that work, as indicated on the calendar below. You should bring your text, notebooks and/or laptops to every class, and you should also come prepared with notes and questions on the readings for the day. If you miss more than 2 classes, your grade will be affected negatively. More than 4 absences will automatically result in an E. There is no need to submit excuses for your two absences, as the same policy applies regardless of your reason for missing class.
- **Notebook.** You are encouraged to keep a reading notebook throughout the course in which you keep track of important details, questions, observations, quarrels, etc. This notebook can be either handwritten or digital. And although I will not be grading it, it will be useful for paper writing and exams.
- **Carmen posts.** Throughout the quarter, you will need to write and publish at least 6 different ‘posts’ or ‘missives’ on Carmen Discussion site. Each of these posts should be approximately 300-500 words and are an opportunity for you to pose a reading/interpretation/analysis/question about a particular text. You do not need to come with any conclusions, but rather you want to describe what you found interesting, annoying, perplexing, awesome, horrid, banal, etc. etc. about the reading. You can focus on close reading and attend to language or form; you can focus on theme or subject and attend to history or cultural context; you can focus on allusion and literary history. The only requirement is that you write seriously and thoughtfully and that you post your missive to Carmen Discussion by 6 PM on Tuesday or Thursday (before the class in which we will discuss the chosen text). These posts will be worth 30% of your grade and if you write more than 6, you will receive extra credit.
- **Writing Assignments.** All papers should be turned in to dropbox (on Carmen) by 8 pm on the due date.
  - **Assignment 1** (due Tuesday, September 4): Write a paragraph in which you explain the relationship between 1 sentence (or independent clause) from 1 poem and the rest of the poem. Your first task is to define the relationship: a contradiction, challenge, epitome, summary, example, or elaboration (and there are many others). Use a close reading of the sentence to explicate the poem’s argument or claims. (10% of grade)
  - **Assignment 2** (due Monday, September 24): In the style of Harper’s Annotation, annotate either several sentences from any story from Dubliners or any page from Jimmy Corrigan. (10% of grade)
  - **Assignment 3** (due Monday, October 15): Draw a quick (3-6 panel) comic that attempts to represent visually and textually a short lyric. (10% of grade)
  - **Assignment 4** (due Monday, November 5): Write a preliminary draft of a more formal paper (that will ultimately be around 6-8 pages long). The paper should focus on one central text, but may take any number of different tactics. You might choose to focus on formal analysis, on social or historical context, on authorship, on literary history or influence, on a theoretical inquiry, etc. (10% of grade)
Assignment 5 (due Wednesday, December 5): Using my comments and suggestions from Assignment 4, this final paper will be the culmination of your work in the class and will offer a sophisticated and stylistically masterful reading of one central text. (20% of grade)

- **Final Examination.** There will be a take home final exam, which I will email to you on December 10 and will be due on December 12 (by 9 pm). (10% of grade)
- All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

**Required Texts:**
- Mark Strand and Evan Boland, The Making of a Poem | Norton 0393321789
- James Joyce, Dubliners | Penguin 0140186476
- Toni Morrison, Song of Solomon | Plume Books 0452260116
- Chris Ware, Jimmy Corrigan: Smartest Kid on Earth | Pantheon 0375404538
- David Mitchell, Cloud Atlas | Random House 0375507256 or 0812984412
- George Eliot, Middlemarch | Broadview Books 9781551112336

**Course Policies**
- **Disability Services.** Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform me as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue (292-3307, TDD 292-0901)
- **Academic honesty.** It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487).
- **Course cancellation.** In cases of inclement weather (unlikely this quarter) or other emergency cancellation, I will send you an email and leave a note on the classroom door.
- **Electric devices.** You are allowed to use laptops, tablets and electronic readers (kindles, nooks) in class so long as you are using them to take notes or look at class material. Please have respect for your colleagues and me and do not play games, surf, tweet, instant message, facebook, &c. Kindly turn off the ringers on your phones.

**Class Schedule**

I. What Does Poetry Do?

**August 22 (W): Introductions**

**August 24 (F):** from Aristotle The Poetics*; William Hazlitt, from “On Poetry in General”*; Emily Dickinson, “The Brain – is wider than the Sky”*; Anne Bradstreet, “The Author to Her Book” (123); Yvor Winters, “On Teaching the Young” (149); Lord Byron, “So We’ll Go No More A-Roving” (144)

II. The Forms Lyric Takes

**August 29 (W):** William Wordsworth, “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” (61); William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 18” (59); Henri Cole, “The Roman Baths at Nîmes” (69); Edna St. Vincent Millay, “What lips my lips have kissed” (64); John Keats, “Bright Star” (62); Elizabeth Barrett Browning, from Sonnets from the Portuguese (63)

**August 31 (F):** Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” (12); James Merrill, “The World and the Child” (13); Elizabeth Bishop, “One Art” (11); Anthony Hecht, “The Book of Yolek” (37); Donald Justice, “Pantoum of the Great Depression” (47)

III. The Forms Story Takes

**September 5 (W):** James Joyce, “The Sisters,” “An Encounter,” and “Araby” from Dubliners

**September 7 (F):** Joyce, “Two Gallants,” “The Boarding House,” “A Little Cloud,” and “Clay” from Dubliners

IV. Making Stories with Pictures and Words

**September 12 (W):** Chris Ware, Jimmy Corrigan

**September 14 (F):** Jimmy Corrigan (continued)
V. Finding and Making Meaning 1
September 19 (W): Jimmy Corrigan (continued); George Herbert, “Easter Wings” (143); Robert Pinsky, “Ode to Meaning” (252); Richard Wilbur, “Lying” (114)

September 21 (F): Howard Nemerov, “The Blue Swallows” (250); Douglas Crase, “The Elegy for New York” (198); W.B. Yeats, “The Circus Animal’s Desertion” (260)

VI. Finding and Making Meaning 2
September 26 (W): Phillis Wheatley, “To S.M.” (127); Marianne Moore, “The Paper Nautilus” (248); Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “The Fire of Driftwood” (245); Hart Crane, from The Bridge (247)

September 28 (F): William Shakespeare, from Julius Caesar (106); Lord Tennyson, “Ulysses” (110); Frank O’Hara, “Ave Maria” (272); Susan Prospere, “Heart of the Matter” (236)

VII. The American Novel 1
October 3 (W): Toni Morrison, Song of Solomon

October 5 (F): Song of Solomon (continued)

VIII. The American Novel 2
October 10 (W): Song of Solomon (continued)

October 12 (F): Song of Solomon; Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool” (94)

IX. Accounting for Loss
October 17 (W): Joyce, “A Painful Case” and “The Dead” from Dubliners

October 19 (F): Ben Jonson, “On my first son” (172); Mark Doty, “Tiara” (199); Oliver Goldsmith, from The Deserted Village (128); Claude McKay, “The Tropics in New York” (148); Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays” (150)

X. Voice and Genre
October 24 (W): David Mitchell, Cloud Atlas

October 26 (F): Cloud Atlas (continued)

XI. Style and Personality
October 31 (W): Cloud Atlas (continued)

November 2 (F): Cloud Atlas (continued); T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (262)

XII. Stories, Seeing, Being
November 7 (W): John Greenleaf Whittier, “The Changeling” (83); William Wordsworth, from The Prelude (109); Thomas Hardy, “The Convergence of the Twain” (145); William Carlos Williams, “Spring and All” (268)

November 9 (F): Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess” (130); Mary Oliver, “The Black Walnut Tree” (235); Garrett Hongo, “The Legend” (197)

XIII. Literary Place, Literary Consciousness 1
November 14 (W): George Eliot, Middlemarch

November 16 (R): Middlemarch (continued)

November 21 and 23 (W and F): Thanksgiving — no class

XIV. Literary Place, Literary Consciousness 2
November 28 (W): Middlemarch (continued)

November 30 (F): Middlemarch (continued)

XV. Conclusion
December 5 (W): Conclusions