English

ENGL 274  **Literature and Society**  credit: 3 hours.
Major literary works presented within the context of social issues of their time. May be repeated with the permission of English advising office to a maximum of 6 hours if topics vary. Prerequisite: Completion of the Composition I requirement.

This course satisfies the General Education Criteria for a:
Humanities – Lit & Arts

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<td>49456</td>
<td>Lecture-Discussion</td>
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<td>11:00 AM - 11:50 AM</td>
<td>MWF</td>
<td>140 - Henry Administration Bldg</td>
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Lit, History, Collectiv Memory

Literature and the Arts course.

Topic Section D: Literature, History, and Collective Memory

What is the past? How does it affect our understanding of the present and the future? Why do people keep bringing up old stuff? This course will consider literature at the nexus of memory and history, texts that recount a past at once verifiable and that the same time spectral. We will explore how narratives about the past become codified as history and how memories, both personal and collective, open spaces for questioning received tradition, whether historical, political, or literary. Instances of critical memory appear throughout the American literary tradition, from slave narrative accounts of ?American slavery as it is? to postmodern novels that imagine folk scenes inaccessible through traditional archives to oral traditions (think music or family mythology) that make simultaneous claims to group specificity and universal truths. Beyond the content of memory, however, we will explore how writers experiment with form and style to challenge how we think about memory and organize our understanding of the past. What happens, for instance, when the narrative shifts our frame of reference from a linear timeline to a nonlinear one that juxtaposes events in eighteenth-century England, colonial South Africa, and twentieth-century Philadelphia or when the past takes a protagonist captive in order to save the future? We will read a variety of texts from American and African American literary traditions, including slave narratives, scientific treatises, historical romance, gothic fiction, sci-fi and speculative fiction, poetry and film. While this course will think about memory across many traditions, we will use narratives about antebellum slavery as our central case study. Texts for the course may include: Phillis Wheatley; Nathaniel Hawthorne; Washington Irving; Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl; Octavia Butler, Kindred; John Edgar Wideman, The Cattle Killing; Leslie Mormon Silko, Ceremony; Blade Runner (film); Margaret Atwood, Oryx and Crake; Toni Morrison, Beloved.