

2025 EIU English Studies Camp

Session Descriptions

S1 - As If! A Study of Jane Austen for the Modern Audience

In this session, we will be looking at the ways that Jane Austen's manuscripts, particularly *Emma*, are adapted for modern audiences. For example, some stay fairly close to the original source material, like the 2020 version of *Emma*. Others are changed for more modern audiences, like *Clueless*. How are they changed? And what have writers deemed important enough to stay the same to stay true to the original essence of Austen's storytelling? For the final project, you will have the chance to make your own adaptation and keep the aspects you consider most important.

S2 - Exploring Folklore and Cryptids: The Legends of the U.S. and Illinois

In this course, students will dive into the fascinating world of folklore, focusing on the cryptids and urban legends that shape American culture—especially those rooted in Illinois. Through discussions, research, and creative writing, students will explore how legends are born, why they endure, and what they reveal about society. They'll learn about iconic cryptids like Bigfoot and the Mothman, with a special focus on local Illinois myths like H.H. Holmes. The final project is where students will get to design their own cryptid or urban legend with a detailed backstory and visual representation.

S3 - Matters of Mental Health

It seems as though many folks today are focusing more and more on their Mental Health. But, our society's understanding of Mental Health hasn't always been what it is now. In this session, we'll explore a variety of texts that reflect how society has viewed Mental Health in the past and how that has changed into what we see today. From historical short stories and real-life medical pamphlets to today's popular music and television, we'll take a well-rounded approach in understanding how media can mirror social belief.

S4 - The Ekphrastic Fantastic

The term ekphrasis is one of those fancy literary terms usually tossed out for an exercise or two in a poetry workshop or craft talk. But ekphrasis — which is descriptive, creative writing detailing or inspired by a piece of visual art — is actually a deeply useful and satisfying writing tool. Ekphrasis can be an author's go-to solution for anything resembling writer's block and it is also an incredible way to practice artistic collaboration. Ekphrasis also invites the writer to consider hybrid writing forms, and to consider how their writing might be enhanced or unlocked through the engagement of another modality. In this session, we'll discuss a bit about the history of ekphrasis but primarily focus on creating ekphrastic works ourselves, using art, music, film, and beyond to inspire and enhance our creative writing practice.

S5 – Film as Literature

In this section we will look at different reviews and campers will design their own standards for film literature reviews. Campers will get to watch different shows, films, and other forms of media. After watching these different forms of media campers will establish their own evaluation criteria, give them ratings, and eventually write an in-depth review of a film or media text of their choice for the showcase. During the class meetings we will talk about what we value most in texts and we'll work toward mastering the structure and the conventions the review genre.

S6 - Speak Poet, Speak!

In this course students will learn the history of Spoken Word poetry, its relevance in our contemporary times, how this poetry form has evolved over the years, and what present day poets are doing to keep the genre ever changing and appealing to modern audiences. Students will craft their own Spoken Word pieces and also edit and critique each other's work through workshops learning to support one another by providing constructive criticism.

S7- From Passion to Farewell to Cupid's Mysterious Arrow

Love letters and breakup letters capture the raw emotions of romance, from passionate beginnings to painful endings. In exploring the art of writing these intimate expressions, we uncover the ways words can immortalize both the joy of connection and the sorrow of loss not only through human interaction, but also the things we have lost due to growing up. This class will teach you how romance has changed throughout the years to help you write creative love letters and break up letters that will help ignite a ferocious spark inside you.

S8 - Digital Editions: Research Like a Time Traveler!

Over the course of five days, students will update the literary world by merging new-age technology and popular culture with historic literary works. First, students will select a short story or poem from the 1700s-1900s to read, study, and research. Options will be provided by the teacher, or students can select their own in class. Next, students will practice close reading and isolate the terms or references they do not immediately understand. After using search terms to find sources on Google and in databases, students will begin building an online edition of the short story or poem in Google Docs. They will create footnotes and embed relevant music, film, or image files to bring the past vividly alive for the modern reader.