

TERM: Fall 2026

COURSE CATEGORY: ENGL 50XX: Seminar: Advanced Studies

COURSE NUMBER & TITLE: English 5016: First Novels

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: M 4:30-7:00 pm

INSTRUCTOR: Claire Stanford

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

The writer Karen Russell has said: "Writing a novel is kind of like scaling Mt. Everest and passing by your own bones on the way." In this generative novel workshop, we will work toward scaling the Mt. Everest of writing a first novel together. Whether this is your first attempt at writing a novel or your tenth, this course will offer a supportive, encouraging environment for generating and revising your ideas and words; it will also offer a challenging and rigorous structure, with approximately five pages of writing due each week, for a total of 30-40 pages of a novel draft over the course of the semester. In taking this class, you should be excited about generating new writing each week, workshoping your peers' work, and reading and studying examples of debut novels, including Justin Torres's *We the Animals*, Rita Bullwinkel's *Headshot*, and others. Additionally, we will read secondary work on the craft of novel-writing and the scholarship of novel theory; the class will also include a session on getting your novel out in the world, with information on querying agents and publishing.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- English majors/minors create literary art that moves, challenges, informs, entertains, and engages its audience
- English majors/minors affirm and cultivate an individual artistic vision
- English majors/minors can express themselves in an artistic, imaginative, inspired, and unique style
- English majors/minors can generate compelling works of literary art

CLASS LEVEL RESTRICTION:

Graduate Only

RECOMMENDED/PREREQUISITES:

N/A

COURSE ATTRIBUTES:

- Critical Methodology
- Contemporary Critical Theory
- Major Writer / Genre / Literary Period
- Literature Elective
- Theory Elective
- Creative Writing Seminar
- Rhetoric / Composition Theory and Practice
- Linguistics OR Reading Theory