

Fall 2022 - Capstone Seminar

ENG 461-01: Social Justice Literature

Against Erasure: A Study of Literature Calling for Social and Environmental Justice

Wednesdays 4:00-6:45 p.m.

Dr. Daniel Donaghy

This seminar will study writers and artists whose work explores injustices imposed by society on individuals because of their race, gender, class, and location. Through class discussion, student presentations, student research and writing, and the insights of guest speakers, students in this course will engage in critical and collaborative thinking about issues such as these:

- The attitudes toward and treatment of asylum seekers at our southern border;
- Violence and other racial and economic injustices within inner cities;
- The vitality of trans people living in often dangerous and inhospitable landscapes;
- How someone make a life for himself after prison while also carrying the label “felon”;
- How the “inner river” we carry inside us is linked to the “outer rivers” of the natural world and how the future of one depends on the nurturing of the other;
- The multitude of environmental battles going on around us, including the flight for clean drinking water in Flint, Michigan, and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s opposition to the proposed and controversial Dakota Access Pipeline;
- How a paper mill in the tiny town of Mexico, Maine, while providing social, cultural, and economic cohesion, also contributed to the community’s demise;
- The relationship between spoken word poetry and social activism;
- and more.



Authors may include Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, Margaret Gibson, Martín Espada, Blithe Baird, Elizabeth Acevedo, Kerry Arsenault, Kayleb Rae Candrilli, Frederick Douglass, Patricia Smith, Reginald Dwayne Betts, and Mark Twain, as well as authors introduced to the class by students.