Course description for English 204 (Erin Anthony)

This section of English 204 examines literary texts from the twentieth century (and one from the twenty-first). The title of this section is *Lost and Found: Belonging in Literature* because we explore the categories of loss, belonging and identity. Modern literature can be said to reflect the feeling in Western culture that the world, as the literary critic Georg Lukacs suggests, had been “abandoned by God.” But also informing the era was a radical sense of possibility in a changing world of technological innovation and social upheaval. Within such an atmosphere of disruption and alienation, many writers considered the fate of the individual – or the self. We will trace important trajectories of the idea of the self in various texts. The course reflects on the influence of world-historical dynamics (e.g. colonialism, post colonialism, war, capitalism). We will also discuss the lives of the authors, and examine their artistic approaches to representing modern life.

This section considers close reading the cornerstone of literary analysis. This section also introduces the student to literary terms and analytical methods particular to the genre at hand. We investigate the relationship between literary form and thematic content. The semester’s two essay assignments (6-7 pages each) are designed to help the student develop interpretive skills and will encourage the student to enter into a more individualized dialogue with the instructor. The student can expect brief reading quizzes. Mid-term and final examinations will assess the student’s sustained engagement with all the texts of the semester.

**Texts:**
Coetzee, J.M. *Waiting for the Barbarians*
Eliot, T.S. *The Wasteland*
Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*
Saunders, George. *The Tenth of December*
Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five*
Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*
Derek Walcott, “The Schooner ‘Flight’”
*In addition, short poems by Wallace Stevens, Wislawa Szymborska and Elizabeth Bishop.*