Let’s spend the semester reading great literary works that have been challenged by authorities for their refusal to abide by strict regimes of social, political, and sexual repression across the twentieth century. Whether it’s Joyce’s desire to fly by the nets of nationality and religion, Forster’s subtle exploration of gay love across racial lines, Orwell’s frighteningly accurate foresight on post-democratic political control, or Rhys’s focus on the repressed colonial body underpinning English civilization, we will spend time with narratives that have helped to keep literature relevant to a rapidly changing society and the recurring threats of authoritarianism.


Coursework will include short, informal writing assignments, class discussions and presentations, and a culminating essay on a topic of the student’s choosing.