Works of literature are imbued with the intellectual spirit of the time and place that gave them birth. This course will survey major literary texts within the British and American traditions, focusing on the ways that they represent knowledge and implicitly or explicitly question its nature and its limits. In reading the work of Shakespeare, Austen, Wordsworth, Poe, Dickinson, Woolf, and others, our aim will be to gain insight into the historical periods and the cultures in which they wrote through the lens of epistemology (the philosophy of knowledge). As this is a writing-intensive class, the practice of writing about literature will be emphasized.