This course, the “gateway” to the English major, is designed to introduce you to some basic concepts in the analysis of literary texts and to encourage you to think creatively about individual works from different periods of English, American, and Canadian literature. Our emphasis will be on poetry, since shorter texts will give us a better opportunity to practice and hone our critical skills. To guide our discussion, we will focus (loosely) on issues of authorship. In the history of critical thinking about literature, authors have been praised and vilified, deconstructed and reconstructed. The texts that I have selected for the course (poems, novels, and a play) reflect, in varying degrees, a concern with the problems of authorship, with self-empowerment or self-entrapment through words, with writing and, ultimately, publication. Texts to be purchased will include Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, *The Vintage Book of Modern American Poetry*, a brand-new novel by the Canadian writer Katherine Govier, and Leonard Bernstein’s and Lillian Hellman’s *Candide*. Students are expected to attend a performance of Bernstein’s *Candide* at the IU Opera.