

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 426.01

WINTER 2018

COURSE TITLE: Freud, Lacan, Žižek [Selected Topics in Contemporary Theory]

Class: M/W 15:30 – 16:45, Room: SH 284

Instructor: David Sigler

Office: SS 1014

Phone: (403) 220-6573

E-mail: dsigler@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: Mondays 11:30 – 1:45

Homepage/course website: D2L

**Course description:**

Advanced study in contemporary psychoanalytic theory. We will read a chain of texts by Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Alenka Zupančič, and Slavoj Žižek. The readings raise challenging questions about your mother, desire, the hidden parts of discourse, national and religious belonging, sexuality and perversion, sexual difference, cruelty, and state politics—sometimes all at once. Among other assignments, students will write one paper about the theory itself and another applying the theory we have been reading to a literary text of their choice. Prerequisite: 12 units of courses labeled ENGL at 300 level or above. Antirequisite: Credit for ENGL 426 and 483 will not be allowed.

**Texts and readings:**

- Freud, Sigmund. *The Freud Reader*, edited by Peter Gay. Norton, 1995. ISBN 978-0393314038.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Russell Grigg. Norton, 2007. ISBN 978-0393330403.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Bruce Fink. Norton, 1998. ISBN 978-0393319163.
- Zupančič, Alenka. *What IS Sex?* MIT Press, 2017. ISBN 978-0262534130.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *Incontinence of the Void*. MIT Press, 2017. ISBN 978-0262036818.

**Assignments and evaluation:**

Paper 1 (c. 2200-2500 words plus works cited) (due February 26): 33%

Paper 2 (c. 2200-2500 words plus works cited) (due April 13): 33%

Q & A installments – F, L, Z @ 3% each: 9%

Reading quizzes (6 of them, and the highest 5 scores count @ 2% each): 10%

Contributions to discussion during class time: 10%

“La Mini-Passe”: 5% (graded P/F)

There are **two formal papers** in this course. One will analyze some aspect of the theory we have been reading to that point in the course (33%); the other will analyze a literary text or film of the student's choice using the theory we have been reading (33%). You can write the papers in either order.

The first of your papers—whichever one it is—is due on February 26 (i.e., right after reading week, although you can submit it before reading week if you prefer to enter that glorious week unburdened). The second paper is due on Friday, April 13, i.e., at the end of the semester. Each paper should be about 2200-2500 words, not including the works cited list. Papers should be submitted to the dropbox on D2L.

A **“Q&A” installment** is designed to stimulate our discussion in class. It consists of two questions and two provisional (but thoughtful and well-developed) answers. Each answer is to be about 200-250 words long, which means that each installment will be about 400-500 words long, plus whatever length of the two questions themselves. You will deliver this—two questions and two answers—three times over the semester, at times of your choosing, in advance of our discussion of the reading the next day.

*With the first question*, present a question for the entire class's discussion. In a class of 40 people, where it's hard to just have discussion flow organically as in a true seminar, this is your chance to shape the class discussion around your interests and concerns. The question should capture something interesting from the reading and significant, based on your meticulous engagement with the text at hand. (Note: framing a question for group discussion is a bit of a skill—you want to be neither too technical and abstruse nor too broad and general; you'll want to avoid questions with yes or no answers and questions that are vast and unanswerable). In your 200-250 words, you will offer your own answer to the question, again based on your careful reading of the day's text and your connecting it to what we have read previously.

*With the second question*, you can (should! must!) ask a question of the instructor specifically. This needn't be a discussion-starting type of question; it could be more a point that is stymying you or needs clarification. Often our readings will expect you to know things that you don't yet know, or it won't be clear why a certain line of argument is underway, or something will be totally confusing, or you won't have enough context to understand it. Give your best answer to this question, too (again, c. 200-250 words), so I can see what you know already and what you need to know. Reading psychoanalytic theory is really challenging, and I expect that everyone (myself included) will have a million questions and points of confusion from the reading. This is a way for me to know how you're doing, what questions are plaguing you, and what seems to be holding you back. Otherwise we could go all semester with you still sort of wondering what the “subject supposed to know is,” and not knowing. With these questions, some we might decide to discuss in class, if the question might be plaguing us generally; others I might address in private comments to you.

You can write this two-part Q&A installment whenever it suits you, in advance of the next day's discussion, but you must do it three times over the semester: one installment for a Freud text, one installment for a Lacan text, and one for either a Žižek or Zupančič text. (That forces you to space out your installments over the semester, somewhat). When the mood strikes, upload a Word file with your two questions and two answers to the appropriate folder in D2L. The cutoff for submission is midnight on the night before our class meets to discuss that text. Late installments will not be accepted. Installments will be evaluated according to the insight they bring to the text: are you working through the reading critically and carefully? Are you seeing the connections to things we have read before? Are you understanding what you are reading and its implications? Are you opening up productive new paths for us to consider and follow? Is the question likely to succeed in stimulating genuine, meaningful discussion in class? An installment is worth 3%

of your final grade in the course, and you do it three times, for a total of 1200-1500 words of writing and 9% of your final course grade.

True fact: nothing is worse than discussing Freud with people who have not actually read Freud. For discussion to be meaningful and democratic, everyone needs to come to class having carefully read and thought about the material beforehand. Thus **reading quizzes** (10%) will be given on a surprise basis during the first five minutes of some classes. These quizzes will test basic facts about the text we are set to discuss, so as to persuade (or inspire) you to keep up with our challenging reading load, and thus to enable you to join the discussion. There will be six of them throughout the semester. Late arrival to class or absence will result in a grade of zero. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped, to mitigate the deleterious effects if you happen to use one of your allowed absences on a day we have a quiz.

**“La Mini-Passe”** is a playful twist on a signal Lacanian innovation, called “La Passe” (or, in English, “The Pass.”) “La Passe” is how a Lacanian analyst-in-training becomes a certified psychoanalyst. It is an institutional procedure introduced by Jacques Lacan in 1967 at his *École freudienne de Paris*, the school he had founded in 1964 for the training of psychoanalysts. It was very controversial at the time, and it’s still very strange, but still today it is the way in which Lacanian analysts-in-training are certified to practice psychoanalysis. We are doing an adapted and very scaled back version, cheerfully called “La Mini-Passe.” Everyone will be a *passand* (a person giving testimony) and a *passeur* (a person reporting on that testimony). You cannot do this reciprocally: you cannot be the *passeur* for your own *passeur*. Everyone will perform both roles over the semester; no one can perform either role more than once.\* (\*except in situations where someone has failed “La Mini-Passe,” so we need to make arrangements for another attempt with an improved *passand* and a new *passeur*).

Here’s how it works: sometime after March 14, but before the end of the semester, you will find a partner to receive your account of what it’s been like for you to learn, study, read, discuss, live, and think psychoanalysis. You will meet with your *passeur* outside of class time, to give them a 45 minute disquisition on your confrontation with psychoanalytic theory. The *passeur*’s job is to listen silently and to take notes by hand. Then the *passeur*—the listener, your partner—goes away to write a c. 600 word report on their partner’s oral testimony. The report is not a transcription of what the *passeur* said, nor primarily a summary, but rather an overview of what you have said and a analytic report on what it reveals. The *passeur* will analyze your experience with psychoanalysis, indicating areas where it is especially strong or deficient; the *passeur* is to flag portions of the testimony that seem glib or clichéd; the *passeur* is to highlight aspects of the testimony that may have been especially interesting—or unintentionally revealing. The *passeur* then offers their analysis of what you have said—a report on the state of your imbrication into psychoanalytic thought—to the instructor via D2L for evaluation. The *passand* is then graded P/F based on the *passeur*’s report. That’s right: you are being evaluated based on someone else’s report of what you have said, and their analysis of your experience.

If you are deemed to have failed by the instructor—meaning that the *passeur*’s report was not very specific, not very revealing, or *too* revealing, or if it seems you might not have shown your *passeur* real evidence of a genuine encounter with psychoanalysis, or if the encounter seems overdramatic, sentimental, or predictable—you will have to try it again with a different *passeur*. You cannot pass ENGL 426 without having successfully traversed “La Mini-Passe.”

**Contributions to discussion:** 10%. Except for the fact that students must be present to contribute, this grade has little to do with attendance. In evaluating this category, I care as much about the quality of contribution as the quantity. Most often, students earn a B- in this category, making insightful comments in

many discussions but staying uninvolved in others. Earning a “B” means that you have come to class prepared every day, making meaningful contributions and responding to your classmates; the B involves participating heartily most days. A-range grades in this segment are reserved for those who consistently offer true insight, read and discuss rigorously without dominating the room, draw their classmates into thoughtful discussion in an inviting and considerate way, and situate their comments within the larger conversation the class is having. The A contributor does this in nearly every class. Showing up to class every day and keeping generally mum will earn you a D in this category. Inadequately affording space for others to speak will also earn you a low grade in this category.

Because class participation is a necessary and crucial component of this course, irregular **attendance** can affect a student’s grade (as per E.3 of the University Calendar). A student may miss up to four meetings of ENGL 426 without penalty. These absences can be taken without explanation and for any reason, but might wisely be saved for days of illness or for other unshakeable commitments. A fifth absence for any reason will lower a student’s final grade in the course by a half letter. A sixth absence will lower a student’s grade by another half letter, for a total penalty of 10%. A seventh absence will incur another half-letter penalty, for a total of a 15% penalty to the final grade. With an eighth absence, the student will receive a D grade for the course, provided that all grade categories have been completed with a passing grade. The course cannot be failed for attendance reasons alone. Except in the most extreme cases, I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences: the above policy authorizes you to excuse your own absences on an as-needed basis up to four times during the semester.

There are no extra credit opportunities available in this course. There is no final exam for the course. Students must satisfactorily complete “La Mini-Passe” to receive a passing grade for the course. No other particular assignment need be passed for a student to receive a passing grade for the course.

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (an A- to B+) for each day (not class) that the assignment is overdue, including weekend days. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

### **Grading system:**

Each quiz will receive a numerical grade out of 4. “La Mini-Passe” is graded pass/fail. Other assignments will be graded on a letter-grade basis, which will then be converted to a percentage for the purposes of calculating grades. As per the Department of English standard, the following conversion scale is used.

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3

50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

The University of Calgary's four-point Grading System, as described in the Calendar; (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-2.html>) will be used in this course.

A+ / A (4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D+ (1.3); D (1.0); F (0)

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades. Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the 4-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

Remember that your job is to jump into our discussion, not to transcribe it. Although students are not forbidden the use of a laptop in class for note-taking purposes, I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand instead, given research that shows that notes taken by hand significantly improve student learning (e.g., Mueller and Oppenheimer, 2014). To read about this research, you might peruse the following links:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html>

<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159.full?keytype=ref&siteid=sppss&ijkey=CjRAwmrlURGNw>

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html#.WEhLPpKSUUI>

Computers, smartphones, and books cannot be used during quizzes. Cell phones must be silenced during class time, including the vibrate function, and may not be used. Except with prior permission, students are not permitted to make video- or audio-recordings of class sessions or conversations during office hours. Students are not permitted to make, disseminate, or publish audio or video recordings of lectures, the instructor, or class discussion.

### **Plagiarism:**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

**Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:**

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events

<http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>.

Our email address is [smecuofc@gmail.com](mailto:smecuofc@gmail.com).

**English Department Website:**

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

**Writing support:**

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

**Library and Research Support:**

Melanie Boyd, Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: [maboyd@ucalgary.ca](mailto:maboyd@ucalgary.ca).

Find The English Pages research guide here:

[https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject\\_id=52619](https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject_id=52619)

**Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:****Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/index.htm>

**Grade appeals:**

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

**Deferral of term work and final examinations:**

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

**Student Accommodations:**

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

### Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip>

### “Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

### Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Arts Students’ Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at

[ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at

<http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3rd Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

### Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

[arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca)

Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

### Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses ([www.ucalgary.ca/usri](http://www.ucalgary.ca/usri)). Your responses make a difference - please participate in USRI Surveys."

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

## **DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT**

According to the University Calendar, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>

“The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community”. The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a “positive and productive learning and working environment.” This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that “seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff”. Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.