

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ENGLISH 201 Lecture 10

Fall 2013

Approaches to Literature: Reading the Mountains

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Office hours: Thursday 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Homepage/course website: available via Blackboard

**Course description: What is “mountain writing,” and why study it?**

All of the works of fiction, poems and drama we study in this course share a common focus: they all write about the mountains of the world. But why look at the ways people have written about mountains? One reason is that mountains traditionally offer writers a setting to explore “the extreme” in various sense of the word: the extreme moments where life meets death, where nature intersects with culture, where the empire meets the wilderness, or where ideas about heroism and gender get challenged.

These themes may sound abstract. Yet one aim of this course is to remind ourselves just how much experience of such stories we already share. After all, “the mountains” in their various guises are used every day to sell us pickup trucks, to mourn for the vanishing wilderness, celebrate heroic individualism, evoke spiritual retreats, or frighten us with images of nature’s indifference to human life. We may think we “know the story” about mountains already--but how did it get to be the story we know? How many familiar and unfamiliar stories have been told under this heading of “the mountains?” How much are they changing before our very eyes?

Another aim of the course is to connect with literature that’s related to places we know, or may think we know--the mountains at our doorstep. Some of the authors we’ll read are still living and writing not far from here. Others have used the Rockies as a setting, a theme, or a source of imagery. To pursue this part of our study we will also take advantage of the presence, right outside Calgary, of the Mountain Culture program at the Banff Centre for the Arts. This program is known worldwide for its publications and events, especially the annual Mountain Book and Film Festival. You will have the opportunity to attend sessions at the festival, held in early November. We will discuss the details of this aspect of the course in class (but please note that attending the event will involve the cost of transportation and event admission).

**How will the course do this?**

As we work through the assigned texts, the course will guide you in practicing close reading and literary analysis skills. Developing your ability to write strong, well-supported, clearly written academic essays is an important aim of this course. A series of short writing exercises will guide you through the various stages of composition and help you learn to create effective arguments. We will also focus on research skills: how to search and locate reference works, books and articles, both electronic and print; and how to use print and online resources responsibly and thoughtfully. Finally, you will begin to engage with other scholars by responding to at least one piece of literary criticism on the course readings.

### Texts and readings:

McFarlane, Robert. *Mountains of the Mind: A History of a Fascination*. Granta Books, 2003.

Schäffer, Mary. *A Hunter of Peace: Mary T.S. Schäffer's Old Indian Trails of The Canadian Rockies*. Introduced and Edited by: E. J. Hart. The Whyte Foundation 1980, 2001.

Auden, W.H. *The Ascent of F6*. Faber 1937 (a reprint of this play will be attached to the coursepack).

Simpson, Joe. *Touching the Void: The True Story of One Man's Miraculous Survival*. Harper-Collins 2004.

Adamson, Gil. *The Outlander*. Anansi 2007.

A course pack of required readings is also available at the university bookstore.

### Assignments and Evaluation:

Five short writing exercises of 200-500 words each

(5% each, graded by the course marker):

25%

1. Thesis formulation and revision
2. Arguments and counter-arguments
3. Integrating and documenting quotations
4. Topic sentences and transitions in paragraphs
5. Revising for more direct and economical phrasing

Research exercise of roughly 1200 words (graded by the course marker)

20%

(This will consist of a research report on a Banff Mountain Book Festival event; or for those unable to attend, a library research exercise. In both cases, detailed requirements and a grading rubric will be provided.)

Assignments graded by the professor:

Final examination (scheduled by the Registrar: no books permitted)

25%

Final essay of 1500 words

30%

Students must be available for examinations up to the last day of the examination period (9 – 19 December). There will be no extra credit assignments. **Students must complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade. This includes each of the short writing exercises.** Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (an A- to B+) for each business day—not each class day--that the assignment is overdue.

Please make every effort to take assignments directly to the instructor. If it is not possible to do so, take your assignment to SS 1152 and put it in the dropbox. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in the instructor's mailbox. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause. Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the Department office.

**Grading system:** Assignments will be given letter grades. Percentages corresponding to the letter grades as follows will be used to calculate the final overall course grade. Grade points will not be used in the calculation of grades, but will appear on transcripts. 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.

*Please read the University of Calgary description of the expectations for each grade level, below, and note that in this course “the subject matter” includes writing performance.*

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

Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding
A	4.00	Excellent-superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	3.70	
B+	3.30	
B	3.00	Good - clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	2.70	
C+	2.30	
C	2.00	Satisfactory - basic understanding of the subject matter.
C-	1.70	Receipt of a grade point average of 1.70 may not be sufficient for promotion or graduation. (See individual undergraduate faculty regulations.)
*D+	1.30	
*D	1.00	Minimal pass - marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
F	0	Fail - unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.
**I	0	Incomplete - unsatisfactory (effective January 2007).

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.

**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-2-1.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/content/scribe-and-muse-reading-and-writing-club>

Our email address is [smrwc@ucalgary.ca](mailto:smrwc@ucalgary.ca).

**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>

**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>

**Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/it/help/articles/email/etiquette>

**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>.

**Academic Accommodation:**

It is the students' responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodations and have not registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact them at 403-220-6019. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services are not eligible for formal academic accommodations. More information about academic accommodations can be found at [www.ucalgary.ca/access](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access).

**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 Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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>

## **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.