

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 201 L03

2017

COURSE TITLE: **Cyberpunks and the Networked Self**

M/W/F 10:00 - -10:50, Room: SS 109

Instructor: Tom Sewel

Office: SS 1031

Phone: 220-6193

E-mail: tom.sewel@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: Wednesday 3pm

Homepage/course website: n/a

**Course description:**

This course will explore a small selection of cyberpunk texts, focusing on the unanticipated political implications of a genre that often figures itself, perhaps too generously, as inherently radical. The course will look at how these books deal with representations of artificial intelligence, constructions of heroism, the role of nostalgia, questions of authenticity, the potential for liberation, and the function of language itself as it prompts students to question what it might mean to be human in a networked world.

The course's primary aim is to cultivate strong critical writing skills, with particular attention given to economy and clarity of written communication. To this end, students will read several key genre works and formulate original critical arguments about them in essay form. Students will also be asked to engage with brief excerpts from relevant theoretical texts and provide short critical summaries of the arguments they propose.

Written assignments early in the term will be slightly longer than typical for the time of year but the required length of written assignments will become progressively shorter as the term continues, encouraging students to develop a parsimonious writing style that centers the critical argument.

Pre-requisites: Undergraduate, non-English major

**Texts and readings:**

Theory excerpts:

"Flatline Constructs", Mark Fisher (short selections from hypertext PhD dissertation, available via the internet archive at <https://web.archive.org/web/20080325013155/http://www.cinestatic.com/transmat/Fisher/FCcontents.htm> )

"A Cyborg Manifesto", Donna Haraway (1984, essay, available online)

"Where are the Missing Masses?", Bruno Latour (1992, book chapter, available online)

"Prologue", *How We Became Posthuman*. N. Katherine Hayles (1999, prologue available online)

Fiction:

*Neuromancer*, William Gibson (1984 novel), Ace.

*Snow Crash*, Neal Stephenson (1992 novel), Bantam.

*Accelerando*, Charles Stross (2005 novel), Ace.

*Doktor Sleepless: Engines of Desire*, Warren Ellis and Ivan Rodriguez (2007 Graphic Novel), Avatar.

*Ready Player One*, Ernest Cline (2011 novel), Random House.

### **Assignments and Evaluation:**

Class Essays will be focused on helping students hone their written communication skills. Each one will ask students to present an original critical analysis of one of the novels studied in class, using evidence from the text to support their argument.

Critical Summaries will ask students to read, think through, and then present in condensed form the argument made by a specific critical text.

**10%** First Class Essay, 1000 – 1200 words

**10%** First Critical Summary, 300 – 400 words

**10%** Second Class Essay, 500 – 600 words

**10%** Second Critical Summary, 150 – 200 words

**10%** Third Class Essay, 250 – 300 words

**10%** In-Class Assignments – quizzes, creative response exercises, groupwork exercises  
(5 of these, worth 2% each, will not be announced in advance, in lieu of participation grade)

**40%** Registrar-scheduled Final Exam (Closed Book).

The final exam will have two sections. The first section will present students with critical terminology used during the course and ask them to explain those terms in a short written answer.

The second section will ask students to choose from a small selection of prompts to write a short essay that constructs a critical argument addressing one or more of the texts studied in the class.

Exam will be scheduled according to Registrar, within the period allocated for Fall 2017 examinations, December 11 to December 21, 2017. Students must be available for examinations up to the last day of the examination period (Dec 11-21).

Students must complete all assignments (with the exception of in-class assignments) in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

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 class] that the assignment is overdue. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

To facilitate participation, students should complete the assigned readings before class and bring the relevant texts to seminar. Annotating books and making reading notes are excellent ways to prepare, but certainly not mandatory

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:**

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.

**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>

### **Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:**

<http://www.enough.utoronto.ca/computeruse/eetiquette.htm>

### **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: [maboyle@ucalgary.ca](mailto:maboyle@ucalgary.ca).

Find The English Pages research guide here: <http://libguides.ucalgary.ca/english>

### **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://www.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://www.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.