

## FACULTY OF ARTS

### DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ENGLISH 201-01 – Approaches to Literature: Death in Fiction

Winter 2014

**Instructor:** Michael G. Khmel'nitsky  
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**Office Hours:** 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, or by appointment

#### Important Dates

**Feb. 17-20:** Reading Days (no lectures)  
**Apr. 14:** Last English 201.01 term lecture

#### Course Description

This course introduces students to fiction, from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first. By the end of this course, you will be able to respond critically and thoughtfully to the concerns that authors raise and the issues that they react to. You will learn literary vocabulary and will use it to discuss the stories you read, how they are told, their style, and the ways in which they offer new ways of thinking about themes and contexts. You will also learn how to formulate clear, well-supported arguments, based on closed reading and response to criticism, in your own writing.

#### Texts and Readings

In much of the fiction that we encounter, death marks the end of a narrative. However, the authors of these novels and stories use death to drive the narratives of their works and to investigate the relationships between death and life, relationships, and identity.

#### Novels

DeLillo, Don. *White Noise*. 1985.  
Palahniuk, Chuck. *Lullaby*. 2002.  
Mayr, Suzette. *Monoceros*. 2011.

#### Short Stories

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Masque of the Red Death." 1842.  
Atherton, Gertrude. "Death and the Woman." 1892.  
Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." 1890.  
Hemingway, Ernest. "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." 1936.  
Bradbury, Ray. "The Small Assassin." 1946.  
Salinger, J.D. "A Perfect Day for Bananafish." 1948.  
Baldwin, James. "Going to Meet the Man." 1965.  
Bradbury, Ray. "The Veldt." 1950.  
Bradbury, Ray. "There Will Come Soft Rains." 1950.

## Assignments and Evaluation

### Participation 10%

#### Self-introduction (2%)

After the first class, I will ask you to e-mail me a one-paragraph self-introduction in which you will tell me a little about your background, learning goals, and literary interests. This submission will count for 2% of the participation grade.

#### 4 reading responses (2% each)

Throughout the term, you will submit four brief reading responses to the texts we will read. Each response will include your favourite quotation from the text and a 300-word reaction to one aspect of the text. You must respond to two of the novels and any two short stories. You may not write on a text more than once. You must submit reading responses to a text during the week or weeks when we are studying it. Each submission will count for 2% of the participation grade.

### Essay 1 15%

#### Draft for writing workshop (5%)

One week before your first essay is due, you will submit a rough draft of your essay. This need not be a polished effort, but your draft must have a clearly-formulated thesis statement and must be at least 1,000 words long. You must include a one-page outline with this draft. You will use this draft for our writing workshop class in week 5; please also e-mail me a copy.

#### Final copy (10%)

One week after workshopping the draft, you will submit a final copy of your first essay. This will be a 1,250-word essay that will provide a close reading of one of the short stories (except “Masque of the Red Death” and “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”). You will use the literary terms and close reading techniques we will have learned in order to provide an analysis of one aspect of the short story’s engagement with the concept of death. This is not a research essay.

### Midterm Examination 20%

One week after submitting your first essay, you will write a midterm examination. You will be required to compare the form and content of two of the stories we will have read. You will also be asked to define or give examples of literary terms and of concepts from Gothic fiction and Modernism. This closed-book examination will be 50 minutes long.

### Essay 2 25%

#### Draft for writing workshop (5%)

One week before your second essay is due, you will submit a rough draft of your essay. This need not be a polished effort, but your draft must have a clearly-formulated thesis statement and must be at least 1,250 words long. You must include a one-page outline with this draft. You will use this draft for our writing workshop class in week 10; please also e-mail me a copy.

#### Final copy (20%)

One week after workshopping the draft, you will submit a final copy of your second essay. This will be a 1,500-word essay that will provide an analysis of one of the novels. You will use the literary terms we will have learned and one critical article from JSTOR or Project Muse with which you will engage in order to construct a thoughtful argument about how the novel engages with the concept of death.

### Final Examination 30%

This registrar-scheduled final examination will be comprised of two in-class essays: one comparing any two of the novels we have read, and one comparing “The Veldt” and “There Will Come Soft Rains.” The essays must engage with both pairs of texts substantially and must each be at least 6 double-spaced pages long. You will be required to focus on one thematic aspect common to each pair of texts, provide evidence, and use relevant literary terminology. This closed-book examination will be 2 hours long. You must be available to take the examination up to the last day of the examination period (April 17, 19-29).

## Assignment Guidelines

- More detail about specific assignments and a weekly reading schedule will be available in a separate course syllabus.
- There are no extra-credit assignments. You must complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade in the course. Extensions will be granted only for valid medical reasons with a doctor's note.
- Final copies of essays and reading responses must be submitted in hardcopy, at the beginning of class or they will be considered late. Submitting essays or reading responses by e-mail without prior agreement is not an acceptable alternative to handing in work in class, on time.
- Essay drafts must be brought in hardcopy to the writing workshops in weeks 5 and 10; please also e-mail me a copy as well.
- Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (for example, from A- to B+) for each business day that the assignment is overdue.
- If you cannot hand in your assignment to me during class time, take it to SS 1152 and put it in the dropbox. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in my mailbox.
- It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments against loss of any type. You are responsible for ensuring that computer problems do not interfere with timely submission of work. Keep multiple backups of all your work at different locations. Computer issues will not be acceptable reasons for late submission.
- Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the department office.

## Grading System

Each assignment will receive a letter grade. The corresponding percentage grade will be recorded and assigned a weight reflecting the value of the assignment in the course. The combined weighted assignment grades will yield a final percentage grade. When converting this final percentage grade back into the final letter grade submitted to the registrar, I may use discretion in rounding grades upward or downward, when grades are between two ranges. I will use The University of Calgary's four-point Undergraduate Grading System, and the following conversion scale, as described in the Calendar

(<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-2.html>):

Letter	Percentage	Point
A+	90% or above	4.0
A	85-89%	4.0
A-	80-84%	3.7
B+	77-79%	3.3
B	74-76%	3.0
B-	70-73%	2.7
C+	67-69%	2.3
C	64-66%	2.0
C-	60-63%	1.7
D+	55-59%	1.3
D	50-54%	1.0
F	below 50%	0

**Note:** The grade of A+ is an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system. I will use this grade to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth, and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

## **General Expectations**

### **Electronics**

I love Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as much as you do (if not more!—I own four computers and two cell phones), but recent research<sup>1</sup> shows that electronic devices in the classroom distract students and their peers and divide their attention. Thus, I would like you to leave all electronic devices (including laptops, tablets, and cell phones) off and to put them away until the end of class.

If you have a special requirement for using an electronic device, please discuss it with me. If you need to make an urgent call, please step outside of the classroom.

### **Chatting**

Our class will include many opportunities for discussions, including pair work and group work. However, when I or your fellow classmates are speaking, please refrain from private conversations.

### **Reading**

Your success in the course greatly depends on the assigned readings and your engagement with them. Make sure that you finish the entire novel or short story by the first day we will discuss it in class. Mark up your text and come to class ready to discuss it. For every class, bring at least one favourite quotation or passage from the text that we are reading that week.

### **Writing**

Just like math is a prerequisite for a science course, your investment in clear, objective, and correct writing and MLA documentation is essential to your success in ENGL 201. I will introduce you to many resources, but I would also like to meet with each of you regarding any concerns you may have—the sooner the better!

I strongly recommend that you get a copy of the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. If you are new to university writing, I also strongly recommend Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing About Literature*.

### **Blackboard and E-Mail**

It is your responsibility to read e-mail from me and to check the ENGL 201 Blackboard page regularly for updates. I will be happy to reply to short, specific questions via e-mail, and I will do my best to respond within 24 hours, but I cannot guarantee that I will reply within any specific amount of time. I will stop responding to any last-minute questions about either essay two days before it is due.

To avoid getting spam-filtered, please include "[ENGL 201]" in the subject line of any e-mail you send. Using your ucalgary.ca email address is the best way to ensure reliable communication.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see Sana, Faria, et al. "Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for Both Users and Nearby Peers." *Computers and Education* 62 (2013) 24-31. *ScienceDirect*. Web. 16 Dec. 2013.

**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/scribe-and-muse-english-club>.

Our email address is [smec@ucalgary.ca](mailto:smec@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>

**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: [maboym@ucalgary.ca](mailto:maboym@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>.

**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>

**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.