



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
Department Of English**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGL 251 L01: Literature and Society  
Winter 2022  
Class Schedule (MWF/10:00-10:50AM/ST130)**

<b>Instructor</b>	Lina Gibbings, She/Her
<b>Email:</b>	Lina.Gibbings@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	11:00AM Monday, SS1137, or by appointment on Zoom.

**Course description:**

Where do texts come from, and where are they going? Do texts belong to their authors? Or are they the properties of society? Can both be true? This class will dig into these questions alongside a more central one: how exactly do texts respond to and influence society? In this class, we will examine texts and their emerges from places of frustration, curiosity, necessity, or from no clear place at all. We will look at how those origins (i.e. how their authors wrote in response to the world around them) compare to how we are readers, and society at large, respond to them. We will ask ourselves how much of a text is the words on the page, and how much of it is the dialogue and image crafted after the writing and reading is done.

Our journey will take us from the Medieval to the Modern. From poetry to video games. We will examine texts from voices on the very margins of society to help us truly understand how texts evolve and adapt and how powerful the written word can be. I hope you enjoy these fascinating works.

**Course learning outcomes:**

This course will involve the reading of several texts alongside consistent group discussion both inside and outside class. This is mandatory and essential for humanities courses. You will also learn the essentials of researching and writing academic papers alongside the skill of close reading of texts, which will help better inform your ability to analyze a text in its historical and contemporary contexts.

During this course, students will:

1. Read and discuss texts from across the English, and world, literary canon.
2. Understand and interpret literary texts in relation to their historical and cultural contexts.

3. Learn how to research and analyze critical sources in preparation for writing academic papers.
4. Write a convincing academic paper using the conventions of English as an academic discipline.
5. Engage in meaningful conversations about literature with peers.
6. Engage in the class in an interdisciplinary manner by involving their own scholarly background.

**Texts and readings:**

Piers Plowman Book 1 – William Langland (On D2L)

- Supplemental Reading: Steven Justice, “Writing and Rebellion” (On D2L)

Othello – William Shakespeare (On D2L)

Harlem Duet – Djanet Sears (Bookstore)

Three Stories - Jorge Luis Borges (On D2L)

The City We Became – NK Jemisen (Bookstore)

Zom-Fam - Kama La Mackerel (Bookstore)

Split Tooth – Tanya Tagaq (Audiobook, available on amazon, or any audiobook retailer)

Gone Home – Fulbright Studios (Steam, or any home video consoles)

**Learning technology requirements:**

Students will need to have access to a laptop computer or smartphone in class time. There is a D2L site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see [d2L.ucalgary.ca](http://d2L.ucalgary.ca)).

**Modality**

This course will be online only (on Zoom) for the first 3 weeks. This approach will last until Jan. 31. Please make sure you attend both modalities.

**Email Contact and Communication**

I am available by email. While I generally try to be prompt, life sometimes gets in the way. I encourage you to be patient. I also consider my responses thoughtfully.

**Assessments and Evaluation:****Group Journals – 10%**

Due – Each Monday at the beginning of class (in either case)

In groups of no larger than 8, assigned at the beginning of the class. You are responsible for holding weekly discussions about the course’s texts. However, you may determine for yourselves if you wish to hold live, synchronous chats at a scheduled time, or asynchronous chats on the D2L discussion board. Meet with your groups and decide together. All meetings must be done online until the 31<sup>st</sup> of Jan. or until the university permits in person meetings.

Synchronous Chats: This must be done via any method (except Discord!), but they must be scheduled at a certain time and everyone from the group must be involved and expected to attend. You may choose Zoom, in a library space, at a favourite coffee shop, your choice! [Although, as declared above, for the first three weeks we are an online only class so online meetings are required until the Jan. 31] I do not support Discord as it defeats the purpose if you are all posting at different times. You will discuss either that week's text or whatever combination of texts from the term interest you. You will all give your observations of the text's strengths, weaknesses and most importantly how does this text respond to the world of its writing? And how does it respond to the world today? **Each chat must be documented by someone on hand and written down in a 2-3 page summarization submitted to me the Monday following the discussion. This summary must include who was there, important points made by each member and the general theme of the discussion. I encourage that person to record the events to make this easier, and to rotate this role among your group members.**

Asynchronous Chats: Organizing weekly meetings is challenging! So, instead, you might opt for the asynchronous option. In this, you will use a discussion room on D2L that I have set up for your group. Weekly, you are to write your thoughts on the week's text, or some combination of the courses' texts, its' strengths, weaknesses, and how it responds to the time of its writing, and to today. You will also offer a question for your group: for example, "I thought Langland's use of distance helped me understand his feelings on religion and society. Did anyone have a different perspective on that?" Starting with the second week, you are to offer an answer to one of your group member's questions in addition to your thoughts.

These are your journals and are meant to document your journey in the class. They are to follow the texts we are studying and so you should reflect your growth as a reader and your developing ability to connect critical themes from text to text. However, you have free rein to discuss whichever text interests you week to week and are encouraged to be creative with your formatting and presentation.

#### Bibliography and Research Assignment – 5%

Due – Jan. 24, before class

This assignment will utilize the library. Using one of our first two texts, *Piers Plowman* or *Othello*, and one of the following themes, you are required to compile a short bibliography of research sources in MLA format. The themes are: Dreams, Law, Religion, Death, Power, Wealth, Queerness, Race, Gender, Violence, Adaptation, Translation, Distance, Rebellion, Plague, Jacobean, or Colonization.

You will find some work better for one text or the other. You may use one of your own, but it must be approved by me, and I encourage you to try the suggested list first. The sources must include the following:

- 2 Book Sources
- 2 Chapters in Scholarly Editions, Anthologies, or Collections
- 4 Journal Articles
- 2 Miscellaneous Sources (Youtube videos, online lectures, blogs, news articles, films [documentaries are an excellent resource], interviews, etc. Don't be afraid to ask!)

After you compile and arrange your sources, write a short explanation of how you searched for them and what you discovered. What mistakes did you make? What did you learn? Were there any sources you considered but chose not to use?

You will be graded on the accuracy of your MLA formatting as well as the relevancy of your sources. A source on your theme not connected to the text can be included if you justify its inclusion well in your introductory statement.

### Critical Review – 15%

Due – Feb. 14, before class

This assignment will see you choosing one of the non-miscellaneous sources you selected for your bibliography and writing a 500-word critical review of the source. What makes this source a good example of scholarship? How does it lay out its arguments? Does it do so clearly? What is the strength of its hypothesis, is it followed through well? How does the article address the text in a way that shows close reading and deep thinking about the text? Does the article include thinking about matters beyond the text? How are those connected into its argument? Do they overpower the text or balance it well? What are the strengths of its conclusion?

You don't have to answer all of these, but they should give you an idea of what you should be looking for when doing a critical review. Basically, I do not want a short essay that says "This article makes no sense." If that is your argument, then I would like to know what specifically the writer does that prevents you as the reader from following their argument. Nor do I want to see, "this is a really smart article." Why is it smart?

I advise you not to choose a book, due to their length, and instead choose either a book chapter or journal article.

### Critical Essay – 25%

March 21, before class.

Compile a 2000 word essay on one of the semester's texts up to that point. Or, if you have read ahead, one of the later texts. Topics will be presented by October 1, or you may decide your own. Topics will be about the theme of the class. You must cite a minimum of three secondary sources in your paper.

Your paper must have a strong introduction, argument, and conclusion with a properly formatted works cited page in MLA.

### Final Creative Project – 20%

April 11, before class.

Your final project will stem from your own interests and academic pursuits. Choose one of the semester's texts and devise a significant creative project inspired by it. Think big. For instance, if you are a business student, perhaps you would like to design and propose a café inspired by one of the texts. Perhaps you are a drama student and want to turn one of the texts into a devised theatre piece. Perhaps you might develop a short video game inspired by one of the texts (I once made a *Beowulf*-based video game for a class, anything is possible). Regardless, your idea must be pitched to me for approval. I want to be sure you have done sufficient work for this project. Your project must also include a written component explaining and justifying your choices (five pages max).

You may also team up for this in groups no larger than three. If you choose to, your written component will require a full justification and explanation of everyone's role so I can be assured everyone participated fully. You will all share a single grade.

Alternatively, you could choose to write another essay. 2500 word maximum, four secondary sources. Topic of your own devising, approved by me.

### Final Exam – 20%

Date TBD

This will be 2 hours, and feature multiple choice, short answer questions, and a long answer question reflecting on the course's texts. I have not written it yet. Students must be available during this exam period: April 19-29.

### Attendance and Participation – 5%

Attendance is expected. In class discussion is common during lectures, and every third class is a workshop class in which we break into class-long discussion groups in which I take part. Participation is therefore very much expected and encouraged.

All assignments will be submitted electronically on D2L, with the exception of the non-written portion of the Final Project, which will be submitted conditional on its form.

#### **Attendance and participation expectations:**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be fully present and engaged in class activities and discussions. These are part of the participation grade, as outlined in the

assessment components section above. A rubric with detailed information about the assessment of participation is available on the course D2L site. If students miss a class session that is included as a component of participation, and wish to receive credit for that day's work, they must contact the instructor within 24 hours to discuss options to make up that component.

**Conduct:**

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

**Policy on use of electronic devices:**

The use of laptop and mobile devices in class is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. Please refrain from accessing websites and resources that may be distracting to you or for other learners during class time. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's [Internet and email use policy](#). Electronic devices are not permitted during the Final Examination.

**Grading System:**

90 + %	A+	4.0	67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
85 – 89 %	A	4.0	64 – 66 %	C	2.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7	60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3	55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0	50 – 54 %	D	1.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7	0 – 49 %	F	0

Students need not receive a passing grade on any particular assignment in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Extra credit assignments are not available.

Students must reach the minimum percentage threshold for the grade range to receive that letter grade (e.g., to receive an A- a student will have surpassed the minimum threshold of 80.00% in the course).

**Academic Integrity:**

This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the [Academic Integrity website](#) for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.

Plagiarism is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

**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](#) must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor. The University also has regulations governing the [deferral of final examinations](#).

**Grade appeals:**

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, Consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at [engl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:engl@ucalgary.ca). Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

[English Department Website:](#)

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English.

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

The [Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club](#) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is [smecuofc@gmail.com](mailto:smecuofc@gmail.com).

**Writing support:**

[The Student Success Centre](#) offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

[Academic regulations and schedules](#)

**Student Academic Accommodations:**

The Student Accessibility Services website is available [here](#). University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>  
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

**Program Advising and Student Information Resources** is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca)  
Website: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>

### **Instructor's Intellectual Property**

Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

### **Sexual violence policy:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

### **Other important information:**

- [Wellness and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Student Success](#)
- [Student Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Union \(SU\) Information](#)
- [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Information](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points](#)
- [Safewalk](#)

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

Please participate in [USRI Surveys](#) toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.