



**FACULTY OF ARTS
Department Of English**

COURSE OUTLINE

ENGL 253.05: STUDIES IN GENRE: NONFICTION

WINTER 2023

Class Schedule (Tu/Th/2:00 to 3:15/online)

Instructor	Dr. Banting
Email:	pbanting@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Wednesdays 10:00 – 12:00 (online consultations – please book in advance via email in order for me to send you a zoom access code)

This is an online course in a synchronous modality.

Course Description:

A study of the conventions of the genre of nonfiction, with emphasis on close reading and critical writing skills. Includes the study of at least one text by an Indigenous author.

Planetary change. In this course we will examine texts pertaining to planetary change, beginning with Barry Lopez's interrogation of the notion of "conquest" of the Americas and concluding with Kathleen Dean Moore's exhortation to all of us to take on the issues of climate chaos and the rapid extirpations and extinctions of species (including our own). In other words, Lopez describes how it all started, and the other writers analyze different aspects of how it's going. We will read a text by a writer the same age as the students, Greta Thunberg, who has been one of the most influential voices in the world for action on climate. Richard Wagamese, an Anishinaabe writer, and Ian Williams, an award-winning Black writer and one of the English Department's former writers-in-residence, illuminate the reverberating physical and social effects of colonialism and the important role stories and testimony play in re-imagining and recreating the world we live in. And Ken Ilgunas strikes out on foot to walk the entire length of the proposed Keystone XL pipeline route from Fort McMurray, AB, to the Texas coast in order to witness and draw to our attention the role of the energy apparatus that is hyper-loading our atmosphere and oceans with excess carbon and altering the climate.

Some of the key generic and critical terms we will be studying include: genre; subgenre; nonfiction (also known as literary nonfiction; creative nonfiction; narrative nonfiction); close reading of the text; representation; narrative / story; literary techniques shared between

narrative fiction and narrative nonfiction; adventure narratives; the manifesto; intertext/intertextuality; and more.

A note on genre: Genre is key to the reading and accurate comprehension of texts. As this is a course on nonfiction, and because novels and short stories are fiction, there are no novels or short stories on this course. Novels are works of the imagination. Works of nonfiction are not fiction: therefore they are not novels. You can call them nonfiction, literary nonfiction, creative nonfiction, or you can refer to them as books or texts. Only book-length works of fiction are called novels. **In other words, the word “novel” is not synonymous with “book.”**

Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate introductory-level knowledge of a range of nonfictional literary texts;
2. Understand and interpret literary texts in relation to their historical and cultural contexts;
3. Pay close attention to the language of a literary text;
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. Comprehend the function and conventions of genre and be able to discern fiction from nonfiction, a useful literary and life skill.
7. Have an introductory knowledge of some current cultural concerns addressed within literary studies, including colonialism, planetary change, the role of stories and storytelling, racism, energy, and citizen engagement.

Texts and readings:

The following texts have all been ordered by the U of Calgary Bookstore:

Barry Lopez, *The Rediscovery of North America*

Greta Thunberg, *No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference* (expanded ed.)

Richard Wagamese, *One Story, One Song*

Ian Williams, *Disorientation: Being Black in the World*

Ken Ilgunas, *Trespassing Across America: One Man’s Epic, Never-Done-Before (and Sort of Illegal) Hike Across the Heartland*

Kathleen Dean Moore, *Great Tide Rising: Towards Clarity and Moral Courage in a Time of Planetary Change*

Students must also have and use a university-level grammar, punctuation and style manual.

The least expensive and one of the best is Douglas Babington, Don LePan, Maureen Okun, *The Broadview Pocket Guide to Writing*, revised 4th Canadian edition. Any relatively recent edition of the *Broadview* manual will suffice. Check what is available in the University of Calgary Bookstore and/or the Used Bookstore on campus. (Tip: manuals that are coil-bound stay open on your desk better.)

See the Class and Reading Schedule for any additional required readings, videos, films, and podcasts. Please download both this syllabus and the Class and Reading Schedule from our D2L site, and save them to your computer for ease of reference.

Assessments and Evaluation:

Reading journal (two full pages per week for a total of twenty pages, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, with 1" margins on all four sides of the page, dated, and written in the first person "I"): 40%

The reading journal will be submitted in two installments, as follows:

Due date (entries one through five): Feb. 14th

Due date (entries one through ten): March 23rd

Test (covering all course materials up to the test date): 20%

Date: March 2nd

Analytical research essay (5 to 6 full pp. including works cited, 20%):

Due date: April 4th

Final online, open-book, registrar-scheduled examination (20%):

Date and time TBA by the registrar

TOTAL

100%

As per University regulations, students MUST BE available for examinations during the entire Examination Period, APRIL 15 TO 26, 2023.

Link to the Academic Schedule: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html>

Extra credit: There are no extra-credit assignments.

Learning technology requirements:

Students will need to have access to a computer or smartphone in class time. There is a D2L site for this course which contains any additional required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see [d2L.ucalgary.ca](https://d2l.ucalgary.ca)).

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;

- Broadband internet connection.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone.

Zoom is a video conferencing program that will allow us to meet at specific times for a live video conference, so that we can have the opportunity to meet each other virtually and discuss relevant course topics as a learning community.

To help ensure Zoom sessions are private, do not share the Zoom link or password with others, or on any social media platforms. Zoom links and passwords are only intended for students registered in the course. Zoom recordings and materials presented in Zoom, including any teaching materials, must not be shared, distributed or published without the instructor's permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity; and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith, and respect (as per the **Code of Conduct**). When entering Zoom or other video conferencing sessions (such as MS Teams), you play a role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment. Please be mindful of how your behaviour in these sessions may affect others. Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (e.g **Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy**). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your zoom sessions visit: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/>.

Office hours: if you need or would like some guidance, assistance or advice with anything course-related, please make an appointment by emailing me in advance to set up a time for a zoom appointment. See the top of this outline for zoom office hours.

Spelling, grammar, punctuation, style, and other formal elements of writing will be assessed with respect to all assignments for the course, not just specific assignments. There is no circumstance in which incorrect or very poor writing is advisable, not even in casual emails or text messages. Your reading journal will be written in the first-person ("I") but writing in the first person is no reason not to use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Active learning: The classes will be conducted as a mixture of lecture, class and small-group discussion, group work (e.g., discussion and preparation of a few PowerPoint slides), field work (journal), and other forms of learning. A combination of various learning activities provides better absorption and integration of materials and stimulates further thought and insight. Group discussion or group activities of any kind are not time fillers. Participation in all such activities, not just lectures, is compulsory. A crucial part of intellectual work is being able to speak about it with others. In short, students will be expected to assume the role of active

participants in the co-construction and dissemination of knowledge rather than that of merely passive consumers of it. This includes participation in discussion and any credit-free assignments and activities carried out during class time.

Regular and punctual attendance of classes, the taking of extensive notes, and studying are all essential to learning.

Formatting: All type-written assignments must be double-spaced in 12-point font with 1” margins on all four sides of the page.

Times New Roman is the default font for work in English literature, though you can use another easily readable font such as this one, Calibri, Arial, Cambria, or Garamond.

Note that “**fun fonts**” do not make your work appear serious or professional. They have the opposite effect, and they can make reading more difficult and time-consuming. Save the fun fonts for greeting cards and other personal correspondence where they will be appreciated.

Late penalties will be deducted for late assignments. Late penalties can and sometimes do result in a failing grade on an assignment so students will want to start assignments well in advance of any due date. **The late penalty for assignments is one mark per day late.** That is, if an assignment merits a 20/25 (80%, A-) but comes in two days late, the mark will drop two marks to 18/25 (76%, B). This measure is in place to ensure a level playing field for everyone in the course and to facilitate timely completion of your assignments and my marking (professors have deadlines too). Timely completion is made possible by starting your assignments well in advance of their respective due dates: this also tends to create a much better quality of work.

Avoid this common misperception: We are not studying literary texts simply to extract “the main idea” or to get “the general drift” of a text! Quite the opposite. We will be focusing on what is actually on the page, no drifts, themes or general ideas. **For the same reason, you MUST bring the assigned reading(s) of the day to our online class.** If you don’t bring the text of the day to class, you are completely missing the point of literary studies, which is based on close textual analysis first and foremost.

Keep in mind that it is the student’s responsibility to take notes. (In other words, notes are not given but taken.) Sometimes students assume that notes should be taken only when there is a PowerPoint Presentation on the screen, but this is not true.

Along similar lines, I highly recommend that you **annotate and underline** the course texts. Don’t try to preserve pristine copies of your books for resale to other students who will underline and annotate and therefore may do better than you did in the course! Underlining and annotating in the margins are the best ways of acquiring and consolidating your knowledge of textual material. If you ‘make tracks’ in your texts (though not, of course, in any library books ever), you will be far more likely to take ownership of the knowledge we will be co-creating in

the classroom. It is also vastly more efficient when it is time to study for a test to study your notes, marginalia and underlining in the text than to re-read the books!

Submission of assignments. Submit your assignments via D2L's Dropbox feature.

Feedback. For each of your written assignments, I will give you editorial feedback on how you can improve the quality of your work. It is expected that you address any indicated deficiencies, errors or infelicities – even if your writing is very good, you can always improve along the lines I highlight – prior to submitting your next assignment. You don't want to make the same errors, infelicities or omissions more than once.

Attendance and participation expectations:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be fully present and engaged in class activities and discussions.

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 required for the online class format. Please use them in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. For instance, please refrain from accessing extraneous 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](#).

Grading System:

The Desire 2 Learn (D2L) system keeps a running total of your marks, and your final grade will simply be the letter grade corresponding to the accumulated number of marks you have earned in your assignments by the end of the course. Your final grade is simply the number of total marks you accumulate out of 100: it is not a total of percentages (i.e., it is not a total of 60% on one assignment + 76% on another, etc.).

All assignments will be graded as a numerical percentage of their value as listed on this syllabus and will only be converted to a letter grade using the scale below at the conclusion of the course. The English department has standardized the percentage conversion scale as follows:

90 + %	A+	4.0	67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
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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

- Any final percentage grades that end in a .50 will be rounded up.
- 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 far exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.
- The interpretation of the undergraduate university grading system can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>
- There is no D- grade.

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. 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.

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
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/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Sexual-and-Gender-Based-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.