

# ENGL 503 (WINTER 2013)

## DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS

“People say that life is the thing, but I prefer reading.” ~ Logan Pearsall Smith

The history of reading begins with the invention of written language and culminates, like all histories, in the present — in the seminar room of English 503, among other places. In this course we will study that history and the theorizations of reading practices, and consider how cultural and material circumstances have influenced historical readers. And we will see the present and future of reading as equally subject to our own intellectual habits and technologies. But we will also examine our practices of reading two novels in 2013 — novels from the 1760s and the 1990s. Both are “thick with the presence of other books” (in A.S. Byatt’s words), and with an awareness of their own status as books, of both the limits and potential of written language.

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### TEXTBOOKS

- Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*
- Susan Hill, *Howards End is on the Landing: A Year of Reading from Home*
- A. S. Byatt, *Possession: A Romance*
- Stephen Ramsay, *Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism*
- Umberto Eco and Jean-Claude Carrière, *This is Not the End of the Book*

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### EVALUATION

Topical Presentation: Summary	10%	90 + %	A+	4.0
Topical Presentation: Delivery	10%	85 – 89 %	A	4.0
Blog post: Close Reading	10%	80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
Blog post: Resource	10%	77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
Participation	10%	74 – 76 %	B	3.0
Research Paper	50%	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

Each component is graded out of 10 or 100 marks. Here are the percentage equivalents in the English Department’s standardized grading system.

**All components are compulsory. No student can achieve a passing grade in the course without completing and submitting both blog posts and the Research Paper.**

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## TOPICAL PRESENTATION (10 + 10%)

The Topical Presentation is an oral presentation on a topic pertaining to one of the texts we are reading that day. Think of it as an introductory lecture to intelligent non-specialists; each presentation subject focuses on the text's relation to other texts or to its culture.

Its aim is to **interpret the readings** and other resources. That means your presentation will normally quote the readings at least twice.

For full marks, you will:

- Deliver a thoughtful and well-prepared presentation.
- Do not simply tell a story: develop an argument about any aspect of the prescribed topic.
- Do not exceed your time limit; it is a **strict maximum**.

### Presentation Format

Your presentation can take one of two forms: either a [PetchaKucha](#) (6 minutes, 40 seconds) or a more traditional 8-minute presentation **without** any visual slides. (So if you plan to use visual images, you **must** opt for the PetchaKucha format.) Both will pertain to one of the written texts we are reading in the course. I will circulate a sign-up sheet in advance.

- For the PetchaKucha, [follow my instructions here](#) (online).
- For the **8-minute** presentation, deliver a thoughtful and well-prepared presentation. Do not simply tell a story: make an argument about any aspect of the prescribed topic.

### Discussion

After your presentation, there will be 10 minutes for discussion. You may find it helpful to conclude your presentation with one or two questions for this discussion.

Each presentation will have a designated respondent. This person's job has two parts:

1. to respond to your summary on the [blog](#), in the comments field; and
2. to join you in leading the 10-minute discussion of your presentation. (I will not speak first.)

Your 10% for the presentation will reflect your performance in the delivery, and your moderation of the following discussion. I will circulate a rubric in advance.

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## BLOG POSTS (10 + 10%)

You will write at least two 300-word posts on [the English 503 blog](#) in this course. The [instructions](#) you need to get started are online.

There are two types of required blog posts:

1. Close readings are of any passage you choose from the sections of Sterne or Byatt that we are reading in a given week. There's an advantage to writing these posts early, because you're not allowed to repeat the selections of any of your fellow students. Start by choosing a short passage — about 10 lines of prose, or 20 lines of poetry. (Don't transcribe the passage; just give us the page number.) Which passage seems the most interesting, the most complex, the most beautiful? Your choice can be any passage we haven't discussed in class, or haven't discussed enough. Then discuss the passage in detail, including a lot of questions. The best close readings shift between commenting on a text's details and using those details to hypothesize a pattern or a reading of a larger structure (e.g., what the narrator is like) or the text as a

whole. For more resources on close reading, see [this guide](#), or [this one](#) — or [these four lists of terms](#), prepared for my Shakespeare students (online).

2. Responses are less prescriptive. Respond either to the “History + Theory” text we’re reading that week, or to any other material you find that would enrich our understanding of anything we’re reading that week. These can be other supplementary material like articles, podcasts, videos, Wikipedia entries, reading blogs, tweets, art exhibitions — anything that will provoke new thinking and discussion about the history and future of books and reading. Start by identifying what you’re responding to, and give us your thoughts and questions about it. If you’ve gone outside of the course texts, provide a rationale for your choice — and a link so we can find it!

**Always categorize your posts** as either a Close Reading or a Response.

My policies and my rubric for grading your close reading post are [here](#) (online). I’ll grade your response by how well it fulfills the terms of the assignment.

### Timing of Blog Posts

In Week 1, I will assign you to one of 11 groups, G1 to G11. Each group will write one post of each type. Your group assignment also determines the timing of your two posts. In the course schedule, you can see the dates when your posts are due: e.g. Group 1/{G1} must post a close reading of a passage from *Sterne* (vols. I-II) by Monday, January 14th. We’ll discuss the posts in the following class — in this case, on Wednesday the 16th.

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## PARTICIPATION (10%)

Your participation grade depends on three things:

1. Your active and regular attendance in our seminars; and your informed and engaged participation in those seminars. That means you come to the seminar regularly, always prepared to discuss the day’s reading(s) with your peers. You have impressions and questions about the texts. If you don’t have a chance to share them in class, you post them to [the course blog](#) (category: “Followup”).
2. When you serve as a (formal) Respondent to a presentation, you comment on the presentation summary on the blog, and you actively lead the 10-minute discussion, along with the speaker who has presented.
3. Your participation in [the Twitter assignment](#). (See online for full details.)

The success of this seminar depends on your willingness to offer ideas, and to build on your colleagues’ ideas (including mine). Some students will inevitably speak more often than others, while others will prefer to hold back and offer comments less frequently. However, do some self-examination to avoid the opposing poles of anxious observer and dominating talker. If you find yourself veering in either direction, try to do more speaking or listening.

Persistently silent students are often highly intelligent and perceptive, but simply prefer not to speak in class. To avoid my presuming any less of you, you have a few alternate means of communication:

1. Post entries and comments on [the course blog](#) (i.e. beyond the required minimum). These can be about anything related to the course, or topics we discuss in class.
2. Tweet more often, using the #engl503 hashtag. See “More Options” in the [assignment description](#) for ideas (online).
3. E-mail me directly with your thoughts and questions about anything course-related.

Don't wait for the final week of the course, when panic about your participation grade sets in. (Of course, you can contact me about anything to do with the course, no matter how often you speak in class.)

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## RESEARCH PAPER (50%)

Your Research Paper will address one of the following questions:

1. How are historical reading practices like or unlike the present experience of reading either Sterne or Byatt in English 503? Use one or more of the following historians to define these past practices: Manguel, Gilmont, Sherman, and/or Johns.
2. How does either Sterne's or Byatt's novel resist or encourage the digital forms and methods of future reading? Use Ramsay and/or Eco and Carrière to define this future.

We will treat your scholarly writing as a work-in-progress. The final Research Paper you submit will be the culmination of successive drafts. There are a couple of important dates to keep you moving forward with this assignment:

- On February 15th I'll discuss both the research questions and best practices for your methods to address them.
- On or before March 11th you'll send me an e-mail proposing which question and novel you will address. Tell me how you will interpret and address the terms of the question. Your proposal will also explicitly justify your choice of Sterne or Byatt--i.e. why your choice is better suited to the question than the other.
- You will then post a more formal Prospectus (about 750 words) to the [blog](#) on or before March 22nd. It will offer a few paragraphs detailing your questions and the texts you will use to investigate them; it will also include an annotated bibliography of 3-5 scholarly books or journal articles beyond those on the English 503 syllabus. (The proposal and prospectus are together worth 10% of the 50% paper grade.)
- On March 15th, I'll discuss how to find and use these scholarly resources, beginning with the *MLA International Bibliography*. Throughout this course, I'll discuss the elements of scholarly writing, including ways to engage with literary criticism and cultural historiography. That means we will always read secondary texts with attention to their methods as much as their arguments: what works, what doesn't, and why? What can we learn from them beyond transferrable insights? How can we develop our own critical methods and voices?
- Then on April 1st and 8th we will hold two Research Paper Consultations. These are your chance to bring questions about your research methods and ideas to the class at large, and for us to help you resolve them.
- The final draft of your Research Paper is due on Wednesday, April 10th. The length of this paper should be at least 3000 words.

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## LAPTOP & MOBILE POLICY

Computers will be allowed in class **only** if you use them to take notes, to follow along with classroom demonstrations, or to use them for other course-related purposes. Those who cause a distraction by using them for other purposes will have this privilege withdrawn. Simply put, **there is no need for any internet-connected program to run on your computer** during class.

Set your mobile phone to vibrate and put it away. Do not use it in class, except in case of real emergencies.

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## SUBMISSION POLICY

Each student is permitted only one extension, on any one assignment, of one day without penalty. (Your first late submission is your one free extension: no exceptions.)

Beyond these provisions, I penalize late assignments—submitted after class ends on the due date—at a rate of 5% daily for the first two days, and 1% daily thereafter, excluding weekends and university holidays. I do not give any other extensions. Writing assignments must be submitted no later than one calendar week after the due date. Any later, and you will receive a zero grade on that assignment.

The only legitimate excuse for late submissions is a documented medical emergency—as opposed to less drastic misfortunes like the deaths of beloved family pets. Last-minute technological problems (e.g. printers, mail servers, corrupted files) are your own responsibility. Prevent them from costing you marks by finishing before the due date.

Make every effort to submit printed papers **directly** to me, **in class**. If that is impossible, take your paper to the Department office (SS1152) and put it in the drop-box, where your paper will be date-stamped and placed in my mailbox. *Always keep a copy* in case of loss. Electronic submissions will not be accepted. Papers will not be returned by office staff.

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## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

**Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.** If you submit an assignment that includes material (even a very small amount) that you did not write, but that is presented as your own work, you are guilty of plagiarism. The consequences include **failure** on the assignment or in the course, and **suspension** or **expulsion** from the university. For details, see [www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html)

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.

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH INFORMATION

### 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>.

### 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>

### 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 a student’s responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and if you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Your academic accommodation letters should be provided to your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of this course. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/drc/>

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>