

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 607.65-01 Theoretical and Cultural Studies  
COURSE TITLE: Occupy Literature

Fall 2015

Instructor: Bart Beaty

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Office hours: Monday 13:00 – 15:00

**Course description:**

Certain questions might occupy the mind of the Canadian scholars of literature at the start of the twenty-first century: Why is the Prime Minister's book about hockey only available as an American import? Which is a more ethical practice: buying books from Amazon.ca or from a local bookseller? Has the book become a loss leader for literary artists? Are the environmental policies of the publishing industry sustainable over the long term? Is copyright hindering the development of global literary culture? Does literature perpetuate systems of economic inequality?

This course will use contemporary theories of culture to examine the social functioning of literature. Focusing on several contemporary case studies, the course will ask students to reflect upon the issues that are having the most direct impact on the current development of world literature, including consolidation within the publishing industry, changing conceptions of copyright, the impacts of globalization and digitalization, and the shifting nature of creative work. This course will draw on interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological models as a way of interrogating the persistence of structural inequalities in the literary field as it exists today. Ultimately, we will ask: Is literature merely an expression of the 1%, and must it be so?

**Texts and readings:**

Jenny Offill. *Dept. of Speculation* (2014)

Gabrielle Zevin. *The Storied Life of AJ Fikry: A Novel* (2014)

Scott Westerfeld. *Afterworlds* (2014)

Kazuo Ishiguro. *The Buried Giant: A Novel* (2015)

Jennifer Weiner. *Who Do You Love: A Novel* (2015)

Jonathan Franzen. *Purity: A Novel* (2015)

Julie Schumacher. *Dear Committee Members: A Novel* (2014)

Paul Beatty. *The Sellout: A Novel* (2015)

Chad Harbach. *MFA vs NYC: The Two Cultures of American Fiction* (2014)

Other readings to be distributed in class.

### **Assignments and Evaluation:**

#### **Field Work** (6 Assignments worth 5% each = 30%)

This class will include seven field work assignments. Students are required to complete six of these. Students opting to complete all seven will have their lowest grade dropped. Field work assignments may be completed individually, in teams, or by the entire class working together and sharing parts of the work. When students are working collaboratively, it should be for the purposes of refining the quality of work by sharing ideas about method and process. When students are working collaboratively, some reflection on how collaboration altered the work experience is expected. Students are under absolutely no obligation to work collaboratively. All students working collaboratively will receive the same grade on an assignment no matter how the work is broken down by the group.

1. Abbie Hoffman “Steal This Book” Challenge. Students are asked to employ a stopwatch and to time themselves as they answer this question: How long would it take to acquire all of the required and recommended readings for this class without paying for them? [Note: Students are NOT to violate copyright laws in the completion of this assignment. Evidence of finding the book available in free form can include, for example, screen shots of files]. Due: September 21
2. Genre Citations. Using the online MLA citation index, chart the top twenty-five studied authors over the course of the past quarter century in any “popular” genre. Define the genre, the authors, and the most studied work by each author. Due: October 19
3. *New Literary History* Literature Review. Write a literature review of the essays in the two special issues of *New Literary History* assigned for this class. The literature review should position the articles relative to each other in no more than 250 words. Due October 26
4. Mark Lombardi Graphic. Create a Mark Lombardi relationship graphic to illustrate the interconnectedness of book blurbs. Pick a book (any book!) and read the blurbs on the back. Blurbs should be from other writers rather than institutions (Stephen King, say, rather than the *New York Times*). Find a book by that blurber and read those blurbs. Keep mapping these relations until you get back to your first author. Chart the connections in map form. Due November 9.
5. Fiftieth Anniversary Eyes High Challenge. Graph the make-up of the faculty in the Department of English at the University of Calgary since 1966. Due November 16
6. *New Yorker* Dissertation Tweet Challenge. Read Stephen Burt’s *New Yorker* article “All Possible Humanities Dissertations Considered As Single Tweets”. Provide examples (books or articles) of each. Due November 23
7. Ethnography of a Literary Reading. Perform an ethnography of any reading held in Calgary this term. At a minimum, note the age range, gender and ethnic make-up of the audience relative to that of the reader(s). What percentage of the audience has published literary work? What percentage hopes to? Due November 30. [Note: University policies concerning research on human subjects MAY require ethics clearance from the Conjoint Faculty Research Ethics Board. For students wishing to pursue this project, we will be discussing the preparation of an Ethics submission during the class on September 28. If an Ethics submission is required, that submission itself will become a part of this project].

**In-class Presentations** (2 presentations at 10% = 20%). Each week that a field work assignment is due, no more than two students will present their field work to the class. Each presentation should be no more than fifteen minutes in length, and should take the class through the findings as well as through the import of those findings. No more than two students may present on any field work assignment and presentations will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. If a student is presenting on collaboratively produced work, it must be with the permission of all of the collaborators. No more than one person from any collaboration may present the same work. Presentations should highlight the methods that were used to gather relevant data, a presentation of that data, and some preliminary thoughts about the significance of that data that will lead into a class discussion. Please note: As students will each be doing six of these assignments, presume that the majority of your classmates have also gone through similar processes as you have to create their own data-sets. We will be particularly interested in discussions of process and method here.

**Final Project Meeting** (15%). Students will meet with the instructor one on one to discuss their final project. Meetings will be booked in one hour slots during the week of October 15. Students should come prepared to discuss their topic, appropriate literature, and method.

**Final Project** (35%). Students will prepare a final project based on work of their choice. Projects may include field work, digital projects, contributions to community projects (such as the CWILA count), or a final paper. If students opt to write a final paper, that paper should be approximately 20 pages in length. If students opt to write a final paper, the topic of that paper should be a literary work published between September 2014 and December 2015, in keeping with all of the works discussed during this term. Projects will be an appropriate length and scope that is equivalent to the to a 20 page research essay. The specifics of the scope of student projects will be determined during the October meeting. Projects and papers are due December 7, 2015.

There will be no Registrar-scheduled exam 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.

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:**

Grades are calculated according to the 4 point scale used in the *Graduate Calendar*:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-g-1.html>

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding
A	4.00	Excellent-superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.70	Very good performance

B+	3.30	Good performance
B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	Minimum pass for students in Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.30	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted towards Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.
C	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0.00	

Please note: A B- is considered a minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

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.

In the case of Instructors using numerical marks in the grading of term work, the departmental conversion chart applies.

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

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.

**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>

**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/graduate>. 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 Department of English's graduate website for courses, departmental deadlines, and other related program information at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/node/245>. Consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar for university and faculty regulations, dates, deadline, fees, and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar is <http://grad.ucalgary.ca>.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact the Graduate Office at 403 220 5484 or visit us in Social Sciences Tower 1148 in the first instance.

For program planning and advice, contact the Graduate Program Administrator at [enggrad@ucalgary.ca](mailto:enggrad@ucalgary.ca) to make an appointment with Dr. Aruna Srivastava, Graduate Program Director.

**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:**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.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/>

**Contact for the Graduate Student Association:** <http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/>

**Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office:** <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

## **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.