

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 609-S01

Fall 2017

COURSE TITLE: Studies in a Literary Period: Decadent Materialism

Wednesday 9:00 – 11:45, Room: SS 1015

Instructor: Dr. S. Forlini

Office: SS1120

Phone: 403-220-5483

E-mail: sforlini@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: M11:30-13:30

Course description: Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, *Punch* cartoons invariably depict the Victorian aesthete as a physically depleted person engrossed in aesthetic contemplation of a beautiful object (a flower, a teapot, etc.) and neglecting other forms of sustenance such as food or contact with the outside world. By the end of the century, physician Max Nordau reads the aesthetes' attraction to material things as symptomatic of the degeneration that he believes threatens all of civilization. The aesthetes are clearly singled out for their unusual (and apparently aberrant) object conduct, but what exactly is at stake in aesthetic things and sustained aesthetic attention? What motivates attempts to discipline the aesthetes' seemingly queer object choices and practices of intense aesthetic contemplation? In this course, we will attempt to answer such questions by examining the writings and aesthetic practices of British Aestheticism and Decadence. In particular, we will explore the many permutations of the British "cult of beauty," including the writings of aesthetic theorists such as John Ruskin, Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, and Vernon Lee (Violet Paget), and practices such as missionary aestheticism and lifestyle aestheticism. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which such theories and practices are grounded in scientific understandings of embodied experience and the evolution of the "aesthetic instinct". We will also consider tensions between the Aesthetic Movement's emphasis on the ethical and healthful benefits of refining one's "aesthetic sense" and the moments in which Aestheticism becomes associated with Decadence, degeneration, and unfettered consumption. Finally, we will consider the legacy and continuing relevance of Victorian materialist aesthetics through the emerging field of "neuroaesthetics" and the recent "return to aesthetics" in the humanities.

Texts and readings:

Available Online through links posted on D2L:

Allen, Grant. *Physiological Aesthetics*

Gautier, Theophile. Preface to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (brief excerpt)

Lee, Vernon. "Beauty and Ugliness"

-- "Art and Life"

-- *Belcaro* (selected essays)

-- *The Beautiful: An Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics*

Morris, William. *News from Nowhere*.

-- "Art and Socialism"

-- "Useful Work and Useless Toil"

Pater, Walter. *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (selected essays)

Ruskin, John. *Modern Painters* (excerpts)

-- *The Stones of Venice* (excerpts)

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

-- *Salome*

Selected secondary readings in D2L (including essays/articles by Judith Butler, Anjan Chatterjee, Gowan Dawson, Regenia Gagnier, Diana Maltz, Douglas Mao, Dennis Dutton, Robert Michael Brain, Carolyn Burdett, G. Gabrielle Starr, Terry Eagleton, and others)

From the Bookstore:

Elaine Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just*

Isobel Armstrong's *The Radical Aesthetic*

Jacques Rancière's *Aesthetics and its Discontents*

Jacques Rancière's *The Politics of Aesthetics*

Recommended Reading:

Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*

Assignments and Evaluation:

Participation: 20%

Presentation: 25%

Critical Reflection: 15%

Final Essay (15-20 pages): 40%

Participation: Attendance and participation are essential in this seminar-style course. Participation grades will be based on attendance (5%) and the quality of a student's contributions to class discussions (10%), but will also include performing the role of discussant (5%) for at least one student presentation. If a student misses more than 3 classes and fails to provide appropriate medical documentation explaining the absences, he/she will receive a grade of zero in this component.

Presentation: Students will prepare a 15-20-minute conference-style presentation on specific readings, including at least one Victorian text. Presentations should be analytical in nature, constituting a short essay (5-8 pages long). Students will be evaluated based on the quality of the presentation and the student's ability to respond to discussion questions. A hard copy of the presentation must be submitted on the day of the presentation.

Critical Reflection: Students will prepare a brief critical reflection (~5 pages) on a specific topic of their choice that relates theories discussed with current debates about the role of art in society today. Students may focus on a specific artist, art object, exhibit, mode of perceptual compartment, or controversy as they prefer, but they must make explicit ties with one or more works under study. Students will present their reflections as provocations for class discussion. Examples of possible topics will be discussed in class.

Final essay: Students will prepare a final essay (15-20 pages long) on a topic of their choice. Topics must engage with course materials and themes, and must be approved by the instructor. To obtain approval, students must arrange to meet with the instructor and present a brief proposal or research question. Final essays may build upon previous assignments for this course but must be sufficiently different to be approved.

There is no Registrar-scheduled exam for this course. There will be no extra credit assignments.

Class Policies:

- 1-Students are expected to come to class having done all required readings (as specified in the reading schedule) and to be prepared to participate actively in class discussion.
- 2-All assignments must be submitted in hard copy at the start of class on the day that they are due.
- 3-Assignments submitted after the deadline will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends).
- 4-In order to receive a passing grade in this course, students must complete all assignments.
- 5-All assignments must adhere to MLA style guidelines (most recent edition).

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

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-5.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.

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 to make an appointment with Dr. Suzette Mayr, 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:**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at 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>

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). 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.