

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

English 677

Fall 2017

Historical Explorations within the Contemporary Canadian Novel

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 15:30 -17:00; Thursdays, 15:00 – 16:30

This course will examine various readings of history as an inflected space represented within contemporary Canadian fiction. The Canadian “historical novel” has proceeded from a moment of narrative transparency to a position that questions its own reading of history’s wounds, denouncing the texture of received information and yet imposing a narrative order. Can such referential restraints provide a space within which the assumptions of particular social, cultural, and historical moments be examined and critiqued? Is this focus nostalgic or revisionist? Contemporary Canadian historiography appears to be interested in examining subversive or unheroic characters who nevertheless occupy a time and space emblematic of “national character.” At the same time, historiographic representations of landscape, gender, class, region and religion encompass economic, social, and cultural contingencies, all relevant to the construction of a literature within a nation diverse and dispersed in terms of cultural coherence. This course will apprehend these questions by reading a selection of novels that look to history or a particular historical moment as their initiating impulse.

Required Primary Texts:

Margaret Atwood, *Alias Grace*

Timothy Findley, *Famous Last Words*

Lawrence Hill, *Book of Negroes*

Wayne Johnston, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*

Joy Kogawa, *Obasan*

Robert Kroetsch, *Man from the Creeks*

Sky Lee, *Disappearing Moon Cafe*

Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*

Fred Stenson, *The Trade*

Kim Thúy, *Ru*

Jane Urquhart, *The Stone Carvers*

Guy Vanderhaeghe, *The Last Crossing*

Richard Wagamese, *Indian Horse*

Thomas Wharton, *Icefields*

Assignments:

1. In-class presentation + written paper (20%)
2. a short research essay (conference length) early in the term (15%)
3. a long research essay (at the end of the term) 55%
4. Contributions to Critical Bibliography (10%)

A student MUST complete ALL of the above assignments in order to pass this course. There is NO group work in this class. There is NO final examination in this course.

1. In-Class Presentations and subsequent documentation of presentation (20%)
Each student is required to make 1 short (no longer than ten minutes) critical presentation on one of the texts in the course, addressing a specific aspect of historical declension. This oral but well-researched presentation should be primarily based on textual analysis and relevant background critique. The class will engage the presenter in discussion. Students should clear their subject and approach with me. Then, taking class feedback and discussion into account, the student will hand in a written version of the presentation. This work altogether falls under the In-Class Presentation percentage.

2. Short Research Essay (1500 words, 15%):
Each student (by the indicated date on the class schedule) will hand in a short (1500 word) analytical essay. Topics will be handed out early in the course. Please use MLA style to format your papers.

3. Long research paper (4000 words, 50%):
Your long research paper (publishable length) must demonstrate a fairly sophisticated employment of theory and reading. You will be asked to choose one aspect of historicity and historical narrative and to discuss its configuration with relation to a theoretical question. I will hand out essay questions, but students will be free to derive their own, providing they clear their topics with me. Please use MLA style to format your papers.

4. Bibliography Contributions (15%)
You will be expected to read a range of criticism and theory as background for this class. Since this is a graduate level course, students are required bring to every class (and to upload to D2L) a secondary reference relevant to the Canadian historical novel. This can be a theoretical work, or a paper on a particular author or text. This will enable us to build a comprehensive bibliography together.

5. Class Participation:
It is futile to take this course if you do not read the materials in advance and if you fail to come to class prepared to discuss the work in an intelligent and intellectual manner. Students must contribute to in-class analysis and argument. Please be prepared to address the subject at hand with appropriate and sophisticated critical attention. I expect a reasonable level of eloquence.

Grading System:

The following grading system will be used in this course. You will receive a letter grade on all assignments. I grade you as graduate students, and expect you to produce graduate level work.

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.

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 is between two letter grades.

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

Late assignment policy: Assignments submitted after the deadline will drop a grade per week. Thus, a B+ paper that is two weeks late will drop to a B-.

Electronic Devices:

We are all at the mercy of social networking, cell phones, text messages and e-mail, but in this class we will need to focus on literature.

- a) We will be in a wireless-access classroom. You may take notes and work on a laptop in class. If the context is relevant, we may use the Internet to search for a particular item of information together. You are to use this as a tool to accompany the context of what we are learning and discussing. You are NOT to surf the net, text message your friends, play games, or do assignments for a different class.
- b) Cell phones are to be turned off in class.
- c) I check and answer e-mail regularly, usually within 48 hours; however, do not expect me to reply to a query within minutes.

Food, Drink, etc.:

Because this is a long class, it is understandable that students might feel hungry. Students may drink coffee or water or juice in class, but I would request no consumption of food. Eating in a class like this is distracting and intrusive. We do have a fifteen-minute break in the middle of the class, so if you have low blood sugar and need to consume something, please do so in the break.

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>. 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>

Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:

<http://www.enough.utoronto.ca/computeruse/eetiquette.htm>

Library and Research Support:

Christie Hurrell, Interim Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact:

christie.hurrell@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 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/grad/current/>

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 ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

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 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.

HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE

1. Be sure that you are ready to take this course. The reading load is heavy, and students are expected to perform at a very high level. Class attendance is not optional. You will have difficulty passing this course if you do not attend.
2. The schedule for this class is provided to enable you to plan your work in advance. Please use it to ensure that you are caught up, ahead in your reading, that you meet deadlines, and that you know what is going to be discussed in each class. Please make an extra copy of this schedule and keep it in a safe place. I do not appreciate students e-mailing me to find out “what we’re going to do in class” or whether they “missed anything important.”
3. Although I am aware of the difficulties of speaking in public and I am very sympathetic to shyness, class participation is important. An engaged and contributing student inevitably does better than a student who merely occupies a chair.
4. The literature we are reading is to be discussed in class with intellectual eloquence, using literary terminology. As a graduate level class, this course is not interested in feeling or personal reaction, but intelligent, thoughtful responses.
5. While I am happy to answer queries on e-mail, this course will not be conducted via e-mail. I will not e-mail students the notes of a lecture they have missed. However, if you are having difficulties of any kind, or if you have questions, please feel free to meet with me. If you cannot make an appointment during my regular office hours, which are clearly listed, I am happy to arrange to meet at another time. Do not hesitate to inform me of potential difficulties, illness or family concerns, and please don’t leave a problem until it is too late to solve easily.
6. Assignments should be handed to me (in person) in hard copy. I prefer not to receive essays via e-mail attachment. If for some reason you are forced to hand in an assignment to the Department office, please ensure that your name, your student number, your e-mail, and my name and the course number are on the paper before leaving it in the dropbox at SS 1122. Be aware that assignments cannot be returned by the staff in the Department office.
7. The goal of this course is to explore an area of Canadian literature that is rich and dense, much-studied and yet so obvious that it is almost taken for granted. Questions about the notion of canonicity will necessarily be raised as well as questions of validity and cultural contingency. The outcome should enable you to read rich texts with close attention, to analyze their narrative positioning, and to work across literature and history in terms of cultural critique.
8. This promises to be a wonderfully exciting class on a specific strand of Canadian fiction. This literature both reflects the country we occupy and yet asks questions about our national, regional and local assumptions and how they are presented in fiction. I know the material will give you pleasure.

Reference Texts:

You will note that I have ordered no critical texts for this class, but you are expected to read widely and appropriately in the area of criticism and theory. Below is a preliminary list, which you will want to augment as the course proceeds.

John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*

Benedetto Croce, trans. Douglas Ainslie, *Theory & History of Historiography*

Frank Davey, *From There to Here*

Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden*

Linda Hutcheon, *The Canadian Postmodern*

Linda Hutcheon, *The Poetics of Postmodernism*

Jon Kertzer, *Worrying the Nation: Imagining a national literature in English Canada*

Dominic La Capra, *History and Criticism*

Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*

James T. Shotwell, *The History of History*

H. Aram Veesser, ed. *The New Historicism*

Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*