

ALICE MUNRO AND OTHER LOCAL GENIUSES



<http://larryrusswurm.com/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Fiction is all bound up in the local. The internal reason for that is surely that feelings are bound up in place. [...] The truth is, fiction depends for its life on place. Location is the crossroads of circumstance, the proving ground of 'What happened? Who's here? Who's coming?' – and that is the heart's field.

- Eudora Welty

As critics have often observed, Alice Munro's "heart's field" is Southwestern Ontario. In 2013 Munro, who hails from Wingham, Ontario, and is a former Western University undergraduate, was recognized for her literary brilliance with the 2013 Nobel Prize for Literature. This course uses the work of Alice Munro as a starting point and touchstone for an exploration of the value of the local imagination in literature since the 1970s, considering Munro and others who have found inspiration in "Souwesto"¹ for their fiction, poetry and drama.

The class will meet on campus and in a variety of local off-campus locations on field trip days, and will incorporate guest speakers on a variety of topics, cultivating connections with local cultural communities and institutions. The course will develop critical, creative, and experiential engagements with literature and culture through learning assignments tailored to the interests of individual students. Note: this course includes a community-engaged learning component.

This course argues is that there is value in interacting with with local places and people – in effect, that creativity begins *here*, and that knowledge is generated and transformed in such interactions.

¹ "Souwesto" [a term originated by Greg Curnoe] designates one of English Canada's most thickly populated countries of the mind and refers to Southwestern Ontario, which covers the peninsula created by Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Georgian Bay." Duffy, Dennis. "Present at the creation: John Richardson and Souwesto." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'Études canadiennes* (28:3) Fall 1993, 75-91. Online.

CLASS TIMES & LOCATIONS

Wednesdays 6-9 pm Location: Talbot College 343 *unless otherwise indicated on schedule*

CONTACT INFORMATION



PROFESSOR MANINA JONES

Arts and Humanities Building 3G18 (see the "How to Find Professor Jones" slideshow in OWL)

Office Hours: Thursdays 11:30-12:30 and 1:30-3:30 pm

mjones@uwo.ca

TEXTS

(Note: books you should purchase are marked with *, selections from other texts will be made available by photocopy or on OWL)

Alexis, André. Selections from *Lambton, Kent*. Toronto: Gutter Press, 1999.

Barrett, Adrienne. Selections from *The House is Still Standing*. Fredericton, NB: icehouse poetry, 2013.

Bowering, George. Selections from *The Moustache: Memories of Greg Curnoe*. Toronto: Coach House, 1993.

Brand, Dionne. Selections from *Land to Light On*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1997.

Curnoe, Greg. Selections from *Deeds/Abstracts: the history of a London lot*. London: Brick, 1995.

*Davies, Robertson. *Fifth Business*. Toronto: Penguin, 2005.

Donoghue, Emma. Selection from *Landing*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2007.

Dewdney, Christopher. Selections from *A Palaeozoic Geology of London, Ontario*. Toronto: Coach House, 1974.
 Hassan, Jamelie. Selections from *Trespassers and Captives*. London, ON: LRAHM, 2000.
 *Lemire, Jeff. *Essex County*. Atlanta: Top Shelf, 2009.
 Meijer, Sadiqa de. Selections from *Leaving Howe Island*. Fernie, BC: Oolichan, 20013.
 *McKay, Don. *LePendou*. Ilderton, ON: Brick, 1980.
 *Munro, Alice. *Alice Munro's Best: A Selection of Stories*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2008.
 *Reaney, James. "Sticks and Stones." From *The Donnellys*. Hamilton: Dundurn Press, 2008.
 *---. Selections from *Souwesto Home*. London, ON: Brick, 2005.
 *Theatre Passe Muraille. *The Farm Show: A Collective Creation*. Toronto: Coach House, 1990.

Films

Ondaatje, Michael, dir. *The Clinton Special: A Film about The Farm Show*. Toronto: Mongrel Films, 1972.
 Polley, Sarah, dir. *Away from Her*. Toronto: Foundry Films, 2006.

VISITING SPEAKERS AND MEETINGS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

This course will meet, not only on the Western University campus, but in a variety of locations themed to works on the course, including a branch library and poetry reading, the regional art gallery, Eldon House (a heritage house). You can get to all these locations by the LTC. If you have questions about getting to a site, please let me know. Attendance in classes is a core element of the course.

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

By engaging students, staff, and faculty in meaningful experiential learning opportunities, CEL helps meet community defined needs while promoting students' sense of civic engagement and social responsibility. These partnerships help extend Western's reach beyond campus and foster excellence and innovation in teaching and learning.

- From Western's [CEL website](#).

Community-engaged learning bridges the classroom and the local community – in our class, it will give you an opportunity for a “hands-on” experience with local culture, how – and by whom -- it is created, developed, and nurtured. During our first class, we will be visited by Anne-Marie Fischer, Community Engaged Learning Coordinator, who will explain the Community Engaged Learning, and Kathy Navackas, Executive Producer of the London Fringe Festival, who will discuss how students in the course will collaborate with one another to complete a project in partnership with the Fringe.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Assignment	Value	Length	Due Date
Mental map assignment	10%	750 words + illustrations	Oct. 1 st
Academic Integrity Tutorial and Quiz – WebOWL	required	n/a	Oct. 15 th
Essay Proposal	5%	250 words	Nov. 5 th
Essay	20%	1,500 words	Nov. 28thth
Community Engaged Learning Project	25%	tba	tba
Participation and attendance	5%	n/a	n/a
Final Examination	35%	2 hrs.	Tba

Note: A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%.

ASSIGNMENTS

Keep track of due dates. Details of assignments will be posted in OWL. As described in the course description, the essay assignment will be tailored to the individual interests of students. We will use the OWL Wiki function to post possible topics, which you will refine and develop in discussion with Professor Jones. Unless you're informed otherwise, assignments should be submitted in electronic form, through OWL. They will also be returned through OWL.

LATE POLICY

Submit your papers on time. Papers submitted after the due date without prior permission will be deducted 2% per day late, *including* weekends. Papers handed in after the assignment has been returned to other students will not normally be accepted. See the Department of English web page for information on [Academic Relief](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to practice intellectual honesty and act with integrity. This means that you must conscientiously document your research and debts to others, that you must be accountable for your own work in all aspects of the course, and that you must conduct yourself in a respectful way in relation to your peers, faculty and staff. It is your responsibility to be informed about these standards: don't be afraid to ask questions!

All required papers must be submitted for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com. Also, see the Department of English web page for information on [Plagiarism](#).

The Teaching Support Centre has produced a helpful unit on Academic Integrity. It's available on our course OWL site. All students must enrol in and complete this unit in order to pass this course.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

The English Department web site has essential [information](#) about Term Work, Exams, Faculty Office Hours, Academic Relief (appeals, petitions, complaints), and other matters. It is also worth consulting the English Department's [Undergraduate Grading Criteria](#) sheet before you begin your first assignment.

ACCESSIBILITY.UWO.CA

I am committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of all students. Please consult the university [accessibility web site](#) for general information, and don't hesitate to let me know if you have concerns.



Eh? What's that you say? I have a hearing impairment. If you speak directly to me, so that I can see your face, I will be better able to understand you. For important questions, email me; for extended conversations, schedule an appointment at my office, where there are fewer distractions.

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

BASIC EXPECTATIONS...

- ✿ **Come to course meetings, take notes, participate in discussion.**
 - Note: Powerpoint slides don't represent the full content of the class.
- ✿ **Do the reading.** Complete the week's reading before you come to class.
- ✿ **Check OWL regularly.** Essential information will be posted on OWL, including information on cancelled classes, resources, weekly expectations, lectures, assignments, tests, and the exam.

- ✿ **Be respectful.** Treat other students and all our community partners with respect.
 - **Use electronic devices courteously.** If you have material on any electronic device that is distracting to you or those around you, you will be asked to leave the class. This is especially important when we are meeting off-campus.
- ✿ **Complete assignments promptly.** Be sure you note due dates, and read instructions carefully.

BASIC LEARNING GOALS...

- ✿ **Enrich your knowledge and understanding of local literature and culture, and your own place in it.** Considering different definitions, aims, and approaches to self- and community-based creative expression in local literary culture. Taking into account a variety of historical, cultural, generic, and social contexts, we will consider how and why the local imagination matters.
- ✿ **Develop your critical vocabulary, conceptual range, and methodological scope.** The course aims to introduce you to concepts, terms, and methodologies for reading and understanding literary texts in multiple dimensions (eg., aesthetic, formal, social, political, cultural) which you can put to work in your own thinking and writing and living critically, creatively, knowledgeably, and responsibly.
- ✿ **Develop your ability to think creatively in relation to your own various life contexts.**
- ✿ **Develop your practical skills and experience, in a real-life situation, through community-engaged learning.**
- ✿ **Think with more precision.** It's my goal to help you refine your critical and analytical thinking skills, to take your immediate personal reactions to literary texts and issues and submit them to the tools of a discipline.
- ✿ **Read more carefully.** It's my goal to model and foster precise, detailed, reflective reading, to help you realize a heightened appreciation of how literary effects are achieved and why they are important. This will include the ability to identify, understand and analyse such terms as genre, style, plot, character, point of view, imagery, theme, setting, irony, tone, symbols and consider how they function differently in a variety of cultural and historical contexts.
- ✿ **Write and speak more effectively.** It's my goal to support you in developing valuable oral and written communication skills. This includes the clear and organized presentation of ideas with an awareness of audience and disciplinary/generic conventions. It involves the construction of an argument with an effective thesis and a logical development supported by adequate evidence from the text(s) under discussion.
- ✿ **Develop your ideas in relation to those of others.** That means that you will engage in dialogue with others in the class and outside it, and that I will convey multiple perspectives and encourage you to engage with and evaluate alternative views. You should work toward articulating your own perspective *and* being able to defend, modify, supplement it in relation to other thinkers.

Date	Reading or Topic and Class Location
Sept. 10	INTRODUCTION: DRAWING MAPS - REGION? PLACE? SPACE? HOME? Location: Talbot College 343 Introduction to Community-Engaged learning
Sept. 17	Location: Talbot College 343 6-7:30 ORIENTING OURSELVES: LANDINGS, LOCATIONS AND INTERSECTIONS Reading: Munro, "A Wilderness Station," "Vandals;" Donoghue, from <i>Landings</i> ; Brand, from <i>Land to Light On</i> 7:30-9 pm - Guest Speaker: Dr. Ian Rae, King's University College MUNRO AND THE HURON TRACT Reading: Munro, "Meneseteung"
Sept. 24	CLASS CANCELLED
Oct. 1	SOUTHERN (ONTARIO) GOTHIC MENTAL MAP EXERCISE DUE Location: Talbot College 343 Readings: Reaney, <i>The Donnellys: Sticks and Stones</i> ; Munro, "Royal Beatings," "Runaway"
Oct. 8	REGIONAL COLLECTIONS AT WELDON: DEFAMILIARIZING THE LOCAL Location: meet at Weldon Archives Reading Room, WL140A Readings: Munro, "Epilogue: The Photographer" (OWL); Dewdney, from <i>A Paleozoic Geology of London, Ontario</i> ; Alexis, from <i>Lambton, Kent</i>
Oct. 15	THE LOCAL AND THE TRANSNATIONAL: MUNRO AND <i>THE NEW YORKER</i> DEADLINE TO COMPLETE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY TUTORIAL Location: Talbot College 343 6-7:30 pm – Guest Speaker: Dr. Nadine Fladd, Laurentian University Readings: Reaney, <i>Souwesto Home</i> ; Munro, "The Turkey Season," "The Beggar Maid;" Beran, "The Luxury of Excellence: Alice Munro in the NYer" (OWL)
Oct. 22	LOCAL POETS READING Location: Landon Library, 167 Wortley Rd. (via #2 Dundas > #15 Westmount bus) 6:30-7:30 pm – Workshop with Poetry London 7:30-9 pm - Poetry London Reading by Sadiqa de Meijer and Adrienne Barrett Readings: Poetry selections by Sadiqa de Meijer, Adrienne Barrett
Oct. 29	LONDON, ONT., AND THE AVANT GARDE Location: Museum London, 421 Ridout Street North (via any downtown bus) Readings: from Curnoe, <i>Deeds/Abstracts & Deeds/ Nations</i> ; Bowering, from <i>The Moustache</i>
Nov. 5	LOCAL PRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF SMALL PRESSES ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE Location: Talbot College 343 6-7:30 pm – Class meeting 7:30-9 pm Guest Speaker: Kitty Lewis, publisher of Brick Books Reading: "Once Upon a Time/A Word in Your Ear" http://www.brickbooks.ca/about/once-upon-a-time/ "Don It Won't Work" http://www.brickbooks.ca/about/it-wont-work/ "Poetry Map" http://www.brickbooks.ca/about/poetry-map/
Nov. 12	HAUNTINGS AND HISTORY: ELDON HOUSE "BEHIND THE ROPES" Location: Eldon House, 481 Ridout Street North (via any downtown bus) Reading: McKay, <i>Lependu</i> ; Hassan, from <i>Trespassers & Captives</i> ; from <i>Possessions: The Eldon House Poems</i>
Nov. 19	ADAPTATION Location: Talbot College 343 Film: <i>Away from Her</i> (dir. Sarah Polley) Reading: Munro, "The Bear Came Over the Mountain"
Nov. 28	COLLECTIVE CREATION: LOCALIZING AUTHORSHIP ESSAY DUE Location: Talbot College 343 Reading: Theatre Passe Muraille, <i>The Farm Show</i> Film: Ondaatje, <i>The Clinton Special</i>
Dec. 3	BUILDING A LOCAL MYTHOLOGY Reading: Davies, <i>Fifth Business</i>
Dec. 10	DRAWING (OUT) THE LOCAL: GRAPHIC FICTION Location: Talbot College 343 Reading: Lemire, <i>Essex County</i>