

## Department of English & Writing Studies

English 1020E (003) - Understanding English Literature Today  
Tuesdays (Lecture 5:30-7:30 pm, Tutorial 7:30-8:30 pm)

Dr. Anne Schuurman

AHB 3G04 • [anne.schuurman@uwo.ca](mailto:anne.schuurman@uwo.ca) • 519.661.2111 ext. 85814

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Naveera Ahmed • [nahmed88@uwo.ca](mailto:nahmed88@uwo.ca) • AHB 0N85

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00-2:00

Blake Robertson • [brober72@uwo.ca](mailto:brober72@uwo.ca) • AHB 2G30A

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-4:30

### **Course Description:**

Literature illuminates the best of human nature and exposes the worst. It can articulate the finest and most intimate feeling; it can diagnose complex social ills and imagine their cures. Literature makes bridges of intelligibility and meaning between the self and the other, and between the past and the present. Historians will tell you that tyrants have always imprisoned writers and artists first, for good literature and good art do not preach or condemn, but give voice to every perspective, even the villain's: literature, as Azar Nafisi contends, is the greatest threat to tyranny because it is "the oxygen of democracy." Literature is a means, a tool that can be used to ennoble, to teach, to provoke, or to subvert; but it is also an end in itself, an aesthetic object that invites appreciation and enjoyment, even love.

This course introduces students to the study of English literature at the university level. Reading short fiction, poetry, drama, novels, and essays, we will seek, first, to understand how literary language works, and, second, to understand our current global, social, and political world more clearly and deeply through the powerful lenses of literature. The course will consist of weekly lectures and tutorials, in-class writing and student discussion, formal writing assignments, and a final exam.

### **Course Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. describe and explain the literary and aesthetic expectations of a variety of genres, including short fiction, poetry, drama, novels, and essays;
2. define and analyze the structure of a variety of poetic forms;
3. construct and present a complex argument about one or more literary texts, demonstrating knowledge of genre, form, language, and style, and engaging with relevant historical, cultural, and political contexts.

**Required Texts:**

Chalykoff, Lisa, Neta Gordon, and Paul Lumsden, eds. *The Broadview Introduction to Literature*, bundled with *Writing Essays About Literature* by Katherine O. Acheson. Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2013.

Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. Toronto: Vintage-Random House, 2001, 2011.

Krauss, Nicole. *Great House*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2011.

Elizabeth Sargent and Cornelia Paraskevas, eds. *Conversations About Writing* (English 1020 Coursepack)

**Grade Distribution:**

Final Exam:	35%
Tutorial and Responses:	12%
Test:	10%
Library Assignment:	3%
Essay 1:	15%
<u>Essay 2:</u>	<u>25%</u>
	100%

**Course Requirements:**

To earn a passing tutorial grade, you must attend tutorials regularly, listen attentively, and come prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Beyond this, credit will also be given for thoughtful questions and comments, and, in general, demonstration of active engagement with the course material in class. Attendance will be recorded on a sign-in sheet every class and every tutorial to help ensure that your tutorial grade is fair and objective. **Please note that students can be barred from writing final exams in cases of frequent absence from class.** Read actively, **take responsibility for your own learning:** take notes, formulate questions, try to make connections between texts and ideas on your own.

Students are required to submit weekly reading responses, which will be assessed on a pass/fail basis, and will count significantly towards your overall tutorial grade. If you fail, or fail to hand in, more than 3 responses, you will lose 10 out of the possible 12 percentage points of your tutorial grade. Responses must be brought both to class and to tutorial and must be handed in to your TA at the end of each tutorial. The purpose of the reading responses is fourfold: 1. to give you an opportunity to record your responses to the texts in preparation for writing your essays; 2. to organize your thoughts before coming to class; 3. to work on strengthening your writing muscles throughout the whole year; 4. to give me a way to track your progress and your engagement with course material.

Laptops and other electronic devices are **not** allowed in class or in tutorials because they distract from the tasks of listening, thinking, and discussing, and because you will learn the lecture material more effectively if you take notes by hand. You must bring the assigned text to class, every class. Students who show up to class without their books will not be given credit for attendance for that day.

Detailed instructions and topics for the formal papers and library assignment will be distributed in class.

Essays must follow MLA style and are due **in electronic and hard copy at the beginning of class** in class on the date assigned (see class schedule). The electronic copy will be submitted to “Turnitin” (<http://turnitin.uwo.ca/>) to ensure academic integrity and the hard copy will be graded. Late essays will lose 5% per day (including weekends). A paper is considered late if it is handed in any time after the start of class on the date it is due.

**Final Exam:**

Exams are scheduled by the University.

DO NOT MAKE TRAVEL PLANS UNTIL YOU KNOW YOUR EXAM SCHEDULE.

Value of term work and exam:

STUDENTS MUST PASS BOTH TERM WORK AND THE FINAL EXAMINATION (IN COURSES WITH FINAL EXAMINATIONS) IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE. STUDENTS WHO FAIL THE FINAL EXAMINATION (REGARDLESS OF THEIR TERM MARK) AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE.

**Class Conduct:**

All students are expected to conduct themselves according to high standards of respect and civility in the classroom. To that end, students are asked to respect the following guidelines:

1. Frame questions and differences of opinion in a constructive and professional manner.
2. Respect the rights of each student and of the instructor to speak without having to talk over other voices.
3. Laptops and other electronic devices are not allowed in class. Turn off cell-phones and headsets before the start of class, and for the duration of the class. Note: this means no texting during class.
4. Refrain from reading newspapers/magazines/books and from doing work for other classes.

**Email Conduct:**

Please **address** and **sign** all email correspondence appropriately. Typically, emails will be answered within 48 hours, although I do not always answer emails in the evening or on weekends. If you have not heard from me after 48 hours, please re-send your message: do not assume that I have received your email if you do not receive a reply.

**Academic Accommodation:**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student’s Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a major academic offense: see the Scholastic Offense Policy in the Academic Calendar. In sum, plagiarism includes the possession and use of unauthorized materials in examinations, giving to or obtaining from other students in an examination information, representing another student or having oneself represented by another student at an examination, submitting in one course a paper in whole or part already submitted for credit in another course, submitting a paper containing a statement of fact known by the student to be false, submitting a paper in which a reference or source has been fabricated, submitting a paper in which a quotation from another source or a borrowed idea is presented as one's own.

Borrowed ideas and ideas inspired from external sources, not just quotations, must be appropriately acknowledged. This includes borrowings from Internet sources just as it does Library sources. The documentation of your sources is an essential part of writing for university. Plagiarism charges are easy to avoid: put quotations in quotation marks and document the sources of all quotations and borrowed ideas. If you have any doubt about a particular case, I encourage you to ask me for help.

**Class Schedule (subject to change):**

**Sept 15** Class Introduction

22 "Landscape with Fall of Icarus"; "Musée des Beaux Arts"; "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers"; excerpt from Natalie Goldberg, *Writing Down the Bones* and *Wild Mind* (in coursepack)

29 "Ballade for Rosemunde"; "Come Live with Me": "This Be the Verse"; "First Poem for You"; Sonnet 73; "The Altar"; "One Art"; *Writing Essays*, Introduction and Chs 1-2

**Oct 6** "Araby"; "Kew Gardens"; excerpt from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (in coursepack); *Writing Essays*, Ch 3

13 "A Rose for Emily"; "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

20 "Friend of My Youth"; "Interpreter of Maladies"; *Writing Essays*, Ch 4

27 "Seven Pictures Not Taken"; "Happy Endings"

**Nov 3** *Life of Pi*; *Writing Essays*, Ch 6-7

10 *Life of Pi*

17 *Life of Pi*; Class test

24 "Consider the Lobster"; "Internal Revision: A Process of Discovery" (in coursepack) / Tutorials: Essay workshop

**Dec 1** “A Modest Proposal” / Tutorials: Essay workshop

8 “Shooting an Elephant” / Essays DUE

Mid-term period Dec 11-22

**Jan 5** *Twelfth Night*

12 *Twelfth Night*; “Grammar as Style” (in coursepack)

19 *Twelfth Night*; “Grammar as Style” (in coursepack)

26 *Arcadia*

**Feb 2** *Arcadia* / Tutorials: Library orientation

9 *Great House*; Library Assignments DUE

16 Reading Week: no classes

23 *Great House*

**Mar 1** *Great House*

8 *Great House*; Tutorials: Essay workshop

15 Poems by Don McKay, pp. 1204-1206; Tutorials: Essay workshop

22 Poems by Carol Ann Duffy, pp. 1261-1264; Essays DUE

29 Class Conclusion

**Apr 5** Final Exam Review