

Department of English & Writing Studies

Canadian Literature Survey
English 2309E (001)
Fall-Winter 2016-17

There is no exam in December 2016 for this section

Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabek, Lenape, Huron-Wendat and Attawandaron peoples. Acknowledge and respect.

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consultation with the class
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(e-mail is the preferred mode)

Location: Arts & Humanities Building 1B06

Date/Time: Monday 1:30-3:30pm,
Wednesday 1:30-2:30pm

Antirequisite(s): [English 2351E](#), [2352F/G](#), [2353F/G](#), [2354E](#), [2355F/G](#), [2356F/G](#) and [3774E](#).

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of [English 1020E](#) or [1022E](#) or [1024E](#) or [1035E](#) or [1036E](#) or both of [English 1027F/G](#) and [1028F/G](#), or permission of the Department

ENGL 2309E provides a solid foundation from which to pursue more specialized studies in Canadian literature and culture, while also cultivating skills, methods, and aptitudes for studying literature in other courses in the English program; many of these skills, methods, and aptitudes are portable to other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences as well as to inquiry and practice outside of university course work. The course frequently attracts and benefits students from other disciplines, especially Political Science, History, Women's Studies, Visual Arts, and Music. The instructor often hears from former students about how they are using their knowledge from this course in their post-graduate careers.

Course Description

What do you know about Canada's social, political, and cultural history? How many writers of Canadian literature can you name? Have you thought about why there are things about Canada and Canadian literature that you *don't* know? And are you curious to find out and know more? Welcome to ENGL 2309E!

Spanning the period from early exploration and settlement to Confederation, from the resurgence of imperialist loyalty to Britain to the questioning angst but aesthetic freedom of Modernism, from postmodernist skepticism about official narratives to the diversity of forms, issues, and positions on be/longing in Canada in the present day, this course examines selected examples and features of Canada's vibrant literary culture and the contexts in which it was written. We will read a wide range of novels, poetry, short stories, essays, and contextual documents in our study of how literary culture reflects and refracts the past and the present, and the past *in* the present. We will also study selected examples of literary criticism (in scholarly articles) to help you to develop a stronger sense of how to think and write analytically, how to understand the assumptions and methods of the disciplines of literary and cultural studies within the context of studying a national literature.

Three questions in particular will help to anchor our process of engagement, discovery, and analysis throughout the year:

- 1) What kinds of work are set into motion by the modifier “Canadian” in front of the word “Literature”?
- 2) What might literary texts tell us about Canada, about the making of a nation and its citizens? And *how* do they tell us?
- 3) Why do the answers to these questions, and the process of arriving at them, matter?

Although no survey course can claim to provide a “complete” picture of the topic at hand, a “survey” course of a national literature nevertheless requires us to read for breadth. At the same time, this survey course, like the other 2000-level surveys in the English honours’ curriculum, is meant to be foundational within your degree program. As such, this course requires the teaching and learning of methods for reading, writing, and research that can be applied across other courses in our degree programs of study, such as

- to read closely for detail and patterns,
- to make and think through lateral connections between texts while also recognizing distinctions between texts, and
- to write concisely and analytically, using textual detail, abstract concepts, and research (when required).

Class activities will vary between active listening, note-taking, informed discussion, and thoughtful application of what we are studying, sometimes in the form of work in small groups in class. Learning from such activities is maximized when everyone comes to class prepared. From time to time, study questions will be provided (usually for the longer texts), though if you prefer to read without interference from someone else’s cues, you are always free not to consult the study questions in advance of reading (unless, as may be indicated in the daily schedule, the study questions form the basis of an in-class activity).

Course Materials

Required Reading

Two-volume Anthology (we will be reading material from both volumes of the anthology in the fall term):

For selected historical documents, poetry, essays, short fiction, and visual documents:
Cynthia Sugars and Laura Moss, eds., *Canadian Literature in English: Texts and Contexts*,
Volumes I and II.

Novels (only the first two novels listed here will be read in the fall term):

Michael Crummey, *River Thieves*

Frederick Philip Grove, *Settlers of the Marsh*

Sheila Watson, *The Double Hook*

L.M. Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside*

Timothy Findley, *The Wars*

Joy Kogawa, *Obasan*

Learning Objectives:

The reading list, teaching, in- and out-of-class activities, and methods of assessment have been designed to help you meet the following learning objectives:

- to be able to **know (i.e., to identify, recognize, recall), comprehend, and analyze** selected examples of Canadian Literature in English and selected examples of affiliated contextual texts (government documents, literary criticism, etc.);
- to be able to **apply and synthesize** your knowledge, comprehension, and analyses;
- and to be able to **evaluate** others' analyses of the materials studied and materials similar to what we have studied.

With sufficient attention, engagement, discipline, rigor, and commitment on your part to your own learning in relation to what is studied and taught, and recognizing that writing, reading, and research skills vary from individual to individual, and may vary within an individual's own work as well, you will be enabled to meet, with varying degrees of success, the following learning outcomes by the end of the course:

Knowing (identifying, recognizing, recalling) and **comprehending** (understanding):

- many examples of Canadian Literature in English, from the period of exploration in the sixteenth century to contemporary works in the 21st century;
- historical contexts about the making of Canada as represented in selected historical documents and in literary and other cultural works;
- key concepts used by selected literary critics (some of whom will also be creative writers) of Canadian Literature in English, to characterize and account for some of the particularities of reading and writing Canadian Literature in English across its history to date.

Applying what you know and comprehend to new pieces of literature and criticism, both for readings to be done later in the daily schedule but also, on occasion, for a new reading for an assignment, such as an essay or examination.

Analyzing selected literary works and literary criticism of Canadian Literature in English and its contexts (for example, to see patterns and explain how they produce meaning, or to identify and explain the relevance of a contradiction in the making of narratives about Canadian identity; to identify components of a work or an argument and their relations to each other in producing meaning or other effects).

Synthesizing what you are learning about Canadian Literature in English, its contexts, and literary criticism about it. For example, you should be able to generalize from particulars, to relate information from one work to another or from one period to another, etc., in order to draw conclusions or to create a new way of thinking about the literature or the concepts. (Synthesis requires you to combine components of knowledge, comprehension, analysis, and application for a new outcome).

Evaluating interpretations of, arguments about, or perspectives on Canadian Literature in English. For example, you should be able to conclude whose interpretation of a particular novel or poem is the more convincing or valuable and why; or you should be able to assess the value of a concept about Canadian Literature in English by applying it to the literature studied (while understanding that our reading list is a limited one), etc. Research and the writing of a (limited!) critical annotated bibliography for your winter term paper will provide opportunities to demonstrate your evaluative abilities, as will in-class discussion of articles of literary scholarship about selected readings.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions. Questions are part of sound learning, and questions help to improve teaching for improved learning.

Methods of Evaluation

Fall 2015

- 5% Low-stakes writing assignment to identify what you are doing well and where improvements may be needed
- 10% 500-750-word book review written for an audience of your former high school peers or for a parent, guardian, or mentor
- 15% 750-1000-word analytical essay

Winter 2016

- 35% For all assignments comprising stages of development and completion of a Research Essay of 2000-2500 words (identification of a research question; a working bibliography of 8-10 secondary sources of article or book-chapter length relevant to your research question; a critical/analytical annotated bibliography of 2-3 secondary sources that prove most useful to your essay's argument; consultation on your draft work; and the final draft of your research essay). Further details will be provided at the beginning of the winter term.
- 35% Final Examination: part of the exam will be distributed in advance (but answers will be written during the formal examination time slot); the remainder of the exam will be provided in the examination time slot unless announced otherwise in the winter term.

Advice for Managing the Reading Load

- Plan your reading for each week's classes: we meet only *twice a week to discuss a lot of material*, so you will need to make a schedule for being prepared to learn effectively from each class. Most of the time, *you will not be able to read a class's worth of homework in the hour prior to class*.
- Plan your reading for the term: look ahead and plan ahead more than one class at a time, not only to stay on schedule with the readings, but *to maximize your learning* from each class and your reading/reflection between classes. When you are prepared for class, your capacity *to be engaged* by the material and the discussion is increased; when you are prepared for class, you are better able *to contribute to discussion*, and to your own and others' learning, in ways that will help you *to remember the course materials and develop your analytical and communication skills*.

The final examination occurs at the end of winter term (in 2016), so develop study habits that will help you to retain your knowledge of what we have read and discussed all academic year *and* to make connections and distinctions across the materials studied, to see the Forest AND the Trees. Making such connections and distinctions will be important for demonstrating that you can meet the course learning objectives.

The Weekly Schedule appears as a separate file in the OWL course site. Note that some adjustments may be made to the reading list/weekly schedule from time to time in relation to pace of learning and other considerations arising. At no time, however, will you be required to submit work for grades earlier than originally scheduled.

Official Things You Need to Know

On Term Grades, Final Exam Grades, and Passing the Course:

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.

On Academic Accommodation:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Note: to benefit from preparation and completion of the components of the Research Essay for the Winter term, each component must be completed in a timely way; as a result, should you miss or be late for completing any of these components on grounds covered under academic accommodation policy, you will need to apply to the Academic Counselling office of your home Faculty and provide documentation.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

The Possible Consequences of Absenteeism:

Excessive absenteeism is grounds for debarring a student from taking the final examination. The Western Academic Calendar states: "Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course".

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism (the unacknowledged use of another person's work) is one of the most serious academic offences, since it involves fraud and misrepresentation. In plagiarizing, one is in effect claiming another person's words or ideas or data as one's own work, and thus misrepresenting material subject to academic evaluation. It is necessary, therefore, that plagiarism carry appropriate penalties. These are within the discretion of the Chair of Undergraduate Studies, but may include failure of a course or a grade of zero on an assignment, without the privilege of resubmitting it. Visit the Department of English, English Studies, Undergraduate, Student Information website at: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html> for further information you are responsible for knowing.