

Department of English & Writing Studies

Canadian Literature Survey**English 2501E (001)**

Fall/Winter 2018-19

Instructor: Dr. D. Palmateer Pennee**Course Date/Time:** Mondays 12:30-2:20pm; Wednesdays 12:30-1:20pm**Course Location:** Arts & Humanities 1B08**Antirequisites:** [English 2354E](#), [English 2356F/G](#) and [English 3774E](#), or the former English 2309E, the former English 2351E, the former English 2352F/G, the former English 2353F/G, the former English 2355F/G.**Prerequisites:** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1000-1999, or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Brief Calendar Course Description

What does literature tell us about the making of a nation and its citizens? Spanning the period from imperial exploration to Confederation to the present day, this course examines Canada's vibrant literary culture. Students will encounter a diverse range of genres and authors, from accounts of early explorers to current internationally acclaimed and award-winning writers.

Course Description for 2018-19

How many works of Canadian literature have you read? How many writers of Canadian literature can you name? Have you thought about why there are things about Canadian literature—and Canada—that you *don't* know? And are you curious to find out and know more? Welcome to English 2501E!

This course examines selected examples of Canada's (primarily anglophone) literary culture and the contexts in which they were written. Our readings will be selected from a range of periods: from early exploration and settlement to Confederation, from the resurgence of late-nineteenth-century imperialist loyalty to Britain to the questioning *angst* (and aesthetic freedom) of Modernism, and from postmodern skepticism about official narratives to the increasing diversity of forms, issues, and positions on "be/longing" (M. NourbeSe Philip's term) in Canada that characterize "CanLit" today.

We will read a wide range of novels, poetry, short stories, non-fiction essays, and contextual documents in our study of how literary culture *reflects and refracts* not only the past and the present, but the past *in* the present. In the process, we will consider how literature can be a resource for the future as well.

This course, then, will provide many opportunities both to build your knowledge of Canadian literature written (primarily) in English and to begin to learn how to understand and develop your own writing on literary texts as part of a wider scholarly conversation.

To that end, we will also study selected examples of literary criticism to help you develop a stronger sense of *how to think and write analytically*, and *how to understand the assumptions and methods of the discipline of literary studies*, in this case within the context of studying a national literature.

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

- 1) When we put “Canadian” in front of the word “Literature” how might our perspective and understanding of both terms be changed?
- 2) What—and *how*—might literary texts tell us about Canada, about the making of a nation, and about citizenship?
- 3) Why do the answers to these questions, and the process of arriving at and writing about 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 is, like the other 2000-level surveys in the English honors curriculum, foundational within your degree program. This course, then, requires the teaching and learning of methods for reading, writing, and research that are applicable across other courses in our degree programs of study, such as

- reading closely for detail and patterns,
- making, and thinking through, lateral connections between texts while also recognizing distinctions between texts, and
- writing concisely and analytically, using detailed evidence, abstract concepts, secondary source research, draft work, and MLA 8th edition format.

Class activities will include active listening, note-taking, discussion-based inquiry, and thoughtful application of what we are studying, sometimes in the form of work in pairs or small groups in class, and always in out-of-class written assignments.

Learning from such activities is maximized when everyone comes to class prepared. From time to time, study questions (usually for the longer texts) will be provided via OWL, though if you prefer to read without interference from someone else’s cues, you are always free to consult the study questions only after you have done your reading! (The daily schedule—or a message to the class members via the OWL e-mail system—may, from time to time, indicate that the study questions will form the basis of an in-class activity, in which case you will need to consult them in advance of class).

Objectives:

Students are encouraged to consult the department’s document on “learning outcomes” for 2000-level courses in an English module, at the following url:

http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/courses/english_learning_outcomes.html)

Modes of Assessment in English 2501E are designed, and students' work evaluated, with the department's learning outcomes in mind, as well as with the following learning objectives:

- to be able **to know (i.e., to identify, recognize, recall), comprehend, and analyze** selected examples of Canadian Literature 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 objectives by the end of the course:

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

- many examples of Canadian Literature, 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 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 course 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, 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. For example, you should be able to conclude whose interpretation of a particular novel or poem is the more convincing or valuable and why; 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 critical (analytical) annotations of sources for your winter research essay will provide opportunities to demonstrate your evaluative abilities, as will in-class discussion of articles of literary scholarship about selected readings.

Course Materials

Required Reading:

The following list is chronological by publication date, not by order of reading during the course.

L.M. Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921)

Frederick Philip Grove, *Settlers of the Marsh* (1925)

John Marlyn, *Under the Ribs of Death* (1957)

Sheila Watson, *The Double Hook* (1959)

Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (1972)

Timothy Findley, *The Wars* (1977)

Joy Kogawa, *Obasan* (1981)

Michael Crummey, *River Thieves* (2001)

Jeff Lemire, *Collected Essex County* (2009) (graphic novels)

Additional required readings (by various writers and public figures, of historical and contemporary poetry, short fiction and non-fiction prose, literary criticism, as well as excerpts from various government documents) will be available in pdf form through Western Libraries' Course Readings service (accessible from the homepage of Western Libraries). Examples of these other required readings include excerpts from early exploration and fur-trade journals, an early "long" narrative poem and other forms of early settlement writing, the Confederation Poets, modernists and postmodernists, works by early settlers (e.g., Black Loyalists) and their descendants not formerly recognized as such in the English-Canadian canon, as well as the work of *new* "new-comers" from the 1950s through to the present.

There is no additional cost for the required on-line readings: the cost is already covered in fees you regularly pay with your tuition (to defray the costs of the university's access to copyrighted materials for educational purposes).

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Fall term:

40% Short assignments (passage analyses) and a short (1,000-word) analytical essay

Winter term:

30% 3,000-word Research essay based on required stages of work in progress (for which you will receive feedback but not a formal grade), such as: consultation with the instructor and formulation of a research question; identification of key search terms and search strings; preparation of a preliminary bibliography and a record of your search strategies; drafting of critical (analytical) annotations of 2 to 3 sources that will be most important to the development of the essay). The quality of the final draft of the research paper depends on the completion of the earlier stages and learning from feedback on work in progress: the final draft of the paper is worth 30%

30% Final Examination in the timeslot scheduled by the Registrar's office

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

Additional Information

OWL course site:

We will use an OWL course site for the management of course materials (syllabus, weekly schedule, announcements, resources), submission and return of graded assignments (unless otherwise noted), and communication with the class as a whole during the term.

E-mails from instructor/GTA:

Students are responsible for reading all e-mail messages from the instructor and/or GTA, including any messages from "Postmaster," i.e., the OWL course site's e-mail account). The instructor regularly uses OWL for important communications to the class as a whole (e.g., new resources added to the site; slight change to schedule; etc.).

MLA (8th edition) format and submissions of assignments:

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be submitted to your Drop Box in the OWL English 3572F Course Site and formatted according to the MLA 8th edition.

E-mail outside of Monday-to-Friday "business" hours:

Should you need to contact the instructor outside of class time or office hours, please do so by e-mail to dpennee@uwo.ca (e-mail is the best way to reach the instructor to book an appointment, should you have a scheduling conflict with office hours). Face-to-face conversations about the course are always preferable to e-mail. Additional office hours will be offered for the heaviest consultation times in the course (e.g., during the development of ideas for your research essay; during the drafting of critical annotations and the research essay in the winter term).

Do note, however, that the instructor may not respond to e-mail after 8pm Mondays through Fridays, or at any time on Saturdays and Sundays (just as I would be unlikely to pick up my office phone extension after 8pm on weeknights or any time on the weekends; and you would never call an instructor at home at any time, right?). Thank you for respecting that your professors also try to have lives. 😊

Late Submission of Work:

Work submitted after the due date, unless accommodated through your academic counselling office, will be penalized 10% (of the weight of the assignment) per day (or part thereof) late. For example, an assignment worth 30% of your grade would lose grades at the rate of 3 marks out of a possible 30 marks per day late.

Attendance:

While attendance will not be taken in this course, the instructor reminds everyone that regular attendance, preparedness for class, active listening, active note-taking, and engaged contributions to class discussion will improve your overall learning experience. How? Through better comprehension of the readings, class lectures, and discussion, improved retention of course materials for quicker recognition of analytical connections between the readings (= more "A-ha!" moments), and greater enjoyment of the relevance and value of the readings and assignments, in relation to this course, your other course work, and other aspects of an informed life.

Use of Laptops in Class:

Given that the course does not have an attendance requirement as such, the working assumption will be that students are in the classroom because they want to learn the course materials and develop their skills in relation to them. Thus, students are free to use laptops and other devices in the classroom to take notes and look up materials pertinent to class content during class. But if during class time you find yourself using your laptop (or other devices) for social media and activities unrelated to the course, then you should perhaps consider that your time might be better spent elsewhere than enrolled in this course.

Timetable

Fall 2018 (there will be no mid-term or end-of-term exam in the fall term):

Due in Weeks 3, 5, and 7:

3 x 2-page passage analyses (one in week 3, one in week 5, and one in week 7) (best 2 of 3 will count towards the final grade: anyone who wishes to write only 2, both of which will count towards the final grade, may do so)

Due in Week 9:

1 x 1,000-word analytical essay (no research required)

Winter 2019:

Due in Week 10:

1 x 3,000-word research essay

(The due dates for required stages of work in progress on the development of the essay will be determined early in the winter term in consultation between each student and the instructor.)

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 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. 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 UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking 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 <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

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.