

Department of English & Writing Studies

**Endless Forms: Life Sciences and Nineteenth-Century Literature
English 3362G (001)**

Winter 2019

Course website: <https://matthewrowlinson.wordpress.com/endless-forms-english-3362g/>

Instructor: Prof. Matthew Rowlinson, UC 2415
Office hours: Mon. 11-12, Tu. 11-1, and by appt.
email <mrowlins@uwo.ca> is in general the
best way to reach me.

Course Location: Somerville House, Room 2316

Course Date/Time: Mon 3:30-4:30 pm;
Wed. 3:30-5:30 pm

My Twitter handle is @RowlinsonNDP. As the handle implies, I use it for political as well as academic conversations/rants, so be warned. Nonetheless, I encourage you as you wish to use twitter for conversations about this course: use the hashtag #EndlessForms. Twitter posts with this hashtag will be considered in evaluating your course participation. Snark at Mr. Casaubon is strongly encouraged.

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or English 1022E or English 1024E or English 1035E or English 1036E or English 1042E or both of English 1027F/G and English 1028F/G, or permission of the instructor.

Students who do not have the prerequisites for this course will be removed. There will be no appeal from this decision. 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.

Course Description

This class will centre on two of the most challenging and transformative books of the Victorian period: Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* and George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch*. Darwin's work had a profound impact on Victorian thinking about religion, time, history, and relations between human beings and other living species. George Eliot's fiction shows one of the period's greatest novelists developing new narrative forms in response to this impact. In this course we will have the luxury of reading their work slowly and with careful attention to its implications. Some shorter nineteenth century works will also be covered to provide context for the two books that are the major focus of the course.

Objectives:

- Each of the works to be covered in this course makes an argument; each of them makes it indirectly, by devices that include analogy, parable, and allegory. This course aims to train students in reading sustained arguments and in teasing out their historical and philosophical implications.
- The course will include written assignments, and the training it provides in reading is intended to improve students' ability to present a coherent argument in the extended form of a critical essay.
- The course will also introduce students to the intellectual milieu in which Darwin made his breakthrough in *The Origin of Species* and to the Victorian responses his work provoked.

Course Materials

Required Books:

- 1) Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*. Broadview. Edited by Joseph Carroll. ISBN: 9781551113371
- 2) George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, Broadview, Edited by Gregory Maertz. ISBN: 9781551112336

Supplemental Online Resources:

Complete Works of Darwin Online <http://darwin-online.org.uk>

The George Eliot Archive: <http://www.georgeeliotarchive.org>

Timetable

Week 1. Jan 7: Introduction

Jan 9: Darwin, *Origin of Species*, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 95-121. **Suggested further reading:** From the Broadview *Origin*, William Paley, *Natural Theology* pp. 565-71; Thomas Malthus *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, pp. 595-600.

Week 2. Jan 14. Chapter 2-4, pp. 122-77

Jan 16. Continued

Week 3. Jan. 21 Chapters 5, 6, 7, end of 10, pp. 178-247 and 299-309

Jan 23 Continued

Week 4. Jan 28 End of Chapter 12, Chapters 13-14, pp. 347-98

Jan 30: Continued

Week 5: Feb. 4 *Middlemarch* Book 1 pp. 31-123. **Draft of paper 1 due in class. Suggested further reading:** Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* Chapter 5 "George Eliot: *Middlemarch*."

Feb. 6 Writing workshop.

Week 6. Feb. 11 Paper 1 due.

Feb. 13 Chapters 13-14, pp. 123-36

Week 7. Reading week—no class.

Week 8: Feb 25 Chapters 15-27, pp. 136-238

Feb 27 Continued

Week 9. Mar. 4 Chapters 28-39 pp. 238-330

Mar 6 Continued

Week 10. Mar. 11 Chapters 40-53 pp. 330-426

Mar. 13 Continued

Week 11. Mar. 18 Chapters 54- 62 pp. 427-501

Mar. 20 Continued

Week 12. Mar. 25 Book 7 pp. 502-67

Mar. 27 Continued

Week 13: April 1 Book 8 pp. 568-640

Apr. 3 Continued

Week 14: Apr. 8 Conclusions & farewells. Final paper due

Assignments:

--Complete the reading assignments by the dates specified. **Come to class prepared to ask and answer questions about the assigned readings.** Your attendance and participation will determine 10% of your final grade in the course. More than 5 unexcused absences will result a score of zero on this portion of your grade.

--There will be two papers. The first will be five pages long; please bring a draft to class on February 4 for workshopping in class on the 6th. The final version of the paper is to be submitted February 11. I will hand out a list of topics for this paper, of which you should choose one. (20% final grade).

--At the end of the term you will turn in a ten-page interpretative essay on a topic of your choice, related to the course material. This paper will be due April 8; in the event you require an extension, please consult me as early as possible. (35% final grade)

--Finally, there will be a final exam. You will be allowed to use the course textbooks in writing this exam. (35% final grade).

--If you require academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed assignment worth more than 10% of your final grade, you must apply to the Academic Counselling office, where you will be asked to provide documentation.

Papers: Please submit your papers double-spaced, in a 12-point font, on 8.5 x 11" paper. Use 1" margins. You should use the citation format of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

The *MLA Handbook* is available at Weldon Library; an excellent guide to MLA style (along with much other useful information for paper writers) can be found at the Purdue University OWL: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html

Plagiarism: Write your assignments using your own ideas expressed in your own words. Whenever you take an idea or a passage of text from another author, be sure to acknowledge the debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper citations. For the English department's policies on plagiarism, please see the Information for Students page on the department website: <https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

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. 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 necessary form and further information regarding this policy can be found at the Student Services website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>.

The full policy is set out here: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.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.