

Course Syllabus

English 1010G - This University

M.J. Toswell

Learn about Western, its story, its architecture, academic calendar, governance, codes of conduct, research; and learn about universities, their origins in the Middle Ages, their development and current campus issues. Read a short story by Western's own Nobel prizewinner Alice Munro, and think about universities in the world today.

Taught in a flexible hybrid format, 0.5 course

Winter 2020 1010G / 650

What, exactly, is a university? A Canadian university? Western? What purposes does it serve in society? When did they start, and how are they changing today?

In this course we will think about these issues, and on a more pragmatic level we'll learn the basics about Western and its physical structures, its government and its particular concerns. The course is a blended one, with two required units, and five of the other available units.

Students do not have to do the introductory unit first, though it would make sense, and all of the units will be open so that students can look through each one and decide which to do and when. The one requirement will be that students complete at least two units in January, two units in February, three units in March, and the last unit in April. This requirement is purely because otherwise too much of the work will slide to the end of the course.

The final examination will be worth 30% and will be scheduled by the registrar's office.

There are no required textbooks for the course.

There will be one optional lecture, which can happen only once, on Thursday 12 March at 5-6:30 p.m.. The president, Alan Shepard, has asked to give a lecture in this course on "The Future of the University." You may see this advertised as a separate event, but seats will be reserved front and centre for you, as this course is the reason the president has offered to give the lecture. Again, this is not required, but I have spent some time consulting with the timetable expert at Western as to what time there are the fewest first-year courses scheduled this term, and this is the time she recommended. It would be very useful for you to attend, and to look forward to how Western, and other universities in general, will change in the future.

The first required in-class unit is the introductory one, followed by an introductory paper. I am scheduling three of these introductory classes at this point. Please sign up for one of them; if you cannot, please send me an email that enumerates your classes so that I

can find a time for the last few members of the class (please note, just send me your university obligations, not other engagements or concerns). Note that after the introductory lecture and discussion, I will assign a question for you to answer in an online paper within the next six hours in a paper of at least 350 words. Obviously, each introductory lecture will have a different question to answer. You can attend only one of these, so make sure that your OWL connections are working and you have the time to write your paper in the six hours after the class. This will be a class that does not require any preparation on your part, and the questions for you to answer are designed to ensure that you will have something to say. The first two times for this unit will be Thursday 9 January 2019 at 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., and Thursday 16 January 2019 at 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., and the third available time will be Sunday 26 January at 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

The second required in-class unit will address Alice Munro's short story, "The Beggar Maid." The story is written about two students at Western, and a free copy is available at https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/books/2013/10/11/the_beggar_maid_by_alice_munro.html. I will also post some basic information about Alice Munro to the unit on the OWL site, and you should read that before you come to class. We will have a thirty-minute lecture on the story, and then a sixty-minute tutorial, at the end of which I will assign your group a specific question for you to write 350 words within the next six hours. Again, because you will have read the short story (beware that the newspaper says this will take 58 minutes; it may take you longer), and come to class knowing what is in the story, you will be able to engage in the basic analysis common to English courses easily, and we can move on with some more interesting approaches in class. The first two times for this unit will be Thursday 13 February at 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. and Thursday 27 February at 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., and the third available time will be Sunday 1 March at 5:30 - 7:30 p.m..

You will complete a further five units on the OWL website at your convenience, subject to the stipulation above about completing some units each month of the term. Some ask you to finish the unit with a multiple-choice quiz, others ask for an infographic, others for a short written piece taking the information you have and assembling it into a different mental structure. You can go through all the units and pick the ones that interest you. Bear in mind, however, that once you have clicked in to the assessment tool for a particular unit, you must complete it in the time specified. For example, the section on buildings asks you specific questions about buildings around the campus that you are very unlikely to be able to answer without going to the building, so start that one when you already have your outerwear and boots on and are standing in the middle of campus, and make sure that you plot a good route around the campus so that you can finish the quiz in the time available. Think of that one as a kind of scavenger hunt. For the section on the academic calendar, you will similarly be looking through the calendar for particular items; to prepare for that one, which will be set up so that just running Google searches does not find the information correctly, you will want to look around the calendar for a while, and be sure that you understand its basic parameters. These are just examples: most of the units will ask you to do some writing, and it will be time-limited, so bear in mind the vagaries of OWL and do

not click into an assessment that is going to fall due at the precise time that internet in your house or residence always falters because of oversubscription. Go to a library to do these. Or, take the assessment at a different time. You can overcome these hurdles.

You may complete up to two units more than the required five units, and I will count the best five units for your final grade.

The final examination will have a short-answer identify question, with a lot of choice since you will have done quite different units in the course, and two questions requiring longer essay-type answers. Towards the end of the course I will post some review material and invite suggestions from the class. If the suggestions are good ones, I'll use them in the examination. We will also have a review session during the examination period.

Evaluation:	Introductory paper	10%
	Alice Munro class and short paper	10%
	Five units @ 10% each	50%
	Final examination	30%

Total: 100%

Online units for the course. The OWL site will have these, and at the beginning of the term you can expect to find the following units posted:

- a) Western's buildings
- b) Western's academic calendar
- c) Canadian universities, their history, geography, and culture
- d) the European medieval origin and development of universities
- e) accessibility, equity, and diversity in the university
- f) Western's history
- g) the role of research in the modern university

Over the first week or two of classes, I expect to post at least another three or four options:

- a) moral codes and the university
- b) the university in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
- c) Western's Department of English and Writing Studies, its history and culture
- d) the structural development of universities and their role in a given society
- e) university rituals and ceremonies: convocation, orientation, lectures, unwritten codes

I am open to further suggestions (I have about nine more right now). You will also discover that these materials do not have good graphics or images. I'm doing my best, but I'm not a visual person, loathe powerpoint in all its forms, and generally I like reading lots and lots of prose texts in order to learn. As a result, for this class only, if you find me a tool to use to create great graphic images, or produce some great graphics for me to use in the course, I will offer up to 5% bonus marks for your help (and mention on the website).

Instructor information:

M.J. Toswell
Professor, Department of English and Writing Studies
University College Rm 2418
email: mjtoswel@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30-2:30 p.m.

A few notes on contacting me. If you need to send me an email, make sure you do not ask a question already answered in this syllabus or on the course website. I might answer, and I might not. In either case, now I know your name as someone who asks questions irresponsibly. Also, your salutation in your email is "Dear Professor Toswell" or "Dear Dr. Toswell." A student should not address a professor, without invitation, as "Hey" or by first name or with some other effort of that sort. Ask your question quickly and cleanly, avoid explaining your entire life history (which should only be for the academic counsellors), and make sure you ask all of what you need to know. If you foolishly clicked into an assessment with a six-hour window that closed at midnight and your internet crashed, then send me an email explaining this and attaching your assignment within a few minutes of midnight. Do not send that email an hour or two hours later, as you will not be believable and I will not accept the assignment on the grounds that you missed the deadline.

Enjoy, and do let me know of glitches and problems with the materials. Since this is the first iteration of the course, we can expect those. But we'll find a way through them.