

Department of English & Writing Studies

The Culture of Leadership I
English 2018B (001)
Winter 2020

Instructor: Professor Alyssa MacLean
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UC 4429

Course Location: Somerville House 2355

Course Date/Time: Monday 6:30-9:30 pm

Prerequisites: This is a non-essay course open to all students beyond Year One.

Course Description

This course addresses the complex nature of leadership represented in key works of literature and culture. We will focus on the ethical dilemmas and moral choices faced by leaders to ask what role a leader plays: hero, manager, thinker, strategist, artist, figurehead, authority? Is it possible to have different cultures of leadership? Over the course of the term, we will have a chance to discuss some fascinating texts about leaders, leadership, and power structures; however, we will also try to balance these discussions with forms of experiential learning and apply the insights from our course texts to practical contexts during a leadership interview of a community leader that each student will conduct.

We will begin our study by examining works describing classic leaders—kings and generals—such as Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. William Shakespeare's play *Othello*, featuring a black general who is pushed by his underling Iago into a jealous rage against his wife, Desdemona, will enable us to reflect on the relationship between leadership, race, sexuality, and war. We will also have the opportunity to go on a field trip to see Nigel Shawn Williams's production of *Othello* at Stratford.

While the first texts on our syllabus examine men in leadership positions, texts such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* will consider how female leaders are represented and how women experience patriarchal power structures. The dystopia *The Marrow Thieves* offers an imagined indigenous leadership culture forming in the face of apocalypse. The last texts of our course will focus more intently on leaders in a US national context. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* will allow us to consider how race influences the portrayal of resistance and leadership. Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *Hamilton* focuses on a leader who rises to the top, influences others, and wins wars, but at terrible costs.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Analyze how leadership has been described in different cultures, intellectual traditions, and historical periods
- Explain how discourses about leadership reflect and shape larger discussions about social order, ideological conflict, and change
- Think critically about leadership in a variety of class discussions, written assignments
- Reflect critically upon concepts and issues discussed in class, and apply them to concrete personal and professional situations
- Engage with leaders and analyze the problems faced by those in positions of leadership in our community; find a local leader, design appropriate interview questions, conduct a professional interview, and complete a research project examining this figure's accomplishments
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively in written assignments

Course Materials (Tentative)

Sophocles. *Oedipus Rex*. In *Greek Tragedy*. Ed. Shomit Dutta. London: Penguin, ISBN 978-0141439365

George Bernard Shaw, *St. Joan*. Penguin, ISBN 978-0140437911.

Cherie Dimaline, *The Marrow Thieves*. Canada: Dancing Cat, 2017. 978-1770864863

Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. (edition TBA)

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. McClelland and Stewart (Emblem edition), ISBN 978-0-7352-5330-8

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. In *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass and Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Penguin Random, ISBN 9780345478238.

Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution*. 2016. ISBN 978-1455539741.

You will also be required to pay a fee to take the Majors PTI (Personality Types Inventory) assessment--\$15—in order to complete your Leadership Self-Assessment assignment, which is described below. Even if you've taken the test before, you'll need to re-take it for this course. We will also be going on a mandatory field trip to see *Othello* (see details later in the syllabus, under "Field Trip." Additional readings will be provided on the OWL course site.

Methods of Evaluation (Tentative)

The final mark for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Leadership reflection (2-3 pages)	10%
Leadership Self-Assessment Profile (4 pages)	20%
Short Assignment #2 (1 page)	5%
Leadership in Culture Interview (1250 words, 5-6 pages)	30%
Final exam (cumulative)	35%

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>

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.

Timetable

TBA