

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3470F (001)
American Cult Classics
Fall 2019

Instructor: Professor Joshua Schuster
jschust@uwo.ca
UC 2422

Office hours: Thurs 10:30-1:30, or by
appointment

Course Location: B&GS 0153

Course Day/Time: W 1:30-3:30 pm; Th
1:30-2:30 pm

TA: Stephanie Mason (smason49@uwo.ca)
UC 3405

Office hours: W 12:30-1:30 or by
appointment

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.
Course Description

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.

Course Description

This course explores movements or genres with passionate followings and transgressive or countercultural themes. How did these cult traditions emerge and how can we explain their appeal? Topics may include religious or illicit countercultures, American gothic fiction, Beat literature, hard-boiled detective fiction, and sci fi.

Objectives:

Successful students who complete the course will be able to:

- Analyze cultural works as reflective of larger ideas including nationalism, literary value, social experimentalism, and environmentalism;
- Discuss and theorize cultural works using recent methods of literary and cultural scholarship;
- Write an analytical essay with a research component that proposes a compelling thesis.

Course Materials

Walt Whitman, *Complete Poems* (Penguin)

Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (Penguin)

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Penguin)

Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild* (Anchor)

(x) = copy found on OWL

(o) = online – locate by googling – I will send links via OWL email

Methods of Evaluation

Participation	15%	
Whitman short essay	15%	(2-3 pages)
Group object research project	20%	(at least 3 pages)
Creative contribution (<i>Bon Echo Echo</i>)	10%	(any pages)
Final Paper	40%	(6 pages)

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>.

Note: Computers are not recommended in this course.

Assignments: Late essays are not accepted. We will use OWL. Essays will be returned by OWL – be sure to read the comments.

Participation: Your participation is central to this class and is a key component of your growth as a student. Participation includes: being involved in class discussion, participating in group work, and putting real energy into all assignments and readings. **Read the texts before the day they are discussed.**

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and obviously counts for your grade in participation. It is imperative to arrive to each class on time. No unexcused absences are permitted (I am not crazy and I do know that problems arise during the semester – but please supply a legitimate written excuse – see Western policy on this). If you miss a certain number of courses, I will warn you, but already you risk getting a zero in participation.

MLA Documentation: Undergraduate research papers written in Arts and Humanities follow the formatting procedures outlined by the Modern Language Association. The complete guide to this format can be found in the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009). This guide can be found On Reserve in the D. B. Weldon Library, call no: LB2369.M57 2009. The Department of English also offers an overview of MLA documentation, at: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrad/guidelines.html>

Western University Land Acknowledgment: Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

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:

Plagiarism constitutes an automatic failure of this course and goes on a student's permanent record of conduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me.

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

September 5 – Intro; Whitman “I Hear America Singing,” “Me Imperturbe”

September 11 – Angus Fletcher on Whitman (x); Whitman “Song of Myself”; Ralph Waldo Emerson “Letter to Whitman” (x)

September 12 – visit to Weldon Library Special Collections Room, Whitman “Song of Myself”

September 18 – Whitman “Preface” to *Leaves of Grass*, 1855 Edition, “I Sing the Body Electric,” “Spontaneous Me,” “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” “Not Heaving from my Ribb’d Breast Only”

September 19 – Whitman “This Compost,” “To a Locomotive in Winter,” “Respondez!”

September 25 – Whitman “O Captain! My Captain!,” “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”; Abraham Lincoln “Gettysburg Address,” “Second Inaugural Address” (o); Also: Whitman all the “Calamus” poems; CA Conrad, “From Whitman to Walmart” (o); Jeremy Lybarger “Walt Whitman’s Boys” (o); Michel Foucault “Friendship as a Way of Life” (x)

September 26 – Continue: Whitman all the “Calamus” poems

Due: Whitman short essay

October 2 – Whitman “So Long!”; Some Whitmanians: Richard Maurice Bucke “Cosmic Consciousness” (x); *The Sunset of Bon Echo* Vol. 1; Langston Hughes “America,” “Let America Be America Again,” “The Heart of Harlem” (x); Frank O’Hara “Personism,” “Having a Coke with You” (x)

October 3 – Gertrude Stein “Patriarchal Poetry” (x)

October 9-10 – **no class**

October 16 – Allen Ginsberg “A Supermarket in California,” “Sunflower Sutra,” “America” (x); Jack Kerouac “Belief & Technique for Modern Prose” (x); begin Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

October 17 – Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

Due: group object research project

October 23 – Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

October 24 – Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

October 30 – Gil Scott-Heron “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” (o); Dianne di Prima “Revolutionary Letters” (x); Anne Waldman “Spel Against Specious Ones” (x); June Jordan “Poem about My Rights” (x); Sarah Jones “Your Revolution” (o); Tracie Morris “What the sister brother...,” “It All Started When,” “Chain Gang” (o); Whitman “Song of the Open Road”

October 31 – Young-Hae Chae Heavy Industries “Dakota” (o)

November 6-7 – **fall break**

November 13– Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, “Economy,” “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” “Sounds,” “The Bean-Field”

November 14 – Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, “The Ponds,” “Conclusion”

November 20 – finish *Walden* discussion; Evelyn White “Black Women and the Wilderness” (x); Thoreau “On Civil Disobedience”

November 21 – begin Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild*

Due: contribution to *The Bon Echo Echo*

November 27 - Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild*; screen *Grizzly Man* (if time)

November 28 – discussion: *Into the Wild*; *Grizzly Man*; Lisa Korteweg and Jan Oakley “Eco-heroes Out of Place and Relations: Decolonizing the Narratives of *Into the Wild* and *Grizzly Man* through Land Education” (x); Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan “Lesbian National Parks and Services Field Guide to North America” (x)

December 4 – Whitman “Kosmos,” “Who Learns My Lesson Complete?”; install exhibit

December 5 – review

Due: final essay, Dec. 5