

Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
Department of English and Writing Studies  
Course Syllabus 2021

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

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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, two 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.

The first required in-class unit is the introductory one, followed by an introductory paper. I will schedule three of these introductory classes in January and early February. Please sign up for one of them. Note that after the introductory lecture and discussion, I will assign a question for you to answer in an online paper within the day in a paper of 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 day 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 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](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 one-hour lecture on the story, and then a one-hour tutorial, at the end of which I will assign your group a specific question for you to write 350 words within the day. 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. These classes will be booked for late February and early March.

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 the majority of the units provide you with the assignment at the beginning (as a preliminary discussion) and at the end of the unit in more detail. Many of the units ask you to write short pieces based on *Western* and its practices and people. Please count every word and check every word: a short assignment is not easier than a long one, as every word that you place in the assignment will be important, and every sentence matters.

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. Note that the grades you achieve on the two required units will stand.

The final examination will have a short-answer identify question, 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.

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|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 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
- h) moral codes and the university
- i) the university in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
- j) Western's Department of English and Writing Studies, its history and culture
- k) the people and structures here at Western
- l) university rituals and ceremonies: convocation, orientation, lectures, unwritten codes
- m) the future of the university

Instructor information:

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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. Also, your salutation in your email is "Dear Professor Toswell" or "Dear Dr. Toswell." 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.

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