

Department of English & Writing Studies

Understanding Literature Today

English 1020E (200)

Fall/Winter 2021-22

Instructor: Mark McDayter

Course Day/Time: Tuesday Evenings

Course Location: Online

Delivery Type: Asynchronous

Antirequisites: English 1022E, English 1035E.– check [Academic Calendar](#).

Prerequisites: Grade 12U English or permission of the Department. For part time students who have been admitted without the OSSD, this permission will be granted as a matter of course. – check [Academic Calendar](#).

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 serves as an introduction to the wealth and variety of literature in English over the course of some six centuries. We'll be reading a range of materials in verse, prose, and dramatic form that begin with Chaucer in the Middle Ages, and extend nearly to the current day. We'll also be looking at one graphic novel, and experiencing verse in oral and video form.

The course is organized loosely by themes, which will include parody, colonialism, sex, death, identity, and more sex (because, oddly enough, writers have always been as obsessed with that theme as we are today). We'll also be using a variety of different live and interactive tools to keep you engaged and connected, both with your instructors and with the community of students to which you will belong.

In addition to equipping students with a variety of critical reading skills, including an introduction to a handful of theoretical approaches to literature, the course will additionally provide some guidance on the use of scholarly tools, including essay writing and thesis design, as well as relatively advanced, university-level research skills.

Lectures will be delivered in record online form using a dynamic slide show format, and tutorials will be live and in person; additional materials will be available in PDF form. We'll be using Zoom for community sessions and office hours and I will be available as well for live consultations. A web forum and social media will further enhance our connection to each other.

Objectives:

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

- Successful students who complete the course will be able to:
- Identify and analyze basic elements of literature, such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, diction, tone, figures of speech, syntax, and rhythm;
- Write an essay about a work of literature, containing an effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text;
- Research critical commentary on literary works;
- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, especially those obtained through the Internet;
- Integrate outside research materials and references to the original text into an essay through use of quotations and paraphrases;
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively;
- Document essays using MLA format.

Course Materials

Most of the texts for this course are available freely online, either through Western Libraries, or on other online platforms. All texts are required.

The following three texts will need to be purchased, and will be available through The Bookstore:

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (Part I only)

Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

These texts (most of which are shorter poems, prose, or drama) are available online, and will be linked through the course schedule:

Philip Larkin, "This Be the Verse" and "High Windows"

John Donne, "The Flea"

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Eolian Harp"

W. H. Auden, "Musee de Beaux Arts"

Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal*

Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale" and "The Miller's Tale"

Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*

Joseph Conrad, *The Heart of Darkness*

Derek Walcott, "A Far Cry from Africa"

Jeannette Armstrong, "History Lesson"

Rudyard Kipling, "Mark of the Beast"

Irving Layton, "High Windows"

Kim Addonizio, "What Do Women Want?"

Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"

Mary Wortley Montagu, "The Lover: A Ballad"

William Wycherley, "The Country Wife"

Eliza Haywood, "Fantomina"

Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market*

Thomas Grey, *Elegy Written in Country Churchyard*

Tony Harrison, "V"

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Thesis Statement Assignment – 5%

Essay 1 – 15%

Bibliography Assignment – 5%

Essay 2 – 20%

First Term Test – 10%

Participation – 10%

Exam – 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>.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Additional Information

Contact Hours:

While I am always available for questions and discussion, as a general rule your tutorial leaders are your first point of contact relating to assignments. TAs will be holding weekly office hours, and will be available by email as well.

I'm not going to hold particular online "office hours," as it seems to make more sense, given people's variable schedules (and the fact that this course is online) to simply respond to queries via email or, possibly, in the course forum.

I will however be holding a one-hour Zoom "coffee hour" each week, starting Week 2. I'll move this around to ensure that everyone who wants to has a chance to participate, and will announce the time and day at the beginning of each week. This "coffee hour" (I may actually be drinking coffee during it!) is not really for specific questions relating to your own personal work; rather, it will be an opportunity for those who are interested in connecting together as a group to do so using something a bit more personal and intimate than email and message boards.

My email address is: mmcdayte@uwo.ca

Attendance:

Attendance at both lectures and tutorial is obligatory. Participation in tutorial discussion is a very important part of this course, and it is expected that all students will take an active part in these weekly meetings. Attendance at tutorials will be taken, and a participation mark, worth 10% of the final grade, will be assigned on the basis of work done in tutorial.

Penalties for Late Work:

Essays should be handed in electronically, through the OWL dropbox assigned to each student, on the date specified above. Late essays will be penalized at the rate of one percentage point for each working day that they are late, to a maximum of ten points. Essays submitted more than two weeks late will not be accepted unless accompanied by an acceptable reason for the delay (e.g., a medical certificate; see Academic Accommodation below).

Presentation of Written Work:

Written work should generally be submitted electronically, and written on a word processor or equivalent. They should be double-spaced, and use one side of the paper only, with 1 inch margins for all four edges. Use a font size that will permit no more than about 250 words per page: 12 point is standard. Text should be justified only to the left margin. The guidelines for layout that appear in the more recent editions of the Modern Language Association Handbook are recommended; see the course web site for further details on formatting. For special accommodation regarding the format or submission of your assignments, please see your tutorial leader.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence:

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

For the **Student Medical Certificate (SMC)**, see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Religious Accommodation:

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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/>

Academic Support & Engagement <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

Thesis Statement Assignment – Due October 19, 2021

First Term Test – Due November 9, 2021

Essay 1 – Due November 23, 2021

Bibliography Assignment – Due February 1, 2022

Essay 2 – Due March 15, 2022