

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3362F (001)

Endless Forms: Life Sciences and Nineteenth-Century Literature

Fall 2024

Instructor: Prof. Matthew Rowlinson

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

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 will study the changing relation between human and non-human animals in the nineteenth century and the emergent concept of history as driven by competition between species. Our key texts will take up this topic in very different ways. We will study Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859), one of the most important scientific works ever published. We will examine fantasy and nonsense literature by Lewis Carroll (*Alice in Wonderland*) and Edward Lear (*Nonsense Verse*) published after Darwin's book that enters the changed terrain of human-animal relations. And we will finish with a late-Victorian Gothic novel that imagines history as a contest for supremacy between biological populations, Bram Stoker's pathbreaking Gothic novel *Dracula* (1897). We will also study contextual material on the species debate and on Victorian theories of race and gender.

Course Objectives:

- Each of the works to be covered in this course makes an argument; each of them makes it indirectly, by devices that include analogy, parable, and allegory. This course aims to train students in reading sustained arguments and in teasing out their historical and philosophical implications.
- The course will include written assignments, and the training it provides in reading is intended to improve students' ability to present a coherent argument in the extended form of a critical essay.
- The course will also introduce students to the intellectual milieu in which Darwin made his breakthrough in *The Origin of Species* and to the Victorian responses his work provoked.

Course Materials

Required Books

All three of these books are required in paper (not digital) copies. You are encouraged to make notes in your copies as you read and during class. You will need these books for the in-class writing exercises.

- 1) Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*. Broadview. Edited by Joseph Carroll. ISBN: 9781551113371.
- 2) Bram Stoker, *Dracula*. Broadview. Edited by Glennis Byron. ISBN: 9781551111360 / 1551111365
- 3) Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, Broadview. Edited by Richard Kelly. ISBN: 9781554812417 / 1554812410

Supplemental Online Resources

Complete Works of Darwin Online <http://darwin-online.org.uk>

Assignments (all writing assignments to be submitted in hard copy, either in class or via the English department drop box. I reserve the right to deduct 1% from the paper grade for each day a paper is submitted late without permission.):

--Complete the reading assignments by the dates specified. **Come to class prepared to ask and answer questions about the assigned readings.** Your attendance and participation will determine 10% of your final grade in the course. More than 6 unexcused absences will result a score of zero on this portion of your grade.

--There will be two papers. The first will be 1500 words long and is to be submitted October 9. I will hand out a list of topics for this paper, of which you should choose one. (25% final grade).

--November 18 or earlier you will submit a 250-word pitch for your final paper. This should identify your research question, give a prospective title for the paper, identify one or two passages you intend to discuss, and list at least two peer-reviewed works of scholarship you will refer to in your argument. (10% final grade)

--At the end of the term you will turn in a 2,500-word interpretative essay on a topic of your choice related to the course material. This paper will be due December 4. (35% final grade)

--Three times during the term I will assign topics for in class writing. *You must bring the book under discussion for that day to class.* Your 15 minute responses will provide the topic for the days' discussion; I will grade each piece of writing out of 10 and your two best scores will make up 20% of your final grade.

Additional Information

Please submit your papers double-spaced, in a 12-point font, on 8.5 x 11" paper. Use 1" margins. You should use the citation format of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Submit your papers on the date stated in the syllabus, either in class or at the Department of English dropbox, which is accessed from the hall outside UC 2401. The department secretary will date-stamp your work and deliver it; be sure it includes your name, the course number, and the name of the instructor. Any work submitted to the dropbox before 8:30am will be date-stamped with the *previous day's* date. In the absence of accommodation approved by the Academic Counselling office of your home faculty, late papers will be penalized at a rate of 1% per calendar day. The

MLA Handbook is available at Weldon Library; an excellent guide to MLA style (along with much other useful information for paper writers) can be found at the Purdue University OWL:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html

Phones are not to be used during class meetings. In the event of a call or text that you must attend to, please step out of the room.

The use of laptops in class is strongly discouraged. If you decide that you must use a laptop to take notes, you will be asked to sit near the back of the hall to avoid distracting other students.

Academic Offences

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 includes the submission of material generated by artificial intelligence programs or large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT; students should be aware that LLMs are trained with an archive of already existing writing, but do not provide citations of the work they use. Citations and statements of fact generated by LLMs are frequently in error.

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.

Academic Consideration

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student’s control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student’s ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student’s Faculty of Registration.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components: a) Self-attestation signed by the student; b) Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request; c) Supporting documentation as relevant.

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

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.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

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](#).

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Week 1. Sept 9: Introduction

Sept 11: From Broadview *Origin*, The First Book of Moses called GENESIS, pp. 562-65; William Paley, *Natural Theology* pp. 565-71

Week 2. Sept 16: From Broadview *Origin*, Thomas Malthus *Essay on the Principle of Population*, pp. 595-605

Sept 18: From Broadview *Origin*, Charles Lyell *Principles of Geology* 605-10.

Week 3. Sept 23: Darwin, *Origin of Species*, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 95-121.

Sept 25: Continued

Week 4. Sept 30: Chapter 2-4, pp. 122-77. **In class writing session 1. You will need your copy of Darwin's *Origin*.**

Oct 2: Continued

Week 5. Oct. 7: Chapters 5, 6, 7, end of 10, pp. 178-247 and 299-309. **Paper 1 due Oct. 9**

Week 6: End of Chapter 12, Chapters 13-14, pp. 347-98

Week 7: Reading Week

Week 8. Oct 21: Lewis Carroll *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. **In class writing session 2**

Oct 23: Continued.

Week 9: Carroll *Through the Looking-Glass* 187-98; 208-224; 240-50; 290-91. Edward Lear "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat," "The Jumblies," "The Pobble who has no Toes," "The Dong with a Luminous Nose" (handouts)

Week 10: Edward Lear, continued. From *Origin*; excerpts from *The Descent of Man* 495-561.

Week 11: *Dracula*

Week 12: *Dracula* **November 18:** In class writing session 3. **November 20** 250-word pitch for your final paper due. This should identify your research question, give a prospective title for the paper, identify one or two passages you intend to discuss, and list at least two peer-reviewed works of scholarship you will refer to in your argument.

Week 13: *Dracula*

Week 14: *Dracula* Paper 2 due 2,500 words.