

Department of English & Writing Studies

Understanding English Literature Today
English 1020E (651)
Summer 2016

Instructor: Dr. Mark Stephenson

Prerequisite

Grade 12U English or permission of the Department.

Course Description

This course takes you on a journey through the genres, historical periods, and critical approaches to English literature. In online lectures and online discussions, you will study major works of poetry, prose, and drama with attention to their use of literary form and the cultural contexts in which they were written. The written assignments for the course will provide you with training in literary analysis, logical and rhetorical argumentation, and strong skills in grammar and composition.

This course is recommended to students who may be considering either a Major or Minor in English Language and Literature, and who are interested in reading poetry, prose, and drama.

Objectives:

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;
- Recognize connections between course texts;
- Write an essay about a work (or works) of literature, containing a clear and effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text(s);
- 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(s) into an essay through the use of quotations and paraphrases;
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively in writing;
- Document essays using MLA format.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

1. Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey*. Ed. Claire Grogan. Peterborough: Broadview, 2002.
2. *Elements of Literature*. 5th Canadian Edition. Ed. David Staines et al. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2010.
3. Larsen, Nella. *Passing*. New York: Modern Library-Random House, 2002.
4. Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. Toronto: Vintage, 2002.
5. Messenger et. al. *The Canadian Writer's Handbook: Essentials Edition*. Don Mills: Oxford UP, 2012.
6. Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. Russ McDonald. New York: Pelican Shakespeare-Penguin, 2000.

Further readings which will be made available on the course website, under the tab “Readings C-Pack.” These are labelled “course website” in the Course Schedule below; in the lectures themselves, they are referred to as “Course Pack.”

Methods of Evaluation

| COMPONENT | WEIGHT | DUE DATE | LENGTH |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------------|------------|
| Participation | 15% | Every Unit | X 2-3 |
| Essay 1 | 15% | Week of Unit 4.2 | 1000 words |
| Midterm Test | 10% | Week of Unit 7.1 | 1 hour |
| Essay 2 | 20% | Week of Unit 12.1 | 2000 words |
| Discussion Reflection | 5% | Last day of class | 500 words |
| Final Exam | 35% | TBA – July 27-30 th | 3 hours |

Final Grades:

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. Please note: The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

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/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Class Format:

Each week you will be responsible for reading the assigned text(s), the associated lecture, and the discussion postings of your peers. You are expected to contribute to these discussions on a regular basis. (For more information, please see the “Discussion” section of the document labelled “Read Me First.”)

Discussion Participation:

Participation in online discussion is a major component of this course. It is essential that students keep up with class discussion, because each topic is only available for a limited period (without exception). In order to receive a passing participation grade, you must contribute to at least twenty discussion topics (out of a total of twenty three). Remember: discussion contributions are more about quality than quantity. You must respond to the ideas of your classmates, which means that you need to read other students’ postings. In preparation for each discussion, you should first read the required text(s), then read the lectures, then read what other students have already posted, then post your own response. Discussion posts that fail to respond to previous posts by repeating the same points or covering the same ground with additions but without acknowledging peers will receive a failing grade. Moreover, posting to the discussion board is not a onetime thing—it’s a conversation. Expect to visit the discussion board repeatedly throughout the week. You might find that you can use the class discussion space as a springboard for new ideas—you may even come back to your discussion posts when you’re brainstorming for an essay.

Essay Style:

Essays must comply with MLA (Modern Languages Association) citation style and guidelines. The UWO library provides a document explaining the basics of MLA formatting: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/files/styleguides/MLA.pdf> A link is provided under course resources on your OWL site. York: MLA, 2009.) You will find a link to this site in the Academic Resources folder through the Learner Resources tab.

Late Penalty:

Due to the nature of an online course and assignment turnaround times, students should make every effort to hand all assignments in on time. Essays and other assignments are to be submitted via the Owl drop box by the due dates listed above (and on the Course Schedule). Assignments sent as email attachments will not be accepted unless previously arranged with the instructor. Papers handed in late without prior permission will be deducted 5% per day late, including weekends. Essays submitted more than one week after the due date has passed will not be accepted. Late essays will forfeit instructor commentary. Please note that instructors cannot grant accommodation on medical grounds: see the Academic Accommodation section below for details.

Timetable:

(Note that *Elements of Literature* is abbreviated to EL)

May 9-11: Unit 1.1: Creation Stories: Margaret Laurence, "Where the World Began" (course website); *Elements of Literature* (EL) 3-4; Discussion 1.1

May, 11-13 Unit 1.2 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, from Book 4 (course website) EL 372-373; Discussion 1.2

May 16-18: Unit 2.1: The Natural World: Frost, "Design" and "Birches" (EL), Page, "Planet Earth" (course website), EL 361-72; Discussion 2.1

May 18-20: Unit 2.2: The Natural World: Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" (EL), Thomas, "The Force that through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower" (EL), EL 347-9; Discussion 2.2

May 23-25: Unit 3.1: The Reading Self: Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, EL 7-9; Discussion 3.1

May 25-27: Unit 3.2: The Reading Self: Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, Discussion 3.2

May 30-June 1: Unit 4.1: Art and Life: Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (EL), Rossetti, "In an Artist's Studio" (course website); Discussion 4.1

June 1-June 3: Unit 4.2: Art and Life: Avison, "Snow" (EL), Walker, "Everyday Use" (course website), EL 9-11; Discussion 4.2

ESSAY 1 DUE JUNE 6

June 6-8: Unit 5.1: Dreams and Nightmares: Blake, "London" (EL), Lampman, "The City of the End of Things" (EL), T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men" (EL); Discussion 5.1 6

June 8-10: Unit 5.2: Dreams and Nightmares: LeGuin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (course pack); Page, "Unless the Eye Catch Fire" (course website); Discussion 5.2

June 13-15: Unit 6.1: Love and Loss: Shakespeare, "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; EL 707-12; Discussion 6.1

June 15-17: Unit 6.2: Love and Loss: Shakespeare, "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; Discussion 6.2

June 20-22: Unit 7.1: Love and Loss: Donne, "Holy Sonnets" (EL); Discussion 7.1

MIDTERM TEST (ONLINE) JUNE 20-22

June 22-24: Unit 7.2: Love and Loss: Shakespeare, "Sonnet 18, "Sonnet 73" and "Sonnet 130" (EL); Edna St. Vincent Millay, "I Being Born a Woman and Distressed" (course website); Discussion 7.2

June 27-29: Unit 8.1: Love and Loss: Burns, "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose" (course website); Atwood, "Variations on the Word Love" (EL); Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (course website); Discussion 8.1

June 29-July 1: Unit 8.2: Love and Loss: Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" (EL); Yeats, "When You Are Old" (course website); Auden, "Funeral Blues" (course website); Discussion 8.2

July 4-6: Unit 9.1: Public and Private Selves: Nella Larsen, *Passing*; Discussion 9.1

July 6-8: Unit 9.2: Public and Private Selves: Nella Larsen, *Passing*; Discussion 9.2

July 11-13: Unit 10.1: Public and Private Selves: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (EL); EL 11-14; Discussion 10.1

July 13-15: Unit 10.2: Public and Private Selves: Munro, "Family Furnishings" (course website); Heaney, "Digging" (course website); Discussion 10.2

July 18-20: Unit 11.1: Storytelling: Barnes, excerpt from *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* (course website); Discussion 11.1

July 20-22: Unit 11.2: Storytelling: Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess" (EL); Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (EL); Discussion 11.2

July 25-27: Unit 12.1: Storytelling: Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*; EL 4-5; Discussion 12.1

ESSAY 2 DUE JULY 25

July 27-29: Unit 12.2: Storytelling: *Life of Pi*. Discussion 12.2.

REFLECTIONS DUE JULY 31

Final Exam TBA: Somewhere between August 2nd and 5th

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>.

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.