

ENGLISH 9116B - Winter 2014

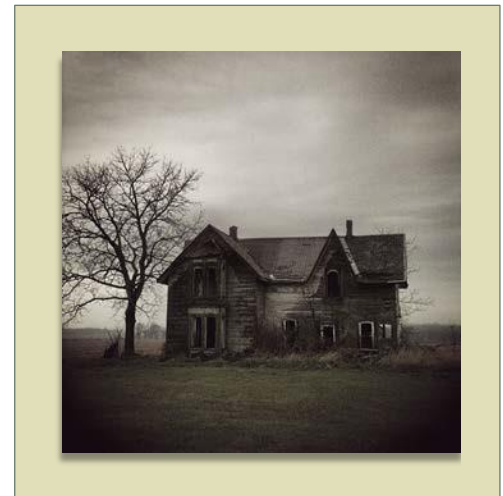
ALICE MUNRO AND THE POETICS OF HERE AND NOW

COURSE INFORMATION

Mondays 12:30-3:30 pm

University College 377

Course Description: This course undertakes an intensive study of a selection of short fiction across the career of Nobel Prize-winning author Alice Munro. We will also consider film adaptations and aspects of the critical and popular reception of Munro's stories. By way of close readings, we will address the ways Munro's narratives are informed by concepts of time, place, gender and genre. The format of classes will include a minor lecture component, assigned seminar and discussion-starter presentations by students, and group discussion. The course will also informally include professionalization components, including weekly "icebreakers" on topics suggested by students. (image adapted from Joni Morash, pinterest.com)



INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor Manina Jones

Office Hours

Arts & Humanities 3G18*

Thurs. 11:30-12:30pm

mjones@uwo.ca

and 1:30-3:30 pm

*see file titled "How to Find Professor Jones" included in OWL Resources folder.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts

Johnston, Liza. *Hateship, Loveship*. Benaroya Pictures, 2013.*

McBrearty, Don, dir. *Boys and Girls*. Atlantis Films, 1983.*

Munro, Alice. *Alice Munro's Best: Selected Stories*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006.**

Polley, Sara, dir. *Away From Her*. Capri Films, 2006.*

** Available at the bookstore or electronically.

*Films are available on iTunes, YouTube and/or in the Arts&Humanities Video Library. We will screen *Boys and Girls* in class, but students are expected to view *Away from Her* and *Hateship, Loveship* on their own time.

Weekly article excerpts and some additional stories will be available electronically on OWL.

OWL

All students should be registered in OWL and have access to the course OWL page: I will use the page to send announcements, post readings and presentations, access the course wiki, etc. Please let me know if you need to be added or removed from the class list, or if you need more information on OWL.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Assignments

Seminar	30%	approx. 1 hour
Discussion-Starter part A	5%	research, consultation and identification of text one week in advance of class (5%)
part B	15%	presentation and discussion approx. 30 minutes (20%)
part C	5%	written report (2 pages)
Research question & feedback	5%	contributed to course Wiki
Attendance/Particip'n	10%	weekly
Final Paper	30%	approx. 3,000 words

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly preparation: Good graduate seminars are a collaborative production. So, in addition to the assignments described above, you are expected, not just to complete the assigned reading for each week's seminar meeting, but to come prepared to engage with both the readings and other members of the class. Constructive questions, comments, supplementary resources, etc., are always appreciated.

Class seminar: You will give a presentation on one assigned story during class time. While the list above says the length of your presentation should be "approx. 1 hour," please don't think you have to talk non-stop for that whole time. In this course, the seminar presentation is not a self-contained, polished paper presentation. Your seminar need not have a perfectly cogent argument (though that's certainly not a deficiency!); it may be exploratory, but it should have a coherent trajectory and be motivated by a clear set of questions.

You may want to think of your seminar as the process of testing out a hypothesis or set of tactics orally to a friendly audience who might contribute to your thinking. Consider it your minimal task to orient our discussion of each text around a defined set of issues, to situate the text in relation to relevant background/critical information and resources, to call our collective attention to details of the story you find provocative or problematic and direct our interpretation of them, and to prompt further discussion. In this sense, the seminar is both a pedagogical exercise and a map of possible research directions, for you and for others. For the class in which you present, you are both "teacher" and the "ideal student," prepared

with reading and research, articulate, and eager to draw out and respond to the contributions of others. Your seminar presentation may (but need not) form the basis of your final paper for the course.

Your seminar must be accompanied by a **PowerPoint (or equivalent) presentation**. Developing technical presentation skills is an important aspect of professionalization. Please send an electronic copy of slide show to Professor Jones, so that it can be made available on OWL. Minimally, it must include the following:

- your name, a title, and the date of the seminar
- a point-form summary of your presentation
- a list of discussion questions or topics
- quotations, diagrams, maps, illustrations, etc.: whatever you think would be helpful and engaging to others in the class
- at least one textual excerpt to form the basis of class discussion/analysis
- a bibliography of resources you found useful or cited

*** Please note: You are required to contact me **the Thursday prior to your presentation** (preferably in person during my office hours) to let me know in general terms what you're planning. I may be able to direct you to helpful resources, or brainstorm a topic/focus with you.*

Discussion-Starter: This assignment asks you to develop and perform, with the participation of your classmates, your critical engagement with an appropriate scholarly text or textual excerpt (eg., an excerpt from a book on Munro, an article, a selection of reviews or interviews, a text outlining a critical concept relevant to her work), and to familiarize yourself with the terms of critical discourse. There is a bibliography of critical sources specifically on Munro's work available in OWL, but you need not limit your choice to this list. The discussion-starter has three parts...

1. 5% of your grade is based on the value of your choice of text and your work in the process of selection. There is an abundance of critical work on Munro (a bibliography is available in the OWL "resources" folder), but you may also choose an essay or textual excerpt(s) that you think enriches our discussions and provides productive points of departure. This option is meant to open up the possibility of sharing your own research interests, investments, and experiences with the class. The selection you choose should be a moderate essay-length (say, 15 pages), so you may have to excerpt it. Provide a copy of your selection to me a week in advance so that I can post it to OWL and inform other students it's available.

15% of your grade is based on the effectiveness of your presentation in class. This assignment's function is in part to identify and convey the information, arguments, methodologies, and analyses of the excerpt(s), but it is also to model the ways in which you can think critically about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, consider its significance and utility, and make the thinking of others *generative* for your own ideas. Thus you should consider the excerpt not the be-all-and-end-all, not something that has to be recapitulated in class paragraph by paragraph, but a point of departure for further discussion or a conceptual touchstone that we might revisit in different contexts. You should develop three or four questions for discussion prompted by your reading of the material. Don't feel that you need comprehensively to recapitulate the whole selection: use the elements that you consider most useful, most engaging, most controversial, most suspect, most current or outdated, etc.

2.

For the purposes of your presentation, you should

- contextualize: where did the selection appear? When? Who is the author?
- summarize: briefly outline its argument
- orient: identify its critical stance, methodology and/or goals. Does the essay represent a critical movement or trend?
- define: explain salient terms and concepts
- highlight: locate influences and/or tease out controversies
- engage: explore points of departure, consider alternative perspectives, and/or suggest some ways in which the essay might be relevant to works on this course or others.

3. 5% of your grade is based on a written summary. The week following the class in which you present, you should submit a two-page summary of presentation that integrates the issues that arose in class. This assignment need not be written in formal essay style: it may be written in first person; it may include a point-form portion; it may be written in expository sections. *Submit the written portion of this assignment me via email, preferably in MS Word or rtf.*

Research Topics and Feedback: By the end of the course, you will be expected to contribute at least one suggestion for further research to the course Wiki. This suggestion will take the form of a topic/title, and a sentence or two of elaboration. You are not required to write on this topic (though you may). This exercise allows members of the course to generate research ideas collaboratively and on an ongoing basis. In addition, you will be expected to provide supplementary comments on someone else's topic. This might involve recommending a suitable text, a research aid, a term or method, a refinement, an appropriate venue for delivery (journal, conference), etc. You may revise and modify your questions and responses over the course of the term: at the end of classes, they will be considered final, and fair game for you or others to use. This is an informal exercise, and you won't be marked on style.

Final paper: While I expect all students to submit a rigorously researched, intellectually sound paper, the paper may take a number of different forms. You should think through (and discuss with me, if you like) what format will best serve your individual interests, career goals, and academic strengths. The important thing is to recognize that different formats have different conventions, expectations, and audiences. Here are some suggestions as to what you might want to undertake:

- an academic conference paper, written perhaps with an eye to presenting at a scholarly conference
- a dialogue in collaboration with another student (with length and assessment criteria to be discussed)
- a critically-framed lesson plan for a particular specified constituency
- a guide to research on a single story or volume of stories
- an overview and assessment of the popular reception of a single volume of stories
- a pedagogical approach inspired by a literary text
- a review of a related scholarly book

STATEMENT ON 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 the following web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

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>).

- On OWL, you may sign up for an Academic Integrity Tutorial and Quiz, which assesses your level of knowledge on responsible scholarly practices. This brief exercise is strongly recommended for all students.

MENTAL HEALTH

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

ACCESSIBILITY.UWO.CA

I am committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of all students. Please consult the university accessibility [web site](http://www.uwo.ca/accessibility) for general information, and don't hesitate to let me know if you have concerns.



Eh? What's that you say? I have a hearing impairment. If you speak directly to me, so that I can see your face, I will be better able to understand you. Please be aware of this in our class meetings: I want to hear everyone!

SCHEDULE

Date	Readings/Topics	Essay Presentation: T.B.A
Jan. 5	Introductions	
Jan. 12	"Boys and Girls" (OWL) <i>Boys and Girls</i> (film)	
Jan. 19	"Epilogue: The Photographer" (OWL)	
Jan. 26	"Royal Beatings" (AMB)	
Feb. 2	"The Turkey Season" (AMB)	
Feb. 9	"Miles City, Montana" (AMB)	
Feb. 16	Reading week	
Feb. 23	"Meneseung" (AMB)	
Mar. 2	"A Wilderness Station" (AMB)	
Mar. 9	"The Bear Came Over the Mountain" (AMB) <i>Away from Her</i> (film)	
Mar. 16	"Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage" (AMB) <i>Hateship Friendship</i> (film)	
Mar. 23	"Runaway" (AMB)	
Mar. 30	"The View from Castle Rock" (OWL)	
Apr. 6	"Train" (OWL)	