English 9126B – Winter Term 2016

Contemporary Canadian Literature in Cross-Border Contexts

Instructor: Prof. Manina Jones

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Office Hours Mondays 10 am-12 pm
Wednesdays 2:30-3:30 pm

…or by appointment

Location: Lawson Hall 2210

Time: Thursdays 12:30-3:30 pm

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Description:

What does it mean to read "from the nation's edge"? In this course we will consider a selection of contemporary Canadian fiction and film in the light of recent critical and theoretical work in the interdisciplinary field of Border Studies, in order to explore the limits of our national literature. We will analyze the ways in which movement across geo-political lines, including the US-Canada border, Indigenous territorial boundaries, and other trans-national spaces is negotiated, regulated and challenged in contemporary Canadian fiction.

Texts:

Badami, Anita Rau.	*Can You Hear the Night Bird Call?*	Vintage, 2007.
Brand, Dionne.	*What We All Long For*.	Vintage, 2008.
Compton, Wayde.	*49th Parallel Psalm*.	Arsenal, 2011.
Edugyan, Esi.	*Half Blood Blues*.	HarperCollins, 2011.
Hill, Lawrence.	*The Book of Negroes*.	Norton, 2008.
Hunt, Courtney (dir.)	*Frozen River*.	Cohen Media, 2008.
King, Thomas.	*Truth and Bright Water*.	Harper, 2000.

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Lynch, Jim.	*Border Songs*.	Vintage, 2010.
Urquhart, Jane.	*Sanctuary Line*.	Emblem, 2014.
Silvera, Makeda.	"Carribbean Chameleon," from *Her Head a Village*.	(OWL)
Verdecchia, Guillermo.	*Fronteras Americanas*.	Talonbooks, 1997.

Requirements and Due dates:

Seminar	30%	approx. 1 hour + PowerPoint and/or presentation tool
Article presentation	25%	20 mins. + 1000 word summary one week following presentation
Participation	10%	all term
Final paper discussion topics	5%	April 4th (last class)
Final Paper	30%	5,000 words *due April 20th 2016*

Assignment Descriptions

Class seminar: You will give a presentation on one literary text during class time. While the list above says the length of your presentation should be "approx. 1 hour," don't think you have to talk non-stop for that whole time. 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 oriented around the concept of borders.

The seminar is not a polished paper presentation, but a a pedagogical exercise, an intellectual dialogue with your colleagues, and a map of possible research directions, their possibilities and limits. 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 will contribute to your thinking. Consider it your task to introduce the work to the class, offer relevant background/critical information and resources, present and develop a critical idea with close reflection on the text, directing us to elements of the text you find provocative or problematic in relation to the course topic, and prompting further discussion.

Your seminar must be accompanied by a PowerPoint or some other presentation tool (you may discuss alternatives with me), which you will submit electronically. Your seminar presentation may (but need not) form the basis of your final paper for the course.

Your presentation tool should include:

- your name, a title, and the date of the seminar
- a point-form summary of your presentation
- a list of discussion questions
- quotations, maps, diagrams, charts, illustrations: whatever you think would be illuminating and engaging to others in the class
- a bibliography of resources and works cited: you will, naturally, have surveyed the critical literature specifically on your literary text/author, and researched concepts key to your discussion.

*** Please note: I will expect you to contact me the week prior to your presentation, to let me know in general terms what you're planning. I will be able to direct you to locate helpful resources or brainstorm a topic/focus with you. Plan ahead.*

Article presentation: This assignment asks you to develop and perform, with the participation of your classmates, your critical engagement with a scholarly text relevant to the course theme. You may use the essay listed on the course syllabus, or, if you choose, you may present another essay or textual excerpt that you think provides productive points of departure for our discussions. This latter option opens up the possibility of sharing your own interests, investments, and experiences with the class. Articles will be available on OWL.

This assignment's function is in part to convey the information, arguments, methodologies, and analyses of the assigned essay, but it is also to model the ways in which you can position your own disciplinary investments, and make the research of others *generative*, i.e., how you can put it to work in productive ways. Consider the essay not the be-all-and-end-all (i.e., you don't have to "cover" it comprehensively), then, but a point of departure for discussion. For the purposes of your presentation, this may include

- contextualizing the article
- briefly summarizing its argument
- identifying its methodology and goals
- defining salient terms and concepts
- locating influences or teasing out controversies
- selecting and exploring points of departure, offering alternative perspectives
- suggesting some ways in which the essay might be relevant to literary studies and/or particular texts on the course
- developing three or four questions to prompt discussion

Please contact the seminar presenter for the day of your discussion-starter in advance to consider how you might work to support his or her presentation without stepping on her or his toes. Within a week of your presentation, you will hand in a 1000-word paper that summarizes your presentation and accounts for class discussion on the day. This paper need not be written in formal essay style.

Final paper discussion: On the last day of class, each student will informally present two or three potential topics or research questions for final papers. This suggestion will take the form of a topic/title, and a few sentences of elaboration, rationale, or research suggestions. This exercise is meant to allow members of the course to develop some options for their final paper, and to generate research ideas collaboratively. As part of this discussion, you will be expected to provide supplementary contributions in support of other people's topics. This might involve recommending a suitable text (or passage), a research aid, a term or method, a refinement, an appropriate venue for delivery (journal, conference), etc. You would be well-advised to note and develop your questions and responses over the entire course of the term. Obviously, if you choose to advance another student's suggestion, you will acknowledge their contribution in an endnote.

Final paper: While I expect all students to submit a rigourously researched, intellectually sound paper, the paper may take a number of different forms. You should think through and discuss with me 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, but you are welcome to consider others:

- an academic research paper
- a critical dialogue on a topic or term, in collaboration with another student (with length and assessment criteria to be discussed)
- a critically-framed lesson plan for a particular specified constituency, including pedagogical reflection
- a guide to research and critical commentary on a single literary text, oriented around course concerns
- a review essay on a recent border studies book, considering its implications for Canadian literary studies: I can provide suggestions
- a "critical term paper" in which you research and define a key term and consider its relevance to one (or more) texts on the course
- I'm happy to discuss other options

Please submit your paper electronically, preferably in MS Word: I'll return it to you electronically, with my comments.

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 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 so that I can see your face, I will be better able to understand you. Please be aware of this in our class meetings, and be patient with my requests for repetition: I want to hear everyone!

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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

turnitin.com

"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)."

Graduate Course Health and Wellness:

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. For example, please check out the Faculty of Music web page http://www.music.uwo.ca/, and our own McIntosh Gallery http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.

Week	Text	Article*
January 7	Introduction	*articles are available on OWL
January 14	King, "Borders;" Silvera, "Caribbean Chameleon" (OWL)	Newman, David and Anssi Paasi. "Fences and Neighbours in the Postmodern World: Boundary Narratives in Political Geography." *Progress in Human Geography* 22.2 (1998): 186-207.
January 21	Lynch, *Border Songs*	Traister, Bryce. "Border Shopping: American Studies and the Anti-Nation." *Globalization on the Line: Culture, Capital, and Citizenship at US Borders*. Ed. Claudia Sadowski-Smith. NY: Palgrave, 2002. 31-52.
January 28	Verdecchia, *Fronteras Americanas*	Anzaldua, Gloria. "Crossing Borders." *Borderlands/La Frontera: the New Mestiza.* San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987. 1-39.
February 4	Compton, *49th Parallel Psalm*	Bhabha, Homi. "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation." *The Location of Culture*. NY: Routledge, 1994. 199-70.
February 11	Edugyan, *Half Blood Blues*	Moretti, Franco. From *The Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900*. London: Verso, 1998. 1-23, 33-47.
February 18	**READING WEEK**	---
February 25	Badami, *Can You Hear the Night Bird Call?*	Rajaram, Prem Kumar and Carl Grundy-Warr. "Introduction." *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge*. Eds. Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007. ix-xl.
March 3	Brand, *What We All Long For*	Pratt, Geraldine; and Rosner, Victoria. "Introduction: The Global and the Intimate." *The Global and the Intimate: Feminism in Our Time*. Ed. Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner. NY: Columbia U P, 2012. 1-27.
March 10	King, *Truth and Bright Water*	Feghali, Zalfa. "Border Studies and Indigenous Peoples: Reconsidering Our Approaches." *Beyond the Border: Tensions across the Forty-Ninth Parallel in the Great Plains and Prairies*. Eds. Kyle Conway and Timothy Pasch. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013. 153-69.
March 17	Hunt, *Frozen River* (film)	Film viewing and discussion in class
March 24	Hill, *The Book of Negroes*	Soguk, Nevzat. "Border's Capture: Insurrectional Politics, Border-Crossing Humans, and the New Political." *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge*. Eds. Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007. 283-308.
March 31	Urquhart, *Sanctuary Line*	Salter, Mark B. "Theory of the / : The Suture and Critical Border Studies." *Geopolitics* 17.4 (2012): 734-755.
April 7	Final paper presentations / discussion	