Understanding Literature Today
English 1020E (002)
Fall/Winter 2013-14

Instructor: Dr. Allan Pero
Date/Time: Tuesday 12:30pm-1:30pm,
           Thursday 12:30pm-1:30pm, plus tutorial

Location: Somerville House 3315

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.

Antirequisite(s): English 1022E, 1035E.

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
What is Understanding Literature Today? Why might this course be for you? This course is for you if you love the following: reading; feeling the power of words; learning how to harness that power and to make it your own; exploring books that would otherwise intimidate you; and if you love the notion that every time you pick up a great book, you hold a universe in your hands. English Literature is an ongoing search to make meaning from the human condition, to capture in imagination forms of truth and experience that other forms of human knowledge do not or cannot provide. By using core literary concepts, and critical approaches to different genres, we will come together in lectures to think about how ever-evolving ideas about the world shape the literature we read, and how literature has in turn shaped those ideas. In small group tutorials, you will not only apply, question, and test the ideas discussed in the lecture, but also develop and refine the analytical and writing skills necessary to evaluate literature critically. You will emerge from this course armed with several tools: in reading, in writing, in critical reasoning, and in conveying the value and importance of literature to understanding and enriching your life and work.

Objectives:
Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Develop further their ability to analyze texts critically, and formulate and produce essays which have an effective thesis with a clear, well-articulated intent, and a logical argument supported by adequate evidence from the text(s) under discussion;
- Explain the various theoretical and rhetorical approaches to literature, with specific attention both to their concepts, their historical, cultural and intellectual contexts, and their application to different texts;
• Develop research and writing skills which will not only augment their knowledge of the field of study, but will also able to incorporate the results of this research into their essays and other assignments; among the basic research skills are the ability to collect relevant bibliographic material on a prescribed topic (online and in the library), and
• critically engage with the scholarly literature with an assessment of the relative merits of an argument in essays and other written/oral assignments, and articulate their own positions within a particular scholarly discussion;
• Develop further their written/oral communication skills in the clear and organized presentation of an argument/hypothesis within the prescribed word limits of the research essays and other written/oral assignments;
• (All of the above are really useful and valuable in the study of English and in other parts of the Real World).

Course Materials

Required Texts:
Julian Barnes, A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters (Vintage)
Gary Shteyngart, Super Sad True Love Story (Random House)

Methods of Evaluation

2 Response Papers (500 words each) 2 x 5% 10%
Essay 1 (500 words) 5%
Essay 2 (1000 words) 10%
Essay 3 (2000 words) 15%
Mid-Year Exam 10%
Tutorial grade 15%
Final exam 35%

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.

Timetable:

Tues. Sept. 10: Introduction to Class; The Question of Literary Art. (No tutorial this week!)
Tues. Sept. 17: What is an essay? Why write essays?
Tues. Sept. 24: What is University Writing? What do you need to know?

Tues. Oct. 1: What is critical thinking? How do you develop critical thinking skills?


Thurs. Oct. 24: Margaret Atwood, “Death of a Young Son by Drowning” (Voice)


Thurs. Oct. 31: FALL BREAK! NO CLASS!

Tues. Nov. 5: W. H. Auden, “In Memory of W. B. Yeats” (Elegy) *(Response 1 DUE)*

Thurs. Nov. 7: Death and War: Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est”


Thurs. Nov. 14: Ernest Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants” (Minimalism, Point of View)

Tues. Nov. 19: William Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily” (Point of View)


Tues. Nov. 26: Ezra Pound, “In the Station of the Metro,” William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow” and “This Is Just To Say” (Concision and Simplicity)

Thurs. Nov. 28: Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool,” Langston Hughes, “Harlem” (Concision and Simplicity)


**HOLIDAY (AFTER DECEMBER MID-YEAR EXAM)! FLY! BE FREE! (Well, until January.)**

**SECOND TERM:**

Tues. Jan. 7: Julian Barnes, *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters*


Tutorial: Discussion of Barnes
Tues. Feb. 11: Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

**Feb. 17-21: READING WEEK**
Thurs. Feb. 27: Tom Stoppard, *The Real Inspector Hound* (Parody; Postmodern Drama)
Tues. Mar. 4: Tom Stoppard, *The Real Inspector Hound*
Thurs. Mar. 6: Tom Stoppard, *The Real Inspector Hound*
Tues. Mar. 11: Gary Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*
Tues. Mar. 18: Gary Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*
Thurs. Mar. 20: Gary Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*
Tues. Mar. 25: Gary Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*
Thurs. Mar. 27: Gary Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*
Tues. Apr. 1: Gary Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*
Thurs. Apr. 3: Gary Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*
Tues. Apr. 8: REVIEW for FINAL EXAM (ESSAY 3 DUE)

**Essays:**
Essays 1 and 2 will not be research essays. In second term, Essay 3 will be written as a Research Essay. One of the primary goals of the course is to help you develop critical and writing skills. Andrew and I will be working with you to help you accrue and hone those skills.

**NOTA BENE (Latin for “Note Well”):**
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.

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**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.