

University of Waterloo
ENGL 108H: Isolation and Alienation
Winter 2013

Instructor: Danielle Stock
Schedule: Mon., Wed., Fri., 2:30–3:20 p.m.
Location: ML 354

Office: PAS 1067
Office Hours: Mon. & Wed., 3:30–4:30 p.m.
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Course Description

This course explores themes of isolation and alienation within a range of texts, including novels, short stories, poetry, and films, from various genres and cultural contexts. The goal of this semester-long investigation is to arrive at an understanding of literary representations of isolation and alienation as expressions of individual and communal experience that involve social, cultural, psychological, political, and geographical factors, among others. The narratives of the various protagonists in the course texts negotiate issues of power, race, disability, gender, and sexuality in ways that allow us to study growth, stagnation, or deterioration, as potential responses to trauma. Along with individual experiences, some of the texts will provide a lens through which to examine society and culture, as well as to problematize dichotomies of isolation/community and alienation/connection. Students will be expected to perform contextualized close readings of texts and to communicate their ideas through both oral and written exercises.

Learning Goals

By the end of the course, students will be familiar with:

- Identifying and analyzing literary themes of isolation and alienation
- Grounding thematic observations within the social, cultural, political, and historical context of a narrative
- Using secondary sources to develop a critical textual analysis

Course Texts

Anderson, Sherwood – *Winesburg, Ohio**
Carver, Raymond – “Cathedral”
García Márquez, Gabriel – “The Sea of Lost Time”
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins – “The Yellow Wallpaper”**
Ginsberg, Allen – “Howl”
Hurston, Zora Neale – *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
MacLeod, Alistair – “The Lost Salt Gift of Blood”
Satrapi, Marjane – *Persepolis*
Toews, Miriam – *A Complicated Kindness*

All course texts, as well as the course reader, are available for purchase at the UW Bookstore. Texts marked with an asterisk (*) are also available online.

Evaluation Breakdown

Presentation – 20%

Responses to presentations (5% x 2) – 10%

Term essay – 30%

Final exam – 30%

Participation/attendance – 10%

Assignment Descriptions

Presentation: In groups of three or four, give a 20-minute presentation that analyzes one aspect of a course text in relation to themes of isolation and alienation. You should ground your analysis in thorough contextual research that references critical, cultural, and historical details. You may choose to incorporate a relevant cultural artifact, such as an image or a work of art, a film, a website, a song, a video game, or another text, into the presentation. In this case, the presentation should focus on how the artifact relates to, complicates, explicates, or elaborates on the theme or issue you are analyzing. You must have your presentation topic approved by the instructor at least one week prior to your presentation. Presentations are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- quality of presented content
- organization of material
- creativity of presentation format(s)
- ability to lead discussion (posing and responding to questions)

Each group is required to submit a written copy of their presentation to the LEARN dropbox on the day of their presentation (this document may be in point form, but should reflect the content of the entire presentation and include MLA-style citations for all secondary sources used). The written copy should also indicate which components of the presentation each group member was responsible for. *It is expected that each group member contribute an equal amount of work and that all members are involved in developing the presentation content.* All presenters in the group must be available to present on their assigned day and will receive the same grade. Any individual absent on his or her presentation day will receive a zero on the assignment.

Responses to presentations: Write two responses (400 words in length each) to two presentations over the course of the term that address one or more questions or ideas posed by the presenters. Responses should reflect that you have read the text thoroughly and paid close attention to your peers' presentations. Submit your reflections to the LEARN dropbox. Responses are due by noon on the Friday following the presentation you are discussing. Responses are evaluated based on grammar, style, and content.

Term essay: Write a 1500-word research paper in which you investigate course themes in relation to one or more texts that we have discussed over the course of the semester. Topics will be distributed in class, but you may propose your own topic (subject to

approval by the instructor). Prior to writing your essay, you must submit a detailed essay outline on the date specified in the course schedule. (Expectations for the outline component will be discussed in class.) Essays must include secondary research (cite at least two secondary sources according to MLA guidelines). Essays are evaluated based on grammar, style, content, and citations.

Final exam: The final exam takes place during the examination period (as scheduled by the Registrar's Office) and covers all material from the course. The exam format is short answer and essay questions.

Participation: The participation grade is based on your attendance, preparedness for class, and participation in in-class discussions, activities, quizzes, and writing exercises. Effective participation requires that students complete assigned readings before the day on which they are covered in class and are prepared to offer appropriate and relevant comments in class discussions.* You should demonstrate your ability to offer personal insight, as well as actively listen to others. The collective goal is to make the classroom environment a place of mutual respect and learning. Note: Attendance is mandatory for film screenings and presentations.

* *Please bring the relevant course texts to each class.*

Late Policy

All assignments must be completed and submitted on the due date, before the indicated deadline. Any work submitted after this deadline will receive an automatic 10% late penalty (one full letter grade). 2% will be deducted from the grade for each subsequent day until the assignment is submitted. Assignments will not be accepted after one week past the deadline, resulting in a grade of zero for the assignment. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis, as per the discretion of the instructor.

Missed presentations and exams can be rescheduled only if a doctor's note is provided.

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>.

Grievances: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>. In addition, consult <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes> for the Faculty of Arts' grievance processes.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72>.

Academic Integrity (Arts):

http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

Cross-listed Courses

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

Schedule of Classes

We will attempt to follow this schedule as closely as possible. Please have the full readings completed *before* the assigned class.

Week One		
January 7	Introduction to course & syllabus	*Sign up for group presentations
January 9	Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"	
January 11	Gilman	*Discussion of presentation assignment and expectations
Week Two		
January 14	Gilman	
January 16	Anderson, <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i>	
January 18	Anderson	Group 1 presentation (Anderson)
Week Three		
January 21	Anderson	
January 23	Anderson	
January 25	Anderson	Group 2 presentation (Anderson)
Week Four		
January 28	Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i>	
January 30	Satrapi	
February 1	Satrapi	Group 3 presentation (Satrapi)
Week Five		
February 4	Toews, <i>A Complicated Kindness</i>	
February 6	Toews	
February 8	Toews	Group 4 presentation (Toews) *Discussion of term paper assignment and expectations
Week Six		
February 11	Toews	
February 13	Toews	
February 15	Toews	Group 5 presentation (Toews)
February 18-22	READING WEEK: NO CLASS	
Week Seven		
February 25	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>	
February 27	Hurston	
March 1	Hurston	Group 6 presentation (Hurston)

Week Eight		
March 4	Hurston	Term paper outline due (submit to LEARN dropbox by noon)
March 6	Hurston	
March 8	Hurston	Group 7 presentation (Hurston)
Week Nine		
March 11	Ginsberg, "Howl"	
March 13	Ginsberg <i>Howl</i> film screening	
March 15	Ginsberg <i>Howl</i> film screening (continued)	Group 8 presentation (Ginsberg)
Week Ten		
March 18	Ginsberg	Term paper rough draft due (optional) ; submit to instructor via email by noon)
March 20	MacLeod, "The Lost Salt Gift of Blood"	
March 22	MacLeod	Group 9 presentation (MacLeod)
Week Eleven		
March 25	Carver, "Cathedral"	
March 27	Carver	
March 29	GOOD FRIDAY: NO CLASS	<i>*Last day to submit a response to presentation</i>
Week Twelve		
April 1	García Márquez, "The Sea of Lost Time"	Required secondary reading: "The Solitude of Latin America" by García Márquez
April 3	García Márquez	
April 5	García Márquez	
Week Thirteen		
April 8	Exam review	Term paper due (submit to LEARN dropbox by noon)

April 11-25: Exam period