Engl105B: 20th Century Literature in English

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Office Hours: T.B.A.
Class Meetings: T/Th 3:00-4:20, HH280

Course Description: 1945 brought the end to WWII – the war deemed “the end of the world” by many because of the atrocities of the holocaust. The world may not have literally ended, but upheaval, struggle, and change have remained constants. The time since 1945 has been filled with cultural genocide in various parts of the world, vast technological progress, the rise of the global community, and increasing concern about such issues as the environment, terrorism, and criminal violence. Nevertheless, despite the vast upheaval and cynicism characteristic of the latter half of the 20th century and the start of the 21st century, there remains as well great confidence in the strength of the human spirit. The texts that we will be exploring in this course attest to that endurance and hope.

Throughout the course, you will gain knowledge of major cultural events and literary achievements occurring from 1945 to the present. Structured around units concerning such topics as war, the environment, crime, cultural trauma, and technological progress, this course will explore various genres of literature including novels, poetry, graphic narrative, drama, and multimedia. As you will find, the texts on this course will provoke many questions, such as, but of course not limited to:

- How can trauma be represented in literature? Are words ever enough?
- What are the intricacies of the binary victim/victimizer?
- Do cultural upheavals, good and bad, lead to or require new literary forms?
- What cultural work can literature do? Can it have an impact and how?
- How do traumatic historical events – the holocaust, slavery, colonialism – resonate in later time periods?
- How do we read narratives that are multi-modal (so, those that combine words with pictures, colours, sounds, etc.)?

Course Objectives:
- develop an understanding of major cultural events and literary achievements in the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century
- develop the skills of close critical reading
- enable students to interpret texts in an effective manner and communicate their interpretations effectively both orally and in writing
- offer the opportunity for students to build their essay writing skills, including effective argumentation, structure, and grammar
- allow students to experience interesting and challenging texts
Required Texts:
The following texts will be available at the UW bookstore.

Highway, Tomson. Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing (ISBN: 9780920079553)
Brand, Dionne. At the Full and Change of the Moon (ISBN: 9780676972580)

Engl 105B: Course Readings Package

Recommended Text:
Any person who does a lot of writing (or even just a little) should own a grammar handbook. I would suggest the following:

or

Note: the Compact Handbook is completely adequate especially if business communication will be your goal, but the full edition has more information on academic writing, including strategies for effective essay writing.

Assignment Schedule:
Reading Journal – 10 entries (one paragraph each) – Due: Nov. 27 – 10%
Short Essay (3 pages) – Due: Oct. 2 – 20%
Final Essay (6 pages) – Due: Nov. 18 – 35%
Final Exam – Date to be set by the university – 35%

Assignment Descriptions:
Note: Full assignment guidelines will be available via UW-ACE. If you require a paper copy instead, please be in touch.

Reading Journal – Due: Nov. 27 – 10%
Note: These are the full assignment guidelines.

For each week of the course (Sept. 16th to Nov. 18th), you must write one paragraph (or equivalent – see below) on at least one of the texts assigned that week. As you'll see, we cover The Dew Breaker, Helpless, and At the Full and Change of the Moon on more than one week, but you may only write on ONE of these twice (you, of course, need not write on any twice since there are plenty of texts from which to choose). For each entry, you will offer your personal response to the text by identifying a key aspect of it that interests you. You could as well use your entry to offer your personal response to discussions begun in lecture. Remember though, these entries should not be plot summary or character analysis. Find something interesting to say about each text you write about, and you could say it in an interesting manner if you want (e.g., offer a
poem expressing your idea for one entry, create a comic strip for another, whatever you feel is most appropriate to express your thoughts about the text).

Your goal is to write your entries at the time we’re studying each text so that you can gain full benefit of the exercise. That way you’ll be ready to participate actively in lecture and share your ideas.

Though I’m expecting the journals to be typed, if you’ve offered a more creative entry like a comic strip, be sure to keep a copy of it for yourself since it might be helpful in your exam preparation, and I can’t guarantee that you’ll receive your journals back until the exam.

See the Marking Rubric on UW-ACE for the evaluation criteria. As well, one sample entry will be available for viewing.

**Short Essay (3 pages) – Due: Oct. 2 – 20%**
This assignment requires that you conduct a close critical reading of a selected passage from one of our course’s early texts. The passages from which you may choose will appear on the full assignment guidelines which will be available on UW-ACE at the start of term. We will discuss effective strategies for close critical reading in class. By focusing your attention on a given passage, this assignment will allow you to develop your interpretation skills and ensure that you are capable of forming in-depth analyses of literature.

**Final Essay (6 pages) – Due: Nov. 18 – 35%**
Building upon your interpretation skills developed in the Short Essay assignment, this assignment will require that you develop an argument that explores two texts studied in the course. Expect to develop your argument by discussing significant similarities and differences between your texts. In other words, you’ll be showing how their ideas, themes, styles, or use of literary techniques significantly intersect or diverge. No outside research sources may be used for this essay. Full assignment guidelines, complete with possible essay topics, will be available on UW-ACE by Oct. 9th.

**Final Exam – Date to be set by the university – 35%**
More detailed guidelines will be distributed, but expect the final exam to test your knowledge of our readings by requiring you to identify passages from our readings and discuss their significance. As well, your knowledge of key discussions from class will be tested through short answer and/or essay questions.

**Course Schedule:**
We will follow this schedule as closely as possible, but occasionally one week’s topic may carry over into the next week. Please have all the reading for the week done by the beginning of the week so that you will be able to participate fully in class discussions.

Readings marked with an * will be part of the courseware package.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Important Dates</th>
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<td>Sept. 9, 11</td>
<td>Orientation and Introduction</td>
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<td>Sept. 16, 18</td>
<td>Unit 1: “War, What is it Good For?” Wiesel, <em>Night</em></td>
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<td>Sept. 23, 25</td>
<td>Harris, “Sister (Y)our Manchild” *</td>
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<td>selection from Spiegelman’s <em>In the Shadow of No Towers</em> (available on UW-ACE)</td>
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<td>Sept. 30, Oct. 2</td>
<td>Danticat, <em>The Dew Breaker</em></td>
<td>Short Essay Due:</td>
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<td>Oct. 2</td>
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<td>Oct. 7, 9</td>
<td>Danticat, <em>The Dew Breaker</em></td>
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<td>Unit 2: <em>Green-Sleeves: Eco-poetry</em> Oliver, “The Heron” *</td>
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<td>Culley, “A Letter from Hammertown to East Vancouver and the East Village” *</td>
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<td>Oct. 14, 16</td>
<td>Brand, “Zone: &lt;le Détroit&gt;” and “Dreamsongs for Eden” *</td>
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<td>Zwicky, “Five Songs for Relinquishing the Earth.” *</td>
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<td>Unit 3: <em>The Loss of Childhood: Crime and Violence in Contemporary Culture</em></td>
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<td>Gowdy, <em>Helpless</em></td>
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<td>Oct. 21, 23</td>
<td>Gowdy, <em>Helpless</em></td>
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<td>Oct. 28, 30</td>
<td>Unit 4: <em>Ghosts of the Past: Dealing with Traumatic Cultural Histories</em></td>
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<td>Highway, <em>Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing</em></td>
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<td>Nov. 4, 6</td>
<td>Brand, <em>At the Full and Change of the Moon</em></td>
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<td>Nov. 11, 13</td>
<td>Brand, <em>At the Full and Change of the Moon</em></td>
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<td>Unit 5: “Technology, what is it good for?”: The Birth of Digital Poetry</td>
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<td>(all digital poems available on UW-ACE) Lewis, “Nine”</td>
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<td>Nov. 18</td>
<td>Green, “Walking Together What Remains (a found poem from the first day of Spring)” Ankerson, “After Persephone”</td>
<td>Final Essay Due: Nov. 18</td>
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<td>Nov. 20, 25</td>
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<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>Course wrap-up</td>
<td>Reading Journal Due: Nov. 27</td>
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Course Policies:

Correspondence:

If you need to contact me by email, be sure to use my vjausten@uwaterloo.ca account. I will not check email in UW-ACE regularly, so to ensure that I receive your message please use the email address that I have provided. In most cases, I will respond to emails within 24 hours, though I can't guarantee that I'll check email on weekends. Remember too that a university is a professional environment, so you should use your Laurier email addresses for all correspondence with me.

Unexcused Absences:

Though you do not receive marks for your attendance in this course, you are expected to attend every lecture meeting. The university is a professional space much like the workplace, so you need to show your professionalism and take all your work, including your attendance, seriously. For the rare times when you can't attend, please inform me by email. In any case, remember that absences will make you less likely to be able to succeed in the course because you won't be privy to where our class discussions take us. The number one lesson in university, as in life, is 'show up.'

Late Assignments:

Your assignments will be collected at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Once class has ended, your work will be considered as already one day late. Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of five percent (5%) on the first day and three percent (3%) each day thereafter, including weekends, up to a maximum of seven (7) days or twenty-three percent (23%) after which time a zero (0) will be registered.

Extensions:

Except in exceptional circumstances, all extensions must be requested by the Friday of the week prior to the assignment's due date. A request made in person is more likely to be granted. In any case, a request made after the Friday, will only be granted if appropriate documentation can be provided explaining why your assignment will be late (this may include a doctor's note; documentation of a family emergency; etc.). Remember that a request for an extension may be denied. No extension will be granted after the original due date has passed.

Assignment Format:

All assignments must follow MLA format as described in The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (6th ed). Some details regarding MLA formatting will be discussed in class, but you should as well consult the MLA Handbook yourself.

Missed Exams:

You must contact me on the day of the exam if you find that you're going to have to miss the exam due to extraordinary circumstances (sickness, family emergency). Your request for a make-up exam isn't guaranteed to be approved if your reasons for missing the exam aren't appropriate, but in any case, in order to receive the right to make-up the exam at a later date, you will have to provide appropriate documentation (doctor's note, etc.). No requests for a make-up exam will be honoured after the original date of the exam has passed. I, of course, reserve the right to alter the original test in order to ensure fairness.
The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations (www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegps.pdf) state that:

A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or at www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html.

If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.

The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations.

Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

Assignment Submission:
Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified due date. I will only accept hard copies of your essays. Electronic submissions will not be accepted.

Assignment Format:
All assignments must follow MLA format as described in The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (6th ed). Some details regarding MLA formatting will be discussed in class, but you should as well consult the MLA Handbook yourself.

Special Needs:
Students with documented or suspected disabilities (i.e., physical, learning, or sensory disabilities or chronic medical conditions) are encouraged to contact the Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD) to determine eligibility for their services. OPD is located in Needles Hall 1132, 519-888-4567 ext. 35082.

Academic Offences:
Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offences that carry grave consequences.

Plagiarism in part can involve appropriating the work of another and claiming it as one’s own. Common incidences of plagiarism include, but are not restricted to, copying or downloading published essays, or parts of published essays; copying or downloading essays, or parts of essays, by other students; and purchasing essays on-line. Plagiarism, too, can result from a misuse of sources: for example, a failure to indicate material from other sources by using quotation marks; a failure to offer proper in-text documentation of sources (author and page references); and a failure to provide a works cited page. Please be sure to review your papers carefully to ensure that you have used your texts fairly and documented them appropriately. Don’t let carelessness lead you to a serious academic offence.
Avoidance of Academic Offences
All students registered in courses at the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. Students who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating), or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, TA, academic advisor, the appropriate St. Jerome’s departmental Chair, or ultimately the Appeals Officer for St. Jerome’s University. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy #71, Student Academic Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve in accord with Policy #70, Student Grievance, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.
If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Further information on “How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors” can be found at www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html.