I. Course Description

In this course we will consider the development of Canadian prose fiction from the early decades of the twentieth century to the present. We will read selected prose texts (several short stories and four novels) in order to identify some thematic and formal issues that characterize Canadian prose writing of this century. These issues include: the relationship between narrative and nation; the constitution of communities through acts of storytelling; the status and effects of narrative "voice"; the differences that gender, race, class, and ethnicity make. Our readings will be informed by some concepts from narrative theory, which we will learn through lectures during the early part of the course.

II. Books

A. Required
Howard O’Hagan. *Tay John* (McClelland and Stewart)
John Marlyn. *Under the ribs of death* (McClelland and Stewart)
Margaret Atwood. *Cat’s Eye* (Seal)
Sky Lee. *Disappearing moon café* (Douglas and McIntyre)
Margaret Atwood and Robert Weaver, eds. *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories* (Oxford UP)

B. Highly Recommended

Note: All royalties earned from the sale of *The little, Brown compact handbook* will go to the Department of English Scholarship Fund.
III. Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar presentation</td>
<td>sign up</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>sign up before June 24</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>July 8</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>Tba</td>
<td>30%</td>
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1. Group Seminar Presentation
This assignment will give you an opportunity to meet each other and to work together as a team. For the purpose of the seminars, we will stay focused on the literary works, although you may draw on critical sources in your presentations (which should be duly credited) if you wish. Your presentation should last for the duration of the class.

Your main task is to engage the class in a critical discussion about the literary work studied. Your presentation must be analytical. That is, while you could provide background information about the writer, you should keep this kind of information to a minimum. Try not to simply stand at the front of the room lecturing. This puts everyone to sleep and shuts down others’ intellectual engagement with the material. We want the active, lively involvement of everyone. Part of your task is to find ways of facilitating that involvement. You may be as creative as you wish in determining how to get things going. Some suggestions: you could use multi media; you could stage an interview or a debate; you could use dramatic techniques and strategies; you could set members of the class particular learning tasks, etc. The variety of presentation strategies is endless. Just let me know well ahead of time if you need any A-V equipment, and I will arrange to have it delivered to the classroom on the day of your presentation.

Important: You are also responsible for providing each member of the class with one piece of paper that represents notes to your seminar. These notes can take any form you like, but they should be substantial enough that students could later use them as study notes.

Evaluation: Each member of the group will receive the same mark; thus, it is up to you to ensure that each member of the group contributes equally. I will evaluate your presentations according to the following criteria: the intellectual challenge of the issues raised; enthusiasm and commitment of the group to the project; background preparation; coherence of the presentation (i.e. you must demonstrate that you have worked together as a group and that you have thought about how you will integrate your material and share the labour—in terms of both preparation and presentation); ability to respond to comments from other members of the class; ability to link a discussion of the primary text to some of the broader issues pursued in the course.
2. Term paper
The purpose of this assignment is for you to engage more fully with the primary texts studied in the course. There are three steps to this assignment:

1) Design an original essay topic, extrapolate a thesis from the topic, and write an essay plan in which you structure the discussion and briefly indicate the kind of textual evidence (from both primary and secondary sources) that you will use to support your argument.

2) Schedule a ten-minute appointment during my office hours (if possible) before June 24, 1999. During this interview, you will orally present to me your topic, thesis, and essay plan. You may hand in your notes for marking, but basically I will evaluate your oral presentation of the essay plan.

3) Write the essay.

The essay should be 2000 words long (8 double-spaced pages, 10-12 point font, no more than 1 ½ inch margins). Give your paper a descriptive title that includes the title of the literary work or works analyzed. A separate title page is not necessary; however, a works cited page, properly formatted according to MLA style, is.

You may draw on appropriate secondary sources in preparing your essay, but you must situate your own interpretation of a text in relation to arguments made by other critics. It is not enough to string together other critics’ words and views; your own ideas and your own voice must remain primary. Use critical sources as starting points, but do not rely on other critics to do the interpretive work for you.

All quoted, paraphrased, and otherwise borrowed material must be properly documented according to the MLA style guide (explained in the Little, Brown Compact Handbook).

Evaluation: 10% of the mark for this assignment will be based on the interview with me. Thus, it is important that you come to the interview with your essay topic, thesis, and essay plan well formulated. The finished paper will be graded according to the following criteria: the interest and persuasiveness of the argument; the integration, relevance and analysis of the evidence presented (both from the primary text/s and from secondary sources); the logic and coherence of the discussion; mechanics (organization, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, etc.).

Note 1: If you are having difficulty designing a suitable essay topic and extrapolating a thesis from it, please consult with me early in the process.

Note 2: If you are uncertain of how to use secondary sources in your papers, and if you are still confused after consulting the Handbook, please ask me for clarification and instruction. Incorrect citation and documentation is a form of plagiarism, a serious academic offense, and could result in academic penalty.

Note on avoidance of academic offenses: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions.
When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p.1:11). 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 me for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

**Late policy:** Your peers are counting on you to show up for your group seminar presentation; do not let them down. If an emergency arises, be sure to contact both me and your co-presenters as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances, we will either reschedule the presentation or rethink the way in which your grade for the presentation will be determined. In either case, you will be required to provide official documentation to explain and justify your absence.

I will not be granting extensions. Late essays will be penalized 3% per day, including weekends. Emergencies (usually medical) will be fairly dealt with, but you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate your incapacity. Computer problems, while enormously frustrating, do not count as emergencies.

**Note:** I will not accept any essays at all after the last day of classes.

### 3. Final examination

The final exam will cover the work of the course as a whole and will be scheduled during the exam period. You will not be able to extensively repeat material that you have already discussed in your seminar presentations and essays. There will be some choice of questions.

### IV. Schedule of Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Introduction I and seminar assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Introduction II: Narrating the nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Sinclair Ross &quot;The Lamp at Noon&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>Joyce Marshall &quot;The Old Woman&quot;</td>
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<td>May 18</td>
<td>Margaret Laurence &quot;The Mask of the Bear&quot;</td>
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<td>May 20</td>
<td>Guy Vanderhaeghe &quot;The Dancing Bear&quot;</td>
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<td>May 25</td>
<td>Seminar: Hugh Garner “One-Two-Three Little Indians” and Rudy Wiebe “Where is the Voice Coming From?”</td>
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<td>May 27</td>
<td>Further discussion of stories above</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Seminar: Howard O’Hagan <em>Tay John</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 3</td>
<td><em>Tay John</em></td>
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8 **Seminar:** John Marlyn *Under the Ribs of Death*

10 *Under the Ribs of Death*

15 **Seminar:** Mavis Gallant “Scarves, Beads, Sandals” and Alice Munro “The Jack Randa Hotel”

17 Class cancelled (Convocation)

22 **Seminar:** Diane Schoemperlen “Red Plaid Shirt” and Bronwen Wallace “For Puzzled in Wisconsin”

24 Further discussion of stories above

**Last day for interviews**

29 **Seminar:** Margaret Atwood *Cat’s Eye*

July 1 University Holiday

6 *Cat’s Eye*

8 Rohinton Mistry “The Ghost of Firozsha Baag”

**Term papers due**

13 **Seminar:** Austin C. Clarke “Griff!” and Dionne Brand “Sans Souci”

15 Further discussion of stories above

20 **Seminar:** Sky Lee *Disappearing Moon Café*

22 *Disappearing Moon Café*

27 Thomas King “One Good Story, That One”

29 Review and Exam preparation