UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

English 315: Modern Canadian Literature

Spring 2002
Room: Physics 313
Time: T, Th 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
Office hours: T, Th 2:30 – 4:00 or by appointment

Dr. L. Warley
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I. Course Description

In this course we will study English-Canadian poetry, short stories, and novels published between 1930 and the early 1970’s. Many of the writers we will study exemplify a recognizable modern Canadian literature and were instrumental in establishing a literary culture that we now take for granted. Through close readings of a selection of texts by (mainly) canonical authors, we will consider issues such as the relationship between literature and nationalism, Canadian adaptations of European and American aesthetic forms, the importance of women’s writing in the development of the national literature, and the place of “ethnic” writers in relation to the Canadian literary mainstream. Our study of the literature will be enhanced by student seminar presentations that will focus on relevant cultural, historical and political materials.

II. Books

A. Required
Russell Brown, Donna Bennett, and Natalie Cooke, eds. An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English, revised and abridged edition (Oxford UP)
Howard O’Hagan. Tay John (New Canadian Library)
John Marlyn. Under the Ribs of Death (New Canadian Library)
Margaret Atwood. The Edible Woman (New Canadian Library)

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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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar presentation</td>
<td>Sign up before May 9th</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Sign up before June 20th</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term essay</td>
<td>Due July 2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>Exam period</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. The purpose of the seminars is to present important cultural, historical and political materials that will provide a broader context through which the literature might be understood and interpreted. Your seminar must be analytical (i.e. not just present “facts”) and should link the seminar material to the particular writers and texts we are studying in the course. The seminar should last 30 minutes. Sign up by May 9\textsuperscript{th} for one of the seminar topics listed below.

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 for the final exam.

Here are some strategies that ensure a good seminar presentation:

- Be well prepared. Hastily cobbled-together presentations are often incoherent (i.e. the parts don’t work very well together). In practical terms, this means that your group should meet and work together on several occasions prior to presentation day. Exchange e-mail addresses and phone numbers early in the course.
- Be focused. Think of your presentation as an orally presented group essay: that is, you should stay on topic and make sure every part of the presentation relates to the topic.
- Too much lecturing is dull. Every teacher quickly learns that simply talking at people limits, rather than fosters, their active learning. Part of your job is to find ways to facilitate the interest and intellectual involvement of class members.
- Be creative. You may invent any number of ways to present your material. Consider using audio-visual materials, and please let me know well ahead of time if you need to borrow equipment so that I can make the necessary arrangements.
- Think about the design of your notes. Give others a way of remembering the substance of your presentation. The notes should be substantial enough that they can serve as study notes, but they do not have to record every detail of your presentation.
- Have fun! Enthusiasm is infectious.

Evaluation: Each member of the group will receive the same mark; thus, it is up to you to ensure that the work of the group is shared equally. I will evaluate your presentations according to the following criteria: the intellectual rigor of the presentation; the commitment and preparation of the group; the 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); your ability to generate and respond to comments and questions from other members of the class.

2. Term essay
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.

Note: This is a research essay; you are expected to conduct library (not just Internet) research in order to situate your analysis within the context of existing scholarship that pertains to your essay topic.

2) Schedule a ten-minute appointment with me during my office hours (if possible) to take place between May 9th and June 20th. During this interview, you will orally present to me your topic, thesis, and essay plan, and I will evaluate your oral presentation, as well as give you immediate feedback as to how you might refine or improve your essay. It is not necessary to hand anything in for this interview: I will take notes as we talk.

3) Write the essay. The essay should be 8-10 double-spaced pages in 10-12 point font, no more than 1 inch margins all around. Give your paper a descriptive title that includes the title or titles of the literary work or works analyzed. DO NOT make a separate title page. DO include a works cited page. Your essay must conform in EVERY way to MLA format.

4) The essay is due at the beginning of class Tuesday July 2nd. Hand in both a print and a diskette version of your essay. Please write in or convert the paper to Word '97 format or submit an RTF version. Also, please put both the print and the disk copies of the paper in an envelope with your name on all pieces.

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 intellectual challenge 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.).
3. Final examination

The final examination will take place during the regularly scheduled examination period. It will be three hours long, will cover the material studied during the entire course, and will require you to respond in essay form. There will be some choice of questions.

IV. Policies

1. Classroom work
   
   What you get out of this course is in direct proportion to what you put into it. I don’t give grades for participation in classroom discussion, but I do take note of those who attend regularly and contribute something to the course. Much of the responsibility for the intellectual work that goes on in this course lies with you.

2. Plagiarism and cheating

   Cheating, of which plagiarism is just one form, will result in AT LEAST automatic failure of the assignment and could lead to other penalties, including failure of the course or consequences even more dire. Plagiarism is theft of intellectual property. It is commonly understood to be the presentation (whether deliberate or not) of another person’s work as your own. Failing to copy quotations correctly or to put them in double quotation marks, getting page references wrong or leaving them out altogether, failing to hand in a list of works cited, and other forms of sloppy documentation are not acceptable as excuses. It is your responsibility to know what these offences consist of and how to avoid them. Please read and keep with you during the preparation of all assignments, both written and oral, the handout “Varieties of Academic Offenses . . .” that was prepared by the Associate Dean Undergraduate Studies. For the University of Waterloo’s policy on plagiarism and other academic offenses, please refer to the attached page and read University Policy #71 in the undergraduate calendar or online at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infoucal/UW/policy_71.html.

NOTE: I reserve the right to submit your essay to a plagiarism web site such as Turnitin.com.

3. Late essays and missed assignments

   You have to be there for your group seminar presentation. The only exception would be for medical or other emergencies. In that case, contact me and the group members immediately to make alternative arrangements. You will have to provide official documentation to substantiate your incapacity and you will be required to do make up work.

   I do not grant extensions except in emergency circumstances. Again, official documentation is required. Computer problems do not count as emergencies. If you decide to hand in your essay late, you’ll have to pay a price: a late penalty of 3% per day, including weekends.

NOTE: I do not accept any essays at all after the last day of classes.
V. Schedule of Classes

May
2 Introduction I

7 Introduction II: Narrating the nation
9 E.J. Pratt “Towards the Last Spike”

14 E.J. Pratt “Towards the Last Spike”
16 F.R. Scott “The Canadian Authors Meet” “Laurentian Shield” “All the Spikes But the Last”

21 A.J.M. Smith “The Lonely Land” “The Plot Against Proteus”
Seminar: The Group of Seven and Canadian poetry
23 Howard O’Hagan Tay John

28 Tay John
Seminar: Tourism, or, selling Canada
30 Earle Birney “Anglosaxon Street” “Bushed” “The Bear on the Delhi Road”

June
4 John Marlyn Under the ribs of Death
Seminar: Immigration and “ethnic” writing in Canada
6 Under the ribs of Death

11 Dorothy Livesay “Green Rain” “Day and Night” “Bartok and the Geranium”
Seminar: The 1930’s and Social Change
13 Class cancelled (I’ll be at Convocation)

18 P.K. Page “The Stenographers” “Cry Ararat!”
Seminar: A poet’s oeuvre and literary anthologies
20 Mavis Gallant “The Ice Wagon Going Down the Street”
*** Last day for essay interviews

25 Margaret Laurence “To Set Our House in Order”
Seminar: Chatelaine magazine and women’s stories
27 Alice Munro “Something I’ve Been Meaning to Tell You”

July
*** Term essay due at beginning of class
4 Gwendolyn MacEwen “Icarus” “The Portage”
Seminar: Little Magazines
VI. Seminar Topics

Note: All of these seminar topics require you to do library research. Depending on the topic, you will study microfilm, literary journals, and audio or visual materials, as well as scholarly books and journal articles. Please use library resources to the fullest extent possible and enlist the help of the librarians, who will be delighted to get you started on your search. If you need equipment to present your seminar, please give me as much lead time as possible to make the necessary bookings through Media Services.

The notes and questions listed under each seminar topic heading are intended to facilitate the brainstorming process, but you do not have to stick to these questions; indeed, it is your responsibility to formulate your own important research questions and topics. In each case you should find ways of making connections between the particular topic being explored and the writers and literary works we are studying throughout the course.

The Group of Seven
How are the aims, philosophies, and creative work of this group of artists related to the literary writing of the same period?

Tourism, or, selling Canada
How was Canada (and “the west” in particular) represented to both Canadians and foreigners who were either immigrants or tourists?

Immigration and “ethnic writing” in Canada
Who was immigrating to Canada in the middle part of the twentieth century and what particular problems, challenges, issues did they face? What role does literature play in making “immigrants” into “Canadians”?

The 1930s and social change
What was going on in Canada in the 1930s? Tell us about important social and political movements that shaped the period (e.g., The Winnipeg General Strike,
the development and influence of labour unions, the formation of the Co-operative Commonwealth Foundation, etc.), as well as Canadian responses to significant historical and political events (e.g. the stock market crash of 1929 and the Depression, the build up to WWII, etc.). You may, of course, be selective, but your aim should be to give us a portrait of Canadian society and the issues that shaped it in this decade.

A poet’s oeuvre and literary anthologies
Find out as much as you can about P.K. Page and her life’s work. What assumptions and ideas seem to shape the selection of texts in the anthology? What conclusions can be drawn from such a case study? How do these issues relate to canon-formation?

Chatelaine magazine and women’s stories
Choose one representative issue of Chatelaine (Canada’s oldest continuing “women’s magazine”) from any year during the 1950s and analyze it in terms of both content and ideology. How do these magazines compare with some of the women’s writing we have been reading?

Little magazines
The McGill Fortnightly Review, Northern Review, Prism, and Canadian Literature are important literary magazines (also known in the field as “little magazines”) founded and edited by young writers and academics during this literary historical period. What (briefly) are their publishing philosophies and aims? What picture of Canadian literature in the 1940s and 50s do they give us? Who was publishing in them? What was being said about their work?

Jewish-Canadian literature
Sketch a mini-history of Jewish-Canadian identity. What can you say about the place of writers of Jewish background to the development of 20th-century English-Canadian literature?

The 1960s and Canadian urban culture
Writers such as Leonard Cohen and Margaret Atwood lived in and (partly) wrote about their experience of big cities, as well as the social and political issues that shaped the 1960’s and early 1970’s when they were beginning their careers as writers. Tell us about those days.
Department of English Contacts and Resources

Contacts:

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Resources:
English Mail Room
HH 229
Open 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday
• Faculty mail boxes and course boxes located here.

THE FACULTY OF ARTS REQUIRES THAT WE NOTIFY YOU OF THE FOLLOWING:

"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 your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean."

Dean of Arts: Robert R. Kerton
Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Affairs
ML 236, ext. 2217
Sheila Ager
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