UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

English 315: Modern Canadian Literature

Spring 2004  
Room: ML 246  
Time: T, Th 1:00 – 2:20  
Office hours: T, Th 2:30 – 4:30  
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I. Course Description

In this course we will study a representative corpus of works from the 1920s to the early 1970s that can loosely be characterized under the rubric “Canadian Modernism.” Modernism is a term that describes a period in art and literary history, an aesthetic, and a cultural politics. We will always be reading literary works with close attention to formal details, but we will also consider relevant historical, philosophical, aesthetic, critical, and social issues that shaped Canadian Modernism. Some of the broader topics that we engage include: the relationship between literature and nationalism; Canadian adaptations of European and American genres and forms; gender politics and the importance of women’s writing; and the place of “ethnic” (especially Jewish) writers in the literary canon. We will also consider the development and institutionalization of Canadian literature in the 20th century as a field of cultural and academic work.

II. Books

A. Required  
Russell Brown, Donna Bennett, eds. A New Anthology of Canadian Literature in English (Oxford UP)  
Hugh MacLennan. Barometer Rising (New Canadian Library)  
Ethel Wilson. Swamp Angel (New Canadian Library)

B. Highly Recommended  
Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur. The Little, Brown Compact Handbook  
Joseph Gabaldi. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers

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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<td>Seminar presentation</td>
<td>Sign up by May 13</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
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<td>Term essay</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 seminar is to present important critical, cultural, and historical materials that will provide a broader context through which the literature might be interpreted. Your seminar must be analytical (i.e. not just present facts) and should connect in meaningful ways with the writers and texts we are studying in the course. The seminar should last 30 minutes. Sign up by May 13th for one of the seminar topics listed below.

Handout: 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. They must also include all works cited in correct MLA format.

Advice: On my web site http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~lwarley/ you will find a downloadable document that gives you practical advice on how to prepare good seminar presentations. Please look in the “teaching” section of the web site.

Equipment and aids: The classroom is supplied with a blackboard, an overhead projector, and a screen. If you require any other audio-visual equipment please let me know well ahead of time so that I can book it through the A-V centre. If you would like to show any part of a video please check with me first to make sure that it clears copyright restrictions.

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 rigour 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 study in depth a limited number of the primary texts studied in the course by writing about those texts in relation to a topic of your choice. You must choose texts that are on the course syllabus or obtain prior permission from me. The best essays will also be researched, so spend some time reading
literary critical sources about your topic, and incorporate well-chosen sources into your essay. You do not have to be exhaustive, but a minimum of three relevant critical articles or books will enhance and contextualize your analysis. All sources (primary and secondary) must be fully acknowledged and cited in correct MLA format.

Note: Make sure that you research articles published in scholarly journals as well as book and Internet sources. The most useful electronic databases that index articles on Canadian literary topics are the Canadian Periodical Index and the MLA International Bibliography. Access them through the “indexes & databases” section of the University of Waterloo library web site.

There are three parts to the term paper assignment:

1) **Topic, thesis and essay plan**: Design an original essay topic, extrapolate a thesis from the topic, and compose 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) **Interview**: Schedule a ten-minute appointment with me during my office hours (if possible) to take place between June 3-24. During the 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) **Writing**: Based on your essay plan and our interview, write an analytical essay of 10 pages—double-spaced, in 10-12 point font, and with no more than 1 inch margins. 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. **The essay is due on July 8th in class. 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.**

Advice: On my web site [http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~lwcarley/](http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~lwcarley/) you will find a downloadable document that gives you practical advice on how to write good essays. Please look in the “teaching” section of the web site.

**Evaluation**: The essay will be marked out of 100% with a marking scheme as follows: 30% for formulation and articulation of topic and thesis; 40% for structure, argumentation, and interpretation of primary and secondary sources; 30% for presentation, writing accuracy and MLA documentation.

3. **Final examination**
The final exam will cover the work of the course as a whole and will take place during the examination period. You will be required to write your answers in essay form.
IV. Course Policies

1. Classroom work
   Attendance is mandatory, and you are expected to arrive in class well prepared, having read and thought carefully about the material to be discussed that day. I will sometimes ask students to read aloud literary works (especially poetry) in class.

2. Plagiarism and other academic offences
   All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section 1 or on the web at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infoucal/UW/policy_71.html). If you need help in learning how to avoid offences 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.

   All suspected cases of plagiarism will be investigated and reported. Proven cases will result in academic penalty, proportional to the extent of the infraction, and could include an official written reprimand from the Associate Dean that will be placed in your file. Please consult the following web site for a comprehensive explanation of plagiarism and how to avoid it http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~sager/plagiarism.html

   NOTE: If I have any suspicion at all that your essay is not wholly your own work I will submit it to Turnitin.com for verification.

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 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.

   All essays must be handed in on the due date. I do not grant extensions except in emergency circumstances (computer problems do not count as emergencies). Again, official documentation will be required. If you decide to hand in your essay after the due date, the late penalty is 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
4  Introduction I
6  Introduction II: Narrating the nation
11  Frederick Philip Grove “Snow”
13  E.J. Pratt “Towards the Last Spike”
    ***** Last day to sign up for seminars*****
18  Pratt
20  F. R. Scott “The Canadian Authors Meet” “Trans Canada” “W.L.M.K.”
    “All the Spikes But the Last”
27  Earl Birney “Vancouver Lights” “Anglosaxon Street”
    Seminar: The Group of Seven

June
1  Dorothy Livesay “Green Rain” “The Difference” “Day and Night”
3  P.K. Page “Stories of Snow” “Photos of a Salt Mine” “Cry Ararat!”
    Seminar: Chatelaine magazine
    ***** Essay interviews begin *****
8  Hugh MacLennan Barometer Rising
10  MacLennan
    Seminar: Representations of history
15  MacLennan
17  Sinclair Ross “The Runaway”
    Seminar: “Little Magazines”
22  A.M. Klein “Heirloom” “The Rocking Chair” “Autobiographical”
24  Irving Layton “Keine Lazarovitch 1870-1959” “The Fertile Muck”
    Seminar: Jewish-Canadian literature
    ***** Last day for essay interviews *****
29  Margaret Avison “Snow” “Butterfly Bones: or Sonnet Against Sonnets”

July
1  Canada Day holiday
6  Gwendolyn MacEwen “Icarus” “The Portage”
8  Ethel Wilson Swamp Angel
    ***** Term papers due *****
13  Wilson
15  Wilson
    Seminar: Representations of places
20 Margaret Atwood “This is a Photograph of Me” “Progressive Insanities of a Pioneer” “Tricks with Mirrors”
22 Mavis Gallant “Varieties of Exile”
Seminar: Women’s writing

27 Leonard Cohen “You Have the Lovers” “Suzanne”
Seminar: Literature and urban culture
29 Exam preparation

VI. Seminar Topics

Note: All of these seminar topics require you to do library research. Depending on the topic, you will study microfilm, periodicals, fine art, and other 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 as required.

The questions listed under each seminar topic heading are merely suggestions. They 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.

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? What do you think of their work? What cultural function do you think it serves?

Chatelaine magazine
Choose one issue of “Canada’s first women’s magazine” from the 1950s and analyze it. What does it include? What is its mandate? How does it represent images, topics, etc.? What did you expect to see in the magazine and how were your expectations either confirmed or challenged?

Representations of history
In several canonical works of Canadian literature (from this period and others) authors represent real historical events or persons. What are the ideological and cultural functions of such representations? How have MacLennan and any other writers on the course syllabus used history in their work? How do history and literature differ as genres of writing?

“Little Magazines”
Magazines such as The McGill Fortnightly Review, Northern Review, Prism International, and Canadian Literature were founded and edited by young writers and academics during this period. What 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**
What can you say about the importance of Jewish writers in the development of 20\(^{th}\)-century English-Canadian literature?

**Representations of places**
To say that Canadian authors are preoccupied with the human relationship to place is a truism that quickly becomes cliché. However, it was during this literary period that some of those characterizations of Canadian literature were formulated: e.g. “garrison mentality” “survival” “patterns of isolation” and so on. Research the critical scholarship: how, why and by whom was this way of thinking about Canadian writing established during this period?

**Women’s writing**
Unlike many other national literatures (e.g. British or American), women authors have always enjoyed a strong presence in Canadian literary history. Briefly trace that history and situate any of the female authors on the course syllabus within it. What are some of the prevailing issues and concerns in the academic scholarship that deals with women’s writing in Canada?

**Literature and urban culture**
Most of the writers on the syllabus lived in and (sometimes) wrote about their experience of cities. How do Modern Canadian writers create a sense of urban space and culture? How does this urbanism fit with prevailing ideas of Canadian literature of the period?