Instructor: Kevin Ziegler
kziegler@uwaterloo.ca
Office: PAS 1059
Office Hours: W 11:00-1:00

Course Description: Welcome to English 318, your introduction to contemporary Canadian literature. This class analyzes work published in the last thirty years and written in a variety of different genres, including novels, short stories, autobiographies, and graphic narratives. The challenge of studying contemporary literature is that the history of its development has not yet solidified. Students may compare contemporary writers with earlier canonical authors, and, indeed, are encouraged to do so; yet, there is an element of experimentation that keeps contemporary writing unpredictable, as each generation defines itself against the generation that preceded it. By the end of term students should start developing their own understanding of contemporary Canadian literature: how do we define it? Do authors replicate earlier formal devices? Do they all share an interest in the same subject matter? Do they all experiment with similar poetics?

Definitions of “the contemporary” depend on one’s understanding of “the modern” and “the original.” Thus, the question of what’s new about contemporary Canadian literature may produce a wide range of possible responses (from “not much” to “everything”)

Course Objectives:
1. Students will discuss and debate literary texts, using advanced close-reading skills
2. Students will learn to apply appropriate disciplinary vocabulary and critical approaches
3. Students will articulate and support positions, through reasoned argument and the effective use of evidence
4. Students will construct formal literary essays. They should edit for content, organization (e.g. effective introductions and conclusions; unified, coherent paragraphs; transitions between and within paragraphs), style (e.g. sentence rhythm; sentence variety; vocabulary; figurative language), and grammar

Course Texts:
(available at UW Bookstore – try to use the correct editions)
DeWitt, Patrick. The Sister Brothers
Findley, Timothy. Not Wanted on the Voyage
Heti, Sheila. The Middle Stories
Kogawa, Joy. Obasan
Seth. Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists
Shields, Carol. Unless
Toews, Miriam. Flying Troutmans
Wah, Fred. Diamond Grill

Optional (but recommended):
Working Class Schedule:
Sept. 10: Intro
Sept. 17: “Coyote Columbus Story”
Sept. 19: Not Wanted on the Voyage
Sept. 24: Not Wanted on the Voyage
Sept. 26: “The Beggar Maid”
Oct. 1: Obasan
Oct. 3: Obasan
Oct. 8: University Holiday
Oct. 10: George Elliott Clarke
Oct. 15: Diamond Grill
Oct. 17: Diamond Grill
Oct. 22: Unless
Oct. 24: Unless
Oct. 29: Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists
Oct. 31: Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists
Nov. 5: Author interviews (clips)
Nov. 7: Flying Troutmans
Nov. 12: Flying Troutmans
Nov. 14: The Middle Stories
Nov. 19: The Middle Stories
Nov. 21: “The Ray Gun”
Nov. 26: The Sister Brothers
Nov. 28: The Sister Brothers
Dec. 3: Final discussion day

Assignments:
Attendance and Participation (10%):
Seminar: (30%):
Term Essay (30%):
Final Exam (30%)

1. Attendance and Participation: Students will be evaluated based on their attendance and their participation in class discussions.
2. Seminar (Question Period/Assignment): Each student will lead a question and answer period concerning one of the assigned texts (10-15 minutes). Prepare a short introduction and lead the class in discussion. Students will be evaluated both in terms of the quality of the questions they prepare and their ability to generate relevant debates concerning Canadian literature. It may be beneficial to include secondary research (including relevant social and political background information) but it is not required.
Following each presentation, students will prepare a short written assignment (2-3 pages) that addresses one or more of the topics we discussed in class. Treat the assignment like a mini-essay and remember to follow proper paragraph structure (MLA format). These assignments are due two
weeks after the presentation. 

Note: I will circulate a sign-up sheet for the seminars. Only two students may present each class.

3. Term Essay: A long comparison essay (6-8 pages) due Nov. 26th. Essay topics will be distributed in class prior to the deadline. Students should consult at least two secondary sources to help formulate their argument.

4. Final Exam: A final exam based on all of the assigned texts from the term, including short-answer and essay questions.

Late Policy:
If you miss the mid-term you must provide medical documentation to substantiate your incapacity to write the test on the scheduled day. The essay is due in class on the due date. Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 2% a day, including weekends, and will not be accepted more than 2 weeks after the due date. No extensions will be given unless there is a clear and verified medical reason for the delay. Please note that I do not grant extensions except in emergency circumstances (being busy with other courses does not count as an emergency).

Student Responsibilities
Students should be prepared to discuss all of the assigned texts. Attendance is mandatory and I encourage classroom discussion. In my experience, English courses are the most successful when students are actively engaged. Try to read short works multiple times in preparation for class.

Electronic Devices:
Electronic devices can be a nuisance in the classroom and disrupt the ability of students to concentrate during lectures and discussion. Please be respectful of your peers. Mobile devices, specifically laptops and tablets, may be used in this course for educational purposes only (i.e., learning directed related to the course). Use of all other mobile devices is not permitted in class. Students who fail to comply with this policy will receive a verbal and written warning first before being asked to leave the classroom for part of the course.

Contacting the Instructor
I encourage students to contact me about the course. If you want to receive thorough feedback for your question, you should come to my office and speak with me in person. I will answer short e-mails, but my ability to respond is limited. I check my messages regularly, but always assume it will take at least 48 hours for me to respond and plan accordingly.

Final Examinations
Students are strongly urged not to make any commitments (i.e., vacation) during the examination period. Students are required to be available for examinations during the examination periods of all terms in which they register.

Essay Formatting
When formatting your essays, conform to MLA style. This includes the following:
- In the top left-hand corner of the first page, list on four separate lines, flush with the left margin: your first and last name and student number, my name, the course name and number, and the date on which you submit the essay. Do not include a separate title page.
- Following the identifying information, provide a title for your essay and centre it.
- Use one-inch margins (except for page numbers), and indent each paragraph.
- Use 12-point Times New Roman font or equivalent.
Academic Integrity
The Faculty of Arts requires that I make you aware of the following: “Students are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. Students who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who need 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 Assistant Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy #71, Student Academic Discipline, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm

The Internet has made plagiarism and other forms of cheating much more tempting; it has also made it easier to detect. I will investigate and report to the Associate Dean all cases of suspected plagiarism. 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, “Avoiding Academic Offences” for a comprehensive explanation of plagiarism and how to avoid it http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve: refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.

Note for Students with Disabilities
The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), 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 OPD at the beginning of each academic term.