Instructor: Kevin McGuirk
Office hours: T Th 11:30-noon, W 2:30-3:00, and by appointment.
Office: HH 263; phone x32419; email kmcguirk@uwaterloo.ca
Preferred method of contact: office hours, after class, etc.

Course description:
This is not a survey of American fiction, but students should glean some sense of a set of distinctive American concerns starting with the early classic, The Scarlet Letter. The course is organized around three pairs of texts. The Scarlet Letter and The Age of Innocence are social and moral fictions. The Professor's House and The Way to Rainy Mountain explore space and origin. Beloved and Housekeeping reflect on home, houses, memory, and outsiderhood. Our approach to the novels will be eclectic in that we will range from close reading of words, sentences, and paragraphs; to reflection on narrative technique and narrative theory (point of view, genre, etc.); to considerations of contextual matters like culture, social history, and politics.

What I want you to get from the course:
An enriched sense of what the novel is as a material and social phenomenon. The ability to respond with increased understanding to the formal and rhetorical dimensions of fiction. Increased ability to identify areas of interest and ambiguity in fiction and to pose clarifying questions. Knowledge of the basic tendencies and themes of American fiction. Enhanced appreciation for relations between literary form and social history. The ability to write more effectively and imaginatively about literature in general.

What I want you to do in the course:
Read every page of the works assigned. Write about and discuss fiction frequently; formally, in tests, essays, and a presentation. Ask questions in class: participate; listen to and engage with your peers. Read out loud. Take notes and make sure you grasp the major concerns of the course, as well as the distinctive work of each novel or writer; write tests demonstrating this grasp. Write an essay, or essays, based on careful reflection, analysis, and revision.

Texts:
Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, Dover
Edith Wharton, The Age of Innocence, Dover
Willa Cather, The Professor's House, Vintage
N. Scott Momaday, The Way to Rainy Mountain, University of New Mexico Press
Toni Morrison, Beloved, Vintage
Marylynnne Robinson, Housekeeping, Harper Perennial
A story or two, TBA
Brief readings in theory – on Learn
Schedule:

ALWAYS BRING YOUR TEXT TO CLASS!

Reading fiction: I recommend that you read with a pen in hand. Underline, circle, box, asterisk interesting passages, motifs, keywords, important moments. Write comments in the margins. Graphic notation encourages active reading, enhances memory, and helps to identify patterns and generate insight.

May 7, 9  introductions, *The Scarlet Letter* chs. 1 to 3 (we will not read “The Custom-House”)
May 14, 16  *The Scarlet Letter*
May 21, 23  *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Age of Innocence*
May 28, 30  *The Age of Innocence*
June 4, 6  **TEST Tuesday, The Professor's House**
June 11, 13  *The Professor's House*
June 18, 20  *The Professor's House*, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*
June 25, 27  *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, **TEST Wednesday**
July 4*  *Beloved*
July 9, 11  *Beloved*
July 16, 18  *Housekeeping*
July 23, 25  *Housekeeping*, short story TBA
July 30  **TEST**

*In the Arts Faculty, Tuesday, July 2 will follow a Monday schedule.

ESSAY  Due Tuesday, August 6

Assignments and Values:

1. **Three tests:** 15% each. Each test will consist of two essay questions. Questions will be posted on Learn ahead of time; you will have the opportunity to prepare answers that you will write out in class.

2. **Essay (1800-2000 words): 30%* (see 3. below).** A discussion of thematic, stylistic, and/or contextual matters. Topics will be assigned. Details to follow. Due Tuesday, August 6. Please submit a hard copy to me in my office or the English department dropbox on the 2nd floor of Hagey Hall and an electronic copy in the dropbox on Learn.

3. **Optional short paper or essay proposal:** 10%. **NOTE:** If you choose not to write a short paper or proposal, your final essay will be weighted at 40%. Topics will be assigned for a short paper early in the term. It will be due on June 28. Proposals will be due on July 26. Details to follow.

4. **In-class work:** 15%. In-class work includes i) attendance and evident preparedness; ii) participation; and iii) a brief presentation.
   
   i) You are expected to attend every class, to keep up with the reading, and always to have your text in front of you in class.
   
   ii) Participation means, in addition to regular attendance and preparedness, comments and questions. This includes responding to your classmates' presentations. The primary mode of the class will be lecture/discussion. I will use Learn only for sending messages to the class concerning test preparation, schedule updates, essay assignments, and so on. The class is small enough for everyone to participate to some extent. I will frequently ask you for your views. I will invite questions about any aspect of the fiction we're studying.
   
   iii) Everyone will give a presentation, with a partner or solo. Sign up on the first day of classes, May 7th. Since there are 40 students registered and 20 classes (aside from test days and the first day), we will have two presentations in every class, starting on May 9th. The presentation should be 5 to 10 minutes (10 minutes maximum!) in length.
This is your task: choose a word (or pair of words) or phrase, an object, or a brief passage – from the novel under discussion – that interests you and explain to the class what is interesting about the word, object, or passage. Draw our attention to the relevant page, read the passage out loud to the class if it’s helpful, and highlight what is arresting, edifying, stylistically striking, etc. End your presentation with a question. Note that expressive appreciation is not enough: you must explain your interest analytically. Although your presentation will not be marked separately (it will be considered holistically as part of your in-class mark), I will give you a written response taking into account Delivery, Argument, and Insight. Please don’t hesitate to see me as you prepare. I will be happy to suggest topics and suggest lines of inquiry. Let me know ahead of time by email, or after class, what you plan to do.

Policies:
Contact: I would rather see you during office hours or after class than hear from you by email. Please feel free to see me to discuss anything related to the course. My office hours are for you.
Late papers: An extension of a day or two can be negotiated in conversation with me ahead of due dates. A request for an extension longer than a few days will have to be supported by appropriate documentation.
Plagiarism: Outside the university, plagiarism is “actionable.” That is, you can be sued for it. Educate yourself about plagiarism and don’t commit plagiarism. It is a serious offence. See UW Policy 71 and the Notes below.
Devices: Laptops: You may of course use a laptop and some of you may need to use a laptop. But I encourage you to rely on graphic notation as much as possible. It is simply too easy to click to email, facebook, or other sites during class. Anyone would be tempted. And when you do things other than notetaking with your laptop, you’re not the only student mentally checking out: everyone around you will be distracted. Finally, the screen itself is a barrier between you and the class and therefore a barrier to participation. If you choose to use a laptop, I may require you to sit immediately in front of me or, if you appear to be surfing the internet, to close the laptop for the remainder of the course. Smart phones: Do not text in class. Put away phones in your bookbag.

Notes from the Faculty of Arts

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the UW Waterlooo Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs 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 Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 - Student Appeals.
Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

**Note for students with disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health support if they are needed.

**On Campus**
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- **MATES:** one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek form Student Life Centre

**Off campus, 24/7**
- **Good2Talk:** Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext. 6880
- **Here 24/7:** Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- **OK2BME:** set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online on the Faculty of Arts website
Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources](https://example.com) (PDF)
Download the [WatSafe app](https://example.com) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

**Academic freedom at the University of Waterloo**

**Policy 33, Ethical Behaviour** states, as one of its general principles (Section 1), “The University supports academic freedom for all members of the University community. Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base teaching and research on an honest and ethical quest for knowledge. In the context of this policy, 'academic freedom' refers to academic activities, including teaching and scholarship, as is articulated in the principles set out in the Memorandum of Agreement between the FAUW and the University of Waterloo, 1998 (Article 6). The academic environment which fosters free debate may from time to time include the presentation or discussion of unpopular opinions or controversial material. Such material shall be dealt with as openly, respectfully and sensitively as possible.” This definition is repeated in Policies 70 and 71, and in the Memorandum of Agreement, Section 6.

**Territorial Acknowledgement**

The University recognizes that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

For more information about the purpose of territorial acknowledgements, please see the [CAUT Guide to Acknowledging Traditional Territory](https://example.com) (PDF).