



Department of English
Engl101A: Intro to Literary Studies
Fall 2021
MW 11:30 am - 12:50 pm, SJ2 1002

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Veronica Austen (she/her)
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Office: Sweeney Hall 2202
Office Hours by appointment:
Standing availability: W 1:00-2:00 pm
Other appointment times available upon request
Office hours will be held remotely via Teams until further notice

Course Description

Calendar Description:

An introduction to the study of literature, covering such areas of enquiry as literary history, genre, criticism, analysis, and theory.

Detailed Description:

This course assumes that the study of literature is vital because it is through literature that we train our imaginations and emotions, become agile critical thinkers, and gain facility with interpreting language. Ideally, our study of literature in this course will be part joyful, part challenging, a little gut-wrenching, hopefully a bit exasperating, and with any luck, inspiring, even transformative.

Our course is designed to let you engage with an eclectic mix of texts so that you can see that the study of literature offers a diverse range of possibilities. Our literary texts, which include poetry, short stories, and one novel, are predominantly contemporary ones (with a few notable exceptions). Ideally, you'll find that our texts allow you to challenge yourself to reconsider our social world and the role literature and language plays in it. You likely will even find yourselves needing to think through "what is literature anyway (just wait until the sound poets at the end of term!)? And what can it do in these very complex times?" As well, our mix of texts will let us ask questions like, "how does language/literature both empower and disempower?"; "how does language/literature both reflect and participate in various systems of power?"; and "how do reading practices differ according to the kind of text we're reading?"

As we address these questions and more, you will develop your abilities to analyse language and literature and to communicate your interpretations effectively. In order to enhance your close reading skills, you will be gaining skills in using literary terms and applying the tools of narrative theory. You will, as well, gain experience in using literary criticism to enhance your own interpretations of texts. You will thereby also develop skills in using sources ethically and documenting them exactly. As you will see, your key goal throughout the term will be to flex your own intellectual and creative muscles so as to gain the confidence and skill to form your own insights about what we're reading, but part of the way you can do this is by considering what others say and subsequently finding a place for your own voice in the conversation.

Our aim in this course will be to develop a community of learning, so be prepared to read and think actively and to communicate your ideas with me and your colleagues.

Managing Our Uncertain Times

We're, of course, going to hope that conditions remain such that we'll make it through the term without a disruption to our in-person classes, but the pandemic sure does render our best laid plans precarious, so we're best to be prepared for whatever might come.

Firstly, it will be the responsibility of us all to stay up-to-date regarding Health and Safety protocols and to ensure that we're complying with requirements: [On-campus Health and Safety Requirements](#)

Secondly, we will best keep each other safe if we listen to our bodies and stay home if we are ill and/or suspect we are ill and/or if we have been advised to self-isolate/quarantine. You are expected to stay home from class if you find yourself in one of these situations; and of course, as long as you are well and free from quarantine, you are expected to attend class.

If you do find yourself unable to attend class due to an extenuating circumstance, narrated lecture slides (from Fall 2020) can be made available to you upon request. These recorded lectures would not be identical to what is covered in-person because our in-person meetings involve discussion and topics/ideas can evolve spontaneously. Nevertheless, the recorded lectures would allow you access to our course content, if you do have to miss the in-person meeting due to illness or possible illness. Furthermore, as you will see, creating notes that capture our in-person meetings will be a responsibility that everyone will share throughout the term (see "Academic Citizen – Group Notetaking" below), so again, if you face an extenuating circumstance, you will have a means of accessing what we discussed in class.

If our evolving public health conditions result in our course no longer being able to meet in-person, our plan will be to move the course online and meet synchronously using our usual classtime. Such online synchronous meetings would not be recorded. Rather, we will maintain our already established practice: those who miss class due to an extenuating circumstance, will have access to the previously recorded narrated lecture slides and there will be notetakers for our synchronous meetings.

Remember that the university is a professional place, so demonstrating your professionalism is essential, and that means many things in our uncertain times, including but not limited to the following:

- Showing your commitment to the class and missing class only when you must due to an extenuating circumstance like illness or suspected illness (Please remember that providing you access to the narrated lecture slides is added work for me, so do not abuse the opportunity that you have, but also remember that it's totally okay for you to ask to access the recorded content if you're facing an extenuating circumstance.)
- Taking responsibility for any necessary absence by requesting access to available recorded content and by consulting class notes so as to ensure you are achieving the learning outcomes of the course
- Ensuring that you understand [university expectations](#) and course policies (see below) regarding the pursuit of accommodations and how to [self-declare a flu-like illness](#) appropriately
- Following health and safety protocols with exactness and consistency and thereby doing your part to prevent the spread of illness

And one final note: Of course, I too may be impacted by illness, suspected illness, or self-isolation/quarantine. Depending upon what's most appropriate to the situation, we would be able to catch-up on any missed lecture material in a later in-person class, meet synchronously on-line, or be able to put to use the recorded narrated slide presentations.

The moral of this long story is, yes, we will still be living amidst uncertainty, but we will have means of ensuring that we can continue forth and achieve the goals of this course even if our circumstances do not remain ideal.

Information about [Covid Testing, Rapid Antigen Screening and Getting Vaccinated](#) on campus.

Course Goals and/or Learning Outcomes

- Gain skills in literary interpretation by studying (and hopefully enjoying) interesting and challenging texts that let us explore the value of literature and literary studies in our contemporary world
- Develop the skills of close critical reading by gaining an introductory understanding of discourse analysis, the use of literary terms, and the tools of narrative theory
- Become knowledgeable about the socio-historical context of assigned texts, including aspects of literary history
- Build skills in written communication, including essay writing skills such as effective argumentation, structure, and grammar

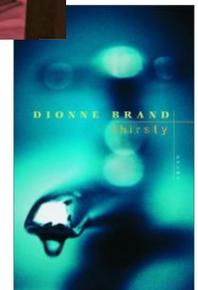
- Gain an introductory understanding of using critical material, including developing an understanding of effective research skills.
- Achieve understanding and respect for matters of academic integrity, including the skills of ethical use of sources
- Participate in a community of learners wherein you can engage in conversation (both written and oral) effectively, demonstrate understanding of how to communicate clearly, attract interest in your ideas, establish your credibility, and demonstrate respect for the ideas of others

Required Texts

The majority of our required readings are to be found via Course Reserves (for anyone unfamiliar, Course Reserves can be accessed directly from the Library homepage, or follow the link to Course Reserves on our LEARN site). Otherwise, there are two required texts that are available for purchase through the UW bookstore. Having an alternate edition is completely acceptable, but be aware that you might find it difficult to follow lectures if your page numbers are different from the edition assigned.



- Brand, Dionne. *What We All Long for*. (ISBN: 9780735279872)
Please note that this version is the one currently in print and includes a second novel *Love Enough*. We are not reading *Love Enough*, but it is no longer possible to order *What We All Long for* without it (at least not enough for the full class), but you are more than welcome to use an alternate edition of *What We All Long for* (e.g., an older version or a version on Kindle/etc.). But do note that the page numbers in the edition that we're using are quite different from other versions.
- Brand, Dionne. *thirsty*. (ISBN: 97807717016448)



Note: **You should be marking up your texts substantially** – noting important themes or word choices, asking questions, etc. If you can do that kind of active reading with e-versions, then that's great, but if you're doubtful that you'd be an active reader while reading on a screen, I'd recommend using hard copies of the two Brand texts and printing your course reserves, conserving on paper as you are able, of course. I'd recommend gathering all your readings at the start of term and making yourself a e-folder or hard copy binder so that you have all your course materials together and ready to go.

Recommended Texts:

Grammar Handbook: Any person who does a lot of writing (or even just a little) should have access to a grammar handbook. I would suggest the following:

The Little, Brown Handbook or The Little, Brown Compact Handbook

A Canadian Writer's Reference

Note: MLA will be our citation format. MLA conventions for citations changed substantially in 2016 with the publishing of the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*, so be wary of older handbooks as sources for learning MLA formatting.

Purdue's Online Writing Lab is an excellent, up-to-date guide for many citation formats, including MLA: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html

Essay Writing Handbook: As well, if you think you need a refresher on your essay writing skills and/or want to know more about writing in a literary studies context, I'd highly recommend the following:

Acheson, Katherine O. *Writing Essays about Literature: A Brief Guide for University and College Students*. (ISBN: 978-1551119922 or the second edition was released this year ISBN: 9781554815517)

Assignment Schedule

Except for the Group Notetaking, all of our due dates are Fridays. Assignments are due by 11:59pm on the due date.

	Assignment	Due Date	Weighting
1	Academic Citizenship a) Group Notetaking	Due on the Monday after your group's assigned week	10%
	b) Active Participation and Professionalism	Throughout the term	5%
2	Critical Article Summary and Response	Oct. 1	15%
3	Faux-Twitter Essay and Author's Statement	Nov. 5 (those with texts scheduled for Week 8 can have an automatic extension until Nov. 12)	15%
4	Final Essay a) Proposal/Outline	Nov. 19	5%
	b) Editorial Board Submission (this requires group work, but is graded individually; to facilitate the group work, we pause on lecture content the week that you're completing this assignment)	Nov. 19	5%
	c) Final Essay	Dec. 3	25%
5	Take Home Exam	Dec. 17	20%

Assignment Descriptions

Please note that detailed assignment guidelines will be posted on LEARN. The following introductory descriptions are not sufficient for completing the assignments.

Assignment 1

Academic Citizenship

Group Notetaking

Due: on the Monday after your group's assigned week

Value: 10%

For most weeks of the course, a group will be assigned to produce class notes. The notes will represent the class meetings from your assigned week. What your group produces will be posted as a resource for the class.

Active Participation and Professionalism

Due: Throughout the term

Value: 5%

This part of your grade evaluates the effectiveness of your contributions to our course and your ability to demonstrate professionalism throughout the term.

Assignment 2

Critical Article Summary and Response (3 pages, double spaced)

Due: Oct. 1

Value: 15%

This assignment requires that you summarize an assigned critical article. The assigned articles (there are four options) represent approximately 13-18 pages of reading (remember just because something is shorter doesn't make it easier!). Your goal will be twofold: 1. Demonstrate your ability to synthesize the most important aspects of your article and communicate this synthesis effectively/ethically; and 2. Offer a thoughtful response to the article's ideas. This assignment will allow you to practice and build skills regarding the effective use of scholarly articles (namely, quoting/paraphrasing, synthesizing, and applying).

Assignment 3

Faux-Twitter Essay (10-20 tweets, 140-280 characters each) and Author's Statement (300-600 words): 15%

Due: Nov. 5 (if your assigned text is scheduled for Nov. 1-3, you automatically qualify for an extension until Nov. 12th, if needed)



You will sign-up to be responsible for creating a faux-Twitter essay about one of our shorter texts. I describe this as a “faux” Twitter essay because we will be using the constraints of Twitter, but you need not post your tweets openly on Twitter. Nevertheless, although your essay need not be viewable on Twitter, you are writing for a public audience; your essay will be viewed and used by your colleagues. Your goal will be to represent your text in a way that is accurate, that makes it memorable, that communicates the depth of your thought about it, and that will attract your audience.

As part of this assignment, you will also submit an author’s statement that describes your intentions.

Assignment 4a

Proposal/Outline Final Essay (2 pages, double spaced)

Due: Nov. 19

Value: 5%

This assignment will require that you indicate your proposed thesis, explain the main ideas that will structure your paper’s argument, and identify possible critical sources. It allows you to try out your ideas and get feedback on them before you work them up into your final essay itself.

Assignment 4b

Editorial Board Submission (Final Essay) (4 pages, in point form)

Due: Nov. 19

Value: 5%

For the week of November 15th, you will take part in an Editorial Board discussion regarding your plans for your essay (to facilitate this work, we will not meet as a class that week). Groups of approximately 4-5 people will be our aim. Submissions of this assignment will be individual, but each individual assignment does require a contribution from the other group members. Through group discussion (virtual or in-person dependant upon the needs of your group), you will accomplish two tasks: 1. An assessment of the qualities of a sample excerpts from published essays (3 paragraphs: one an intro, one a body paragraph, one a conclusion); 2. Discussion of each person’s plans for their essay. Your responses to the 8 questions are expected to be in point form.

Assignment 4c

Final Essay (6 pages + works cited, double-spaced)

Due: Dec. 3

Value: 25%

This assignment will require you to write a well-argued essay responding to assigned topics/questions. This essay will form its argument so that two course texts are

discussed. At least 1 secondary source must be used; this source should represent your ability to conduct effective academic research.

Assignment 5

Take Home Exam

Due: Dec. 17

Value: 20%

The Take Home Exam will be released on the last day of class (Dec. 6th). It will be open-book, but cumulative and require that you show mastery of our readings and lecture material in part by demonstrating your comprehension and in part by demonstrating your ability to apply your knowledge. Expect the take home exam to include short answer responses and an essay question.

Class Schedule

We will follow this schedule as closely as possible, but occasionally one week's topic/readings may carry over into the next week. **Your goal is to complete the week's readings by the start of the week so that you can engage actively in our lectures and discussions.** The readings are in the order in which we'll discuss them. When we come to the novel, ideally try to finish it for the first week in which we're discussing it, but I will try to advise you about how many chapters are vital for the first week (if I forget to do so, please remind me!)



All submissions, except the Group Notetaking which is due the Monday after your assigned week, are due on Fridays by 11:59 pm.

Readings marked with an * will be available via Course Reserves (see link on LEARN).

Also please note that I have done my best to anticipate what readings may require that you prepare yourselves for difficult subject matter. Where relevant, please see the parenthetical note accompanying the reading's listing below.

Week	Date	Readings	Submissions
1	Sept. 8	Orientation	
2	Sept. 13, 15	Introduction: a) A Three Part Approach to Literary Studies b) Effective Reading Strategies Twain, "A River Pilot Looks at the Mississippi"* Bressler, "Defining Criticism, Theory, and Literature" *	

3	Sept. 20, 22	<p>Language and/as Power:</p> <p>Stevens, "The Idea of Order at Key West" * (Note: don't get stuck on this one; it is tricky and we'll be listening to it during lecture)</p> <p>Lemay, "Calm Things" *</p> <p>Philip, "Meditations on the Declension of Beauty" *</p> <p>Coyote, "[Barber story]" (youtube) *</p> <p>Philip, "Discourse on the Logic of Language" *</p>	Weekly Notetaking: Group 1
4	Sept. 27, 29	<p>(Redux) Philip, "Discourse on the Logic of Language" *</p> <p>Dumont, "It Crosses my Mind" *</p> <p>Adichie "Danger of a Single Story" (TedX) *</p> <p>Dumont, "Letter to Sir John A. MacDonald" *</p> <p>Scofield, "This is my Blanket" * (Note: this poem makes mention of rape)</p> <p>Finder-Koziel, "Collect: Living with the Things You Love" * (this is the text to which Scofield responds)</p>	<p>Weekly Notetaking: Group 2</p> <p>Course Survey: Stop-Start-Continue (Optional)</p> <p>Critical Article Summary and Response Due: Oct. 1st</p>
5	Oct. 4, 6	<p>Intro to the Short Story and Narrative Theory</p> <p>Olsen, "I Stand Here Ironing" *</p> <p>Selvadurai, "Pigs Can't Fly" *</p> <p>Robinson, "Queen of the North" * (Note: this story includes representation of childhood sexual abuse)</p>	Weekly Notetaking: Group 3
	Oct. 11-15	Reading Week	
6	Oct. 18, 20	<p>Intro to Narrative Theory Continued and Developing Close Reading Skills</p> <p>Brand, <i>What We All Long for</i> (Note: this novel includes a scene of police violence against a Black man)</p>	Weekly Notetaking: Group 4
7	Oct. 25, 27	Brand, <i>What We All Long for</i>	Weekly Notetaking: Group 5

8	Nov. 1, 3	<p>Introduction to Poetics</p> <p>Purdy, “At the Quinte Hotel” * Purdy, “On Being Human” *</p> <p>Goyette, “I Know Women”; “Again to Be a Daughter”; “The Season of Forgiveness” *</p> <p>Kiyooka, selections from <i>Pear Tree Pomes</i> (197, 199, 208, 221-22) *</p> <p>Ginsberg, “Howl” *</p>	<p>Weekly Notetaking: Group 6</p> <p>Course Survey: Stop-Start-Continue (Optional)</p> <p>Twitter Essay Due: Nov. 5th (Note: if your assigned text is scheduled for this week of term, you will automatically qualify for an extension until Nov. 12th)</p>
9	Nov. 8, 10	<p>Brand, <i>thirsty</i> (Note: this collection includes a scene of police violence against a Black man)</p>	<p>Weekly Notetaking: Group 7</p> <p>Note: you should be preparing for next week’s workshopping of your final projects</p>
10	Nov. 15, 17	<p>Workshopping Final Projects ** no in-person class meetings this week</p> <p>Note: Your requirements for this week involve individual planning AND some discussion with your peers (what we’re deeming your ‘editorial board’)</p>	<p>Editorial Board Submission</p> <p>Proposal/Outline</p>
11	Nov. 22, 24	<p>Confronting the Incomprehensible</p> <p>Selections from The Four Horsemen (video) and other sound poetry (viewed in class)</p> <p>Carroll, “Jabberwocky” *</p>	<p>Weekly Notetaking: Group 8</p>
12	Nov. 29, Dec. 1	<p>Selections from Philip, <i>Zong!</i> * (note: you must download the .pdf vs. reading it in html; read the “Prologue” and then choose approx. 10 pages of this text to read)</p>	<p>Weekly Notetaking: Group 9</p> <p>Final Essay Due: Dec. 3rd</p>
13	Dec. 6	<p>Course Wrap-up and Review</p>	
<p>Take Home Exam Due: Friday, December 17th</p>			

Course Policies:

Correspondence:

If you need to contact me by email, be sure to use my vjausten@uwaterloo.ca address. In most cases, I will respond to emails within 24 hours, though I can’t guarantee that I’ll check email on weekends. Remember too that a university is a professional environment, so **you should use your UW email addresses** for all correspondence. Please note that I do not use the chat feature in MS Teams regularly, so even though our course does have an MS Team (for the purpose of

facilitating our COVID contingency plans, if necessary), I cannot guarantee that I'll catch your message through that platform. Email is best.

A Note on Ethics in Writing:

Although you may, of course, discuss your work with others, your assignments must reflect your own abilities. Remember that "study help" sites are not your friends. **Your job in our course is the creation of knowledge, not the regurgitation of what others have already thought and communicated.** So, do your own thinking!

Furthermore, while peer-review can (and often should) be part of any writing process, soliciting someone "to correct" or "edit" your writing is NOT allowed. There is a fine-line between peer-review and academic misconduct (peer reviewers point out potential problem spots and make suggestions that the writer can then take or discard; peer-reviewers should not do the "correcting" for the writer). If you have any questions about ethics in the preparation of assignments, please ask!

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of **three percent (3%) per day**, including weekends (e.g. an assignment due on Oct. 1st that is submitted on Oct. 6th is 5 days late; hence, that assignment will be penalized by 15%).

Extensions:

All extensions must be requested **by the Monday** of the week of the assignment's due date (e.g., if an assignment is due on Friday, Oct. 1st, then a request for an extension would need to be made by Monday, Sept. 27th). A request made after the Monday, will be granted only if accommodations are secured through proper processes (e.g., self-declaration of illness, VIF, other relevant documentation). Remember that a request for an extension may be denied. Without documentation, no extension will be granted after the original due date has passed.

Assignment Format and Submission:

All assignments are to be submitted via LEARN using the appropriate dropbox.

All essays must follow MLA format as described in *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (8th ed.). Some details regarding MLA formatting will be discussed in class, but you should as well consult the MLA Handbook yourself (Owl@Purdue is a great source for information re: MLA formatting).

Specified page lengths for assignments/essays are approximate and based on proper MLA formatting (1 inch margins, Times New Roman (or equivalent) 12 point font). Exceeding the page limit by up to approximately one page is acceptable. Not meeting the specified page length is not acceptable and most often can significantly affect the quality of your assignment.

Other Important Information

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.

[Academic Integrity Office \(UW\)](#): A resource for students and instructors.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. 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 Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the University of Waterloo Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline.

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. For students who decide to file a grievance, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 70 \(Student Petitions and Grievances\)](#). For more information, students should contact the Associate Dean of St. Jerome's University.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, read [University of Waterloo Policy 72 \(Student Appeals\)](#).

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

Due to COVID-19 and campus closures, services are available only online or by phone.

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services

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 \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or the University of Waterloo/St. Jerome's University. Intellectual property includes items such as:



- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA and/or the University of Waterloo/St. Jerome's University for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor, TA or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

Image Sources:

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