

Carleton University
Department of English
Fall/Winter 2013-2014

ENGL 1000A Literature, Genre, Context

[Precludes additional credit for FYSM 1004]

Lecture: Wednesdays 3:35-5:25 p.m. / Canal Building 3101

Discussion Group A1: Thursdays 10:35-11:25 a.m. / Southam Hall 413

Discussion Group A2: Thursdays 11:35 a.m.-12:25 p.m. / Southam Hall 406

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Intertextuality: Literature as Dialogue

The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the
innumerable centres of culture.

—Roland Barthes, “Death of the Author”

Every utterance must be regarded as primarily a *response*
to preceding utterances of the given sphere... Each
utterance refutes affirms, supplements, and relies upon
the others, presupposes them to be known, and
somehow takes them into account.

—Mikhail Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*

[Intertextuality is] the condition of interconnectedness
among texts, or the concept that any text is an amalgam
of others, either because it exhibits signs of influence or
because its language inevitably contains common points
of reference with other texts through such things as
allusion, quotation, genre, style, and even revisions.

—*The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*



How do literary texts mean? There are many ways of approaching this question, and we will examine many of them in this course. We will be concerned with situating the works we study in their particular cultural and historical contexts; we will think about who wrote them and why;

and we will study the way that form subtly but decisively shapes the semantic content of any utterance—be that utterance a sentence, a novel, a comic book, or a poem. Our overarching concern, however, will be to explore how texts produce meaning by addressing other texts—both directly (through allusion, quotation, and revision) and indirectly (through more general points of connection such as genre, mode, and style). We will, in other words, be concerned with how literary texts are inevitably “intertextual”—that is, engaged in debate and dialogue with other texts—and how an understanding of the ways in which texts speak to each other across times and places, across cultures and experiences, is fundamental to understanding what a given text might have meant to its original audience and why it might be meaningful to us today.

In the first term, we will establish a basic conceptual vocabulary for thinking about verbal and graphic narrative as we examine the complex interactions between plot, character, setting, narration, symbolism, tone, style, theme, genre, and mode in a variety of works; in the second term we will build on this conceptual vocabulary by expanding our focus to drama and poetry. Because we will be studying literature intertextually, our approach throughout the year will necessarily be comparative. In the first term, for instance, we will look at how nature is represented across a range of modes, periods, and aesthetic traditions (medieval romance, nineteenth-century realism, the pastoral, the sublime, the Gothic, science fiction) and how works concerned with the natural world reference and comment on each other. We will also examine the rich network of allusions in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and then compare that novel to a modern work of horror that rewrites *Frankenstein’s* treatment of nature and monstrosity in a new medium: the superhero comic book. In the second term, our study of intertextuality will focus on how Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* has been adapted for film and also how it has been appropriated, parodied, and rewritten by a wide range of writers to very different ends. We will be particularly concerned with postcolonial appropriations of the play and will examine the way that *Frankenstein* and *The Tempest* are both rewritten by Jamaican-American novelist Clare Harris in her challenging political novel *No Telephone to Heaven*. We will conclude the year with an intensive study of contemporary Irish poet Seamus Heaney’s extraordinarily popular work and its poetic influences: William Wordsworth and W. B. Yeats.

Each week, students will attend a two-hour formal lecture by the professor and a one-hour discussion group led by a teaching assistant, wherein they will be able to develop their own responses to the texts and explore ideas raised in the lectures more fully.

Note: ENGL 1000A is a writing attentive course. Students will write several essays over the course of the year in which they will be expected to sustain an argument that is anticipated in a thesis statement, to show they can refer to and cite texts appropriately, and to pursue some secondary research and indicate citation skills. A number of classes will be devoted to developing and improving writing and research essay skills.

LIST OF REQUIRED TEXTS (Available at the Campus Bookstore.)

Marjorie Borroff, Trans., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Norton Critical Edition)

Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd* (Norton Critical Edition)
 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Norton Critical Edition)
 Alan Moore et. al., *Saga of the Swamp Thing, Book. 2* (Vertigo/DC)
 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Norton Critical Edition)
 Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven* (Plume)
 Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground, 1966-1996* (MacMillan)
 Gerald Graff and Cathy Beirkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, Second Edition (Norton)
 Richard Bullock and Francine Weinberg, *The Little Seagull Handbook* (Norton)

Method of Evaluation

Assignment	Description	Length	Value	Due Date
Assignment #1	Original analysis of some aspect of an assigned piece of fiction.	1000 words	10%	TBA
Assignment #2	Comparative essay on an assigned topic.	1500 words	15%	TBA
December Exam	Passage Commentaries	3 hrs.	20%	TBA
Assignment #3	Working with secondary sources.	1000 words	10%	TBA
Assignment #4	Comparative essay on an assigned topic employing secondary sources.	1500 words	15%	TBA
April Exam	Comparative Essay and Poetry Explication	3 hrs.	20%	TBA
Participation	Discussion Group Grade	n/a	10%	n/a

***Exams and airplane ticket bookings:** The Fall exam period is December 11-22, 2013 (including Saturdays) and the Winter exam period is April 11-26, 2014 (including Saturdays). Since the Registrar's Office does not set exam dates until well into each term, you must plan to be available throughout the entire examination period. Do not purchase plane tickets with departure dates prior to December 23, 2012 or April 27, 2013 until you know your exam schedule. Exams will not be rescheduled for students who take on other commitments during the exam period.

Course Procedures, Grades, and Grading

Basic Preparation: As a matter of course you are expected to: (1) attend all lectures and tutorials, (2) complete the scheduled readings beforehand, (3) arrive prepared to discuss what you have read, (4) bring the relevant text(s) to class. It is strongly recommended that you take notes on the lectures and keep a record of the passages we discuss in class. Writing in the margins of your books and marking off key passages as you read is also a good idea. Passages discussed in class are likely to appear on the exam, but any part of an assigned text is examinable.

Classroom Conduct: Cell phones are to be turned off during class, and laptops are only to be used for note-taking—not for playing games, texting your friends, or working on your tumblr. Please be courteous and respectful in your conduct to each other both inside and outside of the classroom.

Email: I am happy to answer short questions by email, but if you have a larger question or would like to receive more substantial feedback please drop by during office hours or make an appointment to come talk to me.

WebCT: This course uses Carleton’s WebCT course management software. Any course updates—including changes to the schedule—will be announced on WebCT, so students are expected to check in regularly. Any information posted by the professor in WebCT is considered official. In addition to finding announcements, students can use WebCT to check their essay and exam grades, download assignments, explore literature links, and email the professor.

Handing In Assignments: Assignments are due in class on the dates indicated. However, they can be handed in without penalty until 8:30 a.m. the day *after* the due date, via the English Department’s drop box, located on the 18th floor of Dunton Tower. Please do not slip the assignment under my office door. Emailed or faxed assignments are not acceptable and will not be marked. Keep a back-up copy of every assignment you hand in as an insurance policy in the unlikely event that I misplace your essay. If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the professor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

Confirming Receipt of Assignment on cuLearn: Upon receipt of your assignment, I will enter a note (“R”) in the cuLearn gradebook for this class, confirming that I have it. It is your responsibility to check the gradebook the following afternoon to make sure your assignment has been received. In the unlikely event that it has gone astray, email me the completed assignment immediately and bring a hard copy to the next class.

Late Penalty: Except in rare cases for which corroborating documentation can be provided (such as a medical emergency or the death of an immediate family member), assignments handed in after the due date will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per day. For example, a B+ essay due on Monday but handed in on Tuesday afternoon would drop to a B. If it wasn’t handed in until Wednesday it would receive a B-, etc. Saturday and Sunday count as 1 day each, so if you find yourself in the position of finishing up your late essay on Saturday afternoon and don’t want to lose 1/3 of a grade for Sunday too, email me the completed assignment immediately and submit an identical hard copy to the drop box on Monday.

Extensions: Requests for extension may be granted in some instances, but only for compelling reasons. Any such request must be made in writing or in person to the professor (not one of the TAs) no later than 48 hours prior to the due date of the assignment. Requests for “retroactive” extensions (i.e. requests made on or after the due date of the essay) will not be considered.

Grading Criteria: Grades for term work will be based on insightfulness, originality, focus, organization of ideas, clarity of expression, scholarly rigor, correct use of MLA style, spelling, and grammar. (See “Understanding Your Essay Grade” on the last page of the syllabus.)

Plagiarism: Plagiarism means passing off someone else’s words or ideas as your own or submitting the same work in two different academic contexts (self-plagiarism). The consequences of plagiarism are severe and are issued by the Dean and the University Senate. In order to avoid plagiarism, you must correctly and fairly attribute the sources of the ideas you pick up from books, the internet, and other people. For additional information, consult the section on Instructional Offenses in the *Undergraduate Calendar*.

Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy: Write your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit Equity Services:

http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm

Religious obligations: Write your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website:

http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that their professors receive a *Letter of Accommodation*, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by the last official day to withdraw from classes in each term. For more details visit the PMC website:

http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/acad_accom.html

Understanding Your Essay Grade

GPA	%	Grade	
12	90-100	A+	Excellent. The essay presents a clear, engaging thesis and follows through with a well-developed and well-supported argument. It shows good understanding of the text(s) and is perceptive and even original in its treatment, presenting more than a restatement of the lecture/tutorial discussion. The structure is logical and easy to follow, using effective transitions. Paragraphs are internally coherent; examples are well-integrated, relevant, and thoughtfully analyzed. The essay is grammatically correct and free of mechanical errors; sentences are balanced and varied in interesting and appropriate ways; the language is lucid, precise, and lively. The essay is formatted properly and all sources are accurately cited.
11	85-89	A	
10	80-84	A-	
9	77-79	B+	Good. The essay presents a clear thesis and follows through with a generally well-developed argument, though some parts of the argument need further clarification or support. It shows good understanding of the text(s) but is not especially insightful or original. The structure is logical but not always perfectly controlled (for instance, some transitions are weak or missing). Paragraphs are mostly coherent; most examples are well-chosen but discussion of them is not always sufficiently detailed. The essay is grammatically correct and mostly free of mechanical errors, but the prose is not particularly elegant or engaging. The essay is formatted properly and all sources are accurately cited.
8	73-76	B	
7	70-72	B-	
6	67-69	C+	Adequate. The essay presents a thesis, but not a clear or suitable one; it does not follow through with a consistent, well-supported argument. It shows basic understanding of the text(s) but misses, distorts, or misunderstands some aspects. The structure is loose in places, lacking transitions or wandering off topic. Paragraphs sometimes lack unity, and examples are not always relevant or simply inserted without adequate discussion. The essay has a number of grammatical and/or mechanical problems, and the writing style is uncertain and obscure in places. The essay is not formatted properly and/or sources are not correctly cited.
5	63-66	C	
4	60-62	C-	
3	57-59	D+	Poor. The essay does not present or argue consistently for a suitable thesis. It shows some substantial misunderstandings of the text(s); it paraphrases or summarizes instead of analyzing; its examples are simply inserted without proper connection to an argument and without discussion. The essay lacks structure and moves from idea to idea without any apparent logic. Paragraphs are not unified. The essay has many grammatical and mechanical errors and the style is generally faulty; phrases or sentences are frequently unintelligible. The essay is not formatted properly and/or sources are not correctly cited. (Essays with all of these problems will fail.)
2	53-56	D	
1	50-52	D-	
0	0-49	F	Failure. The essay is completely off topic or has no thesis and no argument; it simply paraphrases the text(s), or misunderstands them; it uses no appropriate evidence or fails to discuss its examples; it is incoherent, unintelligible, or has no discernible structure. It is stylistically and mechanically a disaster. It is not formatted correctly and/or sources are not properly cited. It does not meet the minimum requirements for the assignment.