

**Carleton University  
Winter 2016  
Department of English**

**ENGL 1200: Literature, Science and Technology**

*Precludes additional credit for ENGL 100, 1009, 1100, 1300, 1400, and FYSM 1004*

**Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:05 -- 7:25**

**Location: ME 3269 (Confirm on Carleton Central)**

**Instructor: Dr. H. Reid**

**Office phone: 520-2600 ext.2318**

**e-mail: [hugh.reid@carleton.ca](mailto:hugh.reid@carleton.ca)**

**Office: 1915 Dunton Tower**

**Office hours: Thursdays, 4:15-5:15 p.m.**

**\*Preliminary Outline- subject to change**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The Greeks and Romans often presented scientific and technological advances, and indeed, scientific knowledge, in the form of poetry. Today, most people feel that the two worlds, the worlds of literature and science and technology are so different as to be mutually exclusive. This course will examine the often strained relationship which literature has with science and technology. And it will do so by posing a number of questions in three different areas and then make some projections as to the future of this relationship:

**The Book**

How has print technology and print culture evolved over time and what effect does this have on literature and the arts? On the rise of a mass audience? Some of these effects may be surprising, e.g. that literature has an influence on the development of scientific knowledge. Gillian Beer, in *Darwin's Plots*, points out that Darwin's *Origin of Species* was greatly influenced by Darwin's reading of novels, particularly those of Dickens.

**Science and Technology's Influence on Literature**

What is the influence of technology and science on literature? Clearly technological developments influence literature. But can we be sure of what that influence is. Do mass market paperbacks increase reading? What does the increasingly cheaper price of paper have on the sales of poetry? How does the development of railways coincide with an increase in novel reading? Can nationalism be related to the conformity in spelling and grammar which came with the growth of the book trade?

## The Writers

How do artists see this relationship? Pope thought science was wonderful and Newton a demi-god, while Tolkien (“long ago in the quiet of the world, when there was less noise and more green” describing the Shire in Middle-earth in *The Hobbit* and Blake ‘dark Satanic mills’) clearly thought that science and technology would be the ruin of mankind. But Pope’s friend, Swift, satirized scientists and the newly formed Royal Academy, in Book Three of *Gulliver’s Travels*. We can see the changing effects of technology in Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*, yet *Alice in Wonderland* is full of novel inventions.

## The Future

What of the new technologies? How will they change what we regard as literature? Will literature still provide (as Tolkien argues that myths do) a genuine means of understanding the world when society increasingly believes that only science can provide an objective and authentic version of truth. Or, does all the new technology, and all it can do, mean the end of the humanities and the arts and literature?

## Texts

*Technology: A Reader for Writers*. ed. Johannah Rodgers, Oxford Univ. Press.  
*The Oxford Book of Science Fiction Stories*. ed. Tom Shippey. Oxford Univ. Press  
*Hard Times*. Charles Dickens. Norton Critical Edition, eds. Fred Kaplan, Sylvere Monod  
*Frankenstein*. Mary Shelley. Norton Critical Edition, ed. J. Paul Hunter  
*Alice in Wonderland*. Lewis Carroll. Norton Critical Edition, ed. Donald J. Gray  
*The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkien. Harper Collins and the Lang Lecture ‘On Fairy Tales’, available online.

## Evaluation

There will be 1 three hour examination in April\* worth 50%. A brief written piece worth 10% will be submitted during the first 6 weeks of the term. In addition there will be one term essay worth 40%. **Except under unusual circumstances, students must complete all 3 pieces of evaluation to receive credit for the course.**

**\*The final exam and airplane ticket bookings:** The final exam period is in April, 2016. Since the Registrar’s Office does not set exam dates until well into the Winter term, you must plan to be available throughout the entire examination period. Do not purchase plane tickets with departure dates prior to the end of April, 2016. 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 (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 detailed 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.

**Handing In Assignments:** Assignments are due in class on the dates indicated. However, they can be handed in without penalty until 8:00 a.m. the morning *after* the due date, via the English Department's drop box, located on the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 your essay is misplaced.

**Confirming Receipt of Assignment:** Upon receipt of your assignment, confirmation will be recorded in cuLearn for this class. It is your responsibility to check 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: Deadlines must be met. Late essays are not normally accepted (for many reasons, not the least of which is that it is inherently unfair to those who do work hard to meet deadlines). If you have a valid reason for missing a deadline, and if I know in advance, your essay may be accepted.**

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 which are accepted and 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.

### **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 attribute the sources of the ideas you pick up from books, the internet, and other people. See the statement on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar. In addition I should like to quote a letter from C.S. Lewis to Dr. Alastair Fowler (dated 10 December 1959). Lewis writes: "I only once detected a pupil offering me some one else (Elton) as his own work. I told him I was not a detective nor even a schoolmaster, nor a nurse, and that I absolutely refused to take any precaution against such a puerile trick; that I'd as

soon think it my business to see that he washed behind his ears or wiped his bottom...He went down [left the university] of his own accord the next week and I never saw him again. I think you ought to make a general announcement of that sort. You must not waste your time constantly reading me and Dowden and Churton Collins as a sort of police measure. It is bad for them to think this is 'up to you'. Flay them alive if you happen to detect them; but don't let them feel that you are a safeguard against the effects of their own idleness. What staggers me is how any man can prefer the galley-slave labour of transcription to the freeman's work of attempting an essay on his own...."

### **For Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary *letters of accommodation*. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me at least two weeks prior to the first in-class test or cutv midterm exam. This is necessary in order to ensure sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

### **For Religious Observance:**

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious observance should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

### **For Pregnancy:**

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Note: "Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and examinations) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are not intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s)."

**Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.**

Jan. 7	Introduction
Jan. 12	Carr, Is Google Making us Stupid, p. 123
Jan. 14	Litt, The Reader and Technology, p. 145
Jan. 19	Le Guin, The Death of the Book, p.156
Jan. 21	Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i>
Jan. 26	Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i>
Jan. 28	Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> . <b>Short writing assignment due</b>
Feb. 2	Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i>
Feb. 4	Sawyer, The Purpose of Science Fiction, p. 39
Feb. 9	Aldiss, Who Can Replace a Man, p. 278
Feb. 11	Wells, The Land Ironclads, p.1 Martin, The Way of Cross and Dragon, p.454
Feb. 15-19	<b>Winter Break</b>
Feb. 23	Dickens, <i>Hard Times</i>
Feb. 25	Dickens, <i>Hard Times</i>
Mar. 1	Dickens, <i>Hard Times</i>
Mar. 3	Tolkien, The Lang Lecture on Faerie
Mar. 8	Tolkien, <i>The Hobbit</i>
Mar. 10	Tolkien, <i>The Hobbit</i>
Mar. 15	Tolkien, <i>The Hobbit</i>
Mar. 17	Carroll, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>
Mar. 22	Carroll, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>
Mar. 24	Carroll, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>

- Mar. 29            Delbanco, MOOCs of Hazard, p. 174 **Essay Due**
- Mar. 31            SJSU, An Open Letter to Professor Michael Sandel from the Philosophy Department at the San Jose State University, p. 185
- Apr. 5             Conclusion and examination preparation

## **English 1200 Writing Assignments and Essays Topics**

### **Initial short writing assignments**

The short writing assignment which is due early in the term is to be at least one page in length but **no more than 2**. Do you think that Science/technology is incompatible with literature or imaginative creativity?

**Due date: 28 January.**

### **Essays**

**Length:** The term essay should be approx. **1500** words in length (usually 6pp double spaced, 'normal' margins, size 12 font). The word count excludes quotations.

**Due date: 29 March**

### **Instructions**

Do not use any kind of essay cover (folder, duo-tang etc.). All that is required is a title page with your name, title and topic number, course title, and my name. Number all pages in the top right hand corner. Footnotes (or endnotes) are not required for references to primary sources (these should be placed in the text). References to poetry should be by line number (not page). Generally, underline the titles of works which were published separately, e.g. novels, plays. Put those works which were published as part of a larger work, e.g. poems, short stories, in quotation marks.

Students must select a topic from the list provided and should have chosen their thesis<sup>1</sup> well before the essays are due. **Be sure to indicate quite clearly on the title page which topic (by number) you are dealing with. Nor** may they use a text which is not on the course.

I should like to point out to students that I am not a proof reader and will not continue to read an essay which has careless errors in grammar and spelling. Even a few such errors lowers the grade of an essay considerably.

Students should not FAX essays to the department and photocopied essays are **not** acceptable.

I am enclosing a group of 'essay tips' prepared (with only slight modifications) by my former colleague, Prof. M.B. Thompson, which I think you will find very valuable in preparing your essay. And a further reminder against plagiarism. Remember that Sheridan was being

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Students are reminded that a thesis is a proposition, not a question or a topic. It is a position statement. Remember that a good thesis statement is not self-evidently true.

satirical when he self-effacingly condoned plagiarism in his play *The Critic*: “Steal! And egad, serve your best thoughts as gypsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make ‘em pass for their own.”

## Essay Topics

1. Do you think that *Hard Times* may be considered an allegory. Why might you think so?
2. How does Dickens’ portrayal of Bounderby demonstrate his belief that the myth of the self-made is harmful to society?
3. *Hard Times* is a novel about poverty, yet it spends most of its time with the middle class. How does Dickens succeed in presenting an effective case for the need to remedy the situation of the large number of poor in England.
4. Discuss how *Frankenstein* illustrates the conflict between the value of human life and the value of scientific discovery.
5. Discuss the idea that the real ‘monster’ in the novel *Frankenstein* is Viktor Frankenstein himself.
6. Discuss the role of women in *Frankenstein*.
7. “How real, how startingly alive is a factory chimney compared with an elm tree,” Tolkien wrote scornfully. “Poor obsolete thing, insubstantial dream of an escapist!” The tragedy as Tolkien saw it was the attempt to use technology to actualize our desires and increase our power over the world around us---all of which leaves us unsatisfied. How is this view of industry reflected in *The Hobbit*?
8. Saruman the Wizard “has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment,” Tolkien wrote. Discuss whether you would consider that *The Hobbit* could be considered a ‘green’ book today or a book mostly concerned with the environment.
9. Considering that Alice often exhibits mature characteristics and that the adult characters often exhibit childish behaviour, in what ways can *Alice in Wonderland* be considered subversive or a satirical critique of the Victorian’s belief in science and technology.
10. Discuss the role of class and gender in *Alice in Wonderland*.

## Essay Tips

Some of these are “pet peeves”; some of them are perennial bloopers. If they appear in your essay the mark will be heavily jeopardised. The OED (Oxford English Dictionary) is the arbiter of spelling, though literate Americanisms are all right. It is very much to your advantage to spare me trouble, and even to entertain me. Wide margins are nice. A clean, well-spaced typescript brings a smile to my face. To make me struggle to grasp what you are saying is (i) discourteous and (ii) suicidal.

Your job is to present me (and yourself) with a reasoned, coherent, response to what you have been reading. It isn't likely to be original. What is original is its effect on you, and your mark depends on how you convey to me the excitement and insight you have got from you reading. Construct your argument coherently. Let your writing be lively and precise. Don't be afraid to entertain me. In all likelihood there will be very many students in the class this year. The rat that has something special about its whiskers often wins the rat-race. The trick is to make me confident, after a page or two, that what you say is worth paying attention to, that you have blended personal response and scholarly discretion so that I can settle back and murmur, “Yes, this student has earned the right to say these things.” Good writing involves

### Precision and Concision

- (i) Always quote verse in verse form.
- (ii) Run quotations up to 3 or 4 lines straight into you own prose so that they are syntactically and grammatically part of it. In this case separate lines of by verse by a ‘/’. “In Xanadu did Kubla Khan / A stately pleasure-dome decree.” Indent and single space longer quotations.
- (iii) The word when used as a noun is “quotation”, not “quote”.
- (iv) Put page and/or line reference in parenthesis after a quotation when you make fairly frequent citations from the same piece. Don't load up the footnotes with a full description of a source every time you use it.
- (v) The abbreviation for page is ‘p.’, not ‘pg.’. For pages it is ‘pp.’.
- (vi) Titles of short works (generally works published within or as part of a larger work) take quotation marks, of long works (works published as separate entities) underlining. Thus “Tintern Abbey”, The Prelude. Underlining is the signal to the printer to italicise.
- (vii) Do not confuse ‘few’ and ‘less’. The former deals with numbers, the latter with quantity.
- (viii) In the possessive, monosyllabic names ending in ‘s’ take ‘ ’s’: Keats’s. Polysyllabics take ‘ ’ ’s’: Hopkins’.
- (ix) ‘Humorous’ does not mean ‘funny’. It has a very specific meaning when applied to literature. And nearly everyone spells it ‘humourous’.



- (x) Likewise, ‘mischievous’ is ‘mischievous’, not ‘mischievious’.
- (xi) Avoid this illiterate construction: “At the beginning of Wordsworth’s life he was born.” Say “Wordsworth was born in...”, if you want to say anything quite so banal.
- (xii) Do not write that “Kubla Khan” is the greatest poem ever written. You can’t say that unless you’ve read all the others.
- (xiii) Don’t blather. Don’t tell me that a line “conjures up vivid images”. Tell me, critically, what they are, how they work.
- (xiv) Don’t make flabby generalisations that could apply to almost anything. “This poem is written in blank verse and is really significant and meaningful”. I only want to know: significant of what?
- (xv) Use the active voice almost always. The passive can all too often be seen to make you prose stodgy and bureaucratic.
- (xvi) You are ‘I’, not ‘this reader’ or any other pompous pseudo-modest circumlocution.
- (xvii) ‘It’s’ means ‘it is’. “Who’s” means ‘who is’ not ‘whose’. An apostrophe means something has been left out.
- (xviii) ‘a lot’ is two words.
- (xix) ‘each other’ involves two, ‘one another’ is more than two. “They love one another” is quite kinky.
- (xx) Use semi-colons and dashes sparingly. All you need is commas, periods, the very occasional colon, and the every, very, occasional brackets.
- (xxi) Don’t leave out ‘that’ in noun clauses.

**IF YOU CHEAT YOU WILL FAIL THE COURSE. THIS INCLUDES USING ONE OF YOUR OWN ESSAYS FROM A PREVIOUS CLASS, USING SOMEONE ELSE’S ESSAY, COPYING FROM AN UNASCRIBED SOURCE, HAVING AN ESSAY WRITTEN FOR YOU BY A GRADUATE STUDENT, ETC., ETC.**

