

Carleton University
Fall 2015
Department of English

English 1300A: Literature, Psychology and the Mind

Precludes additional credit ENGL 1000, ENGL 1009, ENGL 1100, ENGL, 1200, ENGL 1400 and FYSM 1004

Tuesdays & Thursdays/ 11:35 -12:55
Location: Please confirm on Carleton Central

Professor Collett Tracey
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1 – 2:30 pm or by appointment
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Overview:

According to Louis Dudek, “The source of every work of literature is in a human individual, and that individual in a particular state of mind and motivation...Creativity is a crisis phenomenon. It is the result of problems facing the individual psyche — exactly as Freud explained the origin of dreams — and it is an attempt to resolve these problems in complex symbolic forms. (The crisis, of course, is personal and internal; it doesn't have to show itself in any external disturbance--but often it does).”¹ As evidence of this idea, he goes on to point to Eliot's nervous breakdown after the writing of the *Wasteland*, Nietzsche's state of possession in writing *Zarathustra*, Ezra Pound's physical collapse in prison that resulted in his celebrated *Cantos*, among others. And, of course, there are countless other examples of writers who have shared their stormy addictions to drugs and alcohol as they fought to find words to express their ideas.

But that is only one part of the equation...

Literature is a reflection of life -- and as such, offers a means by which complex psychological and emotional issues can be explored, not only by the writer, but by readers. From a therapeutic point of view this has enormous power given that it offers one the ability to know that one is not alone in a particular situation or problem, and that there are others who are battling similar issues and pursuing different methods of overcoming them. Rather than deal with a trauma that is, perhaps, too difficult to confront directly, literature offers a parallel space, in which one can revisit a trauma at a safe distance.

These are the ideas we will explore in this class through the close analysis of several novels, short stories and poems and films, including works by Sylvia Plath, P.K. Page, Virginia Woolf, John Updike, Hemingway, Joyce, Klein and others...

¹ Dudek, Louis. “The Psychology of Literature.” (Paper delivered before the Canadian Council of Teachers of English, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. August 21, 1974.)

Required Texts:

(Available at the University bookstore)

David Sedaris, *Squirrel Seeks Chipmunk*

Elizabeth Strout, *Olive Kitteridge*

Mordechai Richler, *Barney's Version*

Miriam Toews, *All My Puny Sorrows*

Timothy Findley, *The Wars*

Chuck Palahniuk, *Fight Club*

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.

Grading:

Class Participation & Seminar: 50%; Essay: 50%

The Essay:

As a student, you will be encouraged to devise your own essay topic in consultation with me. It should reflect ideas and material relevant to the issues that we will be discussing over the semester. You can base your essay on the works of a particular writer, which might be an in-depth study of a single text or a thematic exploration across more than one text (including, if you wish, texts we haven't studied as long as I agree with them). Alternatively, you can write a thematic essay which takes an idea, topic, or theme and explores it through texts by more than one writer (although writing about more than two primary texts is usually a bad idea).

The usual essay rules apply: you are expected to demonstrate a level of engagement and research that goes beyond the content covered in seminars, and the essay must be presented in correct MLA scholarly format (with a consistently used and accurate referencing system and a full, properly formatted bibliography). The essay must be word-processed and paginated, and accompanied by a completed cover sheet.

General Expectations, Course Policies and Classroom Etiquette.

Students are expected to attend all classes, showing up on time and staying for the duration of the class. You are also expected to bring the text assigned for that day's class, having read it and being

prepared for discussion. If you do have to miss a class it is your responsibility to get the notes you miss from another student. **I strongly prefer that, unless they are absolutely necessary for note-taking, both cellphones and laptops should be turned off during class.**

Students must be prepared to discuss the texts in a thoughtful manner. Critical reading, writing and analytical skills cannot be learned from books alone. Asking questions about the readings and contributing to class discussions will help you better understand the material, hone your critical and interpretive skills and prepare you well for upper-year classes where participation will account for part of your final grade.

- Attendance will be taken at every class and absences will be noted. Students who miss **4 or more classes per term will not be able to pass the course**, as all course requirements must be fulfilled for successful completion of the course.

- The best way to get in contact with me is by email at ctracey@connect.carleton.ca. I will respond to emails in a timely fashion (usually within 24 hours, though it could be longer on weekends) and especially to those that ask clear, precise and specific questions.

- I am also available to meet with students to discuss any aspect of the course during my office hours, and if you are unable to make it to my office hours, we can reschedule a time to meet that is convenient to both of us.

It is strongly recommended that you take notes on the lectures and discussions, 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.

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 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 your essay is misplaced.

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 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.

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.

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.

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 me. I will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Students 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: 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.

Course Schedule:

September	3,8	Course Introduction
	10	Introduction to Bibliotherapy, Sedaris
	15	Sedaris
	17	Palahniuk
	22	Palahniuk
	24	Palahniuk
	29	Sedaris, Poetry
October	1	Sedaris, Poetry
	6	Toews
	8	Toews
	13	Sedaris, Poetry
	15	Sedaris, Poetry
	20	Findley
	22	Findley
	27	Fall Break – no class
	29	Fall Break
November	3	Richler
	5	Richler
	10	Richler
	12	Sedaris, Poetry
	17	Sedaris, Poetry
	19	Strout
	24	Strout
	26	Strout
December	1	Sedaris, Poetry
	3	Last class – Essay due