

Carleton University
Fall 2015
Department of English

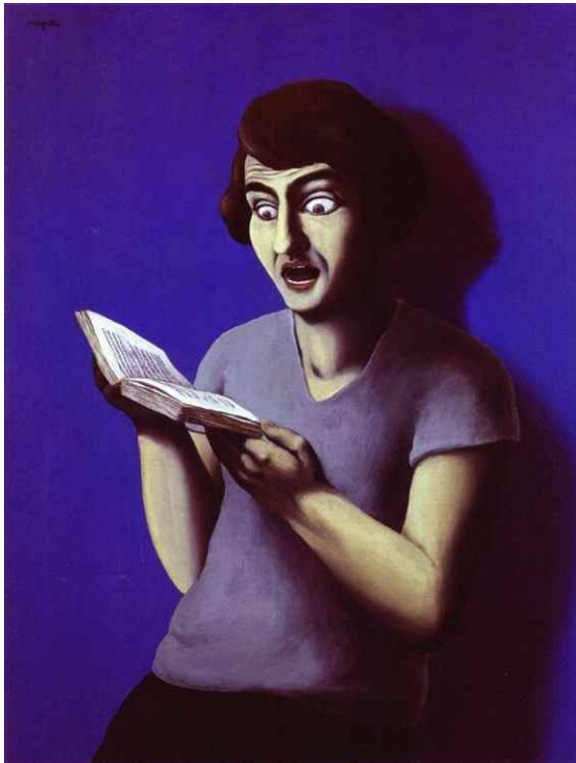
ENGL 2201A: The Pleasures of Reading (0.5 credit)

Prerequisite(s): second-year standing. Students in English may take this course only as a free elective.

Carleton Online (CUOL)

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“Although we read with our minds, the seat of artistic delight is between the shoulder blades. Let us worship the spine and its tingle.”

(Vladimir Nabokov)

This course studies four great literary masterpieces—Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita*, Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*, and Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the Volcano*—with two basic goals: first, to foster skills in the close and sensitive reading of literature; second, to think seriously about the nature of the pleasures that great works of literature afford us.

What do we gain when we put the question of pleasure at the centre of our reading experience? Do we risk losing sight of anything? Do new possibilities come into view? Is it even possible to think seriously about pleasure without deadening what Nabokov calls “the spine and its tingle”?

Please note that this outline is subject to change until August 1, 2015

Course Objectives

My goal for the course is to guide you through your encounters with a small group of extraordinary works of art, with special emphasis on the process of what is called “close reading,” so that you can learn both to savour and think critically about literature.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- 1)** Read and analyze challenging texts accurately, contextually, and critically
- 2)** Write clear and insightful accounts of the content, thematic concerns, and complexity of the course's required readings
- 3)** Connect discrete passages and details in literary texts to wider thematic and cultural concerns
- 4)** Demonstrate an historical and critical grasp of the relationship between reading and pleasure
- 5)** Work in an organized and self-reliant fashion to meet the requirements of a course conducted entirely in an online environment

Required Texts in Order of Study

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (Vintage) 9780679723165
Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Oxford) 9780199541898
Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* (Penguin) 9780141182711
Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano* (Penguin) 9780143191582

*Please note that any edition of these novels is acceptable, but that quotations provided during lecture modules will be keyed to these editions.

Assignment / Activity Structure

“Introduce Yourself”

When you log in to the course for the first time you will be offered an opportunity to make a brief statement about yourself on a course profile page that will be open only to students in the course. Your name will be shown but I am not looking for personal information. Instead, given the focus of the course, I am hoping that you will offer a short description of your interests and readings habits. What authors do you read? Do you have any favourite novels, poems, etc. that you wish to recommend to others? Have you already read any of the course's novels?

Please note that you must complete all required assignments in order to be eligible to pass this course.

I have scheduled assignments at regular intervals throughout the term. It is my hope that this will allow you to isolate these assignments and to work gradually at your grade without overwhelming you with a constant flow of reading responses and weekly assignments.

You will write the following required assignments:

1) One short test on *Lolita* (5% of your final grade)

This test (one question of passage analysis) will give you early feedback and also give you an early view of the kind of questions you will be facing on course tests and on the final examination.

2) One test on *Lolita* **(15% of your final grade)**

Please note that this assignment, plus the early feedback test, combine to make *Lolita*, like the other three novels, account for 20% of your final grade.

3) One test on *Wuthering Heights* **(20% of your final grade)**

4) One test on *The Waves* **(20% of your final grade)**

5) Final exam **(40% of your final grade)**

Please note that the first half of the exam (**i.e., 20% of your final grade**) will be dedicated to *Under the Volcano*. The second half of the exam (**i.e., the remaining 20% of your final grade**) will be devoted to questions in which you are asked to create and analyze links and distinctions among the course's four required texts.

BONUS ACTIVITY 1: Each unit will open with **an optional quiz of five multiple-choice questions** designed to enable you to gauge your ability to retain notable details about the novel under examination. Answers will be provided immediately. **If you complete all 12 of these optional quizzes you can, based on your total score in them, earn a maximum of 3% to be added to your final grade.** Your quiz session will close automatically after 5 minutes.

BONUS ACTIVITY 2: If you chose to contribute **once a week during every week of course activity** (the Fall Reading Week will not count) to the online message board you may earn up to a maximum of 3% to be added to your final grade. Three criteria will be used to assess the percentage of bonus you will receive: 1) the regularity of your contributions 2) the thoughtfulness and length of those contributions 3) the clarity and respectfulness with which you express yourself on the discussion board.

Course Expectations and Advice for Students

Online courses can be considerably more flexible than traditional in-class courses. But this freedom or flexibility also requires you to be much more self-reliant and better organized than you may usually push yourself to be. **Education** is a cooperative activity and it is common to expect immediate feedback and rewards for one's efforts, but **reading** is a solitary activity that requires (and rewards) patience, attention to detail, and a willingness to slow down. Speed-reading this course's novels will give you little chance to succeed in or enjoy the course.

Resist the urge to disappear or go silent if you are having difficulty with the novels or with unit materials. **I am very eager to meet with you either in person or via online forms of contact for office hours, and (barring extraordinary circumstances) can promise to return emails within 24 hours of receiving them. If you have a question please contact me immediately. Please note, too, that contributing to the course's message board is an excellent way to accumulate bonus marks. Note, however, that to become eligible for these bonus marks (see**

above, “Bonus Activity 2”) you must contribute at least once a week during every week of the course.

You are expected to read each of the course’s four novels carefully and to watch, read, and engage with all of the material assembled for each week. For each unit you will be able to download all presentation slides and mp3 audio files. You can also simply watch the lecture material as videos and recorded screen capture sessions.

Reading the novels carefully, paying close attention to all unit materials, taking detailed notes on each, and taking advantage of your ability to accumulate bonus points through quizzes and message board discussion will be your most effective way to succeed in the course.

Please note the following concerning the relationship between your readings, my lectures and supporting materials, and course tests Course tests (i.e., passages selected for analysis, questions about important themes, etc.) will **not** be limited to material presented and discussed in my lecture units. Lecture materials have been developed to help guide your readings of the novels and to provide you with new interpretative routes into those novels, but the tests will assume that you have read the novels carefully and that you will be able to respond with clarity and intelligence to questions that can be reasonably posed to anyone who has read them carefully.

Supplementary readings will be available either directly on the course CULearn site, through ARES (the link will be provided where this is the case), or through Course Reserve at MacOdrum Library.

Aside from the optional quiz sessions, which will remain open for just 5 minutes, materials collected within each unit will remain open for the duration of the course. This will enable you to revisit sections of lectures multiple times if you wish to do so. Course test modules (including the early feedback test) will remain open for 2 hours, after which point they will close and become inaccessible. The final exam will take place during the formally scheduled examination period in December.

Introduction: Course business, course objectives, tips and suggestions (10-minute video)

Please note: you are expected to have done your assigned readings before going through the various lecture files and supporting materials (optional quizzes, any suggested readings, etc.) for each unit. Pages ranges are specified below, but readings are predictable for each week. (Unit 1 studies the first third of *Lolita*; Unit 2 studies the second third of *Lolita*; Unit 3 studies the final third of *Lolita*; Unit 4 studies the first third of *Wuthering Heights*, etc.) Unit material is designed to sharpen your understanding of these readings and to enable you to revisit this section of the book with a keener sense of its complexity, artistry, and beauty.

Unit 1: *Lolita* (i)

You are expected to have read the first third of *Lolita* (from the “Foreword” on page 3 to the end of Chapter 23 [Part I] on page 103) before exploring the material for this unit.

Unit 2: *Lolita* (ii)

You are expected to have read the middle third of *Lolita* (from the beginning of Chapter 24 [Part I] on page 103 to the end of Chapter 14 [Part II] on page 207) before exploring the material for this unit.

Between Units 2 and 3 you will complete the early feedback test on *Lolita* (5% of your final grade). This short test will include only material from the beginning of the novel to the end of Chapter 14 [Part II] on page 207.

Unit 3: *Lolita* (iii)

You are expected to have read the final third of *Lolita* (from the beginning of Chapter 15 [Part II] on page 208 until the end of the novel, including Nabokov's short essay "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*") before exploring the material for this unit.

Between Units 3 and 4 you will write a test on *Lolita* (15% of your final grade)

Unit 4: *Wuthering Heights* (i)

You are expected to have read the first third of *Wuthering Heights* (from page 1 to the end of Volume I, Chapter XI on page 105) before exploring the material for this unit.

Unit 5: *Wuthering Heights* (ii)

You are expected to have read the middle third of *Wuthering Heights* (from the beginning of Volume I, Chapter XII on page 106 to the end of Volume II, Chapter IX on page 215) before exploring the material for this unit.

Unit 6: *Wuthering Heights* (iii)

You are expected to have read the final third of *Wuthering Heights* (from the beginning of Volume II, Chapter X on page 216 to the end of the novel, including Charlotte Brontë's "Editor's Preface to the New Edition of *Wuthering Heights*") before exploring the material for this unit.

Between Units 3 and 4 you will write a test on *Wuthering Heights* (20% of your final grade)

Unit 7: *The Waves* (i)

You are expected to have read the first third of *The Waves* (from page 3 to page 80) before exploring the material for this unit.

Unit 8: *The Waves* (ii)

You are expected to have read the middle third of *The Waves* (from page 81-158) before exploring the material for this unit.

Unit 9: *The Waves* (iii)

You are expected to have read the final third of *The Waves* (from page 159 to the end) before exploring the material for this unit.

Between Units 9 and 10 you will write a test on *The Waves* (15% of your final grade)

Unit 10: *Under the Volcano* (i)

You are expected to have read the first third of *Under the Volcano* (from page 3 to the end of Chapter 4 on page 118) before exploring the material for this unit.

Unit 11: *Under the Volcano* (ii)

You are expected to have read the middle third of *Under the Volcano* (from the beginning of Chapter 5 on page 119 to the end of Chapter 8 on page 241) before exploring the material for this unit.

Unit 12: *Under the Volcano* (iii)

You are expected to have read the final third of *Under the Volcano* (from the beginning of Chapter 9 on page 242 to the end of the novel) before exploring the material for this unit.

Final examination (40% of your final grade; half of this exam will be devoted wholly to *Under the Volcano*; the remaining half of the exam will ask you to create and analyze links and distinctions among the course's four required texts

Plagiarism and Instructional Offences

Please see the section on “Instructional Offences” in the 2015-2016 Undergraduate Calendar. The Undergraduate Calendar defines an act of plagiarism as an attempt “to use and pass off as one’s own idea or product the work of another without expressly giving credit” to the original author. Any act of plagiarism will be prosecuted to the full extent of the guidelines set out in the Undergraduate Calendar. Penalties may include expulsion from Carleton University.

The Undergraduate Calendar specifies that the act of submitting “substantially the same piece of work to two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructors from all courses involved” constitutes an Instructional Offence punishable under the guidelines set out in the Undergraduate Calendar. Please note: “Minor modifications and amendments, such as changes of phraseology in an essay or paper, do not constitute a significant and acceptable reworking of an assignment.” No piece of work written for another course will be accepted for credit in this course.

Academic Accommodations

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me 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.

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 your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.

Late Assignment Policy

Test modules will remain open only for a specified amount of time. Late assignments will not be accepted—indeed, will not even be submittable—except for officially documented reasons. Medical conditions require a signed Doctor's Certificate and any accommodation will be based on the length of the period of illness specified in the Certificate. In the case of the death of a close relative you must produce an obituary notice in which your name appears in confirmation of your relationship to them; alternatively, a copy of the Death Certificate will be accepted.

University Deadlines

Final deadlines are within the limited established by the University Guidelines. See the 2015-2016 Undergraduate Calendar for further details. Requests to defer the final examination are to be directed to the Registrar's Office.