

Carleton University
Fall 2015
Department of English

ENGL 2900: *Literature of the Self*

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:35am-12.55pm
Classroom: CB 3101 (*Confirm location with Carleton Central*)

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2pm and by appointment

This course addresses literary depictions of the nature of the self. It covers a wide historical range, engaging texts from antiquity and the middle ages, the early modern period, and the modern and post-modern eras. Similarly, it ventures across diverse cultural contexts. This large scope provides encounters with strange conceptions of selfhood; it also confronts us with historical origins of assumptions which we experience as natural. The course's historical and cultural diversity both helps defamiliarize our current assumptions about selfhood as well as offer moments of commonality with the apparently alien. We will examine such genres as epic and lyric poetry, religious autobiography, drama, short stories, and novels. Recurring themes include shifts in religious belief, secularization, ethics, the relationship and boundary between self and world, notions of self-division and multiple selves, and relationships between the self and external authorities.

cuLearn

Announcements and documents pertaining to the course will be posted on cuLearn. Students are fully responsible for reading all course material transmitted here. Information posted to cuLearn will be considered provided to all registered students within 24 hours of posting.

Course Work and Evaluation

In-class writing assignment (Sept 17): 10%
Midterm (Oct 13): 25%
Essay (due Dec 3): 20%
Final exam: 40%
Participation: 5%

For the in-class writing assignment, which will take up our class on September 17, you will write about the significant factors that have shaped your own conception of selfhood. In advance of this assignment you will need to think about the individuals, communities, experiences, institutions, media, events, and cultural forms which have influenced your sense of identity. This assignment demands that you not merely discuss how you identify yourself in a specific way (e.g., as a Buddhist, as a creative writer, as a guitar player). You will need to go beyond this to talk about the specific values which constitute the centre of your identity, and the framework through which you make sense of the world. The reflection that you do for this assignment will enrich your engagement with the literature we will read over the course of the term.

The midterm and final exam will cover all course material up to that point, and will include identification questions, passage analysis, and essay questions.

The essay will consist of the critical analysis of a passage from a text that we have studied (you'll be able to pick from a selection of passages). You will provide a close reading of the passage, then discuss the significant ways it engages questions of selfhood, and then finally reflect on how this passage relates to other texts from the course. The required length of the essay is 1500 words. The essay must be submitted in hard copy, typewritten, handed in at the end of class on the due date, and citations must comply with the Modern Languages Association (MLA) format (see the *MLA Handbook* or <http://www.mla.org>). You are not required to use secondary sources. Late essays will be penalized at a rate of 2% for every day they are late, excluding weekends and holidays. A medical emergency, documented with a doctor's note, is the only legitimate excuse for a late paper. Computer problems and lost papers are not valid excuses for late assignments: it is your responsibility to maintain backup copies of all your work.

Participation marks derive from your regular attendance and informed involvement in discussion periods. Participation includes bringing to class the texts to be discussed. Significant absence from this course will lead to loss of participation marks and will have deleterious consequences for your mid-term and final exams.

Classroom Protocols

Audio and visual recording devices are not allowed within the classroom. Students who want audio recordings of lectures must obtain authorization from the instructor. To avoid disrupting fellow students, please refrain from talking to neighbours during class, and turn off cell phones before class begins.

Academic Honesty (PLAGIARISM)

Plagiarism – making someone else’s work or ideas appear as your own – can happen accidentally. However, inadvertent plagiarism is treated the same as intentional plagiarism, and the consequences for this infraction are severe: expulsion from and an F in the course and, in some cases, expulsion from the university. For the code outlining plagiarism, see the section on “Instructional Offences” in the Undergraduate Calendar.

You must be extremely vigilant in documenting all of your sources (including the course lectures). Use MLA format for citation. Please note that plagiarism includes recycling your own work used in other courses.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks.

For more information please go to: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>

Academic Accommodation

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

Pregnancy obligation: 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. For more details see the Student Guide <<http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>>.

Religious obligation: 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. For more details see the Student Guide.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and

impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation.

If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable).

After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website < <http://carleton.ca/pmc/> > for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Schedule of readings (subject to change)

Sept 3: Introduction

Sept 8: Augustine, *Confessions* (excerpts)

Sept 10: Anon., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Sept 15: Anon., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Sept 17: In-class writing assignment

Sept 22: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Sept 24: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Sept 29: William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Oct 1: William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Oct 6: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (excerpts)

Oct 8: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (excerpts)

Oct 13: Midterm Test

Oct 15: William Wordsworth, "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey";
T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Oct 20: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Oct 22: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Oct 27: **Fall Break** – No class

Oct 29: **Fall Break** – No class

Nov 3: Frederik Pohl, "The Tunnel Under the World"; Philip K. Dick, "Adjustment Team"

Nov 5: No class

Nov 10: Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Nov 12: Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Nov 17: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

Nov 19: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

Nov 24: Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*

Nov 26: Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*
 Dec 1: Ian McEwan, *Atonement*
 Dec 3: Ian McEwan, *Atonement*

Required Texts

Please use the specific version of the text indicated so that you can follow along in lectures and class discussion.

The following hardcopy texts can be purchased at Haven Books (43 Seneca Street):

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Dover edition)
 Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (Lynne Rienner Publishers)
 Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (Vintage)
 Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux)
 Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (Vintage)

All other texts are available electronically.

Location of Electronic Texts

Augustine, Confessions

Text available at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confessions.pdf>

Excerpts to read: Book 2, chapters 6-10; Book 8, chapters 5-12; Book 10, chapters 5-29. Excerpts are located on pages 38-41, 125-36, 159-75. These page numbers refer to the viewfinder pagination indicated near the top of the screen.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Text available through the Carleton Library e-reserves system (Ares). To access, go to the Library homepage and then click on the link for Ares. After logging in, you will see ENGL 2900 listed among the courses in which you are registered. A pdf of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is located there.

Hamlet

Text available

at <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Annex/Texts/Ham/EM/scene/1.1>

Macbeth

Text available at

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Annex/Texts/Mac/M/default/>

Paradise Lost

Text available

at https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_1/text.shtml

Excerpts to read: Book 1; Book 2; Book 4 (lines 1-113); Book 9

"Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

Text available

at <http://www.rc.umd.edu/sites/default/RCOldSite/www/rchs/reader/tabbey.html>

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Text available at <http://www.bartleby.com/198/1.html>

"The Tunnel Under the World"

Text available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/31979/31979-h/31979-h.htm>

"Adjustment Team"

Text available at

http://www.philipkdickfans.com/mirror/gutenberg/Adjustment_Team.pdf