

**Carleton University  
Winter 2015  
Department of English**

**ENGL 2900: *Literature of the Self*  
Instructor: Prof. T. DeCook  
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Office Hours: TBA**

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, philosophical texts, mystical writing, and novels. Recurring themes include shifts in religious belief and secularization, ethics, the relationship and boundary between self and world, notions of self-division and multiple selves, relationships between the self and external authorities, and the nature of humanness.

Evaluation (subject to change):

Attendance: 5%

In-class writing assignment: 10%

Midterm: 25%

Essay: 20%

Final exam: 40%

Schedule of readings (subject to change)

Jan 5: Introduction

Jan 7: Augustine, *Confessions* (excerpts)

Jan 12: Meister Eckhart (excerpt); Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (excerpt);

St. John of the Cross (excerpt); Teresa of Avila (excerpt)

Jan 14: Anon., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Jan 19: Anon., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Jan 21: Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*  
Jan 26: Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*  
Jan 28: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*  
Feb 2: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*  
Feb 4: John Donne, selected poems  
Feb 9: George Herbert, selected poems  
Feb 11: René Descartes, Meditation 1; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (excerpts)  
Feb 16: Reading Week  
Feb 18: Reading Week  
Feb 23: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (excerpts)  
Feb 25: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (excerpts)  
Mar 2: William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey";  
T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"  
Mar 4: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*  
Mar 9: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*  
Mar 11: Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*  
Mar 16: Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*  
Mar 18: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*  
Mar 23: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*  
Mar 25: Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*  
Mar 30: Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*  
Apr 1: Ian McEwan, *Atonement*  
Apr 6: Ian McEwan, *Atonement*

### **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](#).

**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](mailto: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](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).