

**Carleton University  
Department of English  
Winter 2011**

**ENGL 5803: Canadian Fiction  
Topic: Contemporary Canadian Texts of Mourning**

**Time: Tuesdays 10:00 – 1:00 p.m.  
Location: 1816DT**

**Professor S. Jamieson  
Office: 1819DT  
613 520-2600 ext. 2431**

### **Course Description**

The calamitous history of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries (a history in which war, genocide, and terrorism produced human losses on an unprecedented scale) has sparked a widespread cultural interest in questions of how we mourn. In this course, students will have the opportunity to read a selection of contemporary Canadian texts and to discuss the particular ways in which they participate in this global conversation about the political and ethical issues at stake in the psychological process of coming to terms with loss. Students will also be introduced to some of the key texts of modern and contemporary mourning theory in order to develop a theoretical vocabulary for approaching representations of mourning in fictional texts. Some theoretical issues to be considered include the role of mourning in the formation of subjectivity, the role of mourning in the construction of national identities, the uses of public rituals of mourning such as funerals and memorials in creating narratives of national trauma, and strategies for resisting attempts on the part of those in power to control and regulate the public expression of grief. Evaluation will be based on a seminar presentation, a research paper, the completion of a course journal, and class participation.

Fictional texts MAY include:

Kim Echlin, *The Disappeared*  
Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces*  
Madeleine Thien, *Certainty*  
Wayne Johnston, *The Divine Ryans*  
Jane Urquhart, *The Stone Carvers*  
Michael Redhill, *Consolation*  
Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach*  
Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing*  
Alistair McLeod, *No Great Mischief*

