

**Carleton University
Department of English 2010**

**ENGL 5900 Literature and the Common
Mondays 10-1
DT 1816**

Instructor: Arnd Bohm
Office: Dunton Tower 1907
Office hours: **Thursdays 2-3 p.m.**
In addition to regular office hours, appointments can be made by prior arrangement.

Appointments cannot be made during office hours: just come by. Except when assignments are due, wait times are usually no more than 10 minutes. Appointments outside of regular office hours are possible; please plan for at least one week's advance notice. Missed appointments will not be rescheduled until the following week.

E-mail: abohm@connect.carleton.ca

Mailbox: English Department, DT 1812

Use the mail slot that is located beside the English Department office (DT 1812) at times when the office is not open.

- **READ THIS ENTIRE COURSE OUTLINE CAREFULLY**
- **READ THE *GRADUATE CALENDAR* CAREFULLY. IT HAS IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON REGULATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FACULTY THAT ALSO APPLY TO THIS COURSE.**

Literature and the Common: Course description and aims

Whose responsibility is our common literature? Neocon theory holds out little hope for the commons, arguing that no one will care or safeguard the common-wealth and hence only private property is viable. In this seminar we will examine literature in the context of the debate about the common/commons. A theoretical orientation is found in Negri: "The common is the network, the series of material goods that enables us to reproduce ourselves and to produce, to move and/or to allow ourselves to be carried from one side of the city to the other, etc. It is the series of things that makes us able to build language (libraries, books, 'open' informational technologies, communication instruments as such)" (2008: 138).

This seminar would attempt to understand literature as a commons, the history of its privatization, and the threats to it in an era of global privatization.

Of necessity, the analysis will draw upon various discourses of the commons, including common sense, the common law, the commonwealth, commoners, common-places, and the common good. We might also have to recall the tradition of contempt for the common exemplified by figures such as Plato and Faust.

Grading

Attendance, Participation	20%
(Includes minutes)	
Presentation	30%
Term essay	50%

(Attendance will be taken and requires remaining for the entire class. You may miss no classes without penalty; 5% will be lost for each absence, except for illness, up to 20%.)

Conversion to letter grades will be done as per the *Calendar*. The grades in this course will not be statistically normed ("curved").

E-Mail

All students have been assigned an e-mail account on CONNECT. You **must** activate your account since I will be using CONNECT to mail handouts, announcements and information about the assignments. Because of privacy issues arising from Ontario's new FIPPA legislation, I will only answer e-mail sent by you through CONNECT. All other e-mail (such as hotmail) is deleted automatically.

Please note that e-mail is not the same as "texting." First, replies are not instantaneous. E-mails will be answered in a timely fashion, usually **within 5 working days** from when they are received. You should not simply hit the "reply" button if you are mailing on a different subject than the one you received a message about; indicate the actual subject. And finally, if you are asking me to do something, a simple "please" somewhere in the message is always appreciated.

I archive all e-mail received.

E-mail is intended for short answers to specific questions. For inquiries that require more extensive discussion, please come see me.

General Academic Regulations

All students are required to be familiar with the rules and regulations as published in the *Graduate Calendar 2009-2010*. The rules and regulations there are not all reprinted in this course outline, but do apply. Note especially the rules about deadlines for assignments.

Academic Freedom

Attention is drawn to the University's policy on "Discrimination and Sexual Harassment."

Students enrolling this course are warned that studying the literature, culture and ideas of societies other than their own will expose them to unfamiliar and sometimes provocative attitudes, images, language and values. **No one will be expected to subscribe to, or be required to accept for their personal lives, the values represented in the texts to be studied.** But all participants in the course must be willing to examine the relevant texts, must make a sincere effort to understand the presuppositions of others, and be willing to discuss, verbally and in writing, the objects of study. By enrolling in this course, students accept a commitment to academic freedom for all participants, themselves, and the instructor.

Special Accommodations

For Disability

If there is any student in this course who, because of a disability, may have a need for special accommodations, please come and discuss this with me. As well, students must contact the Paul Menton Centre for Persons with Disabilities to obtain a Letter of Accommodation for any special examination arrangements. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me at least two weeks prior to the first in-class test or assignment.

For Religious Obligation

Any student who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory, or other compulsory event, must make a formal request in writing for alternative dates or means of satisfying requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of any given academic term, or as soon as possible after a need for accommodation is known to exist, but in no case later than the penultimate week of classes in that term. I will make reasonable accommodation in a way which shall avoid academic disadvantage to the student.

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.

For Work or Travel

No special accommodations will be made for conflicts with work schedules or for travelling.

Research Ethics and Infractions

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. **I am required by the University to report all cases of plagiarism to the appropriate Dean.** The penalties are severe, from an "F" in the course to expulsion from the University. It is not a pleasant experience for anyone.

More often than not, students commit plagiarism because they do not know what it is, but ignorance is no defence. Plagiarism is fraud. A good rule of thumb is that any sentence or passage with three or more words taken from another source must be carefully documented with a footnote. But be careful: even if you put quotation marks around everything and cite the sources, relying too much on someone else's work could still constitute plagiarism. If in doubt, come see me before handing in the final version of your work.

The best ways to avoid plagiarism are to think for yourself, do your own research, take careful notes, and leave enough time to do the job properly.

Note that **all** material stored electronically, whether as software, on diskette or CD-ROM, or on the "Internet" is governed by the same rules and regulations about plagiarism and copyright as printed matter. Downloading material and handing it in as your own work is forbidden.

Ideas you get from lectures and discussions in class should also be properly credited. They may be cited as "Lecture, [name of person], [course number], [date]" or "Class discussion, [course number], [date]". But papers that rely heavily on what I said in class about a text will not get a very good grade, since they do not demonstrate much independent thought or research effort on your part.

The use of the same (substantially unchanged) paper for different assignments in other courses is considered by Carleton University to constitute plagiarism.

Two useful websites on the topic of plagiarism:

MacOdrum Library: either click on "How Do I" on the Library page and then "Avoid Plagiarism" or click on <http://www.library.carleton.ca/howdoI/plagiarism/html/>

Also helpful is a site "How Not to Plagiarize" at the University of Toronto:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep/html>

Fairness in Citing

Quotations must be reproduced exactly as in the original with quotation marks; evidence must be cited accurately. It is wrong to alter evidence to fit your arguments.

Respect for Others

In keeping with Carleton University's "Policy on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment," you should avoid sexist language and language that could be hurtful to others, both in class and in written assignments. Yes, I do take off points in essays for sexist language.

Respect for Common Property

Do not write in or deface library materials. New books are very expensive (\$100-\$200 at a minimum once they are catalogued and shelved) and there is no money to replace them.

Classroom Etiquette

We start and end on time.

Drinks in class are ok; food only if it does not crunch or make those around you queasy.

Cell-phones, pagers, lap-tops and all other electronic equipment must be must be turned off unless you have written permission from the Paul Menton Centre.

Books required and recommended

Ordered for the University Bookstore is Peter Linebaugh, *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberty and Commons for All*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2008. Paperback. This is a readable, spirited survey.

Various readings will be assigned as the course develops. The following might be of general interest:

Benkler, Yochai. *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2006.

Chandler, James. "Ricardo and the Poets: Representing Common-wealth in the Year of Peterloo." *The Wordsworth Circle* 25.3 (1994): 82-86.

Ciriacy-Wantrup, S.V. and Richard Bishop. "'Common Property' as a Concept in Natural Resources Policy." *Natural Resources Journal* 15 (October 1975).

Clark, Tom. *Robert Greeley and the Genius of the American common Place*. New York: New Directions, 1993.

Feeney, David, et al. "The Tragedy of the Commons: Twenty-Two Years Later." *Human Ecology* 18.4 (1990): 1-19.

Goldman, Michael. "'Customs in common': The Epistemic World of the Commons Scholars." *Theory and Society* 26 (1997): 1-37.

Goodrich, Peter. "Eating Law: Commons, Common Land, Common Law." *The Journal of Legal History* 12.3 (1991): 246-67.

Hardin, Garrett. "The Tagedy of the Commons." *Science* 162 (1968): 1243-48. Rpt. in: *Debating the Earth: the Environmental Politics Reader*. Ed. John S. Dryzek and David Schlosberg. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. 23-34.

Lechner, Joan Marie. *Renaissance Concepts of the Commonplaces*. New York: Pageant Press, 1962.

Lessig, Lawrence. *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World*. New York: Random House, 2001.

McKeon, Richard. "Creativity and the Commonplace." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 6 (1973): 199-210.

Neeson, J.M. *Commoners: Common right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700-1820*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.

Negri, Antonio. *Goodbye Mr. Socialism*. Trans. Peter Thomas. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008.

Ormsby-Lennon, Hugh. "Commonplace Swift." *Reading Swift: Papers from The Third Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Hermann J. Real and Helgard Stöver-Leidig. Munich: Fink, 1998. 13-44.

Turner, Michael "Common Property and Property in Common." *Agricultural History Review* 42.2 (1994): 158-62.

Essay

There should be no separate title page.

In matters of form, follow the *MLA Style Handbook*. Use 12-point font throughout, including title pages and headers. Select a font that most resembles "Times Roman" (for example the font in which this text is printed). Do not use fancy display fonts and be very sparing with **bolding**. Important: use *italics* instead of underlining for book and journal titles and emphases.

No electronic submissions will be accepted.

Evaluation of Assignments

The written work will be assessed by the following criteria: form (does it follow the *MLA* format?); organization (clear statement of thesis; clear structure; strong conclusion); original content (have you demonstrated your own thinking and analysis?). Since this is an English course, it is expected that you have, or want to acquire, good writing skills. Spelling, syntax, idiomatic collocations and similar stylistic matters **are important**. You will be **heavily penalized** for mistakes in those areas. Please note that where the *MLA* gives an option for underlining titles or italics, I require *italics*.

I do not welcome papers that parrot back what I have said in class — save that for examinations.

No late assignments can be accepted after **April 7** for any reason whatsoever (University regulation).

Schedule

This is an innovative approach to a topic that is only now being applied to literature. Hence it would be a bit foolhardy to impose a rigorous schedule. The following might make sense, but it might also require adjustments. Some readings are already obvious; others will have to be added as we go along.

Jan. 4	Introduction to the question
Round 1:	“Crisis of the Commons”
Jan. 11	Peter Linebaugh, <i>The Magna Carta Manifesto</i>
Jan. 18	Debate on the Commons
Jan. 25	Common = Free
Round 2:	The Demise of the Commons
Feb. 1	The Ossian Case
Feb. 8	Enclosure: Genius-Fame-Copyright
Feb. 22	Literature and the State
Round 3:	Back to the Commons
Mar. 1	Networks
Mar. 8	Multitudes and (Dis)Order
Round 4:	Presentations and Discussions
Mar. 15	tba
Mar. 22	tba
Mar 29	tba