

**Carleton University
Fall 2013 / Winter 2014
Department of English**

FYSM 1004E: *Ripped from the Headlines*

Instructor: Dr. K. Quinn

Email: kelly_quinn@carleton.ca

Class Time: Wednesdays, 6:05 PM to 8:55 PM

Location: *Please confirm on Carleton Central*

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 9 PM, in the classroom

Mondays, 10:00-10:45 AM, Dunton Tower 1915

******Draft Syllabus: There may be minor changes******

Course Description

In this course, we will be looking at literature that is, so to speak, “ripped from the headlines”: fiction, drama, and poetry that takes as its inspiration real-life events. Through these works, we’ll be examining how art helps us to make sense of the world around us, and how it imaginatively reshapes that world. In so doing, we’ll be considering the very fundamental role of literature in our society. The events that inspire the literature we’ll be looking at range from battlefield horrors to more recent events such as school massacres and 9/11; the works include evocative poetry, satirical masterpieces, Shakespearean plays, classic detective stories, award-winning novels, and a graphic novel.

Texts

Murder on the Orient Express, by Agatha Christie (Harper Collins, 2011)

We Need to Talk About Kevin, by Lionel Shriver (Harper Collins, 2006)

Room, by Emma Donoghue (Harper Collins, 2010)

In the Shadow of No Towers, by Art Spiegelman (Random House)

Tales of Mystery and Imagination, by Edgar Allan Poe (Penguin)

Penguin Book of First World War Poetry, ed. Matthew Walter (Penguin, 2006)

Holocaust Poetry, ed. Hilda Schiff (Macmillan, 1996)

Fit to Print: The Canadian Student’s Guide to Essay Writing, by Joanne Buckley (Nelson)

British Literature 1640-1789: An Anthology, ed. Robert DeMaria (Wiley-Blackwell)

Henry V, by William Shakespeare, ed. Mowat/Werstine (Simon and Schuster)

Richard III, by William Shakespeare, ed. Mowat/Werstine (Simon and Schuster)

Books have been ordered through the Carleton University Bookstore. You might be able to economize using the following guidelines, however:

- The texts we will be looking at in the *Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, *Holocaust Poetry*, and *British Literature 1640-1789* are included in many other anthologies, including anthologies you might have purchased for other classes.

- For the Shakespeare plays, any scholarly edition will do; you do not need to purchase the editions I have suggested if you have access to others.
- E-reader versions of texts are also acceptable.
- You might be able to find reasonably-priced used copies of some of the works online (especially *Room*, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, *In the Shadow of No Towers*, *Fit to Print*).
- Keep in mind not just the Carleton library but also the Ottawa Public Library system.

Evaluation Scheme

4 essays – 45% (5%, 15%, 10%, 15%)

First-term test -- 10%

Participation – 10%

Quizzes/small assignments -- 10%

Final Exam -- 25%

Email

Carleton University regulations stipulate that professors should only respond to questions from students when they write from a Carleton email address, so please remember to use your Carleton account when getting in touch with me. I aim to respond to student emails within 24 hours. If you have not heard back from me 24 hours after sending an email, do email again in case there has been a technological problem. (It may be the case that circumstances have prevented me from responding in time, but I will not be offended by a reminder email in any case!)

Attendance

Consistent attendance is a requirement of the course. If you miss more than two classes in a single term, you will lose 1% of your final mark for each missed class. If you miss more than eight classes, you will fail the course. Please contact me if you need to miss more than two classes because of illness or other urgent matters.

Late Penalties/Missed Tests and Exams

You have six grace days you may use at any point over the year. Grace days mean that you can take extensions without penalties, and you can decide how many grace days, if any, you need for each essay, to a total of six for the full year (if you submit Essay 1 two days late, you have four grace days to use for Essays 2, 3 and 4). Grace days are not transferable from one student to another, and since they are designed to cover the usual kinds of last-minute emergencies (computer problems, writer's block, minor illnesses, workload crunch), once you have exhausted your grace days, extensions will be granted only for serious family, personal or medical emergencies. The best way to use grace days is to aim to submit the paper on the real date, so that you can use the grace days if you run into some kind of difficulty.

Late papers (submitted after you have used up all your grace days) are subject to a late penalty of 2% per day (weekend=1 day). Papers submitted after the deadline (including those submitted during the grace period) may not be marked as quickly or in as much detail as those submitted on time. No papers can be accepted after **April 10**; if you have essays still outstanding on this date, you will receive a mark of zero on them.

If you miss the test, you must provide medical documentation in order to write a make-up test.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own or submitting the same work in two different academic contexts (self-plagiarism). The consequences of plagiarism are severe and are issued by the Dean and the University Senate. In order to avoid plagiarism, you must correctly attribute

the sources of the ideas you pick up from books, the internet, and other people. For additional information, consult the section on Instructional Offenses in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Academic Accommodation

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. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC. 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>.

Schedule of Readings (N.B.: We may occasionally spend slightly more or slightly less time on some texts.)

Classes will regularly incorporate readings and exercises from our writing manual, Fit to Print.

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| September 11 | Introduction to the Course
Auden, "September 1, 1939" |
| September 18 | Murder Most Foul, Part 1: Poe, <i>The Mystery of Marie Roget</i> |
| September 25 | Murder Most Foul, Part 2: Christie, <i>Murder on the Orient Express</i> |
| October 2 | Essay 1 due (essays submitted <i>on time</i> will be returned by October 16) |
| October 2-9 | War, Glorious War?: Shakespeare, <i>Henry V</i> |
| Oct. 16-Nov.6 | Battlefield Horror and the Loss of Glory: World War I poetry |
| October 30 | NO CLASS |
| Nov. 13-20 | Writing the Holocaust: Poetry |
| November 13 | One-hour test |
| Nov. 27-Dec 4 | 9/11 in Word and Image: <i>In the Shadow of No Towers</i> |

December 4	Essay 2 due
January 8-22	School Massacres and the Blame Game: <i>We Need To Talk About Kevin</i>
Jan. 29-Feb. 5	Fact and Fiction in the Colonies: <i>Oroonoko</i> (DeMaria anthology)
February 12	The Politics of Satire: <i>A Modest Proposal</i> (DeMaria anthology)
February 12	Essay 3 due
February 19 –	READING WEEK
Feb. 26-Mar. 5	Satirizing Celebrities: <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> (DeMaria anthology)
March 12-19	The Uses and Abuses of Recent History: <i>Richard III</i>
Mar.26-Apr. 2	Hope in Captivity: <i>Room</i>
April 2	Essay 4 due
April 8	Last day of classes: the last day on which term work can be submitted
April 11-26	Final Exam Period, Date of Exam TBA N.B.: Do NOT make any travel plans for this period until the dates of your exams have been confirmed!

September 1, 1939
W.H. Auden

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-Second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk
To an apathetic grave;
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,
Mismanagement and grief:
We must suffer them all again.

Into this neutral air
Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:
But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream;
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong.

Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire

To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Let us see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.

The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
No universal love
But to be loved alone.

From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow,
"I *will* be true to the wife,
I'll concentrate more on my work",
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.