

**Carleton University
Department of English
Winter 2010**

**ENGL 5807W: Selected Topics in Canadian Literature
Transience, Unemployment, and the Politics of Mobility in Twentieth-Century
Canadian Cultural Texts**

**Time: Tuesdays 10:05 – 12:55
Location: 1816 DT**

**Instructor: J. Mason
Office: 1903DT**

Phone: (613) 520-2600 ext. 8907

**Email: After classes being, please contact me using WebCT email only
Office Hours: TBA**

I. Course Description

In his recent study of mobility in the nineteenth-century U.S., Mark Simpson develops a useful explanation of the “politics of mobility” as “the contestatory processes that produce different forms of movement, and that invest these forms with social value, cultural purchase, and discriminatory power” (*Trafficking Subjects* xiii-xiv). Reading a variety of historical documents and cultural texts together with theorizations of mobility, we will examine the related meanings of transience and unemployment in Canada from 1925 to 1975. We will consider how these meanings are embedded in broad historical and political transitions—from the revolutionary discourses of Third Period socialism, to the ascendance of ideas about state management in the late 1930s and in the postwar period, to the rise of the New Left in the mid-1960s. Considering how transience and unemployment are put to use in politically strategic ways—how Depression-era short stories and poems argue for the existence of a national labour force, for example, or how Carol Bolt’s documentary play *Buffalo Jump* functions within left-nationalist politics—questions such as the following ensue: What literary forms have been used to convey the practice of transience and the problem of unemployment and why? How have the meanings of transience and unemployment participated in the differential distribution of power in Canada, including the making of classed, gendered, and racialized subjectivities? How can the work of reading the politics of transient mobility inform our thinking about the metaphors of rootedness that are so ubiquitous in Canadian literatures, and how can it challenge metaphors of mobility that have been interpreted as inherently liberatory?

II. Required Texts

Works marked with an asterisk* are in the course reader and are listed in the syllabus. The reader and all other texts are available for purchase at Octopus Books (116 Third Ave., tel. 613-233-2589). Readings available through databases on the library's website are listed in the syllabus.

Baird, Irene. *Waste Heritage* (U of Ottawa P, 2007)
Garner, Hugh. *Cabbagetown* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1968)
Grove, Frederick Philip. *A Search for America* (M&S, 1991)

- *Bolt, Carol. *Buffalo Jump*
- *Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Field of Cultural Production"
- *Bourinot, Arthur. "Outcasts"
- *Brown, Russell. "The Road Home: Meditation on a Theme"
- *Cassidy, H.M. "Is Unemployment Relief Enough?"
- *Cecil-Smith, E. "Propaganda and Art"
- *Creighton, Alan. "Unemployed"
- *Cresswell, Tim. (from) *The Tramp in America*
- *Druick, Zoë. (from) *Projecting Canada: Government Policy and Documentary Film at the National Film Board*
- *Filewood, Alan. (from) *Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada*
- *Foucault, Michel. "Governmentality"
- *Francis, H. (Frank Love), "Madeline Street"
- *Grove, Frederick Philip. "Riders"
- *Horn, Michiel. (from) *The LSR: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada, 1930–1942*
- *Kertzer, Jonathan. (from) *Worrying the Nation: Imagining a National Literature in English Canada*
- *Livesay, Dorothy. "A Girl Sees It!"; "An Immigrant"; "Yes!"; "In Praise of Evening"; "Dominion Day at Regina"
- *LSR. (from) *Social Planning for Canada* (1935)
- *Marcson, Simon. "Dream Train"
- *Nesbitt, A. "Workless Sister"
- *Rifkind, Candida. (from) *Comrades & Critics: Women, Literature, and the Left in 1930s Canada*
- *Simpson, Mark. (from) *Trafficking Subjects*
- *Smith, Cedric and Jack Winter. *Ten Lost Years*
- *Struthers, James. (from) *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State*
- *Wolff, Janet. "On the Road Again: Metaphors of Travel in Cultural Criticism"
- *Zigler, Maurice. "Four Cents a Bread"

III. Course Requirements and Assignments

30-minute Seminar Facilitation (plus notes) (25%)
500-word Response Papers (3 @ 10% each)
Participation (10%)
2,500-word Final Research Essay (35%)

1. 30-minute Seminar Facilitation (25%)

On the first day of classes, students will sign up for weekly seminar presentations. Each student will facilitate class discussion for 30 minutes. I expect you to read the assigned material for the week, to conduct secondary research, and to formulate an argument and discussion points based on the topic you have chosen. You may use visual or other resources, but please consult with me first. Each presenter is responsible for handing in a 750-word (3 pp. MLA format) summary of the seminar presentation (with Works Cited).

2. 500-word Response Papers (3 @ 10% each)

Each week, I will post three or four questions to Web CT that deal with some aspect of the readings for the week. At least three times during the term, you must choose a question (or generate a topic of your own) and write a 500-word response (2 pages in MLA format). No secondary research is required for this assignment. Responses must be handed in at the beginning of class. At least one response must be submitted in the first four weeks of the term; the other two must be submitted by the second-last week of class (date).

3. Participation (10%)

This is a discussion-based seminar; accordingly, you must be present and active. Students who have more than two undocumented absences will receive a grade of 0 for participation. In order to contribute meaningfully to the seminar discussion, you must be prepared to share your response papers with the class, to pose questions for the seminar facilitators, and to otherwise actively contribute to classroom discussion.

*have students send me one question based on the reading per week (prior to class); I'll print these out and use them as the basis for discussion—these will be used to determine participation marks

4. 4,000-word Final Research Essay (35%)

4,000 words (16 pages in MLA format). Early in the term, I expect each student to make an appointment to speak with me about formulating a research topic. This research paper should have a clear thesis, should demonstrate a range and breadth of secondary research, and should provide evidence of independent critical thinking. It should conform to academic conventions: i.e., it must follow MLA format and have correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. On Friday, March 20th, be prepared to discuss your research with the class. This paper is due at the beginning of our last class—on Friday, April 3rd.

IV. Expectations

Email and Office Hours: Please use class time and office hours for questions relating to lectures, readings, and assignments. You may also communicate with me through the WebCT email system; I will not respond to emails outside WebCT.

Assignments and Late Policy: (NB-Seminar notes and Response papers may not be submitted late.) Assignments must be submitted in class the day they are due. Late assignments may be handed in up to seven days late with a penalty of 1% per day (this includes the day they are due if they are submitted after class, as well as weekends); the maximum penalty is 7%. Essays will not be accepted after this period unless proper medical or other documentation is provided. You must hand in a printed copy of your work: electronic submission is not acceptable. Late assignments must be left in the essay drop-box at the English Department, Dunton Tower, 18th floor: they will be stamped with the date and deposited in my mailbox. Please keep a backup copy of all your assignments.

V. Special Accommodations

Students with disabilities should contact the Paul Menton Centre (613-520-6608, <www.carleton.ca/pmc>) to obtain letters of accommodation.

Religious observance may be worked out on an individual basis with the instructor. Consult the Equity Services web site or an equity advisor for policy and a list of holy days <www.carleton.ca/equity>.

Pregnant students should contact Equity Services to obtain letters of accommodation <www.carleton.ca/equity>.