

**\*PRELIMINARY OUTLINE—SUBJECT TO CHANGE\***

Fall/Winter 2023-24

Department of English Language and Literature

**FYSM 1004B: Reading Literatures and Cultures**

*Precludes additional credit for ENGL 1000, ENGL 1100, ENGL 1200,  
ENGL 1300, ENGL 1400, ENGL 1600, ENGL 1700*

**Classes:** Wednesdays and Fridays 10:05-11:25 am

**Format:** In-person, not suitable for online students

**Instructor:** Dr M. Susan Birkwood

**Email:** [Susan.Birkwood@carleton.ca](mailto:Susan.Birkwood@carleton.ca)

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*Carleton University is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the  
Algonquin Nation*

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- ❖ We will spend some scheduled class time in the [Book Arts Lab](#) where everyone can engage with selected elements of design and production.

### **Course Description:**

Literary works open portals to beauty, sorrow, excitement, revolution, horror, humour, tolerance, hope. They also have much to say about the literary and rhetorical arts, along with the circumstances of their cultural production. This course will support the development of skills in critical thinking and textual analysis, as we study works of poetry, prose, and drama—all the while paying attention to form and structure, as well as content, in our close reading.

As we situate the texts in terms of their diverse literary, historical, and cultural contexts, we will cross temporal and geographic borders while examining—in a wide variety of ways—the relationship of individuals to all their relations—human and other-than-human.

Because this course is your introduction to literary studies at Carleton, one of my jobs is to help you to develop your critical vocabulary as we read texts from different regions, periods, and genres to build a strong base for your future studies. My main interest will always be your well-supported oral and written analyses of texts. I am well aware that students entering first year bring a range of experiences with them, and the transition to university studies has its challenges, especially in the area of academic writing. You will have plenty of opportunities to hone your skills in a supportive environment.

The seminar class size allows for campus-based experiential learning opportunities. Along with time in the Book Arts Lab, we may incorporate a class in the Carleton University Art Gallery. As

well, we may be able to chat with representatives from Carleton’s student support services. Together, we can build a strong learning community.

### General Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Read and analyze texts accurately, contextually, and critically within the course framework.
- Recognize generic conventions within poetry and prose contexts.
- Recognize and analyse the use of rhetorical schemes and other aspects of poetic form.
- Write clearly, while advancing and supporting arguments with sufficient specific, documented textual analysis that illustrates close reading of the literary text(s) in question.
- Smoothly incorporate and properly document some research material from sources beyond the literary text being analysed.

### \*English Department definition of “Writing Attentive”:

- Students will spend a significant amount of class time learning, and improving university-level forms of thinking and writing that will concentrate on the following:
  - establishment of university-level expectations for grammar and syntax
  - establishment and refinement of literary-critical skills through close analysis of texts from a variety of genres
  - generation and proof of an argumentative thesis across an essay
  - establishment and refinement of sophisticated ideas and opinions using proper, correct and effective academic style
  - use and citation of primary literary texts in appropriate and convincing ways
  - development of fluency in and facility with genre-specific literary terminology
  - introduction to the fundamentals of secondary research (including critical evaluation, use, and citation of academic sources)
- Students will complete a minimum of two graded writing assignments per term, in which they will be expected to demonstrate the above skills.
- Students will write at least one formally scheduled examination. If there is just one exam it will take place during the April examination period.
- ❖ *Generative AI will be a topic of discussion.*

**\*\*\*This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change. A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term.\*\*\***

### Required Texts

- Course readings will include poems, short stories, plays, and novels.
- The list of required texts will likely be available in August. The following are texts studied in a previous year and some of these works may or may not be included in the 2023-24 list:
  - *The Broadview Introduction to Literature: Concise Edition* (edited by Lisa Chalykoff, Neta Gordon, Paul Lumsden) – Second Edition, Broadview Press

- Andre Alexis, *Fifteen Dogs* —Coach House
- Drew Hayden Taylor, *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth*—Talon
- Richard Wagamese, *Keeper'n Me*—Penguin
- Jael Richardson, *Gutter Child*—HarperCollins

**Evaluation:**

Close-reading assignments	15%
Brightspace quizzes	5%
cuPortfolio Book Arts Lab entries	20%
December in-person exam	10%
Winter-term essay	15%
Final in-person exam	20%
Engagement (attendance, discussion, peer support)	15%

**Please note:**

- You must complete **the term work and the final exam** in order to be eligible to pass the course.
  - Should you, though, find yourself in circumstances that threaten to preclude your successful completion of any assignment, please contact me before the relevant deadline. I would much rather work with you to find a solution than have you face the possibility of failing the course.
- ❖ “Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean” (FASS Teaching Regulations).