

**Carleton University**  
**Fall 2024/Winter 2025 Preliminary Course Outline**  
**Department of English**

**ENGL 2802B: *Indigenous and Canadian Literatures***

**Prerequisites: *second-year standing or permission of the department***

**Instructor: Prof. Jody Mason**  
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**\*\*\* *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.* \*\*\***

## **I. Course Description**

Canada, part of Turtle Island, is a place of many names and many peoples. This course uses literature as a means of introducing us to Canada as a place of diverse and intersecting cultural traditions. The course is organized into three main sections—The First Words, Contact and Conflict, and Indigenous and Settler Adjacencies. We begin with an overview of some of the many cultural forms, including oral stories, that are characteristic of the First Nations and Inuit peoples who have inhabited and storied the spaces of Turtle Island since time immemorial. We then consider the non-fictional travel narratives and testimonies that document the complicated history of contact between the diverse Indigenous Peoples of northern North America and European settlers (who were predominantly French and English) up to the end of the Seven Years War (1763). Finally, we analyze the complex adjacency of Indigenous and settler literatures in the territory first called British North America and later, after Confederation in 1867, Canada. In this final section, we'll study a wide variety of texts, including Indigenous storytelling, memoir, satire, the literary sketch and the short story, journalism, poetry, visual art, and the novel, and we'll be thinking about the contiguous but often conflicting emergence of Indigenous and Canadian literatures as literary canons, fields of study, and as publishing phenomena.

Throughout the course, influential documents that have shaped Indigenous-settler relations, particularly the Indian Act, will shape our reading, as will discussions of nation-specific Indigenous epistemologies and values, European imperialism, settler colonialism, migration, industrialization and urbanization, and official multiculturalism. Through the year, we'll be analyzing the ways that literary forms forge relationships to place and articulate cultural values. We'll attend to the political significance of such relationships and values, and to the alliances and deep conflicts produced by competing conceptions of place. We'll affirm the autonomy of Indigenous literary traditions, while also acknowledging the complex adjacencies of Indigenous experiences and the literatures that have come to be known as "Can Lit."

ENGL 2802 is a writing attentive course. A portion of class time will be devoted to developing and improving essay writing skills (grammar and syntax, establishment and refinement of arguments, generation and proof of an argumentative thesis across an essay) and research essay skills (critical evaluation, use, and citation of academic sources).

## II. Learning Outcomes

Students in the course will learn to analyze Indigenous and settler literatures in the context of their specific histories and cultural formations. They will learn to make arguments about Indigenous and settler literary texts using appropriate forms of evidence.

## III. Texts (tentative):

Armstrong, Jeannette. *Slash*. 1986. (Theytus Books, 2011, ISBN 9781894778459)

Sugars, Cynthia and Laura Moss, eds. *Canadian Literature in English. Texts and Contexts, Volumes 1 and 2*. (Pearson Longman, 2009, ISBN 0321313623) (these will both be on 4-hour course reserve at MacOdrum Library—you can borrow them from the main circulation desk on the second floor)

## IV. Evaluation (tentative):

In-Class Reading Responses (10% per term=20%)  
Workshop Activities (7.5% per term=15%)  
In-Class Essay (2.5% for outline + 7.5% for essay=10%)  
Fall Term Exam (15%)  
Summary of a Critical Article (5%)  
Research Essay (2.5% for outline + 12.5% for essay=15%)  
Final Exam (20%)