

**Carleton University
Winter 2018
Department of English**

ENGL 1100W: Literature, Law, and Criminality

Lecture: Monday 18:05 – 20:55

**Precludes additional credit for ENGL 1000, ENGL 1009, ENGL 1200, ENGL 1300, ENGL 1400,
and FYSM 1004**

Location: St. Patrick's Building #100 (please confirm on Carleton Central)

Instructor: Dr. P. Whiting

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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30 – 10:30 or by appointment

Description: While most of us will broadly agree that crime is wrong, it is also true that we are fascinated by crime and criminals, and historically, this fascination has been evident in both high art and popular culture. For example, the great criminals of history occupy considerable space in our imaginations, whether they are invented, such as Lady Macbeth or Moriarty, or real, such as Lizzie Borden and Pablo Escobar. One explanation for this is suggested by Stephen King in his essay "Why We Crave Horror Movies," where he maintains that watching such movies is a safe way to acknowledge the dark side of ourselves without doing actual harm: "lifting a trap door in the civilized forebrain and throwing a basket of raw meat to the hungry alligators swimming around in that subterranean river beneath." The same argument might be made that we are fascinated by crime because it appeals to the hidden lawbreaker in us.

But we are not only titillated by crime; we are also fascinated by its complexities and by the suspicion that what constitutes crime and criminals is sometimes pretty ambiguous. Unlike law that can find a suspect only guilty or not guilty, literature provides a forum to examine the grey areas of law, crime, and criminality in light of morality, human nature, and history.

In this class, we will be reading fiction, plays, and poetry that deal with crime and sometimes with the law, and considering questions justice and injustice, good and evil, and right and wrong. Using crime as an overarching theme, the aim of the course is to raise students' high school modes of reading and thinking to the level of close reading and critical thinking required at the university level. Although ENGL 1100 is primarily a literature course, written assignments will be aimed at sharpening students' writing skills. **In combination with ENGL 1010, this class satisfies the first-year requirement for a major or double major in English.**

Required texts:

Gay, John. *The Beggar's Opera*
Himes, Chester. *A Rage in Harlem*
MacMillan, Margaret. *Beast in View*
Marquez, Gabriel Garcia. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*
Tobar, Hector. *The Tattooed Soldier*

These texts are available at Benjamin Books, 116 Third Avenue.

In addition, web links will be provided for e-texts of required short texts. **You must bring hard copies of the e-texts to class on the days they are assigned.**

Course evaluation:

Attendance and participation	10%
Unannounced quizzes (best 5 of 6)	25%
Four short essays (400-500 words)	40%
Final exam	25%

Please read this carefully:

1. **Attendance Policy:** Class attendance is mandatory, and attendance will be taken. Excused absences must be medically documented. Absences for work reasons will not be excused. Students who attend only part of a class will be counted as absent from that class. Everyone has two “free” unexcused absences. The third unexcused absence will result in 2 points being deducted from the attendance mark; the fourth unexcused absence will result in 3 additional points being deducted from the attendance mark; the fifth unexcused absence will result in the loss of the whole attendance mark. Participation in class discussions will factor into the overall attendance/participation mark.

You are required to show knowledge of texts, as well as lecture material in all assignments and tests. You are expected to complete the scheduled readings before you come to class, come prepared to discuss what you've read, and bring the relevant text(s) to lectures and tutorials. If you have to miss a class because of illness, be sure to get the notes from a classmate because you are still responsible for class material.

2. **Classroom Conduct:** Cell phones must be turned off during class, and laptops are to be used only for note-taking only in the lectures.

3. Short Essays: Topics will be provided for four short essays of 300-400 words, double-spaced. The essays are to be submitted before the beginning of class on the days designated on the syllabus. Entries may also be submitted in the Drop Box in the English Secretariat on the 18th floor of Dunton Tower. In order to be accepted, papers must be date-stamped with the due date, which means they have to be in the drop box by 8:30 a.m. on the morning after the due date. **IF YOU USE THE DROP BOX, YOU MUST PUT MY NAME ON THE FRONT SHEET. OTHERWISE, THE ESSAY MAY GO ASTRAY. PAPERS THAT GO ASTRAY FOR THIS REASON WILL BE COUNTED AS LATE PAPERS.**

STUDENTS MUST HAND IN ALL FOUR ESSAYS TO BE ELIGIBLE TO WRITE THE FINAL EXAM.

NB: No secondary sources are required for the essays.

4. Early Feedback Assignment: The first journal entry on *The Beggar's Opera* is due on January 29 and is intended to be used as a guide to your written work in the course.

5. Late papers must be accompanied by valid medical documentation in order not to be penalized. Late papers will receive a penalty of 2% per day. Papers more than a week late will receive a grade of 0. Rewrites of papers are not an option. Essays must conform to the stated word count requirement, must answer the essay question, and must discuss only texts read in this course.

Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be e-mailed immediately upon request.

6. Extensions: Extensions on papers may involve a penalty. All extensions must be arranged by e-mail at least 24 hours in advance of the due date. **No exceptions will be made to this arrangement.**

7. E-Mail Protocol: You are encouraged to work with me on your journal entries and to send me the thesis of your finished journal. Please identify the course in the subject line; otherwise, your e-mail may be deleted without being read. Please do not send attachments.

I DO NOT ACCEPT PAPERS BY E-MAIL. YOU MAY E-MAIL AN ESSAY TO ME ONLY UNDER ALL THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES AND CONDITIONS:

1. If you have printer problems at the last minute
2. If you e-mail me the finished essay by the beginning of the class on the day it is due.
3. If you come to that class and inform me of the problem.
4. If you bring a hard copy of the essay to my office within 24 hours of the due date.

8. In-class assignments and examinations: In-class assignments and examinations must be written on the date indicated on the syllabus and may not be made up unless a student has a valid doctor's certificate.

The Winter term exam period is April 14-26 (including Saturdays and Sundays). The Registrar's Office generally releases the April exam schedule in February. Do not make travel plans until the exam schedule has been released. Exams will not be rescheduled for students who take on other commitments during the exam period.

9. Quizzes: The quizzes may take place during any class and at any point in the class. They will concern the reading assigned for that day, as well as lecture material. Quizzes will last 20 minutes and may not be made up without medical documentation.

10. Collaboration: Although you are encouraged to talk with each other about assignments and to review each other's work, all assignments written for evaluation are to be the original work of individual students.

11. Plagiarism: See statement on Academic Integrity in the Undergraduate Calendar at

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/academicintegrity/>

Plagiarism is a serious matter and can be grounds for expulsion from the University. Plagiarism often occurs because a student is not sure where to draw the line between common knowledge, paraphrase, and direct quotation -- and indeed, the distinctions are sometimes hard to make. The rule of thumb is this: All direct quotations have to be contained by quotation marks and their sources cited in proper MLA documentation style; all paraphrases have to be clearly indicated as such, and their sources also cited. When in doubt about whether a point that you are making is common, shared knowledge in the public domain or the "intellectual property" of another author, either contact me for clarification or err in the direction of documentation.

Please note that I hand over ALL cases of suspected plagiarism to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for investigation.

12. REQUEST FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: 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. For more details see the Student Guide at

<https://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/academic/students/>.

Religious obligation: 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. For more details see the Student Guide at <https://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/academic/students/>.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or <https://carleton.ca/pmc/> for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

WRITING SPEC SHEET

FORMAT: Type your papers, double-spaced, in 12-point font that yields approximately 250 words per page. If you make corrections to hard copy, please make them in ink, above the lines and not in the margins.

TITLE: Essays may be accompanied by a title page that contains the title of the assignment in the centre of the page, with your name, my name, the course code, and the date, double-spaced in the bottom right-hand corner. If you prefer not to use an extra sheet of paper, the title-page information may be included at the top of page one. The latter method will take up essay space, so make sure that the word count conforms to the requirements of the paper. **The word count must be included either on the title page or at the end of the essay.**

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is a serious matter and can be grounds for expulsion from the University. Plagiarism often occurs because a student is not sure where to draw the line between common knowledge, paraphrase, and direct quotation -- and indeed, the distinctions are sometimes hard to make. The rule of thumb is this: All direct quotations have to be contained by quotation marks and their sources cited (see note on bibliographical form below); all paraphrases have to be clearly indicated as such, and their sources also cited. When in doubt about whether a point that you are making is common, shared knowledge in the public domain or the "intellectual property" of another author, either see your TA or me for clarification or err in the direction of documentation.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL FORM: Please use MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation style.

INTERNET SOURCES: Internet sources such as Wikipedia and Sparknotes are far too general for serious academic work and often contain mistakes. Furthermore, the kind of uncited cutting, pasting, paraphrasing, and borrowing from the internet that is acceptable in high school is an instructional offense at Carleton. The safest bet is never to consult such sources with regard to the texts for this class. I am always willing to talk with you about your writing or other concerns you may be having. If my posted office hours are impossible, we can arrange a mutually convenient time -- just ask!

THE LAST WORD: There are many mistakes that SPELLCHECK won't pick up. Be sure to proofread your essays carefully and to use a dictionary to check spellings of which you're unsure. This sentence from an actual essay made it through Spellcheck:

Richard III was not the real air to the thrown.

Syllabus

Jan 8 – Introduction

Jan 15 – *The Beggar's Opera*

Jan 22 – *The Beggar's Opera*; ballads (links will be provided)

Jan 29 – poetry (links will be provided) **(Essay #1 due)**

Feb 5 – *A Rage in Harlem*

Feb 12 – *A Rage in Harlem* **(Essay #2 due)**

Feb 19 – No class: reading week

Feb 26 – short stories (links will be provided)

Mar 5 – *The Tattooed Soldier* **(Essay #3 due)**

Mar 12 – *The Tattooed Soldier*

Mar 19 – *Beast in View*

Mar 26 – *Beast in View* **(Essay #4 due)**

Apr 2 – *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*

Apr 9 – *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*; exam review

Final exam to be announced.