

**Carleton University  
Fall/Winter 2019-20  
Department of English**

**ENGL 1300A: Literature, Psychology, and the Mind**

**Prerequisites:** Precludes additional credit for ENGL 1000, 1100, 1200, 1400, and FYSM 1004

**Winter: T/Th 1:05 p.m.-2:25 p.m.  
Location: Mackenzie Building 3269**

**Instructor: Matthew Scribner  
Email: [Matthew.Scribner@Carleton.ca](mailto:Matthew.Scribner@Carleton.ca)  
Office: 1906 Dunton Tower  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m.**

Literature is a unique way of exploring someone's mind. It transports us into the head of a character and even into the head of an author. Likewise, telling a story is a tried-and-true way of psychological treatment.

Or is it? Is everything I just said a psychological mind game?

Literature and psychology have a long history together. Occasionally that relationship has seemed positive, and even natural, but at other times, the two fields expose weaknesses and vulnerabilities in each other.

This course will explore that history and ask some key questions along the way. How do writers create characters? How do they represent the internal thoughts of characters? What ideas have psychologists abandoned, but fiction writers still use? What are some critiques of psychology, and how does fiction bring them out?

We will read a variety of fiction alongside psychological theory texts in order to address these questions.

**Course Objectives:**

- Learn basic psychological concepts and ideas that are relevant to the study of literature
- Apply critical theory to primary sources
- Refine skills in generating and supporting argumentative thesis statements across essays
- Improve the ability to express in writing sophisticated ideas and opinions using proper, correct, and effective academic English practice

- Use, cite, and interpret primary literary texts in complex ways while following MLA documentation standards

- Develop critical thinking skills

**Evaluation:**

As stated in the Academic Regulations of the University, Section 2.1, students must complete all term papers and examinations to obtain credit for this 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.

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|--------------------------|--|-----|
| <b>Three Term Papers</b> | 1) Two pages (Due: January 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2020)    | 10% |
|                          | 2) Three pages (Due: February 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2020) | 20% |
|                          | 3) Four pages (Due: March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2020)     | 30% |

All of these papers are due at the start of class. Topics will be posted to cuLearn.

**In-Class Assignments** 10%

You need to be in class to do the assignment. There will be no make-ups under normal circumstances. But:

**Bonus Assignments**

Several bonus assignments, worth 1% each, will be posted on cuLearn. They have various due dates.

**Final Examination** 30%

Work handed in late will be penalized 10% per day, unless there has been a prior arrangement.

**PLAGIARISM**

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;

- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;

- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

The policy can be found at:

<https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

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

### **Pregnancy obligation**

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: <https://carleton.ca/equity/contact/form-pregnancy-accommodation/>

### **Religious obligation**

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/discrimination-harassment/religious-spiritual-observances/>

### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the Paul Menton Centre Website: [carleton.ca/pmc](http://carleton.ca/pmc)

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/sexual-violence-prevention-survivor-support/>

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

### **Other Carleton Services:**

Please note that the following university-wide services are available to you: Writing Support Services, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, MacOdrum Library, 613-520-2600x1125, <http://carleton.ca/csas/writingservices/> (offers assistance with developing and improving writing skills); Academic Advising Services, 302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850; Career Development Services, 401 Tory Building, 613-520-6611, <http://carleton.ca/sacds/>; The Centre for Student Academic Support, 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the MacOdrum Library, 613-520-2600 x1125; Research Help Desks at MacOdrum Library, 613-520-2600 x2735, <https://library.carleton.ca/services/research-help> (offer assistance with digital research and using the library); the Office of Student Affairs or Health and Counseling Services, 613-520-2600 x2573; [www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs](http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs) or [www.carleton.ca/health](http://www.carleton.ca/health) (offer assistance coping with stress or crisis).

Many of the texts in this syllabus discuss or depict death by suicide and other forms of self-harm. Please know that the above resources are available to you if you find this material troubling.

Please note as well that you are warmly invited to access Departmental Academic Advising. The English Department's Undergraduate Supervisor will offer advice about your program of study as an English Major or Minor and check your fulfillment of program and university requirements for graduation. To make an appointment for academic advising, contact the Undergraduate Supervisor, Professor Birkwood, at [susan.birkwood@carleton.ca](mailto:susan.birkwood@carleton.ca).

**Please note:** Student or professor materials created for this course (including lectures, hand-outs, assignments, quizzes, drafts, essays, and examinations) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

### **Etiquette**

Please give the person who is speaking in class—whether it is the instructor or one of your peers—your full attention.

You may use a laptop to take notes, but please, do not surf the web, check social media, or do other distracting things in class. Please do not use cellphones in class, even to take notes.

Do not wear earbuds or headphones in class, even if you are not listening to music.

Discussion is encouraged, but (obviously) please disagree without being disagreeable.

## **Texts**

Dangarembga, Tsiti. *Nervous Conditions*. Ayebia Clarke Publishing, 2004. (ISBN 9780954702335)

Dickinson, Emily. Poems (available online through cuLearn)

Hoffman, E.T.A. “The Sandman” (available online through cuLearn)

Nothomb, Amelie. *The Character of Rain*. St. Martin's Press, 2003. (ISBN 9780312302481)

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*. Edited by Craig Walker. Broadview, 2010. (ISBN 9781551119670)

VanderMeer, Jeff. *Annihilation*. HarperCollins, 2014. (ISBN 9781443428392).

All non-online texts are available from Haven Books, 43 Seneca St., Ottawa, ON, K1S 4X2. Regrettably, Haven Books is not wheelchair accessible: please contact me if this presents a problem.

In addition to these primary texts, there are several short articles on psychology. These are available online through cuLearn. In most cases, you will need to log in to Ares, Carleton’s online library program. Just use your regular Carleton log-in.

There are a number of these articles to read for each section, but they are short. It is okay if you do not understand them at first—we will talk about them in class.

## **SCHEDULE**

This schedule will absolutely change as we go. All page numbers are estimates of where we will be.

### **Part One**

Our primary text will be “The Sandman” and we will cover psychology basics, including Sigmund Freud, the subconscious, conformity (with reference to the Milgram experiment), and personality.

January 7: Introduction

January 9: “The Sandman”

January 14: "The Sandman"

January 16: The Psychology of Essay Writing

## Part Two

We will be studying *The Character of Rain*, which will help us examine childhood development, especially the ideas of Jean Piaget, Jacques Lacan, and B.F. Skinner. We will also touch on Sabina Spielrein's idea of the death drive.

January 21: *The Character of Rain*, pages 1-27

January 23: *The Character of Rain*, pages 28-64

January 28: *The Character of Rain*, pages 64-108

January 30: *The Character of Rain*, pages 108-132

## Part Three

*King Lear* gives us the opportunity to explore the idea of mental illness and stigma, as well as unusual and outdated psychological theories, especially theories about how the human mind may (or more likely, may not) have changed over time. We will also discuss Carl Jung's idea of archetypes.

February 4: *King Lear*, Act 1

February 6: *King Lear*, Acts 2-3

February 11: *King Lear*, Act 4

February 13: *King Lear*, Act 5

February 18: READING WEEK

February 20: READING WEEK

## Part Four

There is plenty to talk about in the famously enigmatic poetry of Emily Dickinson, including Harold Bloom's controversial theory on authorship.

February 25: Dickinson's poetry

February 27: Dickinson's poetry

## Part Five

The weirdness continues with *Annihilation*. We'll revisit some themes and also talk about eco-anxiety and the idea of ecological "slow violence."

March 3: *Annihilation*, pages 1-35

March 5: *Annihilation*, pages 36-87

March 10: *Annihilation*, pages 88-119

March 12: *Annihilation*, pages 110-153

March 17: *Annihilation*, pages 154-195

## **Part Six**

While reading *Nervous Conditions*, we will talk about the ideas of Frantz Fanon and other critiques of previous theories, including Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's response to Bloom and Julia Kristeva's challenge to Lacan.

March 19: *Nervous Conditions*, Introduction

March 24: *Nervous Conditions*, pages 1-57

March 26: *Nervous Conditions*, pages, 58-122

March 31: *Nervous Conditions*, pages 123-178

April 2: *Nervous Conditions*, pages 179-208

April 7: Exam Review