

**Carleton University**

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

*Precludes additional credit for ENGL 1000, 1009, 1100, 1200, 1400, 1609 and FYSM 1004*

**Department of English**

**Fall, 2016**

**Professor Collett Tracey**

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**Overview:**

The source of every work of literature is in a human individual, and that individual in a particular state of mind and motivation. Creativity is a crisis phenomenon. It is the result of problems facing the individual psyche — exactly as Freud explained the origin of dreams — and it is an attempt to resolve these problems in complex symbolic forms. The crisis, of course, is personal and internal; it doesn't have to physically manifest itself, but it often it does - consider, for example, Eliot's nervous breakdown after the writing of the *Wasteland*, Nietzsche's state of possession in writing *Zarathustra*, Ezra Pound's physical collapse in prison that resulted in his celebrated *Cantos*, and the countless writers who have shared their stormy addictions to drugs and alcohol as they fought to find words to express their ideas.

But that is only one part of the equation...

Literature is a reflection of life -- and as such, offers a means by which complex psychological and emotional issues can be explored, not only by the writer, but by readers. From a therapeutic point of view this has enormous power given that it offers one the ability to know that one is not alone in a particular situation or problem, and that there are others who are battling similar issues and pursuing different methods of overcoming them. Rather than deal with a trauma that is, perhaps, too difficult to confront directly, literature offers a parallel space, in which one can revisit a trauma at a safe distance.

These are the ideas we will explore in this class through the close analysis of several novels, short stories and poems and films, including works by Sylvia Plath, P.K. Page, Virginia Woolf, John Updike, Hemingway, Joyce, Klein and others...

**Required Texts:**

(available at the University bookstore)

David Sefaris, *Squirrel Seeks Chipmunk*

Thesen, *All My Puny Sorrows*

Chuck Palahniuk, *Fight Club*

Romeo D'Allaire, *Shake Hands With the Devil*

Ami McKay, *The Birth House*

**Grading:**

Class Participation & Seminar: 50%

Essay: 50%

**The Essay:**

As a student, you will be encouraged to devise your own essay topic in consultation with me. It should reflect ideas and material relevant to the issues that we will be discussing over the semester. You can base your essay on the works of a particular writer, which might be an in-depth study of a single text or a thematic exploration across more than one text (including, if you wish, texts we haven't studied as long as I agree with them). Alternatively, you can write a thematic essay which takes an idea, topic, or theme and explores it through texts by more than one writer (although writing about more than two primary texts is usually a bad idea). The usual essay rules apply: you are expected to demonstrate a level of engagement and research that goes beyond the content covered in seminars, and the essay must be presented in correct MLA scholarly format (with a consistently used and accurate referencing system and a full, properly formatted bibliography). The essay must be word-processed and paginated, and accompanied by a completed cover sheet.

**Grading System:**

Grades for term work will be based on insightfulness, originality, focus, organization of ideas, clarity of expression, scholarly rigor, correct use of MLA style, spelling, and grammar.

**General Expectations, Course Policies and Classroom Etiquette:**

Students are expected to attend all classes, showing up on time and staying for the duration of the class. You are also expected to bring the text assigned for that day's class, having read it and being prepared for discussion. If you do have to miss a class it is your responsibility to get the notes you miss from another student. *I strongly prefer that, unless they are absolutely necessary*

*for note-taking, both cellphones and laptops should be turned off during class.* Students must be prepared to discuss the texts in a thoughtful manner.

Critical reading, writing and analytical skills cannot be learned from books alone. Asking questions about the readings and contributing to class discussions will help you better understand the material, hone your critical and interpretive skills and prepare you well for upper-year classes where participation will account for part of your final grade. -

Attendance will be taken on a random basis, and absences will be noted. *Students who miss 4 or more classes per term will not be able to pass the course, as all course requirements must be fulfilled for successful completion of the course.*

### **Contact:**

The best way to get in contact with me is by email at collett.tracey@carleton.ca. I will respond to emails in a timely fashion (usually within 24 hours, though it could be longer on weekends) and especially to those that ask clear, precise and specific questions. - I am also available to meet with students to discuss any aspect of the course during my office hours, and if you are unable to make it to my office hours, we can reschedule a time to meet that is convenient to both of us.

### **Suggestions:**

It is strongly recommended that you take notes on the lectures and discussions, and keep a record of the passages we discuss in class. Writing in the margins of your books and marking off key passages as you read is also a good idea.

### **Handing In Assignments:**

Assignments are due in class on the dates indicated. However, they can be handed in without penalty until 8:00 a.m. the morning after the due date, via the English Department's drop box, located on the 18th floor of Dunton Tower. *Please do not slip the assignment under my office door. Emailed or faxed assignments are not acceptable and will not be marked.* Keep a back-up copy of every assignment you hand in as an insurance policy in the unlikely event that your essay is misplaced.

### **Late Penalty:**

Deadlines must be met. Late essays are not normally accepted (for many reasons, not the least of which is that it is inherently unfair to those who do work hard to meet deadlines). If you have a valid reason for missing a deadline, and if I know in advance, your essay may be accepted. Except in rare cases for which corroborating documentation can be provided (such as a medical emergency or the death of an immediate family member), assignments which are accepted and handed in after the due date will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per day. For example, a B+ essay due on Monday but handed in on Tuesday afternoon would drop to a B. If it wasn't handed

in until Wednesday it would receive a B-, etc. Saturday and Sunday count as 1 day each, so if you find yourself in the position of finishing up your late essay on Saturday afternoon and don't want to lose 1/3 of a grade for Sunday too, email me the completed assignment immediately and submit an identical hard copy to the drop box on Monday.

**Extensions:**

Requests for extension may be granted in some instances, but only for compelling reasons. Any such request must be made in writing or in person no later than 48 hours prior to the due date of the assignment. Requests for "retroactive" extensions (i.e. requests made on or after the due date of the essay) will not be considered.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism means passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own or submitting the same work in two different academic contexts (self-plagiarism). The consequences of plagiarism are severe and are issued by the Dean and the University Senate. In order to avoid plagiarism, you must correctly attribute the sources of the ideas you pick up from books, the internet, and other people. See the statement on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar.

**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: 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 [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) 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).

**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.

**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.

**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 submitted immediately upon request

**Calendar**

September:	Wed, 7	Introduction to Course & to Bibliotherapy ("Whom I Write For") Introduction to journalling
	Mon, 12	Intro continued...Poems ("You Fit Into Me", "Time Around Scars")
	Wed, 14	Poems cont'd
	Mon, 19	Layton Poems
	Wed, 21	Introduction to Seminars & topics/ <i>Fight Club</i>
	Mon, 26	<i>Fight Club</i>
	Wed, 28	<i>Fight Club</i>
October :	Mon, 3	Poems
	Wed, 5	Poems
	Mon, 10	Stat Holiday - no class
	Wed, 12	Palahniuk, <i>Fight Club</i>
	Mon, 17	Sefaris
	Wed, 19	Sefaris
	Mon, 24	Fall Break - no class
	Wed, 26	Fall Break - no class
	Mon, 31	Seminar Topics and Preparation for D'Allaire
November	Wed, 2	D'Allaire

	Mon, 7	D'Allaire	
	Wed, 9	D'Allaire	
	Mon, 14	D'Allaire	
	Wed, 16	Poems	
	Mon, 21	Poems/ Seminar topics for <i>The Birth House</i>	
	Wed, 23	McKay, <i>The Birth House</i>	
	Mon, 28	McKay	
	Wed, 30	McKay	
December:	Mon, 5	McKay	
	Wed, 7	Review of Course	<i>Papers Due</i>