

Carleton University
Summer 2017 (July/August)
Department of English

ENGL 2100A – Topics in Popular Culture
Precludes additional credit for ENGL 2101
Prerequisite(s): second-year standing

Topic:
The Visual Novel: Situating “Prestige Television”

Time: Tues / Thurs 11:35-2:25
Location: A720LA (confirm on Carleton Central)

Instructor: David Thomas
Email: david.thomas3@carleton.ca
Office: DT 1925
Office Hours: Thursday 2:30-3:30

Outline:

This course studies the recent rise of what is often described as “quality” or “prestige” television, and focuses on the special relationship between prestige television and the literary tradition. We will uncover how showrunners and television writers have adapted the techniques of literary writing to the medium of television, cultivating their audience’s interest in extended story arcs that explore characters’ lives with unusual complexity and depth. As these shows arrive on our flat screens organized in “chapters” and “parts,” we see TV networks quietly cashing in on forms of cultural prestige that were once much more exclusively associated with the literary novel. Studying these new developments, and interpreting them in the light of the literary tradition, discussion will center on four critically-lauded shows: *The Wire*, *Mad Men*, *Atlanta* and *Occupied*. Mirroring the thematic concerns of these shows, our conversation will circle hot-button issues such as class, race, gender, and technology as we try to grasp the characteristic political and aesthetic strategies of these “visual novels.”

Required Texts

The Wire (Season 1), David Simon
Mad Men (Season 1), Matthew Weiner
Atlanta, Donald Glover
Occupied (Okkupert), Jo Nesbø, Erik Skjoldbjærg and Karianne Lund

*** These shows are available on a variety of different platforms, from *iTunes* and *Google Play*, to *Netflix* and *Crave*. All texts not listed here will be available via cuLearn.

Method of Evaluation:

10%:	Students will be expected to participate in class discussion in an informed way.
40%:	Essay 1000 words due midterm
50%:	Exam 3hrs date TBA

Accommodations:

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.

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.

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 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*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website (www.carleton.ca/pmc) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

Plagiarism:

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional 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, which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct 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.

Schedule (provisional outline):

4 July:

Introduction to the course

6 July:

Introduction to *The Wire* (Episodes 1, 2, 3, 4)

11 July:

The Wire and the police procedural (Episodes 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

13 July:

The Wire and social realism (Episodes 10, 11, 12, 13)

18 July:

Introduction to *Madmen* (Episodes 1, 2, 3, 4)

20 July:

Madmen and the historical period drama (Episodes 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

25 July:

Madmen and literary modernism (Episodes 10, 11, 12, 13)

27 July:

Introduction to *Atlanta* (Episodes 1, 2, 3)

1 August:

Atlanta, quality television, and magic realism (Episodes 4, 5, 6, 7)

3 August:

Atlanta, hip hop, and social media (Episodes 8, 9, 10)

8 August:

Introduction to *Occupied* (Episodes 1, 2)

10 August:

Occupied and Nordic noir (Episodes 3, 4, 5, 6)

15 August

Occupied and energy politics (Episodes 7, 8, 9, 10)