

**Carleton University
Fall 2019
Department of English**

**ENGL 2107A: *Science Fiction: The Post-Apocalyptic Imagination*
Prerequisite: second-year standing or permission of the department**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11.35am-12.55pm

Classroom: SA 404

Professor T. DeCook

Email: travis_decook@carleton.ca

Office: DT 1803

Phone: 613 520 2600 ext. 1367

Office Hour: Tuesdays, 1-2pm

This course examines novels, short stories, and films which imagine human experience in the wake of world-historical catastrophes. We will consider the distinctive kinds of cultural, social, ethical, and political concerns raised by post-apocalyptic works. We will also pay attention to the kinds of community these works imagine arising from the remains of the old world. Throughout we will be attending to how these works might be understood as responses to specific historical concerns and conflicts, and how they might generate reflection on our own situation.

cuLearn

Announcements and documents pertaining to the course will be posted on cuLearn. Students are fully responsible for reading all course material transmitted here. Information posted to cuLearn will be considered provided to all registered students within 24 hours of posting.

Course Objectives

-acquaint students with important works of post-apocalyptic literature and film, and with some of the central themes and concerns of post-apocalyptic culture

-foster reflection on how cultural works are shaped by their historical contexts, and on how they incite reflection about human experience and history

-develop students' capacities to interpret and critically reflect upon cultural works

-foster students' abilities to effectively communicate critical insights about cultural works

Course Work and Evaluation

First writing assignment (due Oct 3): 10%

Midterm (Oct 17): 25%

Second writing assignment (due Dec 3): 30%

Final exam (December exam period): 30%

Participation: 5%

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.

In the **first writing assignment**, you will address the following questions: What important post-apocalyptic issues or concerns do you think the texts we've covered so far have ignored, or don't adequately develop? Or, conversely, what aspects of these texts do you find particularly insightful and significant, and why? How would you imagine a post-apocalyptic world if you were writing a novel or creating a film? What are the significant things would you emphasize, and why? The assignment length is 1000 words.

The **second writing assignment** will consist of the critical analysis of a passage from a text that we have studied (you'll be able to pick from a selection of passages). You will provide a close reading of the passage, then discuss its significance to the text from which it is taken, and then finally reflect on how this passage relates to other texts from the course. The assignment length is 1500 words.

Both writing assignments must be submitted in hard copy, typewritten, handed in at the end of class on the due date, and citations must comply with the Modern Languages Association (MLA) format (see the *MLA Handbook* or <http://www.mla.org>). You are not required to use secondary sources. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 2% for every day they are late, excluding weekends and holidays. A medical emergency, documented with a doctor's note, is the only legitimate excuse for a late paper. Computer problems and lost papers are not valid excuses for late assignments: it is your responsibility to maintain backup copies of all your work.

The **midterm exam** will cover all course material up to that point, and will include identification questions, passage analysis, and essay questions. The two-hour **final exam**, held during the December exam period, will consist of the same types of

questions as the midterm. It will focus primarily on material covered since the midterm, but will require you to make some connections to earlier material.

Participation marks derive from your regular attendance and informed involvement in discussion periods. Participation includes bringing to class the texts to be discussed. Significant absence from this course will lead to loss of participation marks and will have deleterious consequences for your mid-term and final exams.

Classroom Protocols

Audio and visual recording devices are not allowed within the classroom. Students who want audio recordings of lectures must obtain authorization from the instructor. To avoid disrupting fellow students, please refrain from talking to neighbours during class, and turn off cell phones before class begins.

Academic Honesty

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 must be extremely vigilant in documenting all of your sources (including the course lectures). Use MLA format for citation. Please note that plagiarism includes recycling your own work used in other courses.

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

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: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

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: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

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 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. 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: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-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>

Schedule of readings (subject to change)

Sept 5: Introduction

Sept 10: stories from Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*: "The Luggage Store"; "The Off Season"; "The Watchers"; "The Silent Towns"; "The Long Years"; "There Will Come Soft Rains"

Sept 12: stories from Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*: "The Million Year Picnic"

Sept 17: Walter M. Miller, Jr. *A Canticle for Leibowitz*

Sept 19: Walter M. Miller, Jr. *A Canticle for Leibowitz*

Sept 24: Walter M. Miller, Jr. *A Canticle for Leibowitz*

Sept 26: Walter M. Miller, Jr. *A Canticle for Leibowitz*

Oct 1: Walter M. Miller, Jr. *A Canticle for Leibowitz*

Oct 3: J.G. Ballard, *The Drowned World* (**first writing assignment due**)

Oct 8: J.G. Ballard, *The Drowned World*

Oct 10: *Twelve Monkeys* (dir. Terry Gilliam)

Oct 15: No class

Oct 17: **Midterm**

Oct 22: No class

Oct 24: No class

Oct 29: Philip K. Dick, *Dr. Bloodmoney*

Oct 31: Philip K. Dick, *Dr. Bloodmoney*

Nov 5: Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*

Nov 7: Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*

Nov 12: Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*
Nov 14: Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*
Nov 19: *Children of Men* (dir. Alfonso Cuarón)
Nov 21: *Children of Men* (dir. Alfonso Cuarón)
Nov 26: Colson Whitehead, *Zone One*
Nov 28: Colson Whitehead, *Zone One*
Dec 3: Colson Whitehead, *Zone One* (**second writing assignment due**)
Dec 5: Review

Required Texts

Please use the specific version of the text indicated so that you can follow along in lectures and class discussion.

The following hardcopy texts can be purchased at Haven Books (43 Seneca Street):

Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles* (Simon & Schuster)
Walter M. Miller, Jr. *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (Spectra)
J.G. Ballard, *The Drowned World* (UK General Books)
Philip K. Dick, *Dr. Bloodmoney* (Mariner)
Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (Vintage)
Colson Whitehead, *Zone One* (Anchor)

You are responsible for watching the two films in advance of our discussions. DVD copies of the films will be available at the Library reserve desk. In addition, *Children of Men* is available on Netflix.