

**Carleton University  
Fall 2016  
Department of English**

**ENGL 2900: *Literature of the Self*  
Prerequisite: second-year standing  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:35pm-3:55pm  
Classroom: SA 517 (confirm location with Carleton Central)  
Professor T. DeCook  
Email: [travis\\_decook@carleton.ca](mailto:travis_decook@carleton.ca)  
Office: DT 1803  
Phone: 613 520 2600 ext. 1367  
Office Hours: by appointment**

This course addresses literary depictions of the nature of the self. It covers a wide historical range, engaging texts from antiquity and the middle ages, the early modern period, and the modern and post-modern eras. Similarly, it ventures across diverse cultural contexts. This large scope provides encounters with strange conceptions of selfhood; it also confronts us with historical origins of assumptions which we experience as natural. The course's historical and cultural diversity both helps defamiliarize our current assumptions about selfhood as well as offer moments of commonality with the apparently alien. We will examine such genres as epic and lyric poetry, religious autobiography, drama, short stories, and novels. Recurring themes include shifts in religious belief, secularization, ethics, the relationship and boundary between self and world, notions of self-division and multiple selves, and relationships between the self and external authorities.

### **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 Work and Evaluation**

In-class writing assignment (Sept 27): 10%  
Midterm (Oct 18): 25%  
Essay (due Dec 8): 20%  
Final exam: 40%  
Participation: 5%

For the in-class writing assignment, which will take up our class on September 27, you will write about EITHER 1.) the significant factors that have shaped your own conception of selfhood, or 2.) the significant factors that have shaped the conception of selfhood of a character in a piece of literature of your choice. If you choose the second option, you must indicate in your paper the title of the work of literature and the character's name to which you refer.

In advance of this assignment you will need to think about the individuals, communities, experiences, institutions, media, events, and cultural forms which have influenced your or your character's sense of identity. This assignment demands that you not merely discuss how you or your character identifies in a specific way (e.g., as a Buddhist, as a creative writer, as a guitar player). You will need to go beyond this to talk about the specific values which constitute the centre of your or your character's identity, and the framework through which you or your character make sense of the world. The reflection that you do for this assignment will enrich your engagement with the literature we will read over the course of the term.

The midterm and final exam will cover all course material up to that point, and will include identification questions, passage analysis, and essay questions.

The essay 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 the significant ways it engages questions of selfhood, and then finally reflect on how this passage relates to other texts from the course. The required length of the essay is 1500 words. The essay 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 essays 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.

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**

Plagiarism – making someone else’s work or ideas appear as your own – can happen accidentally. However, inadvertent plagiarism is treated the same as intentional plagiarism, and the consequences for this infraction are severe: expulsion from and an F in the course and, in some cases, expulsion from the university. For the code outlining plagiarism, see the section on “Instructional Offences” in the Undergraduate Calendar.

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

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](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 <http://carleton.ca/pmc> for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

### **Schedule of readings (subject to change)**

Sept 8: Introduction

Sept 13: Augustine, *Confessions* (excerpts)

Sept 15: William Wordsworth, "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey";  
T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Sept 20: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Sept 22: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Sept 27: In-class writing assignment

Sept 29: Frederik Pohl, "The Tunnel Under the World"; Philip K. Dick, "Adjustment Team"

Oct 4: Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Oct 6: Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Oct 11: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

Oct 13: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

Oct 18: Midterm Test

Oct 20: Thomas More, *Utopia* (excerpts)

Oct 25: No class

Oct 27: No class

Nov 1: Anon., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Nov 3: Anon., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Nov 8: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Nov 10: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Nov 15: William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Nov 17: William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Nov 22: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (excerpts)

Nov 24: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (excerpts)

Nov 29: Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*

Dec 1: Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*

Dec 6: Ian McEwan, *Atonement*

Dec 8: Ian McEwan, *Atonement*

## 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):

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Dover edition)  
 Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (Lynne Rienner Publishers)  
 Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (Vintage)  
 Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux)  
 Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (Vintage)

All other texts are available electronically.

## Location of Electronic Texts

### Augustine, Confessions

Text available at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confessions.pdf>

Excerpts to read: Book 2, chapters 6-10; Book 8, chapters 5-12; Book 10, chapters 5-29.

Excerpts are located on pages 38-41, 125-36, 159-75. These page numbers refer to the viewfinder pagination indicated near the top of the screen.

### "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

Text available at

<http://www.rc.umd.edu/sites/default/RCOldSite/www/rchs/reader/tabbey.html>

### "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Text available at <http://www.bartleby.com/198/1.html>

### "The Tunnel Under the World"

Text available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/31979/31979-h/31979-h.htm>

### "Adjustment Team"

Text available at

[http://www.philipkdickfans.com/mirror/gutenberg/Adjustment\\_Team.pdf](http://www.philipkdickfans.com/mirror/gutenberg/Adjustment_Team.pdf)

### Utopia

Text available at [http://literatureproject.com/utopia/Utopia\\_9.htm](http://literatureproject.com/utopia/Utopia_9.htm)

Excerpts to read: "Book II"; "Of Their Towns"; "Of Their Trades, and Manner of Life"; "Of the Travelling of the Utopians"; "Of Their Slaves, and Of Their Marriages"; "Of the Religions of the Utopians"

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Text available through the Carleton Library e-reserves system (Ares). To access, go to the Library homepage and then click on the link for Ares. After logging in, you will see ENGL 2900 listed among the courses in which you are registered. A pdf of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is located there.

*Hamlet*

Text available at

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Annex/Texts/Ham/EM/scene/1.1>

*Macbeth*

Text available at

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Annex/Texts/Mac/M/default/>

*Paradise Lost*

Text available at

[https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading\\_room/pl/book\\_1/text.shtml](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_1/text.shtml)

Excerpts to read: Book 1; Book 2; Book 4 (lines 1-113); Book 9