

Carleton University
 Winter 2018
 Department of English

ENGL 3010: The Secret Lives of Poems

ONLINE COURSE
 [0.5 credit]

Professor Wallace
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Office Hour (in person) Tuesdays 13:00-14:00 at 1922 Dunton Tower. **Meetings outside this time slot can be arranged by appointment. Email is the best way to reach me if you want to set up an appointment.**

Office Hour (online): Mondays 12:00-13:00 via Big Blue Button. **These will be one-on-one sessions only. Please email me either before or during this office hour spot to arrange for a Big Blue Button session. We can also arrange for a Big Blue Button session by appointment.**

“One has to learn to read these poems, just as one has to learn to read a three-line, little imagist poem, just as the writer had to learn to write it.”

Paul Muldoon

Course Description

This course, which has been designed for both non-majors and majors, is designed to enable students to develop skills in reading and writing about poetry. Two interrelated goals have shaped the course: first, it has been structured to both nurture and reward the development of skills in the close reading of poetry; second, it has been constructed in such a way as to show that literary artefacts have their own peculiar histories or, as the title of this course has it, “secret lives.” Reconstructing these histories and secret lives is an activity that can assume several different forms: exploring drafts of a poem that survives in multiple versions; establishing links between a text and the cultures and contexts from which it springs, to which it responds, and which it helps shape; reading poems against the backdrop of the lives and careers of the poets who made them. In order to provide an engaging point of entry into the theory and practice of reading poetry, the course foregrounds poems that explore their emergence from the varied materials of life: that is, from experiences—as well as fantasies—of desire, reading, ecstasy, anger, meditation, and disappointment.

All course work (including the final examination) will be completed and evaluated online. There is no formal essay. The grading scheme couples a series of required tests and a final examination with voluntary weekly activities.

Consistent participation in these bonus activities can add a maximum of 6% to your grade in the course. Please see the .pdf titled “COURSE BONUS PROVISIONS” for a detailed explanation. **These bonus activities will include a series of creative writing exercises (2% max.), participation in a weekly discussion forum (2% max), and the memorization of poems (2% max.).**

Required Readings

Poems studied will range widely, from work by Emily Dickinson to Derek Walcott. With one important exception, all course readings will be available for free via the cuLearn course page. The one addition to these free texts is as follows:

Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux). [9780374523503]

*Any edition of Walcott’s *Omeros* is acceptable, but passages discussed during lecture modules are keyed to this edition.

*Supplementary readings (as described above) will be available either directly on the course cuLearn site (via url) or through ARES (the link will be provided where this is the case).

Copies of *Omeros* will be available at Haven Books 43 Seneca Street, Ottawa, ON, K1S 4X2, (613) 730-9888: www.havenbooks.ca

Course Objectives

My principal goal for the course is to guide you through your encounters with a relatively small group of extraordinary poems, providing you with enough critical support to read these particular texts with pleasure and understanding, while also giving you the tools and confidence to range out widely, on your own, as readers of poetry.

Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- 1) Read and analyze poetry accurately, contextually, and critically
- 2) Write clear and insightful accounts of the formal structure, thematic concerns, and complexity of required readings
- 3) Connect discrete passages and details within poems to wider thematic and cultural concerns
- 4) Demonstrate a firm understanding of a series of technical terms that belong to the study of poetry
- 5) Demonstrate an historical and critical grasp of interrelations between form and content in poetry

6) Work in an organized and self-reliant fashion to meet the requirements of a course conducted entirely in an online environment

Assignment / Activity Structure: Please see course page for deadlines

10% **Early Feedback Test (to be completed by the end of Unit 2)**

25% **Unit 5 Test**

25% **Unit 9 Test**

40% **Final Examination (3 hours)**

Course Expectations and Advice for Students

Online courses can be considerably more flexible than traditional in-class courses. But this flexibility or freedom also requires you to be much more self-reliant and better organized than you may usually push yourself to be. Education is a cooperative activity and it is common to expect immediate feedback concerning one's efforts. Reading, however, is a solitary activity that requires and rewards patience, attention to detail, and a willingness to slow down. Speed-reading this course's poems will give you little chance to enjoy or succeed in the course.

Resist the urge to disappear or go silent if you are having difficulty with readings or lecture modules. I am eager to meet with you either in person or via online forms of contact for office hours. Barring extraordinary circumstances, I can promise to return emails within 24 hours of receiving them. Please contact me immediately if you have a question or concern.

Reading required poems carefully, paying close attention to all unit materials, taking detailed notes on each, and taking advantage of your ability to accumulate bonus points will be your most effective way to succeed in the course.

Please note the following concerning the relationship between your readings, my lectures and supporting materials, and course tests. Course tests (these will place heavy emphasis on your ability to "close read"—i.e., both analyze and interpret—extracts from the course's required readings) will not be limited to material presented and discussed in lecture units. Lecture materials have been developed to help guide your readings of the poems and to provide you with new interpretative routes into those poems, but the tests will assume that you have read the poems carefully and that you will be able to respond with clarity and intelligence to questions that can be reasonably posed to anyone who has read them carefully.

Aside from term tests and the discussion boards for individual units, materials collected within each unit will remain open for the duration of the course. This will enable you to revisit sections of lectures multiple times if you wish to do so. Please see the course page for deadlines.

Plagiarism and Instructional Offences

Please see the section on “Instructional Offences” in the 2017-2018 Undergraduate Calendar. The Undergraduate Calendar defines an act of plagiarism as an attempt “to use and pass off as one’s own idea or product the work of another without expressly giving credit” to the original author. Any act of plagiarism will be prosecuted to the full extent of the guidelines set out in the Undergraduate Calendar. Penalties may include expulsion from Carleton University. The Undergraduate Calendar specifies that the act of submitting “substantially the same piece of work to two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructors from all courses involved” constitutes an Instructional Offence punishable under the guidelines set out in the Undergraduate Calendar. Please note: “Minor modifications and amendments, such as changes of phraseology in an essay or paper, do not constitute a significant and acceptable reworking of an assignment.” No piece of work written for another course will be accepted for credit in this course.

Academic Accommodations

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and 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.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. For further details please consult the website for the PMC: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>

Late Assignment Policy

Test modules will remain open only for a specified amount of time. For dates and time allowances see the relevant entries on the cuLearn course page. Late assignments will not be accepted—indeed, they will not even be submittable—except for officially documented reasons such as serious illness or bereavement. Medical conditions require a signed Doctor’s Certificate. Any accommodation will be based on the length of the period of illness specified in the Certificate. In the case of the death of a close

relative you must produce an obituary notice in which your name appears in confirmation of your relationship to them; alternatively, a copy of the Death Certificate will be accepted.

University Deadlines

Final deadlines are within the limited established by the University Guidelines. See the 2017- 2018 Undergraduate Calendar for further details. Requests to defer the final examination are to be directed to the Registrar's Office.