

Carleton University  
Fall 2020  
Department of English

**ENGL 3603A: 20<sup>th</sup>- & 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Fiction**

**Topic: Fictions for the End of the World**

**Prerequisites:** Prerequisite(s): Third-year standing or permission of the department.

**TIME:** Wednesdays and Fridays 16:05-17:25

**Location: Online**

**Format: Blended**

**Instructor:** Prof. Brian Greenspan

**Office Hours:** TBA

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**Website:** <http://culearn.carleton.ca>

## **I. Course description**

A study of 20th- and 21st-century fiction in English.

Literary fiction helps give shape and meaning to our experiences by providing the sense of an ending that real life often denies us. But what happens when reality itself offers too many endings? How does fiction make sense out of climate crisis, disaster capitalism, global pandemics, and other apocalyptic events?

We will read twentieth- and twenty-first century dystopian narratives (in various media) that rehearse these and other contemporary crises. We will explore various critical and theoretical strategies for critiquing current social, political, and cultural trends, and learn how to sustain hope for a better future amid even the worst case scenario.

**II. Preclusions:** none.

**III. Learning Outcomes:** Students will gain familiarity with select examples of contemporary fiction, along with critical theories and interpretive methods for better understanding them. They will explore methods for recognizing hopeful impulses within even the bleakest of situations. They will learn to learn online, to explore best practices for developing media-rich presentations, and to communicate complex and original critical insights through means other than the printed word.

## **IV. Required Texts**

\* N.B. The reading list below is provisional, and subject to change depending on the availability of primary texts. Please be sure to check back before the start of class before buying your texts. **Only the latest version of the syllabus posted on the course CULearn site is the official version.**

Ling Ma, *Severance*

Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*

Marge Piercy, *He She and It*  
 William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition*  
 Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*  
 Alexander Weinstein, *Children of the New World*  
 Nalo Hopkinson, *Midnight Robber*  
 Naomi Alderman, *The Power*  
 Alex Rivera (dir.), *Sleep Dealer* (available at <http://www.sleepdealer.com>.)

plus various online, secondary, and supplemental readings.

We will be viewing one motion picture, *Sleep Dealer*, available for purchase at: <http://www.sleepdealer.com>. Most other primary texts will be available at **Octopus Books**, 116 Third Avenue (at Bank St.). You can order books from Octopus for pickup or delivery anywhere in Canada at: <http://shop.octopusbooks.ca/ENGL3603>.

Shorter fictions, secondary texts, and supplemental readings can be found through MacOdrum Library's online [Course Reserves](#) and digital holdings.

## V. Blended Instruction

ENGL 3603 is a blended course, meaning some of our classes will take place synchronously online at our regularly scheduled class time, while others will include asynchronous online video Modules, Forum Discussions, and other activities. Each class, whether synchronous or asynchronous, will have associated readings--usually novels or short stories--that will form the basis of our discussion.

All online Modules and Forum Discussions will be linked to our **CULearn** course site.

Our synchronous meetings will take place using the **Zoom** platform; an ID Code for each week's Zoom meeting will be posted in advance on **CULearn**. Those who install the Zoom app are encouraged to create a free Zoom account.

You will not be required to enable your camera or microphone for our Zoom meetings, though you will certainly have the opportunity to participate in our discussions verbally or through the Zoom chat window. You can join our Zoom meetings with the current link provided on CULearn either using the Zoom app, or through a standard web browser. You can also dial into any class meeting by phone, using the Zoom ID Codes that will be provided in advance on CULearn and one of [Zooms' toll-free numbers](#):

+1 647 374 4685 (Ontario)

+1 647 558 0588 (Ontario)

Local numbers for users located outside of Ontario can be found at: <https://zoom.us/j/acKFv2t3c>.

For instructions on installing or running Zoom, please visit Carleton Online: <https://carleton.ca/online>.

For more CULearn support, please visit CULearn Support: <https://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/students>.

## VI. Evaluation

|                                |                                      |                        |     |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----|
| 1) Short paper or Presentation | 1200 words (5-6 pages or equivalent) | <b>DUE October 2</b>   | 20% |
| 2) Term Paper or Presentation  | 1500 words (7-8 pages or equivalent) | <b>DUE November 25</b> | 40% |
| 3) Online participation        |                                      | <b>DUE regularly</b>   | 40% |

All assignments will be graded on a number of criteria, including their interpretive originality, critical insight, attention to the primary text, grammar, and clarity and persuasiveness of expression. **All assignments must be submitted in order to pass the course.**

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.

### **Short Paper and Term Paper** (DUE October 2 and November 25 respectively)

Topics for the Short Paper and Term Paper will be circulated on CULearn closer to the due date. They should provide an original, critical, and well-documented exploration of the assigned topic as it relates to class material, and should be researched, theorized, fully documented, and contextualized within a broader awareness of the kinds of literary and critical issues we discuss in class. All written work will be submitted and graded through CULearn, and will conform to the latest MLA format and style of parenthetical citation (see **Documentation**, below).

### **Optional Presentation** (DUE October 2 or November 25)

If you choose, you may produce a **Presentation** in lieu of **ONE** of your written assignments, i.e. **EITHER** the Short Paper **OR** the Term Paper, but not both. For those who so choose, there will be some limited opportunities to present to the class live and synchronously; sign-up sheets will be posted to CULearn along with the assignment topics.

However, as time slots are limited, most Presentations will need to be pre-recorded and shared with the class through your CUPortfolio account. Your classmates will have the chance to review your recorded Presentation on their own time, and respond online. We will discuss CUPortfolio, presentation platforms, and best practices for producing recorded Presentations in our synchronous class meetings.

Presentations will be graded on the same criteria as written assignments, as well as the success with which you present your material and engage the class. You should aim for a provocative and engaging Presentation, solidly grounded in your reading and research. Your ultimate goal is not to provide all the answers about your primary text, but to raise questions and generate critical discussion.

As part of your Presentation, it's a good idea to provide the class with:

- an outline of your key points and examples, with any salient quotations and page references
- a list of any key theoretical terms you use, with definitions; and
- a selected Works Cited and Consulted, detailing your primary and secondary sources, including any online sources you draw on.

**N.B.** All synchronous Presentations must be accompanied by either a legible transcript or point-form speaking notes, provided in advance through CULearn.

### **Online Participation** (DUE regularly)

You will have the opportunity to contribute in our synchronous Zoom meetings, as well as through our **CULearn Forum**. A portion of most classes will be set aside for asynchronous discussion on the Forum, which will contribute to a substantial portion of your final grade. Grading criteria will include:

- the extent, relevance, and insightfulness of your contributions;
- your level of engagement and respectful dialogue with other members of the class;

- the regularity and consistency of your participation.

Please respect your fellow classmates at all times. When in doubt, follow **The Golden Rule of Netiquette**:

*Don't post any message that you wouldn't say aloud in class or f2f.*

To ensure that you get the most out of the Forum, it's best to visit and engage with it on a regular basis, and to respond to what others are saying there. Your Participation grade will be determined in part by the regularity of your contributions, so don't wait until the end of term to participate.

Please remember that CULearn is a virtual extension of our classroom, and therefore is subject to the University's conduct regulations. At all times, you must respect your fellow classmates, and try to keep the discussion relevant to our course goals. When in doubt, follow **The Golden Rule of Netiquette**: *Don't post any comment you wouldn't read aloud in class or speak f2f.*

For more tips on Netiquette and on succeeding in **Online Interaction and Engagement**, visit:

<https://carleton.ca/online/online-learning-resources>.

### **Absences from Class**

Please notify me through e-mail of any anticipated or unavoidable absences from class due to emergency or illness.

### **Submitting Assignments**

All assignments must be submitted through CULearn on or before the deadline. **Please don't e-mail assignments to me.** It is important that you submit each assignment through CULearn, as doing so provides proof that you have submitted it on time. Assignments not submitted through CULearn will not be considered for grading, and will score 0.

*\* N.B. To avoid potential sanction, please retain all rough work, including digital files. The instructor reserves the right to request all rough work, and to withhold the grade for any given assignment pending a supplemental oral examination by two professors.*

### **Extensions, Late Assignments and Special Accommodations**

- All assignments are expected to be submitted on time, unless you have: i) a medical note from a doctor explaining that you could not complete the assignment; ii) an explanatory note from the Paul Menton Centre (See Academic Accommodation, below); or iii) special permission for an extension from me.
- You may submit written essays or asynchronous Presentations up to 3 days late without penalty; however, late or extended assignments will not receive extensive feedback.
- Assignments submitted more than 3 days late will be docked 5%/day, up to a maximum of 15%. Assignments handed in more than 6 days past the due date will not be accepted, and will score 0. In other words, plan ahead, develop a work schedule, and stick to it. Any request for an extension beyond 3 days must be submitted by email to the instructor at least one week before the due date.

Delays do sometimes occur as a result of computer errors. However, responsibility for your work rests ultimately with you. Be sure to back up your work and print out hard copies regularly as you write. That way, if your computer fails, you can always locate another one to finish your work.

### Documentation

You are expected to document any and all primary and secondary sources referred to (directly or indirectly) in your assignments, including sources for websites, musical, visual and electronic information. **The MLA style of parenthetical references with a Works Cited page, as detailed in the MLA Handbook (8<sup>th</sup> ed.), is the only acceptable method of documentation** (see <http://www.mla.org/style>). For quick guidelines and examples, see [https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/documents/MLAStyle\\_QuickGuide\\_Update\\_Sept\\_2014.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/documents/MLAStyle_QuickGuide_Update_Sept_2014.pdf).

It's your responsibility to educate yourself on how to avoid plagiarism through careful research habits and the proper documentation of sources. Any failure to document sources, whether deliberate or inadvertent, will carry heavy sanctions, and may result in a failing grade or expulsion (see Academic Integrity, below), so please double-check your Works Cited before submitting assignments. Make sure you know both the University's policies on plagiarism, and the MLA Handbook guidelines for referencing sources. If you're still are in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism or about the legitimacy of a citation or reference, please ask me or your T.A., or check with the Academic Writing Centre and Writing Tutorial Service (See Helpful Student Services, below).

To avoid potential sanction, please retain all rough work. The instructor reserves the right to request all rough work, and to withhold the grade for any given assignment pending a supplemental oral examination by two professors.

## **VII. PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Carleton University has a clear policy on academic integrity, including procedures to address academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, and other activities that violate academic integrity standards). Full information is in the Undergraduate Calendar under "Academic Regulations of the University".

It is particularly important in this class that students understand and meet academic integrity standards, and are sure they do not violate these standards through plagiarism. The following definition of plagiarism is taken from Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy, Part VI (this definition also appears in the Undergraduate Calendar):

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." Plagiarism can include, but is not limited to:

- 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 form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that 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 failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity>.

Any secondary sources incorporated into your papers, including essays that I put on Reserve, must be cited appropriately. If you have any questions about when and how to cite sources, do not hesitate to ask either me or your T.A. If we suspect that an essay has been plagiarized either deliberately or inadvertently, we are required to submit the essay to the Dean, who will conduct a thorough investigation into the case and administer penalties. The penalties for plagiarism are very severe, ranging from failure in the course to expulsion from the university. It's not worth the risk!

Carleton has other important policies regarding tests, examinations, and unauthorized resubmission of your work (that is, handing in the same paper in more than one class). Be sure you understand the standards so as to avoid any academic misconduct.

N.B. To avoid potential sanction, please retain all rough work. The instructor reserves the right to request all rough work, and to withhold the grade for any given assignment pending a supplemental oral examination by two professors.

For more helpful information visit the Academic Advising Centre: <http://carleton.ca/academicadvising>.

### **VIII. 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:

**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 click [here](#).

**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 click [here](#).

**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).

## **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 where 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:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

## **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. 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

## **IX. Helpful Student Services**

**CU Online** has lots of great advice for managing online courses: <https://carleton.ca/online>.

The **Centre for Student Academic Support** (<http://carleton.ca/csas/>) offers valuable support for writing and research, such as **Writing Services** (<https://carleton.ca/csas/writing-services>).

**Carleton Health and Counselling Services** (<http://www.carleton.ca/health/>) offers comprehensive health care, including counselling of personal problems and emotional distress. 2600 Carleton Technology & Training Centre.

For other services and support, visit <http://www.carleton.ca/studentssupport>.

## **X. Contacting Your Instructor**

I am available for telephone or online meetings during my virtual office hours on a first-come, first-serve basis to discuss issues directly related to the course. Office hours will be posted on our CULearn course site.

E-mail is the most reliable means of contacting me. You can send me a message by e-mail from your Carleton account any time of day or night, and I will respond in good time (usually within 3 working days). For a timely response, be sure to use your Carleton e-mail account, and to include the course number ("3603") in the subject line of your message.

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