

Carleton University  
Winter 2022  
Department of English Language and Literature

**ENGL 3605A: Modern and Contemporary Literary Theory**  
***Topic: Representing Violence***

Prerequisites: Third-year standing or permission of the department  
Preclusions: Precludes additional credit for ENGL 3002 (no longer offered)

**Mondays 14:35 – 17:25**  
**Location: *online via Zoom***

**Format: *Synchronous***  
**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION ARE REQUIRED**  
**PLEASE, WHERE POSSIBLE, KEEP YOUR CAMERAS ON DURING THE ZOOM MEETING**

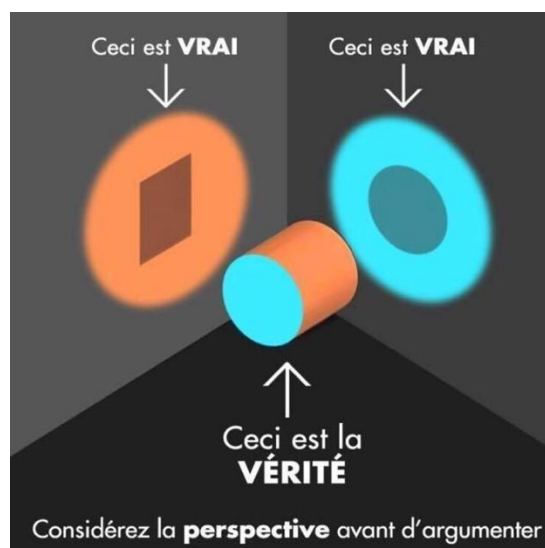
**Zoom link and password are provided in Brightspace**

**N.B. Our synchronous online sessions will not be recorded. This means that if you miss a class you cannot watch at your leisure. However, I hope that this will facilitate active participation, whether on camera and/or online chat.**

**Instructor: Prof. Stuart Murray**  
**Email: [stuart.murray@carleton.ca](mailto:stuart.murray@carleton.ca)**  
**Office: *online via Zoom***  
**Office Hours: By appointment (please email)**

**(To comply with FIPPA privacy legislation, sensitive/private discussions  
will take place by phone or via Microsoft Teams)**





**I. Calendar course description:** Introduction to contemporary approaches to literary texts, such as formalist, structuralist, deconstructive, psychoanalytic, Marxist, historicist, and feminist. Topics may include: the nature and role of literature, of author and reader, of canons, ideology, gender, sexuality, and race.

**N.B.:** The Calendar description above suggests a survey course, in theory. However, our approach in this course will assume that theory is best understood when it is put to work on real-world problems—and these problems, often dramatized in literature, can serve as a entry point for any theoretical investigation. Theory need not be dry, boring, or impenetrable: it is something we do all the time, but it is a critical skill that needs to be honed.

Consider the graphic above: there are many representations of a phenomenon that can be true (*vrai*), but a theoretical understanding tries to make sense of what might not necessarily be represented—but is nevertheless the truth (*la vérité*) on which on which our representations depend.

This course is thematized around representations of violence; however, it is not intended to depress you. The syllabus is populated by writers and artists engaged in an ongoing struggle to resist, challenge, or lay bare the sedimented cultural and political assumptions that structure public discourse on violent acts. From women grappling with the continued prevalence of sexual violence in our society, to American GIs who refused to fight an imperialist war in Vietnam, this course will dramatize their struggles to think through/about/within violence and to intervene in its perpetuation.

**Course Delivery:** Please note that the course will be delivered online (synchronous). This means that students need to be prepared to meet online via Zoom at scheduled days and times. Students are expected to remain up to date with the deadlines and due dates provided

by the instructor. **This course requires reliable high-speed Internet access and a computer with a functioning webcam and microphone.**

**II. Preclusions:** Precludes additional credit for ENGL 3002 (no longer offered).

**III. Learning Outcomes:** Students will develop an understanding of contemporary theoretical approaches to literary/cultural texts, and, conversely, students will learn to take literary/cultural texts themselves as a theoretical approach to contemporary social, cultural, and political problems. The course will foster the *application* of theory and literature to the real world. Finally, students will learn to exercise active literary reading skills across distinct genres.

**IV. Texts:** Required texts will be linked through the Brightspace portal. However, please note that the items in green are texts that must be purchased.

Anna Burns, *Milkman: A Novel* (London: Faber & Faber, 2018).

Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (New York: Scribner, 2017).

Nick Drnaso, *Sabrina* (Drawn & Quarterly, 2018).

These books have been ordered through Haven Books, 43 Seneca St, Ottawa  
<https://www.havenbooks.ca>

I encourage you to please support our local bookseller!

**V. Course calendar:** Please note that each week's texts (readings, audio, visual, etc.) must be completed prior to that week's synchronous Zoom meeting.

**CONTENT WARNING:** Many of our course texts include graphic depictions and/or discussions of war, torture, violence/murder, sexual violence/rape, and racial violence. Content Warnings (CW) are noted for each text below; however, they are not exhaustive.

1. Jan. 10, 2022 Introduction

2. Jan. 17, 2022 Drawing Blood

Lewis, H. Lapham, "Mute Button," *Harper's Magazine* (April 2006), 9–11.

Art Spiegelman, "Drawing Blood: Outrageous Cartoons and the Art of Outrage," *Harper's Magazine* (June 2006), 43–52.

CW // violence/murder, racial violence

3. Jan. 24, 2022 The Photograph

Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others," *New York Times Magazine*, 23 May 2005, 24+.

CW // war, torture, violence/murder, sexual violence/rape, racial violence

Judith Butler, "Torture and the Ethics of Photography," *Environmental and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 25 (2007), 951–66.

**4. Jan. 31, 2022 The Contract Quiz 1**

Ariella Azoulay, "Has Anyone Ever Seen a Photograph of a Rape?," *The Civil Contract of Photography* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2008), 217–88.

CW // sexual violence/rape

Please note, the PDF version available through Brightspace comes from the following weblink, <https://jpgenrgb.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/ariella-azoulay-the-civil-contract-of-photography.pdf>. These are the author page proofs and not the published version. The PDF does not include graphic images or pagination. The published version of the book is available at the library.

**5. Feb. 7, 2022 Milkman 1**

Anna Burns, *Milkman: A Novel* (London: Faber & Faber, 2018). [Read Chapters 1 through 3]

CW // war, violence/murder

**6. Feb. 14, 2022 Milkman 2 Quiz 2**

Anna Burns, *Milkman: A Novel* (London: Faber & Faber, 2018). [Read Chapters 4 through 7]

CW // war, violence/murder

**Feb. 21, 2022 Reading Week**

**7. Feb. 28, 2022 Subjection Essay 1 due**

Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), "Introduction" and Chapters 1 and 2, 1–78.

CW // torture, violence/murder, sexual violence/rape, racial violence

Childish Gambino, "This is America," directed by Hiro Murai, YouTube (2018).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYOjWnS4cMY>

**8. Mar. 7, 2022 Wake Quiz 3**

Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), Chapter 1, "The Wake" and Chapter 2, "The Ship," 1–24 and 25–67. [E-book available through MacOdrum Library: [https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL\\_CRL/1gorbd6/alma991022759618905153](https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/1gorbd6/alma991022759618905153)].

CW // war, torture, violence/murder, sexual violence/rape, racial violence

Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (New York: Scribner, 2017). [Read Chapters 1 and 2]  
 CW // violence/murder, racial violence

9. **Mar. 14, 2022**                      **Unburied**

Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (New York: Scribner, 2017). [Read Chapter 3 through 6]

CW // violence/murder, racial violence

10. **Mar. 21, 2022**                      **Discipline**

*Winter Soldier*, directed by The Winterfilm Collective, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, 1972.

CW // war, torture, violence/murder, sexual violence/rape, racial violence

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977), "Docile Bodies," 135–69.

11. **Mar. 28, 2022**                      **Underground**                      **Quiz 4**

Warren Hinckle and Sidney Zion, editors, "Suppressed Issue: Guerilla War in the U.S.A.," *Scanlan's Monthly*, vol. 1, no. 8 (Jan. 1971). [PDF available online: <https://freedomarchives.org/Documents/Pubs/Scanlans.web.pdf>].

CW // war, violence/murder

12. **Apr. 4, 2022**                      **Sabrina**

Nick Drnaso, *Sabrina* (Drawn & Quarterly, 2018).

CW // war, violence/murder, sexual violence/rape

13. **Apr. 11, 2022**                      **Free Speech**                      **Essay 2 due Apr. 15, 2022**

Nick Drnaso, *Sabrina* (Drawn & Quarterly, 2018).

CW // war, violence/murder, sexual violence/rape

Michel Foucault, "The Word *Parrhesia*," *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 11–24.

## VI. Evaluation:

- Essay 1, due Feb. 28, 2022, 5–6 pages (25%)
- Essay 2, due Apr. 15, 2022, 8–10 pages (40%)
- Online Quizzes (4 x 5% = 20%)
- Attendance and Participation (15%)

**2 Essays (25% + 40% = 65%).** Take note of the page minimums, Times New Roman 12pt font, double-spaced, max. 2.5 cm (1 inch) margins. Essays will be submitted in the designated online portal on Brightspace. Essays will be returned to you through this portal using the feedback file function. **Do not submit any assignments over email, as these assignments will be considered late until submitted to Brightspace.**

When submitting your essays, upload a single document, in Word or another text-processing program (preferably not PDF, as this is less friendly for in-text comments). Essays must closely follow either the [MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#) or the [APA Style Guide](#) (the choice is yours), and include page numbers and a Works Cited page.

**Essay Topics.** You must write your essay using at least one course text and address a course theme; however, you are encouraged to discuss real-world problems (e.g., a social movement, a media campaign, political or geopolitical concerns, and so on). There are no pre-set topics. It is your responsibility to come up with a research question/problem, a site of study, and a theoretical/methodological approach to your question/problem. **You are strongly encouraged to schedule an office hour visit and to meet with us to discuss your essay topics—and the sooner the better!**

**Lateness Policy.** Essays are due by 11:59pm on the days noted. Unexcused late assignments will result in a loss of 3% per day on the assignment. If you need an extension due to illness or for a personal reason, please contact your instructor via email prior to the due date.

**4 Open-Book Quizzes (20%).** Conducted through the Brightspace portal, these open-book quizzes will be available for one full week prior to the scheduled course time, after which they will no longer be accessible. They will consist of 10 multiple-choice and T/F questions based on **cumulative knowledge of course texts and lectures up to and including the date the quiz closes.** **Do the readings first! The quiz is timed:** once the quiz is accessed online, you will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz in one sitting. **(4 x 5% = 20%)**

**Attendance and Participation (15%).** Classes and occasional tutorials are designed to be interactive and participatory, a place for us to discuss and debate course texts. They will be conducted respectfully and collaboratively. **Students are expected to attend and participate weekly and are permitted no more than two unexcused absences in the semester. Failing to attend for three or more weeks or more will result in an automatic grade loss of 5% (of a possible 10%).** Please, whenever possible, keep your cameras on.

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.

## VII. Statement on Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” See: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-2021.pdf>. According to the Department examples of plagiarism include the following:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- 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;
- 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/>

## VIII. Special Information Regarding Pandemic Measures

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow COVID-19 prevention measures and all mandatory public health requirements (e.g. wearing a mask, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette) and mandatory self-screening prior to coming to campus daily.

not have a smartphone will be required to complete a paper process as indicated on the [COVID-19 website](#).

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow guidelines regarding safe movement and seating on campus (e.g. directional arrows, designated entrances and exits, designated seats that maintain physical distancing). In order to avoid congestion, allow all previous occupants to fully vacate a classroom before entering. No food is permitted in any classrooms or labs.

For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and required measures, please see the [University's COVID-19 webpage](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact [covidinfo@carleton.ca](mailto:covidinfo@carleton.ca)

Please note that failure to comply with University policies and mandatory public health requirements, and endangering the safety of others are considered misconduct under the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#). Failure to comply with Carleton's COVID-19 procedures may lead to supplementary action involving Campus Safety and/or Student Affairs.



## IX. Requests 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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the [Pregnancy Accommodation Form](#).

**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 will 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>