

Fall 2016
Department of English
ENGL 3702A: American Culture
Location: TB202 Time: 11:35-12:55, Tues & Thurs
Precludes additional credit for ENGL 3703 (no longer offered).
Prerequisite: 1.0 credit of ENGL at the 1000 level and third-year
standing or permission of the department
Instructor: Rob Holton Phone: 520-2600 ext. 2308
Email: robert_holton@carleton.ca
Office: 1919 Dunton Tower
Office Hours: TBA

Conformism and Its Discontents

Since the mid-20th century, an intense debate has taken place in American culture on the subject of modern conformism. The debate was carried on in the pages of mass market magazines and in academic journals, in Hollywood movies and in literary fiction, with attention focused on the apparent cost of conformism to individual (usually masculine) identity, on the situation of those unwilling or unable to conform, and on the moral authority of mainstream American society itself. One result was a fascination with a range of eccentrics, misfits and non-conformists representing positions outside what appeared to be an increasingly homogeneous centre. This course will consider these issues through readings of a number of fictional and non-fictional texts, and class discussions will include the gender issues raised in conformism discourse, the nature of the self and the apparent threat to individual identity posed by modern culture, the place of literary writing and reading itself as an assertion of difference and more.

Texts

- The Giver* -- Lois Lowry (1993)
 - Revolutionary Road* -- Richard Yates (1961)
 - One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* -- Ken Kesey (1962)
 - Hell's Angels* -- Hunter S. Thompson (1966)
 - Housekeeping* -- Marilynne Robinson (1980)
 - Fight Club* -- Chuck Palahniuk (1996)
 - The Stepford Wives* (1975 dir. Bryan Forbes).
- The novels are available at Octopus Books (Bank & Third in the Glebe).

In addition, selections from Erich Fromm's *Fear of Freedom* (or *Escape from Freedom*), Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and Barbara Ehrenreich's *The Hearts of Men* will be on reserve as well as poems by Adrienne Rich.

Evaluation

Short essay (6+ pages)	20%	Major essay (8+ pages)	35%
Scheduled Exam	35%	Attendance & Participation	10%

- Secondary sources are required for both essays
- The essay topics must be cleared with me well before submission.
- The essays should follow MLA format.
- If an assignment is lost, misplaced, or not received, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

- The participation mark will reflect both attendance and participation. Attendance is required. In my experience, there is a very close correlation between poor attendance and poor marks.

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.

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 see the [Student Guide](#).

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 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). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website (www.carleton.ca/pmc) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional 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;

Tentative Course Schedule

September 8	Introduction
September 13	Concepts and Context – “Automaton Conformity” in Erich Fromm
September 15	Ken Kesey - <i>One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>
September 20	Ken Kesey - <i>One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>
September 22	Ken Kesey - <i>One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>
September 27	Richard Yates - <i>Revolutionary Road</i>
September 29	Richard Yates - <i>Revolutionary Road</i>
October 4	Richard Yates - <i>Revolutionary Road</i>
October 6	Betty Friedan - <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> and Barbara Ehrenreich – <i>The Hearts of Men</i> (selections)
October 11	Betty Friedan - <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> and Barbara Ehrenreich – <i>The Hearts of Men</i> (selections)
October 13	Adrienne Rich: Aunt Jennifer's Tigers, Ghost of a Chance, Living in Sin, Snapshots of a Daughter in Law, Diving into the Wreck (Poets.org), Planetarium, When We Dead Awaken (College English Vol. 34, No. 1, Oct., 1972 Online
October 18	<i>The Stepford Wives</i> (1975 film)
October 20	Catching up
October 25	Reading Week
October 27	Reading Week
November 1	Hunter S. Thompson - <i>Hell's Angels</i>
November 3	Hunter S. Thompson - <i>Hell's Angels</i>
November 8	Hunter S. Thompson - <i>Hell's Angels</i>
November 10	Marilynne Robinson - <i>Housekeeping</i>
November 15	Marilynne Robinson - <i>Housekeeping</i>
November 17	Marilynne Robinson - <i>Housekeeping</i>
November 22	Chuck Palahniuk - <i>Fight Club</i>
November 24	Chuck Palahniuk - <i>Fight Club</i>
November 29	Chuck Palahniuk - <i>Fight Club</i>
December 1	Lois Lowry – <i>The Giver</i>
December 6	Lois Lowry – <i>The Giver</i>
December 8	Catching up & exam discussion