

Carleton University
Fall 2020
Department of English

ENGL 4115A / 5900F
The Future of Literary Culture

(ENGL 4115 prerequisite: 4th-year standing or permission of the department)

Asynchronous online course via cuLearn
starts Thursday 10 September 2020

Instructor: Professor Sarah Brouillette
sarah_brouillette@carleton.ca

The purpose of this online seminar is to study literary forms, sites, and practices that emerge in conditions where support for cultivation of the traditional literary sphere is waning. Indebted, prolonged austerity governments are busy managing the fallout from decades of economic decline and are disinclined to back the social programs they once did, including higher education and library and other arts and culture funding. For readers, contemporary conditions include rising tuition, stagnant wages, fear of joblessness, underemployment, and insecure work, and a reordering of leisure time and mental energy that shapes how people are inclined to spend shrinking entertainment budgets. The golden age of retail literary fiction – and the traditional English department – may thus be behind us. With the rise of digital platforms, we've seen falling book prices and diminishing possibilities for making one's living by writing. Yet, though making it as a professional writer is becoming more difficult, the ease of digital self-publishing has led to a rapid increase in sheer numbers of published, if seldom read, fiction. With new social conditions come new forms of literary expression and experience. What are these forms? What *will* they be?

Course texts: There is nothing to buy. All course texts will be available to download via cuLearn.

Assessment

- 50% Five Think Pieces (due in Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11)
OR Research Proposal (by 22 Oct) and Paper (due 10 Dec)
- 50% Weekly Contributions to Forum Discussions

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.

Further Details on Assessment

Five Think Pieces

Every two weeks (starting in week 3), by Friday at 12 midnight, post your reflection on the readings in the designated assignment space for that week.

You can do this in one of three ways:

1. Submit a think piece of approximately two to three pages double-spaced.
2. Produce an audio or video podcast, of about 5 to 7 minutes, and either upload it directly or provide a link to it. I suggest mediaspace.carleton.ca if you need somewhere to put uploaded files.
3. Write a BuzzFeed-style list with 10 bullet points and brief explanation of each point. You do not need to include images or links, but you certainly can if you wish. A timeline or other visual means of presenting information would be a suitable substitute as well. I'm open to pretty much any style of presentation of information, so long as you can keep some meaty substance in there.

OR

Research Paper and Proposal

You may opt instead to write one longer research paper of approximately 12 to 15 pages. The topic is your choice, but you should submit a one-page proposal to me by 22 Oct so I can provide feedback on your plan. Format is MLA. If you intend to take the research paper option, I encourage you to let me know early so I can think with you about materials.

Proposal due date: 22 October

Paper due date: 10 December

General Grading Rubric for Student Writing

A Range

- The argument or point is clear throughout
- Independent thinking consistently developed
- Thoughtful, interpretive approach
- Engages with the readings in a substantial and complex way
- Developed connections between the texts and the argument
- Writing, presentation, format is clear, fluid, logical with minimal or no errors

B Range

- The argument is more complex than a "C-level" paper
- Use of texts is in the service of an argument
- The student comments on quotes, analyzes them adequately for the most part
- Sustained/meaningful structure; reasonable coherence
- Smooth(ish) transitions between argument and evidence
- Few errors, citations are well done; lack of proof-reading is not an overwhelming issue

C Range

- Argument is emerging but not fully developed; the argument is vague, general, or not clearly articulated from the outset
- Too little analysis: the student uses quotes from the texts but does not comment on them
- Some coherent relationships between paragraphs
- sentence-level errors beginning to impede meaning
- Some mechanical, citation, and/or formatting errors
- Failure to proofread for grammar, spelling, syntax etc.

D Range

- No argument discernible or argument too general/obvious to be meaningful
- A string of personal opinions without supports
- Misunderstanding of the texts and overgeneralizations
- The paper lacks organizational structure
- Little coherence from paragraph to paragraph
- Long paragraphs or no use of paragraphs at all
- Sentence-level errors impede meaning; failure to proofread for grammar, spelling, syntax etc.

Contributions to Forum Discussions

Discussion is at the heart of this course! Each week you will have three tasks. First you will post a contribution to the discussion forum by no later than noon Wednesday. Please be respectful to your classmates and meet this deadline. The contribution will respond to questions and provocations that I will post on the discussion board page for that week. Second, you will share at least **one** response to a post by another member of your group by noon on Friday. That will give people time to respond to one another on the weekend if there is more you want to add. The best discussions happen when people post in a timely manner and read and respond to one another's posts. Try to do that. Lastly, read everyone's posts.

In creating your contributions think about these questions: Is this an important contribution to the discussion? How directly are you engaging with the assigned material? How engaged are you with the points of others? How much have you advanced the conversation and communicated deep thought on the subject? How relevant or helpful are your points?

On a few occasions, the discussion forum will be used to share some alternative assignments: one will be a brief interview you will conduct; another will be a poem you will write in the style of the Insta-poets; I may add a third if inspiration strikes ...

Grading Rubric for Discussion Forum

A Range:

Contributions are numerous, well-developed, and have advanced the discussion in important ways. Contributions directly refer to the discussion materials at hand, the larger rubric of the unit or course, and comments that other discussants have made (if applicable). The student has obviously been engaged with both the material and comments from other discussants in the unit; they have made a substantial contribution to a useful discussion. Contributions posted on time.

B Range:

The student has made substantive contributions to the group discussion each week. These contributions reflect an engagement with the discussion material but not necessarily an engagement with other discussants in the group. The contributions are solid enough, but a deeper level of understanding could have been shown with a more sustained or thorough engagement in the discussion. Contributions posted within 24 hours of when they were supposed to be posted.

C Range:

The student has made regular but not consistent contributions to the group discussion. These contributions are substantial enough but do not directly engage with the assigned material or the comments of others. Contributions posted within 48 hours of when they were supposed to be posted.

D Range:

The student has made some contributions to the discussion, but these are too brief, generic, and/or have not made any difference to the discussion, and/or are unrelated to the topic at hand. The discussion lead and/or contributions were eventually posted but not in time to foster solid discussion.

F Range:

No attempt has been made to contribute to group discussion. For discussion leader: Discussion lead contribution was not made.

In sum, I will be assessing quality and quantity of the contributions: is this contributor a major participant in this discussion? How directly do they engage with the assigned material? How engaged are they with the points of others? How much have they advanced the conversation and communicated deep thought on the subject? How relevant or helpful are their points?

Required plagiarism statement

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally 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;
- 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/>

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: Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: <https://carleton.ca/equity/contact/form-pregnancy-accommodation/>

Religious obligation: Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/discrimination-harassment/religious-spiritual-observances/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the Paul Menton Centre Website: carleton.ca/pmc

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 its 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/focus/sexual-violence-prevention-survivor-support/>

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. Please contact your instructor 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>

Schedule

Readings are posted on cuLearn under the relevant weekly heading. They are a mix of scholarly articles, rants, semi-academic journalist commentaries, and links to industry reports and/or websites to peruse.

Week 1 (Sept 10): Introductions

Week 2 (Sept 17): neoliberalism and the neoliberal university

Week 3 (Sept 24): student debt and the neoliberal self

Week 4 (Oct 1): the decline of the English department

Week 5 (Oct 8): case study of the English department at Ball State University

Week 6 (Oct 15): Digital Humanities

Week 7 (Oct 22): Creative Writing

Week 8 (Nov 5): the publishing industry

Week 9 (Nov 12): the fate of bookstores

Week 10 (Nov 19): “The Amazon Era”

Week 11 (Nov 26): self-publishing

Week 12 (Dec 3): new forms (Flash Fiction, Instagram Poetry)