

Carleton University
Summer 2020 (May-June)
Department of English

ENGL 4115A / 5900S
The Future of Literary Culture

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

online course via cuLearn starts Monday 4 May 2020

Instructor: Professor Sarah Brouillette
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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? In the spirit of the inquiry, there will be no extended research essay for this course.

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

Assessment:

50% Five Weekly Think Pieces
50% 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.

Five Weekly Think Pieces

At the end of the week, by Friday at 5 PM, post your reflection on the readings in the designated space on our website. You only need to do this 5 times.

You can do this in one of three ways:

1. Write a think piece of approximate two pages double-spaced.
2. Produce an audio or video podcast, of about 5 to 7 minutes, and provide us with a link to it.
3. Write a BuzzFeed-style list with 10 bulleted points and brief explanation of each point. You don't need to include images or links, but you certainly can if you wish.

Contributions to Forum Discussions

Each week I will post one or two questions or “activities” for group discussion on cuLearn. These will range from questions helping us to get to know each other online, to deeper discussion of concepts from the readings, to exploratory writing about your own experiences. They will be varied and, I hope, interesting to write and read. You will have the opportunity to do these in written form, or as audio / video uploads. I will set suggested word limits and timelines for contributions as we go. These will not be onerous writing tasks, and none will ask for very long writing (most will be 150 to 250 words).

Flexibility with due dates, and a note on grading:

Given what's going on in Canada and the world right now, you do not need permission from me to submit late material. The course is an evolving group conversation, and we will want to hear from you. But assume deadlines are flexible and do the best you can to participate and contribute.

This course will be graded on an A/A- system. This means that *if you submit all the work* for the course the lowest possible grade is an A-.

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

(starting 4 May 2020)

*** readings are TBA – they will be a mix of shortish scholarly articles and semi-academic journalist commentaries

Week 1

- introductions; the student debt crisis; “the neoliberal self”

Week 2

- the decline of the “traditional” English department

Week 3

- the rise of digital humanities; the rise of creative writing

Week 4

- the Amazon effect and self-publishing

Week 5

- the publishing industry contraction
- the fate of the mega-chain bookstores
- the fate of the small press

Week 6

- Instagram poets and flash fiction

Week 7

- TBA, based on what students want to read more about it
- wrapping up