

Carleton University
Summer 2022 (July-August)
Department of English

ENGL 4115B / 5900S: Culture and the Text/ Selected Topic in English Studies I
The Future of Literary Culture
Meets Wed & Fri / 11:30-2:30 / location 3110 RB
DRAFT Syllabus

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

Instructor: Professor Sarah Brouillette
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office hours by appointment (email me)

The purpose of this 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?

Readings: There is nothing to buy. All texts will be accessed via Brightspace.

Grading:

This course will use an experimental grading system designed in consultation with students on the first day of class. Further details to follow.

University message about COVID

It is important to remember that COVID is still present in Ottawa. The situation can change at any time and the risks of new variants and outbreaks are very real. There are [a number of actions you can take](#) to lower your risk and the risk you pose to those around you including being vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying home when you’re sick, washing your hands and maintaining proper respiratory and cough etiquette.

Feeling sick? Remaining vigilant and not attending work or school when sick or with symptoms is critically important. If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms do not come to class or campus. If you feel ill or exhibit symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately. In all situations, you must follow Carleton’s [symptom reporting protocols](#).

Masks: On the recommendation of Ottawa Public Health, Carleton will be maintaining the mandatory [COVID-19 Mask Policy](#) until further notice. The policy requires masks to be worn in all university buildings, including offices, classrooms, and labs.

Vaccines: Further, while proof of vaccination is no longer required as of May 1 to attend campus or in-person activity, it may become necessary for the University to bring back proof of vaccination requirements on short notice if the situation and public health advice changes. Students are strongly encouraged to get a full course of vaccination, including booster doses as soon as they are eligible, and submit their booster dose information in [cuScreen](#) as soon as possible. Please note that Carleton cannot guarantee that it will be able to offer virtual or hybrid learning options for those who are unable to attend the campus.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow requirements and guidelines regarding health and safety which may change from time to time. For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and health and safety requirements please see the [University's COVID-19 website](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca.

Academic Accommodations

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. Please follow this link to review the [processes for academic accommodation requests](#).

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.” 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 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, visit <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.



Reading Schedule

6 July: introductions / syllabus discussion and revision

8 July: neoliberalism and the neoliberal university

- Wendy Brown, “Neoliberalized Knowledge”
- Shannon Dawn Maree Moore, Bruno De Oliveira Jayme, and Joanna Black, “Disaster Capitalism, Rampant EdTech Opportunism, and the Advancement of Online Learning in the Era of COVID19”

13 July: student debt and the (supposed) neoliberal self

*** no in-person class / replaced with self-study & online discussion forum ***

- Malcolm Harris, “Go to College”
- Annie McClanahan, “Becoming Non-Economic”
- “Communique from an Absent Future”

15 July: decline of the English department

- *Endgame: Can Literary Studies Survive?*
- William McGurn, “Is Majoring in English Worth It?” & Jonathan Beecher Field, “Got Shakespeare?”

20 July: contingent work in English; case study of the English department at Ball State University

- Kevin Birmingham, “The Great Shame of Our Profession”
- Olivia Stowell, “The Time Warp, Again?” (on “dark academia”)
- “Dark academia” TikTok
- Links to Ball State English department programming
- Discussion Questions to prepare re. Ball State

22 July: The Rise of Digital Humanities

- David Golumbia, “Death of a Discipline”
- “Neoliberal Tools (and Archives): A Political History of Digital Humanities”
- Look at Stanford Literary Lab; Price Lab for Digital Humanities; Post45 Data Collective

27 July: The Rise of Creative Writing

- Juliana Spahr and Stephanie Young, “The Program Era and the Mainly White Room”
- Eric Bennett, “How Iowa Flattened Literature”

29 July: The Publishing Industry Today

- Alison Flood, “Literary Fiction in Crisis”
- Arts Council England, “Literature in the 21st Century”
- Richard Jean So and Gus Wezerek, “Just How White is the Book Industry?”
- Anamik Saha & Sandra Van Lente, “The Limits of Diversity: How Publishing Industries Make Race”

3 August: Fate of Bookstores

*** no in-person class / replaced with ethnographic observation at area bookstores ***

- “How a Canadian Chain is Reinventing Bookselling” (Chapters/Indigo covered in the *New York Times*)
- “Hungry Bookworms Find Nourishment” (on Black Squirrel Books)
- “Waterstones Says it Can’t Pay a Living Wage”

5 August: The Amazon Era

- Blake Montgomery, “The Amazon Publishing Juggernaut”
- Mark McGurl, “Everything and Less: Fiction in the Age of Amazon”

10 August: self-publishing

- Timothy Laquintano, “Amazon as a New Intermediary”
- Wattpad, “The Master Plan”
- Aarthi Vadde, “Platform or Publisher?”

12 August: new forms (social media, Flash Fiction, Instagram Poetry)

- Sarah Brouillette, “The Talented Ms. Calloway”
- Laura McGrath, “America’s Next Top Novel”
- Faith Hill and Karen Yuan, “How Instagram Saved Poetry”