

**Carleton University  
Winter 2020  
Department of English**

**ENGL 4806B/5804W: Studies in Canadian Lit. I**  
*There's No Place Like Home?:  
Stories and Spaces of Care in Contemporary Canadian Literature and Culture*

*Prerequisite(s): fourth-year standing or permission of the department*  
**(Note: It is strongly recommended that students who are not English majors have some interest in and/or previous experience with the study of literature.)**

**Time: Mondays, 11:35-2:25**  
**Location: *Please confirm location on Carleton Central***

**Instructor: Sara Jamieson**  
**Email: [sara\\_jamieson@carleton.ca](mailto:sara_jamieson@carleton.ca)**  
**Office: Dunton Tower 1819**  
**Phone: 613-520-2600 ex. 2431**  
**Office Hours: TBA**

This course examines representations of caring for older adults in a selection of recent Canadian texts (including novels, a graphic memoir, short stories, and a film) and pays particular attention to the ways in which these texts depict the spaces and environments in which care takes place. Residential care homes for older adults have long functioned as repositories of profound fears about aging itself, both at the individual and the population level, and are pervasively associated with a narrative of loss: loss of home, of independence, of control, of dignity, of privacy, and of mobility. While these losses are often undeniable, they also form part of a generally negative picture of care-home life that has been and continues to be manipulated to serve particular political ends. In contemporary Canada, the demographic phenomenon of population aging in the context of a neoliberal economic order that characterizes health and dependency as matters of individual responsibility has led to the promotion of at-home care as not only less costly to health-care systems than residential care, but also more desirable both for older people and their caregivers.

Situating Canadian fictional texts in the context of a series of readings drawn from the interdisciplinary field of age studies, the course will consider the ways in which these texts participate in debates about the forms that eldercare may take, often in ways that complicate the idea of a simple dichotomy between the care home and home care. These fictional texts simultaneously reinforce and question both the denigration of the care home and the idealization of home care, turning a critical eye to the disadvantages of each situation, yet also attempting to imagine how those disadvantages might be mitigated, and a habitable—even happy—existence sustained for those in need of care and those who care for them. Aptly registering the complexities and contradictions of life in the care home *and* care in the home, these texts invite readers to

confront and question assumptions about aging, dependency, and caregiving that circulate in contemporary Canadian culture, and to consider the contribution of literature and film to the cultural conversation about where to live in later life.

Objectives:

This course is designed to encourage students

- to develop their skills in the close analysis of representations of eldercare in contemporary Canadian literature and film
- to gain a familiarity with some of the major critical voices in the emerging, interdisciplinary field of age studies, and to develop the ability to situate literary representations in the context of theoretical, historical, sociological, philosophical, architectural, and policy-focused approaches to care homes and home care
- to consider the role that literature and film play in reflecting, shaping, and interrogating perceptions of later life in contemporary culture

**Reading List: Most texts are available at Haven Books, 43 Seneca Street (613-730-9888) unless otherwise specified.**

Margaret Atwood, "Torching the Dusties" (2014) (posted on ARES)

Joan Barfoot, *Exit Lines* (2012)

David Chariandy, *Soucouyant* (2007)

Janet Hepburn, *Flee, Fly, Flown* (2013)

Sarah Leavitt, *Tangles* (2012)

Alice Munro, "The Bear Came Over the Mountain" (2001) (posted on ARES)

Sarah Polley, dir. *Away From Her* (2006) (film to be screened in class)

Other readings will be available through ARES on the library website.

### **Assignments and Evaluation:**

Seminar Presentation: 30% (sign up sheet will be made available in the first class)

Research Paper: 40% (due April 7)

Short Response Paper: 10% (due Feb. 3 OR March 2)

Personal Reflection Paper OR Creative Writing Exercise: 10% (due Feb. 3 OR March 2)

Attendance and Class Contribution: 10%

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.

### **Assignment Guidelines and Objectives:**

**Seminar Presentation: (a sign-up sheet will be circulated in the first class and afterwards posted on my office door; presentation dates will be available on a first-come, first-served basis)**

This assignment requires you to make a polished 20-minute presentation to the class. The evaluation criteria for your presentation are in some ways similar to those for an essay: I expect a coherent and significant thesis that is developed into a convincing argument about an aspect of the text(s), rather than a series of random observations. Think of yourself in this assignment as teaching an aspect of the text to the rest of the class: keep in mind what it is you want us to learn from your presentation and why it is important. Grading will also take into account your public-speaking demeanor: a relaxed, rehearsed, and engaging delivery is the most effective way to communicate your ideas. One purpose of seminar presentations is to stimulate class discussion, so end your presentation with two or three thoughtful questions about the text(s) you have discussed.

**You are required to submit your presentation notes after your presentation has been delivered.**

**Objectives:** development of editing and organizational skills, teaching skills, public speaking skills, fluency in class discussion.

**Short Response Paper (3-4 pages, 12 pt. font, double spaced):** This assignment is meant to record your responses to the course material of your choice. Record ideas and questions that you have about the text as you read it. You might touch on things about it that particularly interest you, elements you may find challenging or confusing, its relationship to other works on the course, etc.

**Objectives:** demonstrating reading comprehension, organizing ideas for class discussion, developing ideas that could later form the basis of an essay or presentation, opportunities for addressing writing problems.

**Personal Reflection Papers / Creative Writing Exercises: (3-4 pages, 12 pt. font, double spaced):**

**Personal Reflection Paper:** If you have personal experiences with eldercare, for example, working at a care facility, or living with and/or caring for an elderly parent or grandparent, this assignment invites you to reflect on that experience and to consider how it intersects with the texts and issues discussed in class.

**Creative Writing Exercise:** This assignment invites you to respond creatively to the course materials by engaging in an imaginative writing exercise. Suggested approaches include taking on the voice of a marginal character in one of the texts we are studying and re-writing a particular episode from their point of view, or imagining your own future old age and the care environments you feel you would prefer, or would be most likely to encounter, that sort of thing!

**Objectives:** Encourage experiential learning by reflecting on connections between personal lived experience and course materials; develop creative writing skills.

**Research Essay: 12-14 pages 12 pt. font, double spaced\***

In a research essay, I expect a significant and engaging thesis statement that is developed into a coherent argument, supported by direct quotations from the primary text and intelligent use of secondary source materials. You must include a minimum of five reputable secondary sources;

but there is no upper limit to the number of sources that you use. You are encouraged to be as comprehensive as possible.

**It is acceptable to develop your seminar presentation into a research paper, but you are not required to do this.**

Correct punctuation, grammar, and adherence to MLA style are required.

**Objectives:** finding and assessing secondary source materials, close reading skills, writing skills

**\* IMPORTANT NOTE: Graduate students taking the course must submit an essay 15-20 pages in length.**

### **Bonus Marks:**

Earn bonus marks by attending VerseFest, Ottawa's annual poetry festival, March 2020. Attend ONE VerseFest event to earn one mark. You can attend any event that interests you (it does not have to feature a Canadian poet). You must provide proof of attendance in the form of a ticket stub/receipt or a picture of yourself at the event.

**VerseFest events are FREE for Carleton students. Use your student card to reserve tickets online or at the door.**

**2019-2020 Munro Beattie Lecutre featuring Canadian comics creator Seth.** Attend this FREE event and receive one bonus mark. **Saturday March 21, 7pm, Carleton Dominion Chalmers Centre.**

### **Grading System:**

Assignments in this course will be graded using the letter grading system: A-, A, A+ (Excellent); B-, B, B+ (Good); C-, C, C+ (Satisfactory); D, D+ (Minimal pass); F (Failure). Percentage conversion: A+ (90-100%), A (85-89), A- (80-84), B+ (77-79), B (73-76), B- (70-72), C+ (67-69), C (63-66), C- (60-62), D+ (57-59), D (53-56), D- (50-52), F (0-49).

### **Expectations:**

**Attendance and Participation: You are expected to attend every class, read the assigned material for each class, bring the assigned readings with you to class, and be prepared to answer questions and engage in discussion.** Perfect attendance alone does not guarantee a perfect grade of 10/10 on the participation component of the course. To attain a 10/10, you must attend regularly, and make regular and **appropriate** contributions to class discussions.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what went on in your absence (i.e. asking for notes from a fellow student).

**Classroom Courtesy:** The classroom must be a safe and respectful environment for all participants, including the instructor. No cell phones, please. Laptops must be used for note-taking only. Please stay for the duration of the class; if you must leave early, I would appreciate it if you would let me know beforehand.

**Submission of Written Work:** Written assignments must be submitted in class on the due date. **Do not use CULearn for submitting course work.**

E-mail submissions are allowed only under particular circumstances, and must be sent directly to my e-mail address (sara\_jamieson@carleton.ca).

There is a drop-box located in the English Department office (Dunton Tower 1812). This can be used if you are unable to hand in your essay in class. **Use the drop-box at your own risk. It is your responsibility to ensure that your essay reaches me; in the highly unlikely event that an essay left in the drop box does not make its way to my mailbox, you must be able to submit an electronic copy of the essay as soon as this is brought to your attention. Please ensure that you save a copy of your essay in the unlikely event that it is lost after you hand it in.**

**Late Penalty: The penalty for late submissions is 2% per day late.** In case of illness or emergency, a doctor's note or appropriate document must be provided in order for an extension to be granted. **Late papers may be returned without end comments (grade only).** Papers will not be accepted two weeks past the due date, except in cases where appropriate documentation has been provided.

## **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 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 serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts 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 a final grade of "F" for the course.**

## **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](mailto: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](http://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>

### **Class Schedule:**

#### **Monday January 6:**

##### **Welcome and Introduction**

**“The ‘Grey Wave,’ the ‘Silver Tsunami’: Panic Over Population Aging and its Implications for Eldercare” (mini-lecture)**

#### **Monday January 13:**

##### **The Care Home as “Total Institution”: Theory and Imagination**

**Erving Goffman, “On Characteristics of Total Institutions” (ARES)**

**Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces” (ARES)**

**Margaret Atwood, “Torching the Dusties” (ARES)**

#### **Monday January 20:**

##### **Historical Perspectives on Care Homes**

**James Struthers, “Home, Hotel, Hospital, Hospice: Conflicting Images of Long-Term Residential Care in Ontario, Canada” (ARES)**

**Carole Haber, “Over the Hill to the Poorhouse: Rhetoric and Reality in the Institutional History of the Aged” (ARES)**

**Fictional Perspective: Escape from the Care Home**

Janet Hepburn, *Flee, Fly, Flown*

**Monday January 27:**

**From Theory to Practice: Worker and Visitor Perspectives on Care Homes**

Laura Dunbar, “Shelter in Place” (ARES)

Aritha Van Hirk, “At Home or Nowhere” (ARES)

Janet Hepburn, *Flee, Fly, Flown*, continued

**Monday February 3: RESPONSE PAPER / PERSONAL REFLECTION PAPER /  
CREATIVE WRITING EXERCISE DUE**

**Care Home Life: A Sociological Perspective**

Stephen Katz, “Busy Bodies: Activity, Aging, and the Management of Everyday Life.” (ARES)

**Fictional Perspective: The Care Home as Leisure Environment**

Joan Barfoot, *Exit Lines*

**Monday February 10:**

**Home vs. Care Home: Housing Policy Perspective**

Christine Oldman and Deborah Quilgars, “The last resort?: Revisiting Ideas about Old People’s Living Arrangements” (ARES)

Joan Barfoot, *Exit Lines* continued

☺ Reading Week ☺

**Monday February 24:**

**The Care Home in Film: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from Cultural Gerontology**

Sally Chivers and Annmarie Adams, “Architecture and Aging: The Depiction of Home in Sarah Polley’s *Away from Her*” (ARES)

Sally Chivers, “‘Sounds like a regular marriage’: Monogamy and the Fidelity of Care” (ARES)

Sarah Polley, dir., *Away From Her* (in-class film screening)

**Monday March 2: RESPONSE PAPER / PERSONAL REFLECTION PAPER/CREATIVE  
WRITING EXERCISE DUE**

**The Future of Care Homes: Perspectives in the Media**

Larissa MacFarquhar, “The Comforting Fictions of Dementia Care” (ARES)

**Fictional Perspective: The Shifting Significance of the Care Home**

Alice Munro, “The Bear Came Over the Mountain” (ARES)

**Monday March 9:**

**The Ethics of Care: A Philosophical Perspective**

Virginia Held, “The Ethics of Care as Moral Theory” (ARES)

**Graphic Memoir: From Home Care to Care Home**

Sarah Leavitt, *Tangles*

**Monday March 16:**

**Representations of Care in Graphic Narrative:**

**Amelia DeFalco**, “Graphic Somatography: Life Writing, Comics, and the Ethics of Care.” (ARES)

**Sara Leavitt**, *Tangles* continued

**Monday March 23:**

**Dementia Care and Gothic Narrative:**

**Marlene Goldman**, “Purging the World of the Whore and the Horror: Gothic and Apocalyptic Portrayals of Dementia in Canadian Fiction.” 2015. (ARES)

**Fictional Perspective: Dementia, Care, and Cultural Memory**

**David Chariandy**, *Soucouyant*

**Monday March 30:**

**Reflections on Narrative Gerontology**

**Hannah Zeilig**, “The Critical Use of Narrative and Literature in Gerontology” (ARES)

**David Chariandy**, *Soucouyant* continued

**Monday April 6: Research Essay Due**