

**Carleton University
Fall 2020
Department of English**

ENGL 5900 / CANS 5003W

“Printed in Canada by Mindless Acid Freaks”: Small-Press Publishing in Canada

**Thurs / 11:30 am-2:30 pm
Location: online**

**Instructor: Prof. Jody Mason
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10am-noon (by appointment)

I. Course Description

In this course, we'll be learning about the particular histories of twentieth- and early twenty-first-century small-press publishing in Canada, theorizing small-press activity through questions such as the following:

- What production practices, literary forms, and genres are distinct to small-press publishing and how do these relate to the practices, forms, and genres of large-scale publishing?
- If oppositions might seem to inform the relation of small and large publishers, how might the closer examination of small publishers dispel binaries of region and metropolis, margin and centre, traditional and modern?
- If small-press publishing in Canada has always been connected to networks not contained by the nation, some of its characteristics have nonetheless been shaped by nation-specific contexts.
 - Thus, what forms of state support enabled small-press book publishing to flourish in late twentieth-century Canada, in particular?
 - What was the function of small-press publishing in this period, vis-à-vis national culture, regional cultures, identity politics, etc.?
 - What has been the fate of these forms of support, and how have small-press publishers survived the neoliberal cultural policy environments that have emerged since the late 1970s?
- How might we theorize the function of the small press in the context of a contemporary global literary field dominated by a handful of media corporations?

Case studies will include publishers such as First Statement Press (Montreal); Coach House Press (Toronto); tish / tishbooks (Vancouver); Sister Vision Press (Toronto); Gaspereau Press (Kentville, NS); and Kegeponce Press (Neyaashiinigmiing, ON). The course will include one or more guest speakers from the world of small-press publishing, in addition to virtual book

arts demonstrations / activities and interaction with digital objects from the university's Archives and Special Collections.

This is a blended virtual course: we will mix asynchronous activities (reading, listening, and watching activities) with weekly discussion seminars (Thursdays, 1-2:30 pm).

II. Texts

All course readings can be found through ARES or via the links provided in the syllabus. To access ARES (electronic reserve), see the right-hand side of the course page in CU Learn. Two exceptions:

Skibsrud, Joanna, *The Sentimentalists* (Gaspereau Press, 2009) is available as a reprint (Penguin Canada, print ISBN: 9780735233195 / e-book ISBN: 9780735233201), a Kobo Ebook (ISBN: 9781554471003), or you can attempt to procure a copy of the now out-of-print trade paperback published by either Gaspereau or Douglas and McIntyre (ISBN: 9781554470785 / 9781553658955) through abebooks.ca or your local second-hand book dealer.

For the week of Nov. 23rd, I'm asking you to order *one poetry chapbook or zine of your choice* from any Canadian micro-press publisher. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

—for publishers of poetry chapbooks in Canada, see: <http://poets.ca/2018/04/20/npm18-a-list-of-twenty-current-chapbook-presses-guest-post-by-rob-mclennan/> or <http://cordite.org.au/essays/notes-on-five-canadian-small-micro-publishers/>

—there are many online resources dedicated to zine culture, including the fabulous *Broken Pencil* (www.brokenpencil.com), which includes links to zine distros (suppliers) in Canada; however, if you want to get your hands on a physical zine, I suggest going to etsy and searching “zines” (limit the search to Canada): <https://www.etsy.com/ca/c/books-movies-and-music/books/zines-and-magazines/zines?explicit=1&locationQuery=6251999>

II. Course Requirements and Assignments

Discussion Forum: 55%

Pamphlet Binding Module: 5%

Final Research Essay: 40%

Discussion Forum: 55%

You must be present and active for our weekly virtual meetings, which will take place on Thursdays from 1:00-2:30 pm. We will use the Zoom platform; links will appear in CU Learn under **Weekly Discussions**. Students who have more than two undocumented absences from these sessions will not pass the course.

Ten times per term, each student is also required to submit a 250-word post to the “Discussion Forum” (under **Assignments** in CU Learn). Your contribution to the “Micro-Press Forum” for the week of Nov. 23rd counts as one of your ten posts (everyone must post this week). Each post will be worth 5.5% of your final grade (for a total of 55%). These are due at midnight on the Wednesday of the week in question (i.e., Wednesday, Sept. 16th for the seminar discussion on Thurs., Sept. 17th). Posts submitted late will not be counted.

Posts should respond to the following kinds of questions: What questions do the week’s readings prompt you to consider? What connections might you make among the readings (or to other readings in the course)? Most weeks, we’re discussing case studies (small-press publishing phenomena and small-press publishers); why is the case unique and important? We will use these posts to animate our seminar discussions; be prepared to talk about your post in class.

Pamphlet Binding Module: 5%

During the week of Nov. 23rd, we’ll be thinking about chapbook and micro-press publishing. Accompanied by master printer Larry Thompson, you’ll have access this week to a module that will guide you through the simple process of pamphlet binding. In class on Thurs., Nov. 26th, you’ll have a chance to show your handiwork, and you’ll be required to reflect on the experience in a brief follow-up exercise that will be posted alongside the module on CU Learn (under **Assignments**).

Final Research Essay: 10% for Research Forum on Dec. 10th and 30% for essay due Fri., Dec. 11th=40%

Ideally, this paper will build on one of your discussion posts. The research paper should have a clear thesis, provide evidence of independent critical thinking, and it should be 5,000 words / roughly 20 pages. This is a research paper: you must use a minimum of five appropriate secondary sources. Each student is strongly encouraged consult with me during my office hours in order to determine what is the relevant scholarship; the course bibliography will also be helpful. The essay must conform to academic conventions: i.e., it must use MLA style and formatting, and documentation, and have correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

On Dec. 10th, you will submit to CU Learn a two-page proposal for your essay: identify the main topic and (tentative) thesis; the secondary sources you plan to consult; and any research difficulties you are encountering. We will share these proposals in the virtual Research Forum on Dec. 10th. This proposal and your participation in the Research Forum are worth 10% of your final grade.

IV. Expectations and Regulations

Email and Office Hours: Please use class time and office hours for questions relating to lectures, readings, and assignments. You may also communicate with me through the email, but these communications should be brief.

Assignments and Late Policy: (NB-Seminar notes may not be submitted late.) Assignments

must be submitted prior to the beginning of class the day they are due (assignments are uploaded to CU Learn unless otherwise specified). *Please submit assignments as Word documents.* Late assignments may be handed in up to five days late with a penalty of 1% per weekday (this includes the day they are due if they are submitted after class) and a grace period over the weekend; the maximum penalty is 5%. Essays will not be accepted after this period unless proper medical or other documentation is provided. Please keep a backup copy of all your assignments.

Grades: Grades for written work will be based on insightfulness, presentation of focused ideas supported by textual evidence, effective organization of ideas, clarity of expression, correct use of MLA style, spelling and grammar. The following percentage equivalents will be used when calculating your final grade for this class:

A+=90; A/A+=88; A=85;A-/A=83; A-=80

B+/A-=79; B+=77; B/B+=75; B=73; B-/B=72; B-=70

C+/B-=69; C+=67; C/C+=65; C=63; C-/C=62; C-=60

D+/C-=59; D+=57; D/D+=55; D=53; D-/D=52; D-=50

F=0-49 (a numerical grade will be assigned for any paper receiving an F)

Note on Final Grades: 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.

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. The university's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <http://carleton.ca/fass/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Sept-2017.pdf>

Writing Tutorial Service: Students requiring assistance with their writing should contact the Writing Tutorial Service at 411 MacOdrum Library (613-520-6632, <www.carleton.ca/wts>).

Student Academic Success Centre: Questions about academic rules and regulations, selecting a major, and other matters relating to academic planning should be directed to the Student Academic Success Centre at 302 Tory Building (613-520-7850, <www.carleton.ca/sasc>).

V. Academic Accommodation

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

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: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

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: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

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. 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 is 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: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-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>

VI. Tentative Syllabus

Week of Sept. 7th:

- Reading

- course outline and syllabus (CU Learn)

- Watching and Listening

- Book Arts Lab Introduction video:

- https://mediaspace.carleton.ca/media/Lab+Intro/1_m8p0k7ah

- Discussion

- Sept. 10th, 1:00-2:30 pm: Introduction to the Course

Week of Sept. 14th: Theorizing the Small Press

If David McKnight defines small-press publishing as “the non-commercial production of books and periodicals with a literary orientation, issued in limited runs for specialized readerships, and often dedicated to experimental writing or identity-based perspectives” (“Small Press Publishing” 310), how might we theorize the function of such agents in the larger literary field?

- Reading

- Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production; or, the Economic World Reversed” (Ares)

- Discussion

- Sept. 17th, 1:00-2:30 pm: Theorizing the Small Press

Week of Sept. 21st: Small-Press Publishing in Canada

This series of historical readings, mostly from the *History of the Book in Canada* Project, offers context for understanding the state of publishing in English Canada in the mid-twentieth century and, relatedly, for the emergence of the small-press publishing initiatives of this period, as well as the slightly later small-press publishing movement of the 1960s and 70s.

- Reading

- Litt, “The State and the Book” (*HBiC* 3, pp. 34-44) (Ares)

- Parker, “The Agency System” (*HBiC* 3, pp. 163-168) (Ares)

- McKnight, “Small Press Publishing” (*HBiC* 3, pp. 308-318) (Ares)
- McLeod, “Publishing Against the Grain” (*HBiC* 3, pp. 322-327) (Ares)
- Lorimer, (from) *Ultra Libris: Policy, Technology, and the Creative Economy of Book Publishing in Canada* (Introduction, pp. 1-18) (Ares)

•Discussion

- Sept. 24th, 1:00-2:30 pm: Small-Press Publishing in Canada

Week of Sept. 28th: The (Anti)Modern Chapbook

Chapbooks in English emerged in early modern England as cheap print forms for the communication of literary, journalistic, and other kinds of information. Associated with hand-press work, the form experienced a renaissance in the English-speaking world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, just as machine printing was transforming the way books were made. In Canada, the convergence in the early twentieth century of the chapbook with the publishing of poetry demonstrates the conditions of authorship confronted by middle-class English Canadians, particularly women, as well as a particular set of political/aesthetic values.

•Reading

- MacLaren, “‘Significant Little Offerings’: The Origin of the Ryerson Poetry Chap-Books, 1925–26” (Ares)
- Harrison, *Later Poems and Villanelles*

https://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-rbrc_ryerson-chapbooks_PS8465A77A61928-12622

•Discussion

- Oct. 1st, 1:00-2:30 pm: The (Anti)Modern Chapbook

Week of Oct. 5th: The Modernist Little Magazine

In Canada, as in the United States and England, an important site for the emergence of literary modernism was the “little magazine”—defined by Dean Irvine as “those non-commercial literary, arts, and cultural-interest magazines whose editors facilitated and participated in the construction of a magazine culture for their contributors and readers—but not, primarily, for profit” (*Editing Modernity* 16). Our readings for the week provide us with an opportunity to think about how the gendered politics of modernism were at least partly worked out in the material practices that brought modernist texts to audiences.

•Reading

- Irvine, (from) *Editing Modernity* (Chapter 3) (Ares)
- (from) *Preview* (July 1942, Page, “The Stenographers”; Feb. 1943, Page “Typists”; Aug. 1943, Page, “Shipbuilding Office”; Oct. 1943, Page, “Offices”) and *First Statement* (Feb. 1943, Waddington, “Social Worker”; March 1943, Waddington, “Now We Steer” and “Two Poems”; Aug. 1943, Waddington, “Indoors”; Feb. 1944, Waddington, “Sympathy”) (from Archives and Research Collections, Ares)
- additional resource: “The Small Presses and Little Magazines: Montreal, Quebec.”

Archives and Research Collections, Carleton University:

<https://arccarleton.wixsite.com/modernpoetry/montreal-quebec>

•Discussion

-Oct. 8th, 1:00-2:30 pm: The Modernist Little Magazine

Week of Oct. 12th: Small-Press Cultures of the 1960s (Coach House Press)

Now Coach House Books, Toronto-based Coach House Press (established in 1965) was an important contributor to the small-press movement of the 1960s and 1970s in Canada. Fuelled in unprecedented ways by forms of public financial support, the small-press movement of this period marks a considerable departure from the self-publishing environment that poets faced in 1920s Canada.

•Reading

-MacSkimming, (from) *The Perilous Trade* (Chapter 8, pp. 167-95) (Ares)

-additional resources: “The Small Presses and Little Magazines: Toronto, Ontario.”

Archives and Research Collections, Carleton University:

<https://arccarleton.wixsite.com/modernpoetry/toronto-ontario>; LAC’s online exhibition, “New Wave Canada: Coach House Press and the Small Press Movement in Canada in the 1960s”: https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/lac-bac/new_wave_canada-ef/www.lac-bac.gc.ca/2/17/index-e.html

-nichol, *Journeying and the Returns*

<https://www.bpnichol.ca/archive/documents/journeying-returns>

•Watching and Listening

-Printing on the Kelsey Platen Press video: [link forthcoming](#)

•Discussion

-Oct. 15th, 1:00-2:30 pm: Coach House Press

Week of Oct. 19th: Small-Press Cultures of the 1960s (TISH / TISHbooks)

Starting with the monthly newsletter, *TISH: A Poetry Newsletter*, in 1961, the Vancouver-based TISH group was both a poetry collective / movement and a small-press phenomenon that played an influential role in contemporary poetry in Canada.

•Reading

-Norris, (from) *The Little Magazine in Canada* (Chapter 7, pp. 97-131) (Ares)

-Davey, *D-Day and After: Poems*

-additional resource: “The Small Presses and Little Magazines: Vancouver, British Columbia.” *Archives and Research Collections*, Carleton University:

<https://arccarleton.wixsite.com/modernpoetry/vancouver-british-columbia>

•Discussion

-Oct. 22nd, 1:00-2:30 pm: tish / tishbooks

Oct. 26th-30th, Reading Week (no classes)

Week of Nov. 2nd: Small-Press Cultures and the Theorization of Work

As part of a broader New Left critique of Fordist postwar cultures of work, artists and writers such as those involved in Canada's small-press movement in the 1960s and 70s promoted poetic practices of collaboration, mutability and free association alongside grassroots production practices. Jasper Bernes argues that these "artistic models and challenges were eventually absorbed by industry in the long process of capitalist restructuring that followed the crisis of the 1970s, providing the conceptual germ for the eventual corporate grammar of participation, teamwork, flexibility, and creativity"—today's "creative economy." While Bourdieu's theorization of the literary field uses nineteenth-century France as its case, Bernes's Marxist analysis of the closing decades of the twentieth century offers us language for thinking through the politics of small-press practice as *work*.

•Reading

-Bernes, (from) *The Work of Art in the Age of Deindustrialization* (Introduction, pp. 1-36) (Ares)

•Discussion

-Nov. 5th, 1:00-2:30 pm: Small-Press Cultures and the Theorization of Work

Week of Nov. 9th: Small-Press Publishing and Representation (Sister Vision Press)

Partners Makeda Silvera and Stephanie Martin founded and ran the Toronto-based Sister Vision Press between 1985 and 2001. This feminist press was the first in Canada to be exclusively dedicated to publishing works by and for women of colour.

•Reading

-Silvera, "Black Women and Women of Colour Press" (from *Black Writers Matter*, pp. 147-51) (Ares)

-Cooper, "'Out of a cardboard box beside our bed like a baby': The Founders of Sister Vision Press" (from *Great Dames*, pp. 291-306) (Ares)

-Silvera, (from) *Silenced* (Introduction to the Revised Edition; "Noreen") (Ares)

-Silvera, ed. (from) *Piece of My Heart: A Lesbian of Colour Anthology* (Introduction, pp. xiii-xix) (Ares)—you may also want to read one of the anthologized texts

•Discussion

-Nov. 12th, 1:00-2:30 pm: Sister Vision Press

Week of Nov. 16th: Small-Press Publishing and Representation (Kegedonce Press)

Established in 1993 by Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Kegedonce Press is one of a handful of Indigenous-owned publishers in Canada. The company is based at Neyaashiinigiing, on the traditional territory of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation.

•Reading

-Akiwenzie-Damm, "'We think differently. We have a different understanding': Editing Indigenous Texts as an Indigenous Editor" (from *Editing as Cultural Practice in Canada*, pp. 29-39) (Ares)

- Indigenous Editors' Association: <https://www.indigenouseitorsassociation.ca/> (see "About" and "Guiding Principles")
- Suzack, "Publishing and Aboriginal Communities" (*HBiC* 3, pp. 293-97) (Ares)
- Akiwenzie-Damm, "Without Reservation: Erotica, Indigenous Style" (Ares)
- Ipellie, "Summit With Sedna: The Mother of Sea Beasts" (from *Without Reservation: Indigenous Erotica*, pp. 6-9) (Ares)

•Watching and Listening

- Akiwenzie-Damm, "UWaterloo Indigenous Speakers Series"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUSlQpd0NY8>

•Discussion

- Nov. 19th, 1:00-2:30 pm: Kegedonce Press

Week of Nov. 23rd: Micro-Press Publishing: Contemporary Chapbook/Zine Cultures in Ottawa and Beyond

Building on derek beaulieu and Jason Christie, Colin Jan Martin defines micro-presses as "those that typically produce fewer than a hundred copies of a work, that engage human rather than mechanical labour, and that do not use ISBN numbers." Contemporary micro-presses publish a wide range of print and digital materials, including broadsides, print ephemera, chapbooks, and zines. While chapbooks, which we read about earlier in the term, share much in common with zines, there are also important aesthetic, political, and historical differences between the two forms. Thinking about these differences helps us to think about the functions and purposes of micro-press publishing in the current moment.

•Reading

- Martin, (from) *At the Margins: Chapbook Presses In Canada* (Chapter 2, pp. 74-83; Chapter 3, pp. 108-44) (Ares)
- resources for zine culture: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingdb/zines/about/> (read also "A Brief History of Zines")
- one poetry chapbook / zine of your choice from any Canadian micropress publisher (see "Course Texts" above for suggestions)—prior to our discussion on Nov. 26th, please post a brief discussion about the form/content of your text, as well as its publisher, on CU Learn (under **Assignments**, "Discussion Forum") (5%)

•Watching and Listening

- Interview with Dessa Bayrock of post ghost press (Ottawa)

•Doing

- Chapbook Making: Pamphlet-Binding Module with Master Printer Larry Thompson (2.5%)

•Discussion

- Nov. 26th, 1:00-2:30 pm: Micro-Press Publishing

Week of Nov. 30th: The Transitional Press (Gaspereau Press)

Founded in 1997 by Gary Dunfield & Andrew Steeves, Gaspereau Press of Kentville, Nova Scotia describes itself as “one of Canada’s most innovative and tenacious literary publishers.” The transitional small-press publisher is positioned between micro-press publishers and the large commercial publishers that dominate publishing in Canada and around the globe (such as Penguin Random House Canada, a subsidiary of Penguin Random House, which is in turn owned by Bertelsmann and Pearson). In addition to considering the role of the transitional press, we will be encouraged by this week’s readings to think about the challenges and opportunities that digital publishing offers to artisanal small presses.

•Readings

-Gayley, “The Enkindling Reciter: E-Books in the Bibliographical Imagination” (Ares)

-Skibsrud, *The Sentimentalists*

•Discussion

-Dec. 3rd, 1:00-2:30 pm: The Transitional Press

Week of Dec. 7th:

Dec. 10th, 1:00-2:30 pm: Virtual Research Forum