

**Carleton University
Winter 2020
Department of English**

**ENGL 6004W: Approaches to the Production of Literature
*Reading, Reception, Consumption: Cultural Texts and Their Users***

**Fridays / 11:35-14:25
Location: 1808 DT**

**Instructor: Prof. Jody Mason
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Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:30-4:30pm**

Human activity is mediated in crucial ways by the practice of reading. A practice that has a kind of assumed importance, its meanings are often taken as self-evident and are left unexamined. Yet reading is contingent; it has a history. Its meanings have been theorized in diverse ways: for some, it is fundamental to the individual freedom of modernity; for others, it is an act of “poaching,” or of actively appropriating meaning; for others, it is a form of immaterial labour, the incorporation “into the workings of late capitalism” of the “recreational time of reading” (Shukin 23).

In this course, we will consider methodologies for studying reading and other forms of cultural consumption from the fields of book history, the sociology of culture, and cultural studies; theories of cultural consumption that range from poststructuralist to Marxist; and case studies that consider reading and cultural consumption practices from a variety of different times and places, from Ancient Rome to nineteenth-century Bengal.

A. Required Texts

All readings can be found in Ares (through CU Learn) unless specified otherwise in the syllabus.

B. Course Requirements / Assignments

Qualitative Methods Assignment 5%
Participation and Weekly Reading Questions 25% + (5 x 2%)=35%
Seminar Facilitation 25%
Final Research Essay 35%

Qualitative Methods in the Study of Reading and Cultural Consumption: 5% for participation in in-class survey design on March 6th

This assignment will introduce you to qualitative research methods that might be used to conduct research on reading / cultural consumption. Our object here will be to devise questionnaires for use with human participants. For a full description of the assignment, please see CU Learn.

Participation and Weekly Reading Questions: 25% + (5 x 2%)=35%

This is a discussion-based seminar; accordingly, you must be present and active. Students who have more than two undocumented absences will receive a grade of 0 for participation. In order to contribute meaningfully to each seminar discussion (and to thus gain full marks for participation), you must be prepared to share your ideas about the readings with the class, to pose questions for the seminar facilitators, and to otherwise actively contribute to classroom discussion (25%)

Five times per term, each student is required to submit a reading question to CU Learn. You may not submit on your seminar date. Each question will be worth 2% of your final grade. These are due at the beginning of the class in question. Questions submitted late will not be counted. Submissions should answer 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)? It's important to consider how you might answer your own question; indeed, you'll be given a chance to think about this in seminar. Your grade will consider the quality of the question and how you are able to take it up in class.

Seminar Facilitation (25%)

On the first day of class, each student will sign up for a seminar presentation. Each student will present one of the texts from the week's readings (approximately 20 minutes) and then facilitate a discussion (approximately 10-15 minutes). You are not required to do secondary research; your focus is the article in question, though you should draw comparisons to other texts on the syllabus (from the week in question, but other weeks as relevant).

To facilitate discussion, students should aim to:

- a) help the class to identify the main ideas, problems, questions of the assigned reading
- b) develop questions that isolate particular passages or contentious issues
- c) help the class to formulate comparisons and connections across the readings

Remember that you are facilitating a discussion and not delivering a conference paper; *please don't read a paper*. On the day of your presentation, you are responsible for handing in a five-page (1,250 words in MLA style / format, with Works Cited) summary of the seminar facilitation (its main points, its principal questions).

Final Research Essay (35%): Fri., Apr. 10th

The research paper should have a clear thesis, provide evidence of independent critical thinking, and it should be 5,000 words / roughly 20 pages. For topic ideas, please see CU Learn. This is a research paper: you must use a minimum of five appropriate secondary sources that are not already on the syllabus (though you may also use course readings as additional sources). Each student is strongly encouraged consult with me (before or after

class, during my office hours) in order to determine what is the relevant scholarship. 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. Before class on Apr. 3rd, you will submit 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 class on Apr. 3rd. (We will also use our time on the 3rd to plan a “mini-symposium” for Approaches to the Production of Literature.) The paper is due one week later, on April 10th.

C. Expectations

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 and response papers 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). 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>).

D. 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>

E. Syllabus

Week 1: Introduction

Jan. 10

*Introduction to course and sign up for weekly seminars

Week 2: Book History and the History of Reading

Jan. 17

*Book history has been an important producer of the history of reading as a sub-field. What methods and preoccupations have characterized book historians' approaches to the uses of texts?

Robert Darnton, "History of Reading," (*New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, pp. 140-67)

Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, "Introduction" (*A History of Reading in the West*, pp. 1–36)

Roger Chartier, "Texts, Printings, Readings" (*The New Cultural History*, pp. 154–75)

Week 3: Cultural Studies and Consumption

Jan. 24

*Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary enterprise for studying the conditions that affect production, reception, and cultural significance of all types of institutions, practices, and products. In cultural studies, literature is merely one form of cultural "signifying practice." This week we are tracking the ways that a theory of cultural consumption as manipulation shaped the British tradition of cultural studies, in particular, and how this line of argument has been modified.

Q.D. Leavis, (from) *Fiction and the Reading Public* (*The History of Reading*, pp. 13-22)

Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Part 2: "Myth Today," pp. 217-42)

Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding" (*The Cultural Studies Reader*, pp. 90-103)

Week 4: Sociology of Culture: Cultural Reception, Taste, and Symbolic Boundaries

Jan. 31

*Sociologists of culture treat cultural texts as inescapably conditioned by the social, economic, and political forces of its age; by extension, they view the interpretation and assessment of a cultural text by a public as shaped by the circumstances specific to that public's time, place, and class.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* ("A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste," pp. 11-63)

Week 5: Reader-Response Theory

Feb. 7

*Reader-response critics agree that the meanings of a text are the "production" or "creation" of the individual reader (there is no one correct meaning for all readers of a texts). This is a "text-centric" approach that has little interest in the material conditions of consumption.

Michel de Certeau, "Reading as Poaching" (*The History of Reading*, pp. 130-39)

Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in Poetry and Discourse in the Novel" (*The History of Reading*, pp. 109-113)

Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* ("What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?," pp. 338-55)

Week 6: Readers and Marginalia

Feb. 14

*The study of marginalia—the marks that readers make in texts—is associated with book history. That is, this is an approach to the study of reading that is historical, book-centric, and often literary in orientation.

H.J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (Chapter 2: “History,” pp. 44–80) (Ares)

Winter Break (No Classes): Feb 17-21

Week 7: Consuming Popular Texts

Feb. 28

*Though all approaches to cultural consumption attend to the ways that certain texts are coded as “bad” and others as “good,” cultural studies has paid particular attention to how popular texts are consumed.

Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapter 3: “The Act of Reading the Romance: Escape and Instruction,” pp. 86–118)
John Fiske, “The Cultural Economy of Fandom” (*The Adoring Audience*, pp. 30-49)

Week 8: Book Clubs and Mass Reading Events

March 6

In-class exercise: design survey for Qualitative Methods Assignment 5%

*Reading is not always solitary: readers have long used the clubs and other social forms as a means of experiencing texts. The practice of the book club is, like all forms of reading, historically contingent; how have book clubs changed since the nineteenth century? What is new, if anything, about the mass reading event?

Elizabeth McHenry, “‘An Association of Kindred Spirits’: Black Readers and Their Reading Rooms” (*Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in the United States*, pp. 99-118)

Ted Striphas, *The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control* (Chapter 4, “Literature as Life on Oprah’s Book Club,” pp. 111-40)

Week 9: Reading Outside the West

March 13

*All of the approaches to reading we’ve considered in this course tend to be centered on North America and western Europe. What of the reading and cultural consumption practices outside these locations? How might they be studied and how do they challenge the assumptions of historians of reading, sociologists of culture, and cultural studies theorists?

Anindita Gosh, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society, 1778-1905* (Chapter 4: “Contesting Print Audiences”)

Ato Quayson, “Kobolo Poetics: Urban Transcripts and their Reading Publics in Africa” (*New Literary History* Vol. 41, No. 2, 2010, pp. 413-38)

Anne E. McLaren, “Constructing New Reading Publics in Late Ming China” (*The History of Reading*, pp. 203–19)

Week 10: Censorship and Surveillance as Reading

March 20

*One method of studying reading is to analyze instruments developed to suppress particular kinds of reading.

Robert Darnton, *Censors at Work* (Part Two, “British India: Liberalism and Imperialism,” pp. 89-143)

Week 11: New Directions / Methods

March 27

*How has the study of consumption, audience, reading grappled with digital texts and their uses? What new methodologies and ways of studying use do the tools of digital humanities enable?

Jim English et al., “Mining Goodreads: Literary Reception Studies at Scale”

<https://pricelab.sas.upenn.edu/projects/goodreads-project>

Special issue of *Participations* on “Readers, Reading, and Digital Media”

(<http://www.participations.org/Volume%2016/Issue%201/contents.htm>—read

Introduction and choose one of the following essays: Rowberry, Driscoll, Marcinkowski, Rodger, McGregor)

Neil Cohn, “Your Brain on Comics: A Cognitive Model of Visual Narrative Comprehension” (*Topics in Cognitive Science*, 2019,

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tops.12421>)

Week 12: Research Forum and Mini-Symposium Planning

Apr. 3

*Final research essays due April 10th