

**Carleton University
Winter 2019
Department of English**

**ENGL 4802A / 5900Y: *Race, Ethnicity, and Canadian Literatures*
A “Dumpster Fire”?: *Diversity Debates in Contemporary Canadian and Indigenous
Literatures***

**Prerequisite(s): fourth-year standing or permission of the department
Seminar 3 hours/week**

**Thursday, 11:35am-2:25pm
Location: 315 Southam Hall**

**Instructor: Professor Jody Mason
Email: jody.mason@carleton.ca
Office: 1903 Dunton Tower
Phone: 613.520.2600 x2367 x8907
Office Hours: Tues., 12:30-1:30pm and Thurs., 10-11am**

I. Course Description

The English-Canadian literary field experienced a particularly controversy-filled year in 2017, especially in relation to issues of ethnicity, cultural identity, and Indigeneity. The debates provoked by Joseph Boyden’s identity and the so-called “Appropriation Prize” are only the most prominent instances of more general discussions in the nation’s many literary communities regarding what writer Jen Sookfong Lee called, in a widely circulated 2017 essay, the “racism and entitlement at the heart of CanLit.” This course will explore these debates, paying particular attention to: the longer history of debates regarding racism that have shaped the literary field in Canada; the ways that these debates render the CanLit industry (publishers, teachers of creative writing, writers, literary agents, literary prizes) more visible; what this new popular attention to literary institutions reveals about the changing signification of “literature” and the “literary author”; and how these debates make visible the epistemological boundaries between Canadian and Indigenous literatures.

II. Texts

All course texts can be purchased at Octopus Books, which is located at 116 Third Ave. Their phone number is 613-233-2589, and they are open Monday to Saturday, 10am-6pm and Sunday, 12-5pm. You may purchase older editions of any of the course texts, but keep in mind that pagination may be different. All other course readings can be found through ARES or via the links provided.

Abdou, Angie. *In Case I Go*. (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2017) ISBN: 9781551527031

Belcourt, Billy-Ray. *This Wound is a World* (Frontenac House, 2017) ISBN: 978-1-927823-64-4

Boyden, Joseph. *Three Day Road*. 2006 (Penguin Canada, 2008) ISBN: 0143056956
Chariandy, David. *Soucoyant*. (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2007) ISBN: 1551522268
Maracle, Lee. *Ravensong*. 1993 (Women's Press, 2017) ISBN: 0889615977
Kogawa, Joy. *Obasan*. 1981 (Penguin Modern Classics, 2017) ISBN: 9780735233706

III. Course Requirements and Assignments

(Please note that grades for assignments will appear as percentages and will only be available to those who collect their marked assignments from me or the TA. Final grades will be appear as alphabetical grades following the percentage equivalents described in the Undergraduate Calendar.)

Diversity Debates Blog Post: 15%

Seminar: 25%

Final Research Essay: 35%

Participation: 25%

Diversity Debates Blog Post 15% varying due dates

Each student will choose one article / posting / review / discussion that deals with diversity debates in Canada (these are social media posts, newspaper and magazine articles, blogs, etc.). These materials are marked with asterisks in the syllabus. You are then responsible for writing a 450-500-word blog post that responds to the text in question: what is the debate; how is it framed; how is it relevant to the other readings for the class in question? Other students in the class may not have read the article you are writing about but will benefit from your summary of it, so be sure to outline the terms of the debate as clearly as possible. This post must be submitted to CU Learn before class on the day it is due. You should be prepared to discuss your post during that class (5-7 minutes, not more).

Presentation and Seminar Facilitation 25% varying due dates

On the first day of class, each student will sign up for a seminar presentation. The requirements for fourth-year students are different from those for MA/PhD students. Note that seminars need not deal with blog post materials (marked with asterisks in the syllabus).

*Fourth-year students will present one of the week's readings (approximately 15 minutes) and then facilitate a discussion (approximately 20 minutes). No secondary research is required.

*MA and PhD students will present one of the week's readings (approximately 20 minutes) and then facilitate a discussion (approximately 30 minutes). Students must consult at least two secondary sources that are *not* on the course reading list.

To facilitate discussion, *all students* should aim to:

- a) help the class to identify the main ideas, problems, questions, and formal qualities of the assigned reading(s) (those working with more than one text must consider the ways the texts in question are in conversation)
- b) develop questions that isolate particular passages or contentious issues

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 (5% for Research Forum on Apr. 4th and 30% for essay due Thurs., Apr. 11th=35%)

Ideally, this paper will build on your seminar. The research paper should have a clear thesis, provide evidence of independent critical thinking, and it should be 4,000 words / roughly 16 pages (for fourth-year students) or 5,000 words / roughly 20 pages (MA and PhD students). This is a research paper: you must use a minimum of three (fourth-year students) or five (MA and PhD students) appropriate secondary 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. On Apr. 4th, 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 the Research Forum on Apr. 4th.

Participation 25%

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.

IV. Expectations and Regulations

Attendance and participation: This is a seminar and not a lecture-style class: attendance and participation in discussion are mandatory. More than two undocumented absences will result in a grade of 0 for participation. Come to class with the assigned readings done in advance and in hand. As you read, underline striking features or make notes—this will help you to be an effective participant in class.

Classroom etiquette: All cell phones must be put away. Laptops are permitted for note-taking only (no browsing, no social media, etc.) and any student found to be using a laptop for another other purpose will lose the privilege of bringing the laptop to class for the rest of the year. Listen attentively to the lecture and to the observations made by other students. Have a sense of taking turns when it comes to contributing to discussion: don't rely on others to carry the conversation, and if you enjoy contributing, be careful not to dominate.

Email etiquette: The best way to speak with us is in person during office hours or right after class. Email may be used for brief messages. If you have a substantive question about an assignment or the course material, please see me during office hours (see header on this course outline). It may be possible to arrange an appointment for another time if you are unavailable during the office hours.

Submission of assignments and penalties for late assignments: All assignments must be submitted electronically on CULearn **before** class on the day they are due. Late assignments may be submitted via CULearn up to five days late. There is a penalty of 1% per weekday (this includes the day they are due if they are submitted after the start of class) and a grace period over the weekend. The maximum penalty is 5%. Essays will **not** be accepted after this five day/-5% period unless proper medical 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)

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.

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. Seminar Schedule (tentative)

Please bring the relevant readings with you to every class.

Jan. 10

Introduction

Sign up for seminars and blog posts

Jan. 17

Framing Diversity Debates

Bannerji, (from) *The Dark Side of the Nation* (“Introduction,” pp. 1-13; “On the Dark Side of the Nation,” pp. pp 87-124)

Baum Singer, Kim, and McCall, eds. (from) *Cultural Grammars of Nation* (Kim and McCall, “Introduction,” pp. 1-9—note that I’m asking you to read only part of this introduction)

McGregor, Rak, and Wunker, (from) *Refuse: Can Lit in Ruins* (“Living in the Ruins”)

Jan. 24

Black Like Who?

Chariandy, *Soucoyant*

Walcott, (from) *Black Like Who?* (Chapter 3, “Desiring to Belong,” pp. 57-72)

Jan. 31

Black Like Who?

Jan. 31st, 7pm Munro Beattie Lecture: David Chariandy

Chariandy, *Soucoyant*

Barrett, (from) *Blackening Canada: Diaspora, Race, Multiculturalism* (“Introduction: Texts and Contexts of Blackening,” pp. 3-25)

*Dunlevy, “Jazz Fest Review: Slav Misses the Mark, and Precious Opportunity”

<http://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/music/jazz-fest-review-slav-misses-the-mark-and-precious-opportunity>

Feb. 1

Asian-Canadian Writing’s Broken Entries

Kogawa, *Obasan*

Miki, (from) *Broken Entries: Race, Subjectivity, Writing* (“Aisancy”)

Feb. 8

Asian-Canadian Writing’s Broken Entries

Kogawa, *Obasan*

Lai, (from) *Slanting I, Imagining We: Asian Canadian Literary Production in the 1980s and 1990s* (“Strategizing the Body of History,” pp. 37-62)

Feb. 15

Writing Thru Race

Brand, (from) *Land to Light On*

Brand, (from) *Bread Out of Stone* (“Notes for Writing Thru Race”)

Lai, “Other Democracies: Writing Thru Race at the Twenty-Year Crossroad”

Miki, “Can I See Your ID? Writing in the ‘Race’ Codes That Bind” (*West Coast Line*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 1997-1998, p. 85)

*Gwyn, “Prize for Literature Points to the Future of Our Nation”

“Twenty Years of Writing Thru ‘Race’: Then and Now” (You Tube videos—see CU Learn for links)

Winter Break: Feb. 18-22

Feb. 28

Appropriation Debates, Part I

Where the Spirit Lives (film, 1989—see CU Learn for link)

*“Whose Voice Is It, Anyway? A Symposium on Who Should Be Speaking for Whom” (*Books In Canada*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1991, pp. 11-17)

http://www.booksincanada.com/article_view.asp?id=2281

*Keeshig-Tobias, “Stop Stealing Native Stories”

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/cultural-appropriation-stop-stealing-native-stories/article35066040/>

March 1

Appropriation Debates, Part II

Boyden, *Three Day Road*

*Barrera, “Author Joseph Boyden’s Shape-Shifting Indigenous Identity”

<http://aptnnews.ca/2016/12/23/author-joseph-boydens-shape-shifting-indigenous-identity/>

*Andrew-Gee, “The Making of Joseph Boyden”

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books-and-media/joseph-boyden/article35881215/>

March 8

Appropriation Debates, Part III

Belcourt, *This Wound is a World*

Fagan, Justice, Martin, McKegney, Reder, and Sinclair, “Canadian Indian Literary Nationalism? Critical Approaches in Canadian Indigenous Contexts—A Collaborative Interlogue” (from Baum Singer, Kim, and McCall, eds., *Cultural Grammars of Nation*, pp. x-x)

*Niedzviecki, “Winning the Appropriation Prize”

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-may-15-2017-1.4112604/i-invoked-cultural-appropriation-in-the-context-of-literature-and-writing-only-hal-niedzviecki-1.4112618>

*Akiwenzie-Damm, “The Cultural Appropriation Debate Is Over”

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/the-cultural-appropriation-debate-is-over-its-time-for-action/article35072670/>

You might also want to look at the Emerging Indigenous Voices Prize

<http://www.indigenoussliterarystudies.org/-indigenous-voices-award/>

March 15 and March 22

Appropriation Debates, Part III

Abdou, *In Case I Go*

*Sebastian, “Misrepresentation and the Truth of Ktunaxa Consent”

<https://quillandquire.com/omni/misrepresentation-and-the-truth-of-ktunaxa-consent-a-response-from-ktunaxa-nation-council/>

*Abdou, “Angie Abdou on Seeking Permission to Use a First Nations Character”

<https://quillandquire.com/omni/angie-abdou-on-seeking-permission-to-use-first-nations-stories/>

*Kay, “‘Canada Has Gone Mad’: Indigenous Representation and the Hounding of Angie Abdou”

<http://quilllette.com/2018/01/10/canada-gone-mad-indigenous-representation-hounding-angie-abdou/>

*McKenzie-Sutter, “Publisher Pulls Book”

*Brodeur et al., “Encore une fois, l’aventure se passera sans nous, les Autochtones?”

<https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/libre-opinion/532406/encore-une-fois-l-aventure-se-passera-sans-nous-les-autochtones>

*Lowrie, “Lobbying Robert Lepage”

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/article-no-commitment-to-change-kanata-casting-after-robert-lepage-meets-with/>

March 29

Diversity and the Production of Canadian Literature

Maracle, *Ravensong*

Maracle, Lee. “Change the Way Canada Sees Us: Interview with Lee Maracle” (from *Producing Canadian Literature: Authors Speak on the Literary Marketplace*, pp. 47-60)

*Sookfong Lee, “Open Letters and Closed Doors”

<http://humberliteraryreview.com/jen-sookfong-lee-essay-open-letters-and-closed-doors//>

Apr. 4 (last class)

Research Forum 5%

Final Essay due Thurs., April 11th