

Carleton University  
Department of English  
Fall 2010

**ENGL 5901F: Selected Topics**  
**Topic: Authenticity and Literary Forgery since 1770**

**Time: Thursdays 10:00 – 1:00 p.m.**  
**Location: 1816DT**

Instructor: Arnd Bohm  
Office: . . . . . Dunton Tower 1907  
Office hours: **Tba**

In addition to regular office hours, appointments can be made by prior arrangement. Appointments cannot be made during office hours: just come by. Except when assignments are due, wait times are usually no more than 10 minutes. Appointments outside of regular office hours are possible; please plan for at least one week's advance notice. Missed appointments will not be rescheduled until the following week.

E-mail: abohm@connect.carleton.ca

Mailbox: English Department, DT 1812

Use the mail slot that is located beside the English Department office (DT 1812) at times when the office is not open.

- **READ THIS ENTIRE COURSE OUTLINE CAREFULLY; KEEP COPY FOR REFERENCE.**
- **READ THE *GRADUATE CALENDAR* CAREFULLY. IT HAS IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON REGULATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FACULTY THAT ALSO APPLY TO THIS COURSE.**

### **Course Aims**

Why are literary fictions welcomed but literary forgeries derided when both operate with non-true events. From Thomas Chatterton to James Frey, cases of literary forgery have raised complex, serious questions about the production and reception of texts. They have also been controversial when they are exposed. Many of the cases involve faking victimhood— but why? Instances such as those of Benjamin Wilkomirski, who produced fake memoirs of having been a Holocaust survivor, or Araki Yasusada, who claimed to have survived Hiroshima and whose identity still remains a puzzle, raised powerful emotional reactions. Why should false accounts turn out to be so provocative?

The seminar will examine a series of cases from the eighteenth century to the present and try to determine what makes a literary forgery, how they come to light, and why they are ruled out of bounds, unlike fiction. Particular focus will be placed on the socio-political situation of literary forgers, such as Canada's Grey Owl and Frederick Philip Grove, to extraordinary fakers. Evidence from Australia, another country that has been affected by the phenomenon, suggests that instances

of literary forgery are closely tied up with the issues of national identity and with postcolonial questions of authentic identity.

### **Books**

I will try to have things on Reserve in the Library. Some materials can only be available electronically. There is no required text for purchase.

### **Grading**

Attendance, Participation	20%
Presentation	30%
Term essay	50%

(Attendance will be taken and requires remaining for the entire class. 5% will be lost for each absence, except for illness, up to 20%.

Conversion to letter grades will be done as per the *Calendar*. The grades in this course will not be statistically normed ("curved").

### **Essay**

There should be no separate title page.

In matters of form, follow the *MLA Style Handbook*. Use 12-point font throughout, including title pages and headers. Select a font that most resembles "Times Roman" (for example the font in which this text is printed). Do not use fancy display fonts and be very sparing with **bolding**. Important: use *italics* instead of underlining for book and journal titles and emphases.

No electronic submissions will be accepted.

The written work will be assessed by the following criteria: form (does it follow the *MLA* format?); organization (clear statement of thesis; clear structure; strong conclusion); original content (have you demonstrated your own thinking and analysis?). Since this is an English course, it is expected that you have, or want to acquire, good writing skills. Spelling, syntax, idiomatic collocations and similar stylistic matters **are important**. You will be **heavily penalized** for mistakes in those areas. Please note that where the *MLA* gives an option for underlining titles or italics, I require *italics*.

I do not welcome papers that parrot back what I have said in class — save that for examinations.

No late assignments can be accepted after **Dec. 6** for any reason whatsoever (University regulation).

### **Presentation**

The presentation will be graded on how well prepared it is; how effectively it was presented and how well you handled discussion. It is a sign of professional collegiality to listen to presentations, to make notes, and to be willing to discuss.

### **E-Mail**

All students have been assigned an e-mail account on CONNECT. You **must** activate your account since I will be using CONNECT to mail handouts, announcements and information about the assignments. Because of privacy issues arising from Ontario's FIPPA legislation, I will only answer e-mail sent by you through CONNECT. All other e-mail (such as hotmail) is deleted automatically.

Please note that e-mail is not the same as "texting." First, replies are not instantaneous. E-mails will be answered in a timely fashion, usually **within 5 working days** from when they are received. You should not simply hit the "reply" button if you are mailing on a different subject than the one you received a message about; indicate the actual subject. And finally, if you are asking me to do something, a simple "please" somewhere in the message is always appreciated.

I archive all e-mail received.

E-mail is intended for short answers to specific questions. For inquiries that require more extensive discussion, please come see me.

### **General Academic Regulations**

All students are required to be familiar with the rules and regulations as published in the *Graduate Calendar 2010-2011*. The rules and regulations there are not all reprinted in this course outline, but do apply. Note especially the rules about deadlines for assignments.

### **Academic Freedom**

Attention is drawn to the University's policy on "Discrimination and Sexual Harassment."

Students enrolling this course are warned that studying the literature, culture and ideas of societies other than their own will expose them to unfamiliar and sometimes provocative attitudes, images, language and values.. But all participants in the course must be willing to examine the relevant texts, must make a sincere effort to understand the presuppositions of others, and be willing to discuss, verbally and in writing, the objects of study. By enrolling in this course, students accept a commitment to academic freedom for all participants, themselves, and the instructor.

### **Special Accommodations**

#### **For Disability**

If there is any student in this course who, because of a disability, may have a need for special accommodations, please come and discuss this with me. As well, students must contact the Paul Menton Centre for Persons with Disabilities to obtain a Letter of Accommodation for any special examination arrangements. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me at least two weeks prior to the first in-class test or assignment.

#### **For Religious Obligation**

Any student who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory, or other compulsory event, must make a formal request in writing for alternative dates or means of satisfying requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of any given academic term, or as soon as possible after a need for accommodation is known to exist, but in no case later than the penultimate week of classes in that term. I will make reasonable accommodation in a way which shall avoid academic disadvantage to the student.

#### **For Pregnancy**

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

#### **For Work or Travel**

No special accommodations will be made for conflicts with work schedules or for travelling.

### **Research Ethics and Infractions**

#### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. **I am required by the University to report all cases of plagiarism to the appropriate Dean.** The penalties are severe, from an "F" in the course to expulsion from the University. It is not a pleasant experience for anyone.

More often than not, students commit plagiarism because they do not know what it is, but ignorance is no defence. Plagiarism is fraud. A good rule of thumb is that any sentence or passage with three or more words taken from another source must be carefully documented with a footnote. But be careful: even if you put quotation marks around everything and cite the sources, relying too much on someone else's work could still constitute plagiarism. If in doubt, come see me before handing in the final version of your work.

The best ways to avoid plagiarism are to think for yourself, do your own research, take careful notes, and leave enough time to do the job properly.

Note that **all** material stored electronically, whether as software, on diskette or CD-ROM, or on the "Internet" is governed by the same rules and regulations about plagiarism and copyright as printed matter. Downloading material and handing it in as your own work is forbidden.

Ideas you get from lectures and discussions in class should also be properly credited. They may be cited as "Lecture, [name of person], [course number], [date]" or "Class discussion, [course number], [date]. But papers that rely heavily on what I said in class about a text will not get a very good grade, since they do not demonstrate much independent thought or research effort on your part.

The use of the same (substantially unchanged) paper for different assignments in other courses is considered by Carleton University to constitute plagiarism.

Two useful websites on the topic of plagiarism:  
MacOdrum Library: either click on "How Do I" on the Library page and then "Avoid Plagiarism" or click on <http://www.library.carleton.ca/howdoI/plagiarism/html/>

Also helpful is a site "How Not to Plagiarize" at the University of Toronto:  
<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep/html>

### **Fairness in Citing**

Quotations must be reproduced exactly as in the original with quotation marks; evidence must be cited accurately. It is wrong to alter evidence to fit your arguments.

### **Respect for Others**

In keeping with Carleton University's "Policy on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment," you should avoid sexist language and language that could be hurtful to others, both in class and in written assignments. Yes, I do take off points in essays for sexist language.

### **Respect for Common Property**

Do not write in or deface library materials. New books are very expensive (\$100-\$200 at a minimum once they are catalogued and shelved) and there is no money to replace them.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

We start and end on time.

Drinks in class are ok; food only if it does not crunch or make those around you queasy.

Cell-phones, pagers, lap-tops and all other electronic equipment must be turned off unless you have written permission from the Paul Menton Centre.

### **Readings**

The exact days will be made known after this outline is draughted, and will be distributed then in a final version.

Sept. 9 start of classes; course outlines distributed and explained

Sept. 13-17 Week 1 Ossian

Sept. 20-24 Week 2 Chatterton

Sept.27-Oct.1	Week 3 Coleridge
Oct. 5-9	Week 4 Rutherford
Oct 11-15	Week 5 Grove / Greve
Oct. 18-22	Week 6 Grey Owl
Oct. 25-29	Week 7 Ern Malley
Nov. 1-5	Week 8 Don Juan
Nov. 8-12	Week 9 Menchu
Nov. 15-19	Week 10 Wilkomirski
Nov. 22-26	Week 11 Yasusada
Dec. 1	Term essay due at 12 noon
Nov. 29-Dec.3	Week 12 Frey; summary
Dec. 6	last day of classes
	Last day for handing in term work