

Carleton University
Winter 2021
Department of English

**ENGL 3605A: Modern and Contemporary Literary Theory
Theorizing Literary Authorship**

Precludes Additional Credit for ENGL 3002 (no longer offered)
Prerequisite(s): third-year standing or permission of the Department
Lecture 3 hours / week

Location: online
Format: asynchronous

Instructor: Professor Jody Mason
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Phone: 613.520.2600 x8907
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10 am-noon (on zoom, by appointment)

I. Course Description

This is an introduction to contemporary approaches to literary texts, such as formalist, structuralist, deconstructive, psychoanalytic, Marxist, historicist, and feminist.

The literary author is both omnipresent and invisible in literary studies: adored as a celebrity, celebrated as a semi-spiritual figure of genius, and isolated from the material conditions that make literature happen, the literary author is at once hypervisible and not really seen. This course will introduce theoretical debates regarding the meanings of authorship, focusing on the period from the late eighteenth century to the present and on western Europe and North America. Beginning with Romantic ideas of authorship and their influence on literary studies as a field, we will then explore the difference between the author as “creator”—a concept associated with the Romantics—and the author as “producer”—a concept that has been taken up (in very different ways!) in Marxist literary theory and in poststructuralist theory. Along the way, we will consider the gender and race politics of authorship, as well as the roles played by publishers, editors, and marketing departments in the construction of literary authorship.

This is an asynchronous course. Weekly modules will be published every Monday morning by 9 am. Each weekly module comprises one lecture capsule and capsule questions. For additional assignments, please see below. Though there are no synchronous meetings, *weekly modules and weekly assignments must be completed each Sunday night at 11:59 pm (ET)*.

NB: I hold two office hours per week (Tuesdays 10am-noon, on zoom). If you'd like to drop in then (or at another time if you have a conflict with these hours), please send me an email and I'll schedule an appointment for you. You will find the zoom information on CU Learn under **Office Hours**. If there is interest, I'll also hold a weekly drop-in session for questions (date and time tba).

II. Course Materials

The book below can be purchased from [Octopus Books](#) in Ottawa. From the Octopus home page, choose “students” on the menu bar and then choose our course code (ENGL 3605A). This will take you to the listing for *Foe*, which you can order online. The book can be delivered or you can pick it up in store.

All other readings in the syllabus are available through Ares (accessible from the CU Learn course page—see the right-hand side of the page).

Coetzee, J.M. *Foe*. 1986 (Penguin, 2010, ISBN: 978-0241950111)

III. Assignments

Note that all term work must be completed in order to pass the course.

Note that fuller instructions for each assignment are available on CU Learn. The syllabus includes deadlines for each assignment.

Forum: Introduction=2%

Capsule Questions (3% for each module x 11)=33%

Module Reflections (10% each x 2)=20%

Applying Theory: *Foe*=25%

Take-Home Exam=20%

Forum: Introduction 2%

You will find this forum under the **Assignments** tab in CU Learn. By 11:59 pm on Sunday, Jan. 17th, please submit a 250-word post that introduces you to the class and that tells us something about your experience(s) of authorship: what program are you in and what is your academic background? Where are you studying from? What experiences of authorship have you had—as a literary author, as a journalist (student or otherwise), as a blogger or podcaster, as a writer of a personal journal (I’m serious!), as an author of papers for university classes... What have these experiences led you to believe about “authorship”: what does it mean to be an author?

Capsule Questions (3% for each module x 11)=33%

For each lecture capsule (except the *Course Introduction* and the *Course Summary*), there will be a set of review questions. These questions are multiple choice (3 choices and 1 correct answer). These questions are meant to ensure that you are keeping up with the capsules (and the assigned reading). Questions are assigned each Monday morning and are due each Sunday on or before 11:59 pm. Late answers will not be considered because I will publish correct answers at the beginning of the next week’s lecture capsule.

Module Reflections (10% each x 2)=20%

You are required to submit a four-page (roughly 1000-word) reflection for **two** of the course modules (you may choose the two you prefer from Weeks 2-10—see the syllabus for deadlines specific to each module). You will find the description of this assignment, as well as the reflection prompts specific to each module, under the **Assignments** tab in CU Learn. Reflections are due on or before 11:59 pm on the following Sundays: Jan. 31st, Feb. 28th, March 7th, March 21st, and March 28th (depending on which two weeks you choose).

Applying Theory: *Foe*=25%

Your reflections will give you some practice writing about the theoretical texts introduced in each module. This assignment builds on the skills you will acquire in the reflections by asking you to respond to a series of prompts related to J.M. Coetzee's novel *Foe*; each of these prompts asks you to think about how you would bring a different theory of authorship to bear on the novel. This is not an essay, but rather a kind of short-answer assignment. You will find these prompts, as well as the description of the assignment, under the **Assignments** tab in CU Learn. This assignment is due on or before 11:59 pm on Wed., Apr. 14th.

Take-Home Exam 20%

This take-home exam will be assigned at the beginning of the formal winter exam period (April 16th) and it must be submitted no later than April 27th at 11:59 pm. The exam comprises definitions, short-answer questions, and one essay question.

IV. Expectations

Email and Office Hours: I encourage you to use my online office hours for questions relating to lectures, readings, and assignments. I have two office hours—please see the header on this document. **Please make an appointment by emailing me.** You may also use email for questions requiring brief responses.

Assignments and Late Policy: Assignments must be submitted to CU Learn the day they are due (by 11:59 pm). *Please submit your assignments as Word documents.* Module Reflections and the Applying Theory assignment may be handed in up to five days late with a penalty of 1% per day; the maximum penalty is 5%. These assignments 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: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.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: write to me 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 click [here](#).

Religious obligation: write to me 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 click [here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520- 6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and 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 me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

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 where 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/sexual-assault-support-services>

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. Write to me 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 1 (week of Jan. 11^h):

Module: Course Introduction

Assignments: Discussion Forum Introduction (2%) due Sun., Jan. 17th

Week 2 (week of Jan. 18th):

Module: The Author as Creator: The Romantics

Reading: Wordsworth, William. "Wordsworth's Prefaces of 1800 and 1802" (from *Lyrical Ballads*, pp. 233-58)

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) due Sun., Jan. 24th

Week 3 (week of Jan. 25th):

Module: The Author as Creator: The Romantics

Reading: Stillinger, Jack. (from) *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (chapter 7, pp. 139-62)

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) and Module Reflection (if applicable) (10%) due Sun., Jan. 31st

Week 4 (week of Feb. 1st):

Module: The Author as Producer: Marxist Approaches

Reading: Benjamin, Walter. "The Author as Producer" (from *Understanding Brecht*, pp. 85-103)

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) due Sun., Feb. 7th

Week 5 (week of Feb. 8th):

Module: The Author as Producer: Marxist Approaches

Reading: Bernes, Jasper. (from) *The Work of Art in the Age of Deindustrialization* (chapter 4, pp. 121-49)

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) and Module Reflection (if applicable) (10%) due Sun., Feb. 28th (note that this due date has been adjusted because of reading week)

Reading Week: Feb. 15th-19th (classes suspended)

Week 6 (week of Feb. 22nd):

Module: Poststructuralist Conceptions of the Author

Reading: Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author" (from *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*, pp. 121-25); Foucault, Michel. "What Is an Author?" (from *The Critical Tradition*, pp. 978-88)

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) due Sun., Feb. 28th

Week 7 (week of March 1st):

Module: Poststructuralist Conceptions of the Author

Reading: Moi, Toril. (from) *Sexual / Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* ("The Madwoman in the Attic," pp. 57-69)

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) and Module Reflection (if applicable) (10%) due Sun., March 7th

Week 8 (week of March 8th):

Module: Book History and Authors as Actors in a "Communications Circuit"

Reading: Darnton, Robert. "What Is the History of Books?" (from *The Book History Reader*, pp. 9-26)

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) due Sun., March 14th

Week 9 (week of March 15th):

Module: Book History and Authors as Actors in a "Communications Circuit"

Reading: Brewer, John. (from) *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (chapter 3, pp. 111-40)

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) and Module Reflection (if applicable) (10%) due Sun., March 21st

Week 10 (week of March 22nd):

Module: Authorship and Critical Race Studies

Reading: Young, John K. (from) *Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African American Literature* (chapter 1, pp. 37-64)

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) and Module Reflection (if applicable) (10%) due Sun., March 28th

Week 11 (week of March 29th):

Module: Theories of Authorship in Foe

Reading: Coetzee, J.M. *Foe*

Assignments: Capsule Question (3%) due Sun., Apr. 4th

Week 12 (week of Apr. 5th):

Module: Course Summary

Reading: none (course review)

Assignments: none

Week 13 (week of April 12th):

Reading: none (course review)

Assignments: Applying Theory: *Foe* (25%) due Wed., Apr. 14th

NB: drop-in review session Thurs., Apr 15th, 1-2pm (zoom link on CU Learn)

NB: April 16-27, 2021: **Take-Home Exam (20%) during the formally scheduled final exam period—due April 27th**