

**Carleton University
Fall 2017
Department of English**

**ENGL 4806B : Studies in Canadian Lit. I
*20th and 21st-Century Canadian Short Fiction***

Prerequisite(s): fourth-year standing or permission of the department

Friday, 2:35-5:25

Location: Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Sara Jamieson

Email: sara_jamieson@carleton.ca

Office: Dunton Tower 1819

Phone: 613-520-2600 ex. 2431

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 2-3, or by appointment

Because it does not make heavy demands on the reader's time, the short story is often described as the literary form best suited to the fast and hectic pace of contemporary life. Canadian authors have always excelled at writing short stories, but, despite the recent successes of short story writers like Guy Vanderhaeghe (winner of the 2015 Governor General's Award), Alice Munro (winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013) and Lynn Coady (winner of the Giller Prize in 2013), there are those who continue to view the short story as a "minor" literary genre, a sort of poor relation to the novel. In this course, you will have the opportunity to consider this conundrum while savouring the skills of some of Canada's most celebrated contemporary writers. You will also be introduced to a selection of critical and theoretical materials that will guide your understanding of the historical, material, and cultural conditions that have shaped short story production in Canada.

Reading List:

All texts available at Haven Books, 43 Seneca Street (613-730-9888)

Alice Munro, *Runaway*, (2004)

Alistair MacLeod, *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun* (1986)

André Alexis, *Despair and Other Stories of Ottawa* (1998)

Nadia Bozak, *Thirteen Shells* (2016)

Thomas King, *One Good Story, That One* (1993)

Additional readings will be made available through the library reserve system.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Seminar Presentation: 25% (sign-up sheet will be made available on first day of class and thereafter posted on my office door [DT 1819])

Periodical Review Assignment: 20%

Research Essay: 35%

Five one-page written response papers: 10% (submit one every two weeks)

Participation: 10%

Assignment Guidelines and Objectives:

Seminar Presentation: (a sign-up sheet will be posted on my office door after the first class; presentation dates will be available on a first-come, first-served basis)

This assignment requires you to make a polished 10-15 minute presentation to the class. The evaluation criteria for your presentation are in some ways similar to those for an essay: I expect a coherent and significant thesis that is developed into a convincing argument about an aspect of the text(s), rather than a series of random observations. Think of yourself in this assignment as teaching an aspect of the text to the rest of the class: keep in mind what it is you want us to learn and why you think it is important. Grading will also take into account your public-speaking demeanor: a relaxed, rehearsed, and engaging delivery is the most effective way to communicate your ideas. One purpose of seminar presentations is to stimulate class discussion, so end your presentation with two or three intelligent and thoughtful questions about the text(s) you have discussed.

You are required to submit your presentation notes for grading after your presentation.

Objectives: development of editing and organizational skills, teaching skills, public speaking skills, fluency in class discussion

Periodical Review: This assignment is intended to enhance your awareness of the kinds of print sources in which Canadian short fiction has been published in the past and continues to be published today. It is designed to help you develop your research and critical thinking skills, and to promote your understanding of the relationship between a short story and the context in which it is published.

You will be given a list of periodicals that publish short fiction. All are available online or in the Carleton University library.

Choose ONE of them and find a single issue in which a short story appears.

Read the story (if the issue includes more than one, just read one) and write a 1000-1500 word report that addresses the following questions:

- 1) Describe the periodical: where is it produced? what do you think is the intended audience? what else does it contain besides short fiction? Does it contain illustrations? Advertisements?
- 2) Describe the story itself. Does it belong to a recognizable genre: romance? mystery? adventure? detective story? Is it formally experimental? Can you draw any conclusions about the relationship between the content/form of the story and the nature of the periodical in which it appears?

Please make a copy of the story you have chosen and attach it to your assignment.

Research Essay: 10-12 pages

In a research essay, I expect a significant and engaging thesis statement that is developed into a coherent argument, supported by direct quotations from the primary text and intelligent use of secondary source materials. There is no required number of secondary sources, but you are encouraged to be as comprehensive as possible.

It is acceptable to develop your seminar presentation into a research paper, but you are not required to do this.

Correct punctuation, grammar, and adherence to MLA style are required.

Objectives: finding and assessing secondary source materials, close reading skills, writing skills

Five one-page response papers: You must submit one response paper on each of the five short story collections we will be reading. These are meant to record your responses to each text: things about it that particularly interest you, elements you may find challenging or confusing, the relationship between the stories in the collection and the theories of the short story that we will be reading in the course, etc.

Objectives: demonstrating reading comprehension, developing ideas that could later form the basis of an essay or presentation, opportunities for addressing writing problems

Grading System:

Assignments in this course will be graded using the letter grading system: A-, A, A+ (Excellent); B-, B, B+ (Good); C-, C, C+ (Satisfactory); D, D+ (Minimal pass); F (Failure). Percentage conversion: A+ (90-100%), A (85-89), A- (80-84), B+ (77-79), B (73-76), B- (70-72), C+ (67-69), C (63-66), C- (60-62), D+ (57-59), D (53-56), D- (50-52), F (0-49).

Expectations:

Attendance and Participation: You are expected to attend every class, read the assigned material for each class, **bring the assigned readings with you to class**, and be prepared to answer questions and engage in discussion. Perfect attendance does not guarantee a perfect grade of 10/10 on the Participation component of the course. To attain a 10/10, you must attend regularly, and make regular and thoughtful contributions to class discussions.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what went on in your absence.

Classroom Courtesy: While the internet can be a very useful in-class tool that enhances the quality of our discussions, please refrain from randomly surfing the web and text messaging during class. Please stay for the duration of the class; if you must leave early, I would appreciate it if you would let me know beforehand.

Submission of Written Work: Written assignments must be submitted in class on the due date. **Do not use CULearn for submitting course work.**

E-mail submissions are allowed only under particular circumstances, and must be sent directly to my e-mail address (sara_jamieson@carleton.ca).

There is a drop-box located in the English Department office (Dunton Tower 1812). This can be used if you are unable to hand in your essay in class. **Use the drop-box at your own risk. It is your responsibility to ensure that your essay reaches me; in the highly unlikely event that an essay left in the drop box does not make its way to my mailbox, you must be able to submit an electronic copy of the essay as soon as this is brought to your attention.**

Please ensure that you save a copy of your essay in the unlikely event that it is lost after you hand it in.

Late Penalty: The penalty for late submissions is 2% per day late. In case of illness or emergency, a doctor's note or appropriate document must be provided in order for an extension to be granted.

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 see the [Student Guide](#).

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 see the [Student Guide](#).

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*). **Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.** After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website (www.carleton.ca/pmc) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

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.

Class Schedule:

Friday Sept. 8: Welcome and Introduction

Friday Sept. 15: **Theorizing Short Fiction (all materials posted on ARES)**

Edgar Allan Poe, "Review of *Twice-Told Tales*"

Brander Matthews, "The Philosophy of the Short Story"

A.L. Bader, "The Structure of the Modern Short Story"

Theorizing Canadian Short Fiction (all materials posted on ARES)

Frank Davey, "Genre Subversion in the English-Canadian Short Story"

W.H. New, Introduction to *Dreams of Speech and Violence: The Art of the Short Story in Canada and New Zealand*

Gail Scott, "Shaping a Vehicle for her Use: Women and the Short Story"

Diana Brydon, "Storying Home: Power and Truth"

Friday Sept. 22: André Alexis, *Despair and Other Stories of Ottawa*

David Chariandy, "Haunted Diasporas: The Second-Generation Stories of André Alexis" (ARES)

Friday Sept. 29: *Despair and Other Stories of Ottawa*

Friday Oct. 6: Alice Munro, *Runaway*

Robert McGill, "Alice Munro and Personal Development" (ARES)

Friday Oct. 13: *Runaway*

Friday Oct. 20: Thomas King, *One Good Story, That One*

Thomas King, "Godzilla vs. Postcolonial" (ARES)

☺ **Fall Break** ☺ (no class)

Friday Nov. 3: *One Good Story, That One*

Friday Nov. 10: Nadia Bozak, *Thirteen Shells*

Gerald Lynch, excerpt from *The One And the Many: English –Canadian Short Story Cycles* (ARES)

Friday Nov. 17: *Thirteen Shells*

Friday Nov. 24: Alistair MacLeod, *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun*
Gwendolyn Davies, "Alistair MacLeod and the Gaelic Diaspora" (ARES)

Friday Dec. 1: *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun*
Research Essay Due