

**Carleton University
Winter 2019
Department of English**

ENGL 2900: Literature of the Self

Prerequisites: *Second-year standing or permission of the department*

Preclusions: *None listed in undergraduate calendar*

Mondays and Wednesdays / 8:35-9:55am

Location: *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

Professor T. DeCook

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Office: 1803DT

Phone: (613) 520-2600x1367

Office Hours: Mondays, 10-11am and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course addresses literary depictions of the nature of the self. It covers a wide historical range, engaging texts from antiquity and the middle ages, the early modern period, and the modern and post-modern eras. Similarly, it ventures across diverse cultural contexts. This large scope provides encounters with strange conceptions of selfhood; it also confronts us with historical origins of assumptions which we experience as natural. The course's historical and cultural diversity both helps defamiliarize our current assumptions about selfhood as well as offer moments of commonality with the apparently alien. We will examine such genres as epic and lyric poetry, religious autobiography, drama, short stories, and novels. Recurring themes include shifts in religious belief, secularization, ethics, the relationship and boundary between self and world, notions of self-division and multiple selves, and relationships between the self and external authorities.

cuLEARN

Announcements and documents pertaining to the course will be posted on cuLearn. Students are fully responsible for reading all course material transmitted here. Information posted to cuLearn will be considered provided to all registered students within 24 hours of posting.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students in this course will:

- Read a diverse generic, cultural, and historical range of literary texts which meditate on questions of selfhood
- Develop an awareness of the ways in which different forms of literature from different historical periods and diverse cultures articulate and explore ideas of selfhood
- Develop and extend their knowledge of key technical and literary terms and theoretical concepts for studying literature
- Develop a sense of how literary texts reflect and participate in their historical and cultural settings
- Acquire and improve the skills used to analyze and write about various kinds of literary texts

COURSE WORK AND EVALUATION

In-class writing assignment (Jan 23): 10%

Midterm (Feb 13): 25%

Essay (due Apr 8): 20%

Final exam (April exam period): 40%

Participation: 5%

For the in-class writing assignment, which will take up our class on January 23, you will write about EITHER 1.) the significant factors that have shaped your own conception of selfhood, or 2.) the significant factors that have shaped the conception of selfhood of a character in a piece of literature of your choice. If you choose the second option, you must indicate in your paper the title of the work of literature and the character's name to which you refer. You are allowed to bring a hard copy, but not an electronic copy, of the literary text with you when writing this assignment.

In advance of this assignment you will need to think about the individuals, communities, experiences, institutions, media, events, and cultural forms which have influenced your or your character's sense of identity. This assignment demands that you not merely discuss how you or your character identifies in a specific way (e.g., as a Buddhist, as a creative writer, as a guitar player). You will need to go beyond this to talk about the specific values which constitute the centre of your or your character's identity, and the framework through which you or your character make sense of the world. The reflection that you do for this assignment will enrich your engagement with the literature we will read over the course of the term.

The midterm and final exam will cover all course material up to that point, and will include identification questions, passage analysis, and essay questions.

The essay will consist of the critical analysis of a passage from a text that we have studied (you'll be able to pick from a selection of passages). You will provide a close reading of the passage, then discuss the significant ways it engages questions of selfhood, and then finally reflect on how this passage relates to other texts from the course. The required length of the essay is 1500 words. The essay must be submitted in hard copy, typewritten, handed in at the end of class on the due date, and citations must comply with the Modern Languages Association (MLA) format (see the *MLA Handbook* or <http://www.mla.org>). You are not required to use secondary sources. Late essays will be penalized at a rate of 2% for every day they are late, excluding weekends and holidays. A medical emergency, documented with a doctor's note, is the only legitimate excuse for a late paper. Computer problems and lost papers are not valid excuses for late assignments: it is your responsibility to maintain backup copies of all your work.

Participation marks derive from your regular attendance and informed involvement in discussion periods. Participation includes bringing to class the texts to be discussed. Significant absence from this course will lead to loss of participation marks and will have deleterious consequences for your mid-term and final exams.

CLASSROOM PROTOCOLS

Students who want audio recordings of lectures must obtain authorization from the instructor. To avoid disrupting fellow students, please refrain from talking to neighbours during class, and turn off cell phones before class begins.

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 form of intellectual theft. It 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 grade of "F" for the course.

More information on the university's Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

Please Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

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.

Please note: Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations, hand-outs, assignments, lectures, quizzes, drafts, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

REQUESTS 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 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, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious obligation: Please contact 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, 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 me 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. After requesting accommodation from PMC, please meet with me 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 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 for 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 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>

REQUIRED TEXTS

Please use the specific version of the text indicated so that you can follow along in lectures and class discussion.

The following hardcopy texts can be purchased at Haven Books (43 Seneca Street):

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Dover edition)
Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (Lynne Rienner Publishers)
Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (Vintage)
Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux)
Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (Vintage)

All other texts are available electronically.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES (subject to change)

Jan 7: Introduction

Jan 9: Augustine, *Confessions* (excerpts)

Jan 14: William Wordsworth, "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey";
T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Jan 16: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Jan 21: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Jan 23: **In-class writing assignment**

Jan 28: Frederik Pohl, "The Tunnel Under the World"; Philip K. Dick, "Adjustment Team"

Jan 30: Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Feb 4: Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Feb 6: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

Feb 11: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

Feb 13: **Midterm Test**

Feb 18: No class

Feb 20: No class

Feb 25: Anon., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Feb 27: Anon., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Mar 4: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Mar 6: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Mar 11: William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Mar 13: William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Mar 18: No class

Mar 20: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (excerpts)

Mar 25: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (excerpts)

Mar 27: Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*

Apr 1: Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*

Apr 3: Ian McEwan, *Atonement*

Apr 8: Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (**Essay due**)

LOCATION OF ELECTRONIC TEXTS

Augustine, Confessions

Text available at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confessions.pdf>

Excerpts to read: Book 2, chapters 6-10; Book 8, chapters 5-12; Book 10, chapters 5-29.

Excerpts are located on pages 38-41, 125-36, 159-75. These page numbers refer to the viewfinder pagination indicated near the top of the screen.

"Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

Text available at

<http://www.rc.umd.edu/sites/default/RCOldSite/www/rchs/reader/tabbey.html>

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Text available at <http://www.bartleby.com/198/1.html>

"The Tunnel Under the World"

Text available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/31979/31979-h/31979-h.htm>

"Adjustment Team"

Text available at

http://www.philipkdickfans.com/mirror/gutenberg/Adjustment_Team.pdf

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Text available through the Carleton Library e-reserves system (Ares). To access, go to the Library homepage and then click on the link for Ares. After logging in, you will see ENGL 2900 listed among the courses in which you are registered. A pdf of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is located there.

Hamlet

Text available at

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Annex/Texts/Ham/EM/scene/1.1>

Macbeth

Text available at

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Annex/Texts/Mac/M/default/>

Paradise Lost

Text available at

https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_1/text.shtml

Excerpts to read: Book 1; Book 2; Book 4 (lines 1-113); Book 9