

Carleton University  
 Winter 2019  
 Department of English

ENGL 3010A: The Secret Lives of Poems

**ONLINE COURSE**  
 [0.5 credit]

Professor Wallace  
 andrew\_wallace@carleton.ca  
 Office: 1922 Dunton Tower  
 Phone: 520-2600 ext. 1039

**Office Hour (in person)** Tuesdays 13:00-14:00 at 1922 Dunton Tower. **Meetings outside this time slot can be arranged by appointment. Email is the best way to reach me if you want to set up an appointment.**

**Office Hour (online):** Mondays 12:00-13:00 via Big Blue Button. **These will be one-on-one sessions only. Please email me either before or during this office hour spot to arrange for a Big Blue Button session. We can also arrange for a Big Blue Button session by appointment.**

*“One has to learn to read these poems, just as one has to learn to read a three-line, little imagist poem, just as the writer had to learn to write it.”*

Paul Muldoon

## Course Description

This course has been designed for both non-majors and majors. Two interrelated goals have shaped the course: first, it has been structured to nurture and reward the development of skills in the close reading of poetry; second, it has been constructed in such a way as to show that literary artifacts have their own peculiar histories or, as the title of this course has it, “secret lives.” Reconstructing these histories and secret lives is an activity that can assume several different forms: exploring drafts of a poem that survives in multiple versions; establishing links between a text and the cultures and contexts from which it springs, to which it responds, and which it helps shape; reading poems against the backdrop of the lives and careers of the poets who made them. In order to provide an engaging point of entry into the theory and practice of reading poetry, the course foregrounds poems that explore their emergence from the varied materials of life: that is, from experiences—as well as fantasies—of desire, reading, ecstasy, anger, meditation, and disappointment.

All course work (including the final examination) will be completed and evaluated online. There is no formal essay. The grading scheme couples a series of required tests

and a final examination with voluntary weekly activities.

Consistent participation in these voluntary activities can add a maximum of 6% to your grade in the course. Please see the .pdf titled “COURSE BONUS PROVISIONS” for detailed explanations and expectations. This .pdf can be found on the course homepage in cuLearn. **Bonus activities include a series of creative writing exercises (2% max.), participation in a weekly discussion forum (2% max), and the memorization of poems (2% max.).**

### **Required Readings**

Poems studied will range widely, from work by Emily Dickinson to Derek Walcott. With one important exception, all course readings will be available for free via the cuLearn course page. The one addition to these free texts is as follows:

Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux). [9780374523503]

\*Any edition of Walcott’s *Omeros* is acceptable, but passages discussed during lecture modules are keyed to page numbers in this edition.

\*Supplementary readings (as described above) will be available either directly on the course cuLearn site (via url) or through ARES (the link will be provided where this is the case).

Copies of *Omeros* will be available at Haven Books 43 Seneca Street, Ottawa, ON, K1S 4X2, (613) 730-9888: [www.havenbooks.ca](http://www.havenbooks.ca)

### **Reading Schedule**

Please note that the entire reading schedule for the course, along with individual titles and page ranges for each week, can be found on the cuLearn course page.

### **Course Objectives**

My principal goal for the course is to guide you through your encounters with a relatively small group of poems, providing you with enough critical support to read these particular texts with pleasure and understanding, while also giving you the tools and confidence to range out widely, on your own, as readers of poetry.

### **Learning Objectives**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Read and analyze poetry accurately, contextually, and critically
- Write clear and insightful accounts of the formal structure, thematic concerns, and complexity of required readings
- Connect discrete passages and details within poems to wider thematic and cultural concerns
- Demonstrate a firm understanding of a series of technical terms that belong to

- the study of poetry
- Demonstrate an historical and critical grasp of interrelations between form and content in poetry
- Work in an organized and self-reliant fashion to meet the requirements of a course conducted entirely in an online environment

### Assignment / Activity Structure

- **Please consult the course homepage in cuLearn for all deadline information**

10% **Early Feedback Test (to be completed by the end of Unit 2)**

25% **Unit 5 Test**

25% **Unit 9 Test**

40% **Final Examination (3 hours)**

Please note that 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.

### Course Expectations and Advice for Students

Online courses are in many ways considerably more flexible than traditional in-class courses. This flexibility, however, also requires you to be much more self-reliant and better organized than you may usually have to push yourself to be. Education is a cooperative activity and it is common to expect immediate feedback concerning one's efforts. Reading, however, is a solitary activity that requires and rewards patience, attention to detail, and a willingness to slow down. Speed-reading this course's poems will give you little chance to enjoy the required readings or, for that matter, succeed in the course.

Resist the urge to disappear or go silent if you are having difficulty with readings or lecture modules. I am eager to meet with you either in person or via online forms of contact for office hours. Barring extraordinary circumstances (correspondence can become overwhelming occur in a class as large as this one), I can promise to return emails within 24 hours of receiving them. Please contact me immediately if you have a question or concern.

Reading required poems carefully, paying close attention to all unit materials, taking detailed notes on each video module, and taking advantage of your ability to accumulate bonus points will be your most effective way to succeed in the course.

**Please note the following concerning the relationship between your readings, my lectures and supporting materials, and course tests.** Course tests place heavy emphasis on your ability to “close read”—i.e., both analyze and interpret—extracts from the course's required readings. These tests will not be limited to passages presented and discussed in lecture units. Lecture materials have been developed to help guide your readings of the poems and to provide you with new interpretative routes into those poems, but the tests will assume that you have

read the poems carefully and that you will be able to respond with clarity and intelligence to questions that can be reasonably posed to anyone who has read them carefully.

Aside from term tests and the discussion boards for individual units, materials collected within each unit will remain open for the duration of the course. This will enable you to revisit sections of lectures multiple times if you wish to do so. Please see the course page for deadlines.

### **Plagiarism and Instructional Offences**

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 latest version of Carleton’s Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

### **Academic Accommodations**

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](https://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](https://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](mailto: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](https://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 its 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](https://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>**

### **Late Assignment Policy**

Test modules will remain open only for a specified amount of time. For dates and time allowances see the relevant entries on the cuLearn course page. Late assignments will not be accepted—indeed, they will not even be submittable—except for officially

documented reasons such as serious illness or bereavement. Medical conditions require a signed Doctor's Certificate. Any accommodation will be based on the length of the period of illness specified in the Certificate.

### **University Deadlines**

Final deadlines are within the limited established by the University Guidelines. See the most recent version of the Undergraduate Calendar for further details (<http://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>). Requests to defer the final examination are to be directed to the Registrar's Office.