

Carleton University  
**Fall / Winter 2025-26 Preliminary Course Outline**  
Department of English

**ENGL 2802B: *Indigenous and Canadian Literatures***

Prerequisite(s): second-year standing or permission of the department  
Lectures 3 hours / week

**Instructor: Professor Jody Mason**  
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**\*\*\* This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change.  
A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. \*\*\***

## **I. Course Description**

Canada, part of Turtle Island, is a place of many names and many peoples. This course uses literature as a means of introducing us to Canada as a place of diverse and intersecting cultural traditions. The course is organized into three main sections—The First Words, Contact and Conflict, and Indigenous and Settler Adjacencies. We begin with an overview of some of the many cultural forms, including oral stories, that are characteristic of the First Nations and Inuit peoples who have inhabited and storied the spaces of Turtle Island since time immemorial. We then consider the non-fictional travel narratives and testimonies that document the complicated history of contact between the diverse Indigenous Peoples of northern North America and European settlers (who were predominantly French and English) up to the end of the Seven Years War (1763). Finally, we analyze the complex adjacency of Indigenous and settler literatures in the territory first called British North America and later, after Confederation in 1867, Canada. In this final section, we'll study a diverse selection of texts, including Indigenous storytelling, memoir, satire, the literary sketch and the short story, journalism, poetry, visual art, and the novel, and we'll be thinking about the contiguous but often conflicting emergence of Indigenous and Canadian literatures as literary canons, fields of study, and as publishing phenomena.

Throughout the course, influential documents that have shaped Indigenous-settler relations will shape our reading, as will discussions of nation-specific Indigenous epistemologies and values, European imperialism, settler colonialism, migration, industrialization and urbanization, and official multiculturalism. Through the year, we'll be analyzing the ways that particular literary forms forge relationships to place and articulate cultural values. We'll attend to the political significance of such relationships and values, and to the alliances and deep conflicts produced by competing conceptions of place. We'll affirm the autonomy of Indigenous literary traditions, while also acknowledging the complex adjacencies of Indigenous experiences and the literatures that have come to be known as "Can Lit."

ENGL 2802 is a writing attentive course. A portion of class time will be devoted to developing and improving essay writing skills (grammar and syntax, establishment and refinement of arguments, generation and proof of an argumentative thesis across an essay) and research essay skills (critical evaluation, use, and citation of academic sources).

## **II. Learning Outcomes**

Students in the course will learn to analyze Indigenous and settler literatures in the context of their specific histories and cultural formations. They will learn to make arguments about Indigenous and settler literary texts using appropriate forms of evidence.

## **III. Texts**

Term One:

There is nothing to purchase (readings on Brightspace).

Term Two:

In addition to Brightspace readings, you'll require:

Armstrong, Jeannette. *Slash*, 1986. (Theytus Books, 2011, ISBN 9781894778459)

Wong, Rita. *forage*, 2007. (Nightwood Editions, 2007, ISBN 9780889712133)

## **IV. Evaluation**

To pass this course, you must complete all term work. To pass this course, you must not miss more than 33% of the classes (i.e., four classes) in any one term. To pass this course, you must pass both the Fall Term Exam and the Final Exam.

### **Reading Responses + Workshop Activities (30%)**

**Essay One (10%)**

**Fall Term Exam (20%)**

**Research Essay (15%)**

**Final Exam (25%)**

### **Reading Responses + Workshop Activities (30%): varying due dates**

This course comprises a mix of lecture-discussion and in-class, workshop-style activities.

- **Reading Responses:** Four times per term, you'll participate in this in-class activity. At the beginning of select classes (see the syllabus), I'll provide some writing prompts based on the week's reading; you'll have time to respond to one of the prompts, which we'll then share in class discussion. Responses are due in class and will be handwritten. You'll find instructions and a rubric for the evaluation of these responses on Brightspace. There will be one make-up session per term for responses missed due to unavoidable reasons. **2.5% per response, or 20% of your final grade**

- **Workshop Activities:** We'll engage in regular in-class workshop activities (brainstorming, small group discussions, writing workshops, etc.). In determining your grade for the workshop activities, I'll be assessing your participation in workshop activities (Indigenous Learning Bundles and writing/research workshops). You'll receive a mid-term grade at the end of term one and a second grade at the end of term two for these activities. **5% x 2=10% of your final grade**

### **Essay One (10%)**

This essay must be 1,250 words (roughly five pages) in MLA style. This is an essay on a single text, written in response to a question chosen from a selection I will provide. There will be time to work on the outline of this essay in class. Fuller instructions and the submission portals can be found on Brightspace.

### **Fall Term Exam (20%)**

This two-hour exam will take place at the end of first term, in the formal examination period. This exam will include a section on literary terms, as well as short-answer questions. It will cover first-term material only. Regular attendance and participation, as well as careful note taking, will ensure success on the exam.

### **Research Essay (15%)**

This essay must be 1,750 words (roughly seven pages) in MLA format. This is an essay that will analyze one text, written in response to a question chosen from a selection I will provide. You'll use two secondary sources to make your argument about the chosen literary text. Fuller instructions and the submission portal can be found on Brightspace in term two.

### **Final Exam (25%)**

This three-hour exam will take place at the end of the second term, in the formal examination period. This exam will include a section on literary terms, sight passages, and short-answer questions. It will cover second-term material only. Regular attendance and participation, as well as careful note taking, will ensure success on the exam.