

Carleton University
Fall and Winter 2026-2027
Department of English

FYSM 1004D: READING LITERATURES AND CULTURES

“Conflicts and Journeys: A Seminar”

This seminar precludes additional credit for ENGL 1000 (no longer offered), ENGL 1100, ENGL 1200, ENGL 1300, ENGL 1400, ENGL 1600, and ENGL 1700. DO NOT register in any of these precluded courses.

Professor A. Wallace
andrew_wallace@carleton.ca
Office: 1922 Dunton Tower
Office Hours: **TBA**

Please note: this preliminary syllabus is subject to revision until the first day of classes.

This seminar introduces students to poetry, prose, and drama selected from an extremely wide range of historical periods. One of the course’s goals will be to expose you to older texts that exercise massive influence on literary history; a second goal will be to explore a series of modern texts in which literary influences are foregrounded and reimagined. The reading list has been arranged thematically around a series of literal and metaphorical conflicts and journeys. Books will range from the ancient poet Homer’s epic of war, loss, and glory, *The Iliad*, in September to Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* in April. Throughout the course, the emphasis will be on helping you to develop skills in close reading (i.e., analysis and interpretation), interpretive argument, clear thinking and speaking, and essay writing. Supervised (i.e., in-class) writing assignments will be at the heart of the course.

The course will adhere to the aims and principles that are common to other writing-attentive seminars taught within the Department of English and Literature.

One-on-One Meetings

I require a one-on-one meeting of roughly 10 minutes with every member of the class during scheduled appointments. Meetings will be conducted in person during the first two weeks of class.

Students will spend a significant amount of class time learning and improving university-level forms of thinking and writing, particularly essay-writing skills, that will concentrate on the following:

- establishment of university-level expectations for grammar and syntax
- establishment and refinement of literary-critical skills through close analysis of texts from a variety of genres
- generation and proof of an argumentative thesis across an essay

- establishment and refinement of arguments and opinions using persuasive, clear and grammatically correct English
- use and citation of primary literary texts in appropriate and convincing ways
- introduction to the fundamentals of secondary research (including critical evaluation, use, and citation of academic sources)
- completion of a number of writing assignments which will include at least one formal scholarly essay
- writing at least one formally scheduled examination or a culminating reflective assignment

This course also shares with other First Year Seminars at Carleton a common set of Learning Outcomes:

- Closely analyze texts (“text” can be interpreted broadly) in order to extract key ideas and construct meaning
- Distinguish between opinion and evidence-based argument
- Effectively identify and evaluate resources in relation to a specific problem
- Comprehensively explore an issue, including interpreting available data or evidence and formulating an argument or conclusion that is supported by the examined resources
- Communicate ideas to a variety of audiences, including purposeful development and expression of academic ideas in written and/or oral formats
- Identify available university-support services for students and recognize how they can contribute to academic success

PLEASE NOTE: Students who miss six or more classes in a term will not be eligible to submit work or write exams.

Required texts:

- **Fall Term**

The Iliad of Homer, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago, 2011). [9780226470498]
 Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. Anthony Esolen (Modern Library, 2003). [9780812970067]
 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. G.R. Hibbert (Oxford). [9780199535811]
 Voltaire, *Candide and Other Stories*, trans. Roger Pearson (Oxford). [9780199535613]
 Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, ed. Linda Bree (Broadview). [9781551111315]

- **Winter Term**

The Odyssey of Homer, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Harper, 2007). [9780061244186] 23.99
 Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Margaret Smith (Oxford, 2019). [9780198804970] 8.95
 T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (Vintage, 2021). [9780593313343] 15
 Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Oxford 2008). [9780199536610] 17.95
 Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Grove, 2011). [9780802144423] 20.95
 Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Penguin, 2010). [9780241951552] 18.99

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU ARE EXPECTED TO BRING YOUR COPY OF THE TEXT TO EVERY CLASS.

Course books are available from Carleton University's Bookstore. Be sure to have your course number and my name with you when purchasing books. Alternatively, you can paste the ISBN (i.e., the International Standard Book Number, which appears in square brackets for each book) into the Search field of any online bookstore.

COSTS OF REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

The approximate cost for these books if they are purchased new:

- Fall term: **\$84.20**
- Winter Term: **\$105.83**

Please note, however, that second-hand copies of these editions should be readily available. My lectures will be keyed to the page numbers of these editions, but you are welcome to use other editions or translations of these texts.

EVALUATION FORMAT

- 15% Unannounced Reading Quizzes (scattered throughout the year)
- 10% In-Class Test / Passage Analysis (Tuesday 6 October)
- 10% In-Class Test / Essay (Tuesday 3 November)
- 20% December Exam (formally scheduled during Exam Period)
- 10% In-Class Test / Essay (Thursday 28 January)
- 10% In-Class Test / Essay (Tuesday 23 March)
- 25% April Exam (formally scheduled during Exam Period)

***Please note that you must complete all assignments in order to be eligible to pass the course.**

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.

FIFTEEN unannounced multiple-choice quizzes will be administered during class throughout the year. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you are up-to-date and engaged in your readings. Each of these multiple-choice quizzes will evaluate your ability to absorb important details about the texts scheduled for study on the day the quiz takes place. **These quizzes cannot be rescheduled.** If you are absent from class, or sick, or arrive in class after the quiz has been completed, you will not have an opportunity to retake the quiz. **Note, however, that only your best TEN quizzes will be counted towards this portion of your grade; your lowest five quiz scores will be dropped.**

FOUR in-class tests will be administered throughout the year on specified dates. The structure and goals of each test will be discussed during the classes that precede the test. In-class essay writing will be the dominant element in these tests.

TWO term exams (one in December, one in April) will take place during the formally scheduled exam period. The goal of these exams is to enable you to demonstrate your command of the full range of the course's readings. **You will have to write on every text studied in the course.**

ADVICE FOR PREPARING READINGS

Because all assignments consist of in-class writing, you will not be spending extra days and nights outside the class composing and revising essays for submission. I strongly recommend that you use the time that would traditionally have been spent writing essays to prepare your readings in a more systematic way than you are perhaps accustomed to doing. I suggest the following:

- Always look up words that you do not understand; do the same with historical and mythological references you do not recognize, etc.
- Be sure to read the introductions to your course texts; you would also benefit from exploring criticism on these books. This is especially true whenever an in-class test will be devoted to a specific book.
- Recognize in advance that different books will require different reading strategies and will make different demands on your abilities as a reader. For example, understanding Dante's *Inferno* will require understanding how different circles of Hell relate to each other, how punishments relate to sins, etc.; understanding Homer's *Odyssey* will require coming to terms with the poem's multiple narrative timelines. *As you read, try to understand what kind of attention the book demands from you.*
- Take notes as you read in such a way as to give you an extremely strong understanding of the book's structure and organization, central themes, character names and relationships, locations, etc.

FALL TERM:

R10 September: INTRODUCTION: course business and goals, literary canons, "The Homeric Question," John Keats ("[On First Looking into Chapman's Homer](#)")

T15 September: Homer, *Iliad* (Books 1-4)

R17 September: Homer, *Iliad* (Books 5-8)

T22 September: Homer, *Iliad* (Books 9-12)

R24 September: Homer, *Iliad* (Books 13-16)

T29 September: Homer, *Iliad* (Books 17-20)

R01 October: Homer, *Iliad* (Books 21-24)

T06 October: **In-Class Test: Homer's *Iliad***

R08 October: Dante, *Inferno* (Cantos 1-6)

T13 October: Dante, *Inferno* (Cantos 7-12)

R15 October: Dante, *Inferno* (Cantos 13-19)

T20 October: Dante, *Inferno* (Cantos 20-26)

R22 October: Dante, *Inferno* (Cantos 27-34)

*******FALL BREAK: 26-30 OCTOBER*******

T03 November: **In-Class Test: Dante's *Inferno***
 R05 November: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Act 1)
 T10 November: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Acts 2-3)
 R12 November: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Acts 3-4)
 T17 November: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Acts 4-5)
 R19 November: Voltaire, *Candide* (Chapters 1-10)
 T24 November: Voltaire, *Candide* (Chapters 11-20)
 R26 November: Voltaire, *Candide* (Chapters 21-30)
 T01 December: Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (Chapters 1-6)
 R03 December: Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (Chapters 7-12)
 T08 December: Austen, *Persuasion* (Chapters 13-18)
 R10 December: Austen, *Persuasion* (Chapters 19-24)

WINTER TERM:

R07 January: Homer, *Odyssey* (Books 1-4)
 T12 January: Homer, *Odyssey* (Books 5-8)
 R14 January: Homer, *Odyssey* (Books 9-12)
 T19 January: Homer, *Odyssey* (Books 13-16)
 R21 January: Homer, *Odyssey* (Books 17-20)
 T26 January: Homer, *Odyssey* (Books 21-24)
 R28 January: **In-class Test: Homer's *Odyssey***
 T02 February: Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (7-81; Volume 1, Chapters 1-9)
 R04 February: Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (81-190; Volume 1, Chapter 10 to Volume 2, Chapter 3)
 T09 February: Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (190-288; Volume 2, Chapters 4-11)
 R11 February: Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (289-440; Volume 3, Chapters 1-12)

*******WINTER BREAK: 15-19 FEBRUARY*******

T23 February: Ezra Pound, "[The Seafarer](#)," "[Canto I](#)"
 R25 February: Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," introduction to *The Waste Land*
 T02 March: Eliot, *The Waste Land*
 R04 March: Eliot, *The Waste Land*
 T09 March: Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* ("The Window")
 R11 March: Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* ("The Window")
 T16 March: Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* ("Time Passes")
 R18 March: Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* ("The Lighthouse")
 T23 March: **In-class Test: Woolf's *To the Lighthouse***
 R25 March: Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Act I)
 T30 March: Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Act II)
 R01 March: Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Part I)
 T06 March: Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Parts I and II)
 R08 March: Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Parts II and III)