

Carleton University
Winter 2026 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

ENGL 3501B: Literatures and Cultures 1900-Now

Prerequisites: third year standing or permission of the department.

Instructor: Professor Jennifer Henderson
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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. *****

Course description:

Three novels of urban life, about living on in the wake of catastrophe. Novels to counter the predominance of ‘end times’ apocalyptic narratives in our day, from different moments since 1900 which have called forth imaginings of collective survival through empathy, interdependence, and belonging. Additional short readings to deepen our understanding of concepts and context.

Learning Outcomes:

Ability to: discuss each novel as an artistic, philosophical, and political response to certain 20th-century contexts; demonstrate understanding of these novels’ particular interplay of theme and literary form; produce perceptive and nuanced close readings of literary prose, informed by critical vocabulary; develop and write an original, reasoned comparative argument, supported by analysis of textual evidence, without the use of AI; provide quality critical feedback on a peer’s work; contribute individual reading insights to a cooperative, collective discussion.

Texts:

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) Penguin Classics, \$22.00
Adele Wiseman, *Crackpot* (1974) McClelland & Stewart, \$18.47
Toni Morrison, *Jazz* (1992) Vintage, \$22.00

Evaluation scheme:

Two 1.5 hour in-class tests: 25% + 25% = 50%
Comparative essay: outline 10% + essay 25% = 35%
Feedback on peer’s work 5%
Participation in discussion and in-class writing activities 10%