

## Preliminary Web Course Description

\*Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.

### School of English and Theatre Studies

Course Code: ENGL*1200 DE	Course Title: Reading the Contemporary World	Date of Offering: Winter 2019
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Course Instructor: S. D. Powell	Course Format: DE
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#### Brief Course Synopsis:

Reading the Contemporary World provides an introduction to literary studies for non-specialists, covering a range of writings in prose, poetry, and drama and the connections of those writings to recent social, cultural, and political issues. The course explores different ways to read and analyze literary texts and to consider these texts in light of the cultural and historical circumstances that shaped them. We will also study the texts as contributions to ongoing dialogues about such issues as community, nationhood, class, race, sexuality, and gender.

Course materials will provide historical background, address key issues in contemporary literary and cultural studies, introduce literary terms and concepts, and explore strategies for reading literary texts. A central goal of the class is to give you a chance to develop your own close reading and analytic skills. You will have the opportunity to practice those skills in on-line discussions, through the weekly short writing assignments and more formal response papers, and on the final exam.

This course will also provide some instruction in writing, both about literature and otherwise for an academic audience. However, the best way to improve your writing is not to hear or read about how to write better, but to write and write a lot. This course will provide you with a number of opportunities to write and to receive constructive feedback on your writing. You will be able to take the writing skills that you develop in this course on with you to other academic and non-academic endeavours.

#### Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

Weekly short writing assignments (top 10 count) 20%  
Weekly discussion board postings (top 10 count)) 20%  
Response papers (each 400-500 words, top 3 marks count) 30%  
Final exam 30%

#### Texts and/or Resources Required (e.g. Internet access, specific textbook title, lab kit, etc.)

Dionne Brand, *What We All Long For*  
Caryl Churchill, *Cloud 9*  
George Elliott Clarke, *Execution Poems*

Paula Vogel, *The Baltimore Waltz and Other Plays*  
Guy Vanderhaeghe, *Man Descending*

Other information that you wish to share about the course (optional):

**This course helps fulfill the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> literature requirement.**

Unlike some DE courses, ENGL 1200 requires activity on a weekly basis. The advantage of that is that you will keep up with your work and not do all of it at the last minute.