

## 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 2130- 01	Course Title: Literature and Social Change	Date of Offering: <b>Fall 2017</b>
Course Instructor: G. Campbell	School of English and Theatre Studies	
<p>Brief Course Synopsis: The turn in literary study after 1968 towards concerns with race, gender, class, ethnicity, politics and nationhood implies that there is a direct relationship between text and context, between literary production and social change, a relationship long disputed pre-68 by critics such as T.S. Eliot and Northrop Frye who were concerned with the formal coherence and aesthetic quality of literary <b>texts</b>.</p> <p>Can a work of literature represent the world as it is? Do historians and sociologists accomplish what artists cannot? In a famous study published just after World War II, <u>Mimesis: the Representation of Reality in Western Literature</u>, Eric Auerbach, a German philologist and literary scholar, suggests that a close reading of literary texts from Homer to Virginia Woolf's modernist novel <u>To the Lighthouse</u> reveals shifts in both the reality outside of texts and in the texts themselves. In the words of two present day scholars, Gebauer and Wulf, "Auerbach's work offers the reader an implicit but nonetheless fundamental understanding of the relation of art to reality: artistic mimesis signals a turn toward social reality. But the latter is in no way given once and for all; it takes on different forms through various historical epochs." The idea that social reality changes in its basic form(s) will suggest the basis of a theory of historicism: everything changes in time, even nature.</p> <p>In an effort to critique the presuppositions of Auerbach's project and to evaluate its overall success, we will follow the arguments of Gebauer and Wulf in their book <u>Mimesis: Culture Art Society</u> in order to fully comprehend the meaning of mimesis. We will assume that students entering the course can recognize a separation between a novel and a work of non-fiction, but may have a limited understanding of what constitutes a specifically social reality. In an effort to comprehend social reality and its historicity from a theoretical point of view (we don't have time for the content!), we will look at demanding essays by members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research to explore the meaning of terms such as society, economy, culture, change, history, power, and everyday life. The general movement of German critical theory had a huge impact in the 50s and 60s and served to alter literary thought around the revolutionary year of 1968. In a final, concluding section of the course, we will turn to the stories of Alice Munro to ask what realism and mimesis mean in the here and now of Canadian social reality in 2008.</p>		

<p>Course Format: Seminar/discussion</p>	<p>Methods of Evaluation and Weights:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>First Seminar Presentation</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Short Paper (500 words) Due Week 4</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Second Seminar Presentation</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Second Paper (1500-2000 words) Due Week 12</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Final Exam</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> </table>	First Seminar Presentation	15%	Short Paper (500 words) Due Week 4	10%	Second Seminar Presentation	20%	Second Paper (1500-2000 words) Due Week 12	30%	Final Exam	25%
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<p>Texts and/or Resources Required (e.g. Internet access, specific textbook title, lab kit, etc.)  Eric Auerbach. <u>Mimesis</u>. (Princeton UP)  Stephen Bronner and Douglas M. Kellner. Eds. <u>Critical Theory and Society: A Reader</u>. (Routledge) [CTS]  Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf. <u>Mimesis: Culture-Art-Society</u>. (U California P) [MCS]  Alice Munro. <u>Open Secrets</u>. (Penguin)</p>											
<p>Other information that you wish share about the course (optional):</p>											