

School of English and Theatre Studies
University of Guelph

GRADUATE COURSE OFFERING – Summer 2015

ENGL*6201 Topics in Canadian Literature

Alice Munro in Context

Class Schedule: TBA

Room: TBA

Instructor: J.R. (Tim) Struthers

This course has been designed in ways meant to appeal to students with a range of interests, including Theatre and/or English and/or Creative Writing, by inviting reflection on Alice Munro's short story writing in terms of its theatricality and its narrativity and its lyricism. Readings and class discussion will consider Munro's achievements from her first two collections, *Dance of the Happy Shades* (1968) and *Something I've Been Meaning To Tell You* (1974), through her four big mid-career breakthrough collections – *The Progress of Love* (1986), *Friend of My Youth* (1990), *Open Secrets* (1994), and *The Love of a Good Woman* (1998) – up to her two most recent collections, *Too Much Happiness* (2009) and *Dear Life* (2012). Munro's stories will be examined in the broader contexts of her own *oeuvre* and particular criticism written about it, of selected Canadian/world story writing and selected Canadian/world short story theory, and, as noted, in the more general terms of theories and practices of theatricality and narrativity and lyricism. Special attention will be given to the first three stories and to the final story in each of the eight volumes by Alice Munro named above: 32 stories in particular (though you will be invited to read more) of the 148 stories that Alice Munro has collected.

Course assignments for "Alice Munro in Context" are intended to involve day-to-day quality participation by all class members, a series of probably four to five mid-length seminar presentations (with accompanying outlines), the final one of these seminar presentations perhaps being somewhat longer, along with regular reading journals (recording your favourite sentence in each new story you read), and a final research paper due no later than Noon Friday 31 July (and preceded, three weeks earlier, no later than Noon Friday 10 July, by the submission of a 2- to 3-page outline and a working bibliography – not annotated – for that research paper). For the purpose of the final research paper, encouragement will be given to class members to continue work on material or a topic that they have already begun investigating earlier in the course – or, again in consultation with the instructor, to broaden their scope and pursue a comparison between material or a topic studied in this course and something else, possibly involving another genre or medium or cultural focus, of particular interest to them.