

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*01	Course Title: Reading the Contemporary World	Date of Offering: SUMMER 2016
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Course Instructor: Dr. J.R. (Tim) Struthers	Course Format: Lecture/Discussion
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Brief Course Synopsis:

This course, which is designed primarily for those not planning a specialization in English, introduces students to literary texts and persuasive forms of writing, bringing to the fore some of the links between language and contemporary social and political issues. Course materials will represent diversity in terms of national origins, gender, race, and class. The course emphasizes the use of figurative language as well as the development of students' critical reading and writing skills. Students planning to major or minor or pursue an area of concentration in English must take ENGL*1080 and ENGL*2080, but may also take ENGL*1200 and count it as an elective lecture.

This section of ENGL*1200 will focus on ways of looking at how, technically, a range of creative forms – fiction, autobiography, non-fiction, and criticism – work, through studying them individually and side by side. Readings for the opening weeks of the course will include the first half of Nobel Prize-winning Canadian writer Alice Munro's volume of family history and autobiographical stories *The View from Castle Rock*, studied side by side with Sri-Lankan-born Canadian writer Michael Ondaatje's family biography / personal autobiography *Running in the Family* and successive chapters from American fiction writer Francine Prose's equally brilliant and personal critical study *Reading Like a Writer* on topics such as "Close Reading," "Words," "Sentences," "Paragraphs," and "Narration," As weeks proceed, we'll go on to compare First Nations writer and University of Guelph Professor Emeritus Thomas King's critical study / autobiographical work *The Truth About Stories* and American First Nations writer Linda Hogan's autobiographical work *The Woman Who Watches Over the World*. Thereafter, we'll treat ourselves to reading University of Guelph graduate Marty Gervais's volume of personal journalism (or some might say prose poems) *My Town: Faces of Windsor* and the autobiographical stories included in the second half of Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock*.

Special attention will be given to strengthening your writing skills through careful study, from the first week of classes onward, of Maxine Ruvinsky's *Practical Grammar: A Canadian Writer's Resource* (preferably the latest edition) – chapters from which will be part of the material tested on in the three in-class tests to be held during the course. A special opportunity to work on improving your writing will be provided through undertaking a good first draft and then a guided rewrite of the 1,500-word take-home essay.

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

1,500-word essay 20%
Rewrite 20%

3 in-class tests 15% each
Overall Effort, Participation, Improvement 15%

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

Maxine Ruvinsky's *Practical Grammar: A Canadian Writer's Resource* (preferably the latest edition) and a total of six books of fiction, autobiography, non-fiction, and criticism by Alice Munro, Michael Ondaatje, Francine Prose, Thomas King, Linda Hogan, and Marty Gervais named under the section "Brief Course Synopsis" above.

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

(1) The essay for this section of ENGL*1200 will meet the 1,500-word requirement for various professional schools.

(2) The last of the three in-class tests for this course, to be held in late July, will take the place of a standard final exam during the official exam period in August.

(3) Anyone interested in doing some advance reading for the course should begin with the first half of Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock*.