

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 Title:	Seminar: Critical Practices	
Course Code:	Topic for Sec. 02:	Date of Offering: F'20
2120*02	Learning To Read and To Write Critically: Interpreting the Short Story and the Novella in Four Key Theoretical Contexts	

Course Instructor:	Course Format:
Dr. J.R. (Tim) Struthers	Seminar

Brief Course Synopsis:

Very importantly, as a core English seminar course, ENGL*2120 requires full commitment week in and week out by every seminar member to one's own and everyone else's education. At the same time, I trust that the various features of this class – but in particular the strong personal element that I always aim to encourage in my students and their work – will prove to be as inspiring, even fun, for you as they are intellectually challenging. The choices of focus and texts and approach for all core seminars in English are made by the individual instructor; our overall topic will be “Learning To Read and To Write Critically: Interpreting the Short Story and the Novella in Four Key Theoretical Contexts” – namely, Psychoanalytic Criticism, The New Historicism, Reader-Response Criticism, and Feminist Criticism, approaches detailed in the required critical edition (edited by Daniel R. Schwarz) of Irish writer James Joyce's “The Dead” (from his 1914 collection *Dubliners*), a novella that we'll be comparing with Canadian writer and Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro's novella “A Queer Streak” (from her 1986 collection, *The Progress of Love*). In addition, to start the course (and as a basis for your medium-length essay on either American writer Richard Ford or Alice Munro) we'll have the pleasure of comparing the opening three stories in Ford's story collection *Rock Springs* and the first three stories in Munro's *The Progress of Love* (for which, interestingly, Ford wrote the introduction). And both to achieve a more intricate understanding of the all-important qualities of fictional form, technique, and style and to discover how we may analyse and write most perceptively and most powerfully both critically and creatively, we'll be reading American writer Francine Prose's insightful and delightful book *Reading Like a Writer*, on which class members will prepare a set of brief reading journals.

PLEASE NOTE: EACH SEMINAR MEMBER NEEDS TO HAVE GAINED ACCESS TO AND TO HAVE DIPPED INTO the critical edition of James Joyce's *The Dead* prepared by Daniel R. Schwarz BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASSES IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO INDICATE YOUR ANTICIPATED TOP ONE TO TWO PREFERENCES FOR PLANNED E-MAIL DISCUSSION GROUPS ABOUT PARTICULAR TOPICS amongst the Four Key Theoretical Contexts we'll be considering: Psychoanalytic Criticism, The New Historicism, Reader-Response Criticism, and Feminist Criticism.

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

Please Note: Assignments for this section (02) of ENGL*2120 will include a Two-Part Out-of-Class Take-Home Final Exam due during the final exam period at the time and the room assigned by the Registrar's Office.

- 10% > First Seminar (consisting of a 1½- to 2½-page typed outline, with questions for rest of class inserted at intervals, for instructor to distribute electronically to entire class)
- 10% > Second Seminar (consisting of a 1½- to 2½-page typed outline, with questions for rest of class inserted at intervals, for instructor to distribute electronically to entire class)
- 15% > Analytic Paper of about 1,000 words (to be revised and resubmitted if requested by instructor)
- 20% > Reading Journal in 13 parts of approx. 100 words apiece (that is, totalling approx. 1,300 words) consisting of double-spaced typed commentaries on assorted theoretical and fictional works identified by the instructor
- 15% > Third Seminar (consisting of a 1½- to 2½-page typed outline, with questions for rest of class inserted at intervals, for instructor to distribute electronically to entire class)
- 20% > Two-Part Out-of-Class Take-Home Final – each part worth 10% and each part approx. 600 to 750 words
- 10% > Overall Effort, Participation, Improvement (including contributions to small e-mail discussion groups divided by whichever 1 or 2 approaches you favour of the 4 approaches we're examining and including work on Take-Home Final Exam)

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS OF FORMAL PROSE REQUIRED:

approx. 3,500 to 3,800 words (incl. approx. 1,200 to 1,500 words in total for the Two-Part Out-of-Class Take-Home Final Exam)

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

FORD, Richard. *Rock Springs*. New York: Grove, 2009.

JOYCE, James. *The Dead*. Ed. Daniel R. Schwarz. Boston: Bedford Books / St. Martin's, 1994. Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism.

MUNRO, Alice. *The Progress of Love*. Introd. Richard Ford. Toronto: Penguin, 2006.

PROSE, Francine. *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and for Those Who Want to Write Them*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

RUVINSKY, Maxine. *Practical Grammar: A Canadian Writer's Resource*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2014. [NOT REQUIRED, BUT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.]

This course counts towards the following distribution requirement(s) for students who registered at the University prior to the Fall of 2018:

N/A

Information about mode of delivery (synchronous/asynchronous/other details):

Although we very likely won't be meeting via Zoom (or, if so, only rarely), I have identified this course as involving "synchronous" meetings – largely to create a standard structure of times when we can count on everyone in our group focussing on participating steadily in the course in the various ways required – including reading the class texts assigned for each week,

reading classmates' seminar outlines on those texts that I'll be assembling and circulating group by group, reading new instructions posted by me on CourseLink and personal messages from me via e-mail and small-group-discussion messages from classmates via e-mail. I believe that establishing set class times when class members can, except in understandable special circumstances, focus on work for this course and on different kinds of communication necessary to the course encourages a crucial degree of the self-discipline required for success in our work. And more practically speaking, setting particular class times gives me a good basis for timetabling "Welcome" personal phone visits with class members that I'll be holding as the begins along with any further visits needed to discuss your work as the semester progresses. And trust me, I do heartily wish that a class such as this can truly allow you to feel, especially in these times, individually welcomed and supported and inspired.

*Students who registered at the University of Guelph after Fall 2018 must fulfill the "new" major and minor requirements. Students who registered at the University of Guelph prior to Fall 2018 must fulfill the requirements of the Calendar in effect when they first enrolled unless they have filed a Schedule of Studies Change Request to change to the 2018-2019 calendar. For more information, please consult the major and minor checklists at <https://www.uoguelph.ca/arts/sets/undergraduate/english/current-student-information>.