

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 3941	Course Title: Form, Genre and Value	Date of Offering: F23
---------------------------	--	--------------------------

Course Instructor:	Course Format: Seminar
--------------------	---------------------------

Brief Course Synopsis:

“Naturalism, Realism, Modernism, and Postmodernism”

This course has one main learning outcome: students will be able to negotiate their way through four distinct schools of literary production: realism, naturalism, modernism, and postmodernism. The relation of genre to these four schools of literary form will be negotiated insofar as it might be possible to have realist, naturalist, modernist or even postmodernist version of say the detective novel. The literature on all four of the major terms of the course is extensive, but knowing realism and modernism will make it easier for the student to enter debates concerning postmodernism.

As a seminar course, I want students to establish their own interests and to lead both our research and in class discussions, but the design of the course opens a few options of my own. I'm interested in popularity, so the tremendous success of Dickens will need to be explained in relation to the specific rise of realism in the 19th century. Naturalism, a term that may be new for some students, appears in relation to the revolutions of knowledge that occurred in the 19th century, most notably Darwin's theory of evolution. As a challenge to literary theory, we will be watching three films in relation to the history of representation over the past two centuries. John Ford's classic Western Stagecoach will be looked at in relation to Dickens Hard Times; the industrial reality of Dickens England is challenged by a genre—the American Western—that sees nature as primordial and society as a tenuous experiment enforced by gun violence. Dickens' realism, which is distinguished by humour and satire, also challenges social norms. London's The Call of the Wild (1903)—a huge bestseller still in print—establishes a naturalist groundwork for American popular culture. I want to explore the idea that the American action film as exemplified by the first Clint Eastwood “Dirty Harry” film argues a gun based, naturalist base to our social existence

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

Seminar 1 15%
Class participation
DIY participation sheets (2) 10%
Final Paper Outline 5%
Research Project 20%
Short Paper (500 words) 15%
Final Paper (3000 words) 35%

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

Charles Dickens, Hard Times. (Norton)

Jack London, The Call of the Wild, White Fang, and To Build a Fire. (Modern Library)

Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse. (Penguin)

Marilynn Robinson, Housekeeping. (HarperCollins)

Don DeLillo, White Noise. (Penguin)

Film/dvd (in order)

Stagecoach. Dir. John Ford (1939)

Dirty Harry. Dir. Don Siegal (1971)

Rear Window. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock (1954)

Fight Club. Dir. David Fincher (1999)

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

American 20th century

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

*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>.