

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: 3940*01	Course Title: Seminar: Form, Genre, and Literary Value Topic for Sec. 01: Autobiography and Ficticity and Allegory	Date of Offering: W'21
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Course Instructor: Dr. J.R. (Tim) Struthers	Course Format: Seminar
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Brief Course Synopsis:

Very importantly, as a core English seminar course, ENGL*3940 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 “Autobiography and Ficticity and Allegory” – subjects judiciously treated in the three theoretical studies by Linda Anderson and Jack Hodgins and Jeremy Tambling listed amongst the required readings for this course, books that you'll be discussing chapter by chapter for your two sets of Reading Journals for this course. Other readings will include Irish writer James Joyce's classic story collection *Dubliners*, the intricate five-story “Linnet Muir” sequence from Canadian writer Mavis Gallant's *Montreal Stories*, key selections including the opening stories and the strongly autobiographical four-story “Finale” from Canadian writer (and Nobel Prize in Literature winner) Alice Munro's last story collection, *Dear Life*, and the whole of Alice Munro's powerful family history/herstory, *The View from Castle Rock*. The variations in critical / creative / personal styles that I wish to foster in this course, along with its chosen topic, offer a chance to develop and possibly radically alter our understanding and our employment of traditionally distinct, now often merging art forms. As one very important facet of this objective, members of this seminar should feel encouraged to reflect on and to explore the potential that the three different elements “Autobiography and Ficticity and Allegory” exert individually (but frequently simultaneously) in enhancing our thinking and writing in ways that give more scope to the individual imagination.

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

Please Note: Assignments for this section (01) of ENGL*3940 will include an Out-of-Class Take-Home Final Exam due during the final exam period at the time assigned by the Registrar's Office.

- 10% > First Seminar Outline (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 Outline (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% > First Reading Journal (13 parts of approx. 100 words apiece; that is, totalling approx. 1,300 words) consisting of double-spaced typed commentaries on successive early chapters of the three theoretical books by Anderson, Hodgins, and Tambling we'll be reading
 - 30% > 2,500-word Creative / Critical / Personal Research Project (on a topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor)
 - 10% > Third Seminar Outline (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% > Out-of-Class Take-Home Final Exam – Second Reading Journal (12 parts of approx. 100 words apiece; that is, totalling approx. 1,200 words) consisting of double-spaced typed commentaries on successive later chapters of the three theoretical books by Anderson, Hodgins, and Tambling we'll be reading
 - 10% > Overall Effort, Participation, Improvement (including contributions to small e-mail discussion groups divided by whichever 1 or 2 approaches you favour of the 3 approaches we're examining and including work on Take-Home Final Exam)
- TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS OF FORMAL PROSE REQUIRED: approx.5,000 words (incl. approx. 1,200 words for the Out-of-Class Take-Home Final Exam)

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

PLEASE NOTE: In order to prepare your first seminar outlines and to start writing your first set of reading journals, you will need to have access to copies of five of our seven texts at the start of the course: Gallant's *Montreal Stories*; Munro's *Dear Life*; Anderson's *Autobiography*; Hodgins' *A Passion for Narrative*; and Tambling's *Allegory*.

Anderson, Linda. *Autobiography*. Routledge. 1st ed. or 2nd ed.

Gallant, Mavis. *Montreal Stories*. McClelland & Stewart.

Hodgins, Jack. *A Passion for Narrative: A Guide for Writing Fiction*. McClelland & Stewart.

Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. Penguin Canada.

Munro, Alice. *Dear Life*. 2012. Penguin Canada.

Munro, Alice. *The View from Castle Rock*. 2006. Penguin Canada.

Tambling, Jeremy. *Allegory*. Routledge.

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 the couple of series of personal phone visits with class members that I'll be holding as the semester progresses (first by way of an introductory encouraging "Welcome" and later to discuss possibilities for your Special Project). 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>.