

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*02	Course Title: Seminar: Form, Genre & Literary Value Topic for Sec. 02: Autobiography, Ficticity, Allegory	Date of Offering: Fall 2021
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Course Instructor: Dr. J.R. (Tim) Struthers	Course Format: Asynchronous (For details, see end of this document)
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Brief Course Synopsis:

Please Note: As needed, this Fall's offering of ENGL*3940*02 (and ENGL*3940*01) may count as a .5 credit in "Canadian literature" if such a .5 credit is required in terms of specific "Distribution Requirements" for English Programs.

The topic I have chosen for this course – “Autobiography, Ficticity, Allegory” -- and my personal desire to encourage a creative and a critical and a personal approach to reading and writing offer an opportunity to develop our understanding of traditionally distinct, now often merging art forms and theoretical approaches, of their values to ourselves and to others. As an important facet of this objective, members of this class should consider themselves not simply invited but strongly encouraged to reflect on and to explore the potential that the three different elements of “Autobiography; Ficticity; Allegory” contain for enhancing our thinking and writing in ways that give more scope to the individual imagination. Special attention will be given to ways in which these three elements combine in Indigenous writer (and Guelph resident) Thomas King’s book *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*.

This class will seek to encourage both an appreciation for and an enjoyment of the genres of the short story, the novella, and the story sequence as practised by Canadian writers Alice Munro (1931-) and Mavis Gallant (1922-2014), and their important precursor, Irish writer James Joyce (1882-1941), in the context of theoretical studies of autobiography, ficticity, and allegory. Alternatively, we could say that what we will be exploring is what it means to read a work of fiction autobiographically and fictively and allegorically. Required theoretical reading for the course will include: Linda Anderson’s *Autobiography* (2nd ed., 2011), Jack Hodgins’ *A Passion for Narrative: A Guide for Writing Fiction*, Jeremy Tambling’s *Allegory*, and, as noted, Thomas King’s *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*.

Methods of Evaluation and Weights:

Please Note: Assignments for ENGL*3940*02 (and ENGL*3940*01) will include a Two-Part Out-of-Class Take-Home Final Exam due at the time and the room assigned by the Registrar’s Office during the Fall 2021 final exam period.

10% > First Seminar Outline (1½ to 2½ pages)

10% > Second Seminar Outline (1½ to 2½ pages)

10%> Reading Journal in 10 parts of approx. 100 words apiece (that is, totalling approx. 1,000 words) consisting of double-spaced typed commentaries on assorted theoretical works identified by the instructor

30%> 2,500-word (creative / critical / research) special project (to be chosen by each class member in consultation with the instructor)

10% > Third Seminar Outline (1½ to 2½ pages)

20% > Two-Part Out-of-Class Take-Home Final – each part worth 10% and each part 600 to 750 words

10% > Overall Effort and Improvement (including work on Take-Home Final Exam)

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS OF FORMAL PROSE REQUIRED: approx.5,000 words (incl. up 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.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: For reading beginning the first week of classes for assignments starting the second week of classes, you will need Alice Munro's story collection *Dear Life*, Thomas King's *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*, and Linda Anderson's theoretical text *Autobiography*.

ALSO NOTE: I STRONGLY DISCOURAGE ORDERING BOOKS BY MAIL FROM OFF-CAMPUS OR NON-LOCAL STORES SINCE AT THIS TIME YOU CAN EXPECT SIGNIFICANT AND OFTEN ENORMOUS DELAYS BEYOND STATED DATES FOR DELIVERY FROM DISTANT SOURCES ESPECIALLY IF ORDERING FROM THE U.S. (LAST FALL SOME STUDENTS RECEIVED TEXTS AS HALLOWEEN PRESENTS!)

ANDERSON, Linda. *Autobiography*. 2nd ed. Abingdon, Eng.: Routledge, 2011. The New Critical Idiom. [2nd ed. CONTAINS EXTRA CHAPTER; SO DON'T PURCHASE 1st ed.]

GALLANT, Mavis. *Montreal Stories*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2004.

HODGINS, Jack. *A Passion for Narrative: A Guide for Writing Fiction*. 1993. Rev. ed. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2001.

JOYCE, James. *Dubliners*. 1914. Toronto: Penguin, 2014. Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition. [OR ANOTHER EDITION IF YOU PREFER]

KING, Thomas. *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*. Toronto: Anansi, 2003.

MUNRO, Alice. *Dear Life*. McClelland & Stewart. 2012.

TAMBLING, Jeremy. *Allegory*. Abingdon, Eng.: Routledge, 2010. The New Critical Idiom.

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

As needed, this course may count as a .5 credit in “Canadian literature” if such a .5 credit is required.

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

Asynchronous, beginning with a “Welcome” phone visit by the instructor with each class member.

As I have done in the past year – very successfully, my students report – I will be handling this class (in part because of my long and varied experience as a book editor) more as a “Writers Group.” Instruction will not be via Zoom or any such medium but will instead take

several other forms: personal phone visits by the instructor with all class members at important stages of the semester and as appropriate individually to offer special consultation; small group exchanges via e-mail by way of making personal introductions, and to explore course topics raised by the instructor, amongst groups of students assembled according to their self-chosen preferences of one or more of the three main theoretical approaches on which we're concentrating; detailed frequently posted guidelines by the instructor on Course Link; individual PDFs from the instructor providing fully annotated copies offering commendations and making suggestions for improvement on all term assignments; and personal e-mail with the instructor.

*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>.