

## 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*3960*02	Course Title: Seminar: Literature in History	Date of Offering: Fall 2019
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Course Instructor: D. O'Quinn	Course Format: Seminar
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#### **Course Description:**

This course offers an introduction to a wide range of critical and theoretical approaches to both verse and narrative. The course opens with a survey of critical problems posed by the very notion of literature. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and the digital Whitman Archive will operate as a touchstone of sorts for a range of critical issues not least of which are the question of lyric subjectivity and the problem of historical and national representation. We then test a series of critical procedures in relation to selected texts by Frederick Douglass and Octavia Butler. We will be reading Douglass's slave narrative and Butler's novel *Kindred* in order to develop rudimentary skills in narratology and to explore the history of antebellum slavery. The course will conclude with five weeks on the American Civil War. We will be looking at Civil War photography and the Civil War writings of Whitman, Dickinson and Louisa May Alcott. By the end of the course, students will have acquired valuable skills in reading verse and will be able to negotiate theoretical problems pertaining to historicization, rhetorical reading, narratology, gender/sexuality studies and the racialization of national fantasy.

#### **Required Texts:**

Louisa May Alcott	<i>Hospital Sketches</i>	(Dover)
Octavia Butler	<i>Kindred</i>	(Beacon Press)
Emily Dickinson	<i>Final Harvest</i>	(Back Bay Press)
Frederick Douglass	<i>Narrative of the Life of....</i>	
J. Matthew Gallman and Gary W. Gallagher	<i>Lens of War</i>	(Univ. of Georgia Press)
John Stauffer et al	<i>Picturing Frederick Douglass</i>	(Liveright)
Walt Whitman	<i>Leaves of Grass and Other Writings</i>	(Norton)

#### **Evaluation Structure**

Close reading 1	10%
Article analysis 1	20%
Narrative analysis	10%
Photography project	25%
Short paper	35%

Total amount of writing will be between 3600 and 5400 words

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

**18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Century**

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

\*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>.