

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 & Literary Value Topic for Sec. 01: Autobiography, Ficticity, Allegory	Date of Offering: Winter 2022
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Course Instructor: Dr. J.R. (Tim) Struthers	Course Format: Seminar
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Brief Course Synopsis:

Please Note: As needed, ENGL*3940*01 may count as a .5 credit in “Canadian literature” in terms of specific “Distribution Requirements” for English Programs if such a .5 credit is required.

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 this section of ENGL*3940*01 will include a Two-Part Out-of-Class Take-Home Final Exam due via e-mail to the instructor by the exam time assigned by the Registrar’s Office during the Winter 2022 final exam period.

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

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

- 15%> Reading Journal in 15 parts of approx. 100 words apiece (that is, totalling approx. 1,500 words) consisting of double-spaced typed commentaries on individual chapters identified by the instructor from the four required theoretical works by for this course
- 25%> 2,000-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* 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 DELAYS BEYOND STATED DATES FOR DELIVERY FROM DISTANT SOURCES ESPECIALLY IF ORDERING FROM THE U.S. (IN THE FALL OF 2020 – AS I WRITE, I HAVE YET TO HEAR POSSIBLE HORROR STORIES FROM THE FALL OF 2021 -- 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, ENGL*3940*01 may count as a .5 credit in “Canadian literature” in terms of specific “Distribution Requirements” for English Programs if such a .5 credit is required.

Other information that you wish share about the course (optional): Mode of delivery: TBA

*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>.