



# ENGL\*3960 Seminar: Literature in History

Fall 2020

Section(s): 01

School of English and Theatre Studies

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 2.00 - September 05, 2020

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## 1 Course Details

### 1.1 Calendar Description

This course explores the processes by which specific texts or genres emerge from particular historical moments and by which we attempt to reconstruct those historically specific connections. Seminars will focus on such topics as the archive surrounding one text, problems of period and canon, or genres and historical change. (Choice of period and texts will be determined by individual instructors.) Writing- and presentation-intensive course.

**Pre-Requisites:**

ENGL\*2080

**Restrictions:**

Registration in the English major, minor or area of concentration.

### 1.2 Course Description

In this section of ENGL\*3960 we probe the relationship between "history" and "childhood." While history is typically associated with public and political narratives, childhood is often understood as private and personal stories and memories. Stories (histories) of childhood, however, can upset this opposition and point to the ways in which reflections on childhood capture significant historical moments. In *Under My Skin* the Nobel Laureate Doris Lessing explains, "One reason for writing this autobiography is that more and more I realize I was part of an extraordinary time, the end of the British Empire in Africa."

There has been an explosion of African childhood memoirs. Our study is limited to Zimbabwe, a small country in southern Africa that has been in the throes of a massive economic and social crisis since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Alongside this crisis, Zimbabwean writers have produced a disproportionate number of narratives of childhood. All of the texts we will examine engage with the *bildungsroman* – the novel/narrative of development and progress. "History" and "childhood" carry assumptions of development and progress, assumptions we will interrogate and trouble in ENGL\*3960. We begin our course by setting up a theoretical framework that engages with "history," "child," and "*bildungsroman*." Next, we turn to a

foundational childhood narrative from the 1980's by an internationally acclaimed Zimbabwean writer: Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*.

### 1.3 Timetable

Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

### 1.4 Final Exam

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

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## 2 Instructional Support

### 2.1 Instructional Support Team

<b>Instructor:</b>	Julie Cairnie
<b>Email:</b>	jcairnie@uoguelph.ca
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Email for individual appointments. These appointments will normally last 15 minutes, but it will be possible to arrange longer appointments.

When emailing me, please use the course code as part of your title. If you are requesting an appointment, also indicate it in the title. I will respond to email within 48 hours (weekends excluded).

Pronouns: she/her

**Seminar Meeting Times:** Monday and Wednesday, 4:00-5:20 (lecture/discussion period)

### 2.2 IMPORTANT NOTE

This course is delivered in a remote virtual format. In addition to online/hard copy readings, there will be regular class meetings via Zoom (see the link under "Content" in Courselink). I strongly encourage you to attend all/most of our meetings, but I also realize that due to work/family/health issues, not every student will be able to attend every class. I will upload recordings of our class meetings to Courselink. We can make this remote class work really well. I am committed to ensuring that this course challenges you intellectually and affectively. Please join me in making the same commitment.

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## 3 Learning Resources

### 3.1 Required Resources

#### Books to buy (Textbook)

- NoViolet Bulawayo, *We Need New Names* (2013; Little, Brown, and Company)
- Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (1988; Lynne Pienner)
- Alexandra Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2001; Random House)

#### Primary Readings/Articles (Other)

A selection of primary readings (posted/linked on Courselink)

- *ABC of all the questions we never dare to ask* (excerpts, 2003)
- Dambudzo Marechera, "Fuzzy Goo's Stories for Children"

A selection of secondary readings (posted on Courselink or hyperlinked)

- Antoinette Burton, "Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories," *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2005. 1-24.
- Simon Hay, "Nervous Conditions, Lukács, and the Postcolonial *Bildungsroman*." *Genre* (2013) 46.3: 317-344.
- Alfred J Lopez, "Whiteness After Empire." *Postcolonial Whiteness*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2005. 1-30.
- Robert Muponde, "Childhood as critical thinking and writing: Dambudzo Marechera's *House of Hunger*." *Some Kinds of Childhood Images of History and Resistance in Zimbabwean Literature*. Africa World Press, 2015.
- Save the Children, "I am a child." *Children in Our Midst: Voices of Farmworkers' Children*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2000. 1-8.
- Tamar Schapiro, "What is a Child?" *Ethics* 109.4 (July 1999): 715-38. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/233943>

### 3.2 Recommended Resources

#### Readings (Readings)

Other (Helpful) Readings

- Julie Cairnie, "Fuzzy Goo's Stories for Children: Literature for a New Zimbabwe" *Moving Spirit: The Legacy of Dambudzo Marechera in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. LitVerlag, 2012. 175-88.
- Memory Chirere, "Marechera-Mania among Young Zimbabwean Writers and Readers." *Moving Spirit: The Legacy of Dambudzo Marechera in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. LitVerlag, 2012. 111-17.
- "Chronology" and "Introduction" to *Becoming Zimbabwe* (Courselink)
- "Convention on the Rights of the Child" (UN) <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>
- Ashleigh Harris, "Writing home: inscriptions of whiteness/descriptions of belonging in white Zimbabwean memoir-autobiography." *Versions of Zimbabwe: new approaches to literature and culture*, ed. Robert Muponde and Ranka Primorac (Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 2005): 103-17.
- Alison Lurie, "Subversive Children's Literature." *Not in Front of the Grown-Ups*. London: Cardinal, 1990. 19-31.
- David McDermott Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.
- Open Parly ZW on Facebook [www.facebook.com/OpenParlyZW](http://www.facebook.com/OpenParlyZW)
- Websites on Zimbabwean Politics and Culture:

<http://www.zimbabwesituation.com>

<http://www.cathybuckle.com>

<http://www.kubatana.net>

<http://zimbabweschildren.org>

### **Films (Other)**

- Tsitsi Dangarembga. *Everyone's Child* (1996)
- Xoliswa Sithole, *Zimbabwe's Forgotten Children* (2010)

## 4 Learning Outcomes

### 4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. • To study the proliferation of childhood narratives that document (in a range of ways and genre) the economic and social crisis in Zimbabwe, and examine the relationship between “the child” and “history.”
  2. • To examine the ways in which the *bildungsroman* is adopted and adapted in contemporary Zimbabwean narratives of childhood.
  3. • To introduce students to key theoretical perspectives on childhood, *bildungsroman*, and history/historical change.
  4. • To develop writing and project development skills through assignments that capture all stages and aspects of essay writing/project development: research and planning; early writing/drafting; building a theoretical/critical framework; writing/preparing the final copy/version.
  5. • To develop presentation and participation skills through assignments that capture all aspects of academic conversation: presentations and participation in seminar discussion.
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

### 5.1 Seminar

**Mon, Sep 14**

**Topics:**

**Introduction to English 3960**

Discuss Course Syllabus; Introductions

**Wed, Sep 16**

**Topics:**

**Theorizing "History"**

Antoinette Burton, "Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories," *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2005. 1-24. **(Courselink)**

"History" (Oxford English Dictionary – U of G Library <http://www.oed.com.subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca>; consult your *Bedford Glossary of Literary Terms*)

**Mon, Sep 21**

**Topics:**

**Theorizing "History"**

Continue - Burton, "Archive Fever, Archive Stories" (**Courselink**)

**Wed, Sep 23**

**Topics:**

**Theorizing "Child"**

Schapiro, "What is a Child?" (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/233943>)

**Sign up for Seminar Presentations**

**Mon, Sep 28**

**Topics:**

**Theorizing "Child"**

"Convention on the Rights of the Child" <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>

"I am a child" (**Courselink**)

**Wed, Sep 30**

**Topics:**

**Theorizing "Bildungsroman"**

"*Bildungsroman*" (Oxford English Dictionary – U of G Library <http://www.oed.com.subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/>; consult your *Bedford Glossary of Literary Terms*)

Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (chaps. 1-3)

**Mon, Oct 5**

**Topics:**

**Postcolonial *Bildungsroman***

Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (chaps. 4-6)

**Seminar Presentations Begin**

**Wed, Oct 7**

**Topics:**

**Postcolonial *Bildungsroman***

Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (chaps. 7-10)

**Mon, Oct 12**

**Topics:**

**THANKSGIVING (NO CLASSES SCHEDULED)**

**Wed, Oct 14**

**Topics:**

**Postcolonial *Bildungsroman***

Simon Hay, "*Nervous Conditions*, Lukács, and the Postcolonial *Bildungsroman*" (**Courselink**)

**Mon, Oct 19**

**Topics:**

**Stories for Children**

Dambudzo Marechera, "Fuzzy Goo's Stories for Children"; Muponde, "Childhood as critical thinking and writing" (**Courselink**)

**Wed, Oct 21**

**Topics: Youth Readers**

*ABC of all the questions we never dare to ask* (**Courselink**)

**Commonplace Book #1 Due**

**Mon, Oct 26**

**Topics: Stories about Children**

Bulawayo, *We Need New Names* (3-59)

**Wed, Oct 28**

**Topics: Stories about Children**

Bulawayo, *We Need New Names* (60-146)

**Mon, Nov 2**

**Topics: Stories about Children**

Bulawayo, *We Need New Names* (147-292)

**Wed, Nov 4**

**Topics: Postcolonial (White) Bildungsroman**

From Alfred J Lopez, *Postcolonial Whiteness* (**Courselink**)

**Mon, Nov 9**

**Topics: Postcolonial (White) Bildungsroman**

Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (3-77)

**Wed, Nov 11**

**Topics: Postcolonial (White) Bildungsroman**



Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (78-148)

**Mon, Nov 16**

**Topics: Postcolonial (White) *Bildungsroman***

Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (149-228)

**Wed, Nov 18**

**Topics: Postcolonial (White) *Bildungsroman***

Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (229-301)

**Seminar Presentations End**

**Final Project Proposals Due**

**Mon, Nov 23**

**Topics: Project Workshops**

**Proposals Returned**

**Wed, Nov 25**

**Topics: Project Workshops**

**Mon, Nov 30**

**Topics: Project Workshops**

**Wed, Dec 2**

**Topics: Project Workshops**

**Fri, Dec 4**

**Topics: Project Workshops**

## 6 Assessments

### Evaluation:

**(1) Seminar Presentation (collaborative)** 30%

(Consultation: 5%; Delivery: 20%;

Handout/Poster: 5%)

**(2) Commonplace Book (journal)** 30%

(2500 words approx. + creative materials)

(Two submissions @ 15% each)

**(3) Final Project: Research Essay (2000 words) OR** 40%

Creative Project (children's book, podcast, graphic novel)

(Consultation: 5%; Proposal: 10%; Final Project: 25%)

### 6.1 Assessment Details

### Seminar Presentation (30%)

Students are responsible for one seminar presentation. Seminar dates will be determined during the second week of classes. Students will work in pairs. Each seminar presentation will focus on a passage from the week's reading and develop an argument about the primary text's engagement with the course's concern with "childhood," "history," and the "*bildungsroman*." The presentation will last 20 minutes and must include the following:

1. Examination of one passage from the primary text
2. A clear articulation the argument about the passage
3. Use of our theory and criticism to articulate the argument
4. One excellent question to facilitate class discussion
5. A useful one-page handout/poster

Here is the grade breakdown:

1. Consultation: 5%

Book an appointment to meet with me at least one week before your presentation. Make sure that you have finished the reading(s) and prepared some ideas for your presentation. If you fulfill these requirements, you receive full marks.

1. Delivery: 20%

This is the presentation portion of the assignment. The presentation will be evaluated according to the criteria above. The presentation must be recorded and uploaded to Teams at least 24 hours before the presentation slot. Students are expected to view the presentation before class. In-class time will be devoted to questions about the presentation and responding to the presenters question(s).

### 1. Handout/Poster: 5%

You are required to produce a handout or poster to accompany your presentation. This should be useful to students both during and after the seminar presentation – easy to follow along during the viewing of the presentation and a helpful resource later.

Seminar presentations begin **week four** and end **week ten**. There will be one presentation per class (there will be a few classes without any presentations).

### **Commonplace Book (30%)**

**Due:** October 21 and December 4 @ 11:59 p.m.

Many writers and scholars keep commonplace books, and it is a practice with deep historical roots. They are compilations of quotations, the writer's reflections, drawings, charts, poems, photographs, even recipes, anything that helps the compiler know and understand one particular area of research/interest.

Here are some helpful links:

[https://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:LIBR548F/2009WT1/Commonplace\\_book](https://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:LIBR548F/2009WT1/Commonplace_book)

<https://specialcollectionsuniversityofsouthampton.wordpress.com/2017/12/14/the-not-so-commonplace-commonplace-books/>

Commonplace books are the “thinker’s journal.” They help us to remember what we are reading and talking about in class, as well as make connections to events outside the class – in the news, in the arts, in pop culture, in other courses and disciplines.

In ENGL\*3960 you will spend the semester compiling a Commonplace Book that you will submit twice (**Weeks 6 and 12**), although you are expected to write on a weekly basis (after every class, at the end of the week – the choice is yours). The Commonplace book will be submitted as a digital copy. Each submission should include approximately 1250 words (give or take 10%) of original reflective prose, along with quotations and creative elements.

In keeping with the broad conventions of the form, include the following:

- quotations/passages from any of the assigned readings
- quotations/passages from other readings (a post or comment, a line from a film or song, a statement in a lecture, a headline, etc.)
- your reflections on the above, a presentation in 3960, a class conversation
- your creative contributions (a short creative piece, drawing, photograph, recipe, meme)

### **Final Project (40%)**

**Date:** November 18 (proposal); December 11 (final project) @ 11:59 p.m.

The final project for the semester is the student’s choice. You can opt to plan and write a research essay OR design and produce a creative project.

Both projects must engage with the theoretical and critical concerns of the course, but students will choose their own particular topic.

In broad strokes, the research essay will be a study of one or more of the course's primary texts – and use theoretical, historical, and critical works to build an argument.

The creative project will build on the work you do in the course. You are welcome to produce a children's book, a narrative of childhood, a podcast, or a graphic novel. Be wary of writing from a Zimbabwean child's perspective. Use this as an opportunity to reflect on what you know or what is reasonably knowable.

The proposal is due **week 10** and the final project is due during the exam period (**Friday, December 11**).

IMPORTANT: Arrange a meeting with me well in advance of week 10 to discuss your plans, concerns, questions. Consultation about the essay is worth 5%. All you have to do is arrange a meeting (not last minute), come to the meeting with essays/questions/some research, and engage in a fruitful conversation about your final project. Easy!

**MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW**

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## 7 Course Statements

### 7.1 Late Policy

- If a student misses a seminar presentation she/he/they will receive a zero.
- Late assignments will be docked 5%/day.
- Extensions without penalty will be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- Late assignments (with no extension granted) will receive a grade without comments

### 7.2 Netiquette

#### Online Behaviour

Inappropriate online behaviour will not be tolerated. Examples of inappropriate online behaviour include:

- Posting inflammatory messages about your instructor or fellow students

- Using obscene or offensive language online
- Copying or presenting someone else's work as your own
- Adapting information from the Internet without using proper citations or references
- Buying or selling term papers or assignments
- Posting or selling course materials to course notes websites
- Threatening or harassing a student or instructor online
- Discriminating against fellow students or the instructor
- Using the course website to promote profit-driven products or services
- Attempting to compromise the security or functionality of the learning management system
- Sharing your user name and password
- Recording lectures without the permission of the instructor

## 8 University Statements

### 8.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

### 8.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

### 8.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

## 8.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

## 8.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website

<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

## 8.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not



relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## 8.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

## 8.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

## 8.9 Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

## 8.10 Illness

The University will not require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for the fall 2020 or winter 2021 semesters.

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