

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 2130	Course Title: Literature and Social Change	Date of Offering: Winter 2023
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Course Instructor: G. Campbell	Course Format: Seminar/ discussion
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Brief Course Synopsis:

Can a work of literature represent the world as it is? Do historians and sociologists accomplish what artists cannot? In a famous study published just after World War II *Mimesis: the Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, Eric Auerbach, a German philologist and literary scholar, suggests that a close reading of literary texts from Homer to Virginia Woolf's modernist novel *To the Lighthouse* reveals shifts in both the reality outside of texts and in the texts themselves. In the words of two present day scholars, Gebauer and Wulf, "Auerbach's work offers the reader an implicit but nonetheless fundamental understanding of the relation of art to reality: artistic mimesis signals a turn toward social reality. But the latter is in no way given once and for all; it takes on different forms through various historical epochs." The idea that social reality changes in its basic form(s) will suggest the basis of a theory of historicism: everything changes in time, even nature.

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

First Seminar Presentation 15%
Short Paper (500 words) Due Week 4 10%
Second Seminar Presentation 20%
Second Paper (1500-2000 words) Due Week 12 30%
Final Exam 25%

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

Eric Auerbach. *Mimesis*. (Princeton UP) Stephen Bronner and Douglas M. Kellner. Eds. *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader*. (Routledge) [CTS] Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf. *Mimesis: Culture-Art-Society*. (U California P) [MCS] Alice Munro. *Open Secrets*. (Penguin)

*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>.