

Department of English & Writing Studies

Contemporary Experimental Literature
English 3371G (001)
Winter 2023

Instructor: Dr. Jeremy Johnston
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Office Hours: Tuesday 11:30-12:30pm

Class Location: B&GS-0165

Class Time: Tuesday 2:30-4:30pm & Thursday 3:30pm-4:30pm

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Land Acknowledgement

Western University straddles the banks of Deshkan Ziibing & sits on the traditional territories of the Chonnonton, Lunaapewak; Anishinaabek & Haudenosaunee Nations, also in relations through Gdoo'naaginaa; this land is a part of London Township Treaty No 6 in connection to the Longwoods, Sombra and McKee Treaties. In close proximity to Western, there are 3 local First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada.

Course Description

This course explores the diverse and innovative literary movements and forms that have emerged in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. We will engage with a range of texts, including digital poetry, unconventional novels, and hybrid works that challenge traditional genre boundaries. Through close reading and other analytical practices, we will consider how these texts engage explore issues of identity, politics, technology, and aesthetics in the contemporary world. We will also examine the cultural and historical contexts in which these texts were produced, as well as how they contribute to ongoing debates within literary theory and criticism.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to help students:

- Identify and discuss key features and concerns of contemporary experimental literature
- Analyze and evaluate the formal, stylistic, and thematic elements of experimental texts
- Place experimental literature within its cultural and historical contexts
- Engage in informed and nuanced discussions of literary theory and criticism as they relate to experimental literature

- Write clear and well-supported literary analyses of experimental texts

In addition, the course will facilitate development of students’:

- Analytical thinking skills.
- Oral and written communication skills.
- Independent research skills.

Evaluation

• Close Reading (4-6 Pages)	15%	Due: February 16 th , 2023
• Engagement	20%	
• Final Research Essay/Unessay	30%	Due: March 16 th , 2023
• Final Exam	35%	Date: TBD

Close Reading Assignment (15%)

This assignment asks you to examine a short passage assigned from either *Malone Dies* or *The Interrogative Mood*. In your discussion of the passage, you may consider its importance to the work as a whole, but the bulk of your attention should be focused on examining the significance of particular details—images and word choices—that contribute to the passage’s meaning.

This assignment provides you with an opportunity to practice the skills you will be using in the essay later this term: your ideas should be organized around a central thesis, a claim about the passage’s meaning that goes beyond the obvious. Your purpose is not to identify the role of the passage in advancing the plot but rather to examine the ideas that the passage explores.

Close Reading Assignment Due: February 16th, 2023

Engagement (20%)

I expect that all students will complete assigned course readings/viewings and will be prepared to discuss those readings on the appropriate day. Class discussion will comprise a large part of our course, and while I recognize that not all students are comfortable speaking in class, I do expect that all students will be engaged and actively listening. Weekly prompts will be posted in the discussion forums on OWL, allowing for additional opportunities to think through and discuss the weekly readings with your peers. Thus, engagement comes in many forms, not just attendance. Taken holistically, engagement includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- **Preparation** (reviewing readings and materials before class)
- **Focus** (avoiding distraction during in-person or online activities)
- **Presence** (engaged and responsive during group discussions)
- **Asking Questions** (in class, out of class, online, offline)
- **Active Listening** (hearing what others say, and also what they’re not saying)
- **Specificity** (referring to specific ideas from readings and discussions)
- **Synthesizing** (making connections between readings and discussions)

Final Research Essay (30%)

You will develop a 10–12-page argumentative essay examining how an aspect or aspects of one of our texts (or a collection of our poems) changes, challenges, and/or revolutionizes our notions

of traditional literary forms, devices, or features. What are the implications of these experimental techniques? Your essay must include at least five scholarly sources and forward a clear, specific, and arguable thesis. More details are to come in advance of the due date.

Alternatively, you may complete an Unessay and reflection. More details are to come in advance of the due date.

Research Essay or Unessay Due: March 16th, 2023

Final Exam (35%)

This final exam will cover material across the course. The date and location of the exam is set by the Registrar's Office. All material covered in class (including lecture, texts, and other learning materials) is testable.

Final Exam: TBD

Required Course Texts

Jonny Appleseed by Joshua Whitehead
ISBN: 9781551527253

Citizen: An American Lyric by Claudia Rankin
ISBN: 9781555976903

The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale by Art Spiegelman
ISBN: 9780679406419

The Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston
ISBN: 9780679721888

The Interrogative Mood: A Novel? by Padgett Powell
ISBN: 9780061859434

Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable by Samuel Beckett
ISBN: 9780802144478

ENGL 3371G: General Course Guidelines & Policies

A Note on Sensitive Content: The content and discussions in this course will necessarily engage with some topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging to engage with. I will do my best to flag especially graphic or intense content as a warning prior to any viewing or discussion, and to moderate exchanges of ideas in the spirit of constructive dialogue and empathy.

Classroom Behaviour: Everyone is expected to behave in a manner befitting of adults in a social and intellectual community setting. As such, everyone is expected to familiarize themselves with Western's Code of Conduct, <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>, especially section E (Examples of Prohibited Student Conduct). Occasionally, topics and

information of a sensitive nature may crop up in class, so it's important for everyone to adhere to respectful and sensitive behaviour, and to provide comments and opinions in the context of discourse that is both constructive (not pedantic or inflammatory) and self-reflexive (critical of one's assumptions).

You are also not allowed to record the lecture in any format without explicit permission from the Professor. Students requiring lecture notes should seek assistance from SSD (<http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>).

Online Behaviour: Students will NOT be required to turn on their video if/when there are online virtual Zoom classes. These sessions will also not be recorded to protect student's privacy. Students are still expected to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner online as they would in a physical classroom. Derogatory remarks and offensive language will not be permitted in the call or chat.

Electronic Devices: Laptops are permitted in the classroom for educational purposes. If you know that you are prone to browsing the Internet, please be respectful of your classmates and sit at the back of the class so as not to distract others. You may be asked to step out of the class if you are using your electronics for non-academic purposes and are distracting others.

Submitting Assignments: All assignments are due on the date stated on the class schedule. You are expected to submit an electronic version through Turnitin via OWL. All papers should be submitted as .doc or .dox files. If submitted as PDFs, in-text feedback will not be provided. They should also be written in 12-point font, Times New Roman, and in MLA format.

Turnitin: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licencing agreement currently between the Western University and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com.>)” (<https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/TurnItIn.html>)

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage of a text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate, and by proper referencing such as footnotes and citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). Western University uses plagiarism checking software. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Grading: Assignment submissions will be evaluated according to the rubrics and guidelines provided. If a student provides a cogent written argument within one week of the assignment being returned for why their assignment meets the criteria for a higher grade than they received, a clean copy of the assignment will be re-graded. Please keep in mind that the new grade **may be lower than the original grade**. Additionally, grades are assigned on a merit basis only, and it is departmental policy to *never* increase a student's grade purely to improve their average.

Rounding of Grades: Across programs, we strive to maintain high standards that reflect the effort that both students and faculty put into the teaching and learning experience during this course. All students will be treated equally and evaluated based only on their actual achievement. **Final grades** on this course, irrespective of the number of decimal places used in marking individual assignments and tests, will be calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest integer (e.g., 74.4 becomes 74, and 74.5 becomes 75). Marks will not be bumped to the next grade or GPA (e.g. a 79 will not be bumped up to an 80, an 84 will not be bumped up to an 85, etc). The mark attained is the mark you achieved, and the mark assigned; requests for mark “bumping” will be denied.

Late Assignments: It is your responsibility to submit assignments on time. Late assignments will receive a 2% grade penalty per day (including weekends) up to a maximum of 7 days, after which the assignment will no longer be accepted and receive **an automatic zero**. Late assignments will not receive feedback, and in-class assignments cannot be made up unless the absence is accommodated.

Extensions: Students are permitted **one free extension**, of no more than three days, on any written assignment; the extension request must be made at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline by email to the instructor. However, all requests of extensions and/or accommodations based on medical considerations must come through the office of Academic Counselling.

Important Note: **If you need an extension, you do not have to share with me the intimate details of your personal life. That information is none of my business and you should never have to disclose private information to me to receive support. If you feel compelled to offer a reason for requesting an extension, I encourage you to be creative (e.g., your dog ate your rough draft, or you’ve been called to help stop an assortment of Marvel villains from breaching an inter-dimensional portal and causing havoc).**

Missed Assignments and Academic Accommodation: Academic accommodation must be requested within 28 days of the missed assignment. Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student’s Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested.

Students seeking accommodation for work worth less than 10% must contact to discuss an appropriate accommodation plan.

More information on Academic Accommodation can be found here:

https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=1&Command=showCategory&Keywords=less%20than%2010%25&SubHeadingID=378&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_378

Owl: The use of OWL is necessary for successful completion of this course. This includes accessing readings as stipulated in the course outline, downloading instructions and guidelines for assignments, and submitting assignments via OWL. All course information, including assignments, will be posted on the course website.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Communicating with Instructor: Email is the best way to communicate with me. I will respond to all emails sent between Monday – Thursday within 24 hours. Emails sent Friday – Sunday will be responded to on Monday mornings. Standard email etiquette is expected.

Attendance Policy: The very nature of this course requires that you attend regularly to do well. You are expected to come prepared to class each week. It is crucial to note that mere attendance is insufficient to warrant a good engagement grade. Students will be evaluated based on the quality and regularity of their contributions to class discussions. Should you need to be absent, notify me as soon as you know you will be away. If you miss more than **4 classes**, I reserve the right to deduct 10% off your final grade (e.g., an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).

Accommodation, Absenteeism, and Deadlines: Students seeking academic accommodation for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. The same is true for accommodation requests pertaining to known disabilities or medical conditions. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Please find UWO's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness here:

https://www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Absence from Course Commitments

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences](#)

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

The policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be viewed [here](#).

Statement on Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Note for Students with Disabilities: Please contact aew@uwo.ca to find out the full range of services available to you.

Western Academic Policies and Statements

Masking Guidelines: Students will be expected to wear triple layer, non-medical, paper masks at all times in the classroom as per University policy. Students who are unable to wear a mask must seek formal accommodation through Western Accessible Education, and present medical documentation. Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Dean, and such actions will be considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Contingency Plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% Online Learning: In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor. In the event that online learning is required, a stable internet connection with working microphone and webcam will be required. As has been the case in the past, the decision to pivot to online learning will be made by Western, and not individual instructors or departments (excepting temporary online instruction in the event of instructor illness).

Academic Offenses

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed [here](#) to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.

Accessibility Statement

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (AE) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation or review [The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Correspondence Statement

The centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual’s official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to

in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).

Copyright and Audio/Video Recording Statement

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

Course Timetable

Week 1

Jan 10: Introduction

Jan 12: Pasiley Rekdal “West” (OWL)

Week 2

Jan 17: Select poems by Rupi Kaur, Atticus, and

Lili Pâquet’s “Selfie-Help: The Multimodal Appeal of Instagram Poetry” (OWL)

Jan 19: Jennifer Egan “Black Box” (OWL)

Week 3

Jan 24: *Malone Dies*

Jan 26: *Malone Dies*

Week 4

Jan 31: *Malone Dies* and Emilie Morin’s “‘Malone Dies’ and the Mysteries of the State” (OWL)

Feb 2: *The Interrogative Mood*

Week 5

Feb 7: *The Interrogative Mood*

Feb 9: *The Interrogative Mood*

Week 6

Feb 14: *Maus I: My Father Bleeds History*

Feb 16: *Maus I: My Father Bleeds History*

Due: Close Reading Assignment

Week 7: Reading Week

Feb 21: NO CLASS

Feb 23: NO CLASS

Week 8

Feb 28: *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began*

Mar 2: *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began*

Week 9

Mar 7: *The Woman Warrior*

Mar 9: *The Woman Warrior*

Week 10

Mar 14: *The Woman Warrior* and Yen Li Loh’s “Ghosts, Marriage, and Madness: The Immigrant Symbolic, Pregnancy as Feminine Epistemology, and the Death Drive in Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior*” (OWL)

Mar 16: *Citizen*

Due: Final Research Essay or Unessay

Week 11

Mar 21: *Citizen*

Mar 23: *Citizen*

Week 12

Mar 28: *Jonny Appleseed*

Mar 30: *Jonny Appleseed* and Julia Siepak's "Two-Spirit Identities in Canada: Mapping Sovereign Erotic in Joshua Whitehead's *Jonny Appleseed*"

Week 13

April 4: Review

April 6: Review