

English 4312G
The Consolation of Philosophy
And its English Afterlives
Winter 2023, UC 4401
Thursday, 9:30-12:30

Course Prerequisites

1.0 from English 2200-2250, English 3200-3210, Theatre Studies 3205F/G, or permission of the Department. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Instructor: Dr. Anne Schuurman

Office: UC 3428

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:30-3:30, or by appointment (in-person or Zoom)

Course Description

Few written works have influenced English thought and literature as profoundly, or for as long, as *The Consolation of Philosophy*, a dialogue written in the sixth century by the Roman philosopher and statesman Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius. In this seminar, we will begin by studying the *Consolation* in a modern English translation, alongside scholarship that will help us interpret the text with some understanding of its original context. We will then survey medieval and early modern translations of and responses to the *Consolation*. In the third and final part of the course, we will consider two modern Boethian texts. Some of the themes of the course include the problem of evil and theodicy; problems of time and temporality; philosophy as therapy of the soul or self-care; neo-Stoicism; paradoxes of allegory and mimesis; translation and reception.

Course Objectives

- ◇ Read and study key texts in the history of ideas and in the history of English
- ◇ Engage in stimulating, thought-provoking discussion
- ◇ Engage with key texts and scholarship and craft complex arguments in writing

Required Texts

- ◇ Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Ed. Douglas C. Langston. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.*
- ◇ Stoppard, Tom. *Arcadia*. London: Faber and Faber, 1993.
- ◇ Readings posted on OWL. (cont'd)

◇ Articles available through the library databases.

*No substitutions. You must purchase this edition of the text because it contains contextual material that you will be required to read.

OWL

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>.

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.

Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation	15%
Primary Text Presentation	15%
Criticism Presentation	10%
Reading Responses	20%
Research Essay	40%

Attendance & Participation

Attendance is mandatory and will be recorded on a sign-in sheet in every class. Each unexcused absence will result in a 3% deduction from your participation grade. A pattern of lateness will likewise affect your participation grade. An absence will be excused if you supply legitimate documentation to the Academic Counseling office.

To earn full participation marks, you must attend class regularly, come prepared with your textbook to discuss the assigned readings, listen actively to all lectures, and participate meaningfully in discussions. You will also be assigned the role of designated respondent for another student's oral presentation. As respondent, you may ask for clarification, formulate questions for discussion, or present counterpoints to the presenter's thesis.

Primary Text Presentation

You are required to give a 15-minute presentation on the primary text assigned to be read on the day of your presentation, and to lead a discussion following from your presentation. You must analyze the text under consideration, not summarize it. The aim of your presentation is to open and lead class discussion. You will be evaluated on

the content of your ideas, the clarity of your presentation, and your efficacy in leading discussion.

Criticism Presentation

In this 10-minute presentation, you are required to summarize the argument of the assigned work of literary criticism (these are the readings indicated by "C" on the class schedule). Explain the particular contribution this critic or scholar makes to our understanding of Boethius or some aspect of a Boethian tradition. Suggest how this reading connects to primary texts and to larger questions guiding the class. Conclude with questions for your classmates that aim to spark thoughtful discussion.

Reading Responses

You must submit **three** short response papers (500-700 max words) in which you discuss and analyze a key idea or passage in the reading assigned for the week. You may choose the three dates on which you submit a paper. Suggested topics are provided on the Reading Response Assignment Sheet (on OWL). **Do not summarize or generalize.** Your papers must be submitted electronically (in Word by email attachment) to me by Sunday at midnight before Monday's class. Do not submit a response paper in the weeks that you are giving your presentations. Use MLA style for all formatting and citations.

Research Essay

2250-2750 words. **Due April 6, 2023.**

Detailed instructions will be provided after Reading Week.

Student Absences

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedure below.

Note:

This class meets once per week for 3 hours, so each class period equals a full week of instructional time.

Work totaling less than 10% of the final course grade

The only course component worth less than 10% of the final course grade are the individual reading responses. Since you can choose the dates on which to submit responses, there is no procedure or accommodation policy to cover missed reading responses. Missed responses will be given a grade of zero.

Work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, you must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to the Academic Counselling Office of your

Faculty of Registration as soon as possible. For further information, please consult the University's medical illness policy at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

The Student Medical Certificate is available at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Accommodation and Accessibility

Religious Accommodation

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf.

Academic Policies

The website for Registrarial Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

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.

Class Conduct

- All students are expected to conduct themselves according to high standards of respect and civility in the classroom. To that end, students are asked to respect the following guidelines:
- Frame questions and differences of opinion in a constructive and professional manner.
- Respect the rights of each student and of the instructor to speak without having to talk over other voices.
- **Laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices are not permitted in class. (You must purchase the specified editions of the two required textbooks and bring them to every class. Be sure to bring print copies of articles and supplementary readings.)**

Email Conduct

Please address and sign all email correspondence appropriately. Typically, emails will be answered within 48 hours, although I do not always answer emails in the evening or on weekends. If you have not heard from me after 48 hours, please re-send your message: do not assume that I have received your email if you do not receive a reply.

Academic Offences

Academic or 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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software

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 for such checking 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 licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Support Services

Academic Counselling

Your Home Faculty's Academic Counselling or Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including

information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

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.

Accessible Education

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Key Dates

Classes begin: January 9, 2023
 Reading Week: February 18 – 26, 2023
 Classes end: April 10, 2023
 Exam period: April 13 – 30, 2023

Class Schedule (Subject to change)

P: Primary Text **L: Library**
C: Critical Text **O: OWL**

January 12:
 Course Introduction

January 19:
 P: *Consolation*, Books 1-2
 C: Walz, "Stoicism as Anaesthesia: Philosophy's 'Gentler Remedies' in Boethius's *Consolation*" (L)

January 26:
 P: *Consolation*, Books 3-4
 C: Donato, "Forgetfulness and Misology in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*" (L)

February 2:
 P: Book 5; Augustine, *On Free Choice Will of the Will* (Norton edition, pp. 123-138)
 C: Pike, "The Predicate 'Timeless'" (Norton edition, pp. 151-158)

February 9:
 P: Alfred, *Old English Boethius*, Books 1, 3, 5 (O)
 C: Lorden, "Tale and Parable: Theorizing Fictions in the Old English *Boethius*" (L)

February 16:
 P: Chaucer, *Boece*, Books 2, 3 (O)
 C: Nielsen, "Translating Lady Philosophy: Chaucer and the Boethian Corpus of Cambridge, University Library MS li.3.21" (L)

February 23:
 Reading Week – no classes

March 2:
 P: More, *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation* (O)

C: Zim, "Creative Dialogues with Textual Partners, Past and Present" (from *The Consolations of Writing*) (O)

March 9:

P: Stradling's translation of Lipsius, *Two Bookes of Constance* (O)

C: Constantinidou, "Public and Private, Divine and Temporal, in Justus Lipsius' *De constantia* and *Politica*" (L)

March 16:

P: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books 11-12 (O)

C: Astell, "The Medieval 'Consolatio' and the Conclusion of *Paradise Lost*" (L)

March 23:

P: Stoppard, *Arcadia*

C: "'Oh, Phooey to Death!': Boethian Consolation in Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*" (L)

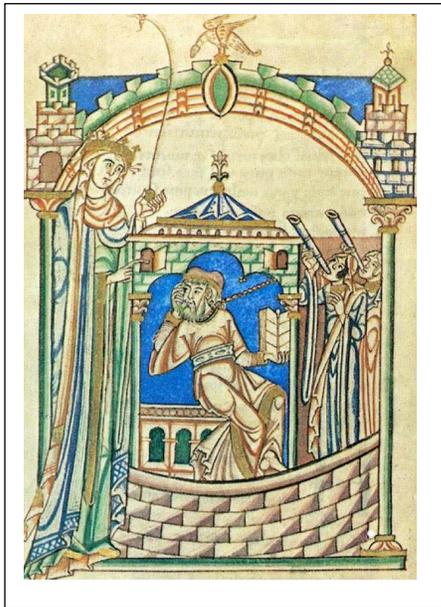
March 30:

P: Chiang, "Story of Your Life" (O); *Arrival* (film in class)

C: Quinn, "Me audiendi ... stupentem": The Restoration of Wonder in Boethius's 'Consolation of Philosophy'" (L)

April 6:

Course Wrap-up



Boethius, writing in prison.
MS Auct. F.5.6 (10th century)
https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_593



Frontispiece to Book II, manuscript cutting. Attributed to Maître de Coëtivy. (16th century)
<https://wallacelive.wallacecollection.org/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=64507&viewType=detailView>