

# **English 3711WA: *Canadian Prose: Reading Canadian Short Fiction***

## **Course Outline, Winter 2013**

***Time and Place***    **WF 11:30-1:00    RB3046**

***Course Website***    D2L: Go to LU Home, and click on *MyCourseLink*.

***Instructor***            Elizabeth Murray    [emurray@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:emurray@lakeheadu.ca)

Office hours            T/Th 1:30-2:30 pm, and by appointment

Office                    UC0036A. Directions for finding my office are posted on D2L.

Office phone            Because I work part time, please email me, rather than phone.

### ***Course Focus:*** Canadian Short Stories

We will read Canadian short fiction, focusing on both the social contexts of our course's short stories and on how the stories themselves are constructed. We will discuss ways in which certain elements or aspects of narrative fiction contribute to, or create meaning in the stories. Individual stories as well as two collections of stories are included.

Our stories take advantage of a variety of literary genres. For example, several stories contrast traditional European and traditional Native North American story forms. An 1800's story reshapes witch legends as a way to explore certain horrors of war, including what today is called post-traumatic stress disorder. Most of our writers prefer realist forms, yet a few also deploy magic realist or fragmented modernist forms as ways to present their themes. Some stories explore inner life and the nature of consciousness; they often redevelop the James Joycean epiphany form. Our "*New Yorker*" style stories by Mavis Gallant and Alice Munro fall, at least partially, into this category, and both of these authors boast international reputations, resonating with readers from all over the world. All of our selections, whatever their genre, engage social justice issues such as race, sexual orientation, disability, social class, nationality, and related post-colonial issues.

We will also explore issues specific to the "plus Canadian," as Barbara Godard calls it, in the short fiction on our course. We will read stories that at least point to the rich variety that is Canada: stories set in different time periods from before Confederation to the present day; stories set in small towns and in big cities, and from the Maritimes to the west coast; stories about at least some of the many varieties of Canadian experience such as African-Canadian experience, Canadian

Native experience, and the experience of recent Canadian immigrants such as Caribbean Canadians and Asian Canadians.

### ***Required Texts***

*Course Materials Package, English 3711WA*

*Sans Souci*, by Dionne Brand

*Light Lifting* by Alexander MacLeod

*They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, First or Second edition

### ***Evaluation (See notes below on late work, plagiarism)***

Group and In-Class Assignments:	Throughout term	10%	
Group Presentation	Throughout term	10%	
First Essay	Feb. 17	1200-1500 words	25%
Second Essay	Mar. 24	1200-1500 words	25%
Final Exam	Exam period	3 hours	30%

### **Important: Assignment Guidelines will be posted on D2L.**

Guidelines and suggested topics for the group presentation and the two essays will be posted on the class website on D2L. You will choose from the same list of topics for both of your essays, but each one must be about a different section of the course. The sections will be listed with the topics. Your group presentation topic must be about yet another section of the course.

It is important that you follow those posted guidelines. Be sure to contact me with any questions you might have.

### ***Final Exam***

The final exam will be 3 hours long, and worth 30% of your mark. It will have 2 parts, each worth half the marks. Part One will ask you to answer 6 short answer questions out of a choice of well over 6 questions. Part Two will ask you to answer one essay question, and there will be at least one essay question about each section of the course.

Choice on the exam: You will be expected to answer seven questions on the exam, six short answer questions and one essay question. Each of your seven answers must be about a different section of the course. The course will be divided into about 10 or 11 sections. Before the exam I will post a detailed exam outline, with the sections specified.

### ***Reading and Assignment Schedule***

**NOTE: Changes to the schedule will be announced in class.**

**January**

- 9      **On Canadian Short Fiction:** First two articles, Course Materials Package  
         William H. New: “Back to the Future: The Short Story in Canada Cambridge re short story history
- 11      **On Reading Narrative Fiction: Key, Interrelated Terms:**  
         **Plot, Characters, Narration, Imagery, Theme, and Genre**
- 16      **Early 1800’s: Thomas Chandler Haliburton:**  
         “The Clockmaker” and  
         “The Witch of Inky Dell” (started)
- 18      “The Witch of Inky Dell” continued
- 23      **Native Canadian Short Stories**  
         Later 1800’s: Pauline Johnson “A Red Girl’s Reasoning”
- 25      Conference Talk, Jeanette Armstrong: “Words”  
         Emma Lee Warrior: “Compatriots” 12 pages  
         re Indienthusiasm
- 30      Beth Brant: “Turtle Gal” 16 pages  
         Lee Maracle: “Yin Chin” 6 pages

**February**

- 1      Essay by Thomas King: *The Truth about Stories*, chapter two
- 6      Stories by Thomas King  
         “A Coyote Columbus Story”  
         “One Good Story, That One”
- 8      **More Short Story Styles**  
         A Fragmented, Modernist Style: Audrey Thomas “The More Little Mummy in the World”  
         An Epistolary Monologue: Zsuzsi Gartner “Floating Like a Goat”
- 13      Magic Realism:  
         Zsuzsi Gartner “The Adopted Chinese Daughters’ Rebellion”

15	<b>The Maritimes</b> Alistair MacLeod: “The Boat” Dionne Brand “One Down” (“One Down” is in the course materials package, not <i>Sans Souci</i> .) <b>First Essay Due</b>
20	<b>Reading Week. No Class</b>
22	<b>Reading Week. No Class</b>
27	<b><i>New Yorker</i> Stories from Canada 1: Alice Munro</b> “Vandals”
<b>March</b>	
1	Alice Munro: “Before the Change”
6	<b><i>New Yorker</i> Stories from Canada 2: Mavis Gallant</b> “The Moslem Wife”
8	<b>Short Story Collection 1</b> <i>Sans Souci</i> by Dionne Brand “Photograph” “Mme Allaird’s Breasts”
13	“No Rinsed Blue Sky” “Blossom, Princess of Oya”
15	<b>Short Story Collection 2</b> <i>Light Lifting</i> by Alexander MacLeod “Miracle Mile”
20	“Adult Beginners I”
22	“ <b>The Loop</b> ” <b>Second Essay due</b>
27	“The Wonder of Parents”
29	Exam Review
<b>April</b>	
3	Possible Make-up Class

### ***In Class Group Work***

Fairly often, we will do group work in class, based on the required reading for that class. The assignments will give you credit for having read the day's short story(s). We will respond to the stories, and will examine ways in which authors deploy short story structuring devices (plot, configuration of characters, choice of narrators and focalizers, imagery, genre) to advance and shape the issues they raise. No make-ups are allowed on these assignments, so regular attendance in class is the way to do well in this component of the course.

### **Late Work:**

Please hand essays in to me personally, in class. No essays will be accepted by email. If you are handing in work late, email or see me to make arrangements for handing it in. I cannot be responsible for essays left for me that I don't know about and/or haven't been okayed.

A deduction of 2% per weekday to a maximum of 20% will be made from all late assignments. Few exemptions can be allowed because it is important to be fair to those who lose marks for being late. Documentation may be needed. In the case of an emergency, email me asap.

### ***Plagiarism: A mark of zero will be assigned to wholly or partly plagiarized work.***

Students are responsible for informing themselves about what constitutes plagiarism and how they must acknowledge sources. Students are responsible for consulting their instructors whenever they are uncertain. See the "Code of Student Behavior" available from the Registrar's office for more information.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, or copying another student's work, all constitute plagiarism. Plagiarism is always reported to the Dean of Social Sciences and Humanities, who is responsible for keeping records of students who have handed in plagiarized work, and for deciding what penalty is appropriate. Usually the dean decides on a mark of zero on the assignment, but more severe penalties are possible. If the academic dishonesty is less serious, I have the option of lowering the student's mark, keeping it above a zero. I am still required to see that the student's name is on the dean's list.