

**Western University**  
**EN 1020E (650): Understanding Literature Today**  
**Summer 2014**  
**Instructor: Dr. George Donaldson**

**Course Description:**

This course takes you on a journey through the genres, historical periods, and critical approaches to English literature. In online lectures and online discussions, you will study major works of poetry, prose, and drama with attention to their use of literary form and the cultural contexts in which they were written. The written assignments for the course will provide you with training in literary analysis, logical and rhetorical argumentation, and strong skills in grammar and composition.

This course is recommended to students who may be considering either a Major or Minor in English Language and Literature, and who are interested in reading poetry, prose, and drama.

Prerequisite: Grade 12U English or permission of the Department.

**Course Objectives:**

Successful students who complete the course will be able to:

- Identify and analyze basic elements of literature, such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, diction, tone, figures of speech, syntax, and rhythm
- Recognize connections between course texts
- Write an essay about a work (or works) of literature, containing a clear and effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text(s)
- Research critical commentary on literary works
- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, especially those obtained through the Internet
- Integrate outside research materials and references to the original text(s) into an essay through the use of quotations and paraphrases
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively in writing
- Document essays using MLA format

**Text List**

1. Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey*. Ed. Claire Grogan. Peterborough: Broadview, 2002.
2. *Elements of Literature*. 4th Canadian Edition. Ed. David Staines et al. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2010.
3. Larsen, Nella. *Passing*. New York: Modern Library-Random House, 2002.
4. Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. Toronto: Vintage, 2002.

6. Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. Russ McDonald. New York: Pelican Shakespeare-Penguin, 2000.
7. Custom Course Pack. Available from the UWO Bookstore.

### **Composition of Grade**

COMPONENT	WEIGHT	DUE DATE	LENGTH
Participation	15%	N/A	N/A
Essay #1	15%	Week of Unit 4.2	1000 words
Mid-term Test	10%	Week of Unit 7.1	1 hour
Essay 2	20%	Week of Unit 12.1	2000 words
Discussion Reflection	5%	Last day of class	500 words
Final Exam	35%	T.B.A.	3 hours
Final Grades			

Students must pass both term work and the final examination in order to pass the course. Students who fail the final examination (regardless of their term mark) automatically fail the course.

### **Class Format**

Each week you will be responsible for reading the assigned text(s), the associated lecture, and the discussion postings of your peers. You are expected to contribute to these discussions on a regular basis. (For more information, please see the “Discussion” section of the document labelled “Read Me First.”)

### **Discussion Participation**

Participation in online discussion is a major component of this course. It is essential that students keep up with class discussion, because each topic is only available for a limited period (without exception). In order to receive a passing participation grade, you must contribute to at least twenty discussion topics (out of a total of twenty three). Remember: discussion contributions are more about quality than quantity. You must respond to the ideas of your classmates, which means that you need to read other students’ postings. In preparation for each discussion, you should first read the required text(s), then read the lectures, then read what other students have already posted, then post your own response. Posting to the discussion board is not a onetime thing—it’s a conversation. Expect to visit the discussion board repeatedly throughout the week. You might find that you can use the class discussion space as a springboard for new ideas—you may even come back to your discussion posts when you’re brainstorming for an essay.

### **Email**

Please use the Messages function in Owl for all course communication. You can do this by composing an email addressed to “Instructor Role.” (See the email section of the “Read Me First” document for more on course communication.)

**Essay Style**

Essays must comply with MLA (Modern Languages Association) citation style and guidelines. The UWO library provides a document explaining the basics of MLA formatting: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/files/styleguides/MLA.pdf>. See also the “MLA Resources for Undergraduates” page on the English Department website: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrad/guidelines.html>. (For more information, consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009.)

**Late Penalty**

Due to the nature of an online course and assignment turnaround times, students should make every effort to hand all assignments in on time. Essays and other assignments are to be submitted via the Owl drop box by t



June 18-20: Unit 7.2: Love and Loss: Shakespeare, “Sonnet 18, “Sonnet 73” and “Sonnet 130” (EL); Edna St. Vincent Millay, “I Being Born a Woman and Distressed” (course pack); Discussion 7.2

June 23-25: Unit 8.1: Love and Loss: Burns, “My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose” (course pack); Atwood, “Variations on the Word Love” (EL); Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily” (EL); Discussion 8.1

June 25-27: Unit 8.2: Love and Loss: Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” (EL); Yeats, “When You Are Old” (course pack); Auden, “Funeral Blues” (course pack); Discussion 8.2

June 30-July 2: Unit 9.1: Public and Private Selves: Nella Larsen, Passing; Discussion 9.1

July 2-4: Unit 9.2: Public and Private Selves: Nella Larsen, Passing; Discussion 9.2 7

July 7-9: Unit 10.1: Public and Private Selves: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (EL); EL 11-14; Discussion 10.1

July 9-11: Unit 10.2: Public and Private Selves: Munro, “Family Furnishings” (EL); Heaney, “Digging” (course pack); Discussion 10.2

July 14-16: Unit 11.1: Storytelling: Barnes, excerpt from A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters (course pack); Discussion 11.1

July 16-18: Unit 11.2: Storytelling: Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess” (EL); Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (EL); Discussion 11.2

July 21-23: Unit 12.1: Storytelling: Yann Martel, Life of Pi; EL 4-5; Discussion 12.1;

ESSAY 2 DUE JULY 21

July 23-25: Unit 12.2: Storytelling:

Reflections Due July 25<sup>th</sup>.

Final Exam TBA somewhere between July 28<sup>th</sup>. and July 31<sup>st</sup>.