

English 252: The Literature(s) of Montreal

Just 90 minutes from Burlington lies one of the great literary cities of the world, Montreal. Home to writers working not only in French and English, but other languages as well, Montreal continues to play a central role in national and international literary culture.

In this course, we will examine some of the most important works to come out of Montreal, drawing primarily from texts published during the 20th and 21st centuries. At least 50% of the texts will be works originally written in French that have been translated into English. Topics we will consider will include the influence of Montreal's multilingual and multicultural history on the city's literary history, work by writers from immigrant communities, the relationship between politics and literary expression, and also the importance of particular neighbourhoods in the literatures of Montreal.

Our course will also meet several times through the semester with students from Professor David Massell's senior History seminar on The History of Montreal. Given our proximity to the border, both of these senior seminars will involve a field trip to Montreal. Plans for the trip are still in development, but we are hoping it will be an overnight trip giving us two full days to explore and *read* the city.

Course texts:

Two Solitudes, by Hugh MacLennan

Nikolski, by Nicolas Dickner (1846271665)

The Tin Flute, by Gabrielle Roy (0-7710-9388-8)

The Fat Woman Next Door is Pregnant, by Michel Tremblay (0889221901)

Barney's Version, by Mordecai Richler (030747688X)

The Wanderer, by Régine Robin

Beautiful Losers, by Leonard Cohen

The Obituary, by Gail Scott (Cancelled)

Assignments:

In this course, you will write two essays as well as respond to blog prompts. There will be no final exam. The blog assignment provides you with the opportunity to reflect regularly on the course reading and also allows you to share ideas with your classmates outside of the weekly meeting of our class. The weighting of these assignments breaks down as follows:

Essay 1 - 35%

Essay 2 - 50%

In class participation and attendance - 15%

Schedule

Jan. 19: First day of class, introduction

Jan. 26: Montreal history

Feb. 2: Poetry (class postponed due to weather)

Feb 9: Poetry, *Two Solitudes*

Feb 16: *Two Solitudes*

Feb 23: *Barney's Version* (go see movie after class?)

Mar 2: *Barney's Version*

Mar 9: SPRING BREAK

Mar 16: *The Tin Flute*

Mar 23: *The Tin Flute* **First essay due**

Mar 30: *NO CLASS*

April 6: *The Fat Woman Next Door is Pregnant*

April 13: *Beautiful Losers*

April 20: *The Wanderer*

April 27: Nikolski

May 4: Nikolski

May 8: **Research essay due**

-

Participation grades:

Here's the rubric for how I determine grades for your participation and attendance

Participation

A: Nearly 100% attendance, unless due to illness or family emergency AND active participation in class. Clearly on top of the reading and regularly speaks in class. Always engaged in the discussion, whether vocally contributing or not.

B: Missed very few classes (2 or 3 max), unless due to illness or family emergency. Participated in class vocally on a fairly regular basis, but, more importantly, is always listening and attentive to the ongoing discussion. Unprepared for class occasionally, but usually caught up on the reading and willing to contribute.

C: Misses more than three classes for reasons other than illness or family emergency. Clearly behind in the reading on at least several occasions. Mostly attentive and speaks in class several times over the course of the semester. Makes a good effort to stay involved in class discussion and appears interested.

D: Regularly missing from class and/or frequently appears disinterested. Routinely behind on reading and fails to bring books to class. Leaves class from time to time to take phone calls thinking that the professor thinks they are using the restroom, continually passes notes back and forth with someone else, works on other homework or reads the newspaper during class, checks e-mail or text messages while instructor or classmates are speaking, all of which, I should add, are apparent to the instructor and your classmates and immediately qualify you for a D.

F: Attendance and participation not worthy of a D or higher. Failure to attend most classes and/or to participate in any meaningful way.

N.B. The above attendance rubric is designed for classes that meet three times per week. An absence from a once-per-week three-hour class period is the equivalent of missing three regular classes.

Academic integrity

Offenses against the Code of Academic Integrity are deemed serious and insult the integrity of the entire academic community. Any suspected violations of the code are taken very seriously and will be forwarded to the Center for Student Ethics & Standards for further investigation.