



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

COURSE TITLE: Literature and Society: Story Ghosts as Hungry Ghosts REVISED MARCH 17 2020			
Course Number	ENGL251-09 Literature and Society	FALL 2019	
Faculty / Department	Faculty of Arts/Department of English		
Instructor Name	W. Mark Giles	Email	williammark.giles@ucalgary.ca
Instructor Email Policy	Response within 2 business days, 9 AM – 5 PM; no after-hours/weekend service		
Office Location	SS1028	Telephone No:	English office: 403-220-5470
Office Hours	Tuesday and Thursday 230 PM-330 PM		
Class Dates/Times/Location	Tuesday and Thursday 330 PM-445 PM, ST130		

Course description:

From Calendar: An examination of the relationship of literature to the world around us, with instruction in close reading and critical writing. Considers how literature as a cultural practice responds to and reflects its social context. Includes the study of at least one text by an Indigenous author.

Course Hours:

3 units; (2-1T) or (1.5-1.5T)

Antirequisite(s):

Credit for English 251 and 201 will not be allowed.

This section of English 251 investigates story ghosts as hungry ghosts. Not “ghost stories” – but rather the way in which events, histories, memories, and legacies haunt the characters and even the landscapes of narratives. In many cultural traditions hungry ghosts are the legions of the dead who suffer from insatiable desire or appetite, due either to their own misdeeds, or because they have become abandoned. Other cultures have other ghosts who yearn for recognition: dybbuk, windigo, abiku, bhoot. Yes, the zombie apocalypse commercialized in much recent media demonstrates that hungry ghosts circulate widely as pop-culture currency. This course will use the notion of the “hungry ghost” as an organizing metaphor to research how human agency (or lack thereof) shapes narratives – from ancient Greece to 21st-century Canada. The plays, stories, poems, and other cultural materials studied in this course necessarily challenge conventions of form as they seek to placate the unsettled.

Note on Course Content: We are studying a variety of documents and texts, some of which engage with issues of emotional, physical, or psychological intensity and include frank representation of experience and feeling. Discussions may probe subjects such as colonization, exploitation, sexuality, violence, and betrayal; as such, students can expect some of the material to be explicit and/or possibly disturbing. Historical texts may have both manifest and latent elements of racism, misogyny, and trauma. Students who are concerned with or troubled by the readings and discussions are invited to discuss any concerns with me in person.

Notes on English 251: The specific content of ENGL 251 will vary with the instructor, but all sections will share the common goals of developing student skills in critical reading and effective, logical writing.

Although individual sections may be “themed,” instructors should aim, in the selection of texts, for some type of breadth, whether it be chronological, generic, national, or conceptual. Instructors are encouraged, also, to develop individual sections around questions of broad, humanistic interest and not to duplicate specialized course topics that could be taught at the advanced level. Special care should be taken, additionally, not to duplicate a substantial number of course texts from courses with different numbering.

As this course is dedicated to instruction in writing, students must complete at least 2,000 words of formal academic writing, excluding essays on exams. Instructors are also expected to give a registrar-scheduled final exam of a minimum 20% to a maximum 35% value of the overall course grade. For all course examinations (including mid-term and final), no more than 50% of their cumulative value may be determined by multiple-choice format.

Aims of the Course:

- Teaching close reading, which, among other things, requires a student to realize that a text is constructed, and not a transparent reflection of reality.
- Introducing a range of technical terms and critical tools with which to interpret texts.
- Offering instruction in how to write a strong, well-supported, clearly written academic essay. This includes introducing the idea of writing as a process by guiding students through the various stages of composition and the creation of effective arguments.
- Teaching proper documentation, including what constitutes plagiarism.
- Teaching library research skills: how to search and locate reference works, books and articles, both electronic and print; and how to use print and online resources responsibly and thoughtfully.
- Encouraging engagement with other scholars by assigning at least one exercise or assignment that asks students to respond to at least one critical text.

Texts and readings:

The following texts are available at the bookstore – check with bookstore staff for used or rentable copies.

Sophocles. *The Complete Plays of Sophocles: A New Translation*. Translated by Robert Bagg and James Scully. HarperPerennial, 2011. [Note: many translations of Sophocles’ plays exist: students will be expected to use this specific edition.]

Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. Norton Critical Edition. Translated by Susan Bernofsky. Norton, 2015. [Note: many translations of Kafka’s novella exist: students will be expected to use this specific edition.]

Chariandy, David. *Soucouyant*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2007.

Halfe, Louise Bernice. *Blue Marrow*. Revised edition. Couteau, 2004. [Do not use the 1998 edition of this book.] **REVISION: Bookstore is sold out and the publisher has gone bankrupt. Key passages will be posted on D2L**

Other texts will be made available on D2L.

You will be expected to ~~bring your texts to class~~ **read your texts**. Hardcopies are recommended, including printing out D2L material.

Reading texts on your phone is NOT recommended. It is impossible to engage in meaningful close reading expected of academic work on a phone screen.

If you use an electronic device to access readings, please ensure that the texts are cued up and ready to go, so you don't waste time fetching and scrolling.

Assignments and Evaluation:

REVISED: Please advise the Instructor if there are any that arise that may have an impact on whether you are able to complete an assignment. Given the special situation of the coronavirus pandemic, every effort will be made to ensure that students can succeed. If illness is an issue, not medical note is required. Please familiarize yourself with University policies and procedures – communications and links arrive daily in your email inbox from University administrators.

- 10% One-page paper (250 words) Jan 23
- 15% two-page paper (500 words) Feb 13
- 10% Mid-term In-Class test Feb 27
- 25% six-page paper (1500 words) Mar 26 **REVISED: While all deadlines are still recommended, the six-page paper will be accepted without penalty until Friday, April 17.**
- 10% In-Class Collaboration: ~~super-collage scrapbook Apr 7, Apr 9~~ **REVISED: this class-collaboration will be re-imagined as a virtual scrapbook on a Discussion Board or Chat or Zoom session. Details TBA; probable date: April 14**
- 30% ~~Registrar-Scheduled Final Exam~~ **REVISED: Final exam will be an at-home exam. Exam Questions will be released on D2L and sent as email to all students no later than 8:30 AM MDT, Wednesday, April 22; completed copies must be uploaded no later than 10:30 AM MDT to the Assignment Dropbox on D2L. The Instructor recommends you block a minimum two-hour window in that time to complete the exam without interruption. The exam will be designed as an essay-response exam that can be written in a two-hour time period, similar to that of an open-book sit down exam**

- 10% One-page paper (250 words) Jan 23

A one-page paper that follows an instructor-supplied template and is intended to focus on creating a single clear purpose or thesis statement, formatting, presentation, and citation

- 15% two-page paper (500 words) Feb 13

A short paper in which a student summarizes and evaluates a critical text

- 10% Mid-term In-Class test Feb 27

An in-class multiple-choice and short-answer test covering material from the course

- 25% six-page paper (1500 words) Mar 26 **REVISED: While all deadlines are still recommended, the six-page paper will be accepted without penalty until Friday, April 17.**

A critical analysis essay based on close critical reading and interpretation of a course text

- 10% In-Class Collaboration: super-collage scrapbook Apr 7, Apr 9

A celebration of the work and reading done in the class, in which all members of the class contribute to a material artefact

- 30% Registrar-Scheduled Final Exam

~~Students must be available for examinations up to the last day of the examination period April 18-29, 2020. <https://www.ualgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html>~~ **REVISED:**

Final exam will be an at-home exam. Exam Questions will be released on D2L and sent as email to all

students no later than 8:30 AM MDT, Wednesday, April 22; completed copies must be uploaded no later than 10:30 AM MDT to the Assignment Dropbox on D2L.

Students must complete the in-class mid-term examination, all papers, and the final exam in order to receive a passing grade on the course. A failure to complete any one of these assignments will result in a final grade of F.

Additional Regulations:

- Examinations and Tests for weighting of tests during the last 14 days of lecture may not count for more than 10% of the final grade, except in the case of laboratory or oral testing, take home examinations or terminal projects. This rule does not apply in the fall term to full courses. (Calendar, G. Examinations and Tests: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g.html>).
- Please note the recently passed (June 10, 2013) departmental regulation: Instructors of undergraduate courses will provide marked feedback on 40% of a student's final grade (provided students meet posted deadlines) by the following dates: 1) one week before the withdrawal date for half courses; or 2) by the end of the first week of the second term for full courses. Note: Deadlines for the return of work may differ slightly for Spring Term and Block Week courses.

Assignment submission instructions

- No assignments will be accepted by email.
- Essays must be uploaded to the appropriate D2L dropbox
- The class-collaborative project will be completed in-class. They require your bodily presence to actually do the necessary activities for two classes for each project. Students who participate will complete a D2L-based self-assessment.
- The mid-term exam will be written in class, using UCalgary exam booklets or other paper media. The instructor may consider allowing laptops to be used for the in-class mid-term, in which case the student will upload the exam to a D2L assignment dropbox.
- All written work submitted to D2L MUST conform to MLA formatting, including double spacing, 12-point font (Times New Roman preferred), name and page number on every page. Single spaced work, work without names and page numbers, and work in other font sizes will not be marked and assigned a grade of F
- All attachments must be in either Word (doc or docx) or PDF format. Files submitted in other formats will not be opened and assigned a grade of F.
- Empty, partial, or corrupted files will be assigned a grade of F. It is the student's responsibility to ensure readable files are uploaded.
- Files uploaded to D2L must have the following naming convention: YourLastName-ENGL251-AssignmentName. Files submitted lacking your name and the course number in the filename will not be opened and assigned a grade of F.
- Files uploaded to D2L must have alphanumeric-only filenames. Letters, numbers, hyphens, and periods only. They cannot contain any accents or other diacritical marks, punctuation marks (other than hyphens or periods), or special characters.

Late Assignment Policy

These assignments must be completed at the appointed time:

- The class-collaborative projects are activities that require attendance on the days of the project.
- The mid-term must be done in class on the appointed day.
- The final exam must be written at the appointed time and place.

~~I will accept papers up to 14 days after their due date without penalty: one-page paper: Feb 6; two-page paper Feb 27; six-page paper Apr 9. No papers will be received after those dates, and the dropboxes will close. Papers submitted after the due date will receive a grade but no comments.~~

A note on participation:

REVISED: As course transitions to on-line delivery and instructor support, D2L will become the meeting place for the course.

The instructor will be on-line during all scheduled class periods.

Material will be posted to D2L, Discussion Boards opened, and chat sessions made available as necessary. Students MUST be regularly checking D2L and are encouraged to check the site during “class” times.

There is no participation grade. A course rooted in dialogic pedagogy and critical discourse demands active and engaged participation. This includes attendance, preparedness, conscientiousness in discussion (both knowing to speak to up, and knowing when to make room for others), professionalism, punctuality. You will be expected to read carefully all the assigned readings and to be able to discuss them with reasoned responses. We may not always agree with each other, but we will always respect each other.

In my courses I emphasize learning as an active practice. My goal is to allow agency to inhabit the learning experience – what you, the learners, *do* – rather than allowing agency to reside in prescribed expectations, or assuming it for myself. For some who arrive in my courses, the agency to make your own decisions and to take actions in pursuit of learning can seem daunting. I am here as a kind of mountaineering guide – I point out the trails, offer some training on specific equipment, give insight into the environment around us, encourage or correct as required, but each of you and the expedition team as a whole must shoulder your own packs, and strive for the summit on your own terms.

~~If you are going to be late or absent, it is polite and professional to send an email before class.~~ I do not require reasons or documentation. If I am informed in a timely and professional fashion, then I can consider options for making up missed work.

Grading system:

The University of Calgary’s four-point Grading System, as described in the Calendar (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>) will be used in this course.

F.1.1 Undergraduate Grading System

Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
A	4.00	Excellent performance
A-	3.70	Approaching excellent performance
B+	3.30	Exceeding good performance
B	3.00	Good performance
B-	2.70	Approaching good performance
C+	2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance
C	2.00	Satisfactory performance
C-	1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance.
*D+	1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject

*D	1.00	Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject. The Faculty of Law utilizes a "D" grade that does not carry weight in calculating the grade point average. This will be noted in the calendar description as "Not Included in GPA" where applicable.
F	0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements. Several Faculties utilize an F grade that does not carry weight in calculating the grade point average. This will be noted in the calendar description as "Not Included in GPA" where applicable.
**I	0.00	Incomplete. Sufficient work has not been submitted for evaluation, unable to adequately assess. May also be used when a final exam is not submitted.

Notes:

- A grade of "C-" or below may not be sufficient for promotion or graduation, see specific faculty regulations.
- The number of "D" and "D+" grades acceptable for credit is subject to specific undergraduate faculty promotional policy.

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

Communication with Instructor: Office Hours and Email

~~Please, visit me in my office hour. F2F meetings are most productive. Make an appointment if the office hour doesn't work. I like meeting with students!~~

REVISED: To consult please email so that we can set up an appropriate method. We can try email, chat, or Zoom video. It will be most effective if we make appointments.

Otherwise, use email; from the *Calendar*:

Student Communication and Responsibilities

The University of Calgary's primary method to communicate with students is electronic communications. This includes email and Student Centre notifications.

University of Calgary students are provided with a UCalgary email address. Official notifications and communications from the University of Calgary will only be sent to the UCalgary email address. Students are responsible for ensuring they set up their UCalgary email prior to the start of their first term at the University of Calgary and are accountable for reading messages sent to their UCalgary email account, or posted on their Student Centre, on a regular basis to ensure important information is not missed.

~~Email cannot replace the classroom — I cannot use it to give special tutorials for missed classes. I cannot pre-mark assignments (though I am happy to meet with you to discuss assignments and expectations and work in progress). I will not use email to provide information that is available elsewhere, such as in this course outline, on D2L, or in assignment instructions. Questions regarding content or explications of course texts are better asked or addressed in class time or office visits.~~

I will always try to respond to emails within two business days. There should be no expectation that I consult my emails in evenings or on weekends. I may not reply to emails that are simply information about absences.

A note on professional etiquette: emails should have ENGL251 in the subject line. You should have a salutation that is suitably formal: “Dear Dr. Giles” if you are asking for something, like a meeting to discuss an assignment grade; perhaps simply “Dr. Giles” if you are advising of an absence. On rare occasions – perhaps following up on a conversation, or in an email chain where a certain rapport has been established, you can hazard “Mark” or “Dear Mark” – but don’t presume familiarity, take your cue from your instructor’s behavior.

There is no occasion when “Hey” is an acceptable salutation.

Electronic devices in the classroom Do’s and Don’t’s

~~I am a huge believer in the benefits of handwriting, sketching, and doodling when participating in learning activities. Analog simply is more effective. It’s active. It’s haptic. Yet I recognize we are in the 21st century. I ask that any use of electronic devices in the classroom be related to the work in the course. I will stop class if I sense the electronic devices are distracting me or others. Next, I will talk to you outside of class if the behavior is persistent. Finally, I will call you out by name in class if it continues.~~

- ~~**Do:** turn off all notifications, including your smartwatch and laptop; take notes on your laptops; look up stuff for discussion or in-class research at appropriate times; read the class texts in your e-reader; take pictures of the blackboard.~~
- ~~**Don’t:** make audio or video recordings of classes; turn notifications on; message friends; do social media; take selfies; live-tweet sarcastic comments; play games; watch videos; prepare for other classes.~~