



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
Allegory and Allegorical Interpretation in the “Western” Context
WINTER 2021

Course Number: ENGL 251, Section 1
Faculty / Department: Faculty of Arts/Department of English
Instructor Name: Benjamin Groh **Email:** benjamin.groh@ucalgary.ca

Instructor Email Policy: I will respond to emails sent via students' @ucalgary addresses within two business days. Please note that all course communications must occur through the students' @ucalgary email.

Office Location: Zoom (please email me to schedule an appointment)
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30 – 11:30am (MST)

Class Zoom and Slack:
Dates/Times/Location: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
from 9:00 – 9:50am (MST)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the mode of writing called “allegory” across a range of temporal periods and creative and critical approaches. The word itself is difficult to define, but it comes from the Greek *allēgoria*, which denotes a disparity between what one says or writes and some *other* sense (Greek *allos*). This course will demonstrate various structural, formal, narrative, and stylistic ways in which texts might convey this *other sense*. Why might historical and contemporary authors have chosen to write allegorically? What differentiates allegory from other modes of writing? How has allegory changed over time, and how do we recognize an allegory when we read one?

This final question poses the central problem of the course. Northrop Frye writes in *Anatomy of Criticism* that “all commentary is allegorical interpretation” (89). This course, therefore, will also discuss how we conceive of the relationship between a creative or critical text, and criticism or commentary written about it later. The question arises: *Can any piece of writing be called allegorical?* Can we call poems, novels, television shows, films, and comics allegorical? What about student essays? This course will investigate these problems while guiding students through practices of close reading, textual analysis, and critical writing.

This course will take place **online** via Desire2Learn (D2L), Zoom, and Slack. To best succeed in the course, students are encouraged to participate in all asynchronous learning tasks, course readings, and assignments using D2L, in addition to synchronous Zoom seminars, Slack discussions, and office hours.

Students will attend synchronous Zoom classes from **9:00 – 9:50am on Mondays and Wednesdays, and Slack discussions from 9:00 – 9:50am on Fridays**. Often, but not always, Monday classes will comprise a 50-minute lecture, while Wednesdays and Fridays will involve seminar-style discussion about the texts under consideration

that week.

I will hold online office hours every week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30 – 11:30am (MST), **by appointment only**. Please set up appointments with me via email. Students are encouraged to attend office hours for assistance with their critical thinking and academic writing, and with any questions they may have regarding the course readings.

When unable to participate in the live Zoom seminars or Slack discussions for whatever reason, please inform me in advance and propose (and implement) an alternative participation activity (e.g., submit a brief reflection on that week's creative or critical text).

The course is designed to develop students' skills in critical reading and effective, logical writing. Students will produce at least 2000 words of formal, academic writing during the semester. Finally, there will be a registrar-scheduled exam.

TEXTS AND READINGS:

The following course texts (unless otherwise stated) are purchasable from the University of Calgary Bookstore:

Abel, Jordan. *Injun*. 2016.
Bervin, Jen. *Nets*. 2004.
Docter, Pete (director). *Inside Out*. Pixar, 2015. [Purchasable or rentable on *iTunes* or *YouTube*]
Findley, Timothy. *The Wars*. 1977.
Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. 1915.
L'Abbé, Sonnet. *Sonnet's Shakespeare*. 2019.
Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. 1966.

The following readings are available on D2L or elsewhere online:

Excerpts from Plato's *Republic* (D2L)
Excerpts from Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (D2L)
Excerpts from Dante's *Inferno* (D2L) and his "Letter to Can Grande" (*Princeton Dante Project*)
An anonymous play called *Everyman* (*Project Gutenberg*)
"On the Concept of History" by Walter Benjamin (D2L)
Notes on Conceptualisms by Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman (D2L)

A series of academic essays and critical writings will also be available online. Students must refer to these in their final essays and critical reflection assignments.

I will post a detailed reading list and course schedule before the first seminar.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

In this course, students will:

- 1) develop a practice of close reading, which requires a student to realize that a text is constructed and not a transparent reflection of reality;
- 2) generate interpretations of allegorical texts we read in class by engaging with a range of technical terms and critical tools;

- 3) learn how to write a strong, well-supported, and clearly written academic essay, which involves introducing students to the notion of writing as a process that requires multiple stages of composition;
- 4) learn how to cite their sources according to MLA style, and learn about what constitutes plagiarism;
- 5) develop library research skills: how to search and locate reference books and articles (both electronic and in print), and how to use print and online resources responsibly and thoughtfully; and
- 6) engage with other scholars by responding to critical texts and ongoing conversations about the practices of textual analysis and criticism.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS:

In order to engage successfully in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with a microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or software enabled;
- A secure and reliable broadband internet connection.

This is a synchronous, online course taught via D2L, Zoom, and Slack. There is a D2L site for this course that contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see: d2l.ucalgary.ca). You will receive a link to our Slack space after the introductory lecture.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

1. Course Encyclopedia: We will be reading some difficult texts in this class. One of the reasons for this difficulty will be the plethora of unfamiliar allusions, references, names, and places that pepper our reading experience. To assist us with these difficulties, we will, as a class, compile an encyclopedia to which we can all refer. As you read, look up terms you do not recognize and add these references to the encyclopedia on D2L. In your post, please explain this allusion, term, reference, or name; offer some context or summary; and make an argument as to why this reference appears in that week's reading. Each entry should be a minimum of 150 words but should not exceed 400 words. Please ensure, before you post, that one of your peers has not already chosen to write about the same term. Each student should contribute to this encyclopedia at least three times over the course of the semester. **Each entry is worth 5% of your final grade, for a total of 15%.**

2. A 1-2- page critical exploration of one of the course's secondary texts. Your exploration should present an argument about what a part of this text "means." Look up unfamiliar words, attempt to parse difficult sentences, and/or describe one or more theoretical terms you discover there in greater detail than any of your entries in the Course Encyclopedia. Your exploration will offer an answer to one or more questions that you ask yourself about the text as you read. In other words, attempt to clarify something you do not immediately understand about the text. Cite any sources you use in-text and on a Works Cited page according to MLA style. **This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.**

3. The thesis statement and introductory paragraph of your final essay. You will prepare a thesis statement and introductory paragraph for your final essay by responding to one of the questions on D2L, which will appear approximately halfway through the course. You and one of your peers will read each other's paragraphs and prepare a paragraph of feedback in response. Do you understand your peer's thesis? Has the paragraph outlined its

proposed investigation legibly and logically? What questions do you have about it? What is working well in the paragraph? What could be improved? Your instructor will also mark both paragraphs and give you feedback on your thesis. **Each paragraph is worth 5% of your final grade, for a total of 10%.**

4. A 1500-1800- word essay on any two primary texts from the course. Your essay should compare these works with the assistance of at least one secondary source from the syllabus. You can use the source you wrote your critical exploration on, or you can pick another. Halfway through the course, a list of potential essay questions will be posted on D2L. Your essay should answer one of these questions by: making an argument in an introductory paragraph; supporting this argument in a series of body paragraphs in which you will embed quotes from, and interpretations of, these texts; and offer a concluding paragraph that restates your thesis and offers avenues for further thought. Cite every source in-text and on a final Works Cited page according to MLA style. **This assignment is worth 25% of your final grade.**

5. Reading Quizzes. There will be 5, asynchronous, multiple-choice reading quizzes scheduled over the course of the semester. You will take these quizzes on D2L. Each will be short—composed of approximately 5 questions—and should not take more than 30 minutes to complete. These quizzes will test your reading knowledge and your knowledge of key literary terms and will orient you for our in-class discussions. **These quizzes are worth a total of 10% of your final grade.**

6. A registrar-scheduled exam, worth 20% of your final grade, will take place during the official exam period.

7. Slack Discussion, worth 10% of your final grade. You should attend class and contribute to seminar-style discussions regularly. But since it will be difficult to conduct discussions over Zoom, students will sign onto Slack on Friday mornings and contribute to the chatroom. Come prepared to talk about the readings and ask questions about what you do not understand (and feel free to chat amongst yourselves, as well).

Students will have received at least 40% of their final grade, with feedback, by April 14, 2021.

All assignments are to be submitted to the dropboxes located in our D2L shell, except for your Course Encyclopedia entries, which should be posted to the D2L Discussion Board.

All assignments do not have to be completed to receive a passing grade. However, failure to attend the final examination or to submit the research paper will make passing the course extremely difficult.

There will be no extra-credit assignments in this course.

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (an A- to B+) for each business day that the assignment is overdue. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

USE OF INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN CLASS:

This course requires students to be able to access a laptop and the Internet. Students are also responsible for being aware of the University's Internet and email use policy, which can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/news/new-policy-acceptable-use-electronic-resources-and-information>

CONDUCT:

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS:

During this course, students will be required to attend a total of 13 live seminars via Zoom. Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom sessions. **Students will be required to leave their webcam's on when present at a seminar, and unmute their device** when invited to speak during group work, or in question and answer sessions.

Zoom is a video conferencing program that will allow us to meet at specific times for a “live” video conference, so that we can have the opportunity to meet each other virtually and discuss relevant course topics as a learning community.

To help ensure Zoom sessions are private, do not share the Zoom link or password with others, or on any social media platforms. Zoom links and passwords are only intended for students registered in the course. Zoom recordings and materials presented in Zoom, including any teaching materials, must not be shared, distributed or published without the instructor's permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity; and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith, and respect (as per the [Code of Conduct](#)). When entering Zoom or other video conferencing sessions (such as MS Teams), you play a role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment. Please be mindful of how your behaviour in these sessions may affect others. Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies ([Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#)). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your zoom sessions visit: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/>.

If you are unable to attend a Zoom session, please contact your instructor to arrange an alternative activity for the missed session (e.g., to review a recorded session). The instructor may record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class – such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

GRADING SYSTEM:

Course grades are based on the University of Calgary four-point Undergraduate Grading System and the standard percentage conversion chart of the Department of English:

90 + %	A+	4.0	67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
85 – 89 %	A	4.0	64 – 66 %	C	2.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7	60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3	55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0	50 – 54 %	D	1.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7	0 – 49 %	F	0

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. There is no D-grade.

The interpretation of the undergraduate university grading system can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university.

“Plagiarism” occurs when a Student presents the ideas, expression of ideas or work of another individual as the Student’s own. Work may include algorithms, code, composition, data, methods, design, formulae, images, indigenous oral teachings, art and ceremonies, organization of ideas, and scientific and mathematical concepts.

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events

<http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>.

Our email address is **smecuofc@gmail.com**.

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at **<https://arts.ucalgary.ca/english>**. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Library and Research Support:

Melanie Boyd, Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: maboyn@ucalgary.ca.

Find The English Pages research guide here:

https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject_id=52619

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:

**Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/welcome.html>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152 or email adveng@ucalgary.ca. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Deferral of term work and final examinations:

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Student Accommodations:**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

The student accommodation policy can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Arts Students' Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at

ascarts@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

***RESEARCH ETHICS (if applicable)**

If a student is interested in undertaking an assignment that will involve collecting information from members of the public, they should speak with the course instructor and consult the CFREB Ethics (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/researchers/ethics-compliance/cfreb>) before beginning the assignment.

***INSTRUCTOR'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

***FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY**

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

***COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION**

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

***MEDIA RECORDING (if applicable)**

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf

***Media recording for lesson capture**

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Although the recording device will be fixed on the Instructor, in the event that incidental student participation is recorded, the instructor will ensure that any identifiable content (video or audio) is masked, or will seek consent to include the identifiable student content to making the content available on University approved platforms.

***Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices**

The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in

the course may be inadvertently captured. These recordings will be used for instructor self-assessment only and will not be used for any other purpose.

***Media recording for the assessment of student learning**

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

***OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses (www.ucalgary.ca/usri). Your responses make a difference – please participate in USRI Surveys."

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level.

Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar

“The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, . . . , to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community”. The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a “positive and productive learning and working environment.” This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that “seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff”. Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.