

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 508.1

Winter 2018

(R, 10-12:45)

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Office hours: TR 9:30-10:30 and by appointment

The Posthuman

Course Description: The 1999 publication of N. Katherine Hayles's landmark work, *How We Became Posthuman*, signaled the increasing importance of notions of the Posthuman to contemporary cultural, technological, and literary studies. Since the appearance of that work, a profusion of cross-disciplinary scholarly interest has transformed the Posthuman in ways that not even Hayles herself envisioned. For example, in his work *Posthuman Life* (2014), David Roden uses advancements in cognitive science and technology studies in order to suggest the possibility of fully digitizing human consciousness and uploading it to a computer network, thereby challenging Hayles's emphasis on embodiment as a necessary precondition for future Posthuman beings. Moreover, in the last seven years, the philosophical movement called "Speculative Realism" has exerted a huge impact—inside and outside its discipline—on critical formulations of the Posthuman. Yet Speculative Realism is just one example taken from a diverse body of emerging critical theories that investigate the Posthuman, among them New Materialist Feminisms, Thing Theories, and Inhuman Phenomenology. The objective of this course is to familiarize students with key developments in the intellectual history of the Posthuman, with emphasis on its articulation in the fields of critical theory and literature. By the end of the course, students should not only have an understanding of the Posthuman informed by its foundational expressions as well as its contemporary innovations, but they should also be able to draw on the Posthuman as a lens for textual analysis.

Texts and readings:

- H. P. Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness and Other Tales of Terror* (Del Rey)
- Caitlín Kiernan, *A is for Alien* (Subterranean)
- Nalo Hopkinson, *Midnight Robber* (Grand Central)
- Ted Chiang, *The Lifecycle of Software Objects* (online)
- Catherynne Valente, *Silently, and Very Fast* (online)
- Ernest Cline, *Ready Player One* (Broadway)
- Greg Egan, *Diaspora* (Nightshade)

- Additional texts and secondary readings—which include articles and book chapters by Cary Wolfe, Rosi Braidotti, Mel Y. Chen, and Reza Negarestani, among others—will be provided by the instructor. The class includes a screening of Denis Villeneuve’s *Blade Runner 2049* (2017) and a visit to the Calgary Centre for Innovative Technology (CCIT), where students will be able to experience a variety of new VR platforms.

Assignments and Evaluation:

- In-Class Presentation: 15%
- Critical Annotations (2 responses of 500 words at 15% apiece): 30%
- Final Research Paper (3000 words): 45%
- Participation and Attendance (5% apiece): 10%

Class Participation and Attendance: Attendance and active participation are essential to the success of this course. Attendance and participation are both worth 5% of your grade. Attendance will be monitored regularly and participation will be evaluated according to engagement in interactive activities and class discussions. Any unexcused absences in excess of two class periods will reduce the final class participation and attendance grade by 20% per absence.

Sample grading rubric for participation component:

A = Student engages in all small-group activities, and frequently contributes thoughtful comments and questions to class discussions that enhance understanding of the texts being studied.

B = Student engages in most of the activities and occasionally offers a comment or question in class.

C = Student shows little to no evidence of engagement in activities and/or class discussions.

In-Class Presentation: The main purpose of this twenty-minute presentation is to prompt exploration of the primary and secondary readings for a particular week. Therefore, while students should present arguments about the various texts, they should also pose discussion questions for debate and further investigation. Although the formal presentation is only twenty minutes long, students are encouraged to consider themselves discussion leaders for the seminar in which they deliver their presentations. Note that the in-class presentations require no written work to be handed in, and the instructor will provide written feedback and a grade one week after the presentation.

Critical Annotations: These short, 500-word assignments provide opportunities to hone potential final paper arguments and begin compiling bibliographies. Students focus on a page or passage that they found particularly difficult or fascinating in a given work. They conduct independent research in order to find a secondary source that helps to clarify or interpret the selected passage. Then, drawing on that source, the student analyses the passage and suggests some further research questions or problems for the seminar to address.

Final Research Paper: This 3000-word paper must make use of at least 10 secondary sources—historical, literary-critical, and/or theoretical in nature—in order to further investigate any work from the syllabus. Students propose their own topics based on

individual scholarly interests. Note that this essay must include a works cited page and follow MLA formatting and style guidelines.

Additional Class Policies:

- It is necessary to complete all course assignments in order to receive a passing grade.
- To facilitate participation, students should complete the assigned readings before class and bring the relevant texts to seminar. Annotating books and making reading notes are excellent ways to prepare, but not mandatory.
- Assignments should be handed in to the instructor. If it is not possible to do so, assignments can be left in the departmental dropbox in SS 1152.

Grading System: The University of Calgary's four-point Grading System, as described in the Calendar; (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-2.html>) will be used in this course.

A+/A (4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D+ (1.3); D (1.0); F (0)

All quizzes will receive a numerical grade, to be converted using the following scale:

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

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the 4-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.

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. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

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 <http://english.ucalgary.ca>. 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: maboym@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

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/index.htm>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. 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: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

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 ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

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 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

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.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3rd Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca,
arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Contact for Students Ombudsman's Office:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

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://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

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

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar,

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

“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.