

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 517.12-01: Theoretical & Cultural Studies: Unreliable Narrators

Dr. Faye Halpern

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Office hours: Wednesdays 10-11:30 and by appointment

Homepage is on D2L. The course blog can be found at fhalpern.ucalgaryblogs.ca/

Fall '15

T/R 2-3:15

Course description:

How can you tell that a narrator is unreliable or untrustworthy? We will examine a wide range of unreliable (and, possibly, some reliable) narrators in this class in both fiction and film. We'll distinguish different kinds and degrees of unreliability and assess how different media affect the ways unreliable narration functions. We'll discuss what our readings tell us about unreliable narrators, but we'll also explore what unreliable narrators can tell us about how we read: why do we often take so much pleasure in unreliable narrators? Do unreliable narrators help or hinder our ethical judgments?

Prerequisites: One full-course equivalent in English at the 400 level, or consent of the Department.

Texts and readings:

Short Stories (available on D2L):

Ring Lardner, "Haircut"

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Novels (available at the bookstore):

Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*

Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

Toni Morrison, *God Help the Child*

Films (on reserve at TFDL):

The Sixth Sense

A Beautiful Mind

Stories That We Tell

Depending on the class' choice, we'll also either add one more novel, Ian McEwan's *Atonement* or one or two more films (*A Beautiful Mind*, *Memento*, or *Stage Fright* are possible choices)

Criticism (available as handouts or on D2L):

We will read excerpts and articles from Wayne Booth, James Phelan, Greta Olson, Jonathan Culler, and others.

Assignments and Evaluation:

<u>Course Requirements</u>	<u>Percentage of Final Grade</u>
Participation	30%
• Posting on the course blog, including the blog facilitation and unit analysis (20%)	
• Participation in class discussion and classroom activities (10%)	
Short Essay (4-5 pp.).....	30%
Seminar Paper (6-8 pp.)	40%
• The seminar paper will include a prospectus, draft, and peer workshop, and feedback on some of your classmates' prospectuses and drafts (5% of the seminar paper grade)	

There is no Registrar-scheduled exam in this course.

The Course Blog:

This will provide a forum, apart from class discussion, to explore the literature and criticism we read. I'll ask you to post and comment at least five times over the course of the semester, including your blog facilitation. If you complete all the posts & comments and do a reasonably thoughtful job on them, you'll receive a "B" for this portion of the grade; if you post seven or more good posts or if you produce at least five exceptionally thoughtful and insightful entries, you'll receive an "A."

Blog facilitation and analysis:

Part 1: You and a partner will sign up to start the blog conversation about one of the novels or films; this conversation will be posted the day before we start class discussion on it. Part 2: On the last day we consider the text, you and your partner will discuss with the class what you think the unit revealed about the text and unreliable narrators, leaving us with questions to consider for future units (10-15 minutes).

Class discussion and classroom activities:

Good classroom discussion depends not just on people talking but on people listening, not just on stating what you know but on revealing what perplexes you. There will be a rubric for contributing to class discussion. We'll also use some of our class time to grapple with the course material in small groups and through in-class writing.

Short Essay & Seminar Paper:

The short essay will ask you to offer a fairly brief, provocative argument about a primary text that explores a question or controversy about its interpretation. It is tied to your blog facilitation and analysis: the short essay, on the same text, will be due a week and a half later. You will have the chance to revise your seminar paper and turn it in for a higher grade (the deadline will be two weeks before the last day of class). The seminar paper, which caps the course, asks you to enter the critical conversation in a more thoroughgoing way around one of the texts or topics we've addressed in the course. Optional: you can choose to write the paper with your blog facilitation partner, in which case the page limit changes to 5-6 pages. (If you later choose to revise it for a higher grade, you can either work alone or together.)

This course will encourage us to become reflective academic writers: we'll discuss the critical articles we read not just for their content but for the moves they make. In addition, we'll write the

seminar paper the way that professional academic writers do: in stages and with feedback from our colleagues.

Handing in assignments:

I'll ask you to slide a hard copy of each of your papers under my office door and also post it to D2L.

Late assignments and completing assignments:

In order to receive a passing grade in the course, you must complete all the written assignments. Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (e.g., an A- to B+) for each day that the assignment is overdue. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without Dr. Halpern's prior consent.

Please make every effort to take assignments directly to me or my office. If it is not possible to do so, take your assignment to SS 1152 and put it in the dropbox. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in the instructor's mailbox. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause. Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the Department office.

Grading system:

I will assign letter grades on the essays and the different components of participation. The university uses the following conversion:

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 four-point system, I will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in insightfulness, sophistication, and originality.

Electronic devices: Students are welcome to bring a computer to class on which to take notes or for

other class-related purposes, but please refrain from using it for email, Facebook, or any other activity that pulls you out of class mentally if not physically.

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-2-1.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>

Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:

<http://www.enough.utoronto.ca/computeruse/eetiquette.htm>

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: **<http://libguides.ucalgary.ca/english>**

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:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services ; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit **www.ucalgary.ca/access/**.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at **http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.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.