

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

**ENGLISH 517.94 Section L20**

**Spring 2013**

**COURSE TITLE:** Theoretical and Cultural Studies: Placing Canada: Culture, Literature, Environment

**Instructor: Dr. Paul Huebener**

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**Office hours: Wed 14:45-15:45**

**Course description:**

The nation that we call Canada has had a complex relationship with the ecosystems, land forms, natural resources, and human-made structures that constitute our environment. Canada has been celebrated as a nation of canoe-paddling nature lovers, yet has also been criticized for neglecting the long-term health of our ecological surroundings, and therefore damaging ourselves. In this course we will take up the matter of place in Canada by investigating how people in Canada have understood both our environment and our place within it. How have Canadian cultural and literary texts conceived of ecological relationships, changes, and crises? Can Canadian literature reshape our sense of place? Does ecocriticism play a useful role in helping us understand and question our imaginative and physical relationships with our environment? If place, as Don McKay tells us, is “wilderness to which history has happened,” or “land to which we have occurred,” this course will investigate how we have occurred to the land, and how the study of culture, literature, and theory might teach us to occur to the land differently.

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

**Texts and readings:**

- Timothy Taylor, *Stanley Park*. 2001. Vintage Canada, 2010.
- Thomas Wharton, *Icelfields*. NeWest, 1995.
- Custom course pack.

**Assignments and Evaluation:**

Grading scheme:

Position papers	35% (7 x 5%)
“Ecocriticism outside the classroom” short essay	15%
Participation	10%
Term paper proposal	5%
Term paper	35%

Position papers (one double-spaced page each, due in class on the dates assigned on the syllabus):

Throughout the term you will write seven position papers responding to the day's assigned readings. A position paper should identify a compelling or problematic aspect of the assigned text and offer a brief argument for how we should interpret, apply, or complicate some aspect of the work. Given the short length of the position paper you will not be expected to account for every aspect of the topic; instead, you should focus on addressing one important point in order to spark a thoughtful group discussion. Bring your position paper to class on the day it is due, and be prepared to spend a few minutes either reading or informally explaining your response to the class.

“Ecocriticism outside the classroom” short essay (three double-spaced pages, due in class on June 3<sup>rd</sup>):

In the days leading up to this assignment you will identify a way to put ecocriticism into practice beyond the classroom by discovering a “text” or carrying out a physical act, and then using this encounter to challenge or reshape your understanding of a concept connected to place or the environment. A brief part of your essay will explain how you went about this task, but the majority of the essay should offer a critical analysis of the assumptions that your work engages with and should explain the lessons that come to light. You can choose one of the suggested approaches below, or modify these suggestions to suit your interests, or develop an entirely different approach, as long as the project involves a thoughtful critical analysis of how we understand a particular place or a broader concept such as “place,” “nature,” or “the environment.” Bring your paper to class on June 3<sup>rd</sup> for discussion.

- Suggestion 1: Find a “text” (this might be a news article, an advertisement, a speech, a legal code, a map, a photograph, a song, a poem, an activity, an artifact, some other cultural object, or something from the natural world) that engages the idea of place, nature, or the environment in some way. Your essay should interpret how this text conceives of place/nature/environment by analyzing the assumptions that it contains or resists. You might ask questions such as: How is the environment represented in this text, and what does this tell us about the ideological representation of the environment or human-nature relations? Does the text envision a clear distinction between humanity and nature where no such distinction exists? Does the text prioritize one particular understanding of place at the expense of other understandings? Does it teach us to see aspects of place or the environment that we had previously neglected? Does it shift our perspective on place or human-nature relations?
- Suggestion 2: Interact with some aspect of your environment in a way that is different from your usual routine. Perhaps you will go to a place where you do not usually go in order to see how your encounter with this place changes your perspective on your local environment. Or maybe you will identify a way in which “nature” exists within part of the city, or a way in which a human-constructed environment exists within a place that is usually considered natural. You may wish to combine this act with a task from Suggestion 1. For instance, you could critically examine a map of a place, and use your actual experience of the place to identify the limitations or erasures of the map. As described above, your essay should address critical questions about cultural assumptions, human-nature relations, ideological representation, or related concerns.

Term paper proposal (one double-spaced page plus a tentative bibliography, due in class on June 12<sup>th</sup>):

In the days leading up to our June 12<sup>th</sup> class you should decide on a preliminary approach for your term paper by developing a topic of your choice that relates to one or more of the course readings and discussions. I will of course be happy to help you with this process during my office hours or through other

forms of discussion. Your one-page proposal should briefly describe your term paper idea by explaining the topic, describing which texts or sources you think will be most relevant, and articulating the argument of the essay as clearly as you can at this stage. Obviously the details of your essay will evolve during the rest of the writing process, so while you should be able to show that you have made a genuine preliminary effort to understand the scope and implications of your topic, you are not committing yourself to a final position at this stage. On June 12<sup>th</sup> the class will break into groups of three for a workshop discussion. Make sure to bring a printed copy of your proposal to class, which you can share with your group members during the discussion and then hand in to me at the end of class. The workshop will give you the chance to receive feedback on your proposed topic, to learn about the approaches and topics that other members of the class have chosen, and to offer your thoughts and advice to your colleagues. This is also a good chance to come prepared with any particularly difficult questions or challenges that you think you will need to address as you write your essay.

Term paper (2,000 words, due in class on June 26<sup>th</sup>):

Bring your completed term paper to class on June 26<sup>th</sup>. While the paper itself is a formal essay, the class discussion on June 26<sup>th</sup> will give you a chance to offer your informal thoughts on the outcome of your project, and to learn about the results of your colleagues' projects.

Other notes on evaluation:

There will be no Registrar scheduled exam or extra-credit assignments, and there is no specific assignment that must be completed to receive a passing grade on the course.

Writing and the grading thereof will be a factor in all of the graded components except participation.

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 (not class) that the assignment is overdue, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Please make every effort to take assignments directly to the instructor. 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:**

Each assignment will be assigned a letter grade based on the following scale:

90 + %	A+
85 – 89 %	A
80 – 84 %	A–
77 – 79 %	B+
74 – 76 %	B
70 – 73 %	B–
67 – 69 %	C+

64 – 66 %	C
60 – 63 %	C–
55 – 59 %	D+
50 – 54 %	D
0 – 49 %	F

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 is between two letter grades.

The A+ grade will be reserved for truly exceptional work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

Electronic devices such as laptop computers may be used for taking notes in the classroom, but must not be used in such a way as to distract other members of the class.

### **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/content/scribe-and-muse-reading-and-writing-club>

Our email address is [smrwc@ucalgary.ca](mailto:smrwc@ucalgary.ca).

### **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>.

### **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>

### **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>

**Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/it/help/articles/email/etiquette>

**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>.

**Academic accommodation:**

It is a student’s responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and if you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Your academic accommodation letters should be provided to your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of this course. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/drc/>

**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 Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca)

**Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office:** <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

## 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.