

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
COURSE OUTLINE

**ENGLISH 523-S02**  
**The Virtual Child**

**Fall 2018**  
**T/R 12:30-1:45pm | TI Studio B**

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**Instructor:** Dr. Derritt Mason

**Research Assistant:** Paul Meunier

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**Office hours:** T. 2:00-3:00pm, or by appointment

**Course Description:**

Now over thirty years old, Jacqueline Rose's *The Case of Peter Pan* remains influential for its examination of how imagined, figural children profoundly influence the way we, as adults, read, produce, and think about texts for young people. This course will bring Rose into the digital age and ask: who is the virtual child behind the explosive genre of digital texts for children? How is this child constructed through online literature, apps, and interactive forms of storytelling, and what characteristics does this child seem to possess? How might we consider children's literature, children, and adolescents alongside critical theories of virtuality and new media? How can we theorize a virtual child in relation to the material creative practices of real-life young people who participate in online communities like "Let's Play" and *fanfiction.net*? And what does the virtual child tell us about our contemporary fantasies, desires, and anxieties surrounding children, childhood, and pedagogy in an increasingly digital world?

**Required Readings:**

**Theory:**

An assortment of critical readings and articles (see reading schedule for details)

**Fiction/Poetry** (available for purchase at the University Bookstore):

J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan* (1911) (recommended edition: Broadview Press, ed. Anne H. Alton, 2011)

Ernest Cline, *Ready Player One* (2011)

Cory Doctorow and Jen Wang, *In Real Life* (2014)

Martin Hallet and Barbara Karasek, eds. *Folk and Fairy Tales: Concise Edition* (Broadview Press 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2008)

Joshua Whitehead, *Full-Metal Indigiqueer* (2017)

Please note that this class will also involve the study of a variety of **apps** (see reading schedule for details). You will be loaned a university iPad for the duration of the term, but you will be responsible for purchasing all required apps.

## Assignments & Evaluation:

The Virtual Child is structured as a term-long **inquiry project**, which consists of the following components:

1. Reading & Research Journal (20%)
2. “Let’s Play” Videos & Reflections (2x 10%)
3. Object Study Proposal & Critical Text Overview (10%)
4. Inquiry Project Synthesis, Object Study & Digital Exhibit (40%)

This project will culminate in a **digital exhibit** that the class will collectively curate and stage at the Taylor Institute. You will select the topic for your inquiry project from a list provided by the instructor.

### **Reading & Research Journal (20%)**

Throughout the term and on an alternating biweekly schedule, you will log responses to and reflections on our course texts, in-class discussions, and inquiry project progress. Your entries should be informal, written in the first person, and focused on making observations, raising questions, and proposing avenues of inquiry instead of offering formal arguments. Your entries will also be used as the basis for in-class discussion. You are encouraged to include photos (screencaps and hand-written marginal notes, for example), collect article links and PDFs, and gather any other objects of interest for your research and writing. This journal will be invaluable to the completion of your inquiry project synthesis, so you are encouraged to maintain a regular, consistent journal-writing schedule!

All entries must be shared on your personal Padlet 24 hours *before* the start of class on your assigned week (i.e. Monday at 12:30pm), and the instructor will grade three of them without prior notice. Your final grade will reflect the quality and consistency of these entries, as well as the overall completeness of the journal, which will be worth 5%. One half percentage will be deducted from this total per missing entry. Late entries (i.e. those submitted after 12:30pm on Monday) will result in an automatic deduction of a half point. Extensions will be permitted only under exceptional/emergency circumstances.

### **“Let’s Play” Videos & Reflections (2 x 10%)**

You will create two “Let’s Play”-style videos (max. 20 min) that engage with a text related to your inquiry topic. The first video will document your *first-ever* encounter with the text. The second video will be an “expert”-style video, that you will plan, script, and narrate according to a strategy of your choice (e.g. tips and tricks? Humour? Subversion?). Alongside each video, you will submit a short reflection in which you describe your approaches and response to the assignment.

### **Object Study Proposal & Critical Text Overview (Max. 1250 words, 10%)**

First, you will select an object related to your inquiry project topic that you would like to create in the Makerspace studio. Next, you will locate and discuss **two peer-reviewed sources** that will assist with your cultural/literary/historical/theoretical study of this object (i.e. scholarly journal articles or book chapters; *not* reviews, dissertations/theses, or magazine/newspaper/web articles). This is *not* an annotated bibliography, in which you would focus on summarizing these texts. Instead, I’m asking you to put these sources into conversation with one another, thinking about how they fit (or don’t fit) together and shed (or don’t shed) new light on your inquiry project theme and object. What are the key themes and issues described in these sources? Do they seem to agree or disagree with one another? How do they engage (or invite engagement) with your inquiry project topic and/or object? Have they altered the way you read and understand this text/object? If so, how? Finally, propose how you will go about making this object—i.e. using what equipment and materials.

## **Inquiry Project Synthesis, Object Study & Digital Exhibit (40%)**

(Synthesis & object study: max. 2500 words, 25%; Exhibit: 15%)

Unlike a standard end-of-term research paper, the inquiry project synthesis (25%) asks you to reflect on how your thinking about and approaches to your selected inquiry topic shifted throughout the course of our term together, as we read and discussed a series of digital texts, novels, theory, and criticism. Although you are still engaging with and referencing secondary sources and material in addition to your primary text, you are not writing an “essay” in the traditional sense; think of the inquiry project as an “exploration.” Instead of offering a polished thesis, you may wish to consider questions such as: how has our term-long interrogation of the “virtual child” shaped your interactions with your inquiry topic? What analytical strategies, developed through your research, proved most fruitful? Did you reach any conclusions about this topic, and/or hit any dead ends? How did your findings shape your approach to curating your exhibit? If you had the time, what other avenues of inquiry might you next pursue?

Alongside this 2500-word paper, our class will collectively curate an interactive, digital exhibit that foregrounds some of the most noteworthy and productive findings and artifacts from the term. The exhibit will be built using Padlet, and will also incorporate the item you create as part of your Object Study. Your exhibit might include: images from your (digital/print) texts, your “Let’s Play” videos, highlights from your journal entries, and anything else you feel best illustrates the progress you’ve made throughout the term.

A final note: the inquiry project is designed to evenly distribute your workload throughout the term instead of backloading it, as research papers tend to do. In other words, the raw material for this project should already exist prior to the end of term; your labour should be more about assembly and polish than building from scratch. You are welcome (and encouraged) to insert and/or adapt material from your journal, research overview, and poster presentation.

Additionally, **class participation** will make up **10%** of your final grade. This will reflect your overall level of engagement with the class and course materials. When determining your grade, I will ask myself the following questions: did you regularly attend class and participate in discussions? Did you meet with me during office hours if you had questions or concerns about course content? In-class, did you demonstrate a good level of preparedness—having completed and engaged with the readings, putting them into conversation with other course texts and themes? Did you engage thoughtfully with your colleagues’ Padlet entries during your assigned weeks? Although regular attendance is crucial to success in a seminar-style class, I recognize that illness, emergencies, and personal situations occasionally arise. If you must miss class, please inform me as soon as possible. Three unexplained absences will result in the forfeiture of your participation grade. You will be given the opportunity to self-assess and reflect on your level of class participation twice during the term.

### **Assignment Policies:**

- Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of 3% for each day that the assignment is overdue. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor. Extensions are only granted under exceptional circumstances, but please do let me know in advance of the deadline if something arises.
- In the case of a late assignment to be submitted electronically, you are responsible for notifying the instructor by email as soon as the assignment has been uploaded. Otherwise, the assignment will be presumed incomplete.

- You must complete the inquiry project synthesis and exhibit in order to qualify for a passing final grade.
- There will be no assignments given for extra credit.
- There will be no final exam in this course.
- For university regulations on attendance, see: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-3.html>

### **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.

All assignments in this class 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.

**My policy: I round grades upwards if they are within 0.50% of a higher grade. Please do not contact me to request an adjustment to your final grade unless (1) you suspect I have made an error, or (2) you are planning to formally appeal your results.**

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the 4-point system, I will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

**Note:** This class includes an option to participate in a Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning-funded study called “The Virtual Child: Teaching and Learning with Texts for Young People.” You may elect to participate in this study by sharing your term work beyond the scope of this class. Consent forms will be distributed at the end of the term, at which time you can indicate whether or not you’d like to participate in all, part, or none of this study. Participation in this study will have no bearing on your assessment, and the instructor will not know who has elected to participate or opt out until after final grades have been submitted.

**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](mailto: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: [maboyd@ucalgary.ca](mailto:maboyd@ucalgary.ca).

Find The English Pages research guide here:

[https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject\\_id=52619](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](http://www.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](http://www.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](mailto: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](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>

**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](http://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.