

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG**  
**ENGL 4710.3-002**  
**Topics in Canadian Literature and Culture:**  
**Contemporary Fiction**

Term: Fall 2017  
Time: Wednesday 2:30-5:15pm  
Room: 3M54  
Email: [c.rifkind@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:c.rifkind@uwinnipeg.ca)  
\*Please do not email me through Nexus

Professor: Dr. Candida Rifkind  
Office: 2A38  
Phone: 204-786-9198 (emergencies only)  
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2:30-3:30  
or by appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This seminar course studies recent works of English Canadian prose and graphic fiction to pay attention to issues of political, cultural, and aesthetic representation. We focus on three prose genres that are prominent in twenty-first century Canadian storytelling: the historical novel, the coming-of-age novel, and speculative fiction. The texts are selected to represent a variety of styles and storytelling techniques, as well as a diversity of Canadian regions and experiences. Each of the works will offer unique questions to discuss, but threads that will run throughout include: gender and sexuality; race and ethnicity; Indigeneity and settler colonialism; family and kinship; displacement and diaspora, human and non-human.

**REQUIRED TEXTS (in order of reading; Kindle or ebooks are permitted)**

Hill, Lawrence. *The Book of Negroes*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 2007.  
Hunter, Catherine. *After Light*. Winnipeg: Signature Editions, 2015.  
Robinson, Eden. *Monkey Beach*. Toronto: Vintage, 2001.  
Tamaki, Mariko and Jillian Tamaki. *This One Summer*. Toronto: Groundwood, 2014.  
Brand, Dionne. *What We All Long For*. Toronto: Vintage, 2005.  
Taylor, Drew Hayden. *Take Us To Your Chief And Other Stories*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2016.

**ASSIGNMENTS (more info provided in class)**

**Short Essay**

**20%**

**1000 words due to Nexus Dropbox before 6pm October 18<sup>th</sup>**

This essay requires students to pick one chapter of *The Book of Negroes* to analyze closely in relation to the novel as a whole. Essays should spend about 80% of the discussion analyzing the literary techniques of the selected chapter and about 20% arguing for its significance in/to the larger narrative.

**Research Essay**

**30%**

**3000 words due to Nexus Dropbox before 6pm on December 6<sup>th</sup>**

This essay requires students to devise their own topic for an argumentative research essay on one of the course texts. The minimum research requirement is three peer-reviewed, scholarly sources. Other sources, such as interviews, blogs, encyclopedias, etc. may be used but do not count towards the research requirement.

**\*Students must have their topic approved by Dr. Rifkind over email no later than 6pm on November 25<sup>th</sup> (more info about how to submit requests for approval will be provided in class). Students who do not complete this step will not be allowed to submit their papers.**

**Seminar Presentations****20%****20 minutes + 1 page handout for the class, dates to be selected in the first class**

These presentations require each student to read a landmark work in criticism and theory of either the novel or Canadian literature and culture. Presentations should summarize the work succinctly and efficiently, provide a few short key quotations, and suggest the significance of the work to our reading. Presentation guidelines will be distributed in the first class.

**Critical Reflections****4x5% = 20%****400-500 words; #1-3 due to Nexus Dropbox by 9am on Sep. 18, Oct. 23, Nov. 13; #4 In-Class on Nov. 29**

The critical reflections are an opportunity to write short, informal, first person reflections on the course material. The first three are due on the Monday that falls in between the first and second weeks on a novel, so that students may use this assignment to assess how their initial responses to the text have/have not shifted after the first class discussion, and to suggest questions or areas they would like to take up in the second class. No research is required, but students should aim for specific reflections rather than general commentary (feel free to focus on a page, character, theme, or technique in the text). The final Critical Reflection will be a 20-minute in-class exercise to reflect on the course material as a whole and to gather together final thoughts and observations coming out of the class.

**Participation****10%**

This is a seminar course in which all students are expected to participate in discussions. Grades are awarded based on the level of participation activity and also on the quality of these contributions, as outlined below.

<b>POOR 0-2%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not participate in class discussion or small group exercises</li> <li>• does not ask questions</li> <li>• does not listen to others, or interrupts and dominates discussion</li> <li>• has side conversations during class discussion or is distracted by social media</li> <li>• does not complete assigned readings</li> </ul>
<b>FAIR 3-5%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participates occasionally and responds minimally to direct questions</li> <li>• expects other students to do majority of small group work</li> <li>• has completed assigned readings but not prepared for discussion (eg. has not flagged sequences or pages to discuss, thought of comments or questions for discussion)</li> <li>• does not always listen to others, sometimes interrupts or dominates discussion</li> <li>• occasionally distracted by side conversations or social media</li> </ul>
<b>GOOD 6-8%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well prepared, comes to class with examples, questions, comments</li> <li>• listens to others and responds, supports, or challenges others' opinions respectfully</li> <li>• consistent engagement with discussion, not distracted in class</li> <li>• participates effectively in small group work and contributes to collaborative learning environment by respecting peers</li> <li>• volunteers to answer questions or read passages regularly</li> </ul>
<b>EXCELLENT 9-10%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very well prepared, relates assigned readings to broader course concepts, terminology, or other course readings</li> <li>• listens to others and advances discussion by synthesizing, extending, or challenging others' opinions respectfully</li> <li>• offers new and insightful approaches or analyses</li> <li>• always willing to respond to questions or read passages</li> </ul>

**GRADING SCALE**

A+	90 - 100%	GPA 4.50	C+	65 - 69%	GPA 2.5
A	85 - 89%	GPA 4.25	C	60 - 64%	GPA 2.0
A-	80 - 84%	GPA 4.0		D50 - 59%	GPA 1.0
B+	75 - 79%	GPA 3.5	F	Below 50%	GPA 0
B	70 - 74%	GPA 3.0			

## NOTES

1. This course outline should be considered a guideline only. Time constraints and other unforeseen factors may require that some of the above topics be omitted or covered in less detail than indicated.
2. Work submitted for evaluation must be either typed or text processed.
3. Cellular phones and other electronic devices **MUST** be turned off during classes.
4. It is the student's responsibility to retain a photocopy or digitized copy of **ALL** assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.
5. Students are advised to read the pertinent pages of the current course calendar for the rules regarding Registration, Voluntary Withdrawals, Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals. **Concerning plagiarism, please note** that as a general rule, an F in the course will be the penalty recommended by the English Departmental Review Committee to the Senate Committee on Academic Misconduct, for plagiarism on major assignments in English Department courses.
6. Accessibility Services:
  - a. Students with documented disabilities, temporary or chronic medical conditions, requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams (e.g., private space) or during lectures/laboratories (e.g., access to volunteer note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 786-9771 or email [accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca) to discuss appropriate options. Specific information about AS is available on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential.
7. The University of Winnipeg promotes a scent-free environment. Please be respectful of the needs of fellow classmates and the instructor by avoiding the use of scented products while attending lectures. Exposures to perfumes and other scented products (such as lotion) can trigger serious health reactions in persons with asthma, allergies, migraines or chemical sensitivities.
8. Students facing a charge of academic or non-academic misconduct may choose to contact the University of Winnipeg Students' Association (UWSA) where a student advocate will be available to answer any questions about the process, help with building a case, and ensuring students have access to support. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit our website at [www.theuwsa.ca/academic-advocacy](http://www.theuwsa.ca/academic-advocacy) or call 204-786-9780.
9. Please note that registering in this course commits you to the date and time of the course final examination. If you are aware of possible conflicts with that date, please see me immediately during the first week of the course, in case you need to register in another course to accommodate the conflict. For appeals for deferred exams, please see the Calendar.
10. **Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017** is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses that begin in September 2017 and end in December 2017 in the 2017 Fall term.
11. **Late Assignment Penalties:** I encourage you to speak with me (in person, not over email) in advance if you anticipate handing an assignment in late due to extenuating circumstances, such as illness or a personal/family emergency. **Note that having a lot of work to do for your other courses is not a reasonable excuse for a late assignment in this course.** Unless prior arrangements have been made or you present a medical/legal note explaining why your assignment has been handed in late, the penalty for a late assignment is: 10% off immediately

when it is not submitted on the due date and 2% off each extra weekday it is late. No unexplained late assignments will be accepted after 7 days.

12. The English Department wishes to ensure your right to privacy regarding handing in and getting back assignments is protected. Most assignments will be handed in and handed back in class or at the Instructor's office. If assignments are to be handled in another way and you are concerned about others having access to your work, you should attach to your assignment a self-addressed envelope that can be sealed. If this is not done, it is assumed that you have waived your concerns in this area.
13. Students may be asked for identification when writing a test or examination.
14. No unauthorized material or equipment may be brought with you to the final exam.
15. Students are advised that the UW Bookstore may run out of textbooks early in the term. Also, the bookstore always ships textbooks back to the publisher if they are not purchased within the first few weeks of term. Students are responsible for communicating directly with the bookstore if they need to order texts or ask for texts to be held for them.
16. For more information regarding the English Department, please refer to our website at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/english-index>
17. Students who plan to conduct research interview, focus groups, surveys, or any other method of collecting data from any person, even a family member, must obtain the approval of the UHREB before commencing data collection. Exceptions are research activities in class as a learning exercise. See <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/research-human-ethics> for submission requirements and deadlines.
18. All students, faculty and staff have the right to participate, learn and work in an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. The UW Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy may be found online at [www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect)
19. Students may choose not to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religion, but they must notify their instructors at least two weeks in advance. Instructors will then provide opportunity for students to make up work examinations without penalty. A list of religious holidays can be found at <http://uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/important-notes.pdf>
20. **Mid-term Reading Week for Fall term is October 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017. No classes.**

**READING SCHEDULE (all readings must be completed by these dates)**

See next page for full listings of presentation readings

Date	Class Readings	Topics	Presenters	Other Info
Sep. 6	Introductions			
Sep.13	<i>The Book of Negroes</i> (finish Book One)	The Black Atlantic	Dr. Rifkind (demo presentation on Paul Gilroy)	Critical Reflection 1 due Sep 18 @ 9am
Sep. 20	<i>The Book of Negroes</i>	Slave narratives & the Bildungsroman	1. on Helen Thomas 2. on Franco Moretti	
Sep. 27	<i>After Light</i>	The historical novel	3. on György Lukács 4. on Hayden White	
Oct. 4	<i>After Light</i>	Writing history	Every student prepares a research/discussion question for the author	Guest: Dr. Catherine Hunter
<b>FALL READING WEEK</b>				
Oct. 18	<i>Monkey Beach</i> & Chelsea Vowel, "The Terminology of Relationships" (Nexus)	Indigenous storytelling	5. on Thomas King	Short essay due Critical Reflection 2 due Oct 23 @ 9am
Oct. 25	<i>Monkey Beach</i>	Indigenous & Settler Gothic	6. on Cynthia Sugars	
Nov. 1	<i>This One Summer</i>	The graphic novel	7. on Jan Baetens	
Nov. 8	<i>What We All Long For</i>	Black Canadian literature	8. on Rinaldo Walcott	Critical Reflection 3 due Nov 13 @ 9am
Nov. 15	<i>What We All Long for</i>	Intermediality (phototexts)	9. on Marianne Hirsch	
Nov. 22	<i>Take Us to Your Chief</i>	Indigeneity and Speculative fiction	10. on Darko Suvin 11. on Indigenous futurisms (Nexus)	
Nov. 29	<i>Take Us to Your Chief</i>	Wrap Up	Final essay due to Nexus Dropbox on December 6 <sup>th</sup> by 6:00 pm	Critical Reflection 4: In-Class

### **UW Library Reserve Books/Ebooks for Seminar Presentations**

- Baetens, Jan, and Hugo Frey. *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2015. PN 6710 B235 2015
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993. CB 235 G55 2000
- Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997. TR 681 F28H573 1997.
- King, Thomas. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. Toronto: Anansi, 2003. PS 8571 I467T69 2003
- Lukács, György. *The Historical Novel*. Lincoln: Uof Nebraska P, 1983. Print. PN 3441 L813 1983
- Moretti, Franco, and Albert Sbragia. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. London: Verso, 2000. PN 3448 B54M67 2000
- Sugars, Cynthia C. *Canadian Gothic: Literature, History, and the Spectre of Self-Invention*. Cardiff: University Of Wales Press, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Suin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. PN 3448 S45S897
- Thomas, Helen. *Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies*. Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 2000. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Walcott, Rinaldo. *Black Like Who?: Writing Black Canada*. Toronto: Insomniac Press, 2003. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- White, Hayden V. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. Print. D 13 W564 1987

### **Posted to Nexus>Indigenous Futurisms**

- Cornum, Lou Catherine. "The Space NDN's Star Map." *The New Inquiry* Jan. 26, 2015. Web. <https://thenewinquiry.com/the-space-ndns-star-map/>
- Lempert, William. "Decolonizing Encounters of the Third Kind: Alternative Futuring in Native Science Fiction Film." *Visual Anthropology Review* 30 (2014): 164–176. Jstor.
- Nixon, Lindsay. "Visual Cultures of Indigenous Futurisms." *GUTS: FUTURES issue* (Spring 2016). Web. 16 May 2016. <http://gutsmagazine.ca/visual-cultures/>