

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2020-2021 MLCS 630, A1: The Disciplines of Literature
(Fall Term)

Note: Remote Delivery

Instructor: Daniel Fried

Office: Remote

Telephone: n/a Fax: 780-492-9106

E-mail: dfried@ualberta.ca

Time: see details below

Place: Remote

Office Hours: online by appointment

Course Website: eClass

Course Prerequisite: consent of department

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the course.

Technology requirements (minimum):

You must have a working computer, capable of using eClass and watching video, an internet connection with sufficient speed, a camera and a microphone. (A smartphone will not work with all required class materials.) It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate technology for the course.

Please refer to the following page for the information on the minimum technology specifications recommended by the University: <https://www.ualberta.ca/information-services-and-technology/services/software-hardware-vendors/technology-requirements.html>.

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects approved.

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Course Description, Objectives, and Expected Learning Outcomes:

This course will use oral epics (as well as prose sagas and other related folkloric materials) to illuminate the development of national literatures, world literature, and comparative literature, and to explore how these concepts became central to the discipline of literature as an object of research. We will also probe the theoretical problems raised by two special cases: the Chinese poetic tradition, which has long said to be “missing” epic; and the Thousand and One Nights, which combines radical textual instability with a history of orientalist construction in a way perhaps unmatched in world literature. These readings will be contextualized, at the beginning and ending of the course, within debates over alternatives to “literature” as a way of conceiving what the object of our study actually is, including discussion of cultural studies as an alternative to literature. By the end of this course, students will be able to analyze how “literature” as a discipline has interacted with conceptions of national identity, and to use their understanding of the limitations of that discipline to hone their own research interests.

Course Format: Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our course will be run entirely online. As live discussion is essential to graduate education in literary studies, all students will be required to join a one-hour Zoom discussion each week. The other two hours of class time which would normally be scheduled in a non-pandemic environment will be fulfilled by collaborative annotation of readings and videos on the Perusall system (see below).

Most of those registered for this course are either resident in Edmonton or elsewhere in Canada and the United States. Everyone physically present in the western hemisphere during fall semester will be asked to join a regular Zoom meeting from 2-3pm on Wednesdays. Everyone physically in the eastern hemisphere will also be asked to meet online every Wednesday, at a mutually convenient time of your choosing. Both hour long meetings will be recorded and uploaded to the Perusall system, so that everyone registered can hear and react to the ideas of everyone else.

Every week, you will first be asked to read a set of primary or secondary source materials, and then to listen to a recorded lecture from me on those materials. After listening to that lecture, you will then be asked to go to an external collaborative learning platform called Perusall, and comment on short excerpts, videos, or other materials. The Perusall system is designed to facilitate class engagement with materials; you are asked to annotate readings and videos with your comments and questions—as well as to respond to comments and questions from your classmates. After creating an account at perusall.com, use the code FRIED-PBYWY to enroll in our course. Three types of materials will be placed on Perusall, as follows:

1. Regular assigned short readings or videos, dealing with the subject matter of each week.
2. Recordings of the two sections’ discussions
3. One bibliographical presentation per week, related to the assigned readings (see below)

Texts:

No texts are required for purchase. All readings are available for free online, with links provided under each week's tab on eClass.

Additional Course Fees

Yes No

Important Dates: [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: September 1, 2020

Add/Delete Date: September 15, 2020

50% Withdrawal Date: October 2, 2020

Fall Term Reading Week: November 9-13, 2020

Withdrawal Date: November 30, 2020

Last Day of Class: December 7, 2020

Final Exam Date (if applicable): n/a

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): Please consult the following site:

https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=33&navoid=9816&hl=%22academic+regulations%22&returnto=search#examinations_exams

Deferred Final Examination: For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see [“I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?”](#)

Components of Course Grade (see “Explanatory Notes”):

General Class Participation 40% (no due date)

Bibliographical Presentation 10% (different students will present each week)

Initial Research Report 10% (due Nov. 25; will be discussed Dec. 2)

Final Research Paper 40% (due December 16, by email to Prof. Fried)

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

General Class Participation 40%

You will be expected to read thoroughly all assigned materials and to discuss them with the insight and attention to detail which is appropriate to a graduate seminar. Included in this portion of the grade is both participation in online discussion, and also annotation and discussion carried on within Perusall. It is not expected that anyone will have prior expertise with any of the materials which we discuss in this class, so that there is no need to feel that detailed knowledge of the materials is required before commenting. Intelligent comments and questions which demonstrate that you have read the materials and tried to take them seriously is all that is expected.

Bibliographical Presentation 10%

Each week, I will ask one student to complete an annotated bibliography of scholarly materials

relevant either to the assigned readings for the following week, or else to a suitable course-related research topic from his/her major literature. In addition to distributing a written bibliography (20 journal articles or 5 books, with a few sentences of analysis for each entry), the student should also record a semi-formal presentation (20 minutes) describing the state of research in the field. Both the video presentation and the text file of the bibliography will be shared with the class on Perusall.

Initial Research Report 10%

On the second-to-last week of class, all students will send me links to recorded formal 15-minute presentations on the research topic about which they intend to write their final research paper. We will discuss these presentations on the final week of class. This means, of course, that you will need to begin research considerably earlier than the end of the semester. You should aim to give this presentation at the same level that you would expect to give at a grad student conference.

Final Research Paper 40%

You are required to turn in a scholarly research paper on a topic of your choosing with clear, direct, and obvious relevance to the course; ordinarily, this will mean a paper actually on one of the works assigned, or else on an oral epic from your major literature. I strongly encourage you to consult me when choosing a paper topic and constructing a thesis if you feel unsure about the proper scope of your research. Because it is important for your professional development to learn how to write publishable scholarship, your paper must be close to journal-article length (4500-5500 words) though I will grade you by an easier standard than that used by journals. You will be penalized if the paper is too short, but you will be penalized more for being repetitive or lacking substance: the idea is not to write as much as possible, but to do such thorough research and analysis that you have no option but to write a lot. Hence, this should be conceived as a semester-long project, not something to be strung together during finals week.

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the Evaluation Procedures and Grading System of the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that the use of on-line translation to complete assignments constitutes a form of cheating as the student's own understanding and work is therefore not reflected. Also, students in language courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, excessive editorial and creative help in assignments is considered a form of cheating that violates the Code of Student Behaviour.

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

Territorial Statement:

“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.” (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used

or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

As stated above, in this course all of our class discussions will be recorded and posted on the Perusall system. There should be no other events which can be recorded. You may not transmit any of the recordings for our class to anyone who is not a registered student in our class.

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

In this course, participation will be graded at 40% of the course grade, as stated above.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Late work which has not been granted an extension will be penalized at the rate of one grade-step per day. For example, a paper which earns an A-, but which is turned in two days late, will be given a grade of B.

Extensions will be granted only for illness or domestic affliction. It is expected that all students have other term work due at the end of the semester, and that this is a normal part of university life—the solution to this is to plan ahead, and begin work early, as extensions will not be granted because students have other papers due.

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the Accessibility Resources webpage: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/accessibility-resources/index.html>

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Graduate Grading Scale”

A+	97-100	Excellent
A	93-96	Excellent
A-	90-92	Excellent
B+	87-89	Good
B	79-86	Good
B-	74-78	Satisfactory
C+	68-73	Satisfactory
C	63-67	Failure
C-	58-62	Failure
D+	54-57	Failure
D-	50-53	Failure

F	00-49	Failure
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