

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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

2017-2018 C-LIT 228, A1: Literature, Popular Culture and the Visual Arts
(Spring Term, May 7-June 13)

Instructor: Jennifer Quist
Office: Arts/Convocation Hall 2-46
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Time: MWF 2:00-3:50 pm
Place: Humanities Centre 1-7
Office Hours: M 4-5pm or by appointment

Course Prerequisite: N/A

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)
- X NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)

Yes No

Course Description and Objectives:

This course introduces popular literature and culture as artforms. Students will acquire critical tools for appreciating and analysing popular literature produced in film, television, and print media as well as in emerging forms of online fan-fiction. Genres of popular literature covered during the term include Horror, Romance, Mystery and Western/Adventure. Historical roots, critical implications, and the enduring significance of popular genres will be explored along with the roles the concept of genre plays in cultural practices and in publishing/filmmaking industries. At times, students will be asked to read as writers, assuming the points of a view of artists, producers, and editors who use genre formulae to create and promote popular stories. Literary theory and history will be used to address questions of why readers and writers keep returning to the same kinds of stories, and why these stories still matter.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the historical development of popular culture and its continuing role in contemporary social life
- Compose reviews of a works of popular fiction which make critical and contextual connections beyond simple personal preferences
- Identify genres of popular fiction
- Analyse storytelling formulae in genres of popular fiction and demonstrate their use
- Present these analyses both orally and in writing

Required Texts:

Portis, Charles. *True Grit*. Simon and Schuster, 1968.

Other short stories, readings, and films will be available in class and on eclass.

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Participation and attendance	10%	ongoing
Content Quizzes (2)	10% (5% each)	Wed. May 16, Fri. May 28
Group Presentation	25%	MWF Jun 3,5 & 7
Reviews (2 @ 500-600 words)	20% (10% each)	Fri. May 18, Mon. May 28
Final Critical Essay or Creative Project (2000-2500 words)	35%	Fri. Jun 15

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Participation and Attendance (10%): Class participation will be assessed based on students’ contributions to in-class discussions. To make contributions possible and meaningful, it is expected that assigned readings will be completed before class. Attendance will be recorded, and if absences exceed more than the one allowable unexcused absence, 1% of the mark will be deducted per ensuing incident.

Content Quizzes (10% - 2 for 5% each) To motivate students to complete assigned readings, two quizzes will be given to evaluate their knowledge of the readings’ contents. The quizzes will consist of five short-answer questions completed in class.

Group Presentation (25%): In groups of two or three, students will make critical presentations of works of popular fiction to the rest of the class. Presentation topics must be approved by the instructor by Wednesday May 23. Works written for children, middle grade, or YA audiences will not be approved. Plot summaries should form only a small part of presentations, with most of the time devoted to critical analyses and drawing connections to social contexts and to concepts covered in class. All presentations will be accompanied by a slide show (no video longer than a 6 second GIF is permitted). Slide shows are to be uploaded to eclass in PPT or Google Slides formats by midnight on the day the presentation is given. Along with the presentation slides, the group is required to submit a breakdown of which tasks were performed by each member of the group in preparation for the presentation. The oral portions will be **no longer than ten minutes** in length, followed by a roughly **two minute question period**.

Reviews (20% - 2 for 10% each): Two 500-600 word reviews of texts covered in class are assigned to promote engagement with the texts and to develop critical review skills, beyond expressing a personal preference, which may transfer to real world academic, journalistic, and blogging activities. Reviews should contain minimal plot summarizing. Instead, students will venture into aesthetic and critical considerations and draw connections between texts and to larger social contexts. Sample professional book and film reviews will be provided in class to serve as loose models for student reviews.

Final Paper or Creative Project (35%): The final project takes the place of a final exam for this class and is due on eclass by the end of our assigned final exam period at 6pm on Friday June 15. The project may take either of two forms:

- 1) *Traditional Critical Essay* - Students may choose to write a traditional critical essay related to any of the texts covered during the course. Topics must be submitted to the instructor for approval no later than May 30. The finished essay, including a “Works Cited” page, will be 2000-2500 words in length.

OR

- 2) *Creative Project* - Students may write an original work of fiction in order to demonstrate their understandings of the effective use of formulae in popular genres. It must not contain illustrations or other visuals. Creative projects targeted at children, middle grade, or YA audiences are not permitted. The project itself should be no less than 2000 words long. An additional 500-750 word author’s note must accompany each creative project, explaining the writer’s creative process and the critical and aesthetic rationale behind key choices they have made.

Whether students choose the traditional essay or the creative project, the final project must total 2000-2500 words. This includes a properly composed works cited page formatted in the [Modern Languages Association \(MLA\)](#) style. More detailed information on the project and format will be provided in class.

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

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 (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) 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.”

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](#).

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the [Student Conduct & Accountability Office](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

Students in languages 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 conduct with dire consequences.

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](#).

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).

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.

In this course, if absences exceed more than the one allowable unexcused absence, 1% of the attendance and participation mark will be deducted per ensuing incident.

Policy for Late Assignments:

All assignments must be submitted to eclass on the dates specified in the course outline. Students who consult with the instructor **in advance** regarding circumstances preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Such an extension will be granted only once throughout the course without penalty. In the case of additional late excused assignments, **half** of the mark assigned for the particular work will be deducted. Any assignment not submitted, or submitted late and without an excuse will receive a grade of **zero**.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381).

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 Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<p>Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.</p>	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
<p>Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.</p>	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
<p>Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.</p>	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
<p>Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.</p>	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
<p>Failure.</p>	F	0.0	0-59

