

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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

**2020-2021** C-LIT 228, B3: Literature, Popular Culture and the Visual Arts  
(Winter Term)

*Note: Remote Delivery*

Instructor: Jennifer Quist  
Office: REMOTE  
E-mail: [jlquist@ualberta.ca](mailto:jlquist@ualberta.ca)  
Course Website: eclass

Time: TR 12:30-1:50 pm  
Place: REMOTE  
Office Hours: R 2:00-3:00 pm  
or by appointment

**Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:**

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

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**Course Prerequisite:** N/A

**Technology requirements (minimum):** Students will need:

- Stable Internet access
- A computer with a working microphone, apps including the university's Google suite, Zoom, Flipgrid, and Steam (a gaming platform)
- A means of video recording (I don't insist you show your face [though it would be nice], but you will need to produce simple videos).

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

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

Yes       No, not needed

**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

**Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:**

This course introduces critical appreciation and analysis of global popular literature produced as film, television, print media, video games, digital media, and fanworks. The popular genres of horror, romance, mystery, and western/adventure are considered,

including the role the concept of genre itself plays in the production and dissemination of culture. Historical contexts, literary and cultural theory, and the enduring significance of popular literature will be explored, with questions of identity and ethics forming part of our analyses. At times, students will be asked to read as writers, assuming the points of view of artists using popular formulae to tell new stories and transform old ones.

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

- Describe the historical development of popular culture and address its continuing role in contemporary life.
- Compose reviews of a works of popular fiction, making critical and contextual connections beyond simple personal preferences.
- Identify and interrogate genres and formulae of popular fiction.
- Navigate popular fiction with a sense of its indivisibility from ethical consumption
- Present literary analyses orally, visually, and in writing.

#### **Notes on Remote Class Delivery:**

Our class is scheduled to meet twice weekly for 80 minutes. Most class sessions will be divided into an opening lecture portion, where we all come together in an online meeting, followed by tasks to be completed individually or in smaller groups and submitted to the forums on eclass or in Flipgrid as directed.

**Course Format:** The objectives of this course will be learned from a combination of remote lectures delivered online, live online student presentations, assigned readings and audiovisual materials, participation in eclass forums and recorded Flipgrid responses.

#### **Required Texts:\*\***

##### **Unit 1 – Introduction to Popular Fiction – Culture, Power, and Production**

Film - Stephen Spielberg. *Ready Player One*. 2018. Via UAlberta library.

Excerpt from *The String of Pearls* (Sweeney Todd). 1846. On eclass.

##### **Unit 2 – Horror – The Author and the Other**

Manga - Ito, Junji. *Frankenstein* (Adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel). 2018. \*

Film – Romero, George A. *Night of the Living Dead*. 1968. Free on YouTube.

Film – Peele, Jordan. *Get Out*. 2017. Stream on YouTube or Amazon. \*

### **Unit 3 – Romance – Critiques, Subversions, and Archives of Gender**

Novel Excerpt – Austen, Jane. Chapter 3, *Pride and Prejudice*. 1813. From Project Gutenberg

Novel Excerpt - Meyer, Stephenie. Chapter 13, “Confessions.” *Twilight*. 2005. On eclass.

TV – Cheng Rong-hui. 愛上哥們/ai shang gemen/ Bromance, Episode 1. On Netflix or dramacool.so.

Essay Excerpt - Barthes, Roland. “Death of the Author.” 1967. On eclass.

### **Unit 4 – Mystery and Detective Fiction - Shifting Subjectivities**

Short Story – Christie, Agatha. “Miss Marple Tells a Story.” 1935. On eclass.

Essay – Chandler, Raymond. “The Simple Art of Murder.” 1950. On eclass.

Film – Huston, John. *Maltese Falcon*. 1941. Via UAlberta Library.

Novel Excerpt – Dostoevsky, Fyodor. Part 4, Chapter 5, *Crime and Punishment*. On Project Gutenberg.

Game – Pope, Lucas. *Return of the Obra Dinn*. 2018. On Steam. \*

### **Unit 5 – Adventure and Western - Evolving Masculinities**

Film - Coen, Joel and Ethan. *True Grit* (remake). 2010. Via UAlberta Library.

### **Unit 6 – Futures of Popular Literature – Collaboration, Derivation, Interaction**

Short Film. Jay Z. “Moonlight.” 2017. On YouTube.

\* paid materials, for a total cost of approx. \$40-60

\*\* texts may be added throughout the course

#### **Additional Course Fees**

Yes       No

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

First Day of Class: January 11, 2021  
Add/Delete Date: January 22, 2021  
50% Withdrawal Date: February 10, 2021  
Winter Term Reading Week: February 16-19, 2021  
Withdrawal Date: April 9, 2021  
Last Day of Class: April 16, 2021

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

Attendance, Participate, Forums	20%	ongoing
Written Review (500-600 words)	10%	Tues 9 Feb.
Video Review (4-6 minutes)	15%	Tues 9 Mar.
Pair Presentation (10 minutes)	20%	Thurs 8, Tues 13, Thurs 15 Apr.
Final Essay or Creative Project – (1800-2200 words)	35%	Tues 20 Apr.

**Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

**Participation and Attendance (20%):** Class participation will be assessed based in part on students’ contributions to class discussions, but since live online class meetings are a daunting environment, most of the participate mark will come from contributions to forum discussions and Flipgrid responses as assigned. The first part of each class period will be taught synchronously with the attendance recorded. If absences exceed more than the one allowable unexcused absence, 1% of the mark will be deducted per ensuing incident. If you have an excuse, contact me as soon as possible.

**Written Review (10%)** – A 500-750 word review of a work of popular literature is assigned to promote engagement with popular literature and to develop critical review skills beyond expressing a personal preference. Review writing may transfer to real world academic, journalistic, and online activities. Sample professional reviews will be provided in class to serve as loose models.

**Video Review (15%)** – In a 4 to 6 minute video review to be posted on YouTube.com, students will expand the skills developed in their written reviews to online video presentation of a different work of popular literature This format allows for relevant visuals of students’

choosing to be combined with student commentary. Commentary must run the length of the video. Text to speech readers are not permitted. Video production need not be sophisticated or lavish. Your literary analysis is what matters.

**Pair Presentations (20%):** In pairs, students will make critical presentations of works of popular fiction to the rest of the class at a live online class meeting. Presentation topics must be approved by the instructor by March 23. Presentation slides will be prepared collaboratively. During the presentation, one member of the pair will share the presentation on-screen while both participate equally in speaking. Presentations on material produced primarily 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 cultural 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. The oral portion will be **no longer than ten minutes** in length, followed by a roughly **two minute question period**.

Part of the final presentation mark will be reserved for asking at least one question of another group's presentation.

**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 6pm on Tuesday 20 April. The project may take either of two forms:

- 1) *Traditional Critical Essay* - Students may choose to write a traditional critical essay on popular literature. Further guidelines will be provided on eclass. Topics must be submitted to the instructor for approval no later than **Tuesday 30 March**. The finished essay, including a properly formatted "Works Cited" page, will be 1800-2200 words in length.

**OR**

- 2) *Creative Project* - Students may write a new, original work of fiction in order to demonstrate their understandings of popular literature. This cannot be a last minute project, and you must notify the instructor of your intention to write a story no later than **Tuesday 30 March**. 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 1800 words long. An additional 500-750 word author's note must

accompany each creative project, explaining the writer's creative process, the role of an editor, and the critical and aesthetic rationale behind key choices they have made. Further guidelines will be provided on eclass.

Whether students choose the traditional essay or the creative project, the final project must total 1800-2200 words. This includes a properly composed works cited page formatted in the [Modern Languages Association \(MLA\)](#) style.

**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](#).

***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study 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](#).

***Sexual Violence Policy:***

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).

***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**, 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:***

Students who consult **in advance** with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension at no penalty. Otherwise, all assignments should be handed in on the stated deadline. Any assignment not handed-in or handed-in late without consulting with the instructor and providing an excuse will not be given any marks.

***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.

**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 Undergraduate Grading Scale”**



Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<p><b>Excellent.</b> 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	<b>97-100</b>
	A	4.0	<b>93-96</b>
	A-	3.7	<b>90-92</b>
<p><b>Good.</b> 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	<b>87-89</b>
	B	3.0	<b>83-86</b>
	B-	2.7	<b>80-82</b>
<p><b>Satisfactory.</b> 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	<b>77-79</b>
	C	2.0	<b>73-76</b>
	C-	1.7	<b>70-72</b>
<p><b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> 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	<b>65-69</b>
	D	1.0	<b>60-64</b>
<p><b>Failure.</b></p>	F	0.0	<b>0-59</b>

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