

English 455/A01
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays 9:30am – 10:20 am

Winter 2013
David Strong C108

Canadian Literature in Transnational Times: Postcolonial Cosmopolitanisms

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Office Hours: Wed. 10:30 – 11:30, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Contemporary Canadian literature confronts the nation's past as operating within the present, revealing how colonialism, the Cold War, and the sixties figure into our postcolonial era. The texts we'll study in this course thus offer insight into how the spectres of nationalism and multiculturalism continue to perpetuate forms of domination of First Peoples (and specific strategies of resistance) while further excluding, assimilating, and stereotyping the experiences of immigrants and their cultural histories. Simultaneously, the texts to be examined signify profound transformations accompanying globalization, anticipating human futures arising from our present historical period in which cultural identity and belonging no longer are determined by paradigms derived from the nation-state. Recent Canadian literature explores the dimensions of emerging transnational socio-cultural realities and the new cosmopolitan forms of being human that they compel.

In various ways, the utopian visions of the future so frequently advertised to us are called into question by the texts of this course: the deeply conflicted meanings of new technologies are probed in a world approaching environmental apocalypse (Coupland); profound tragedy and terror are traced within the economics of diaspora (Badami); human mobility is discovered to reconstitute notions of time and home in ways that risk fragmentation of the self (Ondaatje); the postcolonial nation is not destined to achieve facile commensurability between Indigenous and mainstream cultures (Robinson).

In coming to terms with the critique Canadian literature offers of normative conceptions of technology, community, time, and identity associated with the impermeable borders of the nation-state, what might we learn about the new realities and possibilities that accompany our transformative and transnational cultural moment?

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Douglas Coupland, *Player One*
Anita Rau Badami, *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*
Michael Ondaatje, *Running in the Family*
Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach*
English 455 Custom Readings (linked through Moodle)

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Short essay (1000 words)	20%	Due Oct. 9.
Term paper (1700-2000 words)	30%	Due Nov. 29 OR Dec. 4 (depending on whether you want your essay returned on the last day of classes or at the final exam)
In-Class Presentation	15%	See sign-up sheet
In-Class Quizzes (Pass/Fail)	10%	Sept. 11, Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 19
Final exam (2.5 hrs)	25%	TBA

Short Essay: A short essay (1000 words) offering an economical and original analysis of either a piece of short fiction or a poem not discussed in the class (you may not write on a novel for this assignment). Just under three weeks before the assignment is due I will circulate a list of essay topics, but you are also free to generate your own research topic for this assignment, provided you submit a topic proposal to me two weeks in advance of the due date.

Term paper: A substantial research essay (1700-2000 words) on one of the four novels studied in class. I will circulate a list of essay topics but again you may develop your own, on the condition that you submit a topic proposal to me two weeks before the deadline. While it can be informed by class discussions of the novel, your essay must advance an **original and compelling argument and analysis** as well as demonstrate a strong awareness of recent scholarly criticism on the novel or its author.

In-Class Presentation: You are required to deliver a short – **maximum 10 minute** - presentation to the class in which you 1) select and focus on one key passage from the novel under analysis. The “passage” can consist of a key paragraph, sentence, image or even *word*; 2) either offer a critical interpretation of the significance of the passage for the class (drawing upon a work of secondary criticism if you wish) OR provide some important theoretical, historical, political, cultural, or literary context that helps to illuminate the significance of the passage. The goal of this assignment is for you to guide the class in **close textual study** of a passage *as well as relate the passage to larger questions or issues under discussion in the course.*

You are welcome to present your information in whatever manner you think is most engaging and effective. **Time yourself in advance!** The temptation with this assignment will be to exceed your 10-minute window. The best presentations will be those that pack the most punch into the precious time allotted.

In-class Quizzes (10%): There will be four mini-quizzes over the course of the term, all of them at the start of each new novel. Each quiz will consist of 5 questions designed to test whether you’ve read the work in question, and will be marked on a Pass/Fail basis. You must answer 3 out of 5 questions correctly to receive a Pass grade. You must pass all four quizzes to receive the 10% participation for the course. The primary purpose of these quizzes is to “quantify” participation as well as to create incentive to read the entire

novel prior to the class in which we begin to study it. As you know, 10% can significantly raise or lower your final course mark.

Note: All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and follow MLA documentation style guidelines.

Grading: You will receive a letter grade for each of your assignments. In accordance with Department of English policy, the grading scale is as follows:

A+ 90-100	B+ 77-79	C+ 65-69	D 50-59
A 85-89	B 73-76	C 60-64	F 0-49
A- 80-84	B- 70-72		

This scale conforms to the standard UVic grading system. Please check the UVic Calendar for a full description of undergraduate grading.

Late or Missing Assignments: You are responsible for handing in all assignments on the day in which they are due, and for ensuring that I have returned all assignments to you. You will be docked a half-grade for each day after the deadline that your assignment is late (for example, an A paper will receive an A- one day after the deadline, a B- paper a C, etc.). In the case of illness, a doctor's note must accompany late assignments. Family or other emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance and Participation: Please try to read as much of the assigned text as you can prior to the first class in which we are scheduled to discuss it. Come prepared to make thoughtful contributions to class discussions. While there is no explicit participation mark for the course beyond the 10% allotted to in-class quizzes, I reserve the right to raise or lower your final mark by a *half-grade point* according to your attendance and level of engagement with the course.

Plagiarism: In written assignments, you must unambiguously cite all work that is not your own and give credit to those whose language or ideas you use. Failure to do so is plagiarism, the penalty for which may include failure of the course and academic dismissal. **Please check the UVic Calendar for a full description on the Policy on Academic Integrity.**

English 455 – Course Outline

Note: the following syllabus may be subject to minor alterations as we go along. You are responsible for keeping abreast of any announced changes.

Wed., Sept. 4	Introduction to Class & Syllabus
Fri., Sept. 6	Nationalism and post-nationalism - selections from <i>CanLit Guides</i> (see Moodle for links)
Tues., Sept. 10	Smaro Kamboureli, "Preface" to <i>Trans.Can.Lit</i> pp. vii-x (see Moodle for link)
Wed., Sept. 11	<i>Player One</i> 1st Mini-Quiz
Fri., Sept. 13	<i>Player One</i> (cont.)

Tues., Sept. 17	<i>Player One</i> (cont.) [note: last day to drop courses for 100% reduction of tuition fees]
Wed., Sept. 18	<i>Player One</i> (cont.) and Pheng Cheah, “Cosmopolitanism” (see Moodle for link)
Fri., Sept. 20	<i>Player One</i> (cont.) [note: last day for adding 1 st term courses]
Tues., Sept. 24	<i>Player One</i> (cont.)
Wed., Sept. 25	<i>Player One</i> (cont.) and M.G. Vassanji “Am I a Canadian Writer?” (see Moodle for link)
Fri., Sept. 27	<i>Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?</i> 2nd Mini Quiz ***Please note: the class meets on Moodle (at 9:30) this day, not in the classroom
Tues., Oct. 1	<i>Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?</i> (cont.)
Wed., Oct. 2	<i>Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?</i> (cont.)
Fri., Oct. 4	<i>Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?</i> (cont.) and Canadian immigration, war, and 1960s Multiculturalism – selection from <i>CanLit Guides</i> (see Moodle for links)
Tues., Oct. 8	<i>Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?</i> (cont.)
Wed., Oct. 9	<i>Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?</i> (cont.) and third-wave feminism – selection from <i>CanLit Guides</i> (see Moodle for link)
Fri., Oct. 11	<i>Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?</i> (cont.) First Essay Due
Tues., Oct. 15	Canada’s Cold War and sixties counter-culture – selection from <i>CanLit Guides</i> , Marshall McLuhan, <i>Canada: the Borderline Case</i> and selection from Richard Cavell, <i>McLuhan in Space</i> (see Moodle for links)
Wed., Oct. 16	George Woodcock, “On Completing a Life of Dumont” and <i>The Meeting of Time and Space: Regionalism in Canadian Literature</i> (see Moodle for links)
Fri., Oct. 18	Reading transnational Canadian poetry – selection from <i>CanLit Guides</i> (see Moodle for links)
Tues., Oct. 22	bpNichol “First Screening” (see Moodle for link)
Wed., Oct. 23	Rita Wong, “trip” and “for bing ai” (see Moodle for link)
Fri., Oct. 25	<i>Running in the Family</i> 3rd Mini-Quiz
Tues., Oct. 29	<i>Running in the Family</i> (cont.)
Wed., Oct. 30	<i>Running in the Family</i> (cont.) [note: second last day to withdraw from 1 st term courses without penalty of failure]
Fri., Nov. 1	<i>Running in the Family</i> (cont.) and Ven Begamudré, <i>Greetings from Bangalore, Saskatchewan</i> (see Moodle for link)
Tues., Nov. 5	<i>Running in the Family</i> (cont.)
Wed., Nov. 6	Screening of Ondaatje’s short films “Sons of Captain Poetry” and “Carry on Crime and Punishment.” <i>Running in the Family</i> (cont.)
Fri., Nov. 8	<i>Running in the Family</i> (cont.)
Nov. 11-13	READING BREAK
Fri., Nov. 15	Helen Hoy, from “Introduction” <i>How Should I Read These? Native Women Writers in Canada</i> pp. 3-25 and (See Moodle for Link)
Tues., Nov. 19	<i>Monkey Beach</i> 4th Mini-Quiz
Wed., Nov. 20	<i>Monkey Beach</i>
Fri., Nov. 22	<i>Monkey Beach</i>

- Tues., Nov. 26 *Monkey Beach* and Kit Dobson, “Indigeneity and Diversity in Eden Robinson's Work” (see Moodle for link)
- Wed., Nov. 27 *Monkey Beach*
- Fri., Nov. 29 *Monkey Beach*. **Second essay due** (if you want it to be marked and returned Dec. 4)
- Tues., Dec. 3 *Monkey Beach*
- Wed., Dec. 4 Last class. Review. **Second essay due** (if you want it to be marked and returned at the exam)

Final Exam: TBA (2.5 hours)