

**Huron University College**  
**Department of English and Cultural Studies**  
**English 1028G 550: The Storyteller's Art II: Topics in Narrative**  
**Winter 2023**

**Class:** Mon. 3:30pm-5:30pm; Wed. 2:30pm-3:30pm      **Classroom:** H221

**Instructor:** Dr. Sarah Blanchette (she/her)

**Office:** A211

**Email:** [sarah.blanchette@uwo.ca](mailto:sarah.blanchette@uwo.ca)

**Office Hours:** Wed. 12:30pm-2:30pm

**Antirequisite(s):** ENG1024E, ENG1036E

**Prerequisite(s):** Grade 12U English or permission of the Department. For part time students who have been admitted without the OSSD, this permission will be granted as a matter of course.

### **Land Acknowledgment**

I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay-wuk) and Chonnonton (Chun-ongk-ton) Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. With this, I respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service. (This statement is from Western's [More than Words Land Acknowledgement](#)).

Huron University College was [originally founded](#) by Bishop Benjamin Cronyn as an Anglican theological college in 1863. Between 1820 – 1969, [the Anglican Church](#) ran over thirty-five residential schools for Indigenous children, which subjected them to cultural genocide as well as spiritual, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Consequently, Huron has a distinct and problematic history with Indigenous nations that must be acknowledged.

### **Course Description**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to be a global pandemic. COVID-19 is the deadliest pandemic in human history since the so-called “Spanish flu” or H1N1 influenza pandemic of 1918-1920 that killed approximately 20 – 50 million people across the globe. Consequently, all of us have experienced an extraordinary historical event that has radically altered our society and our lives.

This course explores literary and culture narratives of contagion and disease to unpack why we are culturally fascinated with narratives of pandemics, both real and imagined. How do we rely on narrative to understand disease on an individual and global scale? How do stories of illness become “viral” and “infect” the minds of those they reach? How can we utilize fiction as a

means of escapism/survival from bleak realities? What are the societal “illnesses” that metaphorically plague our communities?

This course focuses on developing strong analytical and writing skills. It will feature a range of texts, mediums, and genres, including reading peer-reviewed secondary sources alongside primary texts.

### **Course Methods**

This course meets on Mondays 3:30pm-5:30pm and Wednesdays 2:30pm-3:30pm. It will include lecture, active discussion, breakout groups, and interactive course components (ex. essay writing tutorials, peer review session). Please come prepared having read the course materials listed under the schedule below.

*This class will strive to create a setting in which everyone feels that their dignity, identity, privacy, personal space, and autonomy are respected. While it is impossible to guarantee that the classroom will remain a safe space or be entirely confidential, it will be an accountable space. Sensitive topics such as oppression, discrimination, and violence will come up in this class. We will not skirt difficult issues. This course contract details some of these topics through content warnings. Talk to your instructor if you have any concerns about course material or about respectful language. Please keep in mind that pejorative language will not be tolerated. I encourage all my students to speak to me if they ever feel uncomfortable in the classroom and to challenge my own use of language when they find it problematic.*

### **Learning Outcomes**

- improve your critical reading and writing in ways that will enable success in a wide variety of University courses
- develop an interdisciplinary perspective on a variety of narrative mediums: for example, the poem, the short story, the novel, and the film
- become capable of identifying, analyzing, and interpreting basic narrative elements, such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, diction, tone, figures of speech, and tropes
- write logically and persuasively in fluent, standard English using the appropriate conventions for scholarly-critical writing
- design strong thesis statements and structured arguments in persuasive (original) essays using MLA format and secondary research material integration (i.e. using quotations and paraphrases)
- evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, including those obtained through the Internet
- engage with social media as text and develop a critical lens through which to analyze how social media shapes broader social narratives, particularly our ideas of science/technology
- think critically about “contagion” as metaphor and how “outbreak discourse” is often utilized for political ends to reify borders of self/Other underlying white supremacy, colonialism, and xenophobia

- identify how COVID-19 narratives have influenced your own perceptions of science/technology/socio-political events
- examine the role of narrative during and after pandemics, as well as why humans rely so heavily on art/storytelling/cultural productions

## **Methods of Evaluation**

Participation: 10%

Social Media Critique (500 Words): 10% **(Due Jan. 23)**

Essay One: (500 Words): 10% **(Due Feb. 15)**

Essay One Re-Write (750 Words): 10% **(Due March 6)**

Peer Review: 10% **(Due March 27)**

Research Essay (1250 Words): 20% **(Due April 10)**

Final Exam: 30% (To be scheduled by the registrar's office)

## **Brief Description of Assessments**

### Participation

While attendance is a necessary pre-requisite to participate, this component of the course evaluates students' ability to demonstrate their personal engagement with the text(s) in the classroom and to respond/interact with their peers. Students should come to class having read/watched the texts listed under the schedule and/or be prepared to engage in the class activity (ex. sample thesis for essay writing session).

### Social Media Critique

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become apparent that people frequently rely on social media blurbs or images for scientific information. Student will select excerpts from contemporary social media (ex. Instagram/Facebook/Twitter post; Government ad/infographic; TikTok video) and make an argument for how technology is being utilized in their selected example and to what ends. This assignment requires an argument and critical analysis of the selected social media excerpt.

### Essay One

A formal MLA-style 500-word essay written on a single primary text and secondary source from the syllabus. Your essay should focus on close reading and textual analysis, while demonstrating your ability to utilize a secondary source to frame your independent argument. Topics will be provided.

### Essay One Re-Write

You will be asked to revise your first essay based on the feedback provided by the instructor. You will be evaluated based on your ability to respond to commentary and make improvements. You will have an additional 250 words from the original 500 words.

### Peer Review Report

Students will bring a thesis and a minimum of 1000-words of their research essay to a peer review session, where they will swap their rough draft with another student and give constructive feedback according to an outline. You will be evaluated on two factors: whether you have adequately prepared a reasonable rough draft and the quality of your feedback to your peer.

### Research Essay

A formal MLA-style 1250-word essay written on a single primary text and with the use of at least one peer-reviewed secondary source (not from the syllabus). Topics will be provided.

### Final Exam

The final exam will consist of three sections: short answer questions, passage analysis, and a comparative essay. To be scheduled by the registrar's office.

## **English and Cultural Studies Department Policies on Assignments:**

Detailed assignment instructions will be provided and posted to our OWL site under Assignments. Students are required to consult and follow those requirements. Assignments must be submitted to our course website for plagiarism checking.

**Plagiarism:** that is, taking the ideas or words of another author from anywhere, including the internet—is a major academic offence. This course has a zero-tolerance plagiarism policy. If you use your own words and acknowledge where you have borrowed ideas and words from others—i.e. using quotations and proper MLA referencing for citations and paraphrasing—you should not have a problem with this. If you are in doubt, please ask your instructor. More information is provided in the Appendix (below).

**Late penalties:** Assignment due dates are specified in the reading schedule below. Late assignments will incur a penalty of 2 marks per day, up to a maximum of one week. **After seven (7) days, the assignment will not be accepted and receive a mark of zero.** Late assignments will not be appended with comments.

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities are also entitled to formal accommodations to ensure all class materials and methods of evaluation are accessible. I aim to create all my courses around universal design principles to reduce the need for accommodations, but I am always eager to know how I can do better, so please let me know if there is an aspect of the course design that could be made more accessible.

Please contact your Academic Advisor and the Student Development Center (SDC) for assistance with formal accommodations and there is more information provided in the Appendix (below).

## **Required Texts:**

You can purchase the following required novels at the UWO Bookstore, local bookstores (ex. [Attic Books](#)), and/or online (ex. [GoodMinds](#); [AbeBooks](#)) The newest edition is not necessary.

Lee Maracle, *Ravensong* (ISBN: 0-88974-044-5)  
 Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven* (ISBN: 978-0-385-35330-4)  
 Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (ISBN: 0-385-72167-6)

The following films can be streamed or purchased from online sources (i.e. Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, etc.):

*Killing Patient Zero* (2019), dir. Laurie Lynd  
*Get Out* (2017), dir. Jordan Peele  
*Inside* (2021), dir. Bo Burnham  
*Contagion* (2011), dir. Steven Soderbergh

### Lecture & Reading Schedule

\*Please note content warnings have been provided in blue text.\*

Date	Text(s)
Mon, Jan. 9	Welcome & Introduction
Outbreak Narratives	
Wed, Jan. 11	“Introduction” from Priscilla Wald’s <i>Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative</i>
Mon, Jan. 16	“Introduction: ‘Islam,’ Terrorism, and the Epidemic Imaginary,” from Anjali Fatima Raza Kolb’s <i>Epidemic Empire</i>
Wed, Jan. 18	<b>Writing Tutorial with Library and Learning Services</b>
1918 Influenza Epidemic	
Mon, Jan. 23	Katherine Anne Porter, “Pale Horse, Pale Rider” (1939) <b>Social Media Critique Due</b>
Wed, Jan. 25	“Untangling War and Plague” from Elizabeth Outka’s <i>Viral Modernism: The Influenza Pandemic and Interwar Literature</i>
Zombie Theory	
Mon, Jan. 30	<i>Get Out</i> (2017), dir. Jordan Peele <b>CW: anti-Black violence</b>
Wed, Feb. 1	“Zombie Biopolitics” by Elizabeth Maddock Dillion in <i>American Quarterly</i> Vol. 71, No. 2, 2019, pp. 625-652 <b>CW: suicide; anti-Black violence</b>
Colonial Contagions	
Mon, Feb. 6	Lee Maracle (Sto:lo), <i>Ravensong</i> (1993) <b>CW: domestic violence; colonial violence</b>
Wed, Feb. 8	<b>Writing Tutorial with Library and Learning Services</b>
Mon, Feb. 13	Lee Maracle (Sto:lo), <i>Ravensong</i>
Wed, Feb. 15	Nick Estes (Sioux), “The Empire of All Maladies: Colonial Contagions and Indigenous Resistance,” in <i>The Baffler</i> , No. 52, 2020, pp. 86-92. <b>Essay One Due</b>
<b>READING WEEK</b>	
Post-apocalypse	
Mon, Feb. 27	Margaret Atwood, <i>Oryx and Crake</i> (2003) <b>CW: rape; pedophilia</b>
Wed, Mar. 1	Margaret Atwood, <i>Oryx and Crake</i>

AIDS	
Mon, Mar. 6	<i>Killing Patient Zero</i> (2019), dir. Laurie Lynd <a href="#">CW: homophobia</a> <b>Essay One Re-Write Due</b>
Wed, Mar. 8	<b>Writing Tutorial with Library and Learning Services</b>
Mon, Mar. 13	Beth Brant (Kanyen'kehà:ka), "This Place" (1991) <a href="#">CW: homophobia</a>
Wed, Mar. 15	Tim Dlugos, "G-9" (1990)
Viral Narratives	
Mon, Mar. 20	Emily St. John Mandel, <i>Station Eleven</i> (2014) <a href="#">CW: suicidal ideation</a>
Wed, Mar. 22	Emily St. John Mandel, <i>Station Eleven</i>
Mon, Mar. 27	<b>Peer Review Exercise</b>
SARS and COVID-19	
Wed, Mar. 29	Vincent Lam, "Contact Tracing" (2006)
Mon, Apr. 3	<i>Inside</i> (2021), dir. Bo Burnham <a href="#">CW: suicidal ideation</a>
Wed, Apr. 5	<i>Contagion</i> (2011), dir. Steven Soderbergh
Mon, Apr. 10	Final Exam Review <b>Research Essay Due</b>



## **Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations Fall/Winter 2022-2023**

Huron will continue to follow the guidance of public health and government officials. It is anticipated that there will be no disruptions to in-person instruction. This is subject to change.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

### **Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information**

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **Attendance Regulations for Examinations**

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academic_calendar) . The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf).

### **Turnitin.com**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices**

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, tablets, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

### **Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)**

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

### **Academic Consideration for Missed Work**

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

### **Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence**

- (a) Consideration on **Medical Grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: **Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising**



When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the **Student Medical Certificate**. The instructor may **not** collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

**b) Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go Directly to Academic Advising**

University Senate policy, which can be found at [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academic_calendar) requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Dean.

**c) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email [huronsss@uwo.ca](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca).**

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation. All consideration requests must include a completed **Consideration Request Form**. Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [accommodation\\_medical.pdf \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academic_calendar/academic_consideration_medical.pdf). Consult **Huron Academic Advising** at [huronsss@uwo.ca](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca) for any further questions or information.

**Support Services**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron’s Student Support Services at

[huronsss@uwo.ca](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca). An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/> Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>  
Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1> Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>  
Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>  
Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

### **Wellness and Health Supports at Huron and Western**

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. All Huron staff and faculty have received training on responding to disclosures of Gender-Based Sexual Violence (GBSV); students should know that the Community Safety Office is a resource for survivors, providing support and, if desired, guidance while referring them to the further supports that they may require. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services:

[huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca) Community

Safety Office: [safety@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:safety@huron.uwo.ca)

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Western Calendar - Policy Pages -  
[Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)