

Huron University College
The Department of English and Cultural Studies
2551F Special Topics in English and Cultural Studies:
Gord Downie, The Tragically Hip, and Canadian Identity

Course time: Mondays 3:30-5:30 pm; Wednesdays 2:30-3:30 pm

Course location: W108

Instructor: Alicia Robinet

Office hour: Monday 2:30-3:30; also by appointment

Office: Benson 2

Email: arobine2@uwo.ca *Please do not hesitate to email me your questions or to set up an appointment

Pre or Corequisites

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of any 1000-level English course, or permission of the Department.

Extra Information: 3 hours

Course Weight: 0.50

Course Description:

This course examines the literary and cultural contributions of Gord Downie and The Tragically Hip in the context of Canadian literary and cultural production. We will attempt to answer the following questions: how does The Tragically Hip's music relate to other forms of Canadian cultural production? Why did Downie's sickness and death impact so many Canadians? How do Canadian literary and cultural works operate on affective registers in the construction of a "Canadian identity"? And finally, why would Prime Minister Trudeau describe The Tragically Hip as "an essential part of who we are"?

Course Objectives:

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

1. Identify characteristics of Canadian literature and Canadian music
2. Recognize and understand the impact of literary devices used by Canadian authors and communicate the effects of these devices
3. Communicate ideas about Canadian literary or cultural texts orally and in writing
4. Engage in academic research in the field of Canadian studies to complete an academic essay
5. Understand and apply the basic rules of writing mechanics in written projects
6. Analyze and compare Canadian literary and cultural texts
7. Recognize how different definitions of Canadian identity have produced different literatures
8. Apply the key concepts in Canadian literary criticism to literary or cultural works

Required Texts:

Moss and Sugar, eds. *Canadian Literature Texts and Contexts: Volume Two*

Andre Alexis, *Fifteen Dogs*

Timothy Findley, *The Wars*

Cherie Dimaline, *The Marrow Thieves*

Optional: Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire, *Secret Path*

Summary of the Reading List (for the full version of the syllabus schedule with the Gord Downie and The Tragically Hip soundtracks, see OWL or email the instructor):

Date	Reading
Monday, September 10	Introduction
Wednesday, September 12	<p>Northrop Frye, Conclusion to <i>The Literary History of Canada</i> (anthology 253)</p> <p>Robertson Davies, “The Canada of Myth and Reality” (anthology 265)</p>
Monday, September 17	<p>Tom Thomson and The Group of Seven</p> <p>We will consider the influence of the following artists to literary movements of the period:</p> <p>Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A. Y. Jackson, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J. E. H. MacDonald, Frederick Varley, A. J. Casson, Edwin Holgate, LeMoine FitzGerald, Tom Thomson, and Emily Carr</p> <p>Texts: Lawren Harris, “The Revelation of Art in Canada” (anthology 67), A.J.M. Smith, “The Lonely Land” (anthology 97)</p>
Wednesday, September 19	<p>P. K. Page, “Planet Earth” (anthology 198)</p> <p>Viewing parts of the documentary and the final concert</p> <p>Dennis Lee, From Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space (anthology 470)</p>
Monday, September 24	<p>Sinclair Ross, “The Painted Door” (anthology 135)</p> <p>Robert Kroetsch, “On Being an Alberta Writer” (anthology 327)</p>
Wednesday, September 26	Andre Alexis, <i>Fifteen Dogs</i>
Monday, October 1	<i>Fifteen Dogs</i> continued
Wednesday, October 3	Annotated Bibliography, Proposal, and Essay Writing Workshop
Monday, October 8	Thanksgiving Holiday

Wednesday, October 10	Fall Reading Week
Monday, October 15	Al Purdy, "At the Quinte Hotel" (in-class viewing) and "The Country North of Belleville" (anthology 274) George Elliott Clarke, "Bio/Black Bastard" (anthology 661); "Antiphony" (anthology 662)
Wednesday, October 17	F.R. Scott, "The Canadian Authors Meet" (anthology 85) In-class viewing: satire collection See Figure VI-9 (anthology 249) and Figure VI-10 (anthology 250)
Monday, October 22	Timothy Findley, <i>The Wars</i> *If possible, we will go and see Timothy Findley's <i>The Wars</i> at The Grand Theatre in London (playing October 23-November 11)
Wednesday, October 24	<i>The Wars</i> cont'd <i>Song Review Due</i>
Monday, October 29	Irving Layton, "Berry Picking" (anthology 177), "Whom I Write For" (anthology 178) Leonard Cohen, "For E. J. P." (anthology 377), "Suzanne" (anthology 378), "How to Speak Poetry" (anthology 379)
Wednesday, October 31	Gordon Lightfoot, "Canadian Railroad Trilogy" (anthology 431) See figure v-6 (anthology 31) We will discuss Downie's poetry book, <i>Coke Machine Glow</i> . Excerpts found on OWL.
Monday, November 5	Irving Layton "Keine Lazarovitch" (anthology 178) Dorothy Livesay, "Lament" (anthology 170)

	Chief Dan George “A Lament for Confederation” (anthology 251) George Grant from <i>Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism</i> (anthology 269)
Wednesday, November 7	Margaret Laurence, “A Bird in the House” (anthology 300) We will examine public reactions to Downie’s death and his posthumous record. <i>Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due</i>
Monday, November 12	Cherie Dimaline, <i>The Marrow Thieves</i>
Wednesday, November 14	<i>The Marrow Thieves</i> cont’d
Monday, November 19	Alistair MacLeod, “The Boat” (anthology 412) Michael Crummey, “What’s Lost” (anthology 668) and “Newfoundland Sealing Disaster” (anthology 669)
Wednesday, November 21	<i>Essay/Music Video and Rationale Workshop</i>
Monday, November 26	Film: <i>Indian Horse</i>
Wednesday, November 28	Jeff Lemire, <i>The Complete Essex County</i> (excerpts on OWL) <i>Essay or Music Video and Rationale Due</i>
Monday, December 3	Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire, <i>Secret Path</i>
Wednesday, December 5	Soundtrack: Class Choice <i>Exam Review</i>

Assignments:

Participation (10%): Ongoing

Presentation (10%): See the sign-up sheet for dates

Song Review (15%): Wednesday, October 24

Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (5%): Wednesday, November 7

Essay OR Music Video with Rationale (25%): Wednesday, November 28

Final Exam (35%): TBA

Huron University College and FASS Policies are posted on the OWL course site.