

School of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies

Engl 445

Contemporary Canadian and New Zealand Fiction

Trimester 1 2009

Description:

New Zealand literature is usually read in a New Zealand context. What happens when we consider recent New Zealand novels alongside a selection of novels from another settler society? This course encourages students to consider the limits of nationalism in *The Vintner's Luck* and *Anil's Ghost*, the claims of the local in *Lives of Girls and Women* and *Chemistry*, the meanings of culture in *Cousins*. As well, students will be able to study in depth Dylan Horrocks' brilliant graphic novel, *Hicksville*, and will encounter a selection of works that reflect the range and vibrancy of contemporary Canadian fiction.

Venue: This is a first trimester course. Seminar classes will be held in von Zedlitz 806 every Thursday between 12.10 and 3.00 p.m. Additional information for all honours classes can be found on the honours noticeboard, 8th floor VZ. Specific information about this course is available on Blackboard.

Course convenor: Mark Williams

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Office hours: Thursday 11.00-12.00 p.m.

Trimester dates

The first trimester of 2009 begins on 2 March and ends on 5 June. The study/examination period is from 8 June to 1 July.

Learning Objectives:

This is a seminar course in which students are expected to present to the class their researches into a selection of fiction from Canada and New Zealand. In the course of the year students will be encouraged to:

consider a range of fictional kinds including historical fiction, the graphic novel, a short story sequence,

ask what it means to talk about literature in national terms and consider the global and local contexts of literature

ask whether the different cultural models multiculturalism and biculturalism have any bearing on the production of literature

consider the critical contexts in which those texts have been interpreted and adopt their own critical stances towards the texts and towards existing criticism

Texts:

Michael Ondaatje, **Anil's Ghost**; Carol Shields, **Unless**; Margaret Atwood, **Alias Grace**; Alice Munro, **Lives of Girls and Women**; Elizabeth Knox, **The Vintner's Luck**; Damien Wilkins, **Chemistry**; Patricia Grace, **Cousins**; Dylan Horrocks, **Hicksville**

Notes Course Reader. Available from the Victoria Book Centre, Student Union Building and Student Notes Distribution Centre, Student Union Building. There may be difficulty obtaining copies of *Hicksville*, which we shall address in the first class.

Mandatory Course Requirements

- (i) As in all English Department courses, 70% attendance is required.
- (ii) Students will be required to participate in the preparation and presentation of at least one seminar presentation
- (iii) Students will complete two essays
- (iv) Students will sit an examination (see note under assessment below).

Assessment:

Students will do two 2,500 word essays for 25 marks each. The first is due on 20 April, the second on 1 June. There will be a final three-hour examination for 40 marks. Students should note that they will be expected to deliver one in-class seminar for 10%; they may opt to do two seminars of which the better will be graded. Students will be expected to write essays, answer test questions or deliver seminar presentations on at least **four** texts during the course. Students will not be allowed to take books into the in-class test, but will be allowed to take in one A4 sheet with notes on both sides. Please note: copies of all marked essays and seminar presentations should be retained by students and must be given to the lecturer by the date of the final test; all grades are provisional; all written work must be handed in by the last day of the semester.

Expected workload:

It has been recommended that in order to maintain a satisfactory progress in a four-paper honours course of a single semester duration, students should give 24 hours to the course per week, including class contacts hours and time spent reading primary texts.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Seminar Schedule

Note: Students should indicate their preferred authors and dates for seminars and indicate these to the convenor by March 12.

Date	Seminar Topic	Seminar Presenter
5 Mar	Intro	
12 Mar	Cousins	
19 Mar	Cousins	
26 Mar	Vintner's Luck	
2Apr	Vintner's Luck	
9 Apr	Hicksville	
20 Apr	First essay due	

Mid-trimester break

30 Apr	Lives of Girls and Women
7 May	Alias Grace
14 May	Alias Grace
21 May	Unless
28 May	Unless
1 June	Second essay due
4 June	Anil's Ghost

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: a full bibliography will be made available on Blackboard

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- Gunew, Sneja. 2004. *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalisms*. London: Routledge.
- Henighan, Stephen. *When Words Deny the World: The Reshaping of Canadian Writing*. Erin, Ont.: The Porcupine's Quill, 2002.
- Howells, Coral Ann. *Contemporary Canadian women's Fiction: Refiguring Identities*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.
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2) New Zealand General:

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- Curnow, Wystan. "High Culture in a Small province." In *Essays on New Zealand Literature*. Auckland: Heinemann Educational, 1973.
- Evans, Patrick. *The Penguin History of New Zealand Literature*. Auckland: Penguin, 1990.
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2) Individual authors:

Patricia Grace

- Crawford, Jen. "Spaze: Void States and the Mother-Child Relationship in *The Matriarch, The Dream Swimmer, Cousins and Baby No-Eyes*." *Kunapipi*, 27:2 (2005): 268-75
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- Heim, Otto. "Traditions of Guardianship in Maori Literature." In Gerhard Stiltz, ed. *Colonies, Missions, Cultures in the English Speaking World: General and Comparative Studies*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2001: 299-306. [book on order]
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Margaret Atwood

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- Miller, Ryan. "The Gospel According to Grace: Gnostic Heresy as Narrative Strategy in Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*." *Literature & Theology*, 16:2 (June 2002): 172-87.
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Dylan Horrocks:

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Michael Ondaatje

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