

ENGL 348 Special Topic: Awkward Books

Trimester 2 2013

15 July to 17 November 2013

20 Points

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates: 15 July to 18 October 2013

Mid-trimester break: 26 August to 8 September 2013

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination (aegrotats), refer to

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Tue, Thu 2.10-3.00pm Maclaurin LT102

Tutorials

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the ENGL 348 site on Blackboard: go to "Tutorials" and then follow the instructions under the "SCubed - Tutorial Enrolment Instructions" link. Please read the instructions carefully. Tutorial rooms will be listed on S-Cubed, Blackboard and on the bulletin board in the Level 3 corridor of the Hugh Mackenzie Building.

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

James Meffan James.Meffan@vuw.ac.nz 463 6807 vZ903 tba

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All changes or additional information will be conveyed to students via Blackboard.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

PRESCRIPTION

What leads people to ban, burn, censor, censure or generally revile works of literature? This course will investigate the relationship between literary fiction and ethics by reading a series of controversial novels written in the last hundred years against the context of their production and reception.

COURSE CONTENT

Great literature has the capacity to take us beyond the narrow confines of the familiar: the world around us, our habits of mind. We might say that great literature unsettles us. But is it therefore the case that unsettling literature is necessarily good literature? And are there limits to the extent that literature can legitimately upset established conventions of taste, morality and comprehensibility?

Examining some novels that are, in various ways, awkward, this course will consider a range of critical responses to them and in doing so explore some important literary controversies. The course covers a range of novels from the late nineteenth through to the early twenty first centuries, reading them in relation to the context of their writing and reception. The course will provide an introduction to some of the theoretical and critical issues relevant to literature and ethics (and literary analysis in general).

In addition to set novels, required reading includes selected non-fictional writing, in order to elaborate historical context and familiarise students with significant critical concerns. These readings are a crucial component of the course and will be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. demonstrate understanding of some of the theoretical and critical issues relevant to the study of ethics and literary fiction;
2. demonstrate the skills of attentive reading through close analysis and discussion in relation to the set novels;
3. demonstrate the skills of theoretical analysis and discussion in relation to the set novels and selected non-fictional writings;
4. show familiarity with the thought, form, techniques and language of the set novels;
5. demonstrate an understanding of the general nature of twentieth and twenty first century fiction in relation to the social, cultural and theoretical contexts to which it belongs;
6. show evidence of alert and informed reading, and command of the oral and written processes of literary discussion, especially in critical analysis and evaluation.

TEACHING FORMAT

The course will be delivered through two lectures and one tutorial each week. In addition to set novels, required reading includes selected non-fictional writing, in the form of historical information and critical commentary on the novels. Students will be expected to prepare for and actively participate in tutorial discussions.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Submit the reports on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Attend 8 out of 11 tutorials

WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours over the trimester or 13 hours per teaching week. A paper in the novel inevitably entails considerable time spent reading (and re-reading) set texts. In addition to the reading of set novels you are also required to spend time reading the critical and theoretical writings set for the paper and attending lectures and tutorials. It is strongly recommended that you develop regular reading habits to ensure that you have read set fiction and critical writing before it is discussed in class.

ASSESSMENT

This course is entirely internally assessed by a combination of reading reports and essays. Assessment has been structured to meet the aims and objectives of the course and to ensure coverage of most of the novels and critical material on the course. Both reading report and essay questions will develop and assess the ability to read literary and critical works specifically and competently. Assessment is weighted as follows: four brief reading reports (worth 30% in total); and two compulsory in-term essays (70%).

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	500-word report	7.5%	1, 3, 5, 6	26/07/13
2	500-word report	7.5%	1, 3, 5, 6	09/08/13
3	500-word report	7.5%	1, 3, 5, 6	23/08/13
4	2,000-word essay	35%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	13/09/13
5	500-word report	7.5%	1, 3, 5, 6	27/09/13
6	2,000-word essay	35%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	18/10/13

SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Electronic assignments must be submitted as a MS Word file through Blackboard. How to name your file and step-by-step instructions can be found on Blackboard in the “Assignments and Turnitin” section.

Your marked assignment will be returned by you as an email attachment to your University-allocated email address. A copy of graded work will be retained on file until course results have been finalised.

PENALTIES

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor’s certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

SET TEXTS

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Penguin Classic);

Albert Camus, *The Outsider* (Penguin A Format or Penguin Modern Classic);

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (Popular Penguin or Pocket Penguin);

Brett Easton Ellis, *American Psycho* (Macmillan);

JM Coetzee, *Disgrace* (Vintage UK);

Lionel Shriver, *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (Penguin B Format).

You can order textbooks online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz.

RECOMMENDED READING

Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (PN98 M67 B725 C)

Tobin Siebers, *The Ethics of Criticism* (PN98 M67 S571 E)

J. Hillis Miller, *Ethics of Reading : Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin* (PN98 R38 M648 E)

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person’s name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

You may like to write the Class Rep’s name and details in the box on the next page:

Class Rep name and email address for this course:

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades
- Resolving academic issues:
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute:
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/vicliffe/student-service
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/vicliffe/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz
- School website: www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms

School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies
ENGLISH PROGRAMME COURSE OUTLINE ENGL 348

COURSE PROGRAMME (LECTURERS: JM = JAMES MEFFAN; CF = CHARLES FERRALL; LA = LUCY ALSTON)

Week 1	16 Jul	Lecture 1: Introduction	JM
	18 Jul	Lecture 2: Literature and Ethics	JM
Week 2	23 Jul	Lecture 3: Literature and History	JM
	25 Jul	Lecture 4: <i>Heart of Darkness</i>	JM
READING REPORT 1 DUE FRIDAY 26 JULY			
Week 3	30 Jul	Lecture 5: <i>Heart of Darkness</i>	JM
	1 Aug	Lecture 6: Modernism and Morality	CF
Week 4	6 Aug	Lecture 7: <i>Ulysses</i>	CF
	8 Aug	Lecture 8: <i>Ulysses</i>	CF
READING REPORT 2 DUE FRIDAY 9 AUGUST			
Week 5	13 Aug	Lecture 9: Existentialism	JM
	15 Aug	Lecture 10: <i>The Outsider</i>	JM
Week 6	20 Aug	Lecture 11: <i>The Outsider</i>	JM
	22 Aug	Lecture 12: Desire and Taboo	LA
READING REPORT 3 DUE FRIDAY 23 AUGUST			
Mid Trimester Break: Monday 26 August to Sunday 8 September 2013			
Week 7	10 Sep	Lecture 13: <i>Lolita</i>	LA
	12 Sep	Lecture 14: <i>Lolita</i>	LA
ESSAY 1 DUE FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER			
Week 8	17 Sep	Lecture 15: Representation and Endorsement	JM
	19 Sep	Lecture 16: <i>American Psycho</i>	JM
Week 9	24 Sep	Lecture 17: <i>American Psycho</i>	JM
	26 Sep	Lecture 18: Ethics vs Politics	JM
READING REPORT 4 DUE FRIDAY 27 SEPTEMBER			

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Week 10	1 Oct	Lecture 19: <i>Disgrace</i>	JM
	3 Oct	Lecture 20: <i>Disgrace</i>	JM
Week 11	8 Oct	Lecture 21: Cause and Culpability	JM
	10 Oct	Lecture 22: <i>We Need to Talk About Kevin</i>	
Week 12	15 Oct	Lecture 23: <i>We Need to Talk About Kevin</i>	JM
	17 Oct	Lecture 24: Wrap up	JM
		ESSAY 2 DUE FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER	