

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**  
**GRADUATE COURSES**  
**FALL 2026**

**ENGLISH 500**

**RESEARCH METHODS & PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**  
**(1.5 units)**  
**Dr. Janelle Jenstad**  
**Wednesdays, 10:30am-1:20pm**  
**IN PERSON**

English 500 is the foundational course of the graduate program, orienting students within the broad field of the discipline of English and also forging a cohesive and collegial student cohort. The course has two functions: firstly, to introduce the **concepts** and **practice** that underpin advanced literary research skills and textual studies (the practice of textual criticism, and the history of the production and dissemination of print); secondly, to enable students to develop their **craft** of professional scholarship (methods of research, advanced scholarly writing, digital tools and methods, diverse modes of research dissemination, academic conversation, appropriate forms of citation and documentation, finding a position within established and emerging trends in English studies). The course will allow students to draw upon digitized primary sources from libraries around the world.

**Tentative Text List**

No assigned texts to buy. Instructor will upload resources, handouts, tips, and short extracts from scholarly sources into BrightSpace. Otherwise, students do reading in their own areas of interest for the purposes of completing the assignments.

**Assignments**

Course is graded on a pass/fail basis. Students must achieve the equivalent of 75% on each assignment to pass the assignment. Assignments that do not meet the minimum standard will be returned with a request to revise and resubmit. Students must pass all assignments to pass the course.

**Assignment**

Humanities Value Reflection  
List of Four Journals in Your Field  
List of Four Databases and Reference Works  
Enumerative Bibliography of Five Articles/Chapters

**Type**

Submit to Instructor  
Post to Discussion Forum  
Post to Discussion Forum  
Submit to Instructor

Annotations for your Enumerative Bibliography  
State-of-the-art footnote  
Conference proposal/abstract  
Archival object biography  
Presentation on archival object

Submit to Instructor  
Submit to Instructor  
Submit to Instructor  
Submit to Instructor  
Submit slide(s) to Instructor

## ENGLISH 532

### TOPICS IN LITERARY HISTORY: The Matter of Land in Middle English Romance (1.5 units) Dr. Joseph Grossi Tuesdays, 5:00-7:50pm PST ONLINE

Survey of medieval English romances and their concern with feudal landownership and its impact on the natural landscape. Focus will be largely on Middle English texts with pertinent excerpts from, and background discussion of, sources and analogues in Anglo-Latin, continental French, and Anglo-Norman literature. Theorization and methodology to be flexible but with special consideration of historicist, ecocritical, and codicological approaches.

#### Tentative Text List

- *The Deeds of Hereward [Gesta Herwardi]*, trans. Michael Swanton, in *Medieval Outlaws: Twelve Tales in Modern English Translation*, ed. Thomas H. Ohlgren, rev. ed. (Parlor Press, 2005), 28-99.
- *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*, ed. Ronald B. Herzman, Eve Salisbury, and Graham Drake (Medieval Institute Publications, 1999).
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. and trans. James Winney (Broadview, 1992).
- *Ywain and Gawain*, in *Middle English Romances*, ed. Stephen H.A. Shepherd, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (W.W. Norton, 2023)
- *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle*, in *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*, ed. Thomas Hahn (Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 41-80.

Secondary readings to be drawn from e.g. Neil Cartlidge, *Boundaries in Medieval Romance* (D.S. Brewer, 2008); Alfred Siewers, *Strange Beauty: Ecocritical Approaches to Early Medieval Landscape* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Laura Ashe, Ivana Djorđević, and Judith E. Weiss, eds., *The Exploitations of Medieval Romance* (D.S. Brewer, 2010); Nicholas Perkins, ed., *Medieval Romance and Material Culture* (D.S. Brewer, 2015); Andrew M. Richmond, *Landscape in*

*Middle English Romance* (CUP, 2021); Victoria Flood and Megan G. Leitch, eds., *Cultural Translations in Medieval Romance* (D.S. Brewer, 2022); Roberta L. Krueger, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance* (CUP, 2023).

## Assignments

Four short response essays: 10%  
Annotated bibliography of at least 5 secondary sources: 10%  
Two in-class presentations: 30%  
Research paper (roughly 20 pp.): 40%  
Class participation: 10%

## ENGLISH 544

**TOPICS IN ETHICS AND MEDIA: Shakespeare's Exiles  
(1.5 Units)  
Dr. Richard van Oort  
Tuesdays, 9:30-12:20pm  
IN PERSON**

Why are human societies hierarchical? How did centralized political authority emerge? Anthropologists tell us that foraging societies are egalitarian compared to their agrarian successors. So, what prompted our foraging ancestors to give up their freedom and submit to the sovereignty of big men, chiefs, and kings? More to the point, how did the big man maintain his sovereignty in the face of the resentment mobilized against him? What political theories, institutions, and technologies emerged in the early modern era to redistribute the surplus away from the sovereign?

These are big questions, but we will try to get a handle on them by reading Shakespeare. His tragic "big men" are not merely outsized control freaks but also morally conflicted human beings, whose insatiable desire to usurp sovereign power is accompanied by much vituperative shouting but also by unexpected expressions of shame, remorse, and guilt.

In this context, Shakespeare's figure of the *exile* is noteworthy. We will examine this figure in a handful of plays (e.g., *Henry V*, *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*), but the bulk of the course will be devoted to his final masterpiece, *The Tempest*, whose magic-wielding protagonist appears to be obsessed with his exile from Milan. But this just makes his final speech more extraordinary. Why does he beg for pardon? What crime has he committed? If Prospero controls what his enemies do and say, how can we say he has forgiven them? If there is no one to accept his forgiveness, who exactly has been forgiven?

This is a problem peculiar to narratives in which an internal character is also the author of the story. If the internal character is the artistic creator of the conflict represented on the stage, how can we say the conflict has been resolved? Time permitting, we will consider how this problem reappears in a pair of recent examples: Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.

## **Tentative Text List**

Shakespeare, *Henry V, King Lear, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens, The Tempest*  
Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*  
Ian McEwan, *Atonement*

## **Assignments**

Discussion paper: 30%  
Research paper: 50%  
Participation: 20%

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## **ENGLISH 533**

### **TOPICS IN GENRE IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA:**

#### **Major British Poets of the Twentieth Century**

**(1.5 Units)**

**Dr. Magdalena Kay**

**Mondays, 12:00-2:50pm**

**IN PERSON**

Reactions to Victorian era; Modernism; Great War; stylistic experimentation and innovation; the avant-garde; “difficult” poetry; the role of tradition and intertextuality; changing social mores; shock value; politics and poetry; World War II; conservatism and traditionalism; post-modernism; objectivity versus confessionality; gender roles; coteries and outsiders; sexuality and self-expression; experiences of physical and emotional trauma; disability; social class; gender expression and gendered experience; spirituality and religion; revisions of Christianity and Judaism.

## **Tentative Text List**

T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems, 1909-1962*. Faber and Faber, 2009.  
Tim Kendall, ed. *Poems of the First World War: An Anthology*. Oxford University Press, 2014.  
D. H. Lawrence, *Birds, Beast and Flowers!* Black Sparrow Press, 2007.  
Stevie Smith, *A Selection*. Faber & Faber, 2019.  
W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*. Ed. Edward Mendelson. Vintage Books, 2007.  
Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems*. Faber and Faber, 2003.  
Geoffrey Hill, *Mercian Hymns* (PDF) or *Selected Poems of Geoffrey Hill* (Penguin, 2006) if available.  
Denise Levertov, *Selected Poems*. New Directions, 2003.  
Ted Hughes, *Selected Poems 1957-1994*. Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2002.  
Edward Thomas, *The Poems of Edward Thomas*, ed. Peter Sacks. Penguin, 2012.

## **Assignments (provisional)**

First Presentation: 25 %

Second Presentation: 25 %

Final essay: 40 %

Attendance and participation: 10 %

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**  
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**GRADUATE COURSES**  
**SPRING 2027**

**ENGLISH 545**

**TOPICS IN PLACE IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA:**

**London Literature**

**(1.5 Units)**

**Dr. Allan Mitchell**

**Wednesdays, 5:00 -7:50 p.m.**

**ONLINE, SYNCHRONOUS**

London dominated the literary imagination of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The seminar reads Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, and Thomas Usk alongside primary historical sources, situating literary fictions within the vital medieval metropolis.

**Tentative Text List**

*The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham (1376-1422)*, trans. David G. Preest (DS Brewer)

*The Oxford Chaucer*, ed. C. Cannon and J. Simpson (Oxford 2026)

John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, 3 vols., ed. Russell Peck (MIP 2006).

Thomas Usk, *Testament of Love* (MIP, 2006)

Thomas Hoccleve, *My Compleinte and Other Poems* (U of Exeter P 2001)

*Source and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales I & II*, ed. Correale and Hamel

**Assignments**

Translation test: 20%

Bibliography: 20%

Presentations: 10%

Research Essay: 50%

**ENGLISH 534**

**TOPICS IN AESTHETICS IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA:**

**Speaking, Listening, Reading, Poetry**

**(1.5 Units)**

**Dr. Nicholas Bradley**

**Wednesdays, 9:30-12:20pm**

**IN PERSON**

“By ear, he sd”

– Olson, “I, Maximus of Gloucester, to You”

It’s a story as old as time. Well, at least it’s pretty old. The professor informs the students that poetry is an oral art (snicker), that poems live in the mouth; they dutifully write that down. He asks them to open their books and follow along as a few lines of drowsy numbness are intoned. Then everyone stares at the page for three quarters of an hour as rhymes are assigned an alphabetic code and metre is counted with ictus and breve. Students say silent prayers, hoping not to be called upon to read aloud. How embarrassing.

But it’s true: for most of human history, across cultures and languages, poetry was primarily an art of the voice. Not the metaphorical voice of the creative-writing workshop, but the one that emerges from lungs and larynx. The technical wizardry of modern poetry and the intricacy of its explication, although enabled by print, are but recent developments in the long record of verbal art and its interpretation. As the pinnacle of literary expression, the supreme fiction, poetry might be regarded as the ultimate manifestation of a literate culture – a mode of writing tethered to the page. And yet modern and contemporary poets have insisted, time and again, that they do the police in different voices. In this course we will learn how to *read* a poem, which is to say we will learn to *hear* it. We will also learn how to *write* about it – that is, how to produce a *reading*. *Reading* and *riting*, then, and our third R might be *rhythm*, *rhyme*, or the tape *recorder* – and also land *rights*, because theories of orality and literacy circulating well into the twentieth century (and probably after) have had a profound impact on political and legal claims to territory. “The tongueless man gets his land took,” writes the English poet Tony Harrison, quoting a Cornish proverb – that is, a *saying*.

What’s all this palaver? The course asks students to investigate the history of “close reading” as a defining disciplinary method or technique, and the relations of formalism to other approaches to “English”; to develop an expanded critical vocabulary for poems as performances as well as verbal artifacts; to practise their ability to read poems aloud (and to ask whether elocution and memorization bear on criticism); to explore notable recordings of poets and poems, and perhaps to unearth them from archives; to examine theories of orality and literacy and the daily entanglements of written and spoken language; to survey twentieth- and twenty-first-century poetic practices in various mediums; to analyze tacit and explicit connections between “English studies” and the printed word, and the consequences thereof; and to view the explication of printed poems as only one of innumerable approaches to the effanineffable stuff we call poetry. Think of it as an introduction to poetics and criticism that begins with the ear. Sound good?

## Tentative Text List

All readings will be available online (via UVic Libraries where possible); no textbooks required.

1. Selections from, *inter alia*:

Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (1962)

Bernstein, ed., *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* (1998)

Boone and Mignolo, eds., *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (1994)

Brooks and Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (1938)

Burt, *Don't Read Poetry: A Book About How to Read Poems* (2019)

Chamberlin, *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories? Finding Common Ground* (2003)

Cook, *Against Coercion: Games Poets Play* (1998)

Eagleton, *How to Read a Poem* (2007)

Fee, *Literary Land Claims: The "Indian Land Question" from Pontiac's War to Attawapiskat* (2015).

Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (2015)

Guillory, *On Close Reading* (2025)

Guillory, *Professing Criticism: Essays on the Organization of Literary Study* (2022)

Kramnick, *Criticism and Truth: On Method in Literary Studies* (2023)

Lerner, *The Hatred of Poetry* (2016)

Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (2015)

Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (1960)

McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962)

Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982)

Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (2020)

... and essays by I. Armstrong, J. Culler, J. Gallop, M. Perloff, H. Vendler, and others as class interests demand.

2. A diversity of modern and contemporary poems by poets from Canada, the U.S., the U.K., and beyond. Works will largely be chosen based on student interest and prior reading, but we will be sure to include historically notable recordings, such as Ginsberg's 1956 reading of "Howl" with its endless bawls.

## Assignments

Seminar presentations (one on a critical statement, one on a poem): 2 x 25%

Proposal for research project: 10%

Final research paper or alternative (non-written?) project: 40%

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**ENGLISH 503****SPECIAL STUDIES IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA:****Victorian Canadian Prose****(1.5 Units)****Dr. Misao Dean****Thursdays, 5:30-8:20pm****HYBRID, SYNCHRONOUS**

This course will read some of the best known early Canadian writers, such as Susanna Moodie, Charles G. D Roberts, Sara Jeannette Duncan, Edith Eaton, and Thomas Chandler Haliburton, tracing the change from the dominance of the “prose sketch” through the short story to the modern novel in Canadian writing. We will read travel narratives, social commentary, early examples of commercial genre fiction as well as literary fiction, and discuss how colonialism has affected the choice of literary models and genres by Canadian writers and the relevance of material factors like copyright, publishing history, and distribution of books. We will also read autobiographical writing by indigenous and black authors and investigate the significance of this genre for non-white authors in nineteenth century Canada.

This course will encourage curiosity and poking around in the library (and on-line) to see what you like and what interests you. There are still lots of lesser-known writers to be discovered and enjoyed in this field.

This course has its origins in my current editorial project which is the creation of an anthology of nineteenth-century prose for Routledge Publishers. Students will be invited to investigate the editorial history of an excerpt suitable for inclusion in an anthology and to write a “headnote” and explanatory and textual annotations for their chosen excerpt.

**Tentative Text List**

A selection of explorer narratives

Susanna Moodie, *Roughing it in the Bush*

Thomas Chandler Haliburton, *The Clockmaker*

George Copway, *The life, history, and travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh*

George M. Grant, *Ocean to Ocean*

Sara Jeannette Duncan, journalism, short stories and other writings

Edith Eaton, various essays and stories

Charles G.D. Roberts, a selection of stories

A selection of Slave narratives (Josiah Henson, Thomas Smallwood), Mifflin Gibbs.

Readings from Thomas Hodd, I.S. MacLaren, Carl Ballstadt, Mary Chapman, Nick Mount, Michael Peterman, etc,

### **Assignments**

Anthology excerpt, edited with headnote: 40%

Short response papers: 40%

Final reflection: 20%

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## **ENGLISH 532**

### **TOPICS IN LITERARY HISTORY:**

**Anne Carson in Dialogue with Antiquity and Modernity  
(1.5 Units)**

**Dr. Eric Miller**

**Mondays, 12:00-2:50pm**

**IN-PERSON**

The work of Anne Carson in diverse genres (bellevistic essay, travelogue, translation, drama, verse); a reconnaissance of the canon that her oeuvre implicitly assembles (Homer, Sappho, Plato, Catullus, Stesichoros, the Bible, Emily Bronte, John Keats, Stein, Beckett, Weil, Woolf, Dickinson, Celan); consideration of Carson under the varied lights of queer and religious studies, feminism, the “culture industry,” rhetorical reading, philosophy, Classics.

### **Tentative Text List**

Plato’s “Symposium”; Plato’s “Phaedrus”; Sappho’s oeuvre; Catullus’s poetry; selections from Homer, the Bible, Keats, Stein, Beckett, Weil, Woolf, Dickinson, Celan; Carson’s books: *Eros the Bittersweet*; *Glass, Irony and God*; *Plainwater*; *Autobiography of Red*; *The Beauty of the Husband*; *Decreation*; *Wrong Norma*.

### **Assignments**

Presentations: 40%

Participation: 20%

Final Paper: 40%