

English 448: Re-Thinking Atwood through *The Handmaid's Tale*



Margaret Atwood seems to be everywhere. *The Handmaid's Tale* is enjoying a revival, with an Emmy-winning television adaptation entering its third season. Reviewers and columnists have remarked on its “grotesque timeliness” and uncanny parallels to the Trump era. Women dressed as Handmaids are protesting the new abortion laws in Alabama and Georgia, and Atwood plans a sequel and graphic novel adaptation in 2019. But many young scholars and writers in Canada have also declared they are “breaking up with CanLit” because they are disappointed by Atwood’s support for Steven Galloway in the “UBC Accountable” controversy, and more generally by the continued dominance of the literary field by white authors like Atwood. In this course we will debate these controversies, and try to put them in the context of Atwood’s long career by studying a selection of her novels, poems, and essays.

Tentative text list:

The Handmaid's Tale (both novel and graphic novel versions)

The Handmaid's Tale (television series season one)

Surfacing

Selected Poetry

Oryx and Crake

The Penelopiad

Also selections from Atwood’s essays, popular journalism, and from academic essays.