



English 2501E (570)
2025/26
Canadian Literature Survey

Course Information:

Calendar Description: What does literature tell us about the making of a nation and its citizens? Spanning the period from imperial exploration to Confederation to the present day, this course examines Canada's vibrant literary culture. Students will encounter a diverse range of genres and authors, from accounts of early explorers to current internationally claimed and award-winning writers.

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Antirequisite(s): English 2354E, English 2356F/G and English 3774E.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 1.00 **Breadth:** Category B

Subject Code: ENGLISH

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of prerequisites, no antirequisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ENGLISH 2501E (570)
Canadian Literature Survey
Fall/Winter 2025 - 2026

Instructor: Ian Rae Email: irae@uwo.ca

Course Information Class Times: Tuesday, Thursday: 1:00 – 2:30 PM

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EMAIL: irae@uwo.ca

OFFICE HOUR: Thursdays, 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce students to the canon of Canadian writing in English while situating literature in relation to crucial developments in other art forms.
2. To help students understand the political, material, and technological forces that have influenced the cultural development of Canada.
3. To highlight thematic and stylistic continuities between different generations of Canadian writers.
4. To show how different definitions of Canadian identity, and resistance to these definitions, have produced different literatures.
5. To introduce students to key concepts in Canadian literary criticism.

REQUIRED TEXTS (AVAILABLE AT UWO BOOKSTORE):

Reid, Bill and Robert Bringhurst. *The Raven Steals the Light*. Preface by Claude Lévi-Strauss. \$18.95.

Bennett, Donna and Russell Brown. *An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English*. 4th ed. \$127.99.

Ondaatje, Michael. *In the Skin of a Lion*. \$22.00.

Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. *Theory of Water: Nishnaabe Maps to the Times Ahead*. \$27.49.

Chariandy, David. *Brother*. \$18.15.

EVALUATION:

Short Reading Quizzes (for every assigned reading): 20%

Response Paper (Oct. 23, 1,250 words): 10%

Comparative Essay Outline (March 17, 500 words): 10%

Comparative Essay (April 9, 2,000 words): 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Participation: 5%

Attendance: 5%

READING QUIZZES: The first task of literary criticism is to read the text carefully. Therefore, each class from Sept. 9th onward will begin with a multiple-choice quiz of ten questions to test students' comprehension of the assigned text. The quizzes will take place in the first ten minutes of class.

At the end of the year, the two lowest marks from the quizzes will be deleted from your gradebook. These "freebies" are intended to cover classes missed due to unforeseen circumstances (bad weather, transportation issues, school trips, etc.). They cannot be further supplemented by self-reported absences.

WOODLAND CENTRE RESPONSE PAPER: Our class will take a bus trip to visit the Woodland Cultural Centre near Brantford:

The Woodland Cultural Centre (WCC) was established in October 1972, under the direction of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians upon the closure of the Mohawk Institute Residential School (MI). WCC's focus began on collecting research and artifacts, to develop its library and museum collections, expanding to include the arts in 1975 and the language program in 1984. With over 50,000 artifacts in our Museum collection, the Centre is one of the largest facilities in Canada managed and administered by First Nations. The WCC serves to preserve, promote and strengthen Indigenous language, culture, art and history; bringing the story of the Hodinohsho:ni people of the Eastern Woodlands to life through innovative exhibitions and programs. As an organization with historic expertise and strong community connections, WCC has a key role to play in knowledge and learning through its program offerings, including museums, language, education, library and arts. (<https://woodlandculturalcentre.ca/about/>)

The expenses of admission and transportation will be covered by the College. Students will be responsible for their own food and beverage costs. Students will craft a unique and thoughtful response to the museum exhibitions in relation to a shared question. This question will be announced before the trip. Simple description of the exhibition will not suffice—an argument is required. Students will present their arguments and findings informally as part of a class discussion on Oct. 23rd. All papers must be submitted to the Brightspace portal (under the "Assignments" tab) at 9 a.m. on Oct. 23rd.

DRAFT ESSAY OUTLINE: On March 17th, students are expected to submit a draft of their comparative essay outline to the professor via the Brightspace portal under the "Assignments" tab. This outline will include an introduction to the thesis topic (1-2 sentences), a thesis statement (1-2 sentences), main supporting arguments (one sentence each), preliminary conclusions (1-2 sentences), and a brief bibliography of secondary resources including key

quotations. The outline will receive feedback from the professor and a letter grade. The outline should demonstrate that students have, indeed, been researching and thinking about their final essay over the course of the winter term. Marks will be deducted for incomplete sections or failure to meet the requirements of the essay outline template posted on Brightspace. No late submissions will be accepted without the recommendation of a student counsellor.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY: The comparative essay, due on April 9th via the Brightspace portal, must demonstrate students' ability to analyze and synthesize course readings and secondary sources. The essay topic is entirely open to enable students to develop unique theses. The essay should compare and contrast two texts on our syllabus. The comparative essay should incorporate a minimum of four secondary sources (i.e. critical resources that are not part of the assigned reading). Essays should adhere to the standard format of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Copies of *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* are available in the DB Weldon and King's libraries. For the sake of consistency, please use the 9th edition of the *MLA Handbook* because the citation styles vary from edition to edition. Essays for this class must be typed and double-spaced. Essays should be submitted to turnitin.com via the Brightspace portal for this class. We will discuss essay expectations in class on Sept. 4th.

LATE POLICY FOR THE COMPARATIVE ESSAY: Essays submitted after the assigned due date will receive a penalty of 1% per day. Note that a weekend counts as one day. Requests for extensions will only be granted if the request is submitted in writing one week prior to the due date. Late papers will still be accepted by the Brightspace portal for a period of two weeks.

SOUNDTRACK SUGGESTIONS: Many readings on this syllabus feature a "soundtrack suggestion." This material is supplementary to the readings and will not be the subject of quiz questions. Each of the soundtrack suggestions relates to the reading and/or topic for that week, but the selections are not meant to be definitive—I am open to suggestions! The songs simply illustrate how issues addressed in Canadian literature resonate in popular culture.

ATTENDANCE: At the end of the year, two absences will be deleted from your attendance record. These "freebies" are intended to cover classes missed due to unforeseen circumstances (bad weather, transportation issues, school trips, etc.). They cannot be further supplemented by self-reported absences. Attendance credits are only granted to students who attend the entire class.

PARTICIPATION: The Participation mark is not an attendance mark. It is designed to reward students who make frequent and valuable contributions to class. Students who do not participate will not receive credit in this category.

ASSIGNED READINGS

Students should complete the readings below by the assigned dates. Most of the readings can be found in Bennett and Brown's *An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English*. Students are required to read the author and genre introductions that precede the selections in the anthology, which will be part of the reading quizzes. Readings from the other works will be indicated by their italicized titles (for book-length works), hyperlinks, or Brightspace folder locations.

INTRODUCTION

Sept. 4: "The Concept of Canada, an Introduction." No assigned reading. Discussion of essay expectations and the response paper. Soundtrack: Classified, "Oh... Canada." For extracurricular reading see: <http://canlitguides.ca/canlit-guides-editorial-team/introduction-to-nationalism/>

CREATION STORIES

Sept. 9: Bill Reid and Robert Bringhurst, *The Raven Steals the Light*, 9-24. Soundtrack: Robbie Robertson, "The Sound is Fading."

Sept. 11: Bill Reid and Robert Bringhurst, *The Raven Steals the Light*, 25-73.

Sept. 16: Bill Reid and Robert Bringhurst, *The Raven Steals the Light*, 75-109. Soundtrack: Buffy Sainte-Marie, "Eagle Man / Changing Woman."

Sept. 18: Eden Robinson selection. Soundtrack: Snotty Nose Rez Kids, "Indigenous Resistance."

Sept. 22 (special timeslot): President's Lecture by Dr. Niigaan Sinclair, Professor, Department of Indigenous Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Manitoba. "Not the Right Thing to Do, the Only Thing to Do: How Indigenous Education Will Save the World." Kenny Theatre, KUC, 5:30 p.m.

Sept. 23: Class cancelled so that students may attend the President's Lecture on Sept. 22nd.

Sept. 25: "The Haudenosaunee Creation Story" (<https://www.oneidaindiannation.com/the-haudenosaunee-creation-story/>); Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake) selections.

Sept. 30: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (non-instructional day). See campus events. Soundtrack: A Tribe Called Red, "How I Feel" Ft. Northern Voice, Shad and Leonard Sumner.

Oct. 2: Harry Robinson and Thomas King selections. Soundtrack: Drezus, "Get Up."

Oct. 7: "Sedna and the Fulmar" and "Kiviung" (see the handout under the unit heading on our Brightspace page). Soundtrack: Tanya Tagaq, "Umingmak."

NISHNAABE MAPS TO THE TIMES AHEAD

Oct. 9: Simpson, *Theory of Water*.

Oct. 14: Simpson, *Theory of Water*.

Oct. 16: Simpson, *Theory of Water*.

RESPONSE PAPERS

Oct. 18: (Saturday, TBC): Trip to Woodland Cultural Centre (<https://woodlandculturalcentre.ca/about/>).

Oct. 21: Tuesday class cancelled to accommodate the trip to the Woodland Cultural Centre (e.g. students who need to swap shifts at work). Students should work on their response papers.

Oct. 23: Discussion of response papers to the Woodland Cultural Centre. Response papers are due at 9 a.m. via the Brightspace portal. Class discussion of the response papers will ensue at 1 p.m. and no late papers will be accepted after the beginning of class. There will be no reading quiz for this class.

BRITISH EXPLORATION NARRATIVES

Oct. 28: Dr. John Franklin and Dr. John Richardson selections. Soundtrack: Stan Rogers, "The Northwest Passage."

Oct. 30: Margaret Atwood, "The Age of Lead." We will read the remainder of the Atwood selections in the anthology on Nov. 25th.

Nov. 3-9: FALL READING WEEK

Nov. 11: Stephen Leacock selection and John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields" (<https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/in-flanders-fields>).

CONFEDERATION POETS

Nov. 13: Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carman selections. Soundtrack: Alexander Muir, "The Maple Leaf Forever."

Nov. 18: D.C. Scott and Archibald Lampman selections.

EARLY SETTLER NARRATIVES

Nov. 20: Catharine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie selections.

Nov. 25: Margaret Atwood, remaining selections.

Nov. 27: Sinclair Ross selection. Soundtrack: The Tragically Hip, "Wheat Kings."

Dec. 2: Al Purdy selections. See Gord Downie's performance of "At the Quinte Hotel" at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPKeczB3wrg>.

BLACK SETTLER NARRATIVES

Dec. 4: George Elliott Clarke selections. Soundtrack: Oscar Peterson, "Blues for Big Scotia."

Dec. 9: Claire Harris selections.

Dec. 11 - Jan. 5: EXAM PERIOD AND WINTER HOLIDAYS.

MONTREAL MODERNS

Jan. 6: F.R. Scott and Marilyn Dumont selections. Soundtrack: Leonard Cohen, "Villanelle for Our Time." (Cohen's lyrics in this song come from a 1944 poem by F.R. Scott. Note that the refrain in the 1944 original is: "We rise to play our global part").

Jan. 8: Class Cancelled. Prof. Rae will be presenting at the 2026 MLA conference in Toronto.

Jan. 13: Mavis Gallant selection. P.K. Page selections. Soundtrack: David Usher, "St. Lawrence River."

Jan. 15: A.M. Klein selections. Irving Layton selections. Soundtrack: Leonard Cohen, "To a Teacher (dedicated to A.M. Klein)."

Jan. 20: Leonard Cohen selections. Soundtrack: Cohen, "Hallelujah," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrLk4vdY28Q>.

VARIETIES OF EXILE AND BELONGING

Jan. 22: Alice Munro selection.

Jan. 27: Alistair Macleod selection.

Jan. 29: Michael Ondaatje selections.

Feb. 3: Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*, "Book 1." Soundtrack: Neil Young, "Helpless."

Feb. 5: Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*, "Book 2." Soundtrack: Listen to this author interview with Ondaatje and consider the aural qualities of Ondaatje's research: <https://www.cbc.ca/books/canadareads/in-the-skin-of-a-lion-1.3993698>

Feb. 10: Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*, "Book 3." Soundtrack: Alexisonfire, "This Could Be Anywhere in the World."

ASIAN CANADIAN WRITING

Feb. 12: Joy Kogawa selections.

Feb. 14-22: Winter Term Reading Week (including Family Day).

Feb. 24: Fred Wah selections. Soundtrack: Sean Gunn and Ula Shine, "Head Tax Blues," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjZyk6aqJ3k>.

Feb. 26: M.G. Vassanji selection.

Mar. 3: Rohinton Mistry selection.

Mar. 5: Madeleine Thien selection.

BLACK POSTMODERNITY

Mar. 10: Dionne Brand selections. Soundtrack: Shad, "The Fool Pt. 1 (Get It Got It Good)."

Mar. 12: David Chariandy, *Brother*, 1-68. Soundtrack: See DJ Agile's mixtape for *Brother* on Soundcloud (<https://soundcloud.com/maximillian-arambulo/brother-the-mixtape-by-dj-agile>).

Mar. 17: David Chariandy, *Brother*, 69-134. Soundtrack: Maestro Fresh Wes, "Drop the Needle." Essay Outline Due.

Mar. 19: David Chariandy, *Brother*, 135-80. Soundtrack: Mustafa, "Name of God."

CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTS

Mar. 24: Anne Carson selections.

Mar. 26: Caroline Adderson selection.

Mar. 31: Christian Bök selections. Soundtrack: Glenn Gould, *The Goldberg Variations*.

April 2: Lisa Moore selection.

Apr. 7: Karen Solie selections.

Apr. 9: Conclusions. Soundtrack: Drake, "Started from the Bottom." Comparative Essay Due.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see

<https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.

