



English 2203G (570)  
Winter 2026  
Studies in Narrative Theory

**Course Information:**

**Calendar Description:** An introduction to important issues and concepts in the theory and analysis of narrative from different periods.

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

**Anti-requisite(s):**

**Extra Information:** 3 hours.

**Course Weight:** 0.50      **Breadth:** Category B

**Subject Code:** ENGLISH

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite 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 pre-requisites.

# English 2203F

## STUDIES IN NARRATIVE THEORY

Department of English, French, & Writing  
King's University College (Winter 2025)

Section: 570  
Instructor: Coby Dowdell  
Meetings: Mondays & Wednesdays,  
11:30-1:00pm

Virtual Office Hours: Tuesday, 9 am -12pm (via Zoom),  
or by appointment  
Email: [cdowdel2@uwo.ca](mailto:cdowdel2@uwo.ca)

### COURSE PREREQUISITES

At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E, 1022E, 1024E, 1035E or 1036E or both of English 1027F/G or 1028F/G, or permission of the Department. Please note: If you are following the 2019 Module Checklist and pursuing either a Specialization or an Honours Specialization in English Language and Literature, you are required to take 0.5 credits in theory at the 3000-level. ENG2203 can count towards this requirement if your final grade is 75% or higher.

### MODULE REQUIREMENTS

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer and artist, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, argues that "storytelling is at its core decolonizing...[and] becomes a lens through which we can envision our way out of cognitive imperialism, or we can create models and mirrors where none existed, and where we can experience the spaces of freedom and justice" (*Dancing* 33). Following Simpson's insights, this course takes seriously the work that both narrative and theories about narrative do. Approaching narrative theory from a range of diverse cultural perspectives, not simply as the kind of critical "thinking about stories" institutionalized by the Western academy, we will take David Morris' lead in "thinking with stories," an affective methodology that seeks to collectively deconstruct the opposition of reader and text, "allowing narrative to [instead] work on us" (Morris 55).

Beginning with formalist definitions and concepts such as plot, fabula/sjužet, signifier/signified, and narrator/narratee as the basis for our discussions, this course moves through the increasingly complex issues of diegesis, narrative temporality, focalization, narrative unreliability and the implied author, the phenomenology of the reader/author relationship, narrative as discursive competence, and theory as social action. Methodologically speaking, this course takes the intersection of narrative practice with race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ability as the preeminent criteria for assessing the relevance of narrative theory to the world(s) we live in. The pertinence of narrative theory for ethical transformation is highlighted by critical race theorist, Richard Delgado, who argues: "[o]ur social world, with its rules, practices, and assignments of prestige and power, is not fixed; rather, we construct it with words, stories, and silence....By writing and speaking against them, we may hope to contribute to a better, fairer world"(2013, 3). Feminist narratologist, Teresa De Lauretis, echoes Delgado's comments, insisting that the primary object of narrative theory must be "the work and effects," rather than the structure and form, of narrative: that is, the manner in which narratives engage "the subject in certain positionalities of meaning and desire....where that relation is materially inscribed—in a field of textual practices...[how] a subject engendered, we might say, precisely by the process of its engagement in the narrative genres" (De Lauretis 206). To this end, the positionality of the author, the theorist, the reader, the instructor, and the student matters.

This course will assess how the questions raised by narrative are inextricably linked to the question of ethics, morality, and social justice. We will examine the rudiments of narrative theory by immersing themselves in the richness and, at times, challenging prose of theorists such as Mieke Bal, Jonathan Culler, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Wolfgang Iser, Wayne Booth, Gerald Vizenor, Judith Roof, Teresa de Lauretis, Trin Minh Ha, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Barbara Christian, Claudia Breger, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Dian Million, David Herman, and others. This focus on reading primary theoretical texts not only provides a foundation for understanding the fundamentals of narrative, but also strives to enhance our fluency with critical vocabulary and comfort in discussing abstract ideas or concepts. Literary texts by authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, James Joyce, Naguib Mahfouz, Ambrose Bierce, Toni Morrison, N.K. Jemison, Chinua Achebe, Andrea Hairston, will ground our discussion of abstract theoretical concepts in specific narrative moments.

## COURSE-BASED LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To become fluent in the critical terms and primary concepts central to narrative theory and to question and critically reflect on the extent to which the theoretical study helps and/or hinders a commitment to decolonial, anti-oppressive, and antiracist frameworks.
2. To create an infrastructure for actively dismantling racism, homo/transphobia, misogyny, gender-based discrimination/violence, linguicism, and ableism through the questions we ask, the answers we pose, and the collective work we do as scholars and human beings.
3. To hone your critical communication skills: (i) how to assert an original voice; (ii) how to rhetorically position themselves within a larger community of scholars; (iii) how to effectively integrate critical theory and analytical practice for meaningful knowledge circulation

## REQUIRED TEXTS

McQuillian, Martin, ed.

The Narrative Reader (Routledge) (\$86.20)

## METHOD OF EVALUATION

ASSIGNMENT	WEIGHT	DUE DATE
Participation	15%	ongoing
Weekly Annotations (Persuall)	25%	Weeks 2-12
Short Essays #1 (4-6 pp.)	30%	Tba, Week 6
Short Essay #2 (4-6 pp.)	30%	Tba, Week 10

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](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.

Please note that Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

For further information, please see:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](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/](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](mailto: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](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](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 you 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.