

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**
<https://ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

Comparative Literature

2020-2021 C LIT: 228 A1: Literature, Popular Culture, and the Visual Arts
(Fall Term)

Note: Remote Delivery

Instructor: Gary Kelly
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Time (notional): TR12:30 – 1:50 pm
Place: Remote delivery
Office Hours: T W R 2:00 – 5:00 pm or by appointment

Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

Course Prerequisite: none

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the course.

Technology requirements (minimum): ability to get online, send and receive email, create and submit digital documents, participate in online meetings when necessary.

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate technology for the course.

Experiential Learning Component: None

Course-based Ethics Approval: No, not needed

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available N/A

Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

This course critically examines popular works in a range of important genres, in diverse media, from a variety of cultures, times, and places, in English translation or otherwise accessible to English speakers. Students fluent in other languages may also choose to study works in those languages. Genres may include romance, crime, adventure, poetry (popular music), drama and melodrama, humour, religious and inspirational, and so on. Media may include print (books, magazines, tabloids, zines, and ephemera e.g., greeting cards, posters, advertising), recordings, TV, films, radio, live performance, internet (e.g., blogs), and others. Students will have a great deal of individual choice and will have the option to do collaborative studies with others in the class, if so desired. Important themes may include, as individual students choose, popular cultures in the modern world across borders, “high” culture in dialogue with popular culture,

culture as everyday life, popular culture and individual and social identity, approaches to popular culture, the popular culture industries and the commerce of popular culture, popular culture in and as your everyday life, representations of social difference in popular arts, and other topics as desired. At the end of this course, successful students will be able to identify and study/research on a variety of popular arts across borders, record and report these studies for the use of others, and understand popular culture in your own and others' lives. By the end of the course students will be better able to study and research these and similar topics and also have greater confidence in their ability to do so.

Course Format: The objectives of this course will be achieved through student study, guided by the instructor, and recorded in regular brief reports in a Portfolio and reported in an individually designed Final Project. The instructor provides guidance through “lectures” and lectures (in written form); email dialogues; occasional online face-to-face conversations; feedback as desired; and suggested readings, viewings, and listening. Success will be achieved by regularly devoting about 8 hours per week to the course. There are no prescribed texts/works, but recommendations, based on materials available online through the U of A Library (ebooks, films, databases) and free internet resources. The instructor provides guidance on finding and using these resources.

Recommended Texts:

Popular fiction: find your own, as preferred, and arrangements have been made for you to design an individual package of genres through the knowledgeable staff at the Whyte Avenue Wee Book Inn, a long-established Edmonton used bookstore (contacts on their website); they also have curbside pickup for you, to reduce risk during the pandemic. I'm seeking to make a similar arrangement with the proprietors of a leading Edmonton graphic novels store.

Popular music: you may choose the “soundtrack of your life,” something you want to know about, genres such as J-Pop and K-Pop, music of other times and places, a popular music radio station, social dance, and so on.

Film and television: again, much to your choice, but I outline some things we can start off with before you collaborate with me to design your own syllabus

Other media: as desired

I. First half of the course:

Recommended starter kit: (NB: to make some of these links work you may have to copy the link and paste it in to your own browser)

Keywords and Concepts: as guided by the instructor

Resources: to be suggested by instructor

A. Sample genres and media:

Crime: Hannelore Cayre *The Godmother: A Crime Novel* (U of A Library ebook; slightly Gothic; perhaps somewhat feminist; deals with issues of gender, class, ethnicity; translated from French of a leading contemporary French crime writer); UA Library: <https://search.library.ualberta.ca/catalog/8867731>

And/or: Mickey Spillane, *I, The Jury* film (based on bestselling novel by controversial Spillane, uses elements of film noir, hardboiled detective genre; warning: may contain disagreeable social views)

And/or:

Takeshi Kitano (director), *Hana-bi (Fireworks)*, UA Kanopy database (go to UofA Library

database Kanopy, search for this title; you have to login to the website) breakthrough film by Japanese director Takeshi; film noir attributes; some scenes may be disturbing to viewers; fascinating takeoff from, homage to, parody of Hollywood crime/gangster movies

<https://search.library.ualberta.ca/catalog/8972795>

And/or: *Fallen Angels*, director Wong Kar-wai; UA Kanopy database; avant-garde, visually exciting, violent, erotic, comic, noir, set in Hong Kong criminal underworld; world famous director)

And/or: Edgar Allen Poe, one of the founders of Gothic and noir genres; novella, e.g., “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” that can be found in U of A Library ebook

<https://search.library.ualberta.ca/catalog/8610518>

Spies:

The Thief: YouTube (a very unusual Cold-War era thriller, in black and white, entirely without dialogue, noir elements, something of a cult classic)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R5kmVUAS9g>

And/or:

The Iron Curtain (another Cold War classic film, based on the true-spy Igor Gouzenko case in Canada)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ea-mphnYh-4>

B. A major genre: Westerns (and Easterns): recommended works to follow, to include choice of books (about Billy the Kid) and films (Wild West and Samurai movies)

II. Second part of the course:

Further studies: individual choices in consultation with the instructor.

Additional Course Fees: No

Important Dates: [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: September 1, 2020

Add/Delete Date: September 15, 2020

50% Withdrawal Date: October 2, 2020

Fall Term Reading Week: November 9-13, 2020

Withdrawal Date: November 30, 2020

Last Day of Class: December 7, 2020

Components of Course Grade (see “Explanatory Notes”):

- a. number and quality of portfolio items—40%
- b. an individually chosen method for reporting on course learning—10%
- c. reflection report: my life in/as/through popular literature and media—20%
- d. quality of course project—30%

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Portfolio: collection of your brief study and research summaries, more or less every week, defined by yourself with guidance and advice from the instructor; assessed by number (at least 8 to 10) and quality (criteria guidance distributed later).

Individual method for reporting on your course learning: be imaginative, negotiate it with the

instructor, more for your self-guidance.

Reflection report: for later in the course, to encourage you to bring together your own life in and with the popular arts and what you did and learned in the course.

Final Course Project: about 8-10 pages, topic negotiated with the instructor, take what you learned in the course and apply it to a relevant topic of your interest.

Required Notes: Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity: The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

1. Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
2. If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Sexual Violence Policy: It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

Territorial Statement: “The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.” (from the beginning of the Calendar).

Recording of Lectures: Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without

prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components: Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

In this course, students should decide, in consultation with the instructor, how or if to be graded on attendance and participation.

Policy for Late Assignments: Students should decide, in consultation with the instructor, how or if each wants to be downgraded for late submission of assignments.

Disclaimer: Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources: The best all-purpose website for student services is:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB) The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall) The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds: The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading: Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<p>Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.</p>	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
<p>Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.</p>	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
<p>Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.</p>	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
<p>Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.</p>	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
<p>Failure.</p>	F	0.0	0-59

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