

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

**2017-2018 C LIT 210 B1: Cyberliterature**

**(Winter Term)**

Instructor: Dr Astrid Ensslin  
Office: 241-C Old Arts Building  
Telephone: N/A  
Course Website: eClass  
Homepage: <https://www.ualberta.ca/arts/about/people-collection/astrid-ensslin>

Time: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00 to 9:50  
Place: Tory Building, B-81  
Office Hours: by appointment  
E-mail: [ensslin@ualberta.ca](mailto:ensslin@ualberta.ca)

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**Course Prerequisite:** N/A

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes       No, not needed, no such projects involved

**Community Service Learning** component

Required     Optional     None

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

- Exam registry – Students' Union  
[http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services\\_and\\_businesses/services/infolink/exams](http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services_and_businesses/services/infolink/exams)
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes       No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course discusses the condition of literature in electronic media. Starting from the late 1970s, the course surveys early attempts to experiment in new genres using features of the digital world, and moves on to analyze some of the current literary experiences in the cyberspace as well as examining some of the issues that characterizes the production of literary works on electronic platforms. The course focuses on fan fiction communities, social networks, videogames, digital fiction and several other spheres of literary activity. It also explores some of the lesser known subgenre of cyber literature, such as newsgames, interactive documentaries and virtual reality. At

the end of this course, students will have developed an extensive and diverse knowledge of works of cyberliterature and will be able to recognize genres, critically engage with these texts and effectively compare and contrast them to works of printed literature. Students will be able to evaluate and analyze works of cyberliterature from the perspectives of content, means of production, type of electronic platform as well as publishing and circulation method.

### **Texts:**

Readings provided on Eclass.

**The required texts are available online. Links will be provided on Moodle e-class. New links for other texts will be added and updated frequently throughout the course.**

Aarseth - "Introduction to Ergodic Literature"  
Ciccoricco - "Digital Fiction"  
Hayes: "Electronic Literature: What is it?" Section 2  
Deemer: "What is Hypertext?"  
Douglas: "Just Tell me When to Stop"  
Ryan: "The Interactive Onion"  
Barthes: "Death of the Author"  
Michel Foucault: "What is an Author"  
Stanley Fish: "Literature in the Reader"  
Tomasula: "Code Poetry and New-media Literature"  
Elias: "Virtual Autobiography"  
Jenkins: "What Happened Before Youtube?"  
Busse & Hellekson: "Introduction: Work in Progress"  
Kaplan: "Construction of Fan Fiction Character through Narrative"  
Russ: "Pornography By Women For Women, With Love"  
Brennan & Large: "Fifty Shades and the Phenomenon of Pulling to Publish"  
Calleja: "Narrative Involvement in Video Games"  
Calleja: "Immersion in Video Games"  
Bogost: "Newsgames"

**Students need to purchase the following games / digital fictions to be studied as part of their coursework. Detailed information about them will be given in class. Each student should have a Steam and iTunes account and access to devices that support these titles. Joint access arrangements between students will be acceptable.**

The Stanley Parable  
Gone Home  
Dear Esther  
Mr. President  
Pry

**Students need to access the following free videogames as part of the course. Further information will be provided in class.**

Passage  
Façade  
Katawa Shoujo Act 1

**Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

1. Participation—20%
2. In-class presentation of a primary text—20%
3. 2 Short papers, (critical readings), 500 to 1000 words each—30% (15% each, due in week 5 and 11)
4. Final Essay: 2,000-2,500 words— 30% (due on April 16)

**Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

Guidelines will feature on eclass and be further explained in class.

Participation: regular class attendance, evidence of having read/played set materials, and participation in group and class-wide discussions.

In-class presentation of a primary text: reporting about textual material featured in the class. Students can choose the text they will present and if they present individually or in group.

2 Short papers: critical readings of about 500 to 1000 words each, aimed to show students’ critical engagement with set secondary texts, composed individually.

Final essay: a 2,000-2,500 word essay that will ask students to critically compare two pieces of cyberliterature from a list of preselected titles using theories and concepts seen throughout the course.

**Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar.”

***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 Behaviour (online at [www.governance.ualberta.ca](http://www.governance.ualberta.ca)) and avoid any behaviour which 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.”

***Learning and Working Environment:***

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

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that directs 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 student ombudservice (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/> ).

Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110>

### ***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Student Conduct & Accountability Office](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

**Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

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](#).

### ***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.

**In this course**, regular attendance is mandatory. Students only have two absence allowances throughout the semester. Any more absences from the class will lead to partial or total loss of the participation segment of the course grade, unless the student has a valid excuse for his/her absence (e.g., health problems, serious emergency case, serious domestic issues) and notifies the instructor in writing as outlined above. Planning conflicts or being too busy with assignments of other courses **DO NOT** count as valid excuse for absence.

***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Students who consult **in advance** with the instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension just one time throughout the course with no penalty. **No second extension** will be granted to a student. The penalty for late submission of assignments without an explicitly granted extension (in writing) is 5% per day. Example: An essay that is worthy of grade “A” (~94%) will be graded “B+” (~89%) if submitted one day late, and “B” (~84%) if submitted two days late. Late excuses will **not** be accepted for any reason.

***Student Accessibility Services:***

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381).

***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	%
<b>Excellent.</b> 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.	A+	4.0	<b>97-100</b>
	A	4.0	<b>93-96</b>
	A-	3.7	<b>90-92</b>

<p><b>Good.</b> 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>B+</b>	3.3	<b>87-89</b>
	<b>B</b>	3.0	<b>83-86</b>
	<b>B-</b>	2.7	<b>80-82</b>
<p><b>Satisfactory.</b> 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>	<b>C+</b>	2.3	<b>77-79</b>
	<b>C</b>	2.0	<b>73-76</b>
	<b>C-</b>	1.7	<b>70-72</b>
<p><b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> 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>	<b>D+</b>	1.3	<b>65-69</b>
	<b>D</b>	1.0	<b>60-64</b>
<p><b>Failure.</b></p>	<b>F</b>	0.0	<b>0-59</b>