## ARTS & SCIENCE 4CD3 / RESEARCH AND CREATIVE WRITING
## 2020-21 (Term 1)

**Instructor:** Anton Piatigorsky LRW-3038, Jenkins Room (416-602-9655) ([piatiga@mcmaster.ca](mailto:piatiga@mcmaster.ca))
**Class Time and Location:** Thursday 11:30 – 2:20, on Zoom
**Office Hours:** Thursday 9:30-11:20, on Zoom (or by appointment)

**Course Description and Objectives**
The process of creative writing involves two overlapping parts: inspiration and execution. Most writing courses only address the latter part, focusing exclusively on technical questions of execution, such as how to construct plot, character and theme, or how to apply dialogue, exposition and metaphor. This course, in contrast, is concerned with inspiration. We examine and consider how source materials are used to create works of poetry, plays and fiction. It is equally analytical, critical and practical. We read and analyze great literature, but from the writer's perspective, allowing us to study how source materials have been used to inspire and execute their works. Students are encouraged to learn techniques of inspiration: how to read associatively and imaginatively; how to utilize the form and content of reading for your own ends; and how to target research to deepen and expand your ideas. The goal is to demystify inspiration, to strip it of divine or Romantic connotations, and to foster curiosity and creative ambition. Aspiring writers of every level will adopt expansive themes, subject matter and techniques in their own work, and gain comfort tackling projects that demand research.

**Course Structure and Schedule**
The course is divided into two complementary sections. Part one addresses how to research form and structure (weeks 1-4). Part two addresses how to research content (week 5-12). Each class has three components: a theoretical investigation, an examination of a writer or writers, and a practical application. Each week is structured around a theme, and has assigned reading.

**Virtual Classes**
For this term, all classes will be synchronous, and held on Zoom.

1) Inspiration (September 10, 2020).
    James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake*, pp. 3-4. (ccw).
    Joseph Campbell & Henry Morton Robinson, *A Skeleton's Key to Finnegan's Wake*, pp. 3-13, 15-16, 22-34 (ccw).

2) Form: Poetry (September 17, 2020)
    Stephen Burt and Davod Mikics, *The Art of the Sonnet*. Introduction, pp. 5-25.
    Sir Philip Sidney, "Astrophel and Stella 45" pp. 38-42.
    Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Sonnets from the Portuguese 28," pp. 162-165.
    Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Bluebeard," pp. 242-245.
    Robert Lowell, "Searching" pp. 325-328.
    Alison Brackenbury, "Homework. Write a Sonnet. About Love?" pp. 397-399 (ccw).
    Agha Shahid Ali, "Tonight", pp. 233-239 (from *the poem is you*, by Stephen Burt)

3) Form: Drama (September 24, 2020)
    *Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett

4) Form: Fiction (October 1, 2020)

James Wood, *How Fiction Works*. "Narration" pp. 3-38 (ccw).
James Joyce, "The Dead" (ccw).

5) <u>Ideology and Philosophy</u> (October 8, 2020)
   Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions*. "The Library of Babel," pp. 112-118 (ccw).
   Lydia Davis, *The Collected Stories of Lydia Davis*. "The Center of the Story," pp. 173-177 (ccw).
   Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, "The Grand Inquisitor," pp. 246-264 (ccw).

6) <u>Mythology and Ancient Text</u> (October 22, 2020)
   Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad.*
   Zachary Mason, *The Lost Books of the Odyssey*, "The Stranger," pp. 9-16, "Bacchae," pp. 32-38,
   "Fragment," p. 71, "The Iliad of Odysseus," pp. 86-103.

7) <u>History, Part One</u> (October 29, 2020)
   Anton Piatigorsky, *The Iron Bridge*. "Tea is Better than Pepsi," pp. 11-41; "The Consummation," pp.
   79-126 (ccw).
   John Nunnelly, *Tales from the King's African Rifles*, pp. pp. 3-5, 156-159 (ccw).

8) <u>History, Part Two</u> (November 5, 2020)
   George Saunders, *Lincoln in the Bardo*

9) <u>Anthropology</u> (November 12, 2020)
   Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* pp. 1-139 (optional: the rest of the book)

10) <u>Legal Procedure/Natural Science</u> (November 19, 2020)
    Sergio de la Pava, *A Naked Singularity*, pp. 266-274 (first line), 281-301 (ccw).
    E.O. Wilson, *Anthill*, "The Anthill Chroncles," pp. 173-247.

11) <u>Psychology and Character</u> (November 26, 2020)
    Stephen Grosz, *The Examined Life*. "On Laughter," pp 11-17; "A Safe House," pp. 28-35; "A Passion
    for Ignorance," pp. 55-62; "How Paranoia Can Relieve Suffering and Prevent a Catastrophe," pp. 81-
    85; "On losing a Wallet," pp. 130-135
    David Foster Wallace, *Oblivion*. "Good Old Neon," pp. 141-181 (ccw).

12) <u>Your Life</u> (December 3, 2020)
    J.M. Coetzee, *Summertime*. pp. 3-84, 221-242 (optional: the rest of the book).

**Required Texts**
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad*
Zachery Mason, *The Lost Books of the Odyssey*
E.O. Wilson, *Anthill*
Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*
George Saunders, *Lincoln in the Bardo*
Stephen Grosz, *The Examined Life*
J.M. Coetzee, *Summertime*

Additional reading is contained in the custom courseware (ccw), available at the *Campus Store*.

**Assignments**

Class Participation……………………………………………………………… 4%
In Class Assignments…………………………………………………….. 10%
Researching Form Assignment…………………………………………. 23%
Researching Content Assignment……………………………………… 23%
Final Project…………………………………………………………….. 40%

• Class Participation includes attendance, completion of the reading, involvement in class discussion, and engagement in weekly group exercises.

• Each class features an in class assignment to practice the ideas and techniques discussed in that class. Each student is required to submit 3 of their in class assignments at the end of the semester. These combined assignments will make up 10% percent of the final grade, and will be graded in a manner similar to participation.

• Researching Form Assignment is a work of poetry, drama or fiction 700-1100 words (for fiction and drama), 2-3 pages (for poetry), double spaced, with 12pt. font, either poetry, play or fiction, that utilizes the skills learned in the first part of the course, on how to research and/or use formal and structural elements. It is **due on Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 4PM (via Avenue to Learn)**.

• Researching Content Assignment is a work of poetry, play or fiction 700-1100 word (for fiction and drama), 2-3 pages (for poetry), double spaced, with 12pt. font, either poetry, play or fiction, that utilizes the skills learned in the second part of the course, on how to research content, and apply source material. It is **due on Monday, November 9, 2020 at 4PM (via Avenue to Learn).**

• The Final Project consists of two pieces: a) a longer creative work, 2500-3800 words (for fiction or drama) or a shorter 10-12 pages (for poetry), double spaced, with 12pt. font, that includes research and source materials in its creation, and b) a shorter explanatory essay, 200-800 words, double spaced, with 12pt. font, that describes precisely how you have used your research. The point of the final project, and other assignments, is not to write a masterpiece, but rather to show diligence, imagination and flexibility in your process – to practice using research for creative work. The Explanatory Essay is not anything like a formal bibliography. It is rather a document that explains your sources, your thought processes, and your creative leaps in the process of writing. It is **due on Monday, December 14, 2020 at 4PM (via Avenue to Learn)**.

•Please submit all assignments in **.doc or .docx format**.

• The written work submission guidelines have been chosen to support the more sustainable use of paper, energy, and toner, and meet the Gold standard of the Office of Sustainability <www.mcmaster.ca/sustainability>. All written work should be submitted in the following format: no title page; sans-serif font.

• The penalty for late submission of assignments is **3% per day, including days of the weekend**.

**SENATE-APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the *Academic Integrity Policy,* located at https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures- guidelines/.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

**AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION**
**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., online search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

**COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT**
**Some courses may** use online elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.).  Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses online elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

**ONLINE PROCTORING**
**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

**CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

**REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK**

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

**COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

**EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme

circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

**NOTES FOR ALL ARTS & SCIENCE COURSES**

1. Some of the statements above refer to a "Faculty Office"; please note that the Arts & Science Program Office serves in this capacity.
2. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster email regularly. Announcements will be made in class, via A2L, and/or via the course email distribution list <d-as4CD3@mcmaster.ca>.