



**ST. JEROME'S**  
**UNIVERSITY**

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**St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo**  
**Department of English**  
**Course Engl 108X Literature and Medicine**  
**Winter 2019**  
**11.30-12.50 Classroom SJ1 3016**

**Instructor: Carol Acton**

Office, Sweeney Hall 2201: [cgacton@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:cgacton@uwaterloo.ca)

NB Please always include the **course number** in the subject heading of your e-mails

Office hrs: Mon/Wed 1.30-2.30 or by appointment

I will be happy to discuss your assignments and essays during office hours and to assist in the essay writing process with you on an individual basis. In addition, please drop in during regular office hours or make an appointment if you can't come during the scheduled time to talk about your work and the course. The best way to reach me outside class is to e-mail me. Please remember to include the course number in any e-mails you send (otherwise I tend to treat them as spam) and to give your full name in the e-mail text.

**Course Description**

How can literature help us understand the body, illness and healing? The course considers the perspectives of patients and medical practitioners across a range of texts including poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. More specifically, the course includes texts that relate to mental and physical health ranging in time from Whitman's poem about his very physical interaction with the wounded as a wound-dresser in the American Civil War, to concerns about the impersonality of medical technology in the present. The works we will be reading offer ways of thinking about the subjective experience of illness from the position of medical practitioner, patient and family member, as well as the larger social and cultural issues around illness and death.

**Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

The aim of this course is to have you consider the role of literature and language in conveying experiences of illness and dying from a range of perspectives. Medical Humanities is often incorporated into medical training as a way of developing practitioners' understanding of the patient as person as well as illness and to allow patients to speak. Story telling is embedded in medicine, from the case history to the patient-doctor exchange. Critical close reading of literary texts offers an important approach to the telling of and listening to narratives of illness. This course is designed to develop an ongoing exchange in understanding medicine, the individual self and the body and mind through class discussion, individual writing assignments and end of term presentations which will reflect on the experiences we have had with literature and

medicine throughout the term. As it is a literature course our focus on the literary texts will involve the close reading that is central to English as a discipline.

### **Required Texts**

Borden, Mary. *The Forbidden Zone* available online at

<http://www.ourstory.info/library/2-ww1/Borden2/fz.html>

Chekhov, Anton. 'Ward 6' available online at

<http://nmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/1332.pdf>

Edson, Margaret. *Wit* (bookstore)

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, *The Yellow Wallpaper* available online at

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1952/1952-h/1952-h.htm>

Lam, Vincent. 'Before Light', from *Bloodletting and Miraculous Cures* (digital reserve)

Owen, Wilfred. 'Mental Cases', 'Disabled' available online at

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57285/disabled>

<https://learn.stleonards.vic.edu.au/yr9hisau/files/2013/05/Wilfred-Owen-Mental-Cases.pdf>

Whitman, Walt. 'The Wound Dresser' online at

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53027/the-wound-dressere>

Williams, William Carlos. 'The Use of Force' and 'The Practice' from *The Doctor Stories* (digital reserve)

Selected poetry and other readings (online and/or digital reserve – see schedule)

### **Course Requirements and Assessment**

Participation and Attendance: 20%:

10% for Attendance (you can have 2 missed classes over the term without penalty. Any others must have a good reason – eg illness, family emergency)

10% for Participation: participation means coming to class prepared to discuss the material for that class or week; engage in discussion; listen to others. If you suffer from severe anxiety (most people suffer some anxiety – that's normal) when speaking in class please discuss this with me at the beginning of term so I can find an alternative way of assessing your participation.

Reflective responses: 2 @ 15% each = 30% I will provide more information in class and via Learn e-mail

Literary-critical essay: at least 8 pages double spaced, 11 or 12 pt font, 35%: Topics and

instruction via Learn e-mail and in class

Final presentation (based on essay content): in class in week 12, 15% - more information in class and via e-mail

Here are two very useful websites that will help with essay writing and various forms of communication more generally. These will be especially useful if you are not familiar with writing an English literary-critical essay.

Trent University Academic Skills: <http://www.trentu.ca/academicskills/resources/overview.php>

Purdue University OWL: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)

Course Outline / Class Schedule The following schedule may be subject to minor changes. I may add to it and/or provide other material in class. I will notify you if I will be making changes so please check your UW e-mail regularly. Please read the assigned texts before the class as preparation for analysis and discussion and again afterwards to reconsider the class analysis and make connections with other texts.

**Please bring your text to each class** - in English we engage in ‘close reading’ which means you need to have a copy of the text (preferably print) to refer to in class. I recognize not all the material is easily printable: *The Forbidden Zone* and *The Yellow Wallpaper* are fine to bring on your computer (not your phone). Poetry and short stories and other shorter readings should be printed out from the digital copies.

Week	Date	Topic/Readings	Assignments Due
1	Jan 7/9	Telling medical stories; Brian Turner: ‘AB Negative’ and ‘Line 9 Medevac’ handouts – the medic and the patient (Afghanistan medevac video <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4pFVkb0Vo4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4pFVkb0Vo4</a> )	In-class activity – medical stories
2	Jan 14/16	Marva Dawn, ‘The Color Red’; Coulehan, ‘Anatomy Lesson’; Foy, ‘Autopsy’; Francis ‘Transformation’; Williams, ‘The Practice’; Marsh, ‘Aneurism’ (digital reserve) Reflection guidelines	Week 2 readings
3	Jan 21/23	Scarry on Pain (handout); Campo, ‘The Distant Moon’; Kenyon, ‘Otherwise’; Hall, ‘The Ship Pounding’; Moore, ‘People like that’; Endrezze, ‘Ponies gathering in the dark’ (digital reserve)	
4	Jan 28/30	Lam, ‘Before Light’; Maskalyk, ‘U is for Urban’; Goldman ‘I never forget’; O’Reilly, ‘Abused Child’; Campo ‘Ten patients and another’ (digital reserve)	Reflection 1 30th
5	Feb 6/8	Drama: Play Wit +discussion	Week 5 readings

Week	Date	Topic/Readings	Assignments Due
6	Feb 13/15	Wit: Film + discussion	
7	Feb 27/29	Medicine and the First World War: Forbidden Zone	Week 7 readings
8	March 4/6	Medicine and War: Civil War, Whitman 'Wound Dresser'; First World War Owen, 'Disabled', 'Mental Cases'; Second World War, Morris diary extract (handout); MacCarthy extract (digital reserve) Vietnam War, 'Coffee Room Soldier', 'Wounds of War'; MSF Kaplan, 'Kurdistan'	Reflection 2 due 6th
9	March 11	History and gender: Harjo, 'Three generations'; Mental Health - Yellow Wallpaper	Week 9 readings
10	March 18	Yellow Wallpaper	Week 10 readings
11	March 25/27	Chekhov, 'Ward 6'; Williams, 'The Use of Force'; Bulgakov, 'The Steel Windpipe' (digital reserve)	Essay due 27th
12	April 1/3	Presentations	Presentations

### Late Work

Late assignments will have 2% deducted per day late. However, if you request an extension via e-mail at least 24hrs before the deadline, I can arrange a new deadline with you without penalty.

**NB** Because of the context, the end of term presentations cannot be rescheduled unless you are ill and can show a doctor's note. It is in your own best interest to hand work in on time so you don't become overwhelmed with overdue work. Please let me know if ongoing illness or family or personal issues cause problems during the term as it makes it much easier for me help you plan work accordingly if I know about such issues.

### Information on Plagiarism Detection

Description of software used to detect plagiarism.

### Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices: To minimize distractions in class I ask that you not use phones or other electronic devices. If you need to use a laptop for accessing a text or for medical reasons that is permissible, but otherwise I prefer you do not use computers. They can be distracting to you and other students. Cognitive psychologists have shown that you think better and retain information more fully if you take notes in class by hand.

### Important Information

**Academic Integrity:** To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) webpage for more information.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is

unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#).

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

**Note for Students with Disabilities:** The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

**Mental Health Services:** Lindsay Thomson is St. Jerome’s University’s Wellness Coordinator. She can be contacted at 519-884-8111 x28361 or at [lindsay.thompson@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:lindsay.thompson@uwaterloo.ca). Her office is Sweeney Hall 1016.

### On Campus (UW)

- Counselling Services: [counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca) / 519-888-4567 x32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from the Student Life Centre

### Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Extended Assessment Unit Phone: 519-749-4300 x6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): Support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 x222

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

Mental Health