

# ENGL 348: Special Topic: Awkward Books

## Trimester 2 2014

14 July to 16 November 2014

**20 Points**

### TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	14 July to 17 October 2014
Mid-trimester break:	25 August to 7 September 2014
Last piece of assessment due:	17 October 2014

### WITHDRAWAL DATES

Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds)

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination (aegrotats), refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat)

### CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

#### Lectures

Monday, Tuesday	9.00-9.50	Hunter HULT323
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#### Tutorials

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the ENGL 348 site on Blackboard: go to “Tutorial Sign Up” and then follow the instructions under the “S-Cubed Log In” link. Please read the instructions carefully. Tutorial rooms will be listed on S-Cubed, Blackboard and on the bulletin board in the Level 3 corridor of the Hugh Mackenzie Building.

### NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Staff	Email	Phone	Room	Office Hours
James Meffan	<a href="mailto:James.Meffan@vuw.ac.nz">James.Meffan@vuw.ac.nz</a>	463 6807	vZ903	tba

## COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All changes or additional information will be conveyed to students via Blackboard.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## PRESCRIPTION

What leads people to ban, burn, censor, censure or generally revile works of literature? This course will investigate the relationship between literary fiction and ethics by reading a series of controversial novels written in the last hundred years against the context of their production and reception.

## COURSE CONTENT

Great literature has the capacity to take us beyond the narrow confines of the familiar: the world around us, our habits of mind. We might say that great literature unsettles us. But is it therefore the case that unsettling literature is necessarily good literature? And are there limits to the extent that literature can legitimately upset established conventions of taste, morality and comprehensibility?

Examining some novels that are, in various ways, awkward, this course will consider a range of critical responses to them and in doing so explore some important literary controversies. The course covers a range of novels from the late nineteenth through to the early twenty first centuries, reading them in relation to the context of their writing and reception. The course will provide an introduction to some of the theoretical and critical issues relevant to literature and ethics (and literary analysis in general).

In addition to set novels, required reading includes selected non-fictional writing, in order to elaborate historical context and familiarise students with significant critical concerns. These readings are a crucial component of the course and will be posted on Blackboard.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. demonstrate understanding of some of the theoretical and critical issues relevant to the study of ethics and literary fiction;
2. demonstrate the skills of attentive reading through close analysis and discussion in relation to the set novels;
3. demonstrate the skills of theoretical analysis and discussion in relation to the set novels and selected non-fictional writings;
4. show familiarity with the thought, form, techniques and language of the set novels;

5. demonstrate an understanding of the general nature of twentieth and twenty first century fiction in relation to the social, cultural and theoretical contexts to which it belongs;
6. show evidence of alert and informed reading, and command of the oral and written processes of literary discussion, especially in critical analysis and evaluation.

### TEACHING FORMAT

The course will be delivered through two lectures and one tutorial each week. In addition to set novels, required reading includes selected non-fictional writing, in the form of historical information and critical commentary on the novels. Students will be expected to prepare for and actively participate in tutorial discussions.

### MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Submit the essays and assignments, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Attend at least 8 out of 11 tutorials

### WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20-point course is 200 hours over the trimester or 13 week hours per teaching week.

A course on the novel inevitably entails considerable time spent reading (and re-reading) set texts. In addition to the reading of set novels you are also required to spend time reading the critical and theoretical writings set for the course and attending lectures and tutorials. It is strongly recommended that you develop regular reading habits to ensure that you have read set fiction and critical writing before it is discussed in class.

### ASSESSMENT

This course is entirely internally assessed by a combination of reading reports and essays. Assessment has been structured to meet the aims and objectives of the course and to ensure coverage of most of the novels and critical material on the course. Both reading report and essays questions will develop and assess the ability to read literary and critical works specifically and competently. Assessment is weighted as follows: three brief reading reports (worth 30% in total); and two compulsory in-term essays (70%).

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	600-word report	10%	1, 3, 5, 6	25/07/14

2	600-word report	10%	1, 3, 5, 6	8/08/14
3	2,000-word essay	35%	1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6	12/09/14
4	600-word report	10%	1, 3, 5, 6	26/09/14
5	2,000-word essay	35%	1, 3, 5, 6	17/10/14

### SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Work provided for assessment in this course will be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin. Follow the instructions provided in the "Assignments and Turnitin" section of Blackboard.

Electronic assignments are submitted as a MS Word file through Blackboard. How to name your file and step-by-step instructions can be found on Blackboard in the "Assignments and Turnitin" section.

Your marked assignment will be found on Blackboard in the same section.

### EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

#### Extensions

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions. **No assignment with or without an extension will be accepted after Friday 31 October 2014.**

#### Penalties

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

### SET TEXTS

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Penguin Classic);

Albert Camus, *The Outsider* (Penguin A Format or Penguin Modern Classic);

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (Popular Penguin or Pocket Penguin);

Brett Easton Ellis, *American Psycho* (Macmillan);

JM Coetzee, *Disgrace* (Vintage UK);

Lionel Shriver, *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (Penguin B Format).

You can order textbooks online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz).

## RECOMMENDED READING

Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (PN98 M67 B725 C)

Tobin Siebers, *The Ethics of Criticism* (PN98 M67 S571 E)

J. Hillis Miller, *Ethics of Reading : Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin* (PN98 R38 M648 E)

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

You may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

**Class Rep name and email address for this course:**

## STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

[www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute:  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)

- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)
- School website: [www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms)



School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies  
ENGLISH LITERATURE PROGRAMME COURSE OUTLINE ENGL 348

Week 10      29 Sep    Lecture 19: *Disgrace*  
                  30 Sep    Lecture 20: *Disgrace*

Week 11      6 Oct     Lecture 21: Cause and Culpability  
                  7 Oct     Lecture 22: *We Need to Talk About Kevin*

Week 12      13 Oct    Lecture 23: *We Need to Talk About Kevin*  
                  14 Oct    Lecture 24: Wrap up

ESSAY 2 DUE FRIDAY 17 OCTOBER