

HIST 5222 Topics in Canadian Social History Fall 2014 **Antimodernism, Modernism, and Postmodernism in Twentieth-Century** **Canadian Culture**

This year's version of HIST 5222 can be organized in two ways.

There are currently 11 undergrads enrolled in HIST 4222; there is an additional undergrad who will be taking it as a GWST credit. Also, others have expressed interest in the course, but are "shopping around," as Dalhousie undergrads do. HIST 4222 is scheduled for Mondays, 10:35-1:25.

If the final numbers shrink, graduate students can join the undergraduate version without any quality-based questions arising. If, however, undergrad demands remains high, and depending on graduate interest, it may be more productive to have a second version of the class, with the graduate students & a few undergrads with similar research interests.

In terms of the graduate workload, greater than that of the undergraduate version:

1. The case study essay is to be approximately 3000 words (10 pages, with footnotes) in length.
2. The research essay is to be approximately 6000 words (20 pages, with footnotes) in length.
3. Finally, each graduate student will be assigned two additional articles, agreed to by the student and instructor after consultation.

Interested students are asked to email me, todd.mccallum@dal.ca, between Friday, Sept 4th, and Sunday, Sept 6th, so that I can assess demand before Monday's first meeting. Once we have decided on the final format of HIST 5222, I will draw up an official syllabus with proper meeting dates.

HIST 4222/5222 Topics in Canadian Social History Fall 2014

Antimodernism, Modernism, and Postmodernism in Twentieth-Century Canadian Culture

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What follows is the class schedule; the full syllabus, with accompanying material on university, faculty and departmental regulations, will be distributed in class.

This year's seminar considers the Canadian dimensions of an international story, how the young white woman became both sign and subject of twentieth-century modernity in all its complexities. Covering the period from the conclusion of the first world war – often characterized as marking our independence in the eyes of the Western powers – to the repatriation of the Constitution – we will not take roads well travelled, but instead grub through the trash & visit the margins & beyond in search of our research material. The young white woman, as both sign and subject, cannot be understood as existing apart from other, equally important others, who were themselves dependent upon the millions of young women for their existence and their culture.

In general terms, we will examine some of the interpretive systems of thought pertaining to cultural analysis – how narratives work (including how we think they work), and how meaning is created (if in fact it is). Finally, we will unpack the analytical techniques associated with “close reading,” and put them into practice in reference to a wide range of products.

Class Schedule

Sept 8th Introduction – “Indissoluble Female Units”

As our introductory case study, we'll consider the choreographed dance routines that some commentators thought symbolized the latest advances in industrial rationality. For our purposes, we will consider three numbers from the infamous American film *Gold Diggers of 1933*, starring Dartmouth's own Ruby Keeler, one of many Canadian-born white women to find work representing American womanhood on screen. We'll also look at Cawelti's seminal work on formula in American popular culture.

John Cawelti, “The Concept of Formula in the Study of Popular Literature,” *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 5:2 (1972), 115-123.

“We're in the Money,” online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJOjTNuuEVw>.

“Pettin' in the Park,” online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUp-7FlhvGA>.

“Remember My Forgotten Man,” online <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzMy7-7WV44>.

I've tagged photos of the Tiller Girls, one of the pioneering female dance troupes, at thebeforetime.tumblr.com, using #kracauer. For American movies made before 1980, the best plots summaries are usually at the Turner Classic Movies database, www.tcm.com/tcmdb/. *Gold Diggers of 1933* can be found at: <http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/3463/Gold-Diggers-of/>.

Sept 15th White Women in Modern Canada

In this session, we'll begin to establish the context and contours of our subject, with chapters from two of the best studies of working-class women in the interwar years. We'll also discuss several short pieces by Dorothy Livesay and other Depression-era activists associated with Communist Party "United Front" and "Popular Front" movements. Finally, we'll work through our first set of evidence, two poems by Cape Breton poet and Communist Dawn Fraser.

Suzanne Morton, "Young Women," in Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburbs in the 1920s (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 131-156. (Reader)

Donica Belisle, "Shopping, Pleasure, and Power," in Retail Nation: Department Stores and the Making of Modern Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2011), 126-157. (Reader) 978-0-7748-1948-0

Dawn Fraser, "The Wearing of the Red" and "The Parasites," both in Echoes From Labor's Wars: The Expanded Edition (Wreck Cove: Breton Books, 1992), 44-45, 58-60. (Reader) 1-895415-16-0

We will also discuss several short pieces by Dorothy Livesay and other Depression-era Communists in Livesay's Right Hand Left Hand (Erin: Press Porcepic, 1977), 115-128. (Reader) 978-0-88878-105-9

Sept 22nd Love and Entropy: Postmodernism & Antimodernism

Here, before we turn to a series of case studies, we will consider some of the conceptual issues associated with understanding mass-produced culture and its consumption by Canadians & others interested in looking at and listening to them.

Janice Radway, "The Utopian Impulse in Popular Literature: Gothic Romances and 'Feminist' Protest," American Quarterly 33:2 (Summer 1981), 140-162. (OWL)

Ian McKay, The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia Carleton Library Series edition (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), xi-xvii, 3-42.

Sept 29th Antimodernism II: Helen Creighton's Ghost

McKay, The Quest of the Folk, 43-151.

Helen Creighton, "So Many Wandering Women," in Bluenose Ghosts Second Edition (Halifax: Nimbus Press, 2009), 161-187. (Reader) 978-1-55109-717-6

For those enraptured by the supernatural, a 1970s television dramatization of stories from Bluenose Ghosts is online thanks to the NS Archives: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YluRwXaxdNw>.

Oct 6th Late Industrial Modernism among the Miners of Cape Breton

Benjamin Buchloh and Robert Wilkie, Eds., Mining Photographs and Other Pictures, 1948-1968: A Selection from the Negative Archives of Shedden Studio, Glace Bay, Cape Breton (Halifax: NSCAD/UCCB, 1983), Plates from 1-167.

Allan Sekula, "Photography between Labour and Capital," in Mining Photographs and Other Pictures, 193-204, 232-264.

Those interested in images of Halifax during the same period should watch *Citadel City*, produced by the Nova Scotia Film Bureau in 1957, online (courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives) in two parts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qPvbPdF_9o and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpmH2S2HNI8>.

Oct 13th No Class – Thanksgiving

Oct 20th Antimodernism III: Property and Perversion among the Fisherfolk of Cape Breton

We will discuss *Johnny Belinda*, directed by Jean Negulesco and released by Warner Bros. in 1948.

McKay, The Quest of the Folk, 214-273.

Leonard Leff, "What in the World interests Women? Hollywood, Postwar America, and *Johnny Belinda*," Journal of American Studies 31:3 (December 1997), 385-405. (OWL)

Oct 27th The Female Coming of Age Novel, Or, The Ethics of Inheriting *un bordel*

We will examine Al Palmer's 1949 pulp novel Sugar-Puss on Dorchester Street (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 2013).

Joan Sangster, "Prostitution and Promiscuity: Sexual Regulation and the Law," in Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960 (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2001), 85-130. (Reader) 978-0-195416633

Will Straw, "Montreal and *The Captive City*," Quebec Studies 48 (Fall 2009/Winter 2010), 13-23. (OWL)

Nov 3rd #MMIW, Circa 1967

We will discuss George Ryga's 1967 play The Ecstasy of Rita Joe (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2010).

Meghan Longstaffe, "The Death and Life of Aboriginal Women in Postwar Vancouver," MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2010. (OWL)

Colleen Krueger, "'Give Me Back the Real Me': The Politics of Identity and *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, 1967-1992," MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2000. (OWL)

Nov 10th No Class – Remembrance Day Holiday

Nov 17th The Backwoods Bildungsroman, Or, Railroads and Statutory Rape

We will examine Peter Taylor's 1967 novel Watcha Gonna Do Boy...Watcha Gonna Be? (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2014).

Elizabeth Harrison, "Peter Taylor," New Brunswick Literary Encyclopedia, online at: http://w3.stu.ca/stu/sites/nble/t/taylor_peter.html.

Mark Rosenfeld, "'It was a Hard Life': Class and Gender in the Work and Family Rhythms of a Railway Town," CHA Historical Papers 23:1 (1998), 237-279. (OWL)

Nov 24th Performativity and Performance: Postmodern Identities

We will discuss Joni Mitchell's 1971 album Blue (Reprise Records, June 1971).

Stuart Henderson, "'All Pink and Clean and Full of Wonder?' Gendering 'Joni Mitchell', 1966-74" left history 10:2 (Fall 2005), 83-109. (OWL)

Denise Riley, "Does Sex Have a History," in "Am I That Name?": Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 1-17. (Reader)

Dec 1st "I'm the woman who gave freedom a bad name": Staging Spectacular Politics in the Postmodern Age

We will discuss Linda Griffiths's 1979 play "Maggie and Pierre," in Maggie and Pierre and The Duchess (Toronto: Playwrights Canada, 2014).

Christabelle Sethna, "'Chastity Outmoded!': The *Ulysses*, Sex, and the Single Girl, 1960-70," in Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherford, Eds., Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945-1975 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 289-314. (Reader) 978-0-7748-1385-3

Bryan D. Palmer, "Celebrity and Audacity: Marshall McLuhan, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and the Decade of the Philosopher King," in Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 139-177. (Reader) 978-08020-9659-3

Texts

The following books are available at Bookmark, 5686 Spring Garden Road:

1. Ian McKay, The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia CLS edition (Kingston & Montreal McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).
2. Al Palmer, Sugar-Puss on Dorchester Street (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 2013).
3. George Ryga, The Ecstasy of Rita Joe (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2010).
4. Peter Taylor, Watcha Gonna Do Boy...Watcha Gonna Be? (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2014).
5. Linda Griffiths, Maggie and Pierre and The Duchess (Toronto: Playwrights Canada, 2014).
6. George Orwell, Politics and the English Language (Penguin Books, 2014).

The folks at Taz Records, 1526 Grafton Street & 1270 Bedford Highway, have stocked a few copies of Joni Mitchell's Blue in CD and vinyl formats.

Some readings are posted on the course's OWL site; the remainder have been collected in a reader for sale at Julia's Photocopying, 1525 Lemarchant Street.

Marking Breakdown

Class Discussions	15%
Case Study Essay	35%
Research Essay	50%

Assignments

Participation

Topics in Canadian Social History is a seminar course with an above-average amount of reading. You are expected to evaluate the arguments in the readings before coming to class, and to have your own ideas and questions about the material for others to consider – discussion is the heart of any seminar course. No marks are earned for attendance. Instead, your participation grade will be earned based on the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions. A portion of this mark will be earned by providing written answers to questions in class.

Assignment One – Case Study Essay

Choosing a primary source assigned during the period from Sept 29th to Dec 1st, students will devise a thesis commenting on one or more of the issues raised in the secondary readings. The paper (2500 words) will provide a close reading of the source in question as the primary basis for the development of the argument.

You must submit 2 paper copies of this essay by 3 pm, October 17th. There are no penalties for submitting a late essay.

Assignment Two – Research Essay

For the major assignment, students will complete a research essay (approx. 5000 words) that combines primary and secondary forms of research. The topic, which must be related to the themes of the course, will be chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor. All essays are expected to conform to the policies set out in the History Style Guide, found online at <http://history.dal.ca>.

Research Essay Proposal

With a minimum of 500 words, explain the subject and scope of your research, including a clearly defined thesis statement. In a separate bibliography, list at least 7 secondary sources that will figure

prominently in your paper. Your bibliography should also contain a list of your primary sources, with brief descriptions of each.

You must submit 2 paper copies of the proposal by 3 pm, November 6th. There are no extensions, save for documented medical and family emergencies.

Research essays are built with the following components:

1. An introduction that conveys the significance of the subject as well as your research questions and answers.
2. A clear and concise thesis statement, in the form of an argument that can be proven by marshalling evidence.
3. A historiographical section that describes and evaluates the major schools of thought about your subject.
4. The so-called 'body' of the paper, which combines evidence and analysis in order to demonstrate the validity of your thesis.
5. A conclusion that restates the arguments.

All essays are expected to conform to the policies set out in the History Style Guide, found online at <http://history.dal.ca>

You must submit 2 paper copies of the research essay by 3 pm, December 10th. There are no extensions, save for documented medical and family emergencies.