

# Literature at the Borders

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'Literature at the Borders' is a 'part-course' for joint English and Scottish Literature Year 1 students. The course runs in semester one, and is taught in weekly 50-minute tutorials.

The course examines the idea of the border and border crossing from a range of perspectives, organised under the headings 'Literature of The Borders', 'Diaspora – Scotland to Canada', 'The Truth About Stories', and 'Borderlands'. It focuses on short-form literature: tales, short stories, ballads, lyric poems. The texts on the course explore the construction and crossing of borders, the construction and destruction of national identities, and the preservation and reimagining of traditional stories and myths. Students will close read stories about the movement of literatures and people across borders, beginning with Walter Scott's writing on the Scottish border, then examining Scottish and Canadian writing on the Clearances, migration, and the experiences of the Scottish diaspora in Canada. In the second half of the course, the focus shifts to Native Canadian writing on the impact of the diaspora on indigenous stories and modes of storytelling. The course concludes with lyric reflections on the psychological impact of the US/Mexico border and literary modes of resistance to it. The formal properties of written representations of orality, literary representations of marginalized histories (Gaelic, Cherokee, Métis, Chicana), and the construction of imagined communities will be major themes of the course.

## Set Texts

All texts will be available on LEARN by Week 1. You can access texts through the 'Literature at the Borders Resource List' on the Scottish Literature 1 LEARN site.

## Tutorials

You will be assigned to a tutorial group in Week 1. Your first tutorial will be in Week 2.

## Assessment

Although you will be attending three tutorial courses in the department instead of two, the total amount of written coursework will be the same as for other first-year students. You will write an essay for 'Literature at the Borders' instead of the English Literature 1 close reading exercise. The 'Literature at the Borders' essay mark will, therefore, contribute 10% to your final mark for English Literature 1. (The only Close Reading Exercise which you do have to submit is that for Scottish Literature 1.)

2,000-word essay on TWO texts from the course, submitted **semester 2, week 2**.

Students will be given the opportunity to revise their essay based on formative feedback on a 1000 word draft submitted week 9.

## Deadlines

1,000-word draft to be submitted via LEARN **by 2pm Monday 11 November 2019** (Semester 1, week 9). Only work submitted by this deadline will receive feedback. Feedback will be returned within 15 working days.

2,000-word essay to be submitted via LEARN **by 2pm Monday 20 January 2020** (Semester 2, week 2). You will receive a mark and feedback within 15 working days. The mark will contribute to your grade for English Literature 1.

## Syllabus.

1. No Class
2. Introduction to the course:
  - a. syllabus, assessment.
  - b. extract from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn. (London: Verso, 1983, 2006), pp. 5–7, 22–32.
  - c. extract from Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987, 1999), pp. 19–35.

### I: Literature of The Borders

3. Walter Scott, 'The Two Drovers', in Walter Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, ed. Claire Lamont (Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 124–46.
4. Border ballads:
  - a. Walter Scott, 'Auld Maitland', from Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border: Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads, Collected in the Southern Counties of Scotland; With a Few of Modern Date, Founded Upon Local Tradition*, III (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, 1803), pp. 1–41.
  - b. Extract from James Hogg, *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, in James Hogg, *Anecdotes of Scott*, ed. Jill Rubenstein (Edinburgh University Press, 2003), pp. 37–38.

### 2: Diaspora – Scotland to Canada

5. Alice Munro, 'The View from Castle Rock', in Alice Munro, *The View from Castle Rock* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2006), pp. 27–87.
6. Iain Mac A' Ghobhainn/Iain Crichton Smith
  - a. 'The Clearances', in *Twentieth-Century Scottish Poetry*, ed. Douglas Dunn (London: Faber & Faber, 2006), p. 252
  - b. 'Highlanders', in Dunn, p. 252.
  - c. 'The Exiles' ('Na h-Eilthirich'), in *The New Penguin Book of Scottish Verse*, ed. Robert Crawford and Mick Imlah (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 492
7. Alistair MacLeod, 'Clearances', in Alistair MacLeod, *Island: The Complete Stories* (New York: Vintage, 2002), pp. 413–31.
8. Essay Writing Workshop

### 3: The Truth about Stories

9. Thomas King, “‘You’ll Never Believe What Happened’ Is Always a Great Way to Start”, from Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 2003), pp. 1–29.
10. Maria Campbell, ‘Jacob’; ‘Joseph’s Justice’, in *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, ed. Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 122–38.

### 4: Borderlands

11. Gloria Anzaldúa, from *Borderlands / La Frontera*:
  - a. extract from ‘*La conciencia de la mestiza / Towards a New Consciousness*’, pp. 99–109
  - b. ‘Interface’, pp. 170–74
  - c. ‘To live in the Borderlands means you’, pp. 216–17.Anaïs Mitchell, ‘Why We Build The Wall’, from Anaïs Mitchell, *Hadestown* (New York: Righteous Babe, 2010).

### Learning Outcomes:

The Learning Outcomes for the course mirror the Learning Outcomes for Scottish Literature 1 and English Literature 1 (semester one).

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. develop independent thought and the ability to communicate information effectively
2. work independently
3. discover and synthesise information
4. select the most relevant materials from a wide range of reading
5. assess the reliability of evidence and weigh a variety of competing or conflicting arguments, to analyse complex questions, to exercise problem-solving skills. In developing and organising your own arguments, you will have learned how to present a coherent, reasoned and well-supported set of conclusions in clear prose. At the same time, you will have developed oral communication skills through active participation in tutorials and seminars.
6. become fluent and confident readers of a variety of literary forms and to develop greater self-awareness in their understanding of the reading process and of critical practice.
7. develop close reading skills
8. demonstrate awareness of the environments in which texts are produced.