

A Student's Guide to English at the University of Guelph

COMPOSED AND COMPILED BY MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH STUDENTS' SOCIETY (TESS)

THE
ENGLISH
STUDENTS'
SOCIETY

WHY STUDY ENGLISH?

Recently, an influx of studies supports the value of studying literature. Many have linked reading literary works to cognitive empathy, emotional intelligence, and motivation. English studies will offer you a lifelong engagement with literature that will enrich your way of life and your career path. Literary studies equip you to be a creative, critical thinker, whether you want to pursue publishing, law, or other professions. With the rapidly shifting media landscape, a strong and clear communicator is increasingly sought after.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO MAJOR IN ENGLISH?

After taking English class from kindergarten through high school, you might be confident in yourself. You know the essay game, you know how to conjugate a verb, and you definitely know when to use "you're" and "your." Unfortunately, it isn't that easy. University, as you've probably heard, is all about critical thinking, and the same applies to an English degree. Sure, you know how to write an essay, but university English courses demand strong arguments and concrete evidence. Paper season can be a dreadful time for any English major, and you're going to have to read and write a lot, but an English degree is ultimately satisfying for those passionate about language and literature.

THE WAY FIRST YEAR WORKS

Being in first year at the University of Guelph gives you some flexibility. ENGL*1080 is the intro English course, which teaches you the fundamentals of English: how to do a close reading, textual analysis, and the beauty of rhetorical devices. It teaches you the basic tools of English that you will use throughout the rest of your years at Guelph. Being in first year also gives you the opportunity to take as many other interesting classes as you want. You have to take a certain amount of courses in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, which is why first year is the perfect year to take a range of diverse courses. After taking ENGL*1080, you can take ENGL*2080 (Finding a Critical Voice), ENLG*2120 (Critical Practices) and ENGL*2130 (Literature and Social Change). These courses focus on critical thinking and how to analyze and interpret texts. They also strengthen your writing skills and close reading abilities and further promote language development.

CAMPUS AND GUELPH HIGHLIGHTS

Guelph offers many outstanding literary experiences both on and off campus. Don't miss the Eden Mills Writers Festival, which features national and international writing luminaries reading from their works in the open-air throughout the bucolic hamlet of Eden Mills. The Bookshelf on Quebec St. also hosts readings on occasion and can boast of being attached to a café/restaurant, another restaurant, a bar, and the only boutique cinema in Guelph. Take advantage of their free student memberships. On Saturday morning, visit PSGuelph, the teeny publishing house/print-on-demand bookstore located in Silence on Essex St., and sign up for a notebook-making workshop. If you're a writer, there are numerous outlets on campus to showcase your work and develop your voice. Volunteer for The Ontarion or freelance for The Cannon to make a little extra cash. Borders publishes academic arts papers, Footnotes promotes intersectional feminist writing, and Kaleidoscope brings the best of Guelph's undergrad writers and artists together beautifully.

English at the University of Guelph

PROFESSOR PROFILES

The faculty of the School of English and Theatre Studies is truly outstanding. Here, students reflect on some of their profs.

For detailed reviews, visit www.wordpress.com/tessguelphu

PROFESSOR STEPHEN POWELL is one of the most intelligent people I've ever met. He may seem a bit intimidating at first, but his teaching style is truly unique. Being in his class is a real treat and he constantly encourages his students to look at texts through a critical eye while considering multiple perspectives. A moment that stuck out for me in his class was when we were discussing the novel *Brideshead Revisited* and students were sharing their thoughts about the relationship between Sebastian and Charles—two main characters in the novel. Professor Powell's thoughts about the homosocial relationship between the two were eye-opening.

Dakota Randall

PROFESSOR JADE FERGUSON'S research and teaching interests include 19th century to contemporary Canadian and American literature. Professor Ferguson's recent undergraduate courses have focused on cultural and literary studies that examine race, ecocriticism, and subjectivity. Professor Ferguson is an insightful teacher who will make your writing infinitely better with her fair assessments and approachable nature. Be prepared for discussions. She does not see participation as merely showing up to class, but marks your investment in the content you are studying.

Anjelica Abarra

PROFESSOR O'QUINN was the first English prof I ever had in university and I always left his class walking on a cloud, totally satisfied with my choice of school and major. He teaches dense and difficult texts—he's not afraid to challenge first year students with Milton and Emily Dickinson, and one of his upper year seminars burrows into obscure postmodern poets—but he tilts them so they catch the light and gleam like perfect diamonds. That's not to say that he's a pure aesthete—his classes often delve into knotty, subtle political questions. He's hyperarticulate, somewhat snooty, and often hilarious. He asks for lots of participation and can be quite intimidating—and he's a tough marker to boot. But you'll learn more in a week with him than in whole other courses.

Will Wellington

PROFESSOR PAUL SALMON is an extremely caring and supportive professor. In his laidback classes, he asks insightful and thought-provoking questions, which his students are eager to answer. A moment that stuck out for me was when Professor Salmon and I were discussing an article called "Detroit Arcadia" by Rebecca Solnit. Professor Salmon's excitement about the article was infectious and made me eager to present on the article. In courses focused on topics like dystopia, he often chooses novels that deal with historical or political events. He gives detailed instructions on midterms and assignments and ensures that his students are more than prepared.

Dakota Randall

PROFESSOR GREGOR CAMPBELL'S courses are something that every English student at Guelph simply must experience. Whether you love them or hate them, you can't deny they're unique. The agenda is flexible, his expectations are opaque, and class discussions spin off in all sorts of unlikely directions. He mixes literature with history, cinema, sociology, and the Internet, connecting disparate discourses with a wave of his hand. And he puts his money where his mouth is—his personal research involves biking through collapsing American cities to see how they feel. Following his train of thought is like trying to ride a tsunami with a boogie board. It's exhilarating, exhausting, and totally awesome.

Will Wellington

PROFESSOR JENNIFER SCHACKER'S work draws on her training as a folklorist and literary scholar and engages with developments in several related but distinct disciplines: folklore, anthropology, children's literature, and fairy-tale studies. She encourages discussion during lectures and looks for active participation. Her courses typically favour quizzes and exams over papers. She teaches second, third, and fourth year seminars as well as a popular second year lecture on children's literature, her specialty, where students read everything from *The Cat in the Hat* to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Professor Schacker wants to help you succeed: ask her questions, go to her office hours, and take advantage of her relaxed, personal teaching style.

Meg Wilson

PROFESSOR MARTHA NANDORFY can be a tough marker, but her classes are truly worth taking. I've had her for several classes and each class has made me a better student and, more importantly, a more informed citizen and critical thinker. Most of her teaching revolves around postcolonial topics and stories of the borderlands and some of the authors she taught have become new favourites of mine. Her instructions for assignments are clear but she pushes her students to think critically and go beyond surface level analysis. If you're looking for a professor who will challenge you and impact how you view the world, I strongly recommend taking any class with Professor Nandorfy.

Christina Barker

PROFESSOR ELAINE CHANG'S courses examine a fantastic selection of contemporary works from all over the globe. Many of the novels and secondary readings she assigns include a mix of modernist, postmodern, feminist, and postcolonial thinkers. Professor Chang is a very approachable and enthusiastic instructor. Her fair assessments and her insights will guide you as a writer and as an academic. To do well in her classes, you must stay on top of readings and participate in discussions. Currently, Professor Chang's film-related ventures are direct continuations of her work as an academic and teacher.

Anjelica Abarra

10 THINGS TO DO IN YOUR FIRST YEAR

1. Meet with your professors: they don't bite!
2. Visit all of Guelph's terrific bookstores: Janus Books, The Bookshelf, Sunrise Books, The Dragon
3. Catch a movie at The Bookshelf
4. Make a notebook at PSGuelph
5. Soak up the atmosphere at the Eden Mills Writers Festival
6. Chill with the Writer-in-Residence during the Fall semester
7. Actually do your readings—say no to Sparknotes!
8. Tune into CFRU93.3fm and listen to Books for Breakfast with the lovable Dan Evans
9. Write for campus publications like The Ontario, The Cannon, or Kaleidoscope and see your name in print!
10. Attend TESS meetings to hear about all of the coolest English events (and help plan them!)

JOIN TESS!

We are an eclectic and growing collective of English students in Guelph held together by love for literature and good times. Our aim is to enrich the academic and social aspects of being an undergrad in English.

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