

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**
www.uab.ca/mlcs

2017 C LIT 230 X51: Scandalous Fictions
(Winter Term)

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Course Website: n/a

Course Prerequisite: n/a

Course-based Ethics Approval? No, not needed, no such projects involved

Community Service Learning component None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available n/a

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors) No

Course Description, Objectives, and Methodology:

Course description: This course undertakes comparative case studies of significant scandalous fictions in literature—novels, plays, poetry—and other media, from popular song to ballet, across two thousand years and across boundaries of place, time, culture, language, media, and audiences.

“Scandal” as something purposefully or unintentionally disgraceful, offensive, damaging to reputation, slanderous, or mere gossip has featured in religious, moral, and ethical ideas for many centuries. As something purposefully untruthful it has also been associated with “fiction” in a negative sense, as falsehood, lying, defamation, and so on. But scandal’s disruptive and destabilizing potential has also long been useful in challenging established systems of belief and power, inequality injustice, oppression, and wrongs.

The course considers examples of such scandalous fictions in their contexts and later circulations and transformations into other media. All works are in English or English translation.

Examples include ancient satire, medieval bawdy, Enlightenment exposé, Revolutionary protest, feminist revolt, anti-war film and poetry, gritty twentieth-century social realism in pulp magazines and fiction, postwar exposés of the holocaust and nuclear terror, salacious popular journalism, 1960s countercultural popular forms, and the culture of popular tabloids which has recently been defended as an important source-book for values and experience in everyday life.

A major emphasis will be on how readers, listeners, audiences, and viewers use such scandalous fictions in and for their (and our) everyday lives. Another major emphasis will be on scandalous fictions’ spur to literary and artistic innovation.

Course objectives: In this course students will improve a number of related skills, including critical reading, research methods, communication of research, collaborative research, structured discussion, and independent research. These skills are required for most professions, occupations, and community life. In this course students will also improve knowledge in issues of gender, class, and ethnicity in writing and culture; and artistic issues of genre, historical period, social context,

reception, critical methodologies, transformations from one artistic medium to others, connecting the past with the present, and relating research to everyday life.

Course methodology: This is a course on what has been and is considered scandalous or offensive, for better or worse, across boundaries of time, space, language, and culture, so each week we will consider works in different genres and media in English or English translation and in relation to their creation, sources, contexts, critical issues, circulation, and uses by readers, viewers, and audiences. In the process, we will consider and practice appropriate research methodologies, different ways to report research, and our own experience of the scandalous in literature, culture, and life.

A seminar may include some of the following activities depending on need: roundtable reports of individual research and study, collective discussion of these, seminar leading and discussion of the genre and text(s) for that week, perhaps a specialist visitor to the seminar, and an introduction to the topic for the following week by the instructor. Each seminar will include a short refresher break.

Each seminar member will choose a topic for a final course project. Assessment will be by contributions to classroom learning, seminar leading, short research explorations, and the final course project.

Prospective Schedule of Topics with some selected key texts and media:

10 Jan	Introduction. Apuleius, <i>The Golden Ass</i> (etext): the Scandal of Slavery and Empire
17 Jan	The Scandalous Middle Ages: Chaucer's Wife of Bath and other tales
24 Jan	Scandal as "Enlightenment" and "Progress": Voltaire's <i>Candide</i> (etext):
31 Jan	Revolutionary Scandal: (Old) World Turned Upside Down; Revolutionary Feminism
7 Feb	The Scandal of Bourgeois Domesticity and Sexuality: Ibsen's <i>A Doll's House</i> (etext)
14 Feb	The Scandal of War: <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> (youtube movie) and war poets
21 Feb	Reading Week
28 Feb	The Scandal of the Great Depression: Pulp and Kromer's <i>Waiting for Nothing</i> (etext)
7 Mar	Postwar Scandal: the Holocaust, Nuclear Apocalypse, and the East is Red
14 Mar	Hollywood Confidential: Scandal in Movieland and the Communist Witch-hunt
21 Mar	Swinging 'Sixties: the Scandal of "Counterculture" and the "Sexual Revolution"
27 Mar	Hot Harlequins and Christian Romance: Scandal as Weapon in Culture Wars
4 Apr	Everyday Life in Tabloidia: Scandal as Industry and Tool for Self-fashioning
11 Apr	Reporting on course projects; class party

Instructor's and students' responsibilities in the course: My responsibility as course instructor is to help each student achieve her, his, or their academic goals. The student's responsibility is to fulfill the course requirements.

Texts: Assigned by the instructor and chosen by seminar members.

Grade Distribution (see "Explanatory Notes below"):

Contributing to classroom learning	30%
In-class reports 3 x 10%	30%
Portfolio (short research exercises)	10%
Course project	30% (due Tuesday 11 April)
Total	100%

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): not applicable

Explanatory Notes:

Contributing to classroom learning: being in class, being prepared, contributing to discussion, encouraging others, treating others respectfully, maintaining professional conduct. A missed class will result in 10% deduction from this grade unless made up by tutorial with instructor or other work.

In-class reports: five- to ten-minute informal reports on a particular topic to prompt discussion.

Portfolio: several short assignments to prepare for seminars and to workshop the Course Project.

Course project: an original project of about ten pages, agreed with the instructor and making use of what was learned on the course, submitted by each student.

Plagiarism: submission of others' work or your work from another course as your own work in this course breaches the Code of Student Behaviour and can incur severe penalties; see links below.

Feedback: 1. Marking: on all graded assignments the instructor gives one-on-one analysis of strengths and suggestions for improvement. 2. Grading: for each assignment the instructor explains how the grade is related to strengths and areas for improvement. 3. Disagreements: any disagreement will be referred where possible to an impartial outside referee.

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

Academic Integrity:

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

In this course, attendance is essential to participation and participation essential to contributing to classroom learning. Accordingly, and to be fair to all, missing a seminar will result in deduction of 10 points out of a hundred for this portion of the course grade, but since absence is sometimes unavoidable, the missed seminar may be made up in a meeting with the instructor.

Policy for Late Assignments: To be fair to all members of the seminar, assignments submitted after the date due will be subject to deduction of a grade segment, e.g., a B would be reduced to a B minus.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-800 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381).

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59