

Project Proposal

ENGL 263: Indigenous Literature in Canada

Executive Summary



Problem to be addressed: The overarching requirement of European Literature courses within the English Literature programs.



New project proposal: a required course within the English Literature Major, Honours and Specialization Programs that targets Literature from Indigenous authors in Canada.



Because students who study at Concordia are situated in Canada, and therefore on Indigenous ground, an Indigenous Literature course being a requirement for the Major and Honours programs is quite logical.

Project Background & Justification

The English Literature Major, Honours and Specialization Programs at Concordia have a heavy focus on required European, but more specifically British, Literature courses. These courses go over pertinent content that trace back centuries worth of literature, which is useful information for one who chooses to study in the field.

However, these courses overpower the program requirements, leaving no room for literature from other regions of the world, notably Canada. The English Department provides limited exposure to Canadian Literature, but Indigenous Literature in specific. Students who graduate from these programs have a gap in their knowledge of literature, because they have no knowledge on the literature from their own place of study.

The project aims to introduce Concordia students to literature not solely through a European lens, and to have this content be accessible to them every semester.

Major in English Literature (42 credits)

3 credits:

- ENGL 260 Introduction to Literary Study (3.00)

6 credits:

- ENGL 261 British Literature to 1660 (3.00)
- ENGL 262 British Literature from 1660 to 1900 (3.00)

Note: The above nine credits are to be taken within first 24 credits.

6 credits chosen from:

- ENGL 303 Reading Women Writing (6.00)
- ENGL 338 Modern British Literature (3.00)
- ENGL 339 British Literature Since 1945 (3.00)
- ENGL 340 Modernism (6.00)
- ENGL 341 Modern Fiction (3.00)
- ENGL 343 Modern European Literature (3.00)
- ENGL 345 Modern Drama (3.00)

Project Background & Justification



The implementation of this project would provide English students at Concordia a more diverse understanding of not only literature in general and its history, but also Canada's history as a nation. Graduating students also get the benefit of acknowledging the literature of their place of study.



This out-of-the-box project comes with risks such as requiring a different study approach because the material tends to be untraditional compared to the rest of literature courses' content (ex. audio, visual). This project also requires a growth mindset from both professors and students, meaning they must be willing to break traditional learning methods and open themselves to new knowledge and ways of teaching and learning.



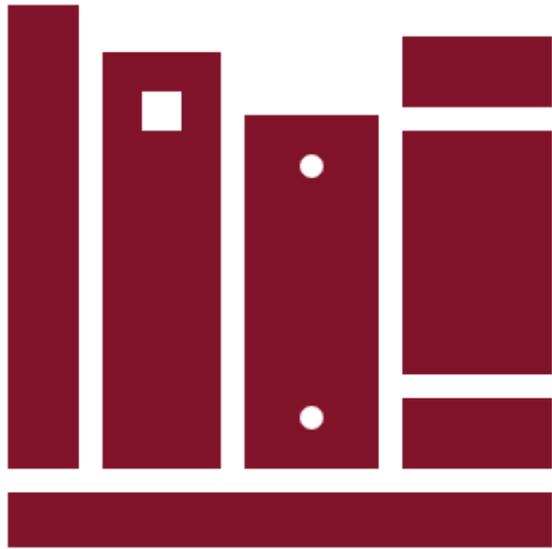
Introducing the project into the program requirements would show the university's efforts to educating their students on Canada's history through the literature of its Native peoples, rather than solely acknowledging the fact that the establishment is on unceded territory on a handful of course outlines.

ENGL 263: Indigenous Literature in Canada

200-level Literature course available in both the fall and winter semesters with 75 available seats and 2 sections.

Course description: Starting with selected texts in translation and/or English, the course will examine literature from the last century written by Indigenous authors in Canada. Works will be studied in their social and historical contexts, across their different mediums, giving students a well-versed view of the Literature that influenced what is now modern-day Canada. The course will discuss works from authors such as King, Simpson, Joseph, Wagamese and Vermette.

Overlap?



- Closest current offering is ENGL 380 First Nations/North American Native Literature, which is a higher-level course, which students are less likely to take as they're starting their degree. This course has only approximately 30 seats, and is only available for enrollment once every 2 years. ENGL 263: Indigenous Literature in Canada would be ENGL 380's more accessible version, with more opportunity for enrollment because of its high seat count and semester availability. ENGL 380 would then be for students who wish to dive deeper into Indigenous Literature at the 300-level.

Course Approach

- Lecture-based format
- Content will include audio, visual and written forms of literature from Indigenous authors in Canada.
- Through these works, students will get to learn about literature outside of the colonial lens European Literature imposes. Subjects include decolonial ways of thinking about Canada and its land, switching the traditional narrative of an exploiting mindset to an abundance mindset.



Demographic Assessment



Primary audience of this project: Concordia University students enrolled in the Major, Honours and Specialization in English Literature.



Secondary audience of this project: Concordia University students enrolled in the Major in First Peoples Studies.



Though the English Department is comprised of 834 students, the project is aimed at solely Literature students.



75 students will have access to the course, similar to the programs' required British Literature courses.



$\frac{3}{4}$ of the seats will be reserved for English Literature Major, Honours or Specialization students as a requirement, while the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ will be accessible to FPST students as an elective to their Major.

Links to Relevant Documents

- Article: Why Don't All High Schools Teach Indigenous Literature? https://www.thestar.com/politics/political-opinion/why-don-t-all-high-schools-teach-indigenous-literature/article_cf17a65e-97bb-52ba-b4b2-7d4f08dcad2a.html
- Academic Journal: Teaching Indigenous Literatures for Decolonization: Challenging Learning, Learning to Challenge. chrome-extension://gphandlahdpffmccakmbngmbjnjiihp/https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ajer/article/download/68509/54094
- Article: Colonist's Conundrum: Can I Teach First Peoples Courses if I'm Not Indigenous? <https://studyforge.net/colonists-conundrum-can-i-teach-first-peoples-courses-if-im-not-indigenous/>



Conclusion

- In essence, ENGL 263 Indigenous Literature in Canada is a course that students, faculty and the university can all benefit from. From its high availability, to its untraditional ways of thinking about literature and Canada, it brings about a new outlook on the literature that influenced Canada into the nation it is today, outside of the European lens we all have grown accustomed to.



CONCORDIA.CA



CONCORDIA