

English 110, Section 003: Approaches to Literature, 2020- Term 1
Online Lectures: Monday and Wednesday 11:00-12:00 noon
Online Discussion Groups: Friday 11:00-12:00 noon

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Narrative in Canadian Contexts: From the Tragically Hip to *The Fast Runner*

"No dress rehearsal / This is our life" --
Gord Downie and the Tragically Hip, "Ahead by A Century."

Narrative, or the act of storytelling, is one of our most basic daily activities, as H. Porter Abbott, a narrative expert, reminds us. We encounter narratives in conversations, text messages, novels, plays, poems, rock songs, films, political speeches, and health reports. Narrative is everywhere because it is a foundational dimension of language and human thought.

This course is an introduction to the study of narrative elements, especially as found in examples of Canadian fiction, drama, poetry, alt rock songs, and film. Some of the fundamental questions that we will take up include the following: What exactly is narrative? Why are narratives important for organizing human experience? How and why do writers manipulate narrative time? How does a storyteller assert persuasive power? How do social groups use narrative to advance their belief systems?

These questions and others will be explored in lectures, lively small group discussions, and weekly readings in H. Porter Abbott's core textbook. **A special effort is made in this course to create a sense of community belonging and to respectfully include everyone's voices in different platforms.** This course will use a combination of asynchronous (recorded/text/online) materials and synchronous (real-time) classes in our designated timeslot.

Course requirements include participation in online discussions, a narrative analysis, a short answer test, pop quizzes, and a final project or exam.

Want to get ahead in the readings this summer? Read Madeleine Thien's brilliant and poignant stories set in Vancouver, *Simple Recipes*. Or sample Michael Ondaatje's dramatic representation of immigrant workers in Toronto in *In the Skin of a Lion*.

Required texts:

- **Core E-Textbook (available online at the UBC Library):** H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2nd Ed.
- **Short stories:** Madeleine Thien, *Simple Recipes* (M &S)
- **Novel:** Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion* (Vintage)
- **Drama:** John Gray and Eric Peterson, *Billy Bishop Goes to War* (Talon)
- **Poetry/Songs:** Selected poems and songs by the Tragically Hip, and others such as Kuldip Gill, Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, and Rita Wong.
- **Film:** *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (Isuma/NFB 2001), directed by Zacharias Kunuk and screenplay by Paul Apak Angilirk: The film is available as a streaming video at the UBC Library website.