

English 2321: British Literature

Course Theme: Revolution

Fall 2025 | Sections 1 & 301 | 9:30-10:50 AM, Tu/Th | LANG 304

Instructor's Information:

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Office Hours: Mondays 2-3 PM, Tuesdays 11 AM-1 PM, Fridays 10-11 AM

Course Overview

It is undeniable that we live in a revolutionary era. Alongside major sociopolitical and governmental shifts across the world, the so-called “fourth industrial revolution” (generative AI) is gaining momentum, and we are already seeing hints of the countless ways that AI is going to challenge traditional institutions, industries, and power structures. American inventor Ray Kurzweil predicted that, within the next five years, AI will reach human-level intelligence and then move beyond it, inaugurating a period of such rapid technological advancement that, he argues, it is impossible for us to imagine what the world will look like in just twenty years. While Kurzweil generally promotes a glowing vision of humans joyfully merging with AI technology, many others—including thousands of global leaders, thinkers, scientists, and tech moguls around the world—are warning that AI technology poses an unprecedented threat to human existence and that we must pause AI development to give societies time to discuss and plan for the future. Among the many extreme opinions and the steady arrival of new, convenient advances in AI technology, it can be hard to find clarity. It can also simply be exhausting—emotionally, intellectually, and physically—to live in a time of revolution, making it hard to care or react.

Luckily, literature may be able to help. In 1918, just after World War I, Ezra Pound wrote that “artists are the antennae of the [human] race,” suggesting that writers and other

artists tend to tune in to the first wobbles of coming change—or deep structural problems that will lead to great fissures in society—before many people have grasped what is happening. In revolutionary times, writers have a superpower: they can find the words and forms to portray new phenomena that, for many people, are still beyond words, and therefore almost beyond perception. Similarly, they can find the words to urge an exhausted, overstimulated population to wake up and take action. Literature can also help us identify trends across history that help us better understand our own time. What hopes and fears do we see rising repeatedly across the centuries? Which fears turned out to be justified, and which ones didn't? Which debates from the past seem relevant today, and why? What types of literature caused real change in the world, and how?

To explore some of these questions, we will sample a range of British poetry, nonfiction, fiction, and drama from the 1680s to the present, zooming in on key moments of significant political, social, and technological change. As we encounter a variety of styles, voices, and ideas, we will work together to develop a greater understanding of the ways in which humans cope, move forward, and create enduring art in times of radical change and revolution.

Readings

Most readings will be provided free of charge through a provided course reader.

The one book you will need to buy is the following, which is available at Voertman's Bookstore, the campus Barnes & Noble, and various online retailers:

Machines Like Me: A Novel, by Ian McEwan. (Paperback.) Anchor Press, 2020.
ISBN: 0525567038

Materials

For every class, you should bring

1. a notebook and/or looseleaf paper
2. a pen or pencil
3. your copy of our course readings for the day

You should also familiarize yourself with our Canvas site, where you can find digital copies of the syllabus and schedule; submission portals for in-class writing and major assignments; announcements; and other important course materials.

Final Grade Components

Informal Weekly Contributions – 50% of your final grade

In-Class Writing and Group Activity Work (Canvas Journal): 20%

Quizzes and Reading Responses: 10%

Participation and Engagement: 20%

Formal Assignments – 50% of your final grade

Close Reading Essay (750-1000 words): 15%

Ethical Conflict Essay: (1000-1250 words): 20%

Experimental Visual Language Project 5%

Social Media Adaptation, Reflection, and Presentation: 10%

**Honors students who are seeking honors credit for this course: see pages 8-9.*

More Information about Informal Course Components

In-Class Writing

In-class writing will give you opportunities to engage informally with readings through activities and writing prompts. At the end of each class, you should take pictures of any freewriting or group activity work from that day and upload them in your Canvas Journal, which you can find in the link from the "In-Class Writing" module on the Home page or by going to "Discussions." Journals will be graded weekly or biweekly.

In-class writing is considered *informal writing*, which means that you are graded on the labor and energy you put into the exercises; you are NOT graded on your spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization, etc. That said, if you are not prepared for class, you may struggle to respond to class prompts and activities.

Please note that your Canvas Journal is private, and only you and I can see the work you post there.

If you have a disability that may require accommodations for in-class writing, please email me or come to my office hours during the first week of class.

Quizzes and Reading Responses

To encourage timely attendance and preparation (completing assigned readings before class to enable lively discussions and useful activities), I will have regular informal, open-book/open-note quizzes at the beginning of class, usually at least once per week. [Note: “open-book and open-note” applies ONLY to handwritten notes and hard copies of readings—no computers, tablets, or phones should be open during quizzes unless you have disability accommodations.]

The open-book/open-note policy is designed to encourage you to take notes in class, annotate your readings, use time-saving bookmarks or sticky notes to allow you to locate readings faster, and jot down questions/observations while reading. Because I recognize that different people are struck by different aspects of readings, quiz questions and prompts will most often be open-ended, allowing you to demonstrate that you have read and thought about the readings. (However, some students in previous courses requested some multiple choice questions, so there will usually be at least one MC question.) I also almost always add an extra credit question that is slightly more obscure or challenging.

Quizzes cannot be made up when you miss class unless you have a university-approved, excused absence (in which case it is your responsibility to contact me and make arrangements for the make-up quiz ASAP but no later than 10 days after missing class).

If you have any concerns or questions about these quizzes, or if you have accessibility/disability accommodations to arrange, please email me or come to my office hours.

Participation and Engagement

You will receive regular grades for your participation and engagement throughout the semester. See the following table for behaviors that raise or lower your participation score.

Ways to Boost and Maintain Your Participation and Engagement Score	Ways to Lower Your Participation and Engagement Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attending class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Missing class

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving your complete attention to class lectures, discussions, and activities. • Keeping your phone put away and on "silent" or "do not disturb" for the entire class period until you need to take pictures of your work at the end of class. • Listening actively to your classmates and me and responding verbally or nonverbally (nodding your head, using facial expressions, looking at the person who is talking, etc.) • Contributing to discussions • Being courteous and respectful to your classmates and me • Asking questions • Answering questions when I call on you • Participating fully in group activities • Being on time, prepared, and professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using your phone during class (except for times when you are specifically directed to do so or if you have disability accommodations) • Wearing headphones or earbuds during class • Using your laptop, tablet, or watch for things unrelated to class • Not paying attention (i.e. not knowing what is going on when I start a group activity, or being zoned out and staring at your laptop) • Having side conversations • Not participating in group work, doing the bare minimum for group work, allowing your group to do the bulk of the work for you, etc. • Leaving the room (unless you have disability accommodations to do so) • Arriving late • Being unprepared for class • Sleeping • Being disrespectful or unprofessional
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More Information about Formal Assignments

Rubrics and Grading Criteria

For each assignment, you will receive detailed instructions and a rubric to ensure that my grading criteria are transparent. You should read these materials carefully and repeatedly—before, during, and after your composition process. If you have any questions, please raise them in class or send an email.

ESSAYS

Formatting

All formal essays should be formatted in MLA style and use MLA citation. We will briefly review MLA citation in class, and I will provide resources to help you. You can see the requirements for MLA *formatting* (i.e. 1" margins, 12-point font, correct headers, etc.) here.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html.

The Composition Process: Revision Histories for Formal Essays

Revision histories are an essential way to help protect yourself in the AI era: if your work is flagged as potentially AI-created (and we all know that AI detectors can be wrong), your revision history can help you easily clear up the situation by showing your work and your process.

If you do not want to use Google Docs, you may use write.processfeedback.org and download your work. HOWEVER, if you choose to use write.processfeedback.org, you must be careful to save and download all your work (in contrast, Google Docs saves your work even on untitled documents). If you are using write.processfeedback.org, I suggest trying a practice document (write, save, download, and get a share link) to make sure you are saving your work properly.

Submission

Submit all final drafts of essays on Canvas as an uploaded Word Doc file (.docx). You can download a Word Doc from Google Docs by going to File > Download > Microsoft Word (docx). Then, on Canvas, you will upload the Word Doc you have saved on your computer.

When submitting, give me access to your revision history by providing a link in the Canvas submission portal's notes/comments section (to create a link: on Google Docs, click on the blue "Share" button, then go to the "General access" section, and use the drop-down menu to select "anyone with the link can EDIT").

Rewrites

I do not accept paper rewrites after the deadline passes. If you ever have questions or concerns about your grade or my evaluation, please email me and make an appointment.

Feedback

To get feedback on an essay draft, come to my office hours (see the top of this syllabus for the details).

Once per essay, you can receive extra credit for going to the campus writing center and then submitting the appointment report (provided by the writing center after your appointment concludes). This is a great way to receive feedback while also getting extra points on the essay.

EXPERIMENTAL VISUAL LANGUAGE PROJECT AND REFLECTION

Using Blake's illuminations, the Modernist manifestos, Brathwaite's *DreamStories*, and other works in the project's assignment folder as inspiration, choose a work or passage from one of our readings that has "regular" formatting, and enhance it through creative manipulation of the visual elements of language. You are welcome to add illustrations, doodles, or other embellishments, but you must also manipulate the look of the words by changes to font/style, spacing, formatting, margins, line breaks, etc. Your changes to the look of the work should be thoughtfully designed to add emphasis, implication, complexity, rhythm, texture, voice, and other types of meaning to the work.

This mini-project will be accompanied by a short written reflection explaining your thought process and the effects you hoped to achieve through the changes you made to the work. All projects will be posted in an open Discussion forum on Canvas to allow your classmates to view your creative work. Extra credit is available for students who use the "Reply" feature to perform a short (250+ words) but rigorous close reading of any visual aspect of another student's project.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADAPTATION, REFLECTION, AND PRESENTATION

Students will create a contemporary, multimodal adaptation of one of the readings and authors and, in a brief (5-10 minute) show-and-tell presentation, will share their work with the class on the day we discuss the reading, with a Q&A session and discussion to follow. When turning in a digital copy of the project on Canvas, students will also include a short reflective essay about the decisions they made when creating the project.

The multimodal project will provide an informed yet imaginative portrayal of what a chosen author and work might look/sound/act like in 21st century society on 21st century media; you should thoughtfully adapt portions of the author's opinions,

rhetoric, biography, literary language, or style and transplant them into a 21st century framework to create a thought-provoking new context for the author's ideas, giving your classmates a fresh, relatable, and entertaining way to think about our readings. For instance, if the "Trad Wives" of the 1870s were on social media, who would they follow, what would they rant about, and what kinds of comments, pictures, reactions, stories, and/or short videos would they post? Create a fake social media profile to show us! Or, to take a more serious tone, how might the poets of World War I lend their gory literary realism and social critique to violence in today's world?

You can be creative with this project, but if you plan to use a less common form of social media or if you have an off-the-wall idea, please run your plans past me to make sure that your project will meet all the criteria for evaluation. Also, feel free to use references to contemporary trends, slang, etc., but when presenting your work, please kindly keep in mind that I am old, so you may have to explain or translate.

Team Option: There are several class periods in which we will read multiple voices (opposing essayists or a set of characters). For these works/authors you have the option to team up with another classmate (up to groups of 4) to interact with each other's profiles/content or to create a collaborative work such as a podcast. Each group member must take on one "voice"/persona, must write their own reflection about the project, and must put in as much work as an individual presenter. Group presentations should not exceed 15 minutes in length.

Because we need to leave plenty of time for discussion after your presentation, there will be a maximum of one presentation per class period. By the end of Week 2, I will create a poll to ask for your ranked preferences for authors/works and your preference for working individually or in a group.

HONORS CREDIT

For students who are enrolled in the honors section of this class (section 301): you can receive honors credit for completing the extra experiences detailed below. *Please note that if you are NOT an honors student, you are still highly encouraged to come to my office hours for help with your assignments and intellectual discussions! You just can't receive honors credit for those activities unless you are officially enrolled in section 301 as an honors student.*

1. **Office Hours:** For at least one of your formal essays, come to my office hours with a rough draft for feedback. The rough draft should have at least an intro, rough/working thesis statement, and paragraphs with claims and evidence, although the word count may not yet meet the requirement, the evidence/argument may need further development, and the wording and/or structure may still be quite rough. Please mention that you are an honors student both verbally and by email (before or after you attend office hours) so that I will have a written record of this visit when it is time for me to grant or deny honors credit at the end of the semester.
2. **Oral Exam/Comprehensive Discussion:** At the end of the semester (i.e. during the last week of class OR during our schedule final exam time), make an appointment for an oral exam of approximately 15 minutes. This “exam” will essentially be a conversation—hopefully a relaxed yet intellectually invigorating one—about your favorite works from the semester, patterns you have noticed among the readings, your informed thoughts about literature and revolution, and other large-scale questions. To clarify, I will not use the exam to ask minor trivia questions (i.e. what year did Brathwaite publish *DreamStories*?) or to test your complete knowledge of every single work. Instead, I will ask open-ended, comprehensive questions to allow you to demonstrate that you have thought deeply about multiple works and themes throughout the semester (beyond those that you cover in your two formal essays). The exam will be graded as pass/fail or credit vs. no credit (for honors credit). To prepare for the oral exam, you should do the following:
 - a. Complete your reading throughout the semester (daily/weekly work)
 - b. Make a habit of taking notes, not only about individual works, but also about your growing set of thoughts, questions, and ideas about the role of literature and language in revolutionary eras.
 - c. Review your formal essays before the exam so you can talk about them.
 - d. Recommended: read through your notes and your posted in-class writing before the exam.
 - e. If you are anxious or concerned about any aspect of this exam, please talk to me and/or come to my office hours.

General Course Policies

Attendance

I will take attendance daily, sometimes aloud and sometimes while the class is working. These records are mostly for my own record-keeping and for my reference when determining your participation/engagement grade. **There are no specific penalties for missing classes. However, you cannot succeed in this course if you miss class regularly:** unexcused absences will directly and significantly affect your grades for informal weekly work (quizzes, participation/engagement, and in-class writing), which together make up 50% of your final grade in this course. Your attendance record can also affect my decision making when you are straddling the line between two grade categories, i.e. an “A” and a “B.”

Of course, when you miss class, you will also miss important lessons and practice for techniques that I will expect to see you using in your weekly writing and formal assignments, as well as content that may appear on future quizzes or in-class activities. Because each day’s classwork builds upon previously discussed and practiced ideas, you are also fully responsible for completing the reading for any days you missed.

Therefore, when you cannot avoid missing class, it is important to be proactive: get notes from a classmate, complete the assigned reading, and check the Canvas site for announcements or notes. It is YOUR responsibility to use these methods to discover the work and material you missed—it is not MY responsibility to “catch you up” or tell you what you missed. If you are struggling with techniques or content from class days you missed, please come to my office hours.

If you have an absence lasting longer than 5 days due to an extenuating circumstance (not related to the excused absence items below), I will request that you receive documentation through the Dean of Students.

Excused Absences: According to UNT’s [Policy 06.039, Student Attendance and Authorized Absences](#), an absence will be considered “excused” for:

- a. religious holy day, including travel for that purpose;
- b. participation in an official university function;
- c. required military service, including travel for that purpose;
- d. pregnancy and parenting under Title IX;

e. when the University is officially closed.

In addition, a student is responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing, providing satisfactory evidence to the faculty member to substantiate excused absence, and delivering the request personally to the faculty member assigned to the course for which the student will be absent.

Students are permitted to make up work for excused absences. They must contact the professor to request an excused absence and complete any missed work within 10 calendar days of the beginning of the absence.

Deadlines, Extensions, and Late Work

Informal weekly work such as in-class writing, activities, and quizzes cannot be made up or turned in late unless you have an approved, documented excused absence (see above in the “Attendance” section).

The formal essay deadlines can be found in the class schedule (on the course Canvas site).

Your multimodal project presentation is time-sensitive because you will present on the day we cover an author/work. Therefore, I will not give extensions for these projects. If you miss your presentation, you should email me, but I cannot guarantee that there will be time in class for you to make up your presentation without disrupting the discussion for other students’ presentations or other authors’ works that we must cover.

Essay Extensions: If you need a short extension (2 days maximum) on a FINAL draft of a formal essay (or the reflection portion of your multimodal remix project), you must email me (laura.hensch@unt.edu) BEFORE the deadline passes and let me know when you will be able to complete the assignment. You do not need to provide detailed excuses—it is enough to say that you are taking the extension option and that you will have your essay completed by the date you list (again, 2 days maximum).

I rarely give extensions longer than two days; if, in extreme circumstances, you believe you need a longer extension, you must make an appointment with me (office hours or Zoom) to discuss your options, and, if I grant a longer extension for extenuating circumstances, we will come up with a plan to prevent you from falling behind.

Use of Text-Generating AI

In this class, generative AI use is NOT permitted for any portion of your in-class writing or your formal essays. That’s because this course is designed to build your own skills

in brainstorming, analysis, reading, writing, choosing words, varying your sentence structures, thinking critically, developing essays, polishing your writing, and more. The only exception to the no-gen-AI policy will be for occasional focused in-class activities that involve AI exploration and discussion. Also, if you have an idea for incorporating gen-AI technology into your multimodal social media project, you must consult with me—I may approve such a request if you have a compelling project idea and will not be using AI in a way that will replace your own thought, creativity, and effort.

Because AI tools are increasingly built into everyday technology, they are not always obvious. Please note that generative AI includes not just chat resources like ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, and Bard (etc.), but also resources like Grammarly, Quillbot, and anything that says it will “help you write” or that it will polish your writing, paraphrase your writing, reduce or increase your word count, or correct a large number of errors for you all at once. If you are ever unsure about whether a resource constitutes an unauthorized use of generative AI, you should contact me to ask.

If I suspect that you used generative AI in an unauthorized way, I will contact you via email to invite you to meet with me to discuss the situation. I may also ask you to demonstrate your writing process in my office. If, after an investigation, I conclude that it is likely that you did use generative AI, I will make a report to the Academic Integrity Office. You will receive a grade of zero on the first instance. Any further instances of AI use will result in a grade of “F” for the course.

Communication Expectations

Communication is key to your success. Connect with me through email and/or by attending office hours. During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

Important: **Check your UNT email at least once per day.** Class cancelations and other announcements will be sent via email (sometimes through Canvas—sometimes not). If I need to communicate with you about your grade, missing work, or other concerns, I will also use UNT email, and it is often vital for you to respond in a timely manner.

When you need to reach me follow these practices:

- Communicate with me formally through my UNT email address: laura.hensch@unt.edu.

- Send emails only from your own UNT email account. Legally, I cannot respond or provide information to you if you write from a personal account because I cannot verify it is really you.
- Include the course and section number in your email.
- Use appropriate salutation such as "Dear Professor H.," or "Dear Dr. Hensch."
- Treat all emails as professional communication.
- Respect the personal identities and privacy of yourself, of me, and others.
- Think carefully about what you reveal and do not reveal, particularly if this information involves your health and/or classroom performance. If your emails contain any information that causes me to be concerned for your safety, or the safety of others, I am required to report it.
- Refrain from making personal attacks or using language that discriminates based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture.

Note | I am not able to discuss any information relating to academic records through email.

Disruptions

Respect the class environment by using your time effectively and helping your classmates do the same. Like you, your classmates are financially invested in this course, and they have the right to a non-disruptive environment that is conducive to learning. Disruptive behavior includes

- Using your phone (except for activities that use your phone in class and disability accommodations that you have set up with me)
- Eating a full meal—small snacks are okay as long as they are not disruptive through sound (i.e. loud wrappers or slurping soup), sight, or smell.
- Holding side conversations
- Entering late, especially when done in a noisy or distracting way
- Leaving the room during class (exceptions will be made for occasional emergencies and for those with accommodations)
- Being disrespectful – see "Participation and Civility" below

If any student is behaving in a disruptive manner, I have the right to remove that student from class with zero credit for attendance or participation for the day.

Participation and Civility

We are all members of an academic community where it is our shared responsibility to cultivate a climate where all students/individuals are valued and where both they and their ideas are treated with respect. I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

Syllabus Change Policy

I have made every attempt to provide your syllabus as an accurate overview of the course. However, unanticipated circumstances may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester. These circumstances may arise in response to the progress, needs, and experiences of students. Advance notice will be given for any changes made to the syllabus, and announcements of changes will be made both in class and on Canvas Announcements.

University Policies

All students and faculty are required to follow the policies below.

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, [Student Academic Integrity](#), academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to:

- Cheating--submitting work that is not your own (this includes using generative AI)
- Fabrication--i.e. making up sources/passages/citations; pretending you are writing about a real interview when you really made it up; etc.
- Facilitating academic dishonesty--helping someone else cheat
- Forgery--pretending your work is someone else's
- Plagiarism--using someone else's published work without citing it correctly

- Sabotage--setting someone else up to fail
- Submitting previously submitted work--you may not “re-use” any work from another class.

A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. I am obligated to report any academic dishonesty.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT.

Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the [Code of Student Conduct](#). The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

The [Dean of Students Office \(opens in a new window\)](#) enforces the [Code of Student Conduct \(opens in a new window\)](#). The Code explains:

- What conduct is prohibited
- The process the DOS uses to review reports of alleged misconduct by students
- The sanctions that can be assigned

When students may have violated the Code, they meet with a representative from the Dean of Students Office to discuss the alleged misconduct in an educational process.

ADA Accommodation

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. To receive accommodation, follow these steps:

1. Register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility.
2. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs.

3. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation.
4. Students must obtain a new letter of accommodation every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the [ODA website](#). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance.

The Survivor Advocates can be reached at:

- SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu
- Dean of Students Office: 940-565-2648

Visit [Title IX Student Information \(opens in a new window\)](#) for more resources.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called [Eagle Alert](#) to quickly provide students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.