



English (ENGL) 423

Advanced Literary Theory (Revision 6)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision ❌

Delivery mode:

Individualized study online . Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits:

3

Areas of study:

Arts or Humanities

Prerequisites:

ENGL 211 and **ENGL 212** or equivalent, and any senior-level English course.

Precluded:

None

Challenge: ENGL 423 is not available for challenge.

Faculty: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences [↗](#)

Overview

ENGL 423: Advanced Literary Theory investigates the theory and practice of communication, and more specifically, how people understand and use language and literature to make meaning.

The course starts with an account of the institutionalization of English literature and literary theory, followed by an introduction to the social history of English. Next, the course considers effective communication, the theory and practice of book history, and contemporary reading practices. Throughout, the course materials emphasize how reading practices and the social production of literature contribute to subjectivity and community.

Outline

Introduction

Part 1: Social Histories of Literature and Language

- Unit 1: Literature and Literary Theory

- Unit 2: A Social History of English

Part 2: Effective Communication

- Unit 3: Signifying History
- Unit 4: Signs and Not-Signs
- Unit 5: A New Formalism

Part 3: Theory and Practice of Book History

- Unit 6: What Is Book History?
- Unit 7: The Impact of Print
- Unit 8: Communication Circuits in Action
- Unit 9: Reading Practices and Communities

Part 4: Contemporary Reading Practices

- Unit 10: Book History and New Media
- Unit 11: The Case of Harlequin Enterprises

Final Comments

Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for ENGL 423, you must submit all the assignments and write the final examination. To pass the course, you must achieve a course composite grade of at least D (50

percent) and a grade of at least **D (50 percent)**  on the final examination.

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: Four Short Responses	10%
Assignment 2: Expository Essay	20%
Assignment 3: Project Report	30%
Final Examination	40%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the **Exams and grades**  section of the Calendar.

Materials

Physical course materials

The following course materials are included in a course package that will be shipped to your home prior to your course's start date:

Finkelstein, David, and Alistair McCleery. *An Introduction to Book History*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Finkelstein, David, and Alistair McCleery, eds. *The Book History Reader*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2006.

McHoul, Alec. *Semiotic Investigations: Towards an Effective Semiotics*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 1996.

Other materials

All other materials are available online.

Important links

- › Academic advising [↗](#)
- › Program planning [↗](#)
- › Request assistance [↗](#)
- › Support services at AU [↗](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 6, March 11, 2024

Updated August 5, 2026

View **previous revision** 
