

English 382.3 Canadian Fiction from 1960 to Present  
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**Is CanLit Really a “Dumpster Fire”?**

What *is* it about CanLit? Are we anticipating its fiery death? If so, what can be built from its ashes? And...how did we get here?

Many writers of the 1960s and 70s embraced a renewed nationalism and were deeply invested in refashioning a distinctly *Canadian* literature, but what does this mean? Books about beavers and bears? Maybe, because we’ll read the story of a woman and her ursine lover (you read that right) in Marian Engel’s *Bear*, which CBC’s *Ideas* calls “one of the most controversial books in the history of Canadian literature.” We’ll then discuss how changed immigration policy and the rise of the rhetoric of multiculturalism in the 1980s engaged new writers and created new audiences for Canadian literature, ones that often questioned its failure to represent the increasing heterogeneity of the nation. We’ll examine how racialized writers, as well as Indigenous authors, used short fiction and novels to put forth their own complicated and not always complimentary understanding of Canada. The remainder of the course will focus on the so-called CanLit dumpster fire, contextualizing and evaluating debates in relation to #UBCAccountable, Indigeneity, representation, and appropriation. Ultimately, we’ll discuss the future – is there a future? – of Canadian literature itself.

Evaluations will comprise formal essays with creative options, such as producing a podcast or audio documentary, as well as a final class project, our very own *Canada Reads*-style event. We will defend and eject texts we’ve studied in class until just one remains, questioning, along the way, the influence of prize culture on Canadian literature.