

# ENGL 452: Modern Canadian Poetry

Instructor: Dr. Graham Jensen

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Portrait of Canadian poet P.K. Page,  
by Harold Town ([source](#))

## Course Description

In this course, we will learn how to read, discuss, and write about modern Canadian poetry (that is, Canadian poetry published roughly between 1920 and 1970). Authors will include E.J. Pratt, F.R. Scott, Earle Birney, A.M. Klein, P.K. Page, Louis Dudek, Margaret Avison, Leonard Cohen, Gwendolyn MacEwen, and Al Purdy, among others. The course will be especially useful for English majors and Honours students who would like to develop their close-reading skills, and it will likely be of particular interest to students curious about Canadian literature, modernism, and poetry from other time periods, but no previous experience in these areas is necessary.

Through course lectures, group discussions, and short assignments, we will learn about the background contexts that make this period so fascinating—the literary scandals and squabbles, the DIY publication of opinionated manifestos and “little magazines,” the effects of two World Wars and increasing globalization, the spiritual and sexual revolutions of the 1960s, and more. Together, we will also explore archival materials and use basic digital tools to share our insights.

## Proposed Assignments:

- Book review (15%)
- “Little magazines” assignment (15%)
- Final essay (30%)
- Final exam (30%)
- Participation (10%)

## Proposed Texts:

- Trehearne, Brian, editor. *Canadian Poetry 1920 to 1960*. New Canadian Library, 2010.
- Other texts will be shared via the course website.