I would like to begin by introducing myself. My name is Will Barlow, and I am an international student from the United States. I have been attending UBCO since 2017 making this my fifth year of my degree. I am in pursuit of a double major in Computer Science and English. I think that the combination of these two majors has given me a unique perspective on both computing sciences and literature.

As far as my interest for this particular course goes, both the time period and the genre of American literature are what drew me in. This will also be my first American literature course at the university level. As an American I have enjoyed learning about Canadian literature and the origins of the English literary genre so far in my English major at UBCO, however I am excited to get back to American literature. The time period is also of interest to me because it is the era that my parents grew up in. I think that the zeitgeist and influence of each decade during this era has cascaded into modernity and I find it interesting to examine the principles and ideals of the previous generation’s thinking in juxtaposition to our current principles and ideals. This era also embodies the collective anxiety of media and technology take overs and their moral implications. Thusly, this era piques my interest not only as a student of literature, but also as a student of computational sciences.

This course fulfills one of my upper-level requirements for my English major. However, this course is more than a means to satisfy a requirement, it is a return to my literary roots and a means to satisfy my interest in both American literature as a genre and the period of time following WWII. It fits nicely with my English major while being a course that I am actually interested in. After I graduate, I would like to spend more time with American literature during this time period and I have even entertained the idea of continuing my education to be able to teach American literature one day.

My weaknesses as a student are largely related to my fantastic ability to procrastinate and get stressed out easily. In regards to writing specifically, I have a tendency to write elaborately with long complex sentences and vague claims. I would like to write more specifically and poignantly with an active voice that doesn’t beat around the bush. As a student, I typically get flustered and I’m sure any student can relate to the crippling nature of academic stress, but after four years of university I have learned some tactics and skills to help mitigate the stress and anxieties of the journey. This is where my strengths surface as I have learned how to manage my time effectively to finish assignments before the last minute. Plus, I consider myself to be fantastic at reading and writing (apart from the aforementioned struggle) and my grades so far have reinforced this claim. This helps immensely with completing assignments and readings in timely manners. I intend to work on my tendency to procrastinate by drawing on good time management skills paired with the support of my acquired reading and writing skills.

I expect this course to be informative and engaging. I was hoping to see a Vonnegut novel in the reading list, but I think Pynchon and DeLillo’s writing echoes a similar tone to him so I will be content. I also haven’t had the opportunity to read Pynchon or DeLillo, so I am excited to dive into uncharted territory. This will also be my first in person course in over a year now. I am excited at the idea of in person discussion versus that of zoom. I consider live physical discussions to be the epitome of human interaction. In turn, it is the best way to exchange thoughts and ideas in a productive manner. So, I expect a high level of engagement and discussion among my peers in this course. I also expect this course to be informative of the social contexts surrounding each text. Since I am equally invested in the time period as well as the genre, I expect that we will be engaging in discussions of post war ideologies, shifts in the status quo for American society, and how these authors have contributed to their cultural moments and beyond.

I am excited for the term ahead and to read the selected novels. As I mentioned above, I think that having an in-person class will raise the level of discussion. This will scratch an itch that has been left unattended by zoom discussions in the past year.