Course Description

English 215 is designed to be an introduction to university-level English studies. Students will get practice at (among other things): (1) textual explication, (2) the use of biographical and historical context, (3) comparison to film adaptations, (4) the application of various critical theories of interpretation, and (5) techniques for scholarly research. The syllabus includes works from a wide range of genres, writers, and literary movements. Our writing assignments will offer you a chance to work directly with texts to formulate your own unique claim or argument. The research assignments will allow you to become familiar with library resources to find credible, peer-reviewed scholarly sources, to summarize and critique those sources, and to join in academic conversations with your own line of critical inquiry.

A list of tentative readings includes: African American autobiography (Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs), poetry from a wide range of writers focused on the personal and the political, Art Spiegelman’s graphic Holocaust memoir *Maus*, Tony Kushner’s play *Angels in America* (AIDS, queer performativity), Jhumpa Lahiri’s postcolonial stories, and Mary Shelley’s classic *Frankenstein*. The course will begin with an introduction to critical theory through *The Theory Toolbox.*