English 215: Introduction to English Studies
Fall 2019 • Online Section

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Description
This course is an introduction to the study of English language and literature in all its forms. Students will learn how to read and analyze a wide range of literary and other cultural texts, write critically about them, research related issues using scholarly sources, and draw on theoretical frameworks for deeper analysis. Ultimately, the goal of the course is to learn different ways to approach different texts. Because these different kinds of texts raise unique questions and require various approaches to reading, we will include a wide range of literary works from traditional novels, poems, and plays, to contemporary documentary genres including film and documentary poetry, as well as feature films and online games. The historical periods of these texts, their cultural contexts, and the backgrounds of their authors range just as widely.

We will engage with a variety of elements for analysis for each text, though we may emphasize some more than others depending on the material. Key elements for analysis include: Genre, Author/authorship, Style/Aesthetics, Figures of speech (allegory, metaphor, etc.) and Historical and National contexts. This course is designed to reflect a variety of possible tracks in the English Department at UWM. Thus, we will be engaging with different types of texts as well, including: Fiction/novels, short story, memoir, poetry, plays, film, and games.

Objectives
To gain exposure to the wide range of forms, genres, periods, and styles of global English.

To develop methods of critical analysis that will prove valuable for students in the future, both in reading literature and in other courses in rhetoric, creative writing, and media, cinema and digital studies.

To develop critical writing and oral communication abilities.

To develop basic university-level research skills applicable to the study of English.
Required Texts: Purchase


All of these texts are available on Amazon—books for this course have not been ordered to the online bookstore through UWM. You may also find used copies at a book store of your choice locally, though availability may vary.

Required Texts: On Canvas (or in public domain) The following are longer works that are available in PDF form on Canvas. If you would prefer a hard copy, you can purchase any edition, or check out from the library:

- *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, 1603
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, 1823
- *The Jungle* (chapters 1 & 2 only) by Upton Sinclair, 1914

All other short stories, poems, games, films, and scholarly texts are on Canvas.

*Selections from Reading and Writing about Literature* by Janet E. Gardner (2012) and *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* by Timothy Corrigan (2014) will be assigned throughout the semester. These readings are short, and are designed to help orient you toward a specific writing or reading approach.

**Access to streaming services such as Swank (available through UWM library database) is required to view assigned films. Any other films, games, or digital media will be linked to Canvas. These screenings will not cost you anything, and you don’t need a subscription service to view them.**

Assignments

**Weekly Discussions (25%)**: You will participate in the online discussion board and respond to posts. You are required to follow the discussion prompt, provide one discussion post (50 word minimum) and respond thoughtfully to at least two posts from your classmates. In these discussion posts, especially your responses to others, I encourage you to raise questions, make observations, and critically engage with each other’s ideas. Merely saying you agree or disagree with a comment is not thorough enough—why did this post catch your eye? Why do you agree or disagree with it or what new idea or facet of the discussion can you glean from it?

Each week, your initial post is due on Canvas by **11:59 each Wednesday** and your responses to each other are due on Canvas by **11:59 each Saturday**. Each week you will be provided a number of points earned from 1-4 according to the quality and frequency of your posts (4 being the best possible grade).

The 1-4 scale is as follows:

1-did not meet all requirements but met some
2-did meet requirements but at a minimal level
3-did meet all requirements and demonstrated critical thinking and thorough engagement
4-did meet all requirements and demonstrated critical thinking, thorough engagement, and deft use of terminology and course readings masterfully

As an online course, this class relies heavily on the active participation of all students.

Each week, most of our time will be spent discussing the readings and texts we engage with. To fully participate in the course and to get the most out of it, you must take the time to read through all posts and comments. Regularly reading and responding will help you with the course material. Just as importantly, your contributions will also allow you to help others in the class, as all of you work together to flesh out an idea or hammer through a challenging question.

**Weekly Response Journal (15%)**: You will provide notes and are expected to do some background knowledge building about the texts we are working with. A form is provided, must be typed, then uploaded in the appropriate Canvas folder. These are due on Canvas by **11:59PM each Saturday**. There will be no late assignments accepted. You may miss two without a grade deduction. The assignment is credit/no credit. These assignments are mainly for your benefit. As a scholar of literature and culture, it is important to learn how to take notes and seek out relevant information as you engage with your textual object. Written feedback will be provided on an as-needed basis. If your notes are not sufficient or create incorrect assumptions and conclusions about the course materials I will comment on your work more thoroughly. If you have any questions about your progress, please email me directly.

**Readings**: Complete all readings before submitting your weekly journal and weekly discussion. Your Journal Responses are also a great place to take notes and show me your thought process as you engage with assigned texts. The Journal Response template is designed encourage your engagement with a variety of different textual elements on a regular basis to increase your familiarity with them.

These requirements will make up your participation grade. As an online class, your completion of these assignments is crucial because there isn’t an opportunity to just show up!

**Exams**: All exams in the class will be written essay exams in the form of critical papers. Three critical papers are due over the course of the semester, the first two 3-5 pages, the second 4-6 pages, and the last one 5-7 pages. I’ll distribute topics in advance. These papers will be graded on a scale of A-F (see section on General Education Requirements).

**Revision**: A critical component of academic work, especially writing, is the revision process. You are required to re-submit either your first or second critical paper in revised form by the end of the semester, taking comments on your first version into account. This resubmission is due by the time you submit your third and final critical paper at the end of the semester. Any improvement to your grade will be taken into account and reflected in the final version of your score at the end of the semester.

**Grading Contributions**

- First Critical Paper 3-5 pages: 15%
- Second Critical Paper 4-6 pages: 20%
- Final Critical Paper 5-7 pages: 25%