



Course Syllabus:
Introduction to Critical Reading and Academic Writing
Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
PY 205 TTh: 9:30
ENGL 1143: Sections 110 and 152
Fall 2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Greg Giddings

Office: Bea Wood 235

Office hours: T: 8:30-9:30; W: 9:00-12:00; Th: 8:30-9:30; and by appointment

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Course Description

This course provides training in critical reading and academic writing. Regarding the former, the class will focus on a close reading of a variety of academic texts. For the latter, the class will emphasize the writing process while generating essays of various genres. Finally, students will evaluate and implement sources when composing an synthesis paper near the end of the semester.

THECB Core Course Objectives and Assessments

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - To assess the student's critical thinking skills, the Synthesis Rubric will be applied to the Synthesis Paper.
- Communication Skills
 - To assess the student's written communication skills, the Synthesis Rubric will be applied to the Synthesis Paper.
- Personal Responsibility
 - To assess ethical use of sources as a measure of personal responsibility, the Synthesis Rubric will be applied to the Synthesis Paper.
- Teamwork
 - To assess the student's teamwork, the Peer Review Teamwork rubric will be used to assess each student's preparation for and participation in peer review workshops.

Textbooks & Instructional Materials

- *The Bedford Reader*, 15th edition, edited by X.J. Kennedy et al.

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring and homework help for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP's Learning Center provides tutoring support in a number of core courses and subject areas. Remember that you don't need an appointment to utilize these services. Check the [TASP webpage](#) for times.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work, not the individual to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the goals and objectives of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare students for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

At the very least, plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment; at worst, the consequence will be an F in the course. Offenders may be reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy and/or the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

For final grades, this class will not use the plus/minus grading system. The following numerical equivalents for final grades are used: A = 100-90%; B = 89-80%; C = 79-70%; D = 69-60%; F = 59-0. For individual assignment grades, an A+ = 98, A = 95, A- = 92; B+ = 88, B = 85, and so on.

Table 1: Percentages allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Description	Percentage
6 In-class writing assignments (10% each)	You will have a variety of writing assignments which will be composed extemporaneous, in-class.	60%

Assignments	Description	Percentage
Daily quizzes	Reading comprehension will be stressed in the class. As such, for most reading assignments, I will utilize a short quiz to assess your understanding of the aforementioned assignment.	25%
Synthesis paper	This paper will be longer than your other writing assignments. And you will use sources for its completion.	15%
Total	*****	100%

Mid-Term Grades

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, I will provide a Midterm Progress Report through Navigate. I will submit a grade for all students, not just those in danger of failing the course. Midterm grades will not be reported on your transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students earning below a C at the midway point should make an appointment with me and consider visiting the Learning Center for tutoring services.

Final Exam

Your final exam, an in-class essay, is scheduled for December 8 at 10:30 am.

Late Work

Daily reading quizzes cannot be “made up.” In-class essays must be made up within one week. You will be given an alternative topic, and you will compose in my office.

Important Dates

Deadline to file for graduation: **September 21**

Last Day to drop with a grade of “W:” **November 23.**

For more information, refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

I will use D2L program as a part of this course. I will typically remind the class what to expect in the upcoming classes. And you can, of course, also consult the semester schedule. Students can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU homepage or the portal. For assistance, submit a help ticket [here](#).

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid

(federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. Two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#).

Course Schedule:

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Week	Dates	Assignment from the <i>Bedford Reader</i>	Writing
1	Aug.25-27	Chapter 1: pp. 9-26. “Narration”: pp. 69-78	n/a
2	Sept. 1-3	Chapter 2: pp. 27-40 “Cold Storage” pp. 79-84 “Champion of the World” pp. 94-99. “The Lottery” pp. 109-20.	n/a
3	Sept. 8-10	Chapter 4: pp. 55-66 “Description” pp. 123-30 “My Summer of Scooping Ice Cream” pp. 131-34 “Once More to the Lake” pp. 165-172 “Arm Wrestling with My Father” pp.157-64	n/a
4	Sept. 15-17	“Red Hot Cell Block” pp. 135-42 “Nighthawks” pp. 152-56	Tuesday: In-class writing #1
5	Sept. 22-24	“Compare and Contrast” pp. 217-27 “Neat People vs. Sloppy People” pp.240-44 “Remembering My Childhood on the Continent of Africa” pp. 245-53 “At Risk” pp.228-32	n/a
6	Sept. 29-Oct. 1	“The Great Silence” pp.233-39 “Climate Change: Pole Pole” pp.254-61	Tuesday: In-class writing #2

7	Oct. 6-8	“Cause and Effect” pp. 407-16 “What Makes Things Cool” pp. 430-39 “Harlem” pp. 417-20 “Little Fish in a Big Pond” pp.440-51	n/a
8	Oct. 13-15	“The Global Peril of Inequality” pp. 457-62 “Argument and Persuasion” pp.503-18	Tuesday: In-class writing #3
9	Oct. 20-22	“How Can Family Immigration Policy be Reformed?” pp. 528-37	Thursday: In-class writing #4
10	Oct. 27-29	“Should Freedom of Speech be Limited?” pp. 560-80	n/a
11	Nov. 3-5	MLA section: pp. 678-84	Tuesday: In-class writing #5
12	Nov.10-12	Conferences—no reading assignments.	n/a
13	Nov. 17-19	(No reading assignments)	Tuesday: Peer Review Thursday: Synthesis Paper is due.
14	Nov.24	“Black Men in Public Space” pp. 182-86 “What I Lived For” pp. 601-11	n/a
15	Dec. 1-3	“The Crest” pp. 628-39 “Behind the Formaldehyde Curtain” pp. 306-16	Tuesday: In-class writing #6

Final: December 8 at 10:30

