

# English 1153: Introduction to Reading & Writing about Culture

## Spring 2025

Professor Todd Giles

Bea Wood 232

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Class meets: MWF 9–9:50 (PY 205) or MWF 11:00–11:50 (PY 202)

Office Hours: MWF 10:00–11:00 & TR 12:30–2:00 & by appointment

**“The things taught in colleges and schools are not an education, but the means of education.”**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

**“It is only when we forget our learning that we begin to know.”**

Henry David Thoreau

### Required Texts

- Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest*. (ISBN# 9780765324641)
- N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. (ISBN# 9780826361219)

### Course Description

This course will provide students an opportunity to develop critical reading and cultural analysis skills in order to achieve deeper understanding of a variety of texts and artifacts. Students will explore the various factors informing the production of texts and learn how to conduct research in order to gain experience exploring different perspectives on select works and themes. The course will include several opportunities for students to articulate their interpretations and insights in essay assignments, which will be assessed for clarity, insight, and understanding.

- Read various literary texts united by a common theme or topic
- Apply knowledge of literary analysis to interpret literary texts
- Engage in a writing process that includes invention, drafting, and revision
- Write various genres of academic essays
- Find, evaluate, and synthesize credible sources in support of a research paper
- Use source ethically and in contextually appropriate ways and follow a designated style guide
- Demonstrate proficient use of Standard Written English

## Assessment of THECB core objectives for COMMUNICATION

- Critical Thinking skills
  - To assess the student's critical thinking skills, the Research Project rubric will be applied to the Literary Research Project.
- Communication skills
  - To assess the student's written communication skills, the Research Project rubric will be applied to the Literary Research Project.
- Personal Responsibility
  - To assess ethical use of sources as a measure of personal responsibility, the Research Project rubric will be applied to the Literary Research Project.
- 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.

**\*My courses are organized around the Academic Seminar model pioneered in German universities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which faculty and students work together to strive for new knowledge based on five pillars: interdisciplinarity; academic freedom; critical thinking; seeking knowledge as an end in itself; and integrating new knowledge while at the same time preserving and interpreting the past.**

**\*My pedagogy is founded on the intrinsic value of questioning and reflection, including the questioning of my own assumptions. As a student in my class, you will develop your higher-order thinking skills through active learning—clarifying and challenging your own perspectives and those of others through the critical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of theoretical and literary texts. We will examine and discuss challenging questions and complex realities, learn to think for ourselves, and connect to the world in rich, subtle ways.**

### Course Requirements

Assignments	Grade Percent
Daily Writing/Homework/Participation	25%
Nature Writing Essay	25%
Ways of Seeing Essay	25%
Part 1 Rainy Mountain	5%
Complete Rainy Mountain Essay	20%

### Grading Policy

In this class, the following numerical equivalents for final grades are used: A = 100-90%; B = 89-80%; C = 79-70%; D = 69-60%; F = 59-0%.

### **Daily Writing and Class Activities**

You will write frequently in and out of the classroom. In-class writings will include quizzes and various other responses to prompts on topics relevant to that day's readings or things recently covered. These writing activities will be graded on a plus/check/minus scale: a **plus (+)** for doing a thorough job (100%), a check (✓) for completing the work in an acceptable fashion (70%), and a minus (−) for not completing the work or for obvious lack of effort (0%). Some assignments, depending on length and difficulty, will count for more than one daily grade. You cannot make up in-class writing or homework. **\*This portion of your course work can easily make or break your overall grade, so be sure to keep up.**

### **Class Preparation and Participation**

To succeed on your daily writing you must show that you've closely read, have at least a cursory understanding of the material, and address, to the best of your ability, the writing prompts. I do not expect you to remember exact quotations, but specific examples from the work always help get the point across. It is also good to try to tie in any relevant terminology or critical concepts from class discussions. Read the assigned material by the date listed on the schedule of readings. As you read, take notes and underline/highlight what you believe are key passages in the text (a climactic scene, crucial lines for understanding the work, a summary of the argument, etc.), or things you have trouble understanding. **\*Come to each class with comments and questions!**

### **Paper Submission Format and Policy**

All out-of-class assignments must be typed in Times New Roman 12-point black font with one inch margins using MLA format. By enrolling in this class, the student expressly grants MSU a "limited right" in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The "limited right" shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student's work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and for educational purposes. **Note:** You may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that already has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless you obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved *in advance*.

### **Late Paper and Assignment Policy**

Unless arrangements are made *in advance* for extenuating circumstances, you will automatically lose a letter grade for each day a paper is late, including weekends. If you can't make it to class on the day a major assignment is due, email me in advance and hand it in either during my office hours or into the main English office (216 Bea Wood Hall) by 5:00 the day the paper is due to avoid losing a letter grade for a late paper. A paper that is more than a week late will automatically receive an F, regardless of the quality of work. **\*All major assignments must be turned in to pass the class. You will not be able to make up daily work and there is no extra credit.**

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing in "Works Cited")—whether you use that material in a quotation, paraphrase, or summary. It is a theft of intellectual property and will not be tolerated, whether intentional or not. I have a zero tolerance for any type of plagiarism. **\*All incidents of plagiarism will be penalized (the paper will receive an automatic F), reported, and kept on file. The second incident of plagiarism in class by the same student will result in the student receiving an F for the course.**

### **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

### **Safe Zone Statement**

I consider this classroom a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being – regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is my expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

### **Attendance Policy**

Because this is a writing and discussion course and the work we do in class is designed to help you understand the readings and improve your writing skills, you must attend class to do well. Although I do not take daily role, your in-class writing and participation grades should ensure your attendance and preparedness. By failing to regularly attend class you will not understand the critical terminology and concepts necessary to successfully complete the daily writing assignments and larger papers. You are in college; come to class.

### **Tardiness Policy**

Your behavior in the college classroom should be no different than what will be expected of you as a working professional. Regularly arriving late to class is disruptive to your instructor and your classmates; as such, it will not be tolerated. Students who arrive after the daily writing assignments have begun will automatically receive a minus. Likewise, they will not be allowed to hand in their daily reading questions.

### **Electronics Policy**

Cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. If a student is caught using an electronic device during a quiz or test they will automatically receive a zero on it. Likewise, each time a student is seen playing with his or her cellphone or iPod during class they will automatically lose credit for the day—any in-

class writings, quizzes, homework assignments due that day will receive a minus. I will tell students they are losing credit for the day for the first few weeks of class, after which time it is not my responsibility to alert them. Other disruptive behavior, including coming in late on a regular basis, chatting with classmates during class discussion or tests, sleeping, or any other behavior not conducive to a mature learning environment, will first receive a warning; if the behavior continues, an instructor drop will be initiated.

### **Recording Devices**

The use of cell phones and other recording or electronic devices is strictly prohibited during class unless it is part of a reasonable accommodation under ADA. Reason: academia should provide a space for free-flowing ideas and discussion; surveillance of any sort infringes upon your classmates' and your professor's freedom of expression.

### **Grade Appeals**

I will be happy to try to explain the rationale behind any grade; however, I absolutely do not negotiate, haggle, or argue about grades. Part of my job is to evaluate your work and to assign a written grade to it. I do that to the best of my ability the first time. The bottom line is that you have to take responsibility for your own education.

### **Tutoring Support**

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring 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. Please see our schedule for more information about times and offerings. Remember that you don't need an appointment to utilize these services. Some departments also provide tutoring. Check the "Tutoring at MSU" tab in the portal for more information about all campus tutoring opportunities. For Distance Education students, TASP has partnered with Thinkingstorm, an online tutoring company that provides you with high-quality, 24/7 tutoring support. Located at the top of your D2L course page, select the Distance Education Tutoring course to book an appointment with a tutor. If you are a distance education student (i.e. you live more than 50 miles from MSU and are in all online courses), but you do not see this course pop up under your courses, please contact Ashley Hurst.

### **Campus Carry Statement**

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at MSU Texas's Campus Carry page.

**Access to Microsoft 365:** All students are able to download Microsoft Office 365 free of charge using their MSU Texas student email address. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/office?ms.officeurl=getoffice365?ms.officeurl=getoffice365>

**University Computer Labs:** The University provides four open computer labs throughout the week that feature access to Microsoft Office Suite for writing and internet access for research.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Clark Student Center	24 hours (Mon-Sun)
Dillard 146	Mon-Thurs 6:00 am–7:00 pm
Moffett Library	Mon-Thurs 8:00 am–10:00 pm; Fri. 8-5; Sat: 10pm-6 pm; Sun: 2:00 pm-10 pm
Legacy Hall	24 hours (Mon-Sun)

### Reading Schedule

This schedule is tentative; I reserve the right to amend it with oral notice in class. If you anticipate a problem with the due dates, please speak with me well in advance.

#### Week 1

- 1/20 **MLK Day**
- 1/22 Class introduction
- 1/24 Discuss nature writing genre and Nature Writing Essay

#### Week 2

- 1/27 Edward Abbey Pp (D2L); Edward Abbey, “The First Morning” (Handout)
- 1/29 Terry T. Williams Pp; TTW, “The Clan of One-Breasted Women” (D2L)
- 1/31 Rachel Carson, “The Human Price” (D2L); Watch Carson bio (D2L)

#### Week 3

- 2/3 In-class writing workshop for Essay 1
- 2/5 Annie Dillard, “Heaven and Earth in Jest” (D2L)
- 2/7 Annie Dillard, “Living like Weasels” (D2L)

#### Week 4

- 2/10 **Peer Review Part I Nature Writing Essay (Bring 1 PRINTED draft)**
- 2/12 John Muir Pp (D2L); John Muir, “A Wind-Storm in the Forests” (D2L)
- 2/14 Henry David Thoreau Pp (D2L); Henry David Thoreau “Walking” (D2L)

#### Week 5

- 2/17 Visual Literacy workshop; **Nature Writing Essay (Parts I & II) Due**
- 2/19 Discuss Paper 2, “Ways of Seeing”
- 2/21 Mary Austin Pp (D2L); Mary Austin, “My Neighbor’s Field” (D2L)

#### Week 6

- 2/24 Joy Williams, “One Acre: On Devaluing Real Estate to Keep Land Priceless” (D2L)
- 2/26 Sallie Bingham, “A Woman’s Land” (D2L)
- 2/28 **In-Class Writing Workshop, Part I “Ways of Seeing” essay (Bring pic of your artwork)**

### **Week 7**

- 3/3 Aldo Leopold Pp (D2L); Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" (D2L)
- 3/5 Jack Kerouac, "Alone on a Mountaintop" (D2L)
- 3/7 **Peer Review Part I "Ways of Seeing" (Bring PRINTED draft to class)**

### **Week 8**

3/10–3/14 **Spring Break**

### **Week 9**

- 3/17 Gary Snyder poems (D2L)
- 3/19 Gary Snyder poems continued
- 3/21 **Peer Review Parts II & III (Bring PRINTED draft to class)**

### **Week 10**

- 3/24 Conferences
- 3/26 **"Ways of Seeing" in-class final revisions workshop (Bring draft to class)**
- 3/28 In-class intro to *The Way to Rainy Mountain*; Discuss *Rainy Mountain* paper;  
**Ways of Seeing Parts I-III Due**

### **Week 11**

- 3/31 N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (ix-41)
- 4/2 N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (44-63)
- 4/4 N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (66-89)

### **Week 12**

- 4/7 N. Scott Momaday cont.
- 4/9 In-class writing workshop for Part 1 of *RM* paper
- 4/11 Conferences

### **Week 13**

- 4/14 **Part I of Rainy Mountain Project Due**; Begin researching and drafting Part II in class
- 4/16 Ursula Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest* (9-61)
- 4/18 **Holiday Break**

### **Week 14**

- 4/21 Ursula Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest* (63-101)
- 4/23 Ursula Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest* (103-155)
- 4/25 Ursula Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest* (157-189)

### **Week 15**

- 4/28 Mary Oliver poems (D2L)
- 4/30 Mary Oliver continued
- 5/2 Linda Hogan poems (D2L)

**Week 16**

5/5 Linda Hogan continued

4/7 Peer Review workshop (Bring 1 copy of your working draft)

4/9 Final draft workshop (Bring 1 copy of your final draft)

**Final Time TBA**