

**Instructor:** Kevin W. Johnson  
**Class Time:** MWF 11:00-11:50am  
**Section(s):** 105 & 1Q2  
**Class Location:** BW117

**Instructor's Email:** [kevin.johnson@msutexas.edu](mailto:kevin.johnson@msutexas.edu)  
**Instructor's Office:** BW234  
**Office hours:** MW 2:00pm-3:00pm; TR 11:00am-12:30pm

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# ENGL 1143: Introduction to Critical Reading and Academic Writing

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## Course Description:

This course provides training in critical reading and academic writing. It focuses on the writing process and rhetorical concepts while requiring students to write a variety of texts. Students will be required to prepare a synthesis paper of moderate length demonstrating critical reading and academic writing skills, including selection, evaluation, analysis, integration, and documentation of sources.

## Text for this course:

- Lunsford, Andrea and Michael Brady. *Let's Talk with Readings*. Norton. 2023. (Provided as eBook via Inclusive Access in D2L.)

**Note**—This course's required eBook is part of MSU Texas' Courseware Access and Affordability Program. Students are charged for the course materials on their Business Office account. If you wish to opt-out of the Program and purchase the required course materials on your own, you must do so using the opt-out instructions, which will be sent to your my.msutexas.edu email on the second day of class. Contact the MSU Bookstore at [jenny.denning@msutexas.edu](mailto:jenny.denning@msutexas.edu) if you have questions about opting out.

## Required materials:

- Note-taking materials
- Folder with pockets

## Course Goals:

- Apply key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Engage in a writing process that includes invention, drafting, collaboration, and revision
- Use reading and composing for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts
- Use strategies – such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design to compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources

- Use sources ethically and in contextually appropriate ways and follow a designated style guide
- Demonstrate proficient use of linguistic structures, including grammar and mechanics, through practice in composing and revising

**Texas Core Curriculum:** This course fulfills a core requirement for **Communication**. As such, the course will assess the following learning objectives:

- Critical Thinking, Communication, & Personal Responsibility - To assess these skills, the Synthesis rubric will be applied to the Synthesis Essay.
- 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 a peer review workshop.

### Assignments and Percentage point values:

**Note**—You will receive detailed assignment sheets that explain the specifics for each of these assignments.

#### Paper assignments

20% -- Rhetorical Analysis of Visual Text paper (**revised composition one**)

10% -- Midterm Exam (**timed composition one— with revision option**)

20% -- Final Synthesis paper (**revised composition two**)

10% -- Final Exam (**timed composition two**)

#### Process assignments

10% -- Proposal Brief & Annotated Bibliography (for Synthesis Paper)

5% -- Library instruction session & Library quiz

10% -- Peer reviews & Instructor conferences

15% -- Process & Participation portfolio (including but not limited to reading response quiz/assignments, short writing & editing assignments, homework, class discussion activities, in-class drafting & planning exercises, or other assignments graded *credit/no credit*)

**Grading Policy:** This class will not use the plus/minus grading system for *final grades*. The following numerical equivalents for final grades are used:

**A** = 100-90%;

**B** = 89-80%;

**C** = 79-70%;

**D** = 69-60%;

**F** = 59-0%.

**Midterm Grades:** In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, a Midterm Progress Report through each student's *Navigate* account will be provided by the instructor. Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcripts; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. Students earning below a C at the midway point should make an appointment with the instructor and consider visiting the **Tutoring & Academic Support Programs Center** (TASP).

**Submission Format and Policy:** All formal assignments are to be typed and formatted – and outside sources documented - according to MLA style. All formal papers will be uploaded into the D2L Dropbox folder.

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. Please note that the D2L Dropbox folder will automatically run the paper through Turnitin.com. Turnitin provides both an Originality Report and an AI Report.

***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.*

**Access to Microsoft 365:** All students are able to download Microsoft Office 365 free of charge using their MSU Texas student email address. To acquire Office 365, please visit [Get Office 365 \(educational institute access\)](#) and create an account with your login credentials.

**University Computer Labs:** The University provides four open computer labs throughout the week. These four labs feature access to Microsoft Office Suite for writing and internet access for research. The computer labs are located in the **Clark Student Center (room 130)**, **Moffett Library (second floor)**, the **Dillard College of Business (room 146)**, and **Legacy Hall (room 102)**. For hours, see [MSU Lab Hours and Contact Info](#).

**Late Assignment Policy:** Late assignments, defined as work not submitted by the designated date and time posted in the D2L Dropbox/Submission folder, will be accepted, but they will lose 10% of the final grade. Additionally, no late work will be accepted more than 48 hours after the original deadline. If you are unable to come to class on the day an assignment is due, you should still upload it into the D2L Dropbox folder on time to avoid late paper deductions.

**Academic Dishonesty:** 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 on the Works Cited page) whether you use that material in a quote, paraphrase, or summary.

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Formal papers will run through the Turnitin for an Originality Report and an AI Report. 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 will be reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy and/or the Director of Student Conduct.

**Use of AI or Writing Technologies:** The use of AI is highly discouraged in this class. Turnitin does have an AI detector, but it is not 100% accurate, and thus leaves room for “reasonable doubt.” Therefore, if you do use AI at any stage in the writing process, you must state in the comments section of your submission how you used it (in detail). If an originality checker indicates that your

response is more than 30% AI-generated, I will investigate further, and if your response and other evidence indicates that the work you submitted is not more than 70% original, you will not receive full credit for the assignment.

*Note that there is no uniform policy on AI use at MSU, and therefore you should make efforts to understand the policy for each course you are taking.*

**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, 940-397-4140.

**Attendance Policy:** Because each class meeting may include class discussion, group work, and writing work, your attentive and active participation is essential. Therefore, it is important that you attend class and arrive on time. For this course, each student is allowed two weeks worth of absences, which is six (6) absences. You should save those absences for when you really need them. After six (6) absences, you will earn a 7.5% reduction on your final grade for each absence beyond the six (6) absences. (**Note**—if you are a student-athlete, please see me about the attendance policy specific to your situation.)

Furthermore, you should be aware that persistent tardiness to class is disrespectful to both your professor and your peers. You may be counted absent if you arrive more than 10 minutes late to class unless you speak to me regarding your tardiness. If you leave early, you may likewise be marked absent, and you will lose participation points unless you speak to me in advance.

**Note** — *If you need to miss several classes because of personal reasons (illness, death in the family, etc), you should alert the Dean of Students office and provide them with the necessary documentation so that they can verify the situation for all of your instructors.*

**Tutoring:** 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. Writing tutors are available. Remember that students don't need an appointment to utilize these services. For more information, see their excellent web page at [Tutoring & Academic Support Programs](#) .

**Safe Zone Statement:** The professor considers this classroom to be 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 the professor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

**Writing Proficiency Requirement:** All students seeking a Bachelor's degree from Midwestern State University must satisfy a writing proficiency requirement once they have 1) completed 6 hours of Communication Core and 2) earned 60 hours. Students may meet this requirement by passing the Writing Proficiency Exam, passing two Writing Intensive Courses, or passing English 2113. If you have

any questions about the exam, visit the Writing Proficiency Office website at <https://msutexas.edu/academics/wpr/> or call 397-4131.

**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](#).

**Contacting Your Instructor:**

The best way to contact your instructor outside of class is via email — [kevin.johnson@msutexas.edu](mailto:kevin.johnson@msutexas.edu) .