



Introduction to Critical Reading and Academic Writing

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

ENGL 1143 Sections 208 & 209 Spring 2026

MWF 10:00 – 10:50 AM PY 205; MWF 11:00 – 11:50 AM PY 205

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Peter Fields, Assoc. Prof. of English

Office: Bea Wood 230 (2nd floor of Prothro-Yeager)

Office hours: MW: 12:15 – 2:15 PM; F 12:00 – 4:00 PM. And by appointment.

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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 read and 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

THECB Core Course Objectives

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

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.

Required Textbook

Ebook for *The Bedford Reader*. 15th edition. Edited by X.J. Kennedy, Dorothy M. Kennedy, Jane E. Aaron, Ellen Kuhl Repetto. Bedford St. Martin's/Macmillan Learning.

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's to whom credit is given). *The use of AI at any stage of the composition of an assignment is prohibited, and that prohibition applies to all our assignments. Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

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

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments		Percent age
3 Response Papers (RP)	Short papers (2 paragraphs) that summarize and respond to a reading. 5 percent each.	15%
Writing Project 1: Position Paper (PP)	You will plan, draft, and revise this essay. It will make a claim supported with evidence and fully developed reasons.	20%
Writing Project 2: Rhetorical Analysis (RA)	You will plan, draft, and revise this essay. It will analyze the rhetorical situation and elements of a visual text.	20%
Annotated Bibliography (Annotated Bib)	Summary and evaluation of each source for WP3.	10%
Rough Draft of WP3 Synthesis paper	Students can use summaries from Annotated Bib	5%
Writing Project 3: Synthesis Paper	Our longest paper explores various perspectives on a topic of your choosing. You will plan, draft, and revise this paper. You will cite a variety of sources and show connections between them.	20%
Writing Project 4: Remix Project	Digital remix of WP3 presented to the class.	10%
Writing Workshops	3 Peer Review Workshops and 1 instructor conference – if missed, is counted absent	
Total	*****	100%

Table 2: Letter grade point values. Note: there is no rounding up of assignment grades and no rounding up of final calculated grade as computed by D2L: e.g., a 79.9 is a C; an 89.9 is a B; a 69.9 is a D; a 59.9 or lower is an F. The calculated grade is the semester grade.

Grade	Points
A	90 to 100
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	Less than 60

Midterm 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

There is no final exam. The WP4 Remix Project replaces the final exam in this course.

Extra Credit

Extra credit for revision works in this way:

- Only Writing Projects 1, 2, or 3 may be revised.
- If the original assignment was late, the 10-point penalty still applies.
- Students must have instructor approval before they revise.
- Instructor's approval includes specific instructions as to the nature and scope of the revisions.
- All extra credit must be submitted to the relevant drop box by the last official class day of the semester: Friday May 8.

Late Work

If D2L indicates an assignment is late, it is penalized 10 points. The penalty applies even if the essay is late by less than a minute. All late work must be submitted by the last official class day of the semester: Friday May 8.

Important Dates [Academic Calendar](#).

- Last day for term schedule changes: January 23.
- Deadline to file for graduation: February 16.
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W": April 29
- For more information, refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance Grade

Roll is taken right away. If you think you missed roll, inform me before you leave class to make sure I mark you present. If students miss one class (without documentation), they still have a 100 for the attendance grade. As of their second undocumented absence, students begin to incur a 10 point penalty for each undocumented absence. Absences can be excused if students provide documentation. The best documentation is a doctor's note. Students may take a picture of this documentation (their name and the date—not the nitty-gritty details which are not my business) with their cell phone and send it to me by email attachment. Other types of documentation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Below is how the attendance grade works:

- 2 absences (90), 3 absences (80), 4 absences (70)
- 5 absences (60), 6 absences (50), 7 absences (40)
- 8 absences (30), 9 absences (20), 10 absences (10)
- 11 absences or more (0)

*NOTE: A missed peer review workshop or student conference counts as an absence.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ***Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations; however, they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Instructor Class Policies

Since the textbook is an ebook, you should bring your laptop or other electronic device to every class in order to access the course readings during discussion.

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 application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (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

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and 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 prohibits 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 has 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 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

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

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

Course Schedule:

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1	MLK Holiday	1/20 Syllabus Discussion of Ch. 14 Argument and Persuasion, 503-518	1/23 Discussion of Vintiadis, "Mass Shooting and the Myth of the Violent Mentally Ill" 519 Instructions for Response Paper 1
2	1/26 Drafting & reading aloud from Response Paper 1 rough draft in class	1/28 DUE DATE Response Paper 1 due in drop box before 11:59 PM. Discussion of Nancy Mairs 12; Anaya's first draft 39; Revised Draft 51; Final Draft 64	1/30 Discussion of Jesse Ward "What PTSD Looks Like" 328 Instructions for WP1
3	2/2 Drafting & reading aloud of WP1 rough draft in class	2/4 Drafting & reading aloud, cont.	2/6 Peer Review Workshop – bring 2 copies of WP1 rough draft to class
4	2/9 Drafting & reading aloud of WP1 Final Draft in class	2/11 DUE DATE Writing Project 1 (Position Paper) due in drop box to be graded. Examining Visual Images 22 (see Hanner image 24)	2/13 Discussion of Ward's image & essay "What PTSD Looks Like" 328 Instructions for Response Paper 2
5	2/16 Drafting & reading aloud of Response Paper 2 in class. Ward's image & essay 328	2/18 DUE DATE Response Paper 2 due in the drop box. More discussion of Ward, "What PTSD Looks Like" 328 – both essay and image.	2/20 Discussion of Thoreau & Urrea, cont. Instructions for Rhetorical Analysis: both essay and image: Writing Project 2 (WP2)
6	2/23 Drafting & reading aloud of WP2 rough draft in class.	2/25 Drafting & reading aloud of WP2, cont.	2/27 Peer Review Workshop Monday 3/2 – bring 2 copies of WP2 rough draft to class
7	3/2 Drafting & reading aloud of WP2 rough draft in class	3/4 DUE DATE Writing Project 2 (Rhetorical Analysis) Discussion of Muhlhausen, "How the Death Penalty Saves Lives" 538; Thompson, "What I Learned from Executing Two Men" 542.	3/6 Muhlhausen & Thompson, continued. Instructions for Response Paper 3 (due the Wednesday after spring break)
Spring Break	3/9-14 No class	No class	No class.

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
8	3/16 Drafting & reading aloud from Response Paper 3 rough draft in class	3/18 DUE DATE Response Paper 3 due Discussion of Sources & Annotated Bibliography Ch. 16, 653 & MLA format Ch 17, 663. Discussion of Lundberg, "Eating Green" 679	3/20 Discussion of Divakaruni "Live Free and Starve" 45. Instructions for WP3 Synthesis Project and Annotated Bib.
9	3/23 Individual Conferences Bring rough draft of Annotated Bib	3/25 Individual Conferences Bring Rough Draft of Annotated Bib	3/27 Individual Conferences Bring Rough Draft of Annotated Bib
10	3/30 Individual Conferences Bring rough draft of Annotated Bib	4/1 DUE DATE Annotated Bibliography due in drop box before 11:59 PM Instructions for Response Paper 4.	4/3 Holiday – Campus closed Thursday & Friday 4/2-4/3
11	4/6 Instructions for WP3 Synthesis Project	4/8 Drafting & Reading aloud from WP3 Rough draft in class.	4/17 Drafting & reading aloud from WP3 Rough Draft in class.
12	4/13 Drafting & reading aloud from WP3 Rough Draft in class	4/15 DUE DATE – Rough Draft of WP 3 (Synthesis) due in the drop box before 11:59 PM.	4/17 Revising & Reading aloud of WP3 revision in class.
13	4/20 Drafting & reading aloud from revision of WP3 in class	4/22 Revising & reading aloud from revision of WP3 in class.	4/24 Revising & Reading aloud from revision.
14	4/27 Remix planning workshop	4/29 DUE DATE Revised WP3 (Synthesis) is due in the drop box before 11:59 PM.	5/1 WP4 Remix presentations begin.
15	5/4 WP4 Remix presentations in class.	5/6 WP4 Remix presentations in class.	5/8 DUE DATE – last day to submit WP4 Remix to the drop box before 11:59 PM. WP4 Remix presentations.
	Week 16 FINALS	No Final Exam	No Final Exam