Introduction to Reading & Writing about Culture

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities & Social Sciences
ENGL 1153 102 10:00 AM MWF PY 205 & ENGL 1153 104 9:30 AM TR Bea Wood 117
Fall 2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Peter Fields
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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.

THECB Core Course Objectives

- 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.

Course Goals

- Engage in a writing process and demonstrate proficient use of standard written English in three comparative literary essays including a comparative literary research project.
- Demonstrate teamwork as part of group AI teams.
- Demonstrate proficiency in MLA in-body citing and Works Cited

Textbook

Mays, Kelly ed. *The Norton Introduction to Literature.* 15th ed. Ebook. Norton, 2025. Inclusive Access (IA) – IA means the cost of book was added to tuition. Students already own it. In D2L on the navigation bar, click on

Content and then the module **Norton E-Book**. Then click on **The Norton Introduction to Literature 11th edition E-Book**. Then click on **Contents.** In the table of contents, each item is a link to a specific story, poem, or discussion. Our pagination follows "Full" (not "portable"). The "Full" page number occurs in the e-text where that page begins in the printed edition.

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 comprises 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 produced by the individual to whom credit is given).

Essays 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, and 3c Literary Research Project must be completely written by the student. The penalty for plagiarism of any part of these assignments is an F (a "0," no points). Use of AI at any stage of these essays is prohibited. EXCEPTION: The AI Team Report requires use of AI and students must work on the assignment in groups (as assigned by D2L). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the 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: Percentage value for 8 assignments: Essays 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c Literary Research Project, and the AI Team Report: each member adds personal comments to their copy of the report; team-members critique each other's report with AI teamwork rubric. We also have an attendance grade.

Assignments (see Course Schedule)	Description (see Course Schedule for more details)	Percent
Essay 1a – pars 2, 3, 4, Works Cited	Compare 2 stories from list by different authors in our book	10%
Essay 1b – add pars 1, 5.	Revision of Essay 1a as per instructor evaluation	10%
Essay 2a – pars 2, 3, 4, Works Cited	Compare Comedy & Tragedy in Shakespeare	10%
Essay 2b – add pars 1, 5.	Revision of Essay 2a as per instructor evaluation	20%
AI Team Report	D2L teams query AI concerning conflict in Emily Dickinson's life.	5%
Essay 3a – pars 2, 3, 4, Works Cited	Compare 2 short poems from list; one must be by Emily Dickinson	10%
Essay 3b – add paras 1, 5	Revision of Essay 3a as per instructor evaluation	10%
Essay 3c – Literary Research Project	Add research paragraph & Works Cited item to 2b.	20%
Attendance grade	Students can have one absence and still have a 100	5%
Total number of assignments: 8	D2L Final Calculated grade is the semester grade	100%

Table 2: Letter grade values. There is no rounding up of any assignment grade and no rounding up of the 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 D2L final calculated grade is the semester grade.

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

Assignments

Students must submit their writing assignments to their relevant drop boxes before they can be graded. Getting input from me by email about your writing-in-progress is NOT the same as submission for grade. Essays 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c Literary Research Project, and the AI Team Report must be submitted to their drop boxes in D2L in order to count, be evaluated, and graded. Any other form of submission (e.g., by email attachment or printed) will not count, be evaluated, or graded. Once submitted to their drop box, assignments can be graded even if early.

Notes

This course analyzes short stories, drama, and short poems in light of Freytag's Pyramid. Notes on how we apply the pyramid are provided in Content in D2L in the module "Notes – Short Stories, Shakespeare, and Short Poems w. Freytag's Pyramid."

Instructions for Essays

We have instructions for our essays and the AI Team Report. In Content in D2L, see the module "Instructions - Essays 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c Literary Research Project, and AI Team Report."

Model Essays, AI Team Report, and Literary Research Project

In Content in D2L, see the models for Essays 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c Literary Research Project, Research Paragraph, and AI Team Report.

Extra Credit

Students may improve the grades of Essays 1a, b and 2a, b. They must have the instructor's approval which includes a plan for how they might be improved. Any late penalty is retained. Revision when complete must be submitted to the original assignment's drop box before 11:59 PM Monday December 7.

Late Work

If Essays 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, and the AI Team Report are flagged as late by D2L (even if by less than a minute), they are penalized 10 points out of 100. The same is true for 3c Literary Research Project, but the drop box for 3c will lock and not accept work after 11:59 PM Tuesday December 8.

Forgiveness of Late Penalty

Forgiveness of late penalty for Essays 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c Literary Research Project or the AI Team Report would require medical documentation or the equivalent. Otherwise, the late penalty of 10 points applies.

Withdrawal from Course:

- Last Day to drop Summer II course with a grade of "W:" 4:00 PM Monday November 23. Check date on Academic Calendar.
- 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 D2Lhelp@msutexas.edu. If that fails, alert your instructor.

Attendance

If you missed my taking roll, touch base with me before you leave class and make sure I mark you present. As of their second undocumented absence, students begin to incur a 10-point penalty for each undocumented absence. Absences for illness can be excused if students provide medical documentation: 1 absence (100), 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).

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 or click on D2Lhelp@msutexas.edu

Instructor Contact Policies

Students can call me any time. Outlook records the call in my email. Be sure to let me know the number and when to return your call (let's make it afternoons or evenings please). Email, of course, is a popular way to ask a question or alert me to a concern, including something wrong in our D2L. If something looks wrong, let me know. I would appreciate it. If you want me to look at what you are doing, you may copy and paste your draft directly into an email, and I will reply at my first opportunity. You may use email to make a phone or ZOOM appointment for times other than my office hours (again, afternoons or evenings).

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.

Other 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

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University MSU Catalog

Course Schedule: Reading Assignments and Due Dates

Week	Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may occur at the discretion of the instructor.	Once submitted to the drop box, assignments can be graded even if early. Drop box assignments are penalized 10 points for lateness **even if they are late by less than a minute**.
Week 1 August 24-28	Required Reading: • Ch 2 Plot 87-92 (Freytag's Pyramid) • Brothers Grimm, "The Shroud" 89-90. • Isabel Allende, "And of Clay Are We Created" 28-35 • Ch 4 Character 255-262. • Monsters: An Album 305. • Ch 6 Symbolism & Figurative Language 399-404.	In-class discussion: Break down Grimm's little story into Freytag's stages and sub-elements. Where do Grimm's story and Allende's story intersect—where do they seem the most similar? See these **NOTES** in Content in D2L: • **Notes** for THE SHROUD w. Freytag's Pyramid • **Notes** for AND OF CLAY ARE WE CREATED w. Freytag's Pyramid

Week	Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may occur at the discretion of the instructor.	Once submitted to the drop box, assignments can be graded even if early. Drop box assignments are penalized 10 points for lateness **even if they are late by less than a minute**.
Week 2 August 31 - September 4	Our list for Essays 1a and 1b (continues Week 3): • Jorge Luis Borges, "The House of Asterion" 323-326. • Margaret Atwood, "Lusus Naturae" 306-311. • Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birth-Mark" 404-416.	In-class discussion**:** Establish the stage of conflict where Borges, Atwood, and Hawthorne seem to intersect—where they converge or feel the most similar. Pivoting from this shared stage of the action, how would you assign the other stages of Freytag's Pyramid to the stories?
Week 3 September 7 – September 11	Our list for Essays 1a and 1b, continued: • William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" 728-735. • Octavia Butler, "Blood Child" 173-188 • Edgar Allan Poe, "The Black Cat" 193-200	In-class discussion: Establish the stage of conflict where Faulkner, Butler, and Poe intersect—where they converge or seem the most similar. Pivoting from the stage they have in common, how would you assign the other stages of Freytag's Pyramid to these stories?
Week 4 September 14 - 18	We are working on 1a in class.	**For Essay 1a is due MONDAY September 21.** • Choose 2 stories from our list excluding "The Shroud," "And of Clay Are We Created," which serve as models only. • Applying Freytag's Pyramid, where do these two stories intersect? • Write paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. • Provide MLA Works Cited (cross reference). **See these sub-modules in Content in D2L:** • **Notes** for "The Shroud" w. Freytag's Pyramid. • **Notes** for "And of Clay Are We Created" w. Freytag's Pyramid. • **Instructions** for Essay 1a**.** • **Model** Essay 1a. **OR** **Prosopopoeia:** 1A Climax & conclusion for "The Black Cat" from point of view of the new black cat (as shape-shifting witch. See **Instructions** for 1a Prosopopoeia.
Week 5 September 21 – 25 Dr. Fields is out of town Wednesday September 23.	**Essay 1a due MONDAY September 21**. For **ENGL 1153 102 WEDNESDAY** (work on your own in class): • **I** am out of town WEDNESDAY 9-23 in Ft. Worth for my wife's doctor's appointment. • Class is STILL in session and attendance will be taken.	**For Essay 1b is due MONDAY September 28.** • Add pars. 1 & 5. • Revise as per instructor comments for 1a in Overall Feedback in D2L. **In Content in D2L, see these sub-modules:** • **Instructions** for Essay 1b. • **Model** Essay 1b. **OR** **Prosopopoeia**: 1b Climax & Conclusion for sleeping youth in forest whom the narrator bit in "Lusus Naturae" (306), OR Theseus who kills the Minotaur in Climax and Conclusion of "The House of Asterion" (323), OR Emily in the Climax and Conclusion of "A Rose for Emily" (728), OR Aminadab in "The Birth-Mark" (404). See **Instructions** for 1b Prosopopoeia.
Week 6 September 28-October 2	**Essay 1b due MONDAY September 28**. William Shakespeare: Comparing the conflicts in Comedy and Tragedy: • Ch 26 The Author's Work as Context: William Shakespeare 1420-1426. • *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 1427-1484	In-class discussion: Where does the conflict—the action in this comedy—reach its climax? Where would you assign the other stages of conflict?

Week	Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may occur at the discretion of the instructor.	Once submitted to the drop box, assignments can be graded even if early. Drop box assignments are penalized 10 points for lateness **even if they are late by less than a minute**.
Week 7 October 5 – 9 Dr. Fields is out of town Thursday & Friday October 8-9.	William Shakespeare: Comparing the conflicts in Comedy and Tragedy: *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice* 1485-1573. For **ENGL 1153 104 October 8 THURSDAY and ENGL 1153 102 FRIDAY,** work on your own in class: • **I** am out of town for Rocky Mountain MLA in Ogden, Utah October 8-9 (Thursday-Friday). • Class is STILL in session and attendance will be taken.	In-class discussion: Establish the stage of conflict where *The Tragedy of Othello* intersects with (converges with/seems the most like) the action in *A Midsummer Night's Dream?* Where might you assign the other stages of conflict in *Othello*?
Week 8 October 12 - 16	William Shakespeare: Comparing the conflicts in Comedy and Tragedy. *The Tragedy of Othello***,** continued.	**For Essay 2a due Monday October 26.** • For our two Shakespeare plays, apply Freytag's Pyramid. • Where do these two stories intersect? • Write paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and MLA Works Cited (cross reference method) **In Content in D2L, see these sub-modules:** • **Notes** for Shakespeare**.** • **Instructions** for Essay 2a**.**
Week 9 October 19 - 23	**Essay 2a due Monday October 26.**	**Essay 2b is due Wednesday November 4.** • Add pars. 1 & 5. • Revise as per instructor comments for 1a in Overall Feedback in D2L. **In Content in D2L, see these sub-modules:** • **Notes** for Shakespeare. • **Instructions** for Essay 1b.
Week 10 October 26 - 30	**Essay 2b due Wednesday November 4.** For AI team report, one student volunteers to be leader. • The leader creates the document, • collects facts from the others, • and writes the preamble at the top. • When the document is done, each team member has the same copy. • In their own copy, team members comment on each fact. • These personal comments individualize the AI report. • Students submit their individualized AI report to the drop box. • They send a copy of their individualized AI report to their fellow group members. • Students evaluate the individualized AI reports in their group by providing comments in the AI Teamwork rubric (one box in each of the four categories).	**For AI team report is due Monday November 9 & peer review due Friday November 9.** • Indicate AI source. • Each student contributes on AI fact (one sentence each) about Emily Dickinson's conflicts in her life • For each fact, students provide details in 3 bullet points • On their own copy of AI report, students add personal comments. • Students submit individualized (personalized) AI Team Report to the drop box. • Students also send their individualized AI Team Reports to each other in their group and peer evaluate each other's report with the AI Team Rubric. **See these sub-modules in Content in D2L**: • **Instructions** for AI team report & Peer Evaluation • **Model** AI team report • **Model** AI Team Rubric

Week	Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may occur at the discretion of the instructor.	Once submitted to the drop box, assignments can be graded even if early. Drop box assignments are penalized 10 points for lateness **even if they are late by less than a minute**.
Week 11 November 2 - 6	**AI Team Report is due Monday November 9 in its drop box & the Rubrics for AI Teamwork for your group are also due in their drop box Monday November 9**. • Emily Dickinson, "'Hope' is the thing with feathers—" (1081). • Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (783). • Ch 11 Poetry 770 -773. • Ch 14 Theme and Tone 875-881. • Ch 15 Language: Word Choice and Order 901-909. • Ch 17 Symbol 933-937. • Ch 18 The Sounds of Poetry 948-951.	**Short Poetry comparison w. Freytag's Pyramid.** See reading (on the left) about short poems. See especially the poems which serve as the basis for our models: Emily Dickinson's "'Hope' is the thing with feathers—" (1081) and Phillis Wheatley's "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (783). **See in these sub-modules in Content in D2L:** • **Notes** for HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS w. Freytag's Pyramid • **Notes** for ON BEING BROUGHT w. Freytag's Pyramid
Week 12 November 9 - 13	**Here is our list of poems:** • Poems by Emily Dickinson: 784, 922, 1080-83. • William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow," "This is Just to Say" (909, either poem). • John Donne, "Batter my heart" (927).. • W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming" (943). • Sylvia Plath, "Daddy" (1234-36). • Hughes, "Harlem" (1117). For 3a & 3b, we are excluding two poems because they are the basis of our model: Emily Dickinson's "'Hope" is the thing with feathers—" and Phillis Wheatley's "On Being Brought from Africa to America."	**For Essay 3a is due Monday November 16.** • Choose an Emily Dickinson poem from our book excluding "'Hope' is the thing with feathers—" • Compare it to one of the poems in our list **not** written by Emily Dickinson excluding Phyllis Wheatley's "On Being Brought to America from Africa." • Applying Freytag's Pyramid, where do these two poems intersect? • Write paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and Works Cited (cross reference method). **In Content in D2L, see these modules for Essay 3a** • **Notes** for "'Hope' is the thing with feathers—" w. Freytag's Pyramid. • **Notes** for "On Being Brought" w. Freytag's Pyramid. • **Instructions** for Essay 3a. • **Model Essay 3a.** • **Notes – Outlines of our Poems (w. Freytag's Pyramid)**
Week 13 November 16 – 20	**Essay 3a due Monday November 16.**	**For Essay 3b is due Monday November 23.** • Add paragraphs 1 and 5. **See these modules in Content in D2L:** • **Instruction**s for Essay 3b. • **Model Essay 3b.**

Week	Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may occur at the discretion of the instructor.	Once submitted to the drop box, assignments can be graded even if early. Drop box assignments are penalized 10 points for lateness **even if they are late by less than a minute**.
Week 14 November 23 -24 Thanksgiving Holiday: campus closed Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday - November 25, 26, 27.	**Essay 3b due Monday November 23**. For the Research Paragraph (for Essay 2c the Literary Research Project), choose one article from the list below; they are all found complete in the Moffett-supported database *Gale Academic OneFile.* • Glenn Hughes, "Love, Terror, and Transcendence in Emily Dickinson's Poetry," Renascence. • Elsa Cajiao Cuellar, "Disentangling Emily Dickinson's Riddles and Encoded Voices in "My Life had stood—a loaded gun" and "I taste a liquor never brewed," Atlantis. • Jay Ladin, "Meeting her Maker: Emily Dickinson's God," CrossCurrents. • Seth Archer, "'I had a terror': Emily Dickinson's Demon," Southwest Review.	**For Essay 3c Literary Research Project is due Monday December 7.** • You are adding a research paragraph to 3b and adding citation to Works Cited. • Choose one of the articles in our list (in the left-hand column on this page) • Explain an idea from article in your own paragraph • Quote at least once from the article • Research paragraph should be next-to-last paragraph before epilogue • Provide correct citation in Works Cited • Now 3b has become 3c - the Literary Research Project. **See these modules in Content in D2L**: • I**nstructions** for Essay 3c Literary Research Project • **Model Research Paragraph** • **Model Essay 3c Literary Research Project**
Week 15 August 3 - 7	We are working on 3c Literary Research Project.	**In-class discussion.** I am happy to look at people's 3c in class and give them input and suggestions.
Week 16 Finals Week	**3c Literary Research Project is due Monday December 7**.	**All late work is due no later than 11:59 PM Tuesday December 8**