



Course Syllabus: Introduction to Critical Reading and Academic Writing

College of Prothro-Yeager Humanities and Social Sciences
ENGL 1143 Section 101
Fall 2025

Contact Information

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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.

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

THECB Required Course Objectives: This course fulfills a Texas 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.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Lunsford, Andrea and Michal Brody. *Let's Talk*, 2nd ed. Ebook.

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

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 the 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 populate in your D2L course drop-down menu, please contact phillis.bunch@msutexas.edu.

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). **Generative AI will be permitted only in very specific situations that will be explained clearly in individual writing prompts. Using this tool beyond these permissions will**

result in a 0 for that submission. 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

Course Grade -All assignments for this course are listed below. The instructor will provide opportunities to revise essays for a stronger draft, but only if the essay is submitted by the designated due date. No extra credit will be available.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Reading Reflections (10 @ 10pts each)	100
Essay 1: Literacy Narrative	100
Essay 2: Critical Reflection	100
Essay 3: Summary Response Paper	100
E4: Synthesis Proposal	50
Research Matrix	100
E5: Synthesis Paper	150
Peer Review Workshops	50
Conferences with Instructor	100
Final Presentation & Reflection	150
Total Points	1000

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	900
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

Homework

“Homework” for this course falls into two general categories: critical reading, and academic writing. **Reading** homework will generally consist of reviewing assigned textbook chapters, and sometimes writing a reflection response. You will rarely be quizzed to make sure you’ve read, as the motivation to read should come from your desire to understand the different writing topics and genres so that you can be successful in this course. **Writing** homework will include brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing—be prepared to devote considerable time to writing for this course! Generally, all graded assignments will be submitted in D2L as a Microsoft Word document unless otherwise noted on the assignment prompt.

Quizzes

Quizzes will rarely, if ever, be administered.

Exams

This course will not use traditional exams to assess student learning.

Projects Required

This course requires students to complete multiple essays, including a more extended Synthesis Project, and students will receive a detailed prompt for each assignment.

Mid-Term Exam

This course will not include a mid-term exam. However, during weeks 6-7, the instructor will send midterm progress reports via Navigate.

Final Exam

During the Final Exam period, students will deliver an oral presentation with PowerPoint or Prezi presentation to their classmates. Students will receive a detailed prompt for this final assessment.

Extra Credit

No extra credit will be assigned.

Late Work

Students are permitted to submit essays up to 48 hours after the original deadline for a 10% automatic grade deduction. Other work can be submitted, but I strongly encourage students to keep on track. This course requires a lot of writing, and getting behind will quickly leave students overwhelmed.

Make Up Work/Tests

N/A

Important Dates

- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 24 by **4pm**.
- Progress Reports will be submitted during week 3 (Early Alerts for attendance and engagement), and weeks 6-7 (Midterm Progress). They will be visible in Navigate, and any Alerts will result in an email to your MSU account.

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

It is important that you attend class and arrive on time. **If you have a total of more than three weeks' worth (9 classes) of absences (excused or not), you will need to drop the course**, as you likely will not be able to keep up with the course requirements and, more importantly, learn what you need to learn! Students who miss class miss out on opportunities for participation and explanations of assignments that could impact the final grade. If you need to miss several classes because of personal reasons, 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.

Computer Requirements

All assignments for this course will be submitted via D2L, so students need to ensure they have access to a computer. ****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; for more information, visit [MSU Computer Labs](#). For additional help, log into [D2L](#).

Instructor Class Policies

The most important policy for this course is a respect for this learning community. One of the challenges and opportunities of college comes from

talking and listening to people with different experiences and perspectives, and our class meetings will regularly include conversation and collaboration.

As for cell phones and laptops, we need to use them as tools not allow them to distract us. ALL OF US will put away our phones during class unless we have a specific reason for them to be out. As for laptops, you won't need one for class, and if it will tempt you to turn your attention away from our 50 minutes together, I strongly encourage you to leave it closed as well.

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. As described below, 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 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

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 Northwestern 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

If you disagree with a grade earned on a specific assignment, schedule an appointment to meet with me. Students who wish to appeal a final **course** grade should consult the Northwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

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