English 1143-112: Introduction to Critical Reading and Academic Writing
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.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

- Lunsford, Andrea and Michael Brody. *Let's Talk with Readings.* Norton. 2023. eBook.

- 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.

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

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 written assignments are to be typed and formatted – and outside sources documented - according to MLA or APA style. All 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 https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/office?ms.officeurl=getoffice365?ms.officeurl=getoffice365 and create an account.

University Computer Labs: MSU provides four open computer labs throughout the week. These four labs feature access to Microsoft Office Suite for writing and internet access for research. You can find these labs in:

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

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). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.
Office of Student Conduct

Grading

All assignments receive a numeric grade based on the 100-point scale. Assignments are weighted. Each project will consist of planning, design and production, and reflections. Here is the rough weight of each major assignment, and I might adjust weights of assignments as the semester progresses.

Assignments	30 % of grade
Discussions	30 % of grade
Final Assignments	40 % of grade

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Percentage
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Less than 59

Overview of the Course

Here are the major assignments in this class:

- Reading Responses/Discussion Posts
- Rhetorical Analysis
- Annotated Bibliography
- Synthesis Essay (Research Essay)

I will give you a handout for each formal assignment which will detail the assignment requirements and will include a rubric explaining how I'll grade the assignment.

Reading Response and Respond to Fellow Students: 20 points each

The readings will often be accompanied with a Discussion Post. These are usually worth 15 points each. Informal, exploratory writing is a good way to improve your writing skills. You will need to write a response to the readings assigned for homework. Unless otherwise stated, these homework responses should be at least **2 paragraphs** in length. Please **DO NOT SUMMARIZE**, instead provide your response to the readings. The responses can be a response to what you have read or you can include questions that you still have about the readings. You can include what you liked or what you learned from the readings. You can include how the information applies to what you are doing for this class or how the readings apply to other classes.

 You can receive either full credit or no credit on the responses and the due dates are listed on the Weekly Schedule. You will also be required (unless otherwise stated) to **respond to at least 1 other post** from a fellow student. Those posts must be at least **3 sentences long**.

While missed Discussion Posts cannot be made up, you are allowed to miss 2 posts without penalty to your grade. I will deduct these points at the end of the semester.

- Please post directly into the assignment and do not attach a file.

Attendance and Participation

Assignments are due on Wednesdays and Sundays.
- Please let me know if you will be missing an assignment or if you need an extension on an assignment. Please inform me prior to these absences so that arrangements, if warranted, can be made.
- I will mark all missing work as a "0" and will go back and change your score after you have submitted your assignments
- I will only accept late work for a week after the deadline. Discussions are not accepted late. This class builds on previous days and so anything older than a week is out of context and no longer as helpful to the class content.
- Discussions are not accepted late, but I will drop your **two lowest scores** at the end of the semester.

Technology
Students in this course will need a working and reliable computer and internet access that will allow the use of D2L course site tools, Google Drive, and any online resources provided. No special software is required but students will need access to MS Office products.

Extra Credit
There will be some extra credit opportunities in the class.

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

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

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**.**

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 a100% 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) exists 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.

Writing Center and Tutoring

Writing Center & Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, writing tutors are available Monday through Thursday from 11:00am to 6:00pm and Sunday 2:00pm to 9:00pm. You don't need an appointment to use these services. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they 3 provide support and feedback at all stages of writing, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to adhere to the Midwestern State University Student Honor Creed when completing any work for this course. When using the content or ideas of others, both published and unpublished sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (e.g., APA or MLA). See the MSU Student Handbook (attached to course website) to read the Student Honor Creed and the university's policy on academic dishonesty.

- All work submitted to D2L will be scanned by the Turnitin® program, which flags text that has been quoted from other sources and/or generated by AI tools such as ChatGPT
- AI/ChatGPT: In this course, you are welcome and encouraged to use artificial intelligence platforms such as ChatGPT, but mainly for pre-writing tasks and brainstorming. That said, you should not be using AI to produce your assignments or otherwise perform the "brain-work" that you are expected to be able to do (or learn to do) on your own. Doing so will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. If this happens twice, you will receive a grade of "F" for the course.
  - Please be aware that many professors do not allow AI use in their classes. Please check with your professors.

- When using the ideas of other published and unpublished sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (i.e., MLA or APA). If you submit an assignment in which quoted content is not placed in "quotation marks" and/or you have not cited the correct source, you will receive a grade of zero for that assignment. If this occurs twice in the course, you will receive a grade of "F" for the course. There are no exceptions to this policy.

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](#)

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

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

- Changes to this schedule may happen, but if a deadline is changed, it will be moved to a later time in the semester.
- Please check D2L Content for the most updated list of readings and assignments

Week 1 Introduction to the class

Readings	Ch. 1 and additional readings for the week are listed in the weekly Discussion post.
Assignments	Discussion Post Introduction to yourself

Week 2 Critical Skills

Readings	Readings are listed in the weekly Discussion post.
Assignments	Discussion Post Email Professor Reading Strategies

Week 3 Appeal of Arguments

Readings	Ch. 4 and additional readings for the week are listed in the weekly Discussion post.
Assignments	Discussion Post Annotate Song Lyrics

Week 4 Rough Drafts

Readings	No readings this week
Assignments	Rough draft of Rhetorical Analysis

Week 5 Final Rhetorical Analysis

Readings	Ch. 2 and additional readings for the week are listed in the weekly Discussion post.
Assignments	Discussion Post on readings

Week 6 Introduction to Resumes and LinkedIn

Readings	The required readings for the week are listed in the weekly Discussion post for the week.
Assignments	Discussion post on readings

Week 7 Rough Draft of Resume and LinkedIn

Readings	No readings this week
Assignments	Rough Draft of resume and Linkedin

Week 8 Introduction to Research Essay and Annotated Bibliography

Readings	Ch. 16, 17, 18, 30
Assignments	Discussion post on readings AI mini-assignment

Week 9 Research Log and Proposal

Readings	Ch. 20 and 21
Assignments	Discussion post on readings Proposal for research essay

Week 10 Rough Draft of Annotated Bibliography

Readings	No readings this week
Assignments	Rough draft of Annotated Bibliography

Week 11 Final Annotated Bibliography and Intro to Research Essay

Readings	No readings this week
Assignments	Final Annotated Bibliography

Week 12 Research Essay Format

Readings	Ch. 8, 9, and 10
Assignments	Discussion post on readings Outline of research essay

Week 13 Research Essay Rough Draft

Readings	Ch. 27, 28, 31
Assignments	Research Essay rough draft

Week 14 Oral Presentations

Readings	No readings this week
Assignments	Oral Presentations

Week 15 Oral Presentations
      Readings   No readings this week

      Assignments   Oral Presentations

Week 16 Final Research Essay
      Readings   No readings for the week
      Assignments   Final Research Essay