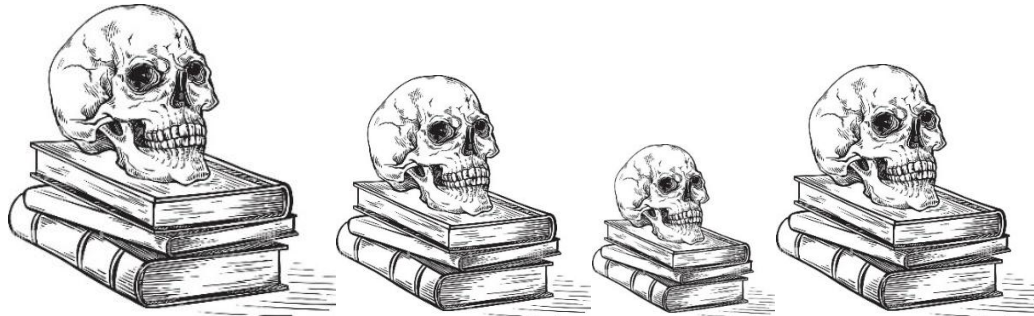


English 1153: Introduction to Reading and Writing about Culture (Spring 2026)



Professor Todd Giles

Bea Wood 232

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Class Times: MWF 9:00–9:50 (PY205)

Office Hours: MWF 10:00–11:00 & TR 11:00–12:00 & by appointment

Required Texts

- Leigh Bardugo, *Ninth House*. Flatiron Books, 2020. (9781250751362)
- M. L. Rio, *If We Were Villains*. Flatiron Books, 2018. (9781250095299)

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.

In this section of 1153, we will use Dark Academia to further develop our critical reading and writing skills, call on our imaginations, and conjure our creativity. In doing so, we will explore art, architecture, music, film, poetry, short stories and novels. Along the way, we will

- Read various literary texts united by a common theme or topic
- Apply knowledge of literary analysis to interpret literary texts
- Engage in a writing process that includes invention, drafting, and revision
- Write various genres of academic essays
- Find, evaluate, and synthesize credible sources in support of a research paper

- Use source ethically and in contextually appropriate ways and follow a designated style guide
- Demonstrate proficient use of Standard Written English

Assessment of THECB core objectives for COMMUNICATION

- To assess the student's critical thinking skills, the Research Project rubric will be applied to the Literary Research Project.
- To assess the student's written communication skills, the Research Project rubric will be applied to the Literary Research Project.
- To assess ethical use of sources as a measure of personal responsibility, the Research Project rubric will be applied to the Literary Research Project.
- 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 Requirements

Assignments	Grade Percent
In-class writing/Homework/Discussion	20%
Dead Poets Society In-Class Essay	15%
Archival Assignment Worksheet	5%
Archival Assignment In-Class Essay	15%
Ways of Seeing In-Class Essay	15%
Architectural Treasure Hunt	5%
Mood Board	15%
Mood Board Presentation	10%

Grading Policy

In this class, the following numerical equivalents for final grades are used: A = 100-90%; B = 89-80%; C = 79-70%; D = 69-60%; F = 59-0%.

Daily Writing and Class Activities

Your course grade is directly tied to keeping up with the readings, which means we will have daily in- and out-of-class writings, including brief in-class writing prompts, reading quizzes, in-class small group work, and various short homework assignments. These will be graded on a plus/x/check/minus scale: (+) for doing a thorough job (100%); (x) for a good job (85%); (✓) for completing the work in an acceptable fashion (70%); (–) for not completing the work or for obvious lack of effort (0%). On occasion, some assignments might, depending on length, count for more than one daily grade. As your grade is determined by your presence and attention to the daily readings, you cannot make up in-class writing or homework.

Class Preparation and Participation

To succeed at your daily writing, you must show that you've closely read, have at least a cursory understanding of the material, and address, to the best of your ability, the writing prompts. I do not expect you to remember exact quotations, but specific examples from the work always help get the point across. It is also good to try to tie in any relevant terminology or critical concepts from class discussions. As you read, take notes and underline/highlight what you believe are key passages in the text (a climactic scene, crucial lines for understanding the work, a summary of the argument, etc.), or things you have trouble understanding. *Come to each class with comments and questions!

Plagiarism / Artificial Intelligence Policy

Plagiarism (including AI-generated writing) is the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation, whether you use that material in a quotation, paraphrase, or summary. *All incidents of plagiarism will an automatic F, be reported to the department chair, and kept on file. A second incident of plagiarism in class by the same student will result in the student receiving an F for the course.

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, 397-4140.

Attendance Policy

Because this is a discussion-oriented course and the work we do in class is designed to help you understand the readings and improve your critical reading, thinking and writing skills, you must attend class to do well. By failing to regularly attend class you will not understand the critical terminology and concepts necessary to successfully complete the daily writing assignments. You are in college; come to class.

Tardiness Policy

Your behavior in the college classroom should be no different than what will be expected of you as a working professional. Regularly arriving late to class is disruptive to your instructor and your classmates; as such, it will not be tolerated. Students who arrive after the daily writing assignments have begun will automatically receive a minus.

Electronics Policy

Cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. If a student is caught using an electronic device during a quiz, they will automatically receive a zero. Likewise, each time a student is seen playing with their cellphone or iPod during class, they will automatically lose credit for any in-class writings, quizzes,

homework assignments due that day. I will tell students they are losing credit for the day for the first few weeks of class, after which time it is not my responsibility to alert them. Other disruptive behavior, including coming in late on a regular basis, chatting with classmates during class discussion or in-class writing, sleeping, or any other behavior not conducive to a mature learning environment, will first receive a warning; if the behavior continues, an instructor drop will be initiated.

Recording Devices

The use of recording devices, including cellphones, is strictly prohibited during class unless it is part of a reasonable accommodation under ADA guideline. Reason: academia should provide a space for free-flowing ideas and discussion; surveillance of any sort infringes upon your classmates' and your professor's freedom of expression.

Grade Appeals

I will be happy to try to explain the rationale behind any grade; however, I absolutely do not negotiate, haggle, or argue about grades. Part of my job is to evaluate your work and to assign a written grade to it. I do that to the best of my ability the first time.

Tutoring Support

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 our 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 pop up under your courses, please contact Ashley Hurst.

Access to Microsoft 365: All students are able to download Microsoft Office 365 free of charge using their MSU Texas student email address. (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/office?ms.officeurl=getoffice365?ms.officeurl=getoffice365>)

University Computer Labs: The University provides four open computer labs throughout the week that feature access to Microsoft Office Suite for writing and internet access for research.

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

Reading Schedule

This schedule is tentative; I reserve the right to amend it with oral notice in class. If you anticipate a problem with the due dates, please speak with me well in advance.

Week 1

- 1/19 MLK Day
- 1/21 Class Introduction
- 1/23 Traits of Dark Academia slideshow; Poetry reading suggestions; Discuss Architectural Treasure Hunt assignment (Due Week 14)

Week 2

- 1/26 Poetry 1: (“Sonnet 29”—“Ode on Solitude”) (PDF); Memento Mori slideshow
- 1/28 Poetry 2: (“A Night-Piece on Death”—“So We’ll Go No More a Roving”) (PDF);
- 1/30 Poetry 3: (“The Eolian Harp”—“Frost at Midnight”) (PDF); Collegiate Gothic slideshow; Discuss Archival Assignment

Week 3

- 2/2 MEET AT MOFFETT LIBRARY (Special Collections, Room 207)
- 2/4 MEET AT MOFFETT LIBRARY
- 2/6 MEET AT MOFFETT LIBRARY

Week 4

- 2/9 *The Dead Poets Society* (Day 1)
- 2/11 *The Dead Poets Society* (Day 2)
- 2/13 *The Dead Poets Society* (Day 3)

Week 5

- 2/16 *The Dead Poets Society* (Day 4)
- 2/18 *The Dead Poets Society* (Day 5)
- 2/20 **In-Class *Dead Poet Society* Essay (bring bluebook)**

Week 6

- 2/23 Poetry 4: ("Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"—"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (PDF); [Types of Colleges slideshow](#))
- 2/25 Poetry 5: ("After Dark Vapors"—"Bright Star") (PDF)
- 2/27 **In-Class Archival Essay (bring your [worksheet](#) & [bluebook](#))**

Week 7

- 3/2 *The Secret History*, Ch. 1 (3-26) (PDF)
- 3/4 *The Secret History*, Ch. 1 (26-45)
- 3/6 [Visual Literacy slideshow](#)

Week 8

3/9–13 Spring Break

Week 9

- 3/16 Rio, *If We were Villains* (3-53)
- 3/18 Rio, *If We were Villains* (53-114)
- 3/20 Rio, *If We were Villains* (114-172)

Week 10

- 3/23 Rio, *If We were Villains* (172-231)
- 3/25 Rio, *If We were Villains* (232-294)
- 3/27 Rio, *If We were Villains* (294-358)

Week 11

- 3/30 **In-class Ways of Seeing Essay (bring a [bluebook](#))**
- 4/1 Poetry 7: ("Alone" —"The Raven") (PDF); [Gargoyles Slideshow w/ Dr. Zeigler](#)
- 4/3 Holiday Break

Week 12

- 4/6 Bardugo, *Ninth House* (1-72)
- 4/8 Bardugo, *Ninth House* (73-146)
- 1/10 Bardugo, *Ninth House* (147-220)

Week 13

- 4/13 Bardugo, *Ninth House* (221-298)
- 4/15 Bardugo, *Ninth House* (299-374)
- 4/17 Bardugo, *Ninth House* (375-450)

Week 14

4/20 Poetry 6: (“Ode on a Grecian Urn”—“Ode to Melancholy”) (PDF);

Architectural Treasure Hunt assignment due

4/22 Hawthorne, “The Birth-mark”

4/24 Poe, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”

Week 15

4/27 Doyle, “The Speckled Band” (PDF)

4/29 Doyle, “The Musgrave Ritual” (PDF)

5/1 Doyle, “The Priory School” (PDF)

Week 16

5/4 Mood Board Presentations (Group 1)

5/6 Mood Board Presentations (Group 2)

5/8 Mood Board Presentations (Group 3)