

**Introduction to Critical Reading and Academic Writing**  
ENGL 1143/X30  
Summer 2026 (June 1-July 3)

**Professor:** Dr. Kirsten Lodge  
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**Office Hours/Zoom Meetings:** by appointment

### **Materials**

- You have access to all of the resources in the Bedford Bookshelf. See instructions on D2L.

### **Texas Core Curriculum**

- 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

### **Course Schedule**

The course schedule has been posted separately from the syllabus. It was prepared by Macmillan Learning specifically for this MSU course. Each week has "Instructional Materials" and "Readings." I have set up links in D2L to each of the assigned "readings." For the "Instructional Materials," I have linked to each of the books, not individual readings. You must consult the schedule to see which chapters and subsections are assigned in the textbooks for each week.

### **Course Assignments**

- 20% Response Papers
  - These short essays (400-500 words) will be written in response to course readings based on my prompts.
- 20% Revised Response Papers

You will revise your response papers based on my feedback. In addition, you will highlight grammatical and stylistic revisions and summarize the relevant rules

and/or recommendations based on reading and exercises I give you. I may also ask you to submit written exercises.

- 20% Discussion Board Posts
  - You will respond to readings with posts on our class Discussion Board as assigned (minimum 75 words).
- 5% Research Question Discussion
  - You will post your preliminary ideas for the Synthesis Paper, as well as a draft thesis, and respond to at least five of your peers.
- 5% Annotated Bibliography
  - You will summarize and evaluate each source that you consult for the Synthesis Paper (at least seven sources).
- 5% Peer Review
  - You will post a draft of your synthesis (research) paper for peer review and give suggestions to at least five of your peers.
- 5% Draft Synthesis Paper
  - You will submit a draft of your final paper to me, and I will provide feedback for you.
- 15% Synthesis Paper
  - This is the longest paper you will compose in this class (4-5 pages, not counting the Works Cited page). It will explore various perspectives on a topic of your choosing. You will cite at least five sources and show connections between them.
- 5% Presentation
  - You will post a presentation of your Synthesis Paper for the class.

**Grading Policy:** This class will not use the plus/minus grading system for *final grades*. The following numerical equivalents for final grades are used:

A = 100-90%;

B = 89-80%;

C = 79-70%;

D = 69-60%;

F = 59-0

**Submission Format and Policy:** All written assignments are to be typed and formatted – and outside sources documented – according to MLA style. All papers will be uploaded to 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, and you will see a similarity 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 from 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](https://ms.officeurl=getoffice365?ms.officeurl=getoffice365) and create an account.

**Late Assignment Policy:** Late assignments will be marked down one third of a letter grade per day, including weekends and holidays (i.e., A > A-), unless you have a good reason for lateness and have preferably spoken to me about it beforehand.

**Academic Dishonesty and AI Policy:** Plagiarism is the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing on the Works Cited page) whether you use that material in a quote, paraphrase, or summary.

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for future courses and a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as academic dishonesty, the penalty for which is a zero on the assignment. However, you will be permitted to use AI in an ethical manner, specifically:

- You may use Grammarly and/or other spelling and grammar checkers, but you may not use them to “rewrite” your paper or change the “tone” (that is, to “make it sound more academic,” etc.);
- You may use AI to generate ideas. For example, you may put your topic into ChatGPT and ask for some ideas, and you may ask it follow-up questions.
- You may use AI to explain grammar and style and generate personalized exercises.

Be aware, however, of the following drawbacks of AI:

- AI is often inaccurate. Check everything you find through AI against other sources;
- AI tends to “hallucinate” sources—that is, it is known to come up with sources that do not actually exist;
- AI tends to confirm what you already believe (“confirmation bias”);
- Grammarly may give you suggestions that actually change the meaning of what you wrote, so always check it carefully;
- Similarly, do not simply accept everything Grammarly suggests. You will not learn anything that way. Go over each suggested change and make sure you understand it and agree with it before you accept it;
- AI is NOT private. Do not put any personal information into AI chats.

If you have used AI in an ethical manner for any assignment, write at the end of the assignment how you have used it (e.g., “I used Grammarly to check spelling and grammar” or “I used ChatGPT to generate ideas about X.”).

Please note that MSU does not have a blanket AI policy. Individual instructors make their own policies. Always make sure you know what your instructors' AI policies are.

**Tutoring:** 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. Writing tutors are available. Remember that students don't need an appointment to utilize these services. Consult the [Summer](#)

[Tutoring Schedule](#) for hours.

**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 Disability Support Services.

**Safe Zone Statement:** The professor considers this online classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being – regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is the professor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

**For all other policies and procedures, please refer to the current [MSU Student Handbook](#).**