

ENGL 1143. X61: Introduction to Critical Reading and Academic Writing

Fall 2026

Online

Contact:

Mrs. Taylor Ullman, M.S.

Lecturer

Office: Virtual

Office Hours: by appointment only

Email: taylor.ullman@msutexas.edu

Required Text:

Bedford Bookshelf ISBN: 9781319530297

Texas Core Curriculum:

This course fulfills a core requirement for Communication. As such, the course will assess the following THECB Core Course Objectives:

- Critical Thinking Skills: To assess the student's critical thinking skills, the Synthesis rubric will be applied to the Synthesis Paper.
- Communication Skills: To assess the student's written communication skills, the Synthesis rubric will be applied to the Synthesis Paper.
- Personal Responsibility: To assess ethical use of sources as a measure of personal responsibility, the Synthesis rubric will be applied to the Synthesis Paper.
- 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:

- 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 communication 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 Assignments:

You will receive detailed assignment sheets that explain the specifics for each of these assignments.

Assignment	% of Final Grade
Response Papers	20%
Rhetorical Analysis	15%
Position Paper	15%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Synthesis Paper	20%
Discussion Boards	10%
Remix Project	10%

Response Papers

These short essays (2 paragraphs) will be written in response to articles that we read and discuss together. These are worth ***20%** of your final grade.

Rhetorical Analysis

You will have the opportunity to plan, draft, and revise this essay. It will analyse the rhetorical elements of a text. This is worth ***15%** of your final grade.

Position Paper

You will have the opportunity to plan, draft, and revise this essay. It will make a claim that is supported with evidence and fully developed reasoning. This is worth ***15%** of your final grade.

Annotated Bibliography

You will summarize and evaluate each source that you consult for the synthesis paper. This is worth ***10%** of your final grade.

Synthesis Paper

This is the longest paper you will compose in this class. It will explore various perspectives on a topic of your choosing. You will cite sources and show connections between them. This is worth ***20%** of your final grade.

Discussion Boards

Participation in regular discussion boards about varying topics including: readings, topic brainstorm, & peer reviews. For each discussion board, your initial post should be posted by Wednesday @11:59 pm and your **two** peer responses should be posted by Friday @11:59 pm. There are no word count requirements; however, both posts (initial & response) should be of substance (probably about 200 words). These are worth ***10%** of your final grade.

Remix Project

You will present your synthesis paper to the class using multimodal text. This is worth ***10%** of your final grade.

Grading Policy:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = 0-59%

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 student's 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 & Policy:

All written assignments are to be typed and formatted according to MLA 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 [Microsoft Office for MSU](#) and create an 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.

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 a 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 that 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.

Late Assignment Policy:

All assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the date listed. Extensions can be requested by email within 36 hours of a due date. I understand that sometimes life happens. If an extension is not requested and granted, it is an automatic-10 points per day late. I will not grade assignments turned in more than a week late.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty- committing or contributing to dishonest acts by those engaged in teaching, learning, research

Plagiarism- the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own

Since writing and analytical skills are part of the learning outcomes from this course, all assignments should be prepared by the students. Developing a foundation in these skills will be pivotal for success in other courses and future endeavors. [*AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.](#)

Those who are found to have committed academic dishonesty or plagiarism will receive a zero on the assignment. Offenses may also result in the student being reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy and/or the Director of Student Conduct.

[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 an 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](#).

[Contacting Your Instructor:](#)

The best way to contact me is through email. I check my email regularly, so you should get a response within 24 hours (during the week). If you don't hear back after 48 hours, email again (your email may have been lost in the busy inbox). If it is later than 6pm, assume I will not see it until the next day. I don't usually check my email over the weekend and therefore probably won't respond.

[Tutoring:](#)

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP Learning Center provides tutoring support in several core courses and subject areas. Follow guidelines from [TASP Learning Center](#) to find the in-person and online help you need.

[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.

College 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 prohibit 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 as 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 the 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.](#)”

Schedule:

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

Week	Assignments	Due Dates
1 8/24-8/28	Read: - Syllabus & Calendar <i>The St. Martin's Guide to Writing (G2W) 13e:</i> - Ch 1. Foundations for Becoming a Successful College Writer <i>St. Martin's Handbook (St. MH) 9e:</i> - Ch 8. Working with Others - Ch 9. Reading Critically Do: - Introduction Discussion Board (DB)	DB1: Initial post due Wed 8/26 @ 11:59pm Response due Fri 8/28 @ 11:59pm
2 8/31-9/4	Read: <i>St. MH:</i> - Ch 3. Rhetorical Situations - Ch 4. Exploring, Planning, and Drafting - Ch 6. Reviewing, Revising, and Editing <i>The Writer's Loop (WL):</i> - Ch 5. Reading Actively and Critically to Create Meaning Do: - Chapter Readings DB Introduce: - Response Papers	DB2: Initial post due Wed 9/2 @ 11:59pm Response due Fri 9/4 @ 11:59pm
3 9/8-6/11	Read: "How to Fix Social Media" "Warped Front Pages" (D2L) <i>WL:</i> - Ch 9. Managing, Annotating, and Summarizing Sources <i>Rules for Writers (Rules) 11e:</i> - Ch 54. Managing information; taking notes responsibly Do: - Response Paper #1 Introduce: - Rhetorical Analysis (RA) 9/7: No class- Labor Day	RP #1 Due Fri 9/11 @ 11:59pm

Week	Assignments	Due Dates
4 9/14-9/18	Read: • “How and why do consumers access news on social media?” (D2L) • <i>WL</i>: ◦ Ch 4. Improving Your Draft Using Feedback and Revision Do: • Response Paper #2 • Find & read text for RA • RA Rough Draft	RP #2 Due Fri 9/18 @ 11:59pm
5 9/21-9/25	Read: • <i>St. MH</i>: ◦ Ch 44. Comma Splices and Fused Sentences ◦ Ch 38. Concise Writing ◦ Ch 40. Sentence Variety ◦ Ch 47. Consistent & Complete Structures Do: • RA Peer Review DB	DB3: Initial post due Wed 9/23 @ 11:59pm Response due Fri 9/25 @ 11:59pm
6 9/28-10/2	Read: • “Contesting Standardized English” (D2L) • “‘Qué lo qué, papi’: Giants bridge cultural gaps with Spanish classes” (D2L) • <i>St. MH</i>: ◦ Ch 33. Language & Identity ◦ Ch 34. Language Varieties ◦ Ch 35. Writing to the World Do: • Rhetorical Analysis due • Response Paper #3	RA due Wed 9/30 @ 11:59pm RP #3 due Fri 10/2 @ 11:59pm
7 10/5-10/9	Read: • <i>St. MH</i>: ◦ Ch 10. Analyzing Arguments ◦ Ch 11. Constructing Arguments • Selected stories from Science & Technology* *More info to come Do: • Response Paper #4 Introduce: • Position Paper (PP)	RP #4 due Fri 10/9 @ 11:59pm

Week	Assignments	Due Dates
8 10/12-10/16	Read: • <i>WL</i>: ◦ Ch 8. Planning Your Research and Evaluating Sources • <i>Rules</i>: ◦ Ch 55. Evaluating sources • <i>St. MH</i>: ◦ Ch 12. Preparing for a Research Project Do: • Position Paper Peer Review DB	DB4: Initial post due Wed 10/14 @ 11:59pm Response due Fri 10/16 @ 11:59pm
9 10/19-10/23	Read: • “Influencer Parents and the Kids Who Had Their Childhoods Made into Content” (D2L) • <i>G2W</i> ◦ Ch 25. Writing for & about Your Community • <i>St. MH</i>: ◦ Ch 17. Writing a Research Project • <i>WL</i>: ◦ Ch 11. Integrating Ideas from Sources Do: • Position Paper due • RP #5 Introduce: • Annotated Bibliography (Ann Bib) • Synthesis Paper (SP)	PP due Wed 10/21 @ 11:59pm RP #5 Due Fri 10/23 @ 11:59pm
10 10/26-10/30	Plan: • Research Question • Working Thesis • Possible Sources Do: • Brainstorming BD • Ann Bib	DB5: Initial post due Wed 10/28 @ 11:59pm Response due Fri 10/30 @ 11:59pm

Week	Assignments	Due Dates
11 11/2-11/6	Read: • <i>St. MH:</i> ◦ Ch 16. Acknowledging Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism • <i>Rules:</i> ◦ Ch 59. Documenting sources in MLA style ◦ Ch 60. MLA format; sample research essay Do: • Synthesis Paper Draft • Ann Bib due	Ann Bib Due Fri 11/6 @ 11:59pm
12 11/9-11/13	Do: • Synthesis Paper Draft • SP Peer Review DB	DB6: Initial post due Wed 11/11 @ 11:59pm Response due Fri 11/13 @ 11:59pm
13 11/16-11/20	Read: • <i>St. MH:</i> ◦ Ch 22. Design for Print & Digital Writing ◦ Ch 24. Communicating in Other Media • <i>G2W</i> ◦ Ch 22. Analyzing & Composing Multimodal Texts Do: • SP Final Draft Introduce: • Remix Project	SP due Fri 11/20 @ 11:59pm
14 11/23-11/27	Do: • Remix Project DB • Remix Project Last Day to drop with a “W” - November 23 by 4pm 11/25-11/29: Thanksgiving Break	DB7: Initial post due Tues 11/24 @ 11:59pm
15 11/30-12/4	Do: • Remix Project Due	DB7: Response due Mon 11/30 @ 11:59pm Remix Project due Fri 12/4 @ 11:59pm
16	No Final Exam!	