



# Syllabus: Intro to Critical Reading & Academic Writing | Sp 2026

ENGL 1143-2R1 | MWF 10-10:50 AM | BW 117

## Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Hillary Coenen | Phone: (940) 397-4058 | Email: [hillary.coenen@msutexas.edu](mailto:hillary.coenen@msutexas.edu)

Office: BW 203 | Office hours in person, by phone, or on Zoom at the following times:

Mon: Noon - 2 PM | Tues: 1-2 PM | Wed: Noon - 1 PM | Thurs: 1-2 PM | OR BY APPT

## 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.

## Required Materials

Ebook materials are provided via Inclusive Access in D2L. You won't buy them separately!

- Bedford Bookshelf Resources. See Live Class Schedule for specific readings.
- MSU Email using Google Suite (Docs, Sites, & Slides)
- 1-inch 3-Ring Binder with dividers or sheet protectors.

## Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to

- Apply key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Engage in a writing process that includes invention, drafting, collaboration, and revision
- Read & compose for inquiry, learning, thinking, & communicating in varied 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 & in contextually appropriate ways & follow a designated style guide
- Demonstrate proficient use of linguistic structures, including grammar and mechanics, through practice in composing and revising

## THECB Core Learning Objectives - Communication

This course fulfills a Communication Core requirement and will assess the following:

- To assess the following skills, the Synthesis rubric will be applied to the Synthesis Essay.
  - *Critical Thinking Skills*, to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
  - *Communication Skills*, to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
  - *Personal Responsibility Skills*, to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.
- The Peer Review Teamwork rubric will be applied to each student's preparation for and participation in a peer review workshop to assess Teamwork Skills.
  - *Teamwork Skills*, to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

## Grading System & Policies

### Portfolio Grading System

This course uses a portfolio grading system, which emphasizes the writing process and aims to foster a supportive environment and relieve some writing anxiety. You'll get feedback which you can use to improve throughout the process. For each portfolio unit, you will receive a list of expectations and criteria for components. If you receive an "Unsatisfactory" mark on any component, you may revise to meet expectations and improve your grade. You can also earn credit for ungraded activities by including them in your Learning Log, which you'll submit with each unit.

Table 1: Points Allocated per Assignment

Assignments	Points	Description
Unit 0 ePortfolio	50	Start your ePortfolio & introduce your research interests.
Critical Reflection Draft	50	In a reflective essay, explain how you'll apply knowledge from course resources in your educational journey.
Unit 1 ePortfolio	150	Demonstrate your writing process on the rhetorical analysis essay by sharing the materials you used to plan, draft, and revise the essay.
Synthesis Matrix Draft	50	Gather your research on your chosen topic, providing citation information, brief summaries, and CRAAP test results for SIX sources.
Unit 2 ePortfolio	150	Demonstrate your writing & research process on the synthesis matrix by sharing the materials you used to find, select, and evaluate sources.
Synthesis Essay Draft	100	In an academic essay, synthesize your research findings from a variety of perspectives on a current issue.
Unit 3 ePortfolio	250	Demonstrate your writing process on the Synthesis essay by sharing the materials you used to plan, draft, and revise.
Peer Review Feedback (4 x 25+ pts)	100+	Provide thoughtful, constructive feedback to peers based on assignment criteria (25 points each).
Learning Logs (4 x 25+ pts)	100+	Throughout the semester, use your Learning Log to document your writing process and log your ungraded work for the class in order to earn credit.
Total Points	1000	

Table 2: Total Points for Final Grade

Grade	Points
A	895-1000
B	795-894
C	695-794
D	595-694
F	0-594

### Acceptable Submission Format and Process

Formal assignments are to be typed and formatted with all sources documented according to MLA style guidelines. Formal papers will be uploaded to the D2L Assignment folder. By enrolling in this class, students expressly grant MSU a "limited right" in all intellectual property created for the purpose of this course. The "limited right" includes but is not limited to the right to reproduce the student's work in order to verify originality and authenticity, and for educational purposes.

*Note:* You may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless you obtain both instructors' explicit written permission in advance.

## Revision

You may revise and resubmit any coursework within 2 weeks of receiving feedback and prior to finals week for additional feedback and a new assessment. Grade revisions are negotiated on a case-by-case basis, and all should be preceded by a revision plan with the help of the instructor.

## Mid-Term Progress Report

At mid-term, I'll share a progress report with advisors, support staff, and you. These do not appear on transcripts or affect GPAs. Students earning Cs or below should visit with me and TASP.

## Late Assignment Policy

Late assignments, defined as work not submitted to the designated site within 2 hours after the deadline, may still be accepted for credit if you consult with me within two business days of the deadline, at the discretion of the instructor. If you anticipate you may have difficulty meeting a deadline, request an extension at least 24 hours in advance. If you have difficulty submitting or are unsure if your submission was successful, email me with your work attached and explain the issue.

## Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Plagiarism is the use of another's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument (including text written by a generation system or artificial intelligence tool) 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. At the very least, plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment; at worst, the consequence will be an F in the course. Offenders will be reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy and the Dean of Students. Students have the right to appeal an alleged incident of Academic Dishonesty. Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in [the Student Handbook](#), under Academic Dishonesty Procedure or through [the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

## Academic Integrity Advice

To avoid penalties or accusations of academic dishonesty, I suggest the following:

- **Ask for help:** As the instructor of this course, I am responsible for teaching you about correct and ethical citation and attribution, and I'm available to assist you. Contact me several days before the assignment is due with a link to the source so that I have time to review the article and meet to discuss your concerns.
- **Don't use AI:** Generally speaking, you are not allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI) engines, software, or artwork generating programs to produce content submitted for grading in this class unless the assignment instructions specifically call for the use of AI. I will provide more information about specific assignments that incorporate AI when the time is appropriate in the course. You may not, however, construe this limited use as permission to use these technologies in any other facet of this course. Use of AI on tasks for which it is not permitted constitutes academic dishonesty.
- **Provide instructor access to all sources used in assignments:** All sources cited in an assignment must be available, accessible online for me, the instructor, to review as I grade your assignments. Save all sources in a Google Folder, then share that Google Folder by pasting the URL into the comment box of your D2L submission. A link to an abstract or to an online database which has a paywall won't work: I need to be able to read the entire article, as do you.
- **Accurately cite sources:** When using the ideas of other published and/or unpublished sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (MLA). All quoted content must be placed in "quotation marks," and for quoted, paraphrased, or summarized content, the correct source must be cited in the body and in a list of references.

## GenAI Policy Details

This course aims to teach ethical research and writing practices, with a focus on the writing process. The use of generative AI is inappropriate for this course. All work submitted for this course is subject to be scanned by plagiarism and AI checkers. If you use AI or other sources without accurate and consistent attributions, you will not receive credit for the assignment, but you will have the opportunity to rewrite the assignment with guidance about proper attribution and citation (on the first occurrence). If this occurs twice in the course, you will receive a grade of "F" for the course.

If you choose to use a generative AI tool for this class, you must include a full transcript of your session(s) with each submission, every prompt you entered and every AI output you received.

- If you turn in an essay that is clearly just AI output pasted into MLA format, you will receive a 0.
- Partial AI use is strongly discouraged in this course. However, I recognize the temptations of new technology, so here is how consequences will work:
  - If your submission appears to be partially AI-generated, or if an originality checker indicates that your response is >30% AI-generated, I will investigate further. If your response and other evidence cannot demonstrate that the work you submitted is more than 70% original, you won't receive credit for the assignment.
  - If you submit work that contains some AI content (<30% AI-generated) but you have been transparent and included the transcript and attributions, there will not be penalties.

This policy is designed to create learning potential, a space for honoring you and your authentic creativity, critical thinking, and written expression. Note that there is no uniform policy on AI use at MSU. Make efforts to understand the policy for each course you take.

## Course Policies

### eBook Access

Your textbooks for this class are provided through English 1143 and are part of MSU Texas' Courseware Access and Affordability Program. Students are charged for course materials on their Business Office account. If you wish to opt-out of the Program and purchase the required course materials on your own, you must do so using the opt-out instructions, which will be sent to your my.msutexas.edu email on the second day of class. Contact [jenny.denning@msutexas.edu](mailto:jenny.denning@msutexas.edu) (MSU Bookstore) if you have questions about opting out.

### Class Communication - Email & GroupMe

Before asking questions via GroupMe or email, check D2L and our course syllabus and schedule. If the answers you seek are not provided, use GroupMe for questions and conversation about class activities, deadlines, and any issues that others in the class may know. This will allow quicker responses and provide helpful reminders for others.

Email is the best way to contact me about your own performance or attendance. Allow 2 business days for email responses. All emails you send for academic purposes should be revised and edited, including a greeting, body paragraph(s), and closing, to meet professional expectations for emails. For all correspondence with your instructors, indicate your full name, course and section number.

### Attendance Policy

Punctual, engaged attendance is crucial to your success in this class and in college. More than two weeks' worth of **unresolved** absences (MWF: 6 classes) will be grounds for the instructor to drop you from the course. Any absences are likely to affect your performance in the course, and it's your responsibility to be present and prepared for class to maximize your learning. If you must miss class for any reason, you may resolve absences by communicating with your instructor. If you must miss multiple sessions for any reason, alert the Dean of Students office so they can verify for instructors.

**\*Unresolved Absence:** Absences about which you did not communicate to the instructor prior to or within two days of its occurrence.

**\*Resolved Absence:** Absences about which you email your instructor prior to or within two business days. Emails must explain what actions you will take to stay on track in the course.

## University Closure Practices

In the event of university closure for inclement weather conditions or emergency situations, students will be notified through official campus channels (MSU Alert, MSU Safety app, Postmaster emails, and website headers). When any schedule changes occur, I will provide schedule updates and assignment expectations using D2L News announcements, GroupMe, and university emails, and I will also update the Live Class Schedule to reflect changes. For this course, unless a change is posted to the course D2L News, assignments due to be uploaded or posted to D2L during the closure will remain due as scheduled. Students who are unable to complete assignments due during a closure (for example, due to a power outage) will not be penalized, but will be expected to notify the professor of their situation.

## Learning with Generosity

As a community, we have diverse bodies, experiences, and needs. Our differences are strengths and we should strive to learn from them. To learn in a safe environment, we must ardently reject language and behaviors that denigrate others based on identity. In this learning space, hate speech, harassment, discrimination, & violence are not tolerated. This course does encourage discussion of difficult topics. We work through discomfort and create a brave space for learning by showing respect for others and considering diverse perspectives. There is a lot we don't know about each other, and our word choice in discussing social & political issues matters! Ignorance is not an excuse for cruelty or dismissiveness, but we all make mistakes as we learn, so we should be willing to forgive & learn from these situations.

## CARE for Class Community

Together, we'll decide what it means to show that we CARE about our own education and that of our classmates. CARE stands for Communicative, Accountable, Respectful, and Engaged.

Together we will describe specific behaviors and practices that correspond with those characteristics:

Principles	Students will...	Professor will...
<i>Communicative</i>		
<i>Accountable</i>		

Principles	Students will...	Professor will...
<i>Respectful</i>		
<i>Engaged</i>		

## Campus Resources & Policies

### Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

TASP's Learning Center is located on the first floor of the Moffett Library, and tutors are available for one-on-one sessions Monday-Thursday from 11 AM-7 PM. You don't need an appointment to use these services. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading. [See TASP's Webpage for more information.](#)

### Access to Microsoft 365

All students can download Microsoft Office 365 free of charge using their MSU Texas student email address. To acquire Office 365, [visit MSU's Student Resources](#).

### Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: January 23, 2026

Deadline to file for graduation: February 16, 2026

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W": April 29, 2026

### University Computer Labs

The University provides four open computer labs with Microsoft Office & internet access.

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

### 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. Explore resources on [Moffett Library's webpage](#) to learn how to best utilize the library.

## Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the [Midwestern State University Catalog](#).

## Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from 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. For information about refunds, refer to [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#).

## 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 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](#).

## Campus Carry

For information on the University's Campus Carry policies, visit [Campus Carry](#).

## Student Emergency Support & Resources

Your well-being and success at MSU are of the utmost importance. The [Student Emergency Support & Resources page](#) features campus and community resources available for students experiencing emergency or extenuating circumstances. Contact [student.affairs@msutexas.edu](mailto:student.affairs@msutexas.edu) (940-397-7500) for more information.

## Overview Schedule

**\*Note:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. [A more detailed, live version of the schedule is posted on D2L.](#)

Weeks	Topics/Activities/Assignments	D2L Deadlines @ 11:59 PM
Week 1: 1/20-1/23	Course Intro, Academic Writing, Rhetorical Context	
2: 1/26-1/30	Writing Process, New Media Design, & ePortfolios	
3: 2/2-2/6	Reading Rhetorically, Information Literacy	2/6: Unit 0 ePortfolio & Learning Log (LL)
4: 2/9-2/13	Genre, Analysis, & Arguments, Documentation, & Editing	
5: 2/16-2/20	Evaluating Sources & Giving Feedback	2/20: Peer Review 0
6: 2/23-2/27	Developing, Revising, and Editing Drafts	
7: 3/2-3/6	Reflecting on Writing, Peer Review	3/2: Peer Review 1 3/6: Critical Reflection
3/9-3/14	SPRING BREAK!	
8: 3/16-3/20	Research Skills: Finding, Evaluating, & Documenting Sources, CRAAP Test	3/20: Unit 1 ePortfolio & LL
9: 3/23-3/27	Incorporating Research: Synthesis Matrix & Practice	
10: 3/30-4/1	Troubleshooting & Completing Synthesis Matrix	
11: 4/6-4/10	Revising & Reflecting on Synthesis Matrix	4/6: Peer Review 2 4/10: Synthesis Matrix
12: 4/13-4/17	Planning & Developing Synthesis Essay	4/13: Unit 2 ePortfolio & LL
13: 4/20-4/24	Drafting & Troubleshooting Synthesis Essay	4/24: Peer Review 3
14: 4/27-5/1	Peer Review Synthesis & Revising Synthesis <b>Last day for "W" Drop (4/29)</b>	4/29: Peer Review 4
15: 5/4-5/8	Reflect and Demonstrate Learning: Workshop ePortfolios, Showcase ePortfolio	5/6: Unit 3 ePortfolio & LL
Fin: 5/10-5/14	No Final Exam	