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**ENG 1500-80 - Introduction to Literature** *Develops the student's appreciation and enjoyment of selected works in fiction, drama, and poetry. Works selected represent different historical periods and cultures. Substantial writing is required.*

Why study literature? Most, if not all, of you have been exposed to literature, and even been taught to write about it, in your previous high school and university courses. You've had teacher after teacher tell you how it important it is to read literature and to learn to write about it. And yet I'll wager that some (many? most?) of you may still be unconvinced of its relevance to your lives, your studies, and your careers.

You're in this class, perhaps, with all the willingness I showed when I had to struggle through math and sciences courses in my own undergraduate studies... because you've been forced to; not, necessarily, because you see any inherent value in it. And you're taking it online, perhaps, in hopes that it will be an easier way to get it out of the way. Sound about right? If I'm wrong, well you'll have to forgive me. It's been known to happen, once in a blue moon. But if I'm right, and if you see yourself described in the above paragraph, then I have some good news and some bad news.

The good news is that I'm not expecting, let alone requiring, that you come into this course with the same love of literature that led me to study it and that continues leading me to teach it. And if at the end of the semester, English Literature is still your least favorite subject, that's okay, too. But if you meet me halfway… if you put honest and real effort into reading the assignments, into sharing your thoughts, views, confusions and concerns with me and with your classmates… I not only expect, but I promise that you will leave this course not only with a better understanding the literature you read, but also with a better understanding of how it fits into your lives. And even more importantly, you'll be better equipped to pick up an unfamiliar text, be it literary or technical or business-related, and to analyze, contextualize, and synthesize the words and ideas contained therein.

But now for some possibly bad news (if you want to call it that): If you think online courses are easier than face-to-face ones, you're in for something of a surprise. In my traditional, face-to-face classes, a good deal of time is spent on in-class discussion; and you can expect there to be a great deal discussion in this online course, as well. But all of these discussions will, necessarily, be in the form of writing. In fact, you can expect there to be writing responses to readings two to three times per week, on average, each of which will be a minimum of 200-300 words in length. These shorter responses, furthermore, will be in addition to three formal papers that you will be assigned over the course of the semester that we will work on in stages, learning to draft and revise in the process.

The purpose of this class is to help you learn to read, think, and write critically about university-level literary readings. Whatever your major might be, your writing is going to be a primary way in which the mastery of assigned subject matter is judged. And so I hope all of us will leave this class more critical readers and more effective writers than we were when we started in it. And the best way to ensure that is to collaborate with each other in our quests to do so.

One of the best ways in which to become a better writer is to become a better reader. And so through the course of this semester, we will read stories and poems, books and plays. And we'll do so not just because they're fun to read (though, hopefully, they will be); but because they will help us to become better writers, thinkers, and communicators, whatever our future career plans might be.

The actual writing, you should learn in the course of this semester, is but one of many steps... and, in some ways, it will be the easiest. In our time together, we will explore various strategies for reading and evaluating the writings of others, as well as our own. Hopefully, we will all leave this class with a greater degree of confidence and proficiency at recognizing and developing theses, and in using strong thesis statements as the bases of your own college essays.


**Course Objectives:**
To enable students to:

a) Write interpretive essays that draw connections between literary form and meaning

b) Make meaningful thematic connections between contemporary issues and literature from historical, geographic, or ethnic origins

c) Cultivate an understanding of specific literary elements and techniques in a literary work

d) Practice reading and interpretation from a variety of critical standpoints

e) Use writing-to-learn strategies (such as journals, writing logs, and brainstorming) to develop understanding of course content and to think critically about that content

f) Engage literature through the drafting, editing, and revising of student writing

g) Use research and documentation skills where they may be necessary and integrate them through paraphrase, quotation and citation appropriately.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

a) Master interpretive essays that demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between literary form and meaning.
b) Develop meaningful thematic connections, orally and in writing, between contemporary issues and literature from various historical, geographic, or ethnic origins.

c) Demonstrate an understanding of specific literary elements and techniques in a literary work.

d) Identify a variety of critical approaches to reading and interpretation.
e) Use writing-to-learn strategies such as brainstorming, free-writing, reading logs, etc.) to develop understanding of course content and to think critically about that content.
f) Create essays through drafting, editing, and revising of student responses that demonstrate an engagement in literature.
g) Create documents which accurately cite secondary sources consulted for research purposes.

## Readings and Course Delivery

This course and all readings for it will be delivered online, using the campus' Blackboard Learning Management system: http://bb.wpunj.edu. Please use this address to access Blackboard directly (rather than go through WPConnect), using a supported web browser and operating system. The best supported browsers for use with Blackboard Google Chrome (http://www.google.com/chrome) and Mozilla Firefox (http://www.firefox.com), either on a PC running Windows 7 or higher or a Mac running some recent iteration of Mac OS X.

For additional information about using Blackboard, please visit http://bit.ly/wpunj-itwiki-bbstu. And if you should encounter any difficulties in using the system, please report them by opening a ticket in Web Help Desk system: http://www.wpunj.edu/helpdesk.

## Formal Papers:

With the exception of those assignments that you will be writing in class and/or posting in the discussion boards (these can be expected on a weekly basis), all papers must be submitted in Microsoft Word format (2007 or higher, double-spaced, 10/12 pt. font). Fiddling with typefaces, line spacing, margins, headers, footers, etc. will be noticed... please don't make me count words. Everything you write for this course should be proofread and properly cited, when appropriate. Deliberately neglecting to properly cite anyone else's work or handing in someone else's work and presenting it as your own (i.e. plagiarizing) will result in failing this course and having the matter reported to the Dean's office. Information on what constitutes plagiarism can be found by reading the Academic Integrity Policy, which appears in the Student Handbook and in the Undergraduate Course Catalog, in the General Information section. Information on how to cite other works, meanwhile, can be found by going to the External Links section and

clicking on the link that reads "Using Modern Language Association (MLA) Format (from Purdue's University's Online Writing Lab Web Site) ."

Late formal papers will be accepted within one week their respective due dates, but they will be downgraded by one letter grade (A to B, B to C, and so on). If you cannot get a paper in within one week of its due date and cannot give me a satisfactory reason for having failed to do so, you will receive an F as your grade for that assignment. Papers that have been downgraded due to lateness, furthermore, and then revised will still have the late penalty calculated into their final grades.

You will have the option of choosing to revise up to two of the formal papers after each has been returned with a grade, though revision will become a part of all of your writing processes and should also have taken place before you have submitted a paper for grading. Revising a paper, you should be warned, will not erase the original grade that you have earned. If your revised paper demonstrates improvement over the original, the higher grade will count more heavily than the lower one, but both will count. I have found that only counting the higher grade almost invariably leads some people to the conclusion that they can hand in slipshod work, on time, and just work harder on the revision... effectively getting a nice long extension of sorts. For this reason, I have decided that as a general rule all of the writing you do for me will count (if any exception is made to this rule, you will be made aware of it).

Be warned, by the way, that proofreading and simply adding sentences here and there as per my annotations does not constitute revision and will not result in your grade being changed. Also, please note that you can only revise a paper that you have actually written and fulfilled the requirements of in the first place. As I mentioned above, if you have not demonstrated a real effort to complete and follow an assignment in the first place, you cannot possibly do a revision. So you should take your assignments seriously and ask me to clarify them if you do not understand what I am asking you to do. I have office hours for a reason and would like to hear from more of you throughout the semester… not just in the last weeks of the class.

**Attendance:**

Attendance in an online course? I must be kidding, right? No, I expect you to log into Blackboard just about daily, depending on the week's assignments. I will be checking to see how regularly you log into the course site and will take that into account when determining what portion of the total Discussion/Participation grade points you have earned.

**Class Participation:**

Class participation is mandatory and will be worth 10% of your final grade. What constitutes class participation in this online class? The contributions that you make without being specifically assigned to. So if I assign you to write a short response to a question, that is not class participation. But each time you respond to one of your classmates' posts or post something for the class to consider, that will help you earn that portion of your grade. Participating in the optional synchronous sessions, furthermore, will help you earn your class participation points.

## Course Work and Grading:

Your final grades will be based on the following:

Formal Papers:        50%
Short Assignments:    25%
Quizzes:              15%
Class Participation:  10%

As a final note, you should always be prepared to participate in discussions in meaningful ways… and this means keeping up with the reading schedule. So long as your comments and questions come out of having read and thought about the assigned readings, they will demonstrate that you care about this class (and your performance in it) and will help you when I am determining your final grade.

## Academic Integrity

Anyone caught cheating will fail this class, with the matter reported to the appropriate campus departments. Almost every semester in which I've taught, unfortunately, an average of one or two students has failed a course as a result of cheating... usually by plagiarizing. Please bear in mind that in addition to being someone who's taught writing and literature courses over the past 18 years, I'm also a former Managing Editor and a current Instructional Technologist. What this means is that in addition to having made my living working with other people's writing, I also specialize in training faculty members in the use of various technologies that they can employ in their own teaching endeavors.

Among the tools used to detect non-original passages is Turnitin.com, a site that I will be using to detect non-original passages and look for incidences of plagiarism, collusion, etc. Any and all writing in this class may be submitted to Turnitin.com for this purpose.

But as long as you are willing and able do your own work and to put a reasonable time and effort into the work you submit, there is no reason that you should not succeed in this class. If you want to ensure that you'll pass this course and earn the best possible grade, all you have to do is the following:

- Do the work, and do it on time.

- Put honest time and effort into doing the readings and writing the assignments.

- ALWAYS Cite/credit/quote any other works, ideas, people, conversations, etc. you may be making use of.

- Ask me for help with readings you're having difficulty with.

- Ask me to clarify anything I've written or said that you don't quite understand.

- Bring any known reading/writing obstacles you may be aware of to my attention sooner, rather than later, so that we can get you any additional assistance that might be needed.

For more information on what constitutes plagiarism and/or cheating, the Academic Integrity Policy, which appears in the Student Handbook and in the Undergraduate Catalog, begins with the following description of some common kinds of cheating:

*Academic Integrity Policy, sections I - II (from the WPUNJ Undergraduate Catalog)*

## I. Standards of Academic Conduct

As an academic institution committed to the discovery and dissemination of truth, William Paterson University expects that all members of the University community shall conduct themselves honestly and with professional demeanor in all academic activities.

William Paterson University has established standards of academic conduct because of its belief that academic honesty is a matter of individual and University responsibility and that, when standards of honesty are violated, each member of the community is harmed.

Members of the University community are expected to acknowledge their individual responsibility to be familiar with and adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy.

## II. Violations of Academic Integrity

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will include, but not be limited to, the following examples:

**A. Cheating** during examinations includes any attempt to (1) look at another student's examination with the intention of using another's answers for attempted personal benefit; (2) communicate, in any manner, information concerning the content of the examination during the testing period or after the examination to someone who has not yet taken the examination; (3) use any materials, such as notebooks, notes, textbooks, or other sources, not specifically designated by the professor of the course for student use during the examination period, or (4) engage in any other activity for the purpose of seeking aid not authorized by the professor.

**B. Plagiarism** is the copying from a book, article, notebook, video, or other source material, whether published or unpublished, without proper credit through the use of quotation marks, footnotes, and other customary means of identifying sources, or passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, programs, and experiments of another, whether or not such actions are intentional or unintentional. Plagiarism will also include submitting, without the consent of the professor, an assignment already tendered for academic credit in another course.

**C. Collusion** is working together in preparing separate course assignments in ways not authorized by the instructor. Academic work produced through a cooperative (collaborative) effort of two or more students is permissible only upon the explicit consent of the professor. The collaboration must also be acknowledged in stating the authorship of the report.

**D. Lying** is knowingly furnishing false information, distorting data, or omitting to provide all necessary, required information to the University's advisor, registrar, admissions counselor, professor, etc., for any academically related purpose.

**E. Other concerns** that relate to the Academic Integrity Policy include such issues as computer security, stolen tests, falsified records, and vandalism of library materials. No list could possibly include all the possible violations of academic integrity. These examples should, however, give a clearer idea of the intent and extent of application of this policy.

**Accessibility Concerns**

Information about accessibility issues can be found by visiting the Disability Services web site: http://www.wpunj.edu/disabilityservices/. Reasonable accommodations will, of course, be made so long as you provide me with the appropriate documentation. Please take the steps necessary to get this documentation as soon as possible, prior to the campus' closure for the winter break.

Information about requesting and receiving accommodations is available at http://www.wpunj.edu/disabilityservices/req-accom.dot, with other important forms, information, and frequently asked questions available throughout the office's web site.