Section Syllabus SPRING 2023

LIT2000: Introduction to Literature
Section P1176: MW 8:00-9:15 in room 443

Instructor: Sara Smith
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Office Hours TBA

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Withdrawal dates for this class: Jan. 13 (refund); Apr. 5 (no refund)
Final exam date: TBA

For course learning outcomes, please see the district syllabus for this course.

Welcome!
I am excited to begin this semester with you! In this class, we will explore several genres of literature, including but not limited to poetry, drama, fiction, and film. We will practice the skills of close reading, critical analysis, and meaningful discussion while producing high-quality writing that deepens our understanding of the texts we study and their relevance to our lives. A key question we will explore all semester is the following: How can studying literature equip us intellectually and emotionally to confront the challenges of our lives and times? You will read and write quite a bit for this class. Although I hope that this class will increase your knowledge of literature, we are not here simply to memorize information—rather, this class is primarily designed to help hone your critical thinking skills. We will read a variety of literary texts carefully, explore their cultural contexts, connect them to present-day realities, and draw conclusions both in class and on paper. While some students question the relevance of studying literature for their intended career field, the ability to read a text carefully, locate evidence to support an interpretation, and write about and discuss these interpretations with others promotes a body of skills relevant to many challenges in college, the workplace, and life in general. I will be your guide as we navigate these tasks, but I expect each of you to play an active role in the classroom, contributing your own knowledge and unique perspective!

"The Edge Is What I Have": Literature and Transitional Spaces

That place among the rocks—is it a cave,
Or winding path? The edge is what I have.
-Theodore Roethke, from "In a Dark Time"

Consider what an "edge" is. It can be a marginal space. It can be the point at which a cliff or plateau drops unexpectedly. It can be whatever we cling to as we face uncertainty. It can be the frame of a puzzle or a sharp blade or a jagged shard. It can be the end of something familiar-- or the cusp of a brand-new world or approach. This semester, I would like us to explore how literary (and popular) texts navigate or engage the concept of the "edge"—however we choose to define it. These past couple of years, the entire world has faced many "edges" in the form of immense challenges, which I am sure we each have experienced in our own way. Nevertheless, we are not the first humans to experience a pandemic, political strife, natural disasters, etc., and much of literature reflects the complexities of the human experience under extreme pressure. As Flannery O'Connor once wrote, "It is the extreme situation that best reveals what we are essentially." And many of those situations are not simply imposed on us from external forces—many involve the internal conflicts we have within ourselves as we try to define our identities and our purposes here on earth. So, while the goal of this course is not to dwell in hardship and darkness, it will be in part to confront those places "among the rocks," those extreme situations and edges that help reveal to us what we truly are—along with the power of the written word to walk with us through those dark times and past the edges of what we thought we knew before.

Required Textbook: Mays, Kelly. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, Portable 13th Edition. ISBN 9780393674002
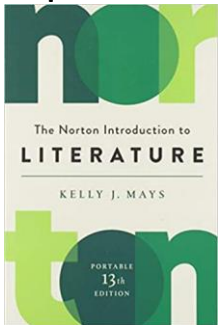
In addition to the readings from the textbook, I will post other readings on our Canvas site!

Assignments and weight of each:

Essay 1: 10%
Essay 2: 10%
Essay 3: 10%
You will write three major essays of approximately 1,000 words each. I will provide guidelines and topics for each of these. The last one will incorporate research.

Response Paragraphs (10-15): 20%
Almost every week, you will write a paragraph in response to a reading for that day. I will give you specific guidelines for writing these paragraphs (150-300 words). You will submit these on eLearning BEFORE class time on the day they are due. Late responses will not be graded and cannot be made up; however, I will drop the lowest grade, even if it is a zero.

Quizzes (10-15): 10%
Almost every week, you will take brief quizzes based on the readings scheduled for that day, especially for longer works. Like the response paragraphs, quizzes must be completed on Canvas before class time—please see the class schedule for an idea of when quizzes will be given. You may not complete a quiz late; however, I do drop the lowest quiz grade at the end of the semester.

Tests(2): 30%
We will have a midterm and a final exam. These tests may be composed of multiple choice, short answer, and/or short essay questions, and perhaps an in-class discussion of your answers.

Oral Presentation/leading discussion: 10%
During the first or second week of class, you will sign up to lead discussion on a story or poem scheduled for a particular day. You will need to prepare a few comments on the work and several discussion questions to prompt your classmates to participate. Note: I am not looking for plot summaries nor lengthy formal speeches, but your goal is to know the material well enough so that you can help guide the class's understanding and prompt a conversation.

Grading Scale

A	90 – 100	B+	88 – 89	B	80 – 87	C+	78 – 79
C	70 – 77	D+	68 – 69	D	60 – 67	F	0 – 59

General Essay Grades:

- **A Assignments:** Assignments of A quality follow the directions explicitly and display a polished style. They are well-organized with a clear purpose and strong claims supported by relevant evidence. These assignments include evidence of complex thinking and academic creativity. A assignments generally go beyond what is required while staying within the dictates of the assignment. The grammar and mechanics are nearly perfect, if not flawless.
- **B Assignments:** Assignments of B quality follow the directions explicitly. They are generally well-organized with a clear purpose and strong claims supported by adequate evidence. They are thoughtful, and there is evidence of attention given to style, but they are not as creative as A assignments. B assignments demonstrate a strong competency in grammatical skills but may have a few minor errors.
- **C Assignments:** Assignments of C quality follow the directions and fulfill the basic expectations of the assignment guidelines. However, these assignments may make leaps in logic, confuse concepts, or contain too much "filler" at the expense of substance. These assignments may have significant grammar issues, including mechanical errors or problems with sentence structure. C assignments show little extended thought or attention to style.
- **D Assignments:** Assignments of D quality do not follow the directions. Assignments that do not meet the basic page requirements will automatically receive a D+. Additionally, these assignments are hastily executed and poorly thought out. These assignments may lack the professionalism required for academic writing.
- **F Assignments:** Assignments of F quality display a significant misunderstanding of the writing or concepts under consideration. Extreme lack of professionalism may be an issue.

- **No Grade Assignments:** Assignments that plagiarize intentionally or unintentionally will receive no grade, as will off-topic assignments.

Class Policies:

- Attendance: This class is highly interactive and requires that you remain actively engaged throughout the semester. That means you need to show up and participate. Your full attention as well as your maximum possible attendance is essential to your success in this class, and if you are not here, you will miss important information as well as the benefit of peer interaction as we build knowledge together. More than four total unexcused absences will result in your being assigned an early 'F' grade at the 70 percent point in the semester for non-participation. To be excused from class, you must have documentation of a medical or other emergency, or be participating in a school-sponsored extracurricular activity with verification of that activity. If possible, notify me ahead of time of any anticipated absences. Students who are absent are responsible for keeping up with coursework on Canvas. Any students who need to withdraw from the class must withdraw themselves via the registrar's office no later than November 1st.

- Tardies: Do not arrive late or leave early except when absolutely necessary. I cannot spend valuable time catching you up on information you may have missed. If arriving late or leaving early becomes a habit for you, I will begin counting those instances as absences.

- Technology policy: Any use of electronic devices in this class should be directly related to the course material and should aid your success in the class, not distract from it. If I find that you are using technology in a distracting, disruptive, or disrespectful manner, I will ask you to leave the classroom, and you will be counted as absent for that day.

- Paper Format: All assignments written outside class must be typed, double-spaced, in a 12-point font such as Times New Roman or Calibri, with one-inch margins. Format and documentation for all papers written outside of class must conform to MLA style. If you are unsure of what this is, check your handbook, or ask the writing lab. It is your responsibility to SAVE your documents both while you are drafting them and after you have submitted them. (I strongly recommend that you save your documents in two separate places— for instance, on a flash/thumb drive, on your personal computer or in the cloud).

- Late papers: Essays are the only assignments that may be submitted late, and will lose 10 points for each day they are late (including weekends and holidays). No late papers will be accepted more than TWO days after their due date.

- If you miss a test: I will allow you to take a make-up exam if you can produce documentation of an emergency that caused you to miss class that day. I will not allow a student to take the exam more than one week after the test date. You must take the exam in the testing center in building 6.

- If you miss a response, quiz, or in-class activity: Response paragraphs, quizzes and other in-class activities cannot be made up unless you have a documented emergency or a school-sponsored extracurricular activity that you notify me about ahead of time. Note: activities such as going on vacation with your family or ditching class for the beach because it is a nice day do not constitute "emergencies" nor "extracurricular activities." I will, however, drop your lowest response grade and quiz grade at the end of the semester.

eLearning and Online Assignment Submission:
PSC uses the eLearning system Canvas: https://www.pensacolastate.edu/elearning/ You will need to log into the eLearning system regularly this semester because this course has a companion website on Canvas that I will use to post important class documents like this syllabus and assignment guidelines. In addition, you are required to take quizzes, submit your response paragraphs AND each of your three major out-of-class essays in the designated dropboxes on our eLearning site. This means that you will need to save your paragraphs and essays as a .docx, .pdf, or .rtf file and upload them to the dropbox. I will provide feedback and a graded rubric

directly on the eLearning site so that you will have online access to your graded papers and feedback for future reference. I try to have papers graded and commented upon within one week of submission, but the turnaround time may be later depending on my workload that week. <u>It is your responsibility to ensure that the essay file is uploaded properly</u>. In the event that the eLearning system is down, the backup mode for submission is sending the essay as an attachment to <u>[ssmith@pensacolastate.edu,](mailto:ssmith@pensacolastate.edu) followed by submission to the dropbox when it is working again</u>. If you do not have computer/internet access at home, remember that there are several places on campus where computers are available for student use, including the writing lab in room 446, the library, and the academic computing lab in building 21. While Canvas has a handy phone app, please be aware that it may not work for all functions.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is academic dishonesty--willfully copying someone else's work without acknowledging the source(s). I carefully investigate any paper in which I notice evidence of plagiarism. Obviously, any paper that is bought or copied off the Internet is plagiarized, as are papers that are copied from other students/friends or "ghost-written" by another person. These papers will receive zeroes. What I see most often are essays that have been pieced together using plagiarized portions of Internet content. Plagiarized passages are usually very easy to locate. <u>Any paper that is totally plagiarized OR includes one or more plagiarized portions will receive a zero with NO opportunity to reclaim points</u>. A plagiarized portion may consist of but is not limited to the following:

- Phrases, sentences, or paragraphs copied directly from another source without quotation marks and/or without in-text citations
- Phrases, sentences, or paragraphs improperly paraphrased (too close to the original) from another source <u>with or without in-text citations</u>
- Ideas or information that you gathered from a source but failed to cite

<u>* If a student plagiarizes more than one assignment, that student will receive a failing grade for the course and may be referred to the dean for further disciplinary action.*</u>Each major assignment you complete for this class will automatically be run through Turnitin.com to check for material that too closely matches internet content or papers submitted by other students. After you submit your paper, you will have access to an "originality report" which highlights passages and phrases that closely match another document. There is also a form available in the Canvas "Help" tab (the question mark icon on the bottom of the far-left sidebar) that allows you to submit a document to screen for plagiarism BEFORE you submit it to the actual course dropbox. https://elearning.pensacolastate.edu/eTools/TurnitinFORM.asp

 If you submit your assignment to this service ahead of time, you will have a chance to correct any portions that are not quoted or paraphrased correctly, so feel free to use this function strategically for your own benefit. I view the originality reports of any assignment that is submitted, but I also check each paper myself to verify the accuracy of the report.

BOTTOM LINE: Although we will cover this topic extensively in class, it is ultimately your responsibility to make sure you know what counts as plagiarism. Any ideas, facts, information, or words gathered from another author and used in your paper must be attributed to their proper source both on a works cited (bibliography) page AND in the text (parenthetical citations) <u>and quoted or paraphrased properly.</u> The MLA provides detailed instructions for handling these tasks. The Writing Lab and the PSC library are also excellent resources for citation technique. Of course, I am always happy to help you quote, paraphrase, and cite properly if you need my help. It's my job to help you! <u>However, I can neither help nor tolerate students who attempt to pass off others' work as their own, assuming that I either will not notice or do not care. I care very much.</u>

The Writing Lab: The Writing Lab (building 4, room 448; 850-484-1451) provides free tutoring and assistance with essays, both in person and online. Appointments are not required. I strongly recommend that you consult writing lab tutors as you draft the three major essays for this course. The writing lab is available in room 448 OR online through its paper reading service and live Zoom tutoring. The tutors will not correct or edit your paper for you, but they will give you advice and suggestions to improve your writing.

Additional Student Resources at PSC:

- ADA Office: (850) 484-1637
- TRIO Student Support Services: (850) 484-2028
- Pirates Care Counseling Team: 850-484-1750

A note on controversy in the classroom: "Trigger warnings"—or alerting an audience of students or others that material to be presented may be upsetting to some individuals—have become a hot topic in recent years. While I have the utmost respect and concern for my students' wellbeing, I cannot shy away from confronting controversial topics in the college classroom, since these are precisely the issues that need to be discussed so that we may learn from each other and grow as human beings. So consider yourself warned: we will, at various times, address in our readings and class discussions some issues including but not limited to racism, sexuality, abortion, war, suicide, and other sensitive topics. Also, please remember that when I assign a text, I am NOT asking you to agree with it or to adopt a particular belief system—I merely ask that you consider the material thoughtfully and carefully. Also, while I strongly encourage serious discussion and debate in class, please do not be rude to others whose opinions may not match your own. Note that a bad attitude will affect your grade. You need to come to class ready to learn with an open mind. You should adopt a similar attitude when you are writing about texts.

A Final Note: You will get out of this class what you invest into it. The best way to learn while in this class (and others) is to be focused on the course material during class time, engage in conversations with your instructor and classmates, put effort into completing your assignments, and ask for help when you don't understand something. While this is a literature class, its broader aim is to provide you with an academic, cultural, and social experience that will serve you during the rest of your college career and beyond. While your instructor is your guide through this process, you are ultimately responsible for your education, so make the most of your time while you are here!