



**Introduction to Literature
ENGL 1410
Credit Hours: 3
Spring 2022
Cap: 16**

Faculty: Dr. Joseph Lamperez

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Office: Building E, Room 108

Office Phone: N/A

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 4:00-6:00

Preferred Communication: email; will respond within 24 hours

Modality: Online

Class Location and Meeting Times: online via Zoom and in person

Meeting Hours and Online Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:40

Required Materials: Notebook, writing instruments, required textbooks

Textbooks:

The Norton Introduction to Literature, 13th edition Kelly J. Mays

Laptop and Internet Access: Every student is required to own a laptop and have internet access.

Mission, Vision, and Philosophy

Mission: Navajo Technical University honors Diné culture and language, while educating for the future.

Vision: Navajo Technical University provides an excellent educational experience in a supportive, culturally diverse environment, enabling all community members to grow intellectually, culturally, and economically.

Philosophy: Through the teachings of Nitsáhákees (thinking), Nahátá (planning), Íina (implementing), and Siihasin (reflection), students acquire quality education in diverse fields, while preserving cultural values and gaining economic opportunities.

University Mission Statement

Navajo Technical University's mission is to provide university readiness programs, certificates, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees. Students, faculty, and staff will provide value to the Diné community through research, community engagement, service learning, and activities

designed to foster cultural and environmental preservation and sustainable economic development. The University is committed to a high quality, student-oriented, hands-on learning environment based on the Diné cultural principles: *Nitsáhákees, Nahat'á, Iiná, Sihasin*.

Course Description

This course is a survey of essential concepts in literature. Our work will explore the formal textual elements unique to various genres, including poetry, short fiction, the novel, and drama. In addition to identifying and discussing literary elements, this course will also provide you with a wide range of critical perspectives for reading literature. In this course you will hone the ability to communicate well in formal and informal writing that shows thoughtful, clear, coherent responses to questions or prompts about assigned readings.

The class will include regular assessment of arguments that students write in response to assigned readings. Students will demonstrate skill in producing arguments using others' words and ideas that they integrate with their own writing in well-argued texts and presentations. These assessed materials include a variety of written assignments over the course of the semester.

This writing-intensive course is designed for students who wish to develop a foundational understanding of literary study, inquiry, and analysis. This course is organized around literary genres, and thus will introduce students to the fundamentals of fiction, poetry, and drama. This course will also question the boundaries of genre and of the category "literature" itself. Throughout the semester, we will reflect on the central questions: "What is Literature" and "Why do we study it"? After successfully completing this class, students will be equipped with the basic critical vocabulary and toolset for engaging in literary study. They will be prepared to analyze literary voice, tone, symbol, motif, theme, imagery, narrative, and form, among other literary aspects. They will also be equipped with several critical cultural lenses, among them gender, race, ethnicity, class, language, and national identity.

Course Level Objectives/Competencies:

The lessons, activities, content, and assignments in this course will help you be able to do the following:

1. Use literary terms to discuss how works of literature communicate.
2. Identify structural elements of poetry, fiction, and drama, to describe how these elements create meaning.
3. Write thesis-driven, evidence-based literary arguments, using literature as a primary source and relying on textual support.
4. Compare works of literature in terms of theme, structure, and use of literary devices.
5. Discuss the connections between literature and its historical, cultural, ethical, economic, or political context.
6. Identify issues raised by literary texts that might be addressed by literary analysis.
7. Apply appropriate formal conventions when writing about literature.

Assessments:

Poetry essay: 15%

Prose essay: 15%

Drama essay: 15%

Reflection essay: 15%

In-class free-writing/blog assignments, journaling, homework: 20%

Presentation: 10%

Participation: 10%

Grading Criteria:

Students must attend each class session and show up on time. If you miss more than two classes, there is a good chance that you will not pass the class. You must also turn all assignments in on time. Late papers are unacceptable. In this class there are no make-up exams and no late papers.

Grading Scale:

100%-90%: A

89%-80%: B

79%-70%: C

69%-60%: D

59%-00%: F

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is required, and regular attendance and participation are part of your grade.

If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. If you have more than two unexcused absences, you will either be automatically dropped from the course, or will not receive a passing grade in the course. If you are tardy more than two times, you will be counted absent for your next tardy class, and for each one thereafter. Come to class on time!

Academic Integrity

Presenting another person's work as one's own constitutes plagiarism, a flagrant violation of the intellectual honesty expected of all students. Any assignment that gives evidence of not being completely one's own work will receive a grade of F or zero. Egregious plagiarism or additional evidence of plagiarism after the first incident may result in a grade of F for the course and possible administrative action.

Students with Disabilities:

Navajo Technical University and the Arts and Humanities Department are committed to serving all enrolled students in a non-discriminatory and accommodating manner. Any student who feels he or she may need specific accommodations based on disability should contact me directly. Students who need an accommodation should also contact the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Diné Philosophy of Learning: An important approach to mastering the content of this course is to consider each assignment as part of a progression through the four seasons of the year and the four directions. Think about the Diné Philosophy of Education as expressed through these words: ***Nitsáhákees*—thinking (east); *Nahat'a* —planning (south); *Iiná*—doing or executing (west); and *Sihasin*—reflecting (north).** We can connect these to the ideas of this course in the following ways.

***Nitsáhákees*—(east): think clearly – learn to think for yourself – do your own work:** Think about reading assignments as you read them, and also think about what you'll need to do to put the information into practice on a written assignment. Like the **spring season**, the reading assignments and ideas about writing are designed to plant seeds of information that will mature as you further reflect on them.

***Nahat'a*—(south): plan your schoolwork and assignments. Learn to plan and prepare for classes and assignments, and be on time and prepared for class.** Create plans to help you accomplish the task assigned. Plan on how you will complete the assignment as we go over the ideas from readings in class and work on writing examples. Also plan what you'll need to do and how long it might take to do the assigned work. Like the **summer season**, your planning helps you grow towards successfully completing assignments and the class.

***Iiná*—(west): Use what you have learned in your everyday life, and use common sense and show respect for others at all times.** Practice your new skills by doing the work required for the course. Practice your new skills, and the ideas in what you've read and in what we've discussed by doing your homework assignments in a timely and engaged manner. Like the **autumn season**,

you now harvest the information by completing assignments that demonstrate your full understanding and gather or store the knowledge you've gained for use in future assignments.

***Sihasin*—(north): Self-discipline: don't be lazy; develop a positive attitude, and work in a disciplined way. Also, reflect on what you have learned, so that the ideas become part of you.** Evaluate your skills by reading the comments on completed and graded work so that you understand what you did correctly and where you might need more work. Consider how to use what you've already learned in future assignments and in other classes. Envision how your new skills can be used to achieve desired results in the future. Like the **winter season**, it's time to reflect on the knowledge you've gained so that you can use it in conjunction with new seeds of knowledge you will gain in the next assignment.

Weekly Schedule

January 19:

Module Learning Objectives

Upon completing this module, you will be able to:

1. Analyze a poem in terms of its meter, stanza form, tone, symbol, and theme.
2. Use effective quotation in your discussion of a work of literature.

Tasks to Complete this Module

- Discuss three distinct poems in terms of meter, stanza, symbol, tone, and theme.
- Write about these poems using quotation effectively

Readings:

William Wordsworth, "The World Is Too Much with Us"

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45564/the-world-is-too-much-with-us>

Langston Hughes, "The Weary Blues" <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47347/the-weary-blues>

Blues music compendium: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SH3KIDlqu_k

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43997/the-rime-of-the-ancient-mariner-text-of-1834>

Celebrity recording of "Rime": <https://www.ancientmarinerbigread.com/reading/1>

January 26:

Introduction to close reading.

Workshop:

Step 1: Paraphrase

In your own words, give a brief summary of the factual content of your chosen poem—that is, what the text directly states—as it proceeds from beginning to end. What situation is being described here and by whom? What happens in that situation? Respond to this prompt in no more than three complete sentences.

Please note that we haven't reached the poem's so-called "deeper meaning" yet; for now, please stick to "just the facts." Beginning with a literal description of what happens in the poem will force you to confront your own confusion—"What the heck is going on here?!"—and slow down the interpretive process.

Step 2: Observe

Re-read the poem. As you read, list any potentially significant features of the poem's language or form that you identified above. Your list of observations should include specific examples of various kinds of textual elements. For example, what descriptive details or word choices stick out? Does the speaker repeat any phrases, sounds, or ideas? Are there any images or uses of figurative language that you find especially arresting or interesting? Does the vocabulary, rhythm, or tone change at any point? What might be said about the narrative voice or perspective in this poem? Given Wordsworth's lifelong interest in the sonnet form, you might pay particular attention to rhyme scheme, rhythm, punctuation, and the like. Respond to this prompt with a list of features. Each observation should include the phrase: "... is potentially significant."

Needless to say, there are many potentially significant features in this poem. The features you observe here may prove important or incidental to the interpretation you will build in the coming steps. For now, it is enough to simply identify the potential building blocks for the analysis to come. So, don't worry about having too many observations, or about observations that end up being insignificant. Just keep your eyes and ears open!

Step 3: Contextualize

Now, as you read again, think about contexts for the poem. Contexts are facts or broader circumstances external to a literary work that are important to its production, reception, or understanding; for instance: literary, biographical, political, or historical information about Wordsworth, "The world is too much with us," or the period during which it was written and published.

From your own knowledge of any relevant contextual facts or circumstances—or from information provided by your instructor, textbook, or the introduction to this workshop—identify and list any potentially significant contexts for the poem. Respond to this prompt with a list of contexts. Each contextualization should include the phrase: "... is potentially significant."

Having spent the previous steps looking only at Wordsworth’s literary language, we are now asking you to look outside of the text for potentially significant interpretive contexts—that is, facts or broader circumstances external to the poem that are important to its production, reception, or understanding. In forcing you to contextualize, we again only ask for potentially significant literary, biographical, political, or historical information. How might Wordsworth’s biography inform or inflect “The world is too much with us”? Does the poem seem to address—directly or indirectly—any contemporaneous historical or political events? While this is an ideal time to look up additional information about the poem or poet, please don’t get bogged down. As with the previous step, such contextual elements may prove important or incidental to your final interpretation of “The world is too much with us.”

Step 4: Analyze

Believe it or not, you now have the building blocks for a literary interpretation of “The world is too much with us”! You just need to fit those pieces together. To that end, review the features and contexts that you identified in the Paraphrase and Observe steps as making potentially significant contributions to the poem’s meaning, purpose, or effect. Then, select at least four of these textual elements and/or contextual frames and explain how each is in fact significant. These analyses should state clearly and forcefully what each item contributes to your understanding of “The world is too much with us.” Respond to this prompt in one to two sentences per feature or context. Each analysis should include the phrase: “ ... is significant because ... ”

In all likelihood, you have produced far more interpretive material in the previous steps than you can use; now is the time to cull your various insights and begin making some claims ... that is, assertions of truth that are open to debate ... about their significance. Please note that you are no longer saying that something is potentially significant to the poem’s meaning, purpose, or effect; you now need to articulate *how* it is significant. Also, please note that these analyses will need to come together in Step 5, where you will argue for a unified interpretation of the poem as a whole. So, be thinking about how your analyses connect to one another.

Step 5: Argue

Before going any further, let’s take a moment—and a deep breath. Re-read the work you have produced thus far by clicking back to the Paraphrase, Observe, Contextualize, and Analyze steps. Using your observations and analyses in the preceding steps, write one paragraph (at least five sentences) that conveys your interpretation of the poem. State the main thesis of your interpretation—that is, the central claim you are arguing for—and then support that thesis by presenting the evidence you gathered in the first four steps.

This fifth step is the moment that your unified interpretation of the poem comes into view. In many ways, this is the culmination of the close reading process; indeed, this step will often result in the germ of a persuasive essay. And, since your observations and analyses should also add up to an interpretive conclusion about the poem as a whole, it is okay if this paragraph integrates and builds on your responses to the previous step.

Step 6: Reflect

This final step asks you to revisit the process by which you arrived at your interpretation. Keep in mind: No interpretation is perfect or can account for every element of a text. Nonetheless, if these reflections have led you to think that your interpretation is less than compelling, then you are free to revise your responses to the previous steps. Again, literary interpretation is a process—especially with a text as rich and complex as “The world is too much with us.”

Now that you have advanced an argument, re-read the poem again and highlight any places that continue to confuse or trouble you. Then, answer the questions below:

What aspects of the poem do I still find confusing?

What elements of the passage does my interpretation neglect or set aside?

What parts of my argument now appear debatable or dubious—that is, what objections could a reasonable person raise to my interpretation of the passage?

February 2:

Review homework and discuss.

Discuss “The Gift of Strawberries,” pages 22-32 from *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

Discuss pages 21-22 of *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*.

Choose five paragraphs from “The Gift of Strawberries.” Write a one-sentence summary, and four-sentence paragraph of each.

Identify the most important passage from “The Gift of Strawberries.” Why did you choose this passage?

Discuss pages 43-52 of *They Say/I Say*. Practice combining summary/paraphrase, and quotations.

Homework: Think about what you offer the land, and what it offers you. In what way are these offerings a kind of gift? Why does these offerings or gifts matter, and to whom? Three to five paragraphs. Be ready to read and discuss in our meeting February 1.

February 9:

Review homework and discuss.

Discuss “An Offering,” pages 33-38 and “Burning Cascade Head,” pages 249-253 from *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

Freewrite: Ceremonies and ways of knowing.

Discuss Pages 53-66 of *They Say/I Say*. Find a passage from the four chapters that we’ve read, and build your own response in dialogue with this passage. We’ll be building off Kimmerer’s writing in order to explore our own relationship with the land by describing a gift, relationship, or ceremony associated with a place of your own choosing.

Brainstorm: Read 333-337 of *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*

Discuss pages 456-463 in *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*.

Homework: descriptive essay due February 8.

February 16:

Descriptive essay due. Peer-review.

Discuss “Asters and Goldenrod,” pages 39-47 in *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

Freewrite: Ways of knowing

Homework: Choose a place you know well that you haven’t discussed before. Describe it from an outsider’s point of view, imagining how someone unfamiliar with the families, relationships, and history of this place might view it. Then, describe what this place means to you, and why. What differences do you notice above these two perspectives? What differing kinds of knowledge does each position use? Three to five paragraphs.

February 23:

President’s day: no class

Read “Learning the Grammar of Animacy,” pages 48-59 of *Braiding Sweetgrass*. What do the words “organic” and “mechanical” mean? Is the difference between these words the same as the difference between the animate and the inanimate?

Read pages 445-455 of *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*.

Freewrite: Describe a repeated process or experience in your life that is organic. Justify your definition: in what way does it qualify as such?

Homework: Describe a repeated process or experience in your life that is mechanical. Justify your definition: in what way does it qualify as such? Three to five paragraphs.

March 2:

Review homework and discuss.

Discuss “Learning the Grammar of Animacy,” pages 48-59 of *Braiding Sweetgrass*. What do the words “organic” and “mechanical” mean? Is the difference between these words the same as the difference between the animate and the inanimate?

Discuss pages 445-455 of *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*.

Freewrite: Describe a repeated process or experience in your life that is organic. Justify your definition: in what way does it qualify as such?

Homework: Describe a repeated process or experience in your life that is mechanical. Justify your definition: in what way does it qualify as such? Three to five paragraphs.

Review homework and discuss.

Discuss “The Three Sisters,” pages 128-140 of *Braiding Sweetgrass*

Freewrite: Choose an object that is closely connected to you. What would it say to you, if it could talk? What story would it tell, what perspective or advice or opinions would it want to share? Three to five paragraphs.

Assign definition essay: the organic and the mechanical.

March 9:

Definition essay due. Peer-review.

Discuss “Superman and Me,” Sherman Alexie, and “Reading to Write,” Stephen King

Workshop on sentence construction

Homework: describe an area in your life in which you feel a sense of literacy. Where did you learn this literacy? What does it offer you? How do others respond to this literacy? Three to five paragraphs.

March 16:

Spring Break

March 23:

Review homework and discuss.

Discuss pages 81-103 from *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*.

Discuss “Learning to Read and Write,” Frederick Douglass, and “Learning to Read,” Malcolm X

Workshop on transitional language

Homework: Describe a skill or activity in your life that you want to be able to do better. In other words, what lack of literacy in your life bothers you? What does this lack of literacy prevent you from doing? Do you have plans to improve your literacy in this area?

March 30:

Read homework and discuss

Workshop on paragraphing.

Assign literacy essay

April 6:

Literacy essay due.

Watch and discuss Mitch Landry's speech

Read about and discuss the Dignity statue of South Dakota.

Homework: Describe a statue that you think should be taken down.

Presentations

April 13:

Discuss pages 258-268 in *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*

Freewrite: describe a statue that you think should be put up.

Assign proposal essay

Presentations

April 20:

Proposal essay due. Peer-review.

Discuss pages 391-401 in *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*

Assign reflection essay

Presentations

April 27:

Reflection essay due. Peer-review.

Presentations

May 4:

Presentations