



ENGL 4210: Advanced Studies in Writing

COURSE DESCRIPTION : As one of the central focuses of Rhetoric and Writing Studies and of schooling in general, *literacy* is both highly desired and hotly debated in contemporary society. For some communities, literacy has been represented as a finite set of skills and knowledge that show evidence of “literate” belonging: reading, writing, correctness, monolingual perfection, etc. As Carmen Kynard writes in *Vernacular Insurrections*, such definitions of standard, “autonomous” literacy represent only a narrow understanding of what literacy can be. Moreover, such narrow definitions structure systems of mastery and exclusions, shifting focus from what literacy *does* to questions of *who* is literate and illiterate.

By contrast, Kynard recognizes that what it means to be literate is situated in “ideological, cultural, and political locations” that are fluid and changing. Literacy is “something that people do, rather than something that they have or do not have” (32). *Critical literacy*, then, is the practice of recognizing different ways communities use and relate to “letters” (Latin, *littera*). Critical literacy prepares us to acknowledge the strength of these differences and to promote more flexible approaches to teaching and assessing literate strategies in our communities. In this course, we will take Kynard’s approach to critical literacy as a framework as we read widely in issues that have changed the conversation about literacy within the fields of Rhetoric and Writing Studies. Our goals will be to read and recognize a variety of literacy practices and to share ideas about how these different practices impact contemporary institutions of work and schooling. As we share insights from our own experiences, we will explore relevant ways our own literacy practices can be useful in achieving our goals and helping others achieve theirs as well.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Assignment	Pts
Attendance and Participation	20
Dialogue Journal	20
Praxis Mini-Essays	20
Discussion Lead	10
Capstone Project	30
TOTAL	100

KEY ASSIGNMENTS

Semester-Long Dialogue Journal: Exploring Critical Literacy

Maintain a semester-long dialogue journal or commonplace book, fostering continuous engagement with the course content. Record reflections, insights, and reactions to readings from Carmen Kynard’s book and supplementary materials. Encourages personal connection to the material, fostering critical reading and thoughtful exploration.

Praxis Mini-Essays: Experimenting with Application (x5)

Craft mini-essays focused on applying ideas from our different research clusters to particular case studies or object analysis that will be provided. Explore intersections in our course topics, as well as your own insights into the vernacular insurrections into language, power, and activism Kynard brings to attention.

Discussion Lead: Shaping Conversations, Sharing Responsibilities

Engage in leadership of a class session with a team of others. For each Discussion Lead, a team will prepare discussion questions and take the lead on facilitating conversation about specific chapters or readings from Kynard’s book. Fosters teamwork, leadership, and active participation in critical conversations, promoting shared responsibility.

Vernacular Visions Capstone Project: Navigating Power in Institutions

Culminate the course by applying key ideas from our readings and discussions to a pertinent challenge relevant to UNT or another institution. The project will take place in parts, culminating in a written component that synthesizes concepts from Carmen Kynard’s *Vernacular Insurrections* and our supplementary readings. We will work on this project in class at the end of the semester.



Schedule of Assignments

Note: assignments and readings due by the start of class on the date indicated below. All readings *except for Kynard* will be provided as PDF files on Canvas. Schedule subject to change: check Canvas for all up-to-date assignment due dates.

Unit	Week	Tu	Class Readings and Assignments	Th	Class Readings and Assignments
Intro	Wk 1	16-Jan	Intro to course	18-Jan	Discuss Assignment Plan Key terms and Ideas
Intro: How are Literacy and Composition Related?	Wk 2	23-Jan	<i>What is literacy?</i> Brandt, "Sponsors of Literacy" Freire, "Banking Model," from <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i>	25-Jan	<i>How does Literacy affect Composition Studies?</i> Pough, "2011 CCCC Chair's Address" Connors, "Rhetorical History as a Component" Harris, "After Dartmouth"
Unit 1: Literacy and Codes of Power	Wk 3	30-Jan	Kynard, Introduction and Teaching Interlude 1 (1-24)	1-Feb	Kynard, Ch. 1 (25-66)
U1: Literacy and Codes of Power	Wk 4	6-Feb	Wilson Logan, "Why College English?" Royster and Williams, "History in the Spaces Left" Watson, " 'Good Will Come of This Evil'"	8-Feb	**Praxis Essay 1 DUE
U2: Literacy Breaking Traditions	Wk 5	13-Feb	Kynard, Teaching Interlude 2 (67-71)	15-Feb	Kynard, Ch. 2 (73-105)
U2: Literacy Breaking Traditions	Wk 6	20-Feb	Smitherman, "CCC's Role in the Struggle for Language Rights" Gilyard, "Holdin It Down" Delpit, "The Silenced Dialogue"	22-Feb	**Praxis Essay 2 DUE
U3: Literacy, Liminality, and Borders	Wk 7	27-Feb	Kynard, Teaching Interlude 3 (107-110)	29-Feb	Kynard, Ch. 3 (111-142)
U3: Literacy, Liminality, and Borders	Wk 8	5-Mar	Smitherman, "God Don't Never Change" Meyers, "Response to Smitherman" Canagarajah, "Negotiating Translingual Literacy"	7-Mar	**Praxis Essay 3 DUE
	SB	12-Mar		14-Mar	SB
U4: Literacy and the Limits of Civility	Wk 9	19-Mar	Kynard, Teaching Interlude 4 (143-147)	21-Mar	Kynard, Ch. 4 (149-190)
U4: Literacy and the Limits of Civility	Wk 10	26-Mar	Ruiz, "Mexican Americans and Segregated Schooling" Rose, "The Language of Exclusion" Shaugnessy, Intro to Errors and Expectations	28-Mar	**Praxis Essay 4 DUE
U5: Literacy and POLICY	Wk 11	19-Mar	Kynard, Teaching Interlude 5 (191-196)	21-Mar	Kynard, Ch. 5 (197-232)
U5: Literacy and POLICY	Wk 12	26-Mar	Bartholomae, "Inventing the University" Min-Zhan Lu, " Conflict and Struggle" Beckett and Western, "Governing Social Marginality"	28-Mar	**Praxis Essay 5 DUE
Final Project	Wk 13	16-Apr	Project Workshop	18-Apr	Project Workshop
Final Project	Wk 14	23-Apr	Project Workshop	25-Apr	Project Workshop
Final Project	Wk 15	30-Apr	Presentations ***** Capstone Project DUE	2-May	Presentations
	Fin	7-May	Course Wrap-Up and Reflection		

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

ENGL 4210 - Advanced Studies in Writing. 3 hours.. Intensive study of writing theory, philosophy, history and practice in dialogue with emerging research in humanities, the sciences and the arts. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 3210.

REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

You can purchase or rent these texts in any form, including e-books. Please bring a print or electronic copy of all assigned books / readings to class. Note that additional readings will be posted to Canvas as PDF files during some weeks.



- 9781438446363. Vernacular Insurrections by Carmen Kynard, SUNY PRESS, 2014. Required.
- Supplementary readings provided as PDF files on Canvas.
- Technology requirements: This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System and [faculty member to include other required equipment or software such as a webcam, microphone, Adobe Photoshop, etc.]. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere \(https://online.unt.edu/learn\)](https://online.unt.edu/learn).

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Although I encourage perfect attendance, I recognize the chaos of the semester by offering you four “free” absences. You do not need to provide any excuses or doctor’s notes for these, although I always appreciate a heads-up when you know you will be absent. After four absences, each additional absence will bring down your attendance and participation grade. Note that if you are absent more than 8 times, you will not earn any points for your entire attendance and participation grade. If you are absent more than 12 times, you will not pass the course.

Our course only works through your close engagement and participation. I will offer you many ways to participate, including speaking up in class and also engaging in online discussions or in office hour conversations with me. Your participation and attendance both are part of your grade for this course. At the same time, I want your access to the course to be as unimpeded as possible, and so please contact me if you experience any barriers that are keeping you from feeling fully engaged. I will be happy to work with you to make sure your perspective is heard and your needs are addressed.

In my experiences, students who attend class are much more successful in courses than students with multiple absences. You should attend every class unless you have a university excused absence such as active military service, a religious holy day, or an official university function as stated in the [Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy \(PDF\) \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039). If you cannot attend a class due to an emergency, please let me know. Your safety and well-being are important to me.

Please note that I will begin class on time every class period, and that we may have quizzes or other in-class assignments at the start of class. These assignments cannot be made up or missed if you are late or absent. If you are late, please join the class, without distracting others. More than two instances of lateness will result in an absence from class, and habitual lateness will need to be addressed with me in person. I urge you to communicate with me about any lateness or absences in advance.

Keep in mind also that I expect us to collaborate and listen to one another, even though we might have very different experiences and ideas! Our readings, discussions, and project-based activities require you to be actively engaged in the class and occasionally to work in teams and groups. If you experience any group tensions or situations that make you uncomfortable, please let me know right away.

OBJECTIVES

We will thoughtfully consider these big questions:

- How do we define literacy? Whose values do our definitions of literacy support?
- How do literacy practices interact with systems of power in the communities and institutions around us?
- How can we leverage our understandings of literacy to respond to challenges in our communities and institutions?

We will work to understand that:

- Critical literacy encompasses more than traditional reading and writing skills. It involves the capacity to analyze, question, and interpret texts within broader socio-cultural and political contexts.
- Critical literacy requires recognition of how intersecting identities, such as race and gender, influence individuals' interactions with and interpretations of texts.
- Critical literacy involves recognizing the intricate relationship between language, power, and discourse. We will learn how language functions as a tool of power, shaping narratives and societal structures.
- Vernacular insurrections represent a form of resistance and empowerment through language in critical literacy. This involves valuing alternative linguistic expressions that challenge dominant norms.
- Critical literacy necessitates the development of strong analytical skills for reading texts. This involves the ability to identify underlying assumptions, biases, and perspectives while acknowledging the multiplicity of interpretations.
- Critical literacy has practical applications in addressing real-world issues. It involves using understanding to contribute to societal discussions, advocate for social justice, and challenge inequities.
- Critical literacy is an ongoing process of growth and reflection. It involves a commitment to developing skills, refining perspectives, and adapting to evolving socio-cultural contexts over time.

We will develop these key ideas and skills:

- Knowledge of theoretical foundations of critical literacy, including key concepts, historical developments, and influential scholars.
- Understanding of how intersecting identities, such as race, gender, class, and culture, impact individuals' engagement with and interpretation of texts.
- Recognition of the relationship between language and power, recognizing how language functions as a tool to shape discourse and influence societal structures.
- Analytical skills for analyzing and understanding texts, including the ability to identify underlying assumptions, biases, and perspectives within written and visual materials.
- Practical applications of critical literacy in addressing real-world issues, advocating for social justice, and challenging inequities.
- Engagement with critical literacy as a continual process of growth and reflection, recognizing the need for ongoing development of skills and perspectives.
- Ability to critically read and interpret texts, going beyond surface-level comprehension to analyze underlying meanings.
- Practice with articulating critical insights and perspectives in both written and oral forms
- Collaboration in class and in teams, especially in activities such as leading discussions, where they work together to craft questions and facilitate meaningful interactions.
- Ability to apply critical literacy skills to real-world issues, demonstrating problem-solving abilities in advocating for social change and challenging existing narratives.
- Skills in self-reflection, engaging in continual growth by assessing understanding, perspectives, and contributions to critical literacy practices.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

To facilitate communication with me, please connect with me through my UNT email and/or by attending office hours. Keep in mind that I always try to respond to emails within 24 hours. Please reach out if you need help or want to talk over anything related to our class.

ADA ACCOMMODATION

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member

prior to implementation in each class. **Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment.** Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment, so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to unt.edu/success and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

SUPPORTING YOUR SUCCESS AND CREATING AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together. I also encourage you to review UNT's student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline expectations ([Code of Student Conduct](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012)) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>).

ASSESSING YOUR WORK

Grading Scale

For the purposes of this course,

- "A" WORK will constitute a final score of 90-100% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is impressively sophisticated and illuminating: inventive, balanced, justified, effective, mature, and expertly-situated in time and context
- "B" WORK will constitute a final score of 80-89.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is thorough and systematic: skilled, revealing, developed, perceptive, but not unusually or surprisingly original
- "C" WORK will constitute a final score of 70-79.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is acceptable but limited: coherent, significant, and perhaps even insightful in places, but ultimately insufficient in organization, articulation, perception, and/or effectiveness
- "D" WORK will constitute a final score of 60-69.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is incomplete and severely lacking: incoherent, limited, uncritical, immature, undeveloped, and overall not reflective of the performance expected of UNT undergraduates
- "F" WORK will constitute a final score of 0-59.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is unacceptable.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Every student in my class can improve by doing their own work and trying their hardest with access to appropriate resources. Students who use other people's work without citations will be violating UNT's Academic Integrity Policy.

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

The decision of the instructor will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity, which is responsible for maintaining student conduct records. The incident may result in an official disciplinary record for the student(s).

Academic integrity violations can include copying a passage from a source verbatim, but they can also include improper or misleading citations. Please note that all source material must be acknowledged, even if the material is paraphrased. Be careful to always acknowledge the work of other writers, and take the time to work out your thoughts and arguments without copying the work of others.

Please read and follow this important set of [guidelines for your academic success](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). If you have questions about this, or any UNT policy, please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

LATE WORK

All assignments are due by class time on the due date indicated on the assignment schedule or in Canvas. In some cases, I may grant extensions on assignments. To request an extension, please contact me before the assignment is due and I will consider your circumstances. Note that I will not grade subsequent assignments from any students until all previous assignments have been completed, and you cannot pass the course if you have not received a grade for all major assignments. Please contact me as soon as possible if you miss a deadline for an assignment.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

This syllabus is accurate as of the beginning of the semester; however, in extreme cases I may need to modify the syllabus to accommodate changes in our class composition or expectations. If any changes are made to the syllabus, I will make a new copy of the syllabus available to you and draw attention to the changes.

THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center can help you get started on a paper or help you to decide what to revise on an existing draft. A tutor can help you to develop your ideas, organize your thoughts, and clarify your prose. For more information or to make an appointment, visit writingcenter.unt.edu, call 940-565-4665, or stop by Sage Hall 150.

Student Support

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

In order to help support you as a student in every way, UNT offers multiple resources to care for your physical, mental, and academic health. Here are some of the resources:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

Other student support services offered by UNT include

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (<https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (<https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance>)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)
- [MathLab](https://math.unt.edu/mathlab) (<https://math.unt.edu/mathlab>)