

ENGL 3000: Introduction to Literary Analysis and Interpretation
Imaginings and Re-imaginings

Tu/Th 9:30-10:50 am • Life Sciences Bldg A, Rm 419 • Spring 2026

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Office: LANG Bldg, Rm 408-E
Office hrs: Fri. 12-1 pm or by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this gateway course to the English major, you will practice developing and honing your skills in the art of textual analysis and interpretation (crucial skills for everyone to have, whatever their major!). In three units covering three of literature's major genres—prose fiction, drama, and poetry—we will be reading a wide range of texts by a wide range of authors and employing a wide range of interpretive tools, approaches, and methodologies. One approach that will play a particularly big role in this class is that of cross-temporal comparative analysis, since each unit will include one or more older, more “canonical” texts (whose canonicity we will discuss and historicize) followed by more recent text(s) that retell, reimagine, or otherwise respond to them. Above all, I want each of you to feel that, by the time you leave this class, you’ve become a more nuanced and incisive reader, writer, and thinker than you were when you came in.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (please buy these exact editions):

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Oxford World Classics, ISBN # 978-0198834786)
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Folger/Simon & Schuster, ISBN # 978-1451669411)
James Ijames, *Fat Ham* (Theatre Publications Group, ISBN # 978-1636701684)

All other required readings will be provided as hard copy handouts.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Attendance/participation: 25%
Weekly short responses: 25%
Big talker day: 5%
In-class essay #1: 10%
In-class essay #2: 10%
Final paper one-on-one conference: 3%
“Songs as Poetry” handout: 2%
Final paper: 20%

Participation: This course is discussion-based. Your verbal contributions and active engagement are crucial to our collective success. To that end, your participation grade is determined not only by attendance, but also by your involvement (or lack thereof) in discussion. Excellent course participants show genuine engagement with others; in other words, they don't talk *at* people, they talk *with* them, and make the space necessary for others to think and speak. On the other end of the spectrum, if you are someone for whom participation in class discussions can feel intimidating or difficult, I recommend writing down at least one observation or question about the assigned reading to have at your fingertips, and aiming to participate at least once per class.

Attendance: Regular attendance is crucial to your success and to the success of this course. That said, I don't want you coming to class if you're feeling sick and may potentially cause others to become sick as well. If you do get sick, you need to let me know **prior to class** so I can help you stay on track. Missing six or more class meetings will result in failure of the course unless you have been in proactive contact with me and we're on the same page about the seriousness of what has been causing you to miss. The main thing is, in all things course-related: communicate, communicate, communicate! At the end of the semester, I will assign you a **holistic** attendance/participation grade that takes into account both the number of classes you have missed and the quality of your participation in class discussions.

Weekly short responses: In lieu of reading quizzes, you will demonstrate to me that you have completed all assigned readings by responding to discussion prompts that I will be posting on Canvas. Due to the new realities of A.I., you will respond to these prompts during the first 12 minutes of class **on paper**, and will therefore need to buy a notebook of lined paper to bring with you to each class (unless you have an ODA accommodation stipulating your use of a computer for in-class work). The purpose of these short responses is twofold: to prove to me that you're doing the assigned reading, and to get you to formulate your thoughts, in written form, on a regular basis. More details about these short responses (including details re: time-and-a-half ODA accommodations) will be provided.

Big talker day: While I am sympathetic to the fact that some students are, by nature, much more comfortable speaking up in the classroom than others, I'm going to even out our conversations a bit by assigning each of you one day to be a designated "Big Talker." On that day, you and two of your classmates will prepare 2 discussion prompts each—6 total—to pose to the rest of the class, and will serve as that day's discussion leaders and shapers. (You'll need to be in touch with your groupmates ahead of time to ensure there isn't too much overlap between your prompts.) Further instructions for this will be provided.

In-class essays: At the end of our fiction and drama units, you will be asked to write an essay in class, in the blue books that I provide. Accommodations will be made for students

who need additional time or who need to write the essay in a quieter space (i.e., the ODA office). I will provide detailed instructions about how each of these in-class essays will work closer to their respective dates (2/19 and 3/31).

“Songs as Poetry” handout: At the end of the semester, you’ll need to type up and print out 4 copies of the lyrics of **one** song that you find particularly moving, enjoyable, or meaningful, with **two** discussion questions about them at the bottom. I’ll put you in groups of 4 so that you can analyze the lyrics of your song along with those of your groupmates, using the interpretation strategies we will be learning in our poetry unit. As long as you bring in 4 copies of your handout, you will receive full credit for this assignment.

Final paper conference: As you begin to think about what you want to write your final paper about, each of you will sign up for a brief (10-minute) one-on-one zoom call with me, during which we’ll have a targeted conversation about potential final paper topics for you so that I can provide you with customized feedback, suggestions, and recommendations for the paper moving forward. This is a required—not optional!—meeting and will count toward your final grade.

Final Paper: The big assignment of the semester is a 1,750-2,000 word long, thesis-driven essay on one or more of the class’s assigned texts. I will go over full expectations for this assignment (and lots of paper-writing pointers) closer to the time it’s due, which is on 5/4.

COURSE POLICIES/RESOURCES:

Office hours/one-on-one communication: If you have questions or concerns that you’d like to discuss with me one-on-one, my virtual office hours will be 12-1:00 pm on Fridays at <https://unt.zoom.us/j/3313271696>. I would also be more than happy to meet with you in person if you’d prefer, but have found in recent years that many more students show up to office hours when they’re primarily offered remotely. You are also, of course, welcome to email me (at nora.gilbert@unt.edu) at any time with questions or concerns, and I will always try to reply to your message within 24 hours, except on weekends when I check email less regularly. Please also be sure to check **your** UNT email and Canvas accounts frequently to make sure you’re seeing all updates and announcements from me.

Course modality: This course has been officially approved as a “some online instruction” course, which means that I may possibly hold a class or two remotely if I am feeling sick and potentially contagious (but not so sick that I feel unable to teach altogether). This hopefully won’t happen, but if it does I’ll let you know as early as possible, via email and on the Canvas announcement page. Our class zoom log-on for that scenario would be the same as the one I use for office hours: <https://unt.zoom.us/j/3313271696>.

Accessibility: UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for all students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of 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 accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the [ODA website \(https://disability.unt.edu/\)](https://disability.unt.edu/).

To be clear: I am deeply committed to facilitating your success in this course. Please don't hesitate to contact me about **any** accessibility issues, large or small, whether you've discussed them with the ODA office yet or not.

Academic integrity policy: Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. 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.

A.I. policy: The use of generative AI writing tools (such as ChatGPT, GrammarlyGO, GPT-3, GPT-4, BERT, or others) is prohibited in this class. Assignments for the course have been designed to help you develop as a writer without the use of these technologies. You will generate ideas, read, revise, and write on your own and/or in consultation with peers, me, or Writing Center tutors, and you will not use AI at any stage of your writing process. You are the author of your work for the course and authorship means you take responsibility for your words and claims. Any use of AI technologies in your work will be considered an [violation of UNT's academic integrity policy](#) and addressed accordingly. * Statement by Annette Vee, under CC-BY-NC (Creative Commons By-Noncommercial license).

Please note also that my A.I. policy goes both ways, meaning that I will never use A.I. "tools" to shortcut any of my responsibilities to you under any circumstances; we'll be discussing all of this more on Thursday, as you'll see below on the syllabus.

Academic freedom: UNT has a robust policy regarding academic freedom and academic responsibility. Crucially, this policy encompasses not only the rights of faculty members but also the rights "of the student to freedom in learning." As a student in this classroom, therefore, you have the right to encounter and debate new ideas, diverse forms of knowledge, and unfamiliar or contrary points of view. According to UNT policy, "it is not

the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive.” At the same time, to encourage the free exchange of ideas, and to ensure that your right to learn is protected, the tone for such discussion must always be civil and respectful; hateful or discriminatory speech will not be tolerated. For more information, please consult the full UNT policy at <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-035>.

Audio/video recording: Although UNT is a publicly supported institution, our classroom is not a public space. Therefore, in order to protect the intellectual property and privacy rights of both faculty and students, video and audio recordings are prohibited during class. The exception is for students who have been granted explicit approval as an ODA accommodation. For more information, please consult the full UNT policy at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/faculty/faculty-guide/accommodations-explained/Audio-Recording-Faculty.html>.

Sexual harassment and assault: If you are a survivor of relational or sexual violence, there is support for you. Counseling and Testing Services can provide confidential mental health counseling; you can reach them at (940) 565-2741 to schedule an appointment. Denton County Friends of the Family is a community agency that offers free counseling and 24/7 crisis hotline services to survivors; contact them at (940) 387-5131. The UNT Survivor Advocate can assist in reporting options, arrange for academic and housing accommodations, schedule appointments and help connect students to UNT and other community resources; their number is (940) 565-2648. To report sexual misconduct to Equal Opportunity & Title IX, visit report.unt.edu. The UNT Police Department can be contacted at (940) 565-3000.

Student support services: UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- 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>)
- UNT Care Team (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- UNT Psychiatric Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- Academic Resource Center (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- Writing Lab (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)

DISCUSSION SCHEDULE:

1/13: Course overview and introductions

1/15: Why no A.I.

(At least skim through all four; focus on whichever interest you the most)

- Ronald Purser, [“AI is Destroying the University and Learning Itself”](#)
- Nataliya Kosmyna, [“Your Brain on ChatGPT”](#)
- Hannah Beckler et al., [“AI runs on dirty power—and the public pays the price”](#)
- Chloe Berger, [“The Rise of the English Major”](#)

1/20: Literary analysis: a brief history and how-to guide

- Dan Sinykin and Johanna Winant, *Close Reading for the Twenty-First Century*, “Introduction,” pp. 1-36 (handout)
- In-class short response

UNIT 1: FICTION

1/22: Prior to class, read:

- “Questions about the Elements of Fiction” in *Norton Introduction to Literature*, p. 19
 - Charlotte Brontë’s *Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell* (pp. 309-314 in Oxford edition of *Wuthering Heights*)
 - Emily Brontë’s “Remembrance” (pp. 326-27), “To Imagination” (pp. 335-36), and “No Coward Soul is Mine” (pp. 345-46) – all in Oxford *WH*
- In-class reading and discussion of Ch. 1 of *Wuthering Heights*

1/27: *Wuthering Heights* – Read 1st half of book by today (pp. 1-147, up to Vol. II, Ch. II)

- In-class short response

1/29: Continue discussing 1st half of *Wuthering Heights*

- Big talker group #1

2/3: *Wuthering Heights* – Read 2nd half of book by today (pp. 148-292, Vol. II, Ch. III–end)

- In-class short response

2/5: Continue discussing 2nd half of *Wuthering Heights*

- Big talker group #2

2/10: Selections from *I am Heathcliff: Stories Inspired by Wuthering Heights*

- Kate Mosse, Foreword
- Joanna Cannon, “One Letter Different”
- Hanan al-Shaykh, “My Eye is a Button on Your Dress”
- Alison Case, “The Cord”
- Anna James, “How Things Disappear”
- Michael Stewart, “Heathcliff Is Not My Name”
- In-class short response

2/12: Continue discussing *I am Heathcliff* stories

- Big talker group #3

2/17: Prior to class, watch one *Wuthering Heights* film adaptation (1939, 1992, 2011, 2026)

- In-class short response

2/19: IN-CLASS ESSAY #1

UNIT 2: DRAMA

2/24: Prior to class, read:

- “Drama: Reading, Responding, Writing” in *Norton Intro to Literature*, pp. 1250-52
- *Hamlet*, 1st half of play (pp. 7-161; Act 1 Scene 1 to Act 3, Scene 2)
- In-class short response

2/26: Continue discussing 1st half of *Hamlet*

- Big talker group #4

3/3: *Hamlet* – Read 2nd half of play by today (pp. 162-287; Act 3, Scene 3 to end)

- In-class short response

3/5: Continue discussing 2nd half of *Hamlet*

- Big talker group #5

SPRING BREAK

3/17: *Fat Ham* – Read full play by today

- In-class short response

3/19: Continue discussing *Fat Ham*

- Big talker group #6

3/22: Screening of Chloe Zhao's *Hamnet* in RTFP 184 @ 6:00 pm

(If you can't make it to the screening, you'll need to stream the film on your own)

3/24: *Hamnet* discussion

- In-class short response

3/26: NO CLASS (screening on 3/22 instead)

3/31: IN-CLASS ESSAY #2

UNIT 3: POETRY (all readings for this unit will be provided in hard copy handouts)

4/2: Prior to class, read "Responding to Poetry" in *Norton Intro to Literature*, pp. 770-77

In-class reading and discussion of:

- Alfred Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott"
- Maya Angelou, "Caged Bird"
- Esther Morgan, "Bone China"
- Elisa Gonzalez, "In Quarantine, I Reflect on the Death of Ophelia"

4/7: Nature poems

- John Keats, "To Autumn"
- Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"
- Emily Dickinson, "A light exists in Spring"
- Mary Oliver, "The Summer Day"
- William Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"
- Emily Dickinson, "I dreaded that first Robin, so"
- Li-Young Lee, "From Blossoms"
- Joy Harjo, "Remember"
- In-class short response

4/9: Continue discussing assigned poems

- Big talker group #7

4/14: Phillis Wheatley and her re-imaginings

- Hollis Robbins, “Examining Phillis Wheatley”
- Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” “On Imagination,” “A Funeral Poem,” and “To a Gentleman and a Lady”
- Robert Hayden, “A Letter from Phillis Wheatley”
- Honorée Fanonne Jeffers, from *The Age of Phillis*: “An Issue of Mercy #1,” “Fracture,” “An Issue of Mercy #2,” “Blues: Odysseus,” “Catalog: Water,” “The Age of Phillis”
- In-class short response

4/16: NO CLASS (one-on-one final paper conferences will be held throughout the day on 4/15 and 4/16 instead)

4/21: In Conversation

- Laura McNeal, “You’ve Got Mail: Poring Over the Love Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning”
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Sonnets from the Portuguese* #1, 13, 24, 28, 38, 43
- Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess”; “Meeting at Night”/“Parting at Morning”; “Love in a Life”/ “Life in a Love”; “Prospice”
- Ada Limón and Natalie Diaz, “Envelopes of Air”
- In-class short response

4/23: Continue discussing assigned poems

- Big talker group #8

4/28: Reading Songs as Poetry Day: bring in 4 hard copies of the lyrics of a song you’d like to discuss and analyze with your groupmates

4/30: Semester wrap-up/SPOT evaluations

5/4: Final paper due @ 11:59 pm on Canvas