

William Paterson University  
Program in Writing and Rhetoric  
Preakness Hall  
300 Pompton Rd  
Wayne, NJ 07470

## English 1500: Experiences in Literature

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*Writing with voice is writing into which someone has breathed. It has that fluency, rhythm, and liveliness that exist naturally in the speech of most people when they are enjoying a conversation.... Writing with real voice has the power to make you pay attention and understand—the words go deep.*

-Peter Elbow

**Spring 2018**

**Eng 1500, Section 09**

**T/Th 9:30-10:45**

**Rooms:**

**Tuesday: UNIVH 118**

**Thursday: SCIW 221**

Instructor: Robert Greco

Email: [rgreco@wpu.edu](mailto:rgreco@wpu.edu)

Office Room: 348 Preakness Hall

Office Phone: 973-720-2664

Office Hours: Mon/Wed: 2:00-3:30, and by appointment

Office appointments can be made through [this link](#). Scheduled appointments always have priority, so please make an appointment.

### Course Description

Welcome to English 1500: Experiences in Literature! First and foremost, English 1500 is a writing intensive literature course, meaning that in the course focuses on writing as a means to explore, understand, and communicate about literary texts. Over the next 15 weeks, we will read, analyze, and write about a variety of literary texts across multiple genres and contexts by composing several written projects. This semester, you compose four major projects, writing and revising multiple drafts per project. For each of these projects, I will ask you to apply a specific method of literary analysis to one or more literary texts that you will chose from a wide range of options. To tackle these projects effectively, you will complete numerous smaller writing tasks along the way, including reading responses, planning and brainstorming activities, and in-class freewriting.

### Learning Objectives

#### Course Objectives:

This course will help you to:

- Write interpretive essays that draw connections between literary form and meaning
- Make meaningful thematic connections between contemporary issues and literature from historical, geographic, or ethnic origins

- Cultivate an understanding of specific literary elements and techniques in a literary work
- Practice reading and interpretation from a variety of critical standpoints
- 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
- Engage literature through the drafting, editing, and revising of student writing
- Use research and documentation skills where they may be necessary and integrate the through paraphrase, quotation and citation appropriately.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

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

- Master interpretive essays that demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between literary form and meaning.
- Develop meaningful thematic connections, orally and in writing, between contemporary issues and literature from various historical, geographic, or ethnic origins.
- Demonstrate an understanding of specific literary elements and techniques in a literary work.
- Identify a variety of critical approaches to reading and interpretation.
- Use writing-to-Learn strategies, such as brainstorming, free-writing, reading responses, among others, to develop their understanding of course content and to think critically about that content.
- Create essays through drafting, editing, and revising of their responses that demonstrate an engagement in literature.
- Create documents which accurately cite secondary sources consulted for research purposes.

### **Writing in a Community**

Because our course focuses heavily on your own writing projects, you will present your work, both to me and to each other, in a variety of contexts. Students often imagine writing as a solitary process in which the individual author pounds away at a keyboard in a dark room until a masterpiece is born, but in reality, most writers work with some form of collaboration: they consult with colleagues, share drafts, review others' work, and employ editors. In this course, some of your work will be individual, but much of it will be collaborative.

Over the semester, I will ask you to share your ideas in class, discuss readings in groups, and workshop each other's drafts through peer responding. Moreover, I will review first drafts of all of your major assignments and ask you to revise accordingly. When dealing with your peers' work, I expect every student in this class to be respectful and generous. Specifically, the goals of peer review include helping your peers to improve their writing while also sharpening your own critical eye as a reader. Peer review produces the best results when the reviewer identifies the strengths of a piece while also noting specific places for improvement. Remember, successful writers strive to maintain a rich, respectful, and productive environment.

### **Course Website**

As you will see below, several of our assignments, and much of our communication will take place on our course website, which will be hosted through Google Classrooms. The site provides important links, explains course assignments, and includes our course schedule. After we've created our writing groups, I will add links to our class folders to help you to find each other's work.

To access our Google Classroom, you will need to log into a gmail account - you can make one for this class if you prefer not to share an existing account - and then follow these instructions:

1. Visit [classroom.google.com](https://classroom.google.com)
2. Log in (or select your account if you are already logged in)
3. Click the + symbol to add a class
4. Type in your course code: **evglwd**

### Course Design and Learning Styles

I am devoted to providing a safe and accessible learning environment for all the students in this class, irrespective of native language, physical ability, age, lifestyle, or gender. I also assume that all of us have different ways of learning and that the organization of any course will accommodate each student differently. This course should work for each student, so I want to adapt my teaching and evaluation methods to accommodate a variety of learning styles and strategies. Please communicate with me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them.

The Office of Disability Services asks faculty to remind you that William Paterson University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities to students with documented disabilities (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical). Please contact the Office of Disability Services to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom and clinical settings. Students are encouraged to register with the Office of Disability Services as soon as they enroll, since accommodations cannot be provided retroactively. More information can be found online on their website at <http://www.wpunj.edu/disabilityservices>, by contacting the office at 973-720-2853, or by visiting the office in Speert Hall, Room 134.

### Assignments

For any given assignment, I will provide specific instructions as the semester progresses. You can always find assignment sheets on Google Classroom in the “Assignments” folder under the “About” tab. The following descriptions offer a brief introduction to the written work of the course.

- *Weekly Writing*: You will write during each class and between each class. Most writing between classes will take the form of short writing tasks that will ask you to plan upcoming projects, respond to literary texts, and reflect on your writing process. Weekly writing tasks will be posted to the course website.
  - *Reflective Writing*: You will complete reflective writing throughout the semester in order to evaluate your learning and to promote the long-term transfer of knowledge from our class to other contexts. In addition to periodic in-class and between-class writing, you will write and revise a reflective letter for each major project and will write a final cover letter for your entire digital portfolio. I will ask you to reflect not only on what you did, but also on why you did it. Thinking about your thinking in this way, which is called metacognition, can help you to facilitate longer-term learning.
- *Major Assignments*: Over the semester, you will compose four major projects; these projects will involve drafts, peer responses, and revisions. For each project we will read and discuss a text as a class to model the method of analysis that you will need to apply in your own writing.
  - *Literary Analysis*: You will select a short story from a list of options and write an analysis of that story that explores how the author uses a variety of *literary elements* that we will discuss in class in order to illustrate a theme. You will evaluate the effect that these elements have on you as a reader and use textual evidence to support your claims.
  - *Adaptation Evaluation*: You will select a short story from the list of options and then watch a film, TV show, or play that adapted this story and evaluate how the adaptation’s different medium alters

the meaning and effect of the text. You will need to cite specific examples from both texts to support your own analysis.

- *Text-in-Context Essay*: As a class, we will read and discuss Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. To explore how themes from this 85-year-old novel still resonate, you will identify a key theme from the text and locate non-fiction articles from modern journalism to discuss how the themes in this novel still reflect important social and cultural questions of today.
- *Theory-Based Reading*: We will discuss the basic features of several major theories of literary analysis. You will then select one of these theories for more focused study and use that theory to analyze a text of your choosing.

## Grading

As composition theorist Peter Elbow has written in a number of places (see especially his "Ranking, Evaluating, and Liking"<sup>1</sup>), grades are a surprisingly crude way of measuring or producing learning: they reduce complex phenomena to a single letter or number, and thus obscure the differences between, say, proofreading skills and ability to support an argument.

So, to widen our attention to include the entire writing process, and the many planning, researching, drafting, and revising tasks that it includes, your grade in this course will be based on earning points in clear, identifiable ways. Over the course of the semester, you will have an opportunity to earn up to 1000 points by attending class, completing weekly writing tasks, and composing major projects.

- **Class attendance** (150 points) - You will earn 5 points each time you attend class on time, prepared with any readings and homework that was required. If you arrive late to class, you will earn 3 points per class, but if you are more than 25 minutes late, you won't earn any points, though you're more than welcome to attend.
- **Weekly Writing** (150 points) - Each week, you will complete writing tasks that will include responding to readings, preparing for upcoming major projects, responding to your peers' writing, and reflecting on your writing process, to name a few. These assignments will be worth a total of 150 points, with each writing task earning you 10 points. Since the goal of these projects is to help you develop your thinking, you will receive full points for completing these assignments as long as you meaningfully engage with the writing task. You will be expected to reach any required word counts for these assignments and to answer all assigned questions with the level of detail asked for. I will respond to your post if your weekly writing assignment does not meet the standards for full credit so that you can avoid this on future assignments. Incomplete or underdeveloped responses will receive half credit or no credit depending on the quality of the response. Any homework handed in after the due date and time - by any amount of time - will receive half credit if made up within one week. After that time, no points can be earned for homework.
- **Major Projects** (700 points) - Over the semester you will complete four major projects. We will discuss in class the specific process for completing and revising these projects. For the first three major projects, the *Literary Analysis*, *Adaptation Evaluation*, and *Text-in-Context Essay*, you will earn 70 points for your writing process, 70 points for completing a satisfactory draft that meets all of the requirements in the assignment sheet, and up to 60 points for exceeding the standards for the project. The 100 points for process reflect the important behaviors associated with composing and revising a complex essay, including submitting drafts on time, participating in peer review, completing a global revision of your

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<sup>1</sup> Elbow, Peter. "Ranking, Evaluating, and Liking: Sorting out Three Forms of Judgment." *College English* 55.2 (1993): 187-206.

writing, and editing a final draft. A specific point-by-point breakdown of the process grade can be found on Google Classroom. The specific requirements for a meets-the-standard and exceeds-the-standard project will be outlined in each assignment sheet. Since the fourth major project, the *Theory-Based Reading*, asks you to engage in a significantly more challenging task, it will be worth 100 points and will be graded much more generously: completing a satisfactory draft will earn you all 100 points. By adding up all of your points, you can determine your grade with the following scale.

A	940+
A-	910-939
B+	870-909
B	830-869
B-	790-829
C+	760-789
C	730-759
C-	700-729
D+	670-699
D	640-669
F	Below 640

#### **Additional Course Policies**

*Access to Technology:* You must have a working William Paterson email account. Failure to maintain and check your email may result in missed assignments or updates. I am responsible for providing information in advance, and I will give significant notice of every project and assignment; however, email updates often make the course run smoother. All email correspondence to me must be appropriately addressed with a subject line that links it with the course, and please make sure your name is included.

*Beverages:* If you bring beverages to class, please make sure you use a small, spill-resistant container and remove any empty bottles and cups. Food can be disruptive to class time, so I ask that you please not eat during class.

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words, or artistic, scientific or technical work as one's own creation. Using the ideas or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. When using Internet based sources for your research you may be tempted to cut-and-paste from others' work into your own work: this can lead to unintentional plagiarism and *should be avoided!* Paraphrasing and summarizing as well as direct quotations require citations to the original source. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve you from responsibility for plagiarism. You should recognize the difference between statements of common knowledge (which do not require documentation) and the restatement of others' ideas. Paraphrase, summary, and direct quotation are acceptable forms of restatement as long as the source is cited. Please note, none of this class's assignments will ever require you to take text directly from a source without citation.

If you are unsure how or when to provide referencing documentation, please consult me. The library provides free guides designed to help you with problems of documentation, and you can find those documents on our course site.

If you plagiarize an assignment, in part or whole, you may be required to repeat the assignment, may

lose credit, may fail the class as a whole, and may be subject to additional academic penalty depending on the severity of the offense.

### **Course Schedule**

You can find a copy of the course schedule under the “About” tab of the Google Classroom. Please note that I will often amend the schedule once or twice during the semester to reflect the class’s progress. I will always email you to alert you when an update has taken place.