

## Department of English &amp; Writing Studies

**Understanding Literature Today****English 1020E (001)**

Fall/Winter 2021-22

**Instructor:** Jonathan Boulter  
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**Course Day/Time:** Monday, Wednesday:  
1:30-2:30 pm

**Antirequisites:** English 1022E, English 1035E.

**Prerequisites:** Grade 12U English or permission of the Department. For part time students who have been admitted without the OSSD, this permission will be granted as a matter of course.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

“Literature,” writes Ezra Pound, “is news that stays news.” Our task in this course will be to give serious attention to the question of literature. What precisely do we mean when we speak of literature? If literature is, as Pound says, some kind of “news” what can this mean? (and why does literature remain “new”?). Our approach will be to analyze various forms of literature (prose, poetry, drama) and ask specific questions: Is literature some kind of specialized language? What demands does literature place on its reader? What happens when we read? Does literature teach us something about what it means to be human? Does literature offer us some kind of truth? How can we, as serious students of literature, speak—and write—effectively about our experience of these great works of art?

**Objectives:**

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Develop further their ability to analyze texts critically, and formulate and produce essays which have an effective thesis with a clear, well-articulated intent, and a logical argument supported by adequate evidence from the text(s) under discussion;
- Explain the various theoretical and rhetorical approaches to literature, with specific attention both to their concepts, their historical, cultural and intellectual contexts, and their application to different texts;
- Develop research and writing skills which will not only augment their knowledge of the field of study, but will also be able to incorporate the results of this research into their essays and other assignments; among the basic research skills are the ability to collect relevant bibliographic material on a prescribed topic (online and in the library), and critically engage with the scholarly literature with an assessment of the relative merits of an argument in essays and other written/oral assignments, and articulate their own positions within a particular scholarly discussion;
- Develop further their written/oral communication skills in the clear and organized presentation of an argument/hypothesis within the prescribed word limits of the research essays and other written/oral assignments.

## Course Materials

### **Required Texts:**

*The Norton Introduction to Literature, Portable 12<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Ed. Kelly J. Mays.  
*Endgame and Act without Words*. Samuel Beckett  
"Wakefield." Nathaniel Hawthorne. (available through OWL)  
"Bartleby, The Scrivener." Herman Melville (available through OWL)  
*Sexing the Cherry*. Jeanette Winterson  
*Rules for Writers, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Eds. Hacker and Sommers

## Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

### **Assignments:**

Take home passage analysis: 500 words (due in class November 24, 2021): 10%  
Essay One: 1500 words (due in class January 26, 2022): 15%  
Essay Two: 2500 words (due in class March 23, 2022): 20%  
Two in-class passage analyses (November 10, 2021; March 7, 2022): 5% x 2  
Participation/Tutorial grade: 10%  
Final examination: 35%

**Extensions and Late Penalties:** Extensions will not be granted. Late essays will be penalized 2% per day including weekends. After seven days the essay will be given a grade of zero.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

## Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

## Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

### Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Academic Consideration for Student Absence:**

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

For the **Student Medical Certificate (SMC)**, see:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

### **Religious Accommodation:**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

### Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

**Plagiarism Checking:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support & Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Timetable

SEPTEMBER

8 Introduction

13 Introduction. *Interpretation*

15 Melville. "Bartleby, The Scrivener"

20 Melville. "Bartleby, The Scrivener"

22 Hawthorne. "Wakefield"

27 Hawthorne. "Wakefield"

29 Marquez. "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"

OCTOBER

4 Kafka. "A Hunger Artist"

6 *Art* Auden "Musee des Beaux Arts"

11 No class

13 Heaney. "Digging"

18 Yeats "Leda and the Swan"

20 Yeats "Leda and the Swan"

25 Gilman "The Yellow Wallpaper"

27 Gilman "The Yellow Wallpaper"

NOVEMBER

1 No class

3 No class

8 Pound. "In a Station of the Metro"

10 ***In-class passage analysis***

15 *Desire*

17 Shakespeare. "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments"

22 Shakespeare. "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun"

24 Donne. "The Flea" "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" (***Take home passage analysis due in class***)

29 Donne. "Batter my heart, three-personed God"

DECEMBER

1 Keats. "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

6 Keats. "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

8 Review

2022

JANUARY

3 Loss. Sophocles. *Antigone*

5 Sophocles. *Antigone*

10 Sophocles. *Antigone*

12 Sophocles. *Antigone*

17 Keats. "Ode to a Nightingale"

19 Keats. "Ode to a Nightingale"

24 Arnold. "Dover Beach"

26 Larkin. "Church Going" (***Essay One due in class***)

31 *Pathologies and Character*. Browning "My Last Duchess"

FEBRUARY

2 Browning "My Last Duchess"

7 Tennyson. "Ulysses"

9 Eliot. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

14 Eliot. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

16 Plath. "Lady Lazarus"; "Daddy"

21 No class

23 No class

28 Plath. "Lady Lazarus"; "Daddy"

MARCH

2 Heaney. "Punishment"

7 ***In-class passage analysis***

9 Beckett. *Endgame*

14 Beckett. *Endgame*

16 Beckett. *Endgame*

21 Beckett. *Endgame*

23 Winterson. *Sexing the Cherry* (***Essay Two due in class***)

28 Winterson. *Sexing the Cherry*

30 Winterson. *Sexing the Cherry* Review