

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 1020E (650)
Understanding Literature Today
Summer 2026

Instructor: Dr. Jo Devereux
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Office Hours: on Zoom by appointment

Prerequisite: Grade 12U English or permission of the Department.

Antirequisites: English 1022E, English 1035E.

Course Description

To understand English literature today, you first need to learn about the literature that went before, so that you can build a strong foundation for exploring many genres of writing. In online lectures and online discussions, you will study major works of poetry, prose, and drama with attention to their use of literary form and the cultural contexts in which they were written. The written assignments for this course will provide you with training in literary analysis, logical and rhetorical argumentation, and strong skills in grammar and composition.

This course is recommended to students who may be considering either a Major or Minor in English Language and Literature and who are interested in reading poetry, prose, and drama.

Objectives:

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

- Identify and analyze basic elements of literature, such as genre, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, diction, tone, figures of speech, syntax, and rhythm;
- Recognize connections between course texts;
- Write an essay about a work (or works) of literature, containing a clear and effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text(s);
- Research critical commentary on literary works;
- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, especially those obtained through the Internet;
- Integrate secondary research materials and references to the texts correctly into an essay;
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively in writing;
- Document essays using MLA style.

Course Materials

The following editions of each book ARE REQUIRED (available at the Western Bookstore):

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Broadview) \$19.15

Drew Hayden Taylor, *In a World Created by a Drunken God* (Talon Books) \$17.95

Téa Mutonji, *Shut Up You're Pretty* (Arsenal Pulp) \$17.95

Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (Penguin) \$23.00

NB: All the poems on the course, including *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, as well as Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (Folger edition), will be posted as PDFs on OWL.

Methods of Evaluation

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

COMPONENT	WEIGHT	DUE DATE	LENGTH
Academic Integrity Unit	Mandatory	May 15	90 minutes
Discussion Forum Participation	15%	1 discussion post per unit (see Timetable)	100 words per post
Essay 1	15%	May 25	750 words
Online Midterm Test	10%	June 15-16	1 hour—completed through OWL
Essay 2	25%	July 6	2000 words
Final Exam	35%	Online: July 27-30	3 hours—completed through OWL

Class Format

Each week you will be responsible for reading the assigned text(s), the associated lecture, and the discussion postings of your peers (under “Communications” tab). You are expected to contribute to the class Discussions once a week.

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>.

Communication & Appointments

Check the “Announcements” regularly on OWL Brightspace and look out for course emails. To ask questions or discuss issues that may arise, contact me via email: jdevereu@uwo.ca

I try to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, 48 hours on weekends or holidays. Answers to many administrative questions can be found in this Syllabus, “Assessments” tab, and in the Discussion. Please check there first.

Academic Integrity Tutorial

All students are required to enroll in and complete the Centre for Teaching and Learning’s Academic Integrity Tutorial. To access the tutorial, please see under Assessments in the course OWL Brightspace site. Once the tutorial has been completed, you will receive a downloadable certificate. You must upload the certificate and submit it through the course Assignments tab in order to complete this assignment. The tutorial must be completed by Friday in the second week of term. This tutorial is mandatory in order for you to complete and pass the course. If you have completed the tutorial already for another course, you may upload the same certificate for this course; you do not need to repeat the tutorial.

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.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

*The use of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, is **not** permitted and will be considered a scholastic offence in this course. Students found to have used generative AI for an essay will be referred to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies in English, who will decide on the penalty, for example, a grade of 0 on that assignment.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences, including the use of generative AI to research or write essays, 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

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. Note that invented sources and fake quotations, such as those generated by ChatGPT, are an academic offence. 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.

Essays

Essays **must** comply with MLA (Modern Languages Association) citation style guidelines. I will provide links on OWL Brightspace.

Essay topics and guidelines will be posted under Assessments, where you will also upload your essays for grading. To submit your essay, upload an attachment (Word doc or PDF) via OWL. It is your responsibility to ensure that your paper has been uploaded properly.

Late Policy

Essays and other assignments are to be submitted via OWL Brightspace by the due dates listed above on on the course Timetable.

Late essays will receive a penalty of 1% per day late including weekends. Late essays will forfeit instructor feedback.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

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 Consideration

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a **substantial but temporary** impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

Requests without supporting documentation are **limited to one per term**.

Assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are **not** eligible for additional consideration.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term **always** require formal supporting documentation.

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.

Schedule of Classes & Assignments

We will be covering one full unit per week (which means we move through a year-long course in 12 weeks). **Note that if the readings are not on OWL, then you need to have the text from the Western Bookstore or a library to complete the work for that unit.**

Unit 1 May 4-10: Prosody and Verse; Discussion 1

Unit 2 May 11-16: Sonnets (readings on OWL); Discussion 2

Unit 3 May 18-24: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (readings on OWL); Discussion 3

Unit 4 May 25-31: Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (readings on OWL); Discussion 4

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Unit 5 June 1-7: Drew Hayden Taylor, *In a World created by a Drunken God*; Discussion 5

Unit 6 June 8-14: Téa Mutonji, *Shut Up You're Pretty*; Discussion 6

Unit 7.1 and 7.2 June 15-21: Wordsworth and Keats (readings on OWL); Discussion 7

MIDTERM TEST (JUNE 15-16 ONLINE, will not include Unit 7)

Unit 8 June 22-28: Tennyson, "Mariana," "Lady of Shalott," "Tithonus" (readings on OWL);

Discussion 8

Unit 9 June 29-July 5: Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*; Discussion 9

Unit 10 July 6-12: Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*; Discussion 10

Unit 11 July 13-19: Gwendolyn Brooks, poems (readings on OWL); Discussion 11

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Unit 12 July 20-26: Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess"; "Porphyria's Lover"; W.B. Yeats, "The

Second Coming," "Sailing to Byzantium" (readings on OWL); Discussion 12

FINAL EXAM Online between JULY 27th and 30th