

# Honors Composition & Rhetoric II

## Required Materials

We will select our reading materials collaboratively, and you will be given time to purchase or borrow your assigned books.

You should own a college-level dictionary such as the *Compact English Dictionary for University or College* or *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.

If you own the *Little Brown Handbook*, you should use it for this class. I will provide additional writing manuals and style guides as needed.

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ENGL 1302.60

Tuesday & Thursday 2:20-3:40

## Course Description and Purpose

Welcome to the second semester of Honors Composition. This course is designed to improve your ability to write, research, and critically read successfully in your advanced courses across the university and in your life outside of college. We will develop these skills within the context of a semester-long project. This project has a history of being highly successful and highly popular among students. I have developed and refined it based on years of practice, and critical reflection on that practice, and on consultation of the scholarship about teaching and learning. Because so many careers and so much of higher education reward the ability to work productively with others, this course is also designed to help you develop healthy and mature habits of teamwork. You will have a lot of freedom and flexibility in determining the topics about which you will read, research, and write.

## My Teaching Philosophy

I believe, and research continues to demonstrate, that people learn most deeply, and are thus best able to apply what they have learned, when they have actively participated in constructing that knowledge. In a foundational course like ours, in which you will practice and refine the skills needed throughout your academic career and lifetime, such an approach is crucial.

I also believe that people are motivated to work hard—an essential part of learning and growing—when they can see the value of what they are asked to do, can have fun, have some choice in and care about what they are working on, can interact productively with other learners, and feel empowered to succeed with clear instructions, models of good products, and manageable yet challenging expectations.

I have designed this course with these principles in mind, and I hope that, like many students before you, you will leave this class a stronger, more confident reader, researcher, and writer.

## Learning outcomes

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| After you have successfully completed this course, you will be better able to: | * demonstrate that you can think and write critically about your reading.   | * arrange points and paragraphs in a logical order and explain that logic. |
| * compose essays with a clear thesis and support.                              | * demonstrate use of research in your writing by documentation from a variety of sources, including electronic sources. | * distinguish between an argument or claim and a factual statement.        |
| * compose clear and fluent sentences.  | * identify and analyze relevant literary concrete details and explain how they support a topic sentence.                | * demonstrate an awareness of genre conventions.                           |
| * demonstrate knowledge of Standard English, grammar, and punctuation.         |   | * work together in a group to complete a complex task.                     |
| * write topic sentences.   |   |  |



Dr. Amy Smith  
Office Hours:

Tues & Thurs 4-5 and by appt.  
Wednesday 10-3



*"... students who use their mobile phones during class lectures tend to write down less information, recall less information, and perform worse on a multiple-choice test than those students who abstain from using their mobile phones during class." (251)<sup>1</sup>*



<sup>1</sup> Kuznekoff, J. H. and Titsworth, S. (2013). The impact of mobile phone usage on student learning. *Communication Education*, 62 (3), 233-252 .

## Our Learning Community

Like many of my colleagues, I think that education is largely about students gaining maturity and practice as thinkers, readers, listeners, speakers and writers. My goal as a teacher is to empower you as a critically reflective learner who can assess information and produce knowledge. As such, you will be given a lot of space in this class to develop in your own directions, and a

lot of maturity, responsibility, and self-motivation will be expected of you.

I will spend some time, probably in every class session, "teaching you stuff," providing information, writing instruction, interpretations, etc., in essence, doing what you might think of as teaching. However, if I am successful by my own standards this course will focus more

on us as a **community of learners** with me as the **guide, coach** and more experienced learner who can help you build your skills and ideas. You might be starting to suspect that this model of education as a community of learners requires more work from you than the traditional model of education, and you're right.

## What this means for you...

1) For starters, if you decide to stay in this community and help build it with us, I will expect you to try your best to maintain an attitude of **curiosity, intention, seriousness, earnestness, courage and humility**. Think about each of those attributes carefully. Incidentally, this is the kind of attitude that might one day make you an excellent job candidate!

2) I will expect you to complete reading and writing assignments in earnest, taking it upon yourself to try your best to penetrate texts that can often be mystifying, challenging, and downright thrilling, rather than expecting that you can read something once and have the teacher tell you what it means.

3) I will expect you to treat the classroom environment with respect and to take our classroom seriously. To me, this means you will come to class prepared (see #2), you will listen thoughtfully to whoever is contributing to the conversation and take them seriously as a fellow learner (even if you happen to think they are a nitwit), and that you will be willing to entertain thoughts, questions and ideas that might make you feel uncomfortable or that might be really advanced. **Before you come to class, please turn off your electronics (MP3 players, cell phones, etc.) so you won't be distracted. Texting, surfing the internet, etc. will not be tolerated.** You may wonder why professors are so strict about this rule.

Studies have shown that when students' attention is divided they cannot learn as well and perform worse on exams. See, for example, the recent study by Kuznekoff and Titsworth (side bar).

4) Because I will invest a lot of time and effort in you, I will expect the same level of intention, effort, courage and humility from you. I will also expect you to put yourself on the line and engage intellectually in a deep and meaningful way with the questions and ideas we will explore. You will be expected to take your written work very seriously and devote significant time and effort to refining your craft as a writer.

## On Writing and Grading

Writing is an incredibly useful vehicle for exploring your ideas in a sustained way, for untying the knot of your thoughts and getting clarity about what you think and assume, and for practicing communicating complex ideas to other people in thoughtful ways.

**Writing is not something that happens after you have finished thinking; it is an im-**

**portant part of the thinking process.**

You may think that **the Writing Center** is for other people. It's not; it's for you, too, and it's an incredibly helpful resource.

You will likely find my grading standards high and demanding. Please try to keep in mind that when I push you in your writing and thinking, it is not a

sign that I am disappointed in you, but rather that I see potential in you and am trying to help you develop it to the best of your abilities. If you are open-minded and humble, I think you will see improvements in your work and in your thinking.

## Course Requirements

This course is organized around a project called Lamar Critical Editions, on which we will work all semester. This project includes many individual components that are then compiled into a website. This website is made available as a learning resource to other students who are studying your chosen text. Along the way, in addition to the formal components of the LCE, we will write many short, informal pieces in which we will practice the skills necessary for good academic writing, especially literary analysis.

These skills include inventing interpretations, constructing effective thesis statements, introductions, conclusions, and unified paragraphs, organizing those paragraphs logically, citing sources, and refining our style.

## Lamar Critical Editions

In assigned learning teams, students will study the structure and conventions of Norton Critical Editions. Each team will select, from a list of options, a text or texts as the focal point of their Critical Edition. Each team will plan, design, and complete an electronic, multi-media Lamar Critical Edition on their text. Each team will conduct research on the contexts (author, period, etc.) of their text and the scholarly conversation about their text. Each team will design a supplement to the LCE, which may be creative.

For the first several weeks of the semester, the entire class will read the texts that each team has chosen for their LCE. We will use this material to practice interpreting and analyzing literature, constructing original interpretations, and writing thesis statements, topic sentences, and coherent and unified paragraphs that support those claims with analysis of carefully chosen evidence.

Each student will contribute to the contexts section and to the scholarship section of the Critical Edition. Each student will compose an analytic essay, which will include research, to be included in the Critical Edition. Each student will contribute a summary of the literary work, introduction to the site, introduction to the annotated bibliography, and an introduction to the supplement. Each student will be responsible for revising and compiling one of these sections.

Students will assist team members in revising contributions to the Critical Edition. The team will work together to design the layout and arrange the Critical Edition in an effective manner.

Students will turn in portfolios of their individual contributions to the Critical Edition to be graded, in addition to receiving a team grade on the Critical Edition.

## Grading

Informal, practice, and short writing 30%

### LCE Grades:

Individual Contributions to LCE project 50%

- Individual section introductions/summary (5%)
- Compiled/revised introductions/summary (5%)
- Contexts section contribution (10%)
- Scholarship section contribution (10%)
- Original argumentative essay (20%)

Lamar Critical Editions Project (team) 20%

- All other components of project (supplemental material, overall aesthetic and clarity of site), team contract, professionalism & team participation, etc.

## Disability Policy

For personal as well as professional reasons, providing accommodations for students with disabilities is very important to me. Lamar University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is located in the Communications building room 105. For additional information, see <http://dept.lamar.edu/sfswd>.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact the DRC at 409-880-8347 or [drc@lamar.edu](mailto:drc@lamar.edu) to arrange a confidential appointment with the Director of the DRC to explore possible options regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

If you are registered with DRC and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact me early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.



*Students of all stripes benefit from the Writing Center at all stages of writing!*

*Schedule an online or face-to-face appointment today.*

Email: [uwc@lamar.edu](mailto:uwc@lamar.edu)

Call: (409) 880-8571

Come by: 1st floor of the Mary and John Gray Library

<http://artssciences.lamar.edu/writing-center/>

Information about the **Lamar Critical Edition** project can be found on my website, which is updated throughout the semester.

<http://www.amycharlottesmith.com/lamar-critical-editions-project.html>





We have a Blackboard page for our course and I will use it to communicate with you via announcements.

I will also post reading assignments and other necessary materials.

Therefore, **check Blackboard regularly** for updates.

### English Department Plagiarism Policy

In the first instance of plagiarism, the student will receive a zero for the assignment.

In the second instance, the student will automatically fail the course.

### Important Dates

**January 22:** last day to register (late fee)

**February 4:** may drop with a refund

**February 16:** dropped for non-payment

**February 26:** may drop with no academic penalty

**March 16-20:** SPRING BREAK

**April 2:** may drop with academic penalty

**May 7:** last TR class day

## Policies and Tips for Success

### Communication

I will have **office hours** on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and you can speak to me before or after class as you wish. If the times listed at the top of this syllabus are not convenient for you, you can make an appointment at another time. You may also meet me for lunch or coffee on Tuesdays or Thursdays, either individually or in small groups. I will be happy to talk about anything you wish to discuss.

You can also email me, since I check my email pretty often. However, while I check my email often I am not always able to respond right away (due to driving and other potentially lethal activities). So, please be patient with me. **I usually respond within 48 hours** to student emails, but if you haven't heard back from me, just send me another email. Please don't try and reach me by calling my office phone. I have a hard time remembering to check it regularly. Email is much faster and more reliable.

### Intellectual Integrity & Learning

To state the obvious, you must complete all of your work for this course yourself. You may not pay for or otherwise procure written work from another person, whether you know them or you find it on the internet. You may not incorporate the words or ideas of another person into your written work without giving them appropriate credit. Your classmates should give feedback on your writing, but should not write them for you. In other words, **don't plagiarize**.

If you do, you may find yourself failing this course. I know that sometimes it is hard to know what counts as plagiarism and what doesn't. We will talk about this in class, and if you are confused, you can ask me at any time. If you come and ask me 'silly' or embarrassing questions before you turn in a paper, you will find me to be generous, kind, and patient.

Sometimes it is hard for students to understand why we care so much about plagiarism in the academy. Personally, I care for a few key reasons.

First, I think that it undermines the learning community of our classroom because it is unfair to your peers. **Our community is not one of competition, but rather of collaboration and support**. I feel strongly about preserving the integrity of that community.

Second, if you plagiarize you miss out on an important and rare opportunity to practice difficult and intimidating skills, which you will need later in life, in a supportive and nurturing environment. You also miss the opportunity to develop your own ideas about a topic you care about, to listen to what other smart people have said, and to contribute to that conversation. You won't have those gifts many times in your adult life, and I think it is short-sighted to waste them.

Thus, I think that plagiarism is not so much a matter of rules as it is a matter of learning in a community. The university's plagiarism policies are on the last page of this syllabus.

### Keeping Perspective

Remember that being successful in this course goes beyond the grade you receive in the course, and it definitely goes beyond the grade you receive on each individual paper. Of course grades matter, but more important is this opportunity to build your skills, to think in new and challenging ways, and to grow and mature as an individual.

Try to let go of your concern for grades and focus on enjoying a deep, meaningful learning experience. You'll be a lot happier, and probably receive higher grades as an unintended side-effect.



## Emergency Procedures

In the event of an announced campus closure in excess of four days due to a hurricane or other disaster, students are expected to login to Lamar University's website's homepage ([www.lamar.edu](http://www.lamar.edu)) for instructions about continuing courses remotely.

Many types of emergencies can occur on campus; instructions for severe weather or violence/active shooter, fire, or chemical release can be found at:

<http://www.lamar.edu/about-lu/administration/risk-management/index.html>.

### Severe Weather

- ◇ Follow the directions of the instructor or emergency personnel.
- ◇ Seek shelter in an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, putting as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
- ◇ If you are in a multi-story building, and you cannot get to the lowest floor, pick a hallway in the center of the building.
- ◇ Stay in the center of the room, away from exterior walls, windows, and doors.

### Violence/Active Shooter (CADD)

**CALL** 8-3-1-1 from a campus phone (880-8311 from a cell phone). Note: Calling 9-1-1 from either a campus phone or cell phone will contact Beaumont City Police Dispatch rather than University Police.

**AVOID** If possible, self-evacuate to a safe area outside the building. Follow directions of police officers.

**DENY** Barricade the door with desks, chairs, bookcases or any other items. Move to a place inside the room where you are not visible. Turn off the lights and remain quiet. Remain there until told by police it is safe.

**DEFEND** Use chairs, desks, cell phones or whatever is immediately available to distract and/or defend yourself and others from attack.

## Attendance and Late Work

Since we are a community and you will be completing much of your work in learning teams, we are all responsible to one another. This extends to attendance, timeliness, and preparation for class sessions.

Repeated absences will affect your grade, and per departmental policy, **6 or more absences will result in failure of the course**. I believe it is unfair to you to grant students who do not attend class the same level of credit as those who do attend class.

Late arrivals or early departures,

without permission, will be counted as partial absences.

For university-sanctioned events, you must provide relevant documentation prior to the absence.

If you miss class, you should email me to see if there are any changes to reading or writing assignments before you return to class. Also, check with classmates for what you missed and check Blackboard for announcements.

Because your teammates are depending on you, make sure you com-

plete your work with plenty of time for peer review and revision before the submission date. I will build this process into our course, but don't leave your work until the last minute.

In the age of the cloud, I will not accept technology-related excuses. You should subscribe to one of the many free cloud services so that your work is available to you anywhere.

**Please do not submit work to me via email.** It often gets lost and forgotten amidst the pile of emails I receive daily.

## University Plagiarism Policy

"Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subjected to disciplinary action." One aspect of the Handbook's definition of cheating includes "purchasing **or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm.**" (The Lamar University Student Handbook)

Plagiarism is defined as "the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or

ideas into one's own and submitted for credit." Faculty members in the College of Arts and Sciences investigate all cases of suspected plagiarism. Consequences of plagiarism include (1) failure of the assignment or course, depending on the extent of the plagiarism, (2) a report filed with the English Department, (3) notification sent to the chair of your academic department and to Dean of the Honors College or to the Principal of TALH, as appropriate.

