English 110:  
Introduction to Literature

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Item #: 30335  
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Class location: L124
Welcome!

Welcome to English 110! I am delighted to have you in this class, and I look forward to working with you this semester.

To get started, please read all the material in this syllabus carefully and completely. It is all very important. Everything you need in order to understand how this course will be run and how you can maximize your educational experience in this course is provided here. In the long run, you will not save any time by skipping it or reading it quickly. So get off to a good start! Read everything carefully, and if you have any questions send me an e-mail or ask me in class.

Please feel free to call me or send me an e-mail any time you have a question or a problem. I'm always happy to hear from students, and I'll respond as soon as I can!

Good luck this semester!

Personal Engagement

I have designed this course to be student-centered and focused on active learning—more doing, more learning—and that means that I will be asking you to do more than simply show up to class, hand your work in, and listen to me talk. In a lecture class, the expectation is that you will come to class, listen attentively, and take notes. This class is structured very differently. It is designed around a robust body of research that shows that students learn best and deepest when they are actively engaged as learners and fully participate in the learning process. You will be expected to take part in classroom activities and to do so with enthusiasm, respectfulness, and positive energy. You will be given a great deal of choice and freedom when it comes to our creative classroom activities that I have scheduled, and you can choose to engage this work however you feel most comfortable. I invite you to participate joyfully and mindfully in class activities and to tailor your responses to these assignments to who you are and who you want to be. If you are shy about presenting your work to the class, just look at it as a fun challenge. If this will keep you from coming to class, however, please let me know and I can read your work to the class for these assignments (anonymously, if you wish).

I also believe that literature offers us valuable insights into living and the nature of the world that no other knowledge domain does, as we will see. I encourage you to make the most of this opportunity to learn and grow. I live my life differently (and better) because of the literature I’ve read. I’ll be sharing some examples of this during the course of the semester. I wish the same for you. But this can only happen if you approach your work for this class this semester with an open heart and a commitment to opening yourself to the generative, transformative power of listening, empathy, and multiple perspectives. My
goal is to create a judgment-free classroom where we can engage new ideas thoughtfully and respectfully and see where they might take us. I invite you to help move that process forward in every way that you can and allowing yourself to see what happens when you do!

**Phones and Headphones!**

Research shows that being able to “strategically allocate your attention” is an essential academic skill and an incredibly important work and life skill that will be of great value to you in all areas of your life. Let’s begin strengthening this important cognitive capacity now, by turning off our phones and music and “strategically allocating your attention” 100% to what is happening in class. Once class is over, you can check your phones again! So power them down and put them away. =:)

Of course, if there is an urgent situation that you need to monitor, you can always excuse yourself from class and check your phone messages or texts that way.

**MCC 2018-19 Student Handbook**

The MCC Student Handbook is a great resource, with all kinds of useful information--and answers to almost any question you might want to ask. It is available online here:


**Grades**

Grades will be based on the four essays (40%), your journal work (45%), and class participation (15%). Final grades can be obtained from mycommnet.edu when the semester concludes.

**Please note:**

1. **I do not accept late journal work.**

   However, if you are absent on a day that homework is due, you may hand it in the next class period.

2. **I do not accept electronic versions of your journals.** Journals must be handed in on the day they are due in hard copy--typed and printed out. Hand-written journals are not accepted (too hard to read!). The reason I do not accept electronic submissions is because you either have the journals completed or not, so you should be able to hand them in when
they are due. =:) Students will often say, "My printer's broken, so I'll e-mail them to you sometime soon--today or sometime in the very near future." My thinking is: If you can e-mail them to me, then you can certainly e-mail them to yourself and print them on campus, right? If you don't have a printer, simply e-mail yourself your journals and then print them up on campus in one of our computer labs or the library. By the way, printing your homework before class cannot be used as an excuse for arriving late to class (“I was printing my homework in the library!”). You will be marked late and this will affect your final grade substantially if you have a lot of these (see below for attendance policy).

3. All written work that you hand in for this class—both journal responses and essays—must use MLA format, 8th edition to document sources. This is how you do it:

Sample In Text Citation:

The death of the narrator’s daughter is an important moment in this story. It inspires the narrator to think about Sonny and reach out to him: “I think I may have written Sonny the very day that little Grace was buried. I was sitting in the living room in the dark, by myself, and I suddenly thought of Sonny. My trouble made his real” (95).

Sample Works Cited Entry:


4. Journal grades will be based on both the length and the relative excellence of each entry. That is to say, they will be graded on both quantity and quality. Each journal entry has a required length (see homework schedule below). These are meant to be general guidelines, however, and students who wish to earn excellent grades on their journal work should strive to write entries that are richly detailed and carefully developed.

5. Students are invited to rewrite their first two essays and submit them for a better grade. If this revised version of your essay earns a better grade, that grade will replace the lower grade in my gradebook.

In order to submit a revision, you must do the following:

1. Meet with a tutor at the Academic Support Center twice to discuss your essay—once to get feedback and again a few days later to check to see if you have responded effectively to this feedback.
2. Include the rough drafts of all this work with your final revised version.

3. Include a note from your tutor indicating the days and times that you worked on your revision. The tutor must sign this note.

4. Include your own note to me briefly describing how this revision is different and better than the first version of your essay that I graded. What did you work on and why is this version better?

**Attendance Policy**

There are two very important things that you can do to help you be successful in this class:

1. **Attend class regularly.**

2. **Arrive on time for each class meeting.**

There are many good reasons to attend class regularly and to arrive in class on time each day. We cover a great deal of material in this class, and all of it is essential. When you arrive late or are absent, you miss important content and classroom experiences that have been designed to further your understanding and appreciation of literature and your growth as a reader, writer, and thinker. Moreover, you can learn a great deal from your teacher and your fellow classmates as you participate in classroom activities and discussions, and obviously if you are not here to participate in these activities, you have no opportunity to learn from them. And, of course, in any professional environment, arriving on time is an absolutely essential prerequisite for any kind of success.

For all of these important reasons, then, **this class has a very strict attendance policy.** Attendance is required for each class meeting. I will be taking attendance every morning. If you are in your seat when class begins, you are on time. If not, you are late.

You may work hard this semester, but if you do not have a good attendance record and do not consistently arrive on time for class, your final grade will suffer significantly. And who wants that, right? =:)

Two absences will be allowed without penalty. For each absence beyond this limit, 1/2 of a letter grade will be deducted from the student's final class participation grade, which counts for 20% of your final grade. The same goes for students arriving late. Two late arrivals will be allowed without penalty. For each absence beyond that limit, 1/2 of a letter grade will be deducted from the student's final class participation grade.

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If you miss our first class meeting: If for any reason you miss our first class meeting, you need to make an appointment to talk with me as soon as possible about what you missed. This is a very important class, and we cover material on this day that we will be drawing on all semester long. You will not be considered a full member of the class—and I will not accept homework from you—until we have met and spoken about what you have missed.

If you must miss a class, please leave me a message on voice mail. If you know you are going to be absent for more than one day, please let me know.

Me Contacting You!

Important note: Please check your e-mail frequently, as I use e-mail quite often during the semester to communicate with you individually and as a class.

What Is Literature?

1. "The human heart in conflict with itself is the only thing worth writing about."

   --William Faulkner

2. “When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.”

   --Maya Angelou

3. “That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.”

   --F. Scott Fitzgerald

4. “From that time on, the world was hers for the reading. She would never be lonely again, never miss the lack of intimate friends. Books became her friends and there was one for every mood. There was poetry for quiet companionship. There was adventure when she tired of quiet hours. There would be love stories when she came into adolescence, and when she wanted to feel a closeness to someone she could read a biography. On that day when she first knew she could read, she made a vow to read one book a day as long as she lived.”

   --Betty Smith, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn
5. “A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.”

--Italo Calvino, The Uses of Literature

6. “What an astonishing thing a book is. It’s a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance at it and you’re inside the mind of another person, maybe somebody dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic.”

--Carl Sagan

7. “Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.”

--C.S. Lewis

8. “There is nothing which can better deserve our patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness.”

--George Washington

9. “Literature is news that stays news.”

--Ezra Pound, ABC of Reading

10. “After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.”

--Philip Pullman

11. Here's the last paragraph of "The Road," by Cormac McCarthy, a novel about the end of the world:

"Once there were brook trout in the streams in the mountains. You could see them standing in the amber current where the white edges of their fins wimpled softly in the flow. They smelled of moss in your hand. Polished and muscular and torsional. On their backs were vermiculate patterns that were maps of the world in its becoming. Maps and
mazes. Of a thing which could not be put back. Not be made right again. In the deep glens
where they lived all things were older than man and they hummed of mystery."

12. "What is wonderful about great literature is that it transforms the man who reads it
towards the condition of the man who wrote it." --E.M. Forster


16. "Read in order to live." --Gustave Flaubert

14. "What you read when you don't have to determines what you will be when you can't
help it."

--Oscar Wilde

15. You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of
the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that
tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people
who were alive, or who had ever been alive.

--James Baldwin

16. While reading, we can leave our own consciousness, and pass over into the
consciousness of another person, another age, another culture. "Passing over," a
term used by the theologian John Dunne, describes the process through which
reading enables us to try on, identify with, and ultimately enter for a brief time
the wholly different perspective of another person's consciousness. When we
pass over into how a knight thinks, how a slave feels, how a heroine behaves,
and how an evildoer can regret or deny wrongdoing, we never come back quite
the same; sometimes we're inspired, sometimes saddened, but we are always
enriched. Through this exposure we learn both the commonality and the
uniqueness of our own thoughts -- that we are individuals, but not alone.

The moment this happens, we are no longer limited by the confines of our own
thinking. Wherever they were set, our original boundaries are challenged,
 teased, and gradually placed somewhere new. An expanding sense of “other”
changes who we are, and, most importantly for children, what we imagine we
can be.

--Maryanne Wolf
17. Indeed, this is one of the great and wondrous characteristics of beautiful books (and one which will enable us to understand the simultaneously essential and limited role that reading can play in our spiritual life): that for the author they may be called Conclusions, but for the reader, Provocations. We can feel that our wisdom begins where the author’s ends, and we want him to give us answers when all he can do is give us desires. He awakens these desires in us only when he gets us to contemplate the supreme beauty which he cannot reach except through the utmost efforts of his art. But by a strange and, it must be said, providential law of spiritual optics (a law which signifies, perhaps, that we cannot receive the truth from anyone else, that we must create it ourselves), the end of the book’s wisdom appears to us as merely the start of our own, so that at the moment when the book has told us everything it can, it gives rise to the feeling that is has told us nothing.

--Marcel Proust

18. We have art in order not to die of the truth.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

19. “do not look for me. look for you.”

— Nayyirah Waheed, salt

20. “We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better.”

--JK Rowling, author of Harry Potter

21. “As you see, I bear some resentment and some scars from the years of anti-genre bigotry. My own fiction, which moves freely around among realism, magical realism, science fiction, fantasy of various kinds, historical fiction, young adult fiction, parable, and other subgenres, to the point where much of it is ungenreifiable, all got shoved into the Sci Fi wastebasket or labeled as kiddilit–subliterature.”

--Ursula K. Le Guin

22. “A good story, just like a good sentence, does more than one job at once. That's what literature is: a story that does more than tell a story, a story that manages to reflect in some way the multilayered texture of life itself.”

--Karen Thompson Walker
23. "A book must be an ice-axe to break the seas frozen inside our soul."

~ Franz Kafka

24. “Literature is the questions minus the answer”

--Roland Barthes

25. “You were silly like us; your gift survived it all: The parish of rich women, physical decay, Yourself. Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry. Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still, For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives In the valley of its making where executives Would never want to tamper, flows on south From ranches of isolation and the busy grieves, Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives, A way of happening, a mouth.

III

Earth, receive an honoured guest: William Yeats is laid to rest. Let the Irish vessel lie Emptied of its poetry. In the nightmare of the dark All the dogs of Europe bark, And the living nations wait, Each sequestered in its hate; Intellectual disgrace Stares from every human face, And the seas of pity lie Locked and frozen in each eye. Follow, poet, follow right To the bottom of the night, With your unconstraining voice Still persuade us to rejoice; With the farming of a verse Make a vineyard of the curse, Sing of human unsuccess In a rapture of distress; In the deserts of the heart Let the healing fountain start, In the prison of his days Teach the free man how to praise.”

--W.H. Auden, from “In Memory of W.B. Yeats”

26. “Every book is a path.”

--Nobel Tran, English 110 student!

27. “A good poem is a contribution to reality. The world is never the same once a good poem has been added to it. A good poem helps to change the shape of the universe, helps to extend everyone's knowledge of himself and the world around him.”

— Dylan Thomas

28. “What do you think an artist is? An imbecile who only has eyes, if he is a painter, or ears if he is a musician, or a lyre in every chamber of his heart if he is a poet, or even, if he is a boxer, just his muscles? Far from it: at the same time he is also a political being, constantly aware of the heartbreaking, passionate, or delightful things that happen in the
world, shaping himself completely in their image. How could it be possible to feel no interest in other people, and with a cool indifference to detach yourself from the very life which they bring to you so abundantly? No, painting is not done to decorate apartments. It is an instrument of war.”

— Pablo Picasso

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**Requirements**

1) Students will be writing 4 formal essays. These essays must be typed, double-spaced, and use MLA format, 8th edition to document sources.

2) Students will also be completing a number of journal assignments, responding to assigned readings. Students must complete all the journal entry assignments outlined in the syllabus below. The quality of your journal entries will affect your grade substantially, so I recommend that you work conscientiously on them.

**Please note:** Because journal assignments are keyed to class activities, are time-sensitive, and are designed to help build your skills cumulatively and incrementally over the course of the semester, **I will not be accepting late journal assignments.**

If you are sick or absent on a day when a journal assignment is due, you may hand that assignment in the next day you are in class. Otherwise, I will not accept it.

Grades will be based on both the length and the relative excellence of each entry. That is to say, they will be graded on both quantity and quality.

**Late Work**

**Journal Responses: No late work accepted.** Because these daily homework responses are keyed to class activities, are designed to help prepare you for class discussions, are time-sensitive, and are designed to help build your skills cumulatively and incrementally over the course of the semester, **I will not be accepting late homework responses.** Also, if you don’t hand in your homework but attend the class discussion and then hand in a response later that week, all you’ve really done is type up minutes for the class discussion—something very different than reading and reflecting on your own about what we’ve read and actively engaging in meaning-making and knowledge-building. In the end, you have either done this work or not. I will be collecting this work at the beginning of class, and I do not accept work in the middle or at the end of class. =:) I want you paying attention in class—not doing your homework!
Essays: One late submission allowed. You are allowed one late submission for your essays in this class. Once you have used up this exemption, I will no longer accept late work from you. So save it until you really need it!

**Having a Resilient Attitude Is Key!**

Research shows that one key factor in academic success is the mindset students have about their work for school. The good news is that the mindset you choose to have is completely within your control. A key finding by psychologist Carol Dweck is that successful students are able to maintain positive academic behaviors and attitudes despite setbacks. (We’ll be reading some of Dweck’s work for our first homework assignment.) This means that they continue to work hard even after not doing well on tests or assignments. When they are stumped or confused by complex material, successful students look for new ways to master it—getting extra help, talking with the professor during office hours, studying together with classmates—rather than simply giving up, not doing the work, doing work half-heartedly or angrily, or simply giving up and not coming to class. What kind of student do you want to be in this class?

Students who are successful also have found a way to believe the following:

1. I belong in this academic community.
2. My ability and competence grow with my effort.
3. I can succeed at this.
4. This work has value for me.

You can look back here for inspiration when things get challenging, as they often do in school settings because you are learning new things.

**Course Materials**

1. *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction* 9th Edition by Ann Charters. ISBN-13: 978-1457664618. The 7th and 8th editions will also work and have most of our reading (just the page numbers will be different).


New and used versions of these books are available at online bookstores like Barnes and Noble and Amazon. Used versions are often very reasonably priced. These books are also available at the MCC bookstore.

**Expectations in Terms of Your Conduct in Class**

A professor might design and run a class like English 110 in any number of ways. I have chosen to make our class as student-centered as possible. We will be working together discussing readings and ideas, and presenting creative and other material to the class. This approach can create a very dynamic and richly rewarding learning environment—but only if everyone in class contributes in significant ways every class meeting to help make our class successful.

Although this kind of educational approach can be an exciting and very satisfying learning environment for students, students have a great deal more responsibility in making this kind of educational experience successful. In a traditional type of lecture class, simply showing up to class is often all you have to do. For the way this class is designed, however, that won't work. So I would like to articulate here as clearly as I can what I am expecting from you in terms of your conduct in this class:

1. **Respect fellow classmates.** There is a great deal that we can learn from each other, but this can’t happen if students feel uncomfortable in class about speaking up (afraid that their ideas or feelings will be treated harshly or not "listened to" respectfully) or are worried about what will be said to them or about them once they do speak up. Make sure you do everything you can to make our classroom culture a comfortable learning environment for everyone in the class.

2. **Support fellow classmates.** Students in classes like this can learn a great deal from each other, and a kind word or sympathetic look can go a long way towards encouraging them to continue working hard and keeping a positive attitude. In this class, we help each other out, we provide as much support to each other as possible, and we conduct ourselves with our fellow classmates with as much compassion and understanding we as we can.

3. **Enjoy this opportunity to meet different kinds of people.** The world is full of all kinds of different people, who, for example, like all kinds of different music (from Tupac Shakur and Bob Marley to The Pretenders and Rihanna), who come from all kinds of different places (like Cambodia and Chile and Jamaica and Rockville), and who enjoy doing all kinds of different things. The makeup of this class will no doubt reflect that diversity. So enjoy this opportunity to meet different kinds of people with experiences different than your own.
4. **Keep an open mind.** You have come to college to learn, to challenge yourself, and to expand your mind. If you keep an open mind, there’s no telling what you might learn and how you might grow as a person and a student. =)

5. **Use an appropriate tone of voice.** Say what you need to say, but say it in an appropriate tone of voice—one that is respectful and calm. Sarcasm, heavily judgmental or confrontational comments break down good will and create an inhospitable classroom atmosphere. These kinds of comments are inappropriate and unacceptable in this class. Please make a special effort to conduct yourselves in this class with tactfulness and sensitivity.

6. **Listen to what people say.** We can learn from each other only if we listen carefully and sympathetically, so make a special effort to concentrate on what your classmates say and try to understand as completely as you can what they're point is and where they are coming from. Patience is an important virtue in this regard.

7. **Enjoy other people's points of view, even if--or perhaps especially if--their opinions are different than your own.**

8. **Take responsibility for making this class successful.** This is your class. Ask yourself what you can do during each class meeting to move the class forward in a positive way. Coming to class prepared is an excellent way to begin.

9. **Don't Consult Any Outside Sources--Including Internet Websites Related to the Authors We Will be Discussing!**

I want you to make your own judgments and come to your own conclusions about what we read. This will make our discussions more lively, and the comments you make are much more likely to be original and authentic. One of the educational objectives of this course is to help you improve your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, and requiring you to make your own judgments about our course material contributes in many ways towards strengthening these important skills.

So I am asking you not to consult any outside sources—especially Internet websites related to the authors and works we will be discussing. For this course to be successful, it is important that you do your own reading, writing, and thinking.

10. **Respect the professor.** There are a number of things implied about my attitude toward you in the way I have structured this class, and I would like to make those implications clear:

I believe in your ability to say important and engaging things.
I look forward to hearing what you will have to say.

I will listen to what you have to say patiently and respectfully.

That being said, however, I need you also to remember that this respect needs to be reciprocal. When I communicate with you, I need you to listen patiently and carefully. There may be classroom management issues that I will have to address with you, and you will need to respond to these in an appropriately respectful and mature manner. I will be working with you in class in many ways as an equal—as a member of our community of readers and learners. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity in a positive way.

11. Arrive on time for each class meeting and establish a consistent attendance record.

Writing for this Class!

Each student will be required to respond in some way to most of the work we will be reading this semester.

1. Benefits

There are a number of important benefits this course offers to you in this regard. You will get a great deal of practice articulating your thoughts and ideas in writing, and there is a very good chance that your writing skills will improve significantly. You will become more comfortable writing "on demand."

I would also like to point out that this class is obviously structured in ways that requires you to take a great deal of responsibility for your learning. You may find it interesting to learn that research about courses like this has shown that students who become "active learners" routinely learn more and learn more deeply than students who are required to be more passive learners. This is certainly a class where you will be actively involved in your own learning, and the benefits of this kind of educational environment are significant. The writing that you do for this class is a very important part of this "active" learning process.

2. Types of Writing You Will Be Doing For This Class

You will be doing two kinds of writing for this class:

- **Journal responses.** You will be writing journal responses for many of our assigned texts. *These responses usually must be at least 500 words long and*
organized into at least 3 different paragraphs to earn a passing grade.
Assignments are outlined in the syllabus.

•Reflective essays. You will be writing four formal essays this semester, complete with MLA documentation (8th ed.). I have provided detailed descriptions for each of these assignments in the syllabus.

3. Journal Responses

Your journal responses to the assigned readings must be at least 500 words long, and should be carefully developed. This means, of course, that you need to read the assigned texts carefully and look for intelligent, thoughtful things to say about them.

As I grade these I will be looking for evidence that you have thought carefully about each assigned reading and have spent some time carefully crafting your written responses. Grades will be based on both the length and the relative excellence of each entry. That is to say, grades will be based on both quality and quantity.

4. How To Produce Excellent Journal Work

Focus On Ideas!

Please make every effort to focus your comments on the ideas and content of these readings--and not on whether you find a particular reading to be "too long," "too hard to understand," or just plain "boring." While these are certainly legitimate things to discuss, we don't learn much as readers, writers, and thinkers by doing so. Your time and energy is much better spent, instead, when you devote it to analyzing and responding to the ideas and issues explored in each of our assigned readings.

Please remember that you are free to say whatever you want about the texts we read, and I encourage you to feel free to discuss anything you think meaningful to the text under consideration--philosophy (your own or someone else's), personal experiences, other literary and non-literary texts, historical situations, contemporary issues, etc.

Mark Up Your Books and Handouts. You can also improve your reading comprehension by interacting physically with each text we read by highlighting, underlining key phrases or sections, and making marginal notes and comments. This is a great way to begin your "conversation" with each author we encounter this semester. These are the kinds of study skills that lead to successful student performance regardless of what class you are doing your reading for. I can't stress enough how important they are.
Keep An Open Mind As You Read and As You Listen to Class Discussion. We will be reading a great deal of material this semester and discussing it as a class, and I would like to encourage you as strongly as I can to keep an open mind as we do this reading and discussing. I invite you to approach your reading and thinking for this class as an opportunity to make new discoveries about yourself and the world. This is one of the primary reasons people come to college in the first place, right? To open themselves up to new ideas, perspectives, and opportunities for growth!

Psychologists have found that individuals aren’t particularly good at this. It appears that we routinely process new information in ways that are comforting to us and that reaffirm our existing beliefs. Decades of research confirm this dynamic, which is called “confirmation bias.” Here is the landmark study that began this research, a subject we will be returning to later in the semester:

Charles Lord, Lee Ross, and Mark Lepper, “Biased Assimilation and Attitude Polarization”:


“In 1979, a team from Stanford University—Charles Lord, Lee Ross, and Mark Lepper—published a paper that made sense of a common, and seemingly irrational, phenomenon: that the beliefs we hold already affect how we process and assimilate new information. In other words, we don’t learn rationally, taking in information and then making a studied judgment. Instead, the very way we learn is influenced from the onset by what we know and who we are. In the original study, Lord and his colleagues asked people to read a series of studies that seemed to either support or reject the idea that capital punishment deters crime. The participants, it turned out, rated studies confirming their original beliefs as more methodologically rigorous—and those that went against them as shoddy.”

Do Not Consult Any Outside Sources--Especially Internet Websites Related to the Authors We Will Be Discussing

I want you to make your own judgments and come to your own conclusions about what we read. This will make our discussions more lively, and the comments you make are much more likely to be original and authentic. One of the educational objectives of this course is to help you improve your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, and requiring you to make your own judgments about our course material contributes in many ways towards strengthening these important skills.

So I am asking you not to consult any outside sources--especially Internet websites related
to the authors we will be discussing. For this course to be successful, it is important that you do your own reading, writing, and thinking.

**Do Your Reading When You Are Mentally Fresh**

In order to read the assigned literature effectively, you need to be doing your reading when you are mentally fresh and where your surroundings are quiet and lend themselves to sustained concentration.

**A Sample Excellent Journal Response is Available on our Blackboard Website**

**5. How to Write an Excellent Journal Response**

To write an excellent journal response, you will need to do the following:

- Read each assigned text carefully and critically. What is the author saying? What kinds of things is the author interested in getting at? How does the author want you to feel? What does the author want you to think about?

- Comment clearly, thoughtfully, and thoroughly on the major ideas and issues raised in the text.

- Quote from the text you are responding to at least twice--and discuss the meaning and implications of what you quote.

- Find ways to connect your own thoughts and ideas to what you've read, and feel free to discuss your personal experience as you respond to each text we read.

- Develop each response carefully and fully.

- Use specific, "juicy" details and proper nouns whenever possible. This will make your writing lively and interesting.

- Use paragraphs and follow the standard rules of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

An excellent ("A") response is one that intelligently and thoroughly discusses the full variety of issues each text raises.

**6. Try to Do More Than Summarize What You've Read**
When you summarize, you simply describe what happens in a particular story or poem or play. Summarizing doesn't accomplish very much, is not very challenging intellectually, and doesn't really contribute in a meaningful way to class discussion, since we've all already read the text you are summarizing. In most writing situations you will need to do some summarizing, of course. But it is also true that in most writing situations you will be asked to interact critically in some way with the material you've been assigned to read. That is certainly the case in this class--and in most other college classes you will find yourself in. So do your best to analyze, discuss, and respond in some personal way to what you've read. This is a much more meaningful academic activity, because it develops important reading, critical thinking, and writing skills. It's certainly more challenging to do, but it's also much more rewarding (in a lot of different ways). So look for ideas, emotions, or situations you can relate to. Try to identify what issues and ideas the writer is interested in exploring. Then go on to discuss how you feel about these issues, ideas, and emotions.

**Help With Staying In School!**

The college is deeply committed to helping more students complete their program of study and earn an associate’s degree. As part of this commitment to your success, I am asking you to call or e-mail me immediately if a problem arises that you feel could endanger your ability to finish this course and complete your degree. I will set up a time to talk about this with you one-on-one.

There is a great deal that we can do to help advice and support you during difficult times. In the long term, there are few things that will benefit you more than a college education. So help us help you by contacting me immediately as problems develop. We have great counselors, advisors, and tutors here. Together, we can make it through!

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the thematic and formal elements of literatures of diverse cultures, with an emphasis on fiction, poetry, drama, and the essay, with the aim of developing interpretive reading and writing skills.

**Prerequisites:** ENG* 101 with a grade of “C” or better.

**Course Objectives**

a) To read fiction, poetry, drama, and the essay  
b) To learn and practice the analytical techniques appropriate to reading literature in its several genres
c) To demonstrate analytical and interpretive reading skills through class discussion, essay tests, analytical essays, and journals

In response to literature, students will:

--Respond to Rhetorical Situations
--Use Sources
--Craft Logical Arguments
--Apply Language Conventions
--Formulate Effective Writing Strategies

High Standards

In this course, I will be applying high standards in terms of evaluating and grading your performance. I also want you to understand that I believe with hard work and dedication you can meet the rigorous standards of excellence that I have set for members of this class. The feedback that I will be providing you during the course of the semester is given in the belief that you can reach those standards of excellence.

A Note To Parents

During the course of the semester there may be days when you may feel that you have to stay home because your children do not have school but you do. This may be a professional day at your children's school, a holiday, or even a snow day where one town cancels and MCC doesn't. On days like this, feel free to bring your children in to class with you if you want (if you feel comfortable doing that). That's no problem. =:)

If You Have A Problem With Something

If you have a problem with something concerning this course (obligations outside of school, for example, that are affecting your ability to do your best work or to get to class, your grade on a particular essay, or a point we covered in class that you're still confused about), I would like to invite you to come and talk with me about it. You can see me before class, after class, or during my office hours as listed above. Or we can set up a time to meet and talk. I'd be glad to discuss anything that might be bothering you. =:)

I also recommend that you consult with me as soon as a problem arises so that we can work it through and get it solved as soon as possible.

Blackboard Learn
A copy of this syllabus along with a variety of other class materials is posted on Blackboard and is available to you 24/7. So even if you lose your syllabus, you always have one available to you online at our Blackboard home site for this class! Links to some of the readings are also embedded in the version of the syllabus posted online. So if you don’t have a reading, chances are, it will be available to you online.

This class will make use of an online course management system called Blackboard Learn. A copy of this syllabus and the class schedule, as well as various class handouts and assignments, will be posted on Blackboard. To access Blackboard Learn, you need to login to myCommNet at http://my.commnet.edu. You can also link to myCommNet from the MCC home page. You will need your NetID and your password.

Some course content as presented in Blackboard Learn is not fully supported on mobile devices at this time. While mobile devices provide convenient access to check in and read information about your courses, they should not be used to perform work such as taking tests, quizzes, completing assignments, or submitting substantive discussion posts.

**Academic Integrity**

Manchester Community College is committed to academic integrity. An academically honest student submits for evaluation only such work, including tests, papers, reports, presentations or ideas that have been written, performed or created solely by that student. On those occasions when the stated rules of a course permit collaborative efforts, the contributions of other individuals and sources should be appropriately acknowledged. It is, at all times, the responsibility of the student to maintain conduct consistent with the concept and definition of academic integrity, including not only the avoidance of plagiarism, but also other actions further outlined under College Policies in the Student Handbook.

Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else’s idea, writing or work, and passing it off as one’s own. If you fail to give credit to the source of the material, whether directly quoted or put in your own words, this lack of credit constitutes plagiarism. Whether you take, buy or receive material from the Internet, from a book, from another student or from any other source, and you fail to give credit, you are stealing ideas; you are engaged in plagiarizing. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic standards and has serious academic consequences for the student. **I want you to know that I have a zero tolerance policy towards plagiarism. Students submitting plagiarized work will receive a final grade of “F” for the course.**

The student code of conduct operates implicitly in everything you do in this course. Academic dishonesty is a violation of this code and will not be tolerated. If you cheat during an exam or plagiarize work (published or unpublished), you will receive an “F” in
the course and be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students with the recommendation that you receive additional disciplinary action (e.g., expulsion, academic probation, etc.) as appropriate. Information on the student code of conduct, including academic integrity and plagiarism, can be found in the Student Handbook, College Policies, under the heading “Student Discipline,” 5.2.1 Policy of Student Conduct, Section 3 (2) – Academic Integrity and Section 4 – Sanctions.

**Title IX: Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Reporting**

Manchester Community College is committed to fostering a safe and productive learning environment. Title VII, Title IX, Board of Regents, and MCC policies prohibit harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Sexual harassment (including sexual violence) has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual’s work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or academic environment. Sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated at MCC. We encourage anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination, or sexual misconduct to talk with someone about what happened to them so they can get the support they need and MCC can respond appropriately. There are confidential and non-confidential resources and reporting options available to you. MCC faculty and staff are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to MCC’S Title IX Coordinator and thus cannot guarantee anyone confidentiality. A list of resources is available at [www.manchestercc.edu/title-9](http://www.manchestercc.edu/title-9). If you wish to report sexual misconduct or have questions about school policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct, please contact MCC’s Title IX Coordinator Debi Freund – SSC L277, 860-512-3107, dfreund@manchestercc.edu.

**Incompletes**

An incomplete is a temporary grade assigned when coursework is missing and the student agrees to complete the requirements. Incompletes are assigned when there are extenuating circumstances, such as illness, that prevent the student from completing the course. A student may request an Incomplete but a faculty member is not required to honor the request. Refer to the Student Handbook or College Catalog.

**Audit**

The MCC catalog states, “This status allows a student to participate in class activities without being required to meet the examination requirements of the course. A student who wishes to change from credit to audit status must request this from the Registrar’s office within the first four weeks of the course. Full tuition and fees are charged for course audits. Financial Aid does NOT COVER AUDITED CLASSES.” (NOTE: A student is not required to have instructor’s permission in order to audit a course.)

**Withdrawal Policy**

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Withdrawal from this course is a student-initiated process. I will not automatically assign a grade of “W” to students who simply stop attending class and/or submitting work. If you choose to stop attending class or submitting course work but do not formally withdraw from the course, then you will receive the grade earned for the course (with zero’s assigned to all missing work).

**General Fund (15-week Courses):** During the first 14 calendar days of the semester (August 28, 2018 through September 11, 2018), courses that a student drops or for which a student receives a refund will be removed from the student’s schedule and will not appear on his/her transcript. After 14 days (September 12, 2018), a student who wishes to withdraw from any course must either withdraw online or submit the appropriate withdrawal form to the Registrar’s office by November 5, 2018. The Course Withdrawal Form Prior to Two Thirds of Semester is available at the Registrar’s office or online at [http://www.manchestercc.edu/form-depot/](http://www.manchestercc.edu/form-depot/). Prior to November 5, 2018, you do not need my permission or signature to withdraw from this course. After two-thirds of the semester, if an instructor permits a student to withdraw from the course, the student must obtain a withdrawal form from the registrar’s office to be signed by the instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to return the form to the registrar’s office by the last day of classes (NOT the last day of finals).

**Credit Extension (Accelerated 12- and 8-week) Add/Drop Schedule:** Students have until the last business day before the first class meeting to drop an extension credit course; only tuition is refunded. If a student officially withdraws on the day of the first class meeting, there is no refund and the student will receive a “W” on their transcript.

**Note:** A student must go to the Registrar’s office in the Student Services Center (SSC) to drop or withdraw from a class.

Students may withdraw from courses without instructor permission during the first two-thirds of the semester. After two-thirds of the semester, if an instructor permits a student to withdraw from the course, the student must obtain a withdrawal form from the registrar’s office to be signed by the instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to return the form to the registrar’s office by the last day of classes (not the last day of finals).

**Class Cancellation**

If class is cancelled by MCC due to inclement weather conditions or other emergency, students will be notified via the school’s web page ([www.mcc.commnet.edu](http://www.mcc.commnet.edu)). Students may also call the MCC information line at 860-512-3004. Although closing information may be broadcast on local news and radio stations, do not rely solely on such outlets – check the website or information line. If class is cancelled by me, students will be informed by a standardized, professionally-printed form posted at the door of the classroom and signed by the Division Director or MCC Police.
Services for Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability and require academic adjustments, please contact me as early as possible. You must be registered with Disability Services, who will determine accommodations based upon your documentation. To make an appointment with a disability services provider concerning a learning disability, ADHD, or Autism Spectrum Disorder, contact Gail Stanton (Lowe Room 131, 860-512-3597, gstanton@mcc.commnet.edu). To make an appointment with a provider about a physical, psychological, or medical disability, contact Joseph Navarra (Lowe Room 131, 860-512-3592, jnavarra@mcc.commnet.edu).

Student Support Services

There are many kinds of support services available to you through the Academic Support Center. Tutors are available in the following areas: English, math (all areas), chemistry, biology, anatomy, physiology, psychology, earth science, astronomy, law, accounting, physics, computers, and public speaking.

Information about tutoring can be obtained at the Academic Support Center webpage:

https://www.manchestercc.edu/current-students/resources/academic-support-center/

Students can also access and register for eTutoring through www.eTutoring.org. No pre-registration is required.

For help with personal, family, or other non-academic problems, please call the Counseling Center at 512-3331. Our counselors are awesome, and one of them will be happy to talk with you about any personal problem that is keeping you from doing your best work here at MCC. You can also go to the Counseling Center for academic advising.

A Message From Your Instructor

I welcome you to English 110: Introduction to College Reading and Writing, and to the joys and challenges that you will encounter as you participate in class discussions and activities, and engage in the process of reading literature and thinking and writing about it. Before we begin the semester, you should be aware of the following English Department assumptions about this course and about your participation in it.

1. If you are working more than twenty hours a week and taking a 12-credit course load, then you may not have enough time to devote to English 110.
This class will require that you spend a good deal of time reading, writing, and thinking. Please remember that this is a college-level course, and that you should be prepared to spend at least six hours a week working on homework and completing class assignments. If you cannot devote at least that much time to this course, then your chances of completing it successfully are greatly reduced.

2. A "C" is not a punitive grade.

The department believes that grades should reflect the quality of the work you produce, not merely the effort that goes into the production. The department believes that a grade of "C" reflects satisfactory performance. A grade of "C" means that you have met the minimum competencies for an assignment. Please consult the description of letter grade values that is contained in your MCC College Catalog and your Student Handbook.

The department also wants you to understand that you will probably find the standards and expectations in English 110 rigorous--and as educators we know that's a good thing (although you may be tempted not to see it as such!). It's an opportunity to learn, to grow, and to become a better reader, thinker, and writer.

A few students come to English 110 with all the skills they need to do excellent, "A"-quality work. Most of these students, however, have read a great deal (in fact, most read constantly), most have done a great deal of writing in high school, and most have had a great deal of experience discussing and evaluating ideas and issues. Most also have very strong study skills and work habits, and recognize that excellent, "A"-quality work is almost always the result of very careful and devoted preparation.

The majority of students, however, do not come to English 110 with the skills they need to do "A"-quality work. Many, in fact, need to do a good deal of work on the whole range of literacy skills needed to read and write effectively. But that's why we offer courses like this. If everyone knew how to read, write, and think effectively about complicated texts like the ones we will be reading and discussing, there would really be no need for courses like this.

As I am sure you recognize, the benefits of learning to read and write about texts extend well beyond our classroom. In this class we will be building the kinds of resourceful reading, writing, and thinking skills required of college students and successful professionals regardless of their area of specialization. We are building a variety of important literacy skills in this class that will have applications to most other things you do on this campus and also to many things you do or will be doing in your life.
But it takes patience and the willingness to work hard and listen. Maybe it won't all come together for you at the beginning of the semester, but if you work hard and apply yourself, there is every reason to believe that you will improve as the semester unfolds.

We know it may be difficult for you to appreciate now, but what is most important about this class is not what grades you get early in the semester, but what grades you get on your essays toward the end of the semester--and what skills you take with you into the world (and perhaps to other colleges, if you transfer) after this course is over. So it's important for you to be patient, to keep an open mind, and to bring as much good energy, dedication, and enthusiasm to this enterprise as you can.

3. The department encourages and supports instructor policies that penalize students for excessive absences.

English 110 requires that you be prepared for each class and participate in all phases of discussion, class activities, and instruction. For this reason, the English Department stands behind any instructor who holds you accountable for attendance. It is perfectly reasonable for a teacher to require you not to miss more than two weeks of the semester--regardless of the reason for your absence. In the long run, it does not matter why you were absent--only that you were.

Course Topics, Readings and Other Assignments:

Assignments and Class Schedule

All dates listed below are due dates. Homework assignments are due on the days listed. For August 30, for example, students should have completed their answers to the assigned questions, and should be ready to hand them in to me.

• August 28: Welcome to Literature!

1. Introduction to the course: Knowledge domains and literary expression. Key questions we’ll be attempting to answer this semester: Why should anyone care about literature? Why should anyone bother reading it? Or put another way, we might ask: “What’s in it for me? Especially since I’m not an English major? This feels like another mysterious, time- and life-wasting requirement.” Why are courses like this required for students even if they are going to be accountants and health care providers--very far removed from English majors? Why do we even have “core distribution” General Education requirements? Wouldn’t we all be better off if students could just take more courses in their major where the content would actually be useful to their lives? =:)

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2. Reading for pleasure.

3. English 110 Journals distributed.

4. Literature as an art form and an aesthetic experience.

3. Previewing our homework for next class.

4. Introducing ourselves. Black Elk: “Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle.” Please tell us a little bit about yourself and also share with us one fond memory you have involving literature (watching a great movie together with your friends or family, a movie you loved as a kid, a TV show that you looked forward to, a song that you sang with in the car, etc.).

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5. End of class activity: The One-Minute Paper

1. What is one thing you enjoyed about class today?

2. What is one thing you learned in class today?

3. Is there anything that you need more information about? Was there anything you found confusing or puzzling?

4. Do you have your books for this class yet? Will you have any trouble getting them? If so, please let me know.

5. Is there anything you would like to say to me? =:)

*****

Science as a knowledge domain:

Photos from deep space:

https://www.spacetelescope.org/images/archive/top100/

http://www.spacetelescope.org/products/presentations/hst01/
The Epigenetics Revolution: How Modern Biology Is Rewriting Our Understanding of Genetics, Disease, and Inheritance by Nessa Carey:


Why We Sleep by Matthew Walker:

https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/sep/21/why-we-sleep-by-matthew-walker-review

Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst by Robert M. Sapolsky:

https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/311787/behave-by-robert-m-sapolsky/9780143110910/

• August 30: **Homework to have completed for today:**

Please read the material on the syllabus carefully and answer the following questions, and have them ready to hand in. Answers can be brief, as this assignment is just my way of insuring that students have read the important parts of the syllabus.

**Question #1:** What are your core values? Please describe the values that are personally important to you and the life experiences have led you to embrace these cores values. (200 word minimum.)

**Question #2:** Please read Carol Dweck’s “Brainology” article about recent discoveries in the field of neuroscience about the human brain. What has neuroscience shown us about the human brain? What is a “growth mindset”? What is a “fixed mindset”? What does Dweck’s research tell us about these different mindsets? What kind of mindset will you have as you engage the work for this class? **Please compose a 200-word response to these questions after reading and reflecting on this material.** This brief essay is available here and on our class website:

https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/winter-2008/brainology/

**Question #3:** I discuss eleven important "responsibilities" related to the student-centered classroom that each student in this class must strive to meet. What are they and why are they important? Note: These can found in the "Expectations in Terms of Your Conduct in Class" section of the syllabus.
•Question #4: Please read “Strong vs. Weak Readings,” which is posted on the Discussion Board of our website and reviews recent research and theory about how we read and interpret what we read. Please discuss the difference between a “strong” and a “weak” reading. How will your understanding of this research affect your approach to the work you do for this class and your understanding of the grades you receive? Please compose a 100-word response to these questions after reading and reflecting on this material.

•Question #5: What is plagiarism? Why do I have a zero tolerance policy toward plagiarism?

•Question #6: I have asked you not to consult any outside sources—especially Internet websites related to the authors we will be discussing. Why have I established this policy?

•Question #7: I have asked you to do as little summarizing as possible in your journal responses. Instead, I ask you to analyze, discuss, and respond in some personal way to what you’ve read. Why have I established this policy?

•Question #8: I have provided guidelines for writing an excellent journal response in the section titled, “How to Write an Excellent Journal Response.” What are the seven items on this list and why are they important?

•Question #9: Please read the quotes above about literature and select at least one to write about here. I will ask you to discuss your selection in class. Your written answer for this question should be at least 100 words long.

•Question #10: What kind of attitude have you had in the past regarding your schoolwork? What kind of attitude are you bringing to this English 110 class? Are there any adjustments you can make or that you need to make regarding your attitude that will help you be more successful in this class?

•Question #11: Please discuss one work of literature that you love and that has been important to you (even if it just makes you laugh). You can select novels, poems, plays, TV shows that are dramas or comedies, films, songs, video games, or even particular musicians whose message you really respond to. Lots to choose from! Your answer should be at least 100 words long. We will be sharing these in class.

•Question #12: Theoretical First Principles. Please read the brief excerpts below from Paul Hirst’s landmark essay on liberal arts education, “Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge.” What is Hirst saying and what
might any of this have to do with English 110? Please compose a 200-word response to these questions after reading and reflecting on this material.

The focus of our class this semester will be on exploring literature as a "knowledge domain." Scholars and researchers have suggested that there are a number of distinct "knowledge domains," each with unique and important things to tell us about human knowledge, the world, and our place in it. We'll be testing that claim this semester!

These knowledge domains translate into major academic disciplines, as we will see. That is why, historically, students at liberal arts colleges have been required to take "core distribution" requirements. The idea is to give each student who will be earning a degree at least some exposure to each of these major knowledge domains. These "core distribution" requirements have been around as long as there have been liberal arts colleges. This is theory that affects much of what you do here at MCC (a liberal arts college), whether you know it or not. So why not know about it?

Paul Hirst, in his foundational essay called "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge" (published in 1973), is perhaps the best person to turn to for a basic overview of these knowledge domains. This is probably the most famous single essay about this subject. Hirst suggests that each knowledge domain offers us a unique and valuable way of looking at the world and creating knowledge. The seven domains he identified are as follows:

Mathematics

Physical sciences

Human sciences

History

Religion

Literature and the fine arts

Philosophy (105)

Each of these "forms of knowledge," he goes on to say, is "distinguished by their dependence on some particular kind of test against experience for their distinctive expressions. . . . The sciences depend crucially on empirical
experiment and observational tests, mathematics depends on deductive demonstrations from certain sets of axioms" (103).

Most essentially, these forms of knowledge "involve our coming to look at experience in particular ways" (103). Studying these forms of knowledge help us to "become aware of experience as structured, organized, and made meaningful in some quite specific way, and the varieties of human knowledge constitute the highly developed forms in which man has found this possible" (98).

During this semester in English 110, we will be exploring literature as a knowledge domain, looking to see how it defines experience while also trying to determine if it offers us a unique and important way of looking at the world and if it embodies a significant body of human knowledge.

At many colleges, students are required to take classes in each of these disciplines. Why is this the case? Why should you be required to take, say, an Introduction to Literature class when most of you are not going to be English majors? Why should you be required to take a history class if you are going to be an engineer or health care provider or criminal justice major? And why should you have to take algebra unless you are going to be an engineer? What's so great about history or math or sociology or science that you have to spend 14 weeks studying it when we could be spending that time working on courses in your major?

The argument is that science, for example, teaches us important things about the world, how it works, and our place in it that no other discipline does. That's why it's a core knowledge area. That's why it's important to study. Math does the same thing, as does history.

Our focus this semester will be on testing this claim as it relates to literature--and attempting to find out for ourselves what value this idea about "knowledge domains" has for us and the way we look at the world and approach the way we live our lives.

Works Cited

• Question #13: Just for fun, and to see how complex and irrational human cognition often is, take a look at Wikipedia’s List of cognitive biases. Fascinating reading!


• Question #14: Please also include the following statement with this assignment: "I agree to adhere to both the letter and the spirit of the Manchester Community College Honor Code." Thanks!

*****

End of class activity: The One-Minute Paper

1. What is one thing you enjoyed about class today?

2. What is one thing you learned in class today?

3. Is there anything that you need more information about? Was there anything you found confusing or puzzling?

4. Is there anything you would like to say to me? =:)

*****

• September 4: Question: Why bother reading literature? One Good Answer: “Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin. Please read “Sonny’s Blues” (pages 40-62). Write a 500-word journal response to this reading. Please answer this question: If you had to use one word to describe this story, what would it be?

• September 6: Returning to “Sonny’s Blues”! Please read the “Reading Guide to ‘Sonny’s Blues’” that I’ve written for you. Once you’ve done that, please re-read “Sonny’s Blues.” Please select one or two questions from this reading guide that you find interesting and discuss them in a 500-word response. We’ll discuss these in class.

Questions we’ll be considering in class in terms of this story being realistic and an accurate depiction of the world:

--What did Baldwin get right?
--What did he get almost right?
--What did he get wrong?
**Re-reading:** English teachers always say that re-reading something is very important. Some even claim that reading *is* re-reading. Could that possibly be true? We’ll be testing that idea today, so call it like you see it and we’ll let the chips fall where they may: Did you gain anything from rereading “Sonny’s Blues” a second time? Did anything change? Did anything deepen? Did you see anything important you missed the first time? What do you think now about rereading now that you've done it?


**Homework for today:** Create your own version of one of these stories or poems. In other words, create your own mixtape that tells a story, your own poem speaking about something, your own version of “Girl” or “Boy,” your own “How To . . .” story, your own “Better Dayz,” your own story told in the form of a conversation (or text message exchange) between two individuals at a café or coffeehouse or bus station or airport or community college café, etc. Have fun! We will be presenting these in class today. =:)

- **September 13:** Discussing some of these diverse stories and poems! No written homework today.

- **September 18:** Part 1: **Would you stone your neighbor to death?** Please read “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson (pages 624-630) and Jackson’s essay about publishing this story, “The Morning of June 28, 1948 (pages 1443-1445). Before reading this story, please answer this question: Are there any circumstances under which you could imagine that you would be willing to stone your neighbor to death? Once you have done this, please complete a 500-word journal response for this assignment in which you discuss “The Lottery” and your answer to that question. Make sure you spend a good deal of time talking about “The Lottery.” Lots to talk about here!
Also: Group assignments distributed today for Part 2 of this discussion!
Students will be assigned to teams and given assignments to delve deeply into one of the research studies or theoretical models.

• September 20: Poetry/Nature Walk/Haiku Day! Today we will be taking our first official English 110 field trip! We will be touring the grounds on campus on our way to the MCC Community Garden. Once we get to the garden, you will be exploring the garden and surrounding area with your assigned haiku partner and writing 5 haiku poems either collaboratively or individually that have been inspired by the garden, the nature around us, and the present moment. You have until 10:25 am to complete this work. At 10:30 am, 20 minutes before class ends, we will meet back at the front of the garden to read our poems to the class.

Haiku is an ancient and highly-prized Japanese art form, dating back hundreds of years. Part of the focus of haiku is spiritual, related to Zen Buddhism and its focus on being alive in the present moment and being responsive to what is happening right now all around us. Another focus, obviously, is acknowledging and celebrating the incredible beauty and mystery of the natural world. Our goal for today is to turn our phones off, get out into nature, be fully alive in the present moment, observe the beauty of the natural world, and capture some of that beauty and mystery in the haiku poetry that we will be writing. Here are some sample haiku and haiku-like poems for inspiration:

**Under Cherry Trees** by Matsuo Basho

Under cherry trees
Soup, the salad, fish and all...
Seasoned with petals.

*****

**The Red Wheelbarrow** by William Carlos Williams

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water
besides the white
chickens

*****

A Dent in a Bucket by Gary Snyder

Hammering a dent out of a bucket
  a woodpecker
    answers from the woods

*****

After Basho by Carolyn Kizer

Tentatively, you
  slip onstage this evening,
    pallid famous moon.

*****

Over-ripe sushi,
  The Master
    Is full of regret.

- Yosa Buson

*****

Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams by Kenneth Koch

1

I chopped down the house that you had been saving to live in next summer.
I am sorry, but it was morning, and I had nothing to do
and its wooden beams were so inviting.

2

We laughed at the hollyhocks together
and then I sprayed them with lye.
Forgive me. I simply do not know what I am doing.

3

I gave away the money that you had been saving to live on for the next ten
years.
The man who asked for it was shabby
and the firm March wind on the porch was so juicy and cold.

4

Last evening we went dancing and I broke your leg.
Forgive me. I was clumsy, and
I wanted you here in the wards, where I am the doctor!

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Nature is our widest home. It includes the oceans that provide our rain, the trees that
give us air to breathe, the ancestral habitats we shared with countless kinds of
animals that now exist only by our sufferance or under our heel.

Until quite recently, indeed (as such things go), the whole world was a wilderness
in which mankind lived as cannily as deer, overmastering with spears or snares
even their woodsmanship and that of other creatures, finding a path wherever
wildlife could go. Nature was the central theater of life for everybody’s ancestors,
not a hideaway where people went to rest and recharge after a hard stint in an urban
or suburban arena. Many of us still do hike, swim, fish, birdwatch, sleep on the
ground or paddle a boat on vacation, and will loll like a lizard in the sun any other
chance we have. We can’t help grinning for at least a moment at the sight of surf, or
sunlight on a river meadow, as if remembering in our mind’s eye paleolithic
pleasures in a home before memories officially began.

It is a thoughtless grin because nature predates “thought.” Aristotle was a naturalist,
and nearer to our own time, Darwin made of the close observation of bits of nature
a lever to examine life in many ways on a large scale. Yet nature writing, despite its
basis in science, usually rings with rhapsody as well—a belief that nature is an
expression of God. --Edward Hoagland.

• September 25: Would you stone your neighbor to death? Part 2. Group research
  project day! Are writers just writers, or do they have to be sociologists,
psychologists, historians, philosophers, and students of human nature as well? I’d like you to do three things for homework for today:

1. Carefully read your individualized reading assignment for today, drawn from the material and websites below.

2. As you do so, please be alert for ways that this research and theory might shed light on “The Lottery,” and perhaps more importantly, on who we are.

3. Compose a 500-word journal assignment that discusses your findings.

In class, you will have 10 minutes to meet with your group to compare notes before I ask each team to present their findings to the class. Each team has 5 minutes to present their findings, and everyone on your team must contribute to the presentation in some way. :-) As a team, I am asking you do three things:

1. Please summarize the key findings of your research as clearly as you can.

2. Please highlight any key ideas from this research that you feel relate to “The Lottery.”

3. Select two quotes from this research or theory that you think are especially important for the class to think about.

Most of this material is provided via links, so you will have to work from the syllabus posted in Blackboard where all the links will be live.

1. **The Stanford Prison Experiment by Philip G. Zimbardo**

   --"What suspects had done was to answer a local newspaper ad calling for volunteers in a study of the psychological effects of prison life. We wanted to see what the psychological effects were of becoming a prisoner or prison guard. To do this, we decided to set up a simulated prison and then carefully note the effects of this institution on the behavior of all those within its walls."

   --"There is a set of social psychological variables that can make ordinary people do things they never could imagine doing."

   --"We frankly didn't anticipate what was going to happen. We tried to really test the power of the environment to transform otherwise normal people."

   --"How do people respond to a cruel environment without clear rules?"
2. Carl Jung and "The Shadow"

"'We have a shadow,' says Jung. 'There's a part of me that just loves maiming, killing, and torturing'" (68)--from Karl Marlantes, What It Is Like to Go to War.

Carl Jung on "The Shadow":

Unfortunately there can be no doubt that man is, on the whole, less good than he imagines himself or wants to be. Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is. If an inferiority is conscious, one always has a chance to correct it. Furthermore, it is constantly in contact with other interests, so that it is continually subjected to modifications. But if it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected.

"Psychology and Religion" (1938). In CW 11: Psychology and Religion: West and East. P.131

It is a frightening thought that man also has a shadow side to him, consisting not just of little weaknesses and foibles, but of a positively demonic dynamism. The individual seldom knows anything of this; to him, as an individual, it is incredible that he should ever in any circumstances go beyond himself. But let these harmless creatures form a mass, and there emerges a raging monster; and each individual is only one tiny cell in the monster's body, so that for better or worse he must accompany it on its bloody rampages and even assist it to the utmost. Having a dark suspicion of these grim possibilities, man turns a blind eye to the shadow-side of human nature. Blindly he strives against the salutary dogma of original sin, which is yet so prodigiously true. Yes, he even hesitates to admit the conflict of which he is so painfully aware.

"On the Psychology of the Unconscious" (1912). In CW 7: Two Essays on Analytical Psychology. P.35

We know that the wildest and most moving dramas are played not in the theatre but in the hearts of ordinary men and women who pass by without exciting attention, and who betray to the world nothing of the conflicts that rage within them except possibly by a nervous breakdown. What is so difficult for the layman to grasp is the fact that in most cases the patients themselves have no suspicion
whatever of the internecine war raging in their unconscious. If we remember that there are many people who understand nothing at all about themselves, we shall be less surprised at the realization that there are also people who are utterly unaware of their actual conflicts.

"New Paths in Psychology" (1912). In CW 7: Two Essays on Analytical Psychology. P.425

3. Sigmund Freud on man's "aggressive cruelty," from Chapter 5 of Civilization and Its Discontents:

The bit of truth behind all this--one so eagerly denied--is that men are not gentle, friendly creatures wishing for love, who simply defend themselves if they are attacked, but that a powerful measure of desire for aggression has to be reckoned as part of their instinctual endowment. The result is that their neighbour is to them not only a possible helper or sexual object, but also a temptation to them to gratify their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without recompense, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and kill him. Homo homini lupus [Man is to man a wolf.]; who has the courage to dispute it in the face of all the evidence in his own life and in history?

This aggressive cruelty usually lies in wait for some provocation, or else it steps into the service of some other purpose, the aim of which might as well have been achieved by milder measures. In circumstances that favour it, when those forces in the mind which ordinarily inhibit it cease to operate, it also manifests itself spontaneously and reveals men as savage beasts to whom the thought of sparing their own kind is alien. Anyone who calls to mind the atrocities of the early migrations, of the invasion by the Huns, or by the so-called Mongols under Jenghiz Khan and Tamurlane, of the sack of Jerusalem by the pious Crusaders, even indeed the horrors of the last World War, will have to bow his head humbly before the truth of this view of man.

The existence of this tendency to aggression which we can detect in ourselves and rightly presume to be present in others is the factor that disturbs our relations with our neighbours and makes it necessary for culture to institute its high demands. Civilized society is perpetually menaced with disintegration through this primary hostility of men towards one another. Their interests in their common work would not hold them together; the passions of instinct are stronger than reasoned interests. Culture has to call up every possible reinforcement in order to erect barriers against the aggressive instincts of men and hold their manifestations in check by reaction-formations in men's minds. Hence its system of methods by which
mankind is to be driven to identifications and aim-inhibited love-relationships; hence the restrictions on sexual life; and hence, too. its ideal command to love one's neighbour as oneself, which is really justified by the fact that nothing is so completely at variance with original human nature as this. With all its striving, this endeavour of culture’s has so far not achieved very much. Civilization expects to prevent the worst atrocities of brutal violence by taking upon itself the right to employ violence against criminals, but the law is not able to lay hands on the more discreet and subtle forms in which human aggressions are expressed. The time comes when every one of us has to abandon the illusory anticipations with which in our youth we regarded our fellow-men, and when we realize how much hardship and suffering we have been caused in life through their ill-will. It would be unfair, however, to reproach culture with trying to eliminate all disputes and competition from human concerns. These things are undoubtedly indispensable; but opposition is not necessarily enmity, only it may be misused to make an opening for it.


Recently, this experiment has become controversial, with some bloggers challenging the findings of this study. Please take a look at these comments, many of which are quite recent:

http://www.prisonexp.org/links/#criticisms

Sample comment from Philip Zimbardo: “In this response to my critics, I hereby assert that none of these criticisms present any substantial evidence that alters the SPE’s main conclusion concerning the importance of understanding how systemic and situational forces can operate to influence individual behavior in negative or positive directions, often without our personal awareness. The SPE’s core message is not that a psychological simulation of prison life is the same as the real thing, or that prisoners and guards always or even usually behave the way that they did in the SPE. Rather, the SPE serves as a cautionary tale of what might happen to any of us if we underestimate the extent to which the power of social roles and external pressures can influence our actions.”

4. This famous experiment: "Opinions and Social Pressure" by Solomon E. Asch

In the 1950s, the social psychologist Solomon Asch conducted a famous experiment that highlighted the fragility of the person in a mass society when he is confronted with the contrary opinion of a majority, and the tendency to conform even if this means to go against the person’s basic perceptions.
"Exactly what is the effect of the opinions of others on our own? In other words, how strong is the urge toward social conformity? The question is approached by means of some unusual experiments."


5. Photos from Abu Ghraib (in Arabic: سجن بغداد المركزي). Please be warned: These photos are graphic and contain disturbing content. If you wish to skip these, you may.

"If it wasn't for those photos no one would have ever believed what was going on over there."

"The photos [of abuse and torture taken at Abu Ghraib] were strikingly familiar to the photographs that we had taken--the photos that I had taken--in the prison study [at Stanford University in the 1970s]."


6. This discussion of the Stanley Milgram and his work:

https://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html

http://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/story?id=2765416&page=1


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8. Confirmation Bias

Charles Lord, Lee Ross, and Mark Lepper’s landmark study on confirmation bias, “Biased Assimilation and Attitude Polarization”:

“In 1979, a team from Stanford University—Charles Lord, Lee Ross, and Mark Lepper—published a paper that made sense of a common, and seemingly irrational, phenomenon: that the beliefs we hold already affect how we process and assimilate new information. In other words, we don’t learn rationally, taking in information and then making a studied judgment. Instead, the very way we learn is influenced from the onset by what we know and who we are. In the original study, Lord and his colleagues asked people to read a series of studies that seemed to either support or reject the idea that capital punishment deters crime. The participants, it turned out, rated studies confirming their original beliefs as more methodologically rigorous—and those that went against them as shoddy.”

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9. Alternate Views

Mother Theresa, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, and Henry David Thoreau. A number of famous thinkers celebrate the peaceful, non-aggressive aspects of man’s spirit and character.

Mother Teresa's Anyway Poem

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered; Forgive them anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; Be kind anyway.
If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; Succeed anyway.
If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; Be honest and frank anyway.
What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; Build anyway.
If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway.
The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; Do good anyway.
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; Give the world the best you've got anyway.
You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and your God; It was never between you and them anyway.

Abraham Lincoln: Among the most famous celebrations of mankind’s great powers of empathy and kindness and love are these comments by Abraham Lincoln about "the better angels of our natures" (which also appears to also acknowledge the presence of less better angels!):

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address, Monday, March 4, 1861

Martin Luther King also expressed a similar sentiment in his Nobel Lecture on December 11, 1964, “The Quest for Peace and Justice.”

Here is an excerpt:

“Not too many years ago, Dr. Kirtley Mather, a Harvard geologist, wrote a book entitled Enough and to Spare. He set forth the basic theme that famine is wholly unnecessary in the modern world. Today, therefore, the question on the agenda must read: Why should there be hunger and privation in any land, in any city, at any table when man has the resources and the scientific know-how to provide all mankind with the basic necessities of life? Even deserts can be irrigated and top soil can be replaced. We cannot complain of a lack of land, for there are twenty-five million square miles of tillable land, of which we are using less than seven million. We have amazing knowledge of vitamins, nutrition, the chemistry of food, and the versatility of atoms. There is no deficit in human resources; the deficit is in
human will. The well-off and the secure have too often become indifferent and oblivious to the poverty and deprivation in their midst. The poor in our countries have been shut out of our minds, and driven from the mainstream of our societies, because we have allowed them to become invisible. Just as nonviolence exposed the ugliness of racial injustice, so must the infection and sickness of poverty be exposed and healed - not only its symptoms but its basic causes. This, too, will be a fierce struggle, but we must not be afraid to pursue the remedy no matter how formidable the task.

The time has come for an all-out world war against poverty. The rich nations must use their vast resources of wealth to develop the underdeveloped, school the unschooled, and feed the unfed. Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation. No individual or nation can be great if it does not have a concern for "the least of these". Deeply etched in the fiber of our religious tradition is the conviction that men are made in the image of God and that they are souls of infinite metaphysical value, the heirs of a legacy of dignity and worth. If we feel this as a profound moral fact, we cannot be content to see men hungry, to see men victimized with starvation and ill health when we have the means to help them. The wealthy nations must go all out to bridge the gulf between the rich minority and the poor majority.

In the final analysis, the rich must not ignore the poor because both rich and poor are tied in a single garment of destiny. All life is interrelated, and all men are interdependent. The agony of the poor diminishes the rich, and the salvation of the poor enlarges the rich. We are inevitably our brothers' keeper because of the interrelated structure of reality. John Donne interpreted this truth in graphic terms when he affirmed:

No man is an Iland, intire of its selfe: every man is a peecce of the Continent, a part of the maine: if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were: any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde: and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls: it tolls for thee.

Henry David Thoreau: There is this great advice Thoreau gives to his readers, which encourages us to live and aim high:
"I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." from Chapter 18

https://www.gutenberg.org/files/205/205-h/205-h.htm

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Sign up to bring an item in for the pot-luck party!

• September 27: Poetry Magazine Editorial Day and Pot-Luck Party!

You have just been hired as poetry editors at Poetry magazine. You have an annual salary of $100,000. The job comes with a townhouse in NYC, a vacation beach house on Martha’s Vineyard, a Mercedes-Benz G-Class SUV, and designated table at the Blue Note Café jazz club in the West Village in NYC. These poems have just come in and you and your team must decide which to publish and which not to publish. Because space in the journal is tight, you have to rank order these poems with your team of co-editors, so that they can be published in order of space available. Please rank order these poems, with #1 being the best.

Please consider the following questions as you make your decisions and be ready to discuss and support your decisions with your classmates:

a. What is a poem?
b. What is a “good poem”?
c. What is a “bad poem”?
d. How do we tell the difference?
e. Are any of these good poems?
f. Are any of them bad poems?

• October 2: Essay #1 Due on “The Lottery” and Associated Research. For our first formal essay, I would like you to discuss your thoughts about this research and “The Lottery.” 750 words, MLA Format. Please include at least one quote from
“The Lottery” and quotes from at least three of the different research sources we read and discussed in class, including at least one writer from the “alternate view” group. What do you think is most important in this work and what can we learn from this story and this research about people, human nature, and ourselves?

We will discuss your thoughts in response to these questions in class. Be ready to report what you decided about all this!

• October 4: Poetry Reading/Performance Day! Assignments will be provided in class!

• October 9: Worldviews, Part 1. Rochefoucauld. Please read the selections from Rochefoucauld’s “Maxims” (handout). Only a few pages long, but very deep! A key question to consider: Do we disguise ourselves from each other? Please complete a 500-word journal response for this assignment.

• October 11: Found Poetry Day! With your partner, please walk around campus looking and listening for inspiration for material you can use for your found poems. You will need to be perceptive, open, and mindful to do this. What do you see? What do you hear? What kind of messages do you see posted around campus? What strikes you as particularly beautiful, interesting, humorous, profound, crazy? What do you think merits inclusion in a found poem? Your job is to capture some of the poetry of everyday life in your poems. Please create at least three found poems during the 25 minutes you have for this exercise. Please provide a title for each of them. Please return to class by 10:10 am to present your found poems to the class.

Found poems take existing words, phrases, or overheard language and presents them as poems. An example of found poetry is this poem, which takes a sentence from scientist William Whewell’s book, "An Elementary Treatise on Mechanics," and presents it as a poem:

Hence no force, however great,
can stretch a cord, however fine,
into a horizontal line
which is accurately straight.

In 2003, Slate writer Hart Seely found poetry in the speeches and news briefings of Donald Rumsfeld. In a transcript of a Department of Defense news briefing from February 12, 2002, Rumsfeld ruminated on "the unknown":

The Unknown

As we know,
There are known knowns.
There are things we know we know.

We also know
There are known unknowns.
That is to say
We know there are some things
We do not know.

But there are also unknown unknowns,
The ones we don't know
We don't know.

Here is another found poem based on Rumsfeld’s comments:

**Needless to Say**

Needless to say,
the president is correct.
Whatever it was he said.

Feb. 28, 2003, Department of Defense briefing


Another well known example of a public figure's speech being converted into found poetry was the Yankees baseball radio announcer of Phil Rizzuto. Rizzuto was the announcer for the New York Yankees for 40 years, and some of his commentary has been reformatted into found poetry. Here’s one good example:

**Go Ahead, Seaver**

by Phil Rizzuto

You know,
Some kid wrote me a letter.
You and Murcer,
I know,
Every time Murcer says
I make oh for four and two errors.
Some guy wrote,
Which I haven’t gotten yet,
He wrote it to Yankee Stadium,
But by the way,
You’re doing the play-by-play, Seaver.
So go ahead.
I was gonna tell you something,
But I forgot what it was.
Go ahead.

Have fun and good luck! You can only use your cell phone for one of these poems. The rest have to be local. Please also answer the following questions when you present your poems to the class:

1. What does found poetry teach us about poetry?
2. What does found poetry teach us about language?
3. What does found poetry teach us about everyday life?

• October 16: Reading Day! No classes!

• October 18: Worldviews, Part 2. Read the graphic novel Bitch Planet, 750-word journal response due. Before or after reading this graphic novel, you may want to browse through these news items, two book reviews and a couple of news stories “torn from the headlines”:

1. “Kick Against the Pricks,” by Laura Kipnis:

http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/12/21/kick-against-the-pricks/

2. “The Revenge of Roger’s Angels: How Fox News Women Took Down the Most Powerful, and Predatory, Man in Media” by Gabriel Sherman:


3. “Can Hollywood Change Its Ways?” by Dana Goodyear:

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/01/08/can-hollywood-change-its-ways


Please quote at least twice from Bitch Planet in your journal response. Please use MLA format to document your sources. Questions I would like to address in your response:

1. What kind of world do the people in this society live in? Is this society in any way like our own?
2. Please pay close attention to the advertisements in Bitch Planet. Taken together cumulatively, what are these advertisements telling us? Are the authors right?
3. Please select your favorite advertisement from Bitch Planet. Why is it your favorite?
4. Do any of us live on Bitch Planet right now?


Class discussion: Where do our ideas about love come from?

1. Ideal vision of romantic love
2. Disney version of romantic love
3. Cynical version of romantic love
3. Real-world version of romantic love

"I have not had one word from her" by Sappho

I have not had one word from her

Frankly I wish I were dead
When she left, she wept

a great deal; she said to me, "This parting must be endured, Sappho. I go unwillingly."
I said, "Go, and be happy
but remember (you know
well) whom you leave shackled by love

If you forget me, think
of our gifts to Aphrodite
and all the loveliness that we shared

all the violet tiaras,
braided rosebuds, dill and
crocus twined around your young neck

myrrh poured on your head
and on soft mats girls with
all that they most wished for beside them

while no voices chanted
choruses without ours,
no woodlot bloomed in spring without song.

--Translated by Mary Barnard

• October 25: Begin Slam Poetry unit!

Don’t tell me you aren’t (or can’t be) be creative!

Ken Robinson: “Creativity is the greatest gift of human intelligence. The more complex the world becomes, the more creative we need to be to meet its challenges” (Out of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative xiii).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: “To achieve the kind of world we consider human, some people had to dare to break the thrall of tradition. Next, they had to find ways of recording those new ideas or procedures that improved on what went before. Finally, they had to find ways of transmitting the new knowledge to the generations to come. Those who were involved in this process we call creative. What we call culture, or those parts of our selves that we internalized from the social environment, is their creation. There is no question that the human species could not survive, either now or in the years to come, if creativity were to run dry. . . . Whether we like it or not, our species has become dependent on creativity” (Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention 317-8).
Ken Robinson from a recent interview in *Educational Leadership*: “I work a lot with Fortune 500 companies, and they're always saying, ‘We need people who can be innovative, who can think differently.’ If you look at the mortality rate among companies, it's massive. America is now facing the biggest challenge it's ever faced—to maintain its position in the world economies. All these things demand high levels of innovation, creativity, and ingenuity. At the moment, instead of promoting creativity, I think we're systematically educating it out of our kids” (Azzam 22).

We will be reviewing a number of Slam Poetry performances on YouTube in preparation for this activity. Slam poetry is poetry meant to be delivered to a live audience at a poetry "slam" competition. A panel of judges scores each contestant, and one poet is selected as the winner at the end of the competition. It's kind of like "American Idol" or “The Voice” for performing poets. =) We will be selecting and providing awards to the top three winners in our class. Slam poetry, as you will see, is meant to be passionate, powerful, topical, and engaging. After you've viewed the slam poets below, I would like you to write your own slam poem. Make sure you speak about something you care passionately about!

**And make sure you use as many juicy details as possible!** Juicy details are the lifeblood of poetry. Also, if possible, I'd like it not to rhyme. =) See what kind of magic you can work without rhyming! Try to find a rhythm that you like and go with it!

Here is the slam poetry I'd like you to watch

**Suli Breaks – “Why I Hate School But Love Education”**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_ZmM7zPLyI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_ZmM7zPLyI)

**Suli Breaks – “I Will Not Let An Exam Result Decide My Fate”**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-eVF_G_p-Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-eVF_G_p-Y)

**Rudy Francisco - "Complainers" (NPS 2014)**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8NVLq2fGLc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8NVLq2fGLc)

**Rudy Francisco - "Chameleon" (NPS 2013)**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdKxViuNC8U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdKxViuNC8U)

**Eminem – “Lose Yourself”**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrBrtyTOeOQ

2016 NPS Finals - San Diego - "Islamophobia" by Rudy Francisco, Natasha Hooper, and Amen Ra

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Qf9onCjdUA

Olivia Gatwood, and Megan Falley - "Say No"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5GxVJTqCNs&list=PL32bMUhHE0Hj04CdEOXCavapiBYFbZwOt

Marshall Davis Jones - "Touchscreen"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAx845QaOck

Taylor Mali - "What Teachers Make"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxsOVK4syxU

Cedric the Entertainer on Def Poetry Jam:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDP1HNlRE1E&feature=related

Others:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYxXPQ8nGc0&feature=related

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDa5G0czkTY&feature=related

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OonDPGwAyfQ&feature=related

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4jqUWpoSJr

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dueJyntQPtI

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQWEGAH2rBU&feature=related


Have fun and speak from the heart!
• October 30: Essay #2 Due!

Essay #2 Assignment!

For this essay, I would like you to select one of the quotes about literature that we began the semester with (and that can be found in the front of the syllabus) and use it as a **lens** to discuss what literature is, how it works, and what it offers us that other knowledge domains can’t and don’t.

You can examine your ideas about this quote in relation to a single work of literature and focus your essay that way. Or you can focus more broadly, using selected works of literature to illustrate key points you wish to make about your quote, about how you feel literature works, and about whether we should bother reading it or not.

What I would like you to do for this essay is to select, explain, and discuss one of these quotes and then see if the ideas in this quote help deepen our understanding of literature—and literature as a knowledge domain—in any way.

Maybe it does. Maybe it doesn’t. You be the judge!

Your essay must include at least three quotes from at least one work of literature that we’ve covered so far in this class. Please discuss these quotations in detail.

**Length: 1000 words**, typed, double-spaced. Please use 8th edition MLA format to document your sources.

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Students will present their thoughts about this subject to the class and we will discuss them in class today.

**Also: Sign up to bring something in for the ice-cream social!** I’ll bring the ice cream. Let me know what brand and flavors you want!

• November 1: Slam Poetry and Ice Cream Social Day! Everyone will present their Slam Poem and then we will vote on a winner. Handsome medallions will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place! Please hand in your slam poem at the end of class. Also, ice cream social!
Note: Slam poems must be at least 200 words in length.

- November 6: **What is War?** Please read Tim O’Brien’s “The Things They Carried” (pages 990-1003), Chinua Achebe’s “Civil Peace” (pages 10-13), Mark Twain’s “The War Prayer” (handout), “Dulce et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen (handout), and “The End and the Beginning” by Wisława Szymborska (handout). 500-word response due.

**Reading “The War Prayer” out loud!**

For the journal response today, I would like you to do two things:

1. Are there any connections between these different literary responses to war? **Please comment on at least three of these works in your journal response as you answer this question.**

2. Please identify as many different categories of the things that the men carry in “The Things They Carry” as you can (physical, emotional, etc.) along with at least two key examples for each category. Does any of this seem accurate and insightful to you?

3. Please also consider this quote from Tim O’Brien:

   “A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, nor restrain men from doing the things they have always done. If a story seems moral, do not believe it. If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very old and terrible lie. There is no rectitude whatsoever. There is no virtue. As a first rule of thumb, therefore, you can tell a true war story by its absolute and uncompromising allegiance to obscenity and evil.”

What does this mean? And is he right?

https://www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/~cinichol/CreativeWriting/323/OBrienWarStory.pdf


- November 8: **The Things I Carry Day!** For today, I would like you to create a work of art that identifies and analyzes the things you carry, physically, emotionally,
intellectually, culturally, and psychologically. You can create a poem, a short story, a list, a song, a YouTube video, an iMovie, a drawing, a painting, a collage—anything you want! It would be great if it had words, but if it doesn’t, that’s OK too. =:) Have fun and speak deep from the heart, just like Tim O’Brien does. What are the things you carry?

**Note: If you use words, please make your response at least 200 words in length.**

Let's try to develop a complete inventory and the full range of the things we carry, physically, emotionally, intellectually, culturally, and psychologically.

- **November 13:** Mindfulness Unit. What Is Mindfulness? 750-word journal response due! The question I would like you to consider is this: Is great literature fundamentally mindful? Please read chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 in Ellen Langer’s book, *Mindfulness.* Please discuss what Langer is saying about being “trapped by categories,” “automatic behavior,” and “acting from a single perspective”? What are these things and what might they have to do they have to do with literature as a knowledge domain? Please also address this interesting question: Does anything Langer says in these chapters apply to literature as a genre, given what we’ve read so far this semester? Please complete a 750-word journal response exploring the idea of mindfulness, the literature we’ve read this semester, and these three key terms of Langer’s:

  1. “trapped by categories.”
  2. “automatic behavior”
  3. “acting from a single perspective”

- **November 15:** “Poetry Should Ride the Bus” Day! Drawing inspiration from Ruth Foreman’s poem, “Poetry Should Ride the Bus,” please do some browsing at online poetry sites and reviewing your CD collection/iTunes/Spotify playlists and find a poem or song lyric or even a passage from a play or short story or novel that has poetic qualities that you think “rides the bus.” Another option is to write your own poem that “rides the bus”? So some creative options here as well. Obviously, you will have to read Foreman’s poem and decide what “riding the bus” might mean. Then you’ll have to find a poem that actually has those qualities. Today you will read/present the poem you’ve selected to the class. After you’ve read the poem, please discuss how you think the poem or song you’ve selected “rides the bus.” Should poetry “ride the bus”? Please compose a 500-word response for this assignment.

*Poetry Should Ride the Bus*
~ by Ruth Forman

poetry should hopscotch in a polka dot dress
wheel cartwheels
n hold your hand
when you walk past the yellow crack house

poetry should wear bright red lipstick
n practice kisses in the mirror
for all the fine young men with fades
shootin craps around the corner

poetry should dress in fine plum linen suits
n not be so educated that it don’t stop in
every now n then to sit on the porch
and talk about the comins and goins of the world

poetry should ride the bus
in a fat woman’s Safeway bag
between the greens n chicken wings
to be served with tuesday’s dinner

poetry should drop by a sweet potato pie
ask about the grandchildren
n sit through a whole photo album
on an orange plastic covered lazyboy with no place to go

poetry should sing red revolution love songs
that massage your scalp
and bring hope to your blood
when you think you’re too old to fight

yeah
poetry should whisper electric blue magic
all the years of your life
never forgettin to look you in the soul
every once in a while
n smile

*****
Here are some websites to help you with your search and a list of poets who might occasionally ride the bus!


http://www.poetseers.org/contemporary-poets/


Sharon Olds    Philip Larkin
Langston Hughes Robert Frost
Martin Espada   Rita Dove
Sherman Alexie  Rickey Laurentiis
Nas              Terrance Hayes
Warsan Shire    Tracy K. Smith
Tupac Shakur    Sylvia Plath
Bob Dylan        Walt Whitman
Bob Marley       Li Po
Jane Kenyon      Allen Ginsberg
Pablo Neruda     T.S. Eliot
Mary Oliver      William Butler Yeats
Emily Dickinson  Frank O’Hara
Billy Collins    Wislawa Szymborska
Maya Angelou     Sonia Sanchez
Cathy Park Hong  Neil Young
Gregory Pardlo   Leonard Cohen
Claudia Rankine  Woodie Guthrie
Carolyn Forche

• November 20: **Thank You Project!** What are you thankful for?

Today we are going to pause for a moment to reflect on the gifts we have been given and offer thanks for our may blessings. So for homework today:

1. Please listen to Louis Armstrong's song "What A Wonderful World":

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5TwT69i1lU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3yCcXgbKrE

I see trees of green, red roses too
I see them bloom, for me and you
And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.

I see skies of blue, and clouds of white
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night
And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.

The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky
Are also on the faces, of people going by
I see friends shaking hands, saying how do you do
They're really saying, I love you.

I hear babies cry, I watch them grow
They'll learn much more, than I'll never know
And I think to myself, what a wonderful world

Yes I think to myself, what a wonderful world.
Oh yeah...

*****

2. Please view the gallery of photos taken of marvels from deep space by the Hubble Space Telescope. Amazing!

https://www.spacetelescope.org/images/archive/top100/
http://www.spacetelescope.org/products/presentations/hst01/
http://hubblesite.org/gallery/album/entire

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3. Please view these amazing photos of the natural world from National Geographic:

http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photo-of-the-day/
http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photo-of-the-day/zebra-snow-ohio/
4. Please read the following poems by Mary Oliver, a celebrated American poet:

"Mockingbirds"

This morning
two mockingbirds
in the green field
were spinning and tossing
the white ribbons
of their songs
into the air.
I had nothing
better to do
than listen.
I mean this
seriously.

In Greece,
a long time ago,
an old couple
opened their door
to two strangers
who were,
it soon appeared,
not men at all,
but gods.
It is my favorite story--
how the old couple
had almost nothing to give
but their willingness
to be attentive--
but for this alone
the gods loved them

and blessed them--
when they rose
out of their mortal bodies,
like a million particles of water
from a fountain,
the light
swept into all the corners
of the cottage,
and the old couple,
shaken with understanding,
bowed down--
but still they asked for nothing
but the difficult life
which they had already.
And the gods smiled, as they
vanished,
clapping their great wings.

Wherever it was
I was supposed to be
this morning--
whatever it was I said
I would be doing--
I was standing
at the edge of the field--
I was hurrying
through my own soul,
opening its dark doors--
I was leaning out;
I was listening.
Goldenrod

On roadsides,
in fall fields,
in rumpy bunches,
saffron and orange and pale gold,

in little towers,
soft as mash,
sneeze-bringers and seed-bearers,
full of bees sand yellow beads and perfect flowerlets

and orange butterflies.
I don't suppose
much notice comes of it, except for honey,
and how it heartens the heart with its

blank blaze.
I don't suppose anything loves it, except, perhaps,
the rocky voids
filled by its dumb dazzle.

For myself,
I was just passing by, when the wind flared
and the blossoms rustled,
and the glittering pandemonium

leaned on me.
I was just minding my own business
when I found myself on their straw hillsides,
citron and butter-colored,

and was happy, and why not?
Are not the difficult labors of our lives
full of dark hours?
And what has consciousness come to anyway, so far,

that is better than these light-filled bodies?
All day
on their airy backbones
they toss in the wind,
they bend as though it was natural and godly to bend, 
they rise in a stiff sweetness, 
in the pure peace of giving 
one's gold away.

****

5. Please read the following traditional Native American prayer of thanksgiving: A Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Prayer.

GREETINGS TO THE NATURAL WORLD!

The People

Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People.

Now our minds are one.

The Earth Mother

We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our Mother, we send greetings and thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Waters

We give thanks to all the Waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms - waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of water.

Now our minds are one.

The Fish

We turn our minds to all the Fish life in the water. They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. So, we turn now to the Fish and send our greetings and thanks.
Now our minds are one.

The Plants

Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plant life. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together, we give thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come.

Now our minds are one.

The Food Plants

With one mind, we turn to honor and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and send them a greeting and thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Medicine Herbs

Now we turn to all the Medicine herbs of the world. From the beginning, they were instructed to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the Medicines and to the keepers of the Medicines.

Now our minds are one.

The Animals

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so.

Now our minds are one.

The Trees

We now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit,
beauty and other useful things. Many peoples of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree life.

Now our minds are one.

The Birds

We put our minds together as one and thank all the Birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The Eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the Birds - from the smallest to the largest - we send our joyful greetings and thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Four Winds

We are all thankful to the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages and giving us strength. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to the Four Winds.

Now our minds are one.

The Thunderers

Now we turn to the west where our Grandfathers, the Thunder Beings, live. With lightning and thundering voices, they bring with them the water that renews life. We bring our minds together as one to send greetings and thanks to our Grandfathers, the Thunderers.

Now our minds are one.

The Sun

We now send greetings and thanks to our eldest Brother, the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Brother, the Sun.

Now our minds are one.

Grandmother Moon
We put our minds together and give thanks to our oldest grandmother, the Moon, who lights the night-time sky. She is the leader of women all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother, the Moon.

Now our minds are one.

The Stars

We give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With our minds gathered together as one, we send greetings and thanks to all the Stars.

Now our minds are one.

The Enlightened Teachers

We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring Teachers.

Now our minds are one.

The Creator

Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator.

Now our minds are one.

Closing Words

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way.

Now our minds are one.
6. Please find a quiet place and meditate for 15 minutes. Let your thoughts drift naturally to what you have to be thankful for.

7. **Homework:** Once you have completed this work, I would like you to compose some kind of creative response to this material. It could be a poem or list titled "Thank You Poem" or "I Celebrate" and you can simply list all the things you're thankful for or that you would like to celebrate. Written responses must be at least 200 words in length.

Or your response can be a song, prayer, drawing, collage, painting, watercolor, sculpture, photograph, video, haiku or anything else you feel like doing! Please bring your thank you project in to share with the class.

- **November 21 – November 25:** Thanksgiving Break! Enjoy this time with your families.

- **November 27:** **What Is “Success”? Essay #3!** Please read Leo Tolstoy’s novella, “The Death of Ivan Illych” (pages 1242-1281). Today’s focus: Reflecting on the meaning of “success.” What are your core values? How do these core values shape the way you live your life and determine the choices you make? What are Ivan’s core values? How do these core values shape the way he lives his life and determine the choices he makes? What is your definition of “success” and living a successful life? Given the evidence in this story, what is Tolstoy’s definition of living a successful life? Please complete a 750-word essay responding to these questions and critically analyzing this story. Please devote at least two paragraphs in your essay to this question: What is happening, exactly, at the end of this story?

Some quotes to consider:

1. "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” Henry David Thoreau

2. “An arrogant person considers himself perfect. This is the chief harm of arrogance. It interferes with a person's main task in life - becoming a better person.” – Tolstoy

3. “Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.” -- Tolstoy

4. “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” --Mahatma Gandhi
5. “The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity.” –Tolstoy

**End-of-class activity:** Writing a letter to our future selves about living a meaningful life. What will we value? How will we live and what will we live for? When we come to the end of it and look back as Ivan does, how do we want to have lived? What will make us proud to list as our achievements? Please list them all in this letter to yourself.


• December 4: **salt.** Please read *salt* by nayyirah waheed, Please select any three poems to discuss and “teach” to the class. Each student will be teaching the three poems they select! Please complete a 500-word, multi-paragraph journal response for this assignment.

  Please select one poem form the beginning of the book, one from the middle, and one from the end!

• December 6: Meet in in library research room, A142. **Complete course evaluation online at MyCommnet.**

  Also, **More salt, please!** Please select three more poems to discuss with the class. What do we make of this poet who we know so little about? Is the lack of biographical information, photos of the author, an author’s Facebook page, and Instagram photos helpful to us in any way as readers? No written homework due today.

• December 13 (Thursday), 9:30 pm—10:50 pm: **Final Exam Period. Final Exam Essay due! Course evaluation and Good Angel/Bad Angel pot-luck party!**

  Final thoughts about literature and discuss final essay assignment! Also: Discussing any works we missed and didn’t discuss yet.

  **Essay #4 Assignment!**

  For our final essay of the semester, please reflect on what you have enjoyed, what you have learned, and what you will be taking away from this course. Research has shown that reflection is a powerful driver of learning. Educational theorist John Dewey believed that “we do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience.”

  **For our final essay, please discuss your thoughts about literature as a knowledge domain now that you’ve spent a semester studying it.** Paul Hirst claims that the fine arts, including literature, are a unique and important knowledge domain. As such, literature constitutes and embodies a valuable form of human knowledge that complements other
domains like math and science. What would you say to Professor Hirst about that? Is he right? And what specifically is it that literature gives us that other knowledge domains don’t?

To do this, please reread Hirst’s comments about knowledge domains. Please also consider again the key issues we began the semester with:

Key questions we’ll be attempting to answer this semester: Why should anyone care about literature? Why should anyone bother reading it? Or put another way, we might ask: “What’s in it for me? Especially since I’m not an English major? This feels like another mysterious and time- and life-wasting requirement.” Why are courses like this required for students even if they are going to be accountants and health care providers—very far removed form English majors? Why do we even have “core distribution” General Education requirements? Wouldn’t we all be better off if students could just take more courses in their major where the content would actually be useful to their lives? =:)

Your goal with this essay is to summarize everything you’ve learned about literature this semester. Please discuss at least three different works of literature in this essay.

**Length: 1250 words**, typed, double-spaced. Please use 8th edition MLA format to document your sources.

**Required: Creative Cover Art!** Please create an original work of art for the cover of your final essay. You can do whatever you want except you have to do it all yourself. No clip art allowed! The top three covers will be voted on in class and receive an award!

You have two additional assignments for today:

1. **Please pick your favorite line, stanza, paragraph, or poem from the readings we did this semester to read it to the class for your farewell.** Please discuss why you chose the material you did.

2. **Please share with us your final thoughts about literature as a knowledge domain.**