

English 215-005: Introduction to English Studies
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee • Fall 2016
NW Quad. Bld. D Rm. 1961 • T&R 11am-12:15pm

Instructor: Kristopher Purzycki
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Office Hours: Tuesdays and
Thursdays 9:30-10:30am
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Course Description: When we're asked to define "English studies," we may conjure up any number of definitions, theories, and practices that reflect our past experiences and understanding. In truth, the discipline we call "English" is difficult to define and is always expanding with every new discovery, technology, and interpretation. Rather than providing an exhaustive survey of English studies, the aim of this section is to examine how the English language is crucial in asserting our place within the community.

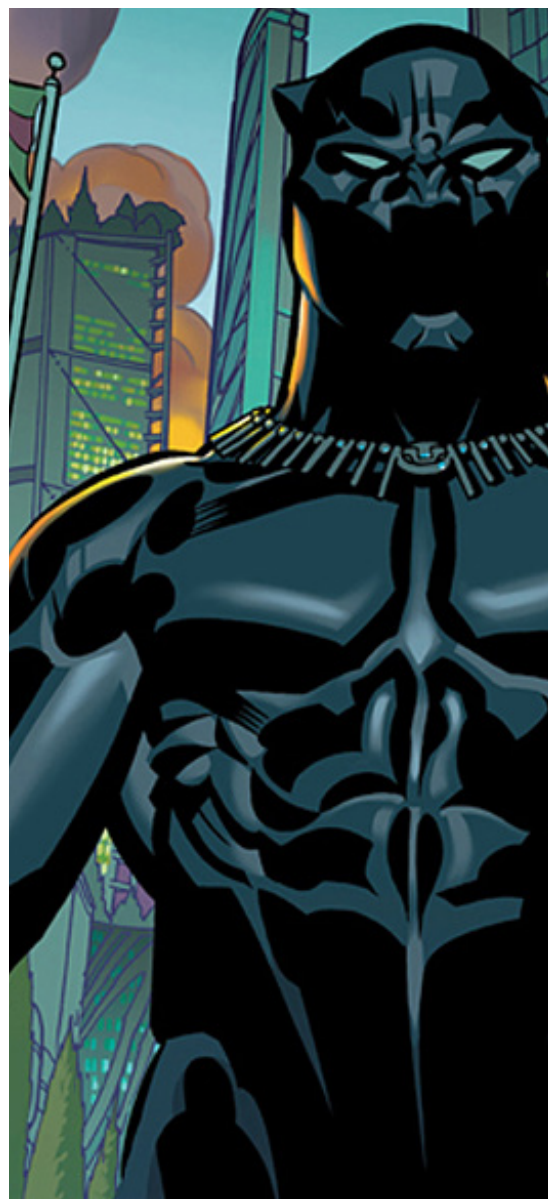
As we will discuss throughout this semester, the study of English is not simply a competence with grammar or even a knowledge of the major authors and works. In addition to these qualities, the discipline engages points of view that are not our own and how these perspectives are susceptible to multiple interpretations.

We will explore several texts that might be considered a threshold in our interaction with others. Whether it be to question religious dogma, deliberate one's freedom, or simply attesting "I am here," the English language has recorded and preserved the voices of those that would otherwise be ignored, reminding us of the struggle for quality of life.

Our study of English also includes the exploration of texts that communicate through means other than the written word. The moving image, the song lyric, and the game mechanic become just as critical as the layout of text within the book. Ink and paper are accompanied by the celluloid frames, Wii remotes, graphic novels, and hyperlinks. What new opportunities and challenges have emerged with these formats and technologies? Just as we once used the written word to assert our identity, how does the tweet compare? Can we consider a level in *Tomb Raider* a form of composition? How has the digital altered the our understanding of reading and writing?

Required Texts: (available at Woodland Pattern Bookstore)

1. *Meet Me Halfway* by Jennifer Morales (978-0299303648)
2. *200 Nights and a Day* by Margaret Rozga (978-0981516318)
3. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz (978-1594483295)
4. *The Black Panther: A Nation Under Our Feet (Book 1)* (978-1302900533); **published Sept. 13, 2016**
5. *Population: 485* by Michael Perry (978-0061363504)
6. *Women of Brewster Place* by Gloria Naylor (978-0140066906)
7. *Ismael* by Daniel Quinn (978-0553375404)



Reading Structure of Course

Each week, our readings will include a larger literary *focus work* along with shorter, complementary *framing texts* that will include poetry, academic articles, videos, and essays.

Framing texts are intended to provide us with a springboard for analysis and discussion of the focus text for the following week but should also be considered (and referred to) whenever plausible. In other words, we will use the framing texts as “lenses” through which to view other works that we engage in the class. The framing work not only provides a lens with which to view other works, it also gives us an opportunity to explore the different genres of academic writing. When we discuss the framing work on Thursday, we will also spend some time breaking down the structure of that piece and the methods it uses to convey information.

Although the **focus works** certainly entail the bulk of our reading over the semester, they also serve as examples that we can use to discuss various theories and approaches to the study of English. Because these readings are much longer than framing texts, adequate time should be allotted to sufficiently engage them.

Reading Schedule: Generally speaking, Tuesdays will entail discussions of the focus works and Thursdays will be dedicated to discussing the framing work. Works are listed according to the day when we will be discussing that work. For example, on Tuesday Sept. 13, you should come prepared to discuss *Meet Me Halfway*. On the following Thursday, we will continue discussing the novel but will do so considering bell hooks’ “Aesthetic of Blackness” which will also help us transition into the following week’s focus text, *The Women of Brewster Place*.

Please be aware that the following schedule may be adjusted with sufficient notice.



Week One (9/6-9/10): Introductions

- Tuesday: Syllabus and Introductions
- Thursday: “How to Read a Poem” and selections from *200 Nights and a Day*

Week Two (9/11-9/17): Diversity in the City

- Tuesday: *Meet Me Halfway*
- Thursday: “An Aesthetic of Blackness” by bell hooks

Week Three (9/18-9/24): Close Reading

- Tuesday: *Women of Brewster Place* pp.1-106
- Thursday: “The Ethics of Reading” by Jane Gallop

Week Four (9/25-10/1): Film

- Tuesday: *Women of Brewster Place* pp.107-192
- Thursday: “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” by Laura Mulvey



Week Five (10/2-10/8): Digital Texts

- Tuesday: “A Cyborg Manifesto” by Donna Haraway and “Cyberqueen” by Porpentine
- Thursday: excerpts from Scott McCloud

Week Six (10/9-10/15): Comics

- Tuesday: *The Black Panther: A Nation Under Our Feet (Book 1)*
- Thursday: “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” by Stuart Hall

Week Seven (10/16-10/22): Queer Theory

- Tuesday: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* pp.1-75
- Thursday: “Go Gaga: Anarchy, Chaos, and the Wild” by Jack Halberstam

Week Eight (10/23 – 10/29): Disability Studies

- Tuesday: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* pp.77-201
- Thursday: “Toward a Poetics of Vision, Space, and the Body” by Dirksen and Bauman

Week Nine (10/30 – 11/5): (Short Paper Due)

- Tuesday: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* pp.205-335
- Thursday: excerpts from *Sand County Almanac*

Week Ten (11/6 – 11/12): Ecocriticism

- Tuesday: *Ismael* pp.3-148
- Thursday: “Writing Takes Place” by Sidney Dobrin

Week Eleven (11/13 – 11/19): Rural Landscape

- Tuesday: *Ismael* pp.149-263
- Thursday: “The Rural Gaze” by Simone Abram

Week Twelve (11/20 – 11/26): Thanksgiving

- Tuesday: *Population: 485* pp.1-127
- Thursday: No class for Thanksgiving

Week Thirteen (11/27 – 12/3): Actor-Netowrk Theory

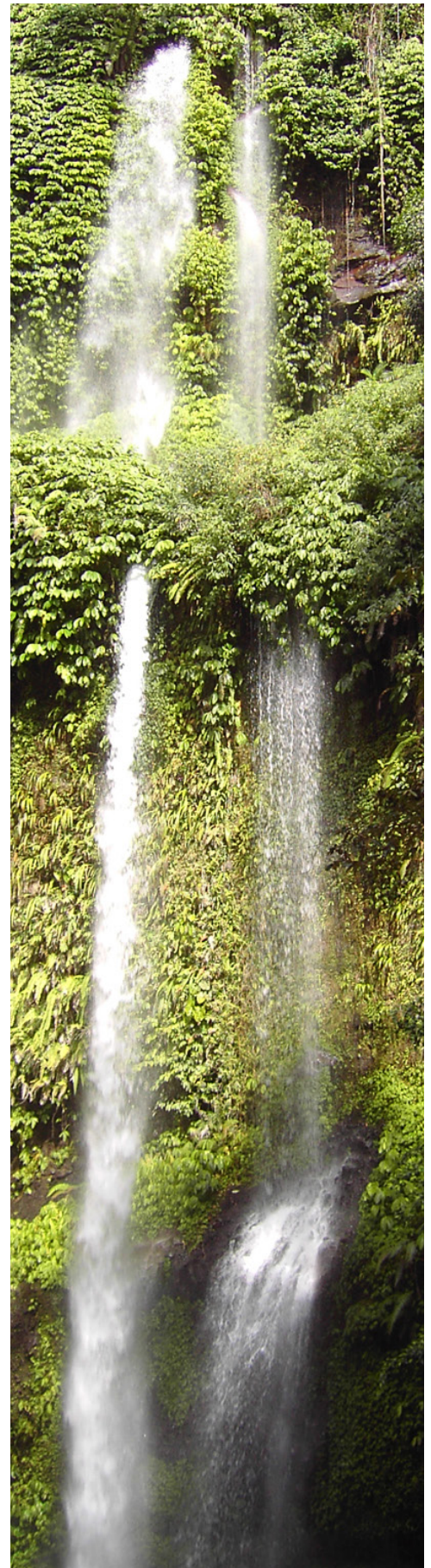
- Tuesday: *Population: 485* pp.128-234
- Thursday: “A Humanistic Rationale for Technical Writing” by Carolyn R. Miller

Week Fourteen (12/4 – 12/10): Research and Editing

- Tuesday: “Who Killed Rex” by Clay Spinuzzi
- Thursday: Research Project Draft Due/Writing Workshops

Finals Week:

- Final Class (12/13):
- Final paper due 12/20



Grading Breakdown:

Discussion Leader: 10%

Participation and Attendance: 25%

Short paper: 15%

Research Project Draft 25%

Final Project: 25%

Grading rubrics will be provided for the short paper, project draft, and final submission.

Participation and Attendance

Despite the reading list above, the work that we do in class is arguably just as – if not more – important the reading and composing that this course entails. In addition to discussing these works, we'll also be engaged in various activities that encapsulate the topics for that week. In addition to your own creativity and experience, your peers are your greatest assets. Therefore, I consider your active involvement in class to be a major portion of your final grade. Please make every effort to make it to class!

Absence policy: The attendance policy for this section follows that which is prescribed by the English department: more than four absences - the equivalent of two weeks - of any kind will result in failure of this course. I don't require excuses in the event that you miss class but it will be your responsibility to Please plan your semester accordingly and anticipate that there will be events that will prevent you from attending class. Letting me know that you will be absent ahead of time is advisable.

Missing the day you are scheduled to be discussion leader will result in a zero for that portion of your final grade! If you foresee needing a day off that you are scheduled to be the discussion leader, please ask your classmates to switch with you.

Tardiness policy: As a matter of courtesy to your classmates, it is also important that you arrive to class on time and make every effort to stay for the duration of the session. Arriving 10 minutes or more after the start of class or leaving 10 minutes or more earlier will count as an absence.



Discussion Leader

Once during the semester, you will be responsible for leading the discussion on one of the readings we will encounter during class. On the day that you sign up to present, be prepared to provide a brief (250 word or the equivalent) report on the focus or framing work for that day. This should include a *brief* summary, the important concepts and terms that emerge from that text, as well as context that may help our interpretation of this work. You will also be responsible for posing at least one question to the class that starts our discussion for the day. This report will be turned in at the end of class for grading. Feel free to use any supplementary or presentation materials you feel are important. If you have an activity in mind, please let me know ahead of time so that I may plan accordingly.

Short Paper

For this short work, which may or may not contribute to your final project, you will conduct a close read of a short text (essay, film, song, game etc.) and apply one or more of the theories you've encountered so far. In approximately 1000 words (or the equivalent), please utilize one of the framing texts we have used in class *plus at least one more reference* to analyze the work. More importantly, however, you should also engage these theories with your own perspective and demonstrate your engagement with both framing theory and subject of analysis.

Final Project

You will be responsible for composing a final, comprehensive project that demonstrates your ability to analyze a single or group of texts. This project will be constructed through several stages where you discuss, draft, and revise (and revise some more). Much like the short paper, this analysis will be conducted through a perspective that combines existing theory with your own critical interpretation. However, this paper should expand on the "lens" you've selected to include other approaches to construct a unique framework. This project does not have to be a traditional essay but may be in composed using a medium of your choice.

1. Project Discussion (Thursday, December 1st)

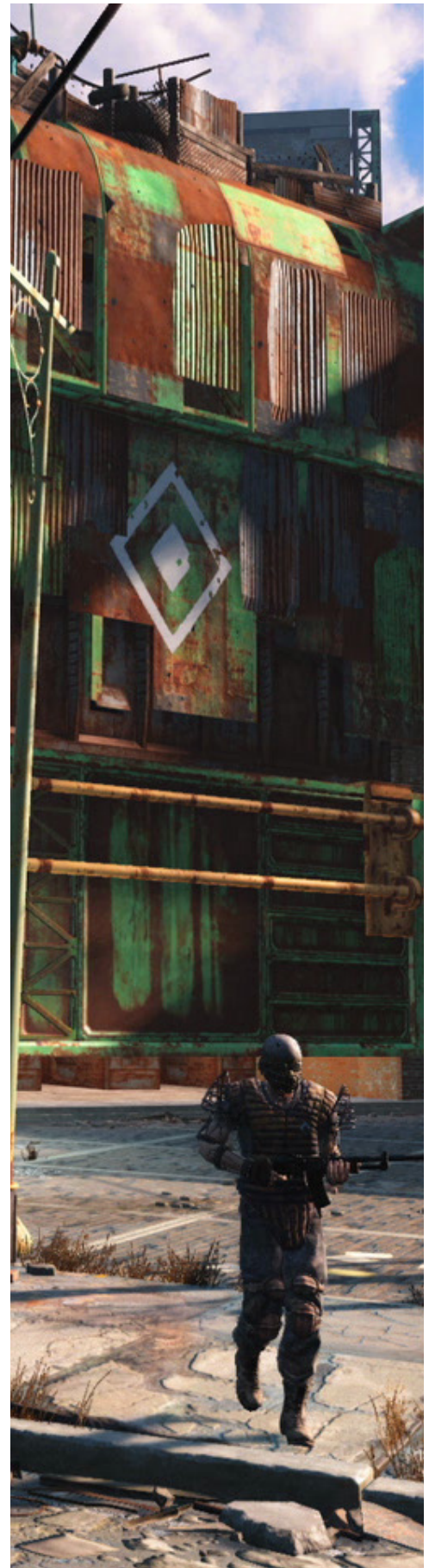
Following the week of Thanksgiving, you will be responsible for providing a brief overview of your final project. This presentation should be no more than 3 minutes and should describe the text you're examining, the genre or medium you would like to use, and the theoretical framework(s) you are using to examine that work.

2. Draft (Due December 6th)

With the feedback you receive from your peers and instructor, you will prepare a comprehensive draft of your project for review.

3. Final Project Revision

This final revision will demonstrate significant changes from your initial draft and address the feedback you receive from the class.



Important Dates

September 19: Last Day to Add/Drop or Change Sections

October 3: Last Day to Drop Without 'W'

October 28: Last Day to Drop

November 24: Thanksgiving (No class)

December 13: Last Class

December 20: Final Paper Due

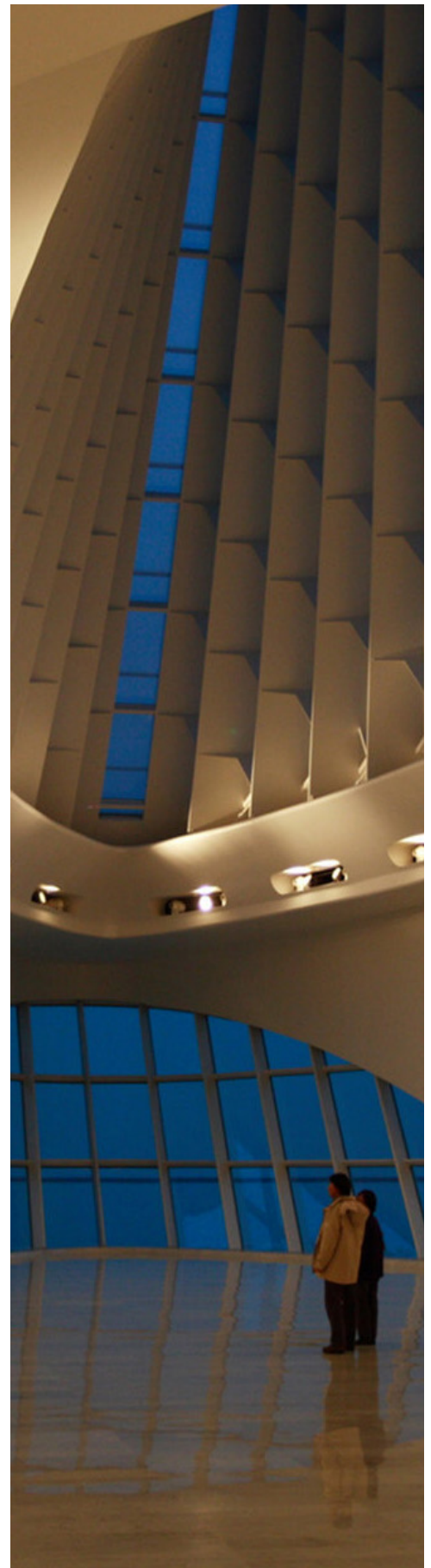
General Education Requirement

This course meets the criteria for General Education Requirement Humanities credit at UWM by addressing “questions, issues and concepts basic to the formation of character and the establishment of values in a human context; ... induc[ing] an organic study of letters and knowledge; [and providing] literary, aesthetic and intellectual experiences which enrich and enlighten human life,” as specified in UWM Faculty Document No. 1382. The course uses humanistic means of inquiry, including critical use of sources and evaluation of evidence, judgment and expression of ideas, and organizing, analyzing and using creatively substantial bodies of knowledge drawn from both primary and secondary sources. In addition to addressing other GER Humanities criteria, the course introduces substantial and coherent bodies of historical, cultural and literary knowledge to illuminate human events in their complexities and varieties, and enhances appreciation of literary and other arts by thoughtful, systematic analyses of language and artifacts such as novels, stories and films.

UWM seeks Essential Learning Outcomes throughout the undergraduate curriculum in four key areas: Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World; Intellectual and Practical Skills; Personal and Social Responsibility; and Integrative Learning. GER courses in particular contribute to these learning outcomes. Student work in GER courses is assessed individually for course-specific outcomes and goals, and holistically as part of departmental self-assessment of learning outcomes throughout the major.

Grading and Assessment

In English 215, students will demonstrate learning outcomes in “Knowledge of Human Cultures” and in “Intellectual and Practical Skills”: by engagement with key questions in literary and other cultural artifacts, and by producing written literary or cultural analysis that reflects thoughtful, informed engagement with source material and standards of evidence and argumentation in humanistic disciplines. This outcome will be assessed through review of papers written in the course, a requirement of all English GER courses, via the rubric which appears on the following page.



	Content	Organization	Mechanics & Editing	Other
A	Highly original. Clear thesis and argument. No factual or logical inaccuracies. Minimal summary; uses evidence, not opinion; represents secondary sources accurately.	Well-organized, even at paragraph level. Reader led through a logical sequence; paper stays on topic.	Accurate use of citation conventions. Virtually no mechanical or formatting errors.	Precise word choices; vivid, fresh language. Avoids wordiness. Informal language only when clearly appropriate. Establishes ethos strongly through knowledge of subject. Entertains, educates, and makes reader want to know more.
B	Less original; may have minor factual errors. May use secondary sources uncritically or with mild inaccuracy	Well-organized, but structure sometimes disjointed. Goes off-topic on occasion.	Some awkwardly worded passages. Some errors, but not enough to distract the reader.	Language sometime too general or less precise than the A writing. Enough errors to suggest the paper needs more polish and thought.
C	Relies more on summary than original interpretation or argument. Restates common or familiar arguments or interpretations uncritically. Secondary sources do not clearly contribute to or support the argument, or may be presented inaccurately.	Basically well organized, though individual paragraphs may be disunified or misplaced. Logical and apparent plan overall.	More frequent awkwardness, with distracting errors, although meaning is clear. Citations improperly formatted or absent.	Language is competent but wordy, general, imprecise, or trite.
D	No original contribution; restatement or misstatement of the ideas of others. Doesn't interpret, but just repeats or reports.	Poor organization; reader has little sense of a plan even though a thesis or main point is recognizable.	Some sentences may be so confused that their meaning does not clearly emerge.	Words may be imprecise, incorrect, trite, or vague. In general, however, the paper is understandable.
F	Lacks clear thesis or point.	Language muddled and unclear in several spots.	Highly distracting mechanical errors.	Shows little care or attention to detail on the part of the author.

GER Course Assessment

All GER courses in the Department require significant student writing, including papers of varying length.

The Department samples GER courses in each semester, including primarily papers from the required ENG 215 course, evaluating them on a holistic scale, according to the following rubric:

1. Work does not meet disciplinary standards for critical analysis, evidence-based argument, and interpretation of literary or cultural artifacts. Work does not meet expectations for clarity of thought and language, and for edited academic prose. Work does not show student awareness of conventions for analysis and expression.
2. [Work quality falls between 1 and 3]
3. Work shows some awareness of conventions for analysis and expression but may contain distracting errors. Work meets some disciplinary standards for critical analysis, evidence-based argument, and interpretation of literary or cultural artifacts, but inconsistent in doing so. Work meets some expectations for clarity of thought and language, and for edited academic prose, but is inconsistent in doing so.
4. [Work quality falls between 3 and 5]
5. Work meets most or all expectations for analysis and interpretation, argues from evidence, and is written clearly and without significant mechanical errors, showing student awareness and achievement the learning outcomes for the course.

Numeric scores are used to generate snapshots of how well GER courses meet the department's stated learning outcomes and what, if anything, needs to be altered when the course is next offered.

Syllabus Addendum: Policy Links

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1. Students with disabilities. Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner. <http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf>

2. Religious observances. Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>

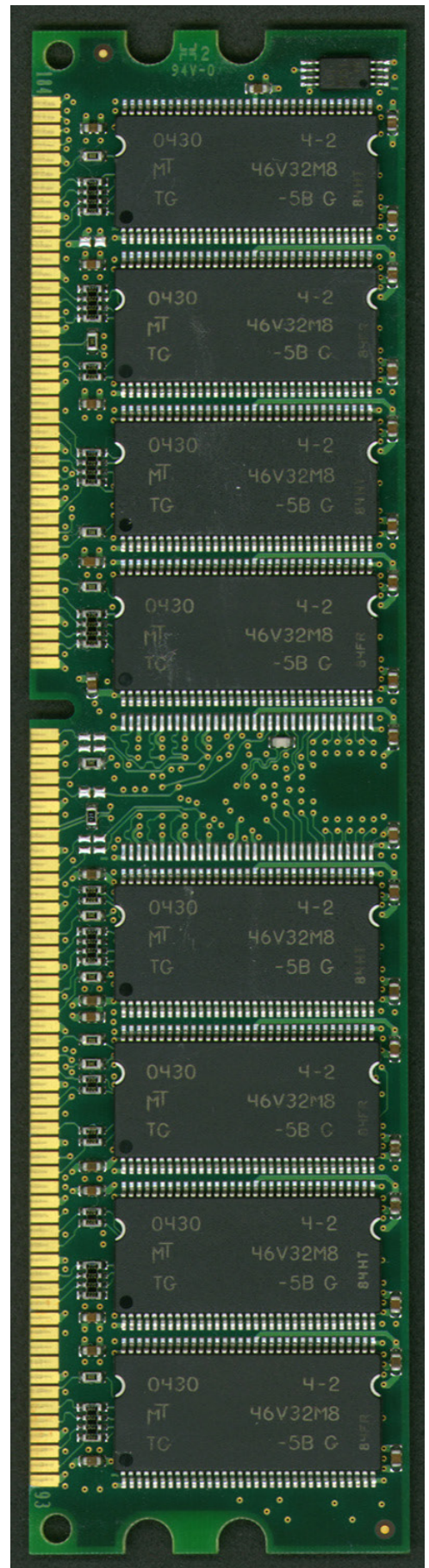
3. Students called to active military duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.
Students: http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm
Employees: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S40.htm>
(Editorially Revised, 3/25/09)

4. Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment).
Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf>

5. Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

6. Complaint procedures. Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm>

7. Grade appeal procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School.
<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm>



1 Supplement to UWM FACULTY DOCUMENT NO. 1895, October 21, 1993; Revised March 16, 2006; Revised January 24, 2008; Editorially Revised 8/26/11.

Syllabus Addendum: Credit Hours

The university has asked departments to break down for students how much time they will spend working on various aspects of their classes.

As the UW System assumes “that study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours” (UWS ACPS 4), a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. You may find it necessary to spend additional time on a course; the numbers below only indicate that the course will not require any less of your time.

In this traditional, face-to-face course (as opposed to online or hybrid), you will spend a minimum of:

- 37.5 hours in the classroom
- 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
- 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

Notes

The breakdown above is for a standard 15-week semester. In a 16-week semester, the numbers breakdown above changes as follows. Traditional:

- 40 hours in classroom,
 - 80 for preparation
 - 24 for papers and exams

Again, these are minimums.

UWM Credit Hour Policy, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Faculty Document No. 2838, can be found at:

https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/2838_Credit_Hour_Policy.pdf

UWS ACPS 4, the University Of Wisconsin System Policy On Academic Year Definition And Assorted Derivatives, can be found at

<http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acps/acps4.pdf>



Academic Integrity: Since improperly conducted research is destructive, it is extremely important that we understand the acceptable practices to avoid plagiarism. Like any educational and professional organization, plagiarism is considered a serious offense at UWM. Any incident of plagiarism is likely to result in failure of the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

So we all better understand the problem of poor research and/or plagiarism, we will discuss the issue a bit more in-depth early in the semester. We will also go over several of the practices, such as quoting authors and properly citing sources, that you'll need throughout your time in college.

Helpful Campus Resources: The Writing Center is a free resource available to every student at UWM. It is highly recommended that you utilize the Writing Center regardless of your performance. See www.writingcenter.uwm.edu for more information.

Student Accessibility Center (SAC): If you have a health condition or disability that may affect your ability to meet any of the requirements of the course, you must bring a VISA form to class that has been completed by a SAC counselor within the first week of class. With the SAC, we will then establish a plan that allows you to successfully meet the goals of the course. Students with conditions that are not documented by the SAC at the beginning of the semester will not receive any exceptions to any of the course policies, so it is important that you visit the center as soon as possible.

Support Services: If you ever feel overwhelmed, overly stressed, or are experiencing extreme life difficulties, please let me know. UWM has several resources that offer student support – please see me if you would like more information.

Accessible and Equal Environment: Providing access to a diverse student population is embedded in the UWM philosophy. *Inappropriate behavior towards any other student will not be tolerated.* If you need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Also, please see the syllabus section pertaining to the Student Accessibility Center (SAC).

