

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 1020E (003)
Understanding Literature Today
Fall/Winter 2025-26**Instructor:** Mark McDayter**Antirequisites:** English 1022E, English 1035E.**Prerequisites:** Grade 12U English or permission of the Department. For part time students who have been admitted without the OSSD, this permission will be granted as a matter of course.

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

Course Description

By studying a broad range of exciting and important literary works from the past and present, this course will increase your understanding and appreciation not just of the richness and power of the works themselves, but also of the role of literature in reflecting and shaping our perceptions of the world and of ourselves. 1.0 course

Objectives

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

- Identify and analyze basic elements of literature, such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, diction, tone, figures of speech, syntax, and rhythm;
- Write an essay about a work of literature, containing an effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text;
- Research critical commentary on literary works;
- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, especially those obtained through the Internet;
- Integrate outside research materials and references to the original text into an essay through use of quotations and paraphrases;
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively;
- Document essays using MLA format.

Course Materials*The Word for World is Forest* (Required) -- \$23.99*Things Fall Apart* (Required) -- \$19.95*V for Vendetta* (Required) -- \$33.99

Total Cost: \$77.93

Methods of Evaluation

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

Assignment 1 (Thesis Draft) – 5%
First Term Essay – 15%
Assignment 2 (Annotated Bibliography – 5%
Second Term Essay – 20%
First Term Test – 10%
Participation – 10%
Exam – 35%

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

Late penalties for assignments are 1% per business day, to a maximum of 10 days.

Participation grades will be assigned on the basis of attendance at and/or contributions to tutorials

Statements

Academic Consideration

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

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

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

Instructors may designate one assignment or assessment as exempt from this allowance. In this course, requests for academic consideration pertaining to the final exam **must** be accompanied by supporting documentation.

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

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

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

Attendance

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

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

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

Intellectual Property/Copyright

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

Religious Accommodation

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

Support Services

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

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

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

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

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

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

AI may be used as a research tool, but should not be the sole source for research, and should be used with care. AI may *not* be used to generate the text submitted for evaluation. Please note that the student is responsible for any issues or errors that may arise from their use of AI.

Academic Integrity Tutorial

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

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

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

Plagiarism Checking

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

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

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

FIRST TERM

Week 1 – Tuesday, 9 September, 2025

Pulleys and Wires

Philip Larkin, "This Be the Verse" ([LION](#))

John Donne, "The Flea" ([RPO](#))

Tutorial 1: Introductions; Metaphor and Metonymy

Week 2 – Tuesday, 16 September, 2025

Samuel Taylor Coleridge "The Eolian Harp" ([RPO](#))

W. H. Auden "Musee de Beaux Arts" ([LION](#))

Tutorial 2: Designing a Thesis

Week 3 – Tuesday, 23 September, 2025

Irony, Parody, and Mock

Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal* ([Online](#))

Tutorial 3: Irony

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – Tuesday, 30 September, 2025

NO CLASSES OR TUTORIALS

Week 4 – Tuesday, 7 October, 2025

Geoffrey Chaucer, from *The Canterbury Tales*, "The Knight's Tale" ([Online](#)) / "The Miller's Tale" ([Online](#))

(Listen to a few minutes of this reading in the original Middle English of "The Knight's Tale")

Tutorial 4: Structuring an Argument

Week 5 – Tuesday, 14 October, 2025

Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* ([LION](#))

Tutorial 5: Mock Epic and Travesty

Week 6 – Tuesday, 21 October, 2025

Parody on Stage (cont'd)

Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* ([LION](#))

Tutorial 6: Staging Renaissance Drama

Assignment 1 (Thesis Draft) Due

Week 7 – Tuesday, 28 October, 2025

Ends of Empire I

Joseph Conrad, *The Heart of Darkness* ([Online](#))

Tutorial 7: Literary Modernism

Fall Reading Week – 3-9 November, 2025

NO CLASSES OR TUTORIALS

Week 8 – Tuesday, 11 November, 2025

Ends of Empire II

Joseph Conrad, *The Heart of Darkness* ([Online](#))

Tutorial 8: Sentence Structures and Commas (Revised and Updated)

Week 9 – Tuesday, 18 November, 2025 (Revised and Updated)

Rudyard Kipling, "Mark of the Beast" (from *Life's Handicap* 1891, pp. 208-24 — [Online](#))

Tutorial 9: IN-TUTORIAL TEST (Revised and Updated)

Week 10 – Tuesday, 25 November, 2025 (Revised and Updated)

Derek Walcott, "A Far Cry from Africa" ([LION](#))

Jeanette Armstrong, "History Lesson" ([OWL](#))

Tutorial 10: Critical Self-Reflection

Week 11 – Tuesday, 2 December, 2025

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Tutorial 11: The Novel

First Term Essay Due (Revised and Updated)

Week 12 – Tuesday, 9 December, 2025

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Cont'd)

Tutorial 12: Our Friend the Paragraph

SECOND TERM

Week 13 – Tuesday, 6 January, 2026

Sexual Intercourse Began in 1963

Philip Larkin, "High Windows" ([LION](#))

Irving Layton, "Misunderstanding" ([Online](#))

Kim Addonizio, "What Do Women Want?" ([Online](#))

Tutorial 13: The Literature of Opposition

Week 14 – Tuesday, 13 January, 2026

No, It Didn't Really

Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress" ([RPO](#))

Mary Wortley Montagu, "The Lover" ([RPO](#))

Tutorial 14: Research Methodologies I

Week 15 – Tuesday, 20 January, 2026

Sex on Stage (Almost)

William Wycherley, "The Country Wife" ([Open Anthology](#))

Tutorial 15: Research Methodologies II

Week 16 – Tuesday, 27 January, 2026

William Wycherley, "The Country Wife" ([Open Anthology](#))

Tutorial 16: The "Proper" Uses of Poetry

Week 17 – Tuesday, 3 February, 2026

Sex and Identity

Eliza Haywood, "Fantomina" ([Online](#))

Tutorial 17: Women and Writing

Week 18 – Tuesday, 10 February, 2026

Sex and Identity II

Tutorial 18: Close Reading and *Goblin Market*

READING WEEK, 14-22 February, 2026

NO CLASSES OR TUTORIALS

Week 19 – Tuesday, 24 February, 2026

Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market* ([RPO](#)) (REVISED)

Tutorial 19: Peer Review Exercise I

Assignment 2 (Annotated Bibliography) Due

Week 20 – Tuesday, 3 March, 2026

And for a Change of Pace: Death!

Thomas Grey, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* ([RPO](#)) (REVISED)

Tutorial 20: Peer Review Exercise II

Week 21 – Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

Tony Harrison, *V* (Online) (REVISED)

<https://youtu.be/WPutBM7zfv8>

https://youtu.be/htVdlq8ID_g

<https://youtu.be/rqsJSAJwmOQ>

<https://youtu.be/gtEaDEdh2zE>

Tutorial 21: *V Is For Vendetta* (Movie Night!)

Week 22 – Tuesday, 17 March, 2026

Fragments, and a Really Famous Poem

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (RPO) (REVISED)

Tutorial 22: Tradition and the Individual Talent

T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (Online)

Week 23 – Tuesday, 24 March, 2026

Fragments Revisited

Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Word for World Is Forest*

Tutorial 23: Ecocriticism

Week 24 – Tuesday, 31 March, 2026

Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Word for World Is Forest*

Tutorial 24: TBA

Week 25 – Tuesday, 7 April, 2026

Alan Moore and David Lloyd, *V Is for Vendetta*

Tutorial 25: Exam Review and Prep

Second Term Essay Due