

Classroom Policies, Academic Year 2017-18

College literature courses – all college literature courses, I dare say, but my college literature courses specifically – are not courses about reading about books. They are courses about reading books. Therefore:

1A. You have to get the books. “Get” can mean “buy,” at the bookstore or online, or it can mean “borrow” or “rent” or “click on.” However, one or another of those verbs must apply. Get the books.

1B. And bring each book to class on the day it’s due to be discussed.

1C. Really: if you aren’t going to get the books, don’t take the course.

2. “But isn’t everything online? Aren’t books free, like music? And anyway, aren’t you going to give us a study guide so we don’t have to like *read* the books?”

Answers: no, no, and no.



2. You have to come to class. This is not an online course. It is not going to become an online course. Texting (“something came up summarize class for the last 3 weeks i need a a 😊”) doesn’t substitute for coming to class. I don’t promise to take roll every single day, but I do promise to lower your grade by a letter or two if you keep missing classes after you’ve been warned. Of course I’ll accept legitimate excuses for absence, but for those I’ll ask for documentation from (for instance) a doctor or a coach. And if your schedule will force you to miss a lot of class, please don’t take the course.

3. You have to do all the writing assignments. Don’t play the odds about missing work. Miss one graded assignment and your final grade will drop by the applicable percentage – typically, one or two letters. Miss two assignments and your final grade will drop all the way to F.

4A. You have to submit all written work in revised printout form.

4B. Keyword 1 is *revised*. As a matter of reader psychology, when you rewrite a paper you should rewrite it all – including (yes! sorry!) the parts I didn't mark. Reader Psychology 100: unless you're Shakespeare, nobody will want to read the same paper of yours twice. Compare: "I know the dessert fell on the floor and then the dog started to eat it, but I've wiped it off. Enjoy!"

4C. Keyword 2 is *printout*. I've had too many bad experiences with email.

5. To judge from us professors' recent experience, somewhere between a quarter and a third of you are going to experience a graduation-endangering crisis this semester. If it happens to you, please be aware that lots of good help is available in the Student Services Center, from help with study habits to help with relationship problems to help with drugs and alcohol. So if you find yourself in academic trouble,

don't just hope for a miracle week after week while the undone work piles up and the problem gets worse. Effective, non-miraculous help is available right here, right now. To start getting it, call Counseling and Student Development, 956-7927.

6. You have to understand the note below about academic honesty.

The note about academic honesty

Don't sign your name to another person's work. A ghostwritten paper, or a paper copied without acknowledgment from another source, in whole or in part (even in small part), will get you an F in the course. One of the hundreds of download paper services on the Web is headed by a banner that assures its customers, "It isn't cheating, it's collaboration," and that's cute but wrong. It's cheating, and if you cheat in this course you die.

So how do you collaborate? Simple answer: if you got an idea or a phrase from somebody else – in person, from a printed source, or from the Net – acknowledge the fact, in writing.

That's really all there is to it. Nobody expects you to come up with thoughts unprecedented in the history of the world, expressed in a completely new way. There's a continuity of thought, and everybody gets help with everything. That's the reason we live in a society. So if you get help with your thinking – yes, even if your helper is named Spark or Pedia – that's fine. To keep up your part of the social contract, all you have to do is say, publicly, "Thank you, Spark or Pedia. Here's where my ideas leave off and yours begin." There's a standard way of saying that in academic writing, and any English 100 handbook can show you the formats.

If you aren't sure about any of this, **ASK ME**. And ask *before* you turn the paper in.