

English 150: Argument and Research Syllabus

David Arnold
Office: CCC 440
715-346-2638

Sec 3: Online/Asynchronous
Office Hours: MW 12:00-1:00
David.Arnold@uwsp.edu

This class has many objectives. Though a close focus on specifically argumentative texts we will explore ways to start thinking systematically about writing, and also about the principles of argument and the methods of research.

Throughout the course you will develop skills that will enable you to identify the basic components and elements that shape successful writing, such as topic, purpose, genre, and audience. Using these skills you will work to compose articulate, grammatically correct, and organized pieces of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience. Further, you will develop skills enabling you to critique your own and others' writing and to provide effective and useful feedback to improve your and your colleagues' communication.

Our class will be transpiring entirely online using the Canvas OLP (online learning platform). Using Zoom and other space-age technologies we'll get together asynchronously (at no particular time; whenever works). This asynchronous material (mostly videos of me in my living room) will be available through links on our Canvas page.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

We will be using the following texts:

- *Novels and Stories* by Zora Neale Hurston (rental)
- *Complete Novels* by Dashiell Hammett (rental)
- *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare* (rental)
- *Rules for Writers* 9th edition by Diana Hacker (purchase)
- Also, I strongly recommend that you set yourself up with a current hardback college dictionary.

These are all available at the bookstore. If you're off campus the bookstore can mail them to you.

In addition, we will view the following films:

- *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1940)
- *Henry V* (Laurence Olivier, 1944)
- *Henry V* (Kenneth Branagh, 1989)

These films will be available to stream through the Library. I'll provide links on our Canvas page.

Your grade in this class will be based on your continued conscientious application to the things we're reading, discussing, and writing. Specifically, I will evaluate the following tasks:

- A Writing / Viewing Journal
- Three "in-class" essays
- A final Portfolio containing revisions of your in-class essays

The breakdown of your grade will work roughly as follows:

- Journal: 300 points
- Three in-class Essays: 100 points apiece
- Portfolio: 300 points
- Preparation, Participation: 100 points

Reading: Plan to have the reading and viewing for a given week **done before that week begins.** The readings and films will provide the bases for our Journal assignments, and we will very frequently be doing exercises and other activities that will require intimate knowledge of what you've read. This class will be miserable if you haven't read what we're working on, and great fun if you have. **Bottom line: Do the reading.**

Viewing: You'll be required to watch several films **out of class.** As with the readings, this must be done before the beginning of that week as the films will be an integral part of class work. Specific versions of the films are indicated in the syllabus, and I'll provide links for viewing.

Journals: A Journal entry is due before the beginning of each week (unless otherwise noted), and we will be evaluating and workshopping them

exhaustively. A list of Journal prompts resides in the Journal Prompts module on our Canvas page. Journal entries must be typed, double-spaced, and (unless otherwise noted) must amount to at least 300 precisely-chosen, interesting, moving words (about a full typed double-spaced page). **Late Journal entries will not be accepted.**

The Journal will be the site of a large percentage of your writing in this course. In it you will reflect on things we read and view, respond to specific questions, and begin marshaling the ideas that you will later develop in your papers. The journal will also give you an opportunity to reflect on your conceptions of yourself and the things you value, and develop your own ideas and voice. The Journal is not quite as structured as the papers, and is an arena where you can express yourself honestly and openly. Nonetheless successful journaling requires careful thought and effort. **Spelling, grammar, mechanics, and strong writing are all important parts of this exercise.**

Think of the Journal as prewriting or exploratory writing, writing that you work through in order to massage and refine your ideas and understanding of a subject. While you hope it will impress people, you don't necessarily expect it to wind up in a formal draft in its current form. We will (anonymously) read and evaluate Journal entries regularly in class, so put forth effort that you will feel comfortable having your classmates read. Journals are scored holistically and will typically receive a "check," "plus," or "minus." Point-wise, this translates to roughly 26.5 for a check, 28.5 for a plus, and 22.5 for a minus (basically a B+, an A, or a C).

Major Writing Assignments: You will draft three papers under timed conditions over the course of the class, closely-focused arguments in response to specific prompts stemming from our reading and viewing. Topics are available on our Canvas page and will be discussed well in advance of due dates. You will be required to consult and cite secondary sources for each of the papers, drawing from a library of critical essays found on our Canvas page in the modules for each author. I'll evaluate and score each of these drafts, and you'll also get the chance to peer-review them. Missed drafts must be made up as soon as possible under timed conditions. You should prepare for these drafts by engaging in invention and prewriting exercises and hashing out thesis statements and outlines in advance. We will discuss this at length. **NO PRE-DRAFTED ESSAYS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Do

what you need to do to ensure that you can crank out a complete draft in the allotted time (roughly seventy minutes).

Portfolios: During or before the Final Exam period you will submit a Final Portfolio containing the following:

- Revised versions of your three drafts, **including the addition of an additional secondary source for each.**

Submit the Final Portfolio as a single Word document or PDF.

- Start with a Title page indicating the assignment ("Final Portfolio"), your name and class and section, and the date.
- Follow this with the three revisions in order, each containing its own list of Works Cited. You'll end up with a big long document containing:
 - Your Hurston revision and its Works Cited list,
 - Your Hammett revision and its Works Cited list, and
 - Your Henry V revision and its Works Cited list.

Observe the conventions of the MLA style for all documentation, and remember always to title your papers.

When you revise your papers you will attend to specific reading and evaluating skills that will help you locate the strengths and weaknesses in your writing and make sound decisions about improving it. You will also have the benefit of feedback on your drafts from your colleagues and from me. A revision is an opportunity to take a paper farther than you originally had the time or insight to. **As such, it represents a significant departure from the original, and must involve substantially more than merely correcting mechanical errors. Each revision is worth 100 points, separate from the original draft.** If I see no or little evidence of substantive changes it is perfectly possible for a revision to receive fewer points than the original. We will discuss strategies for revision exhaustively in class. Remember too, as mentioned above, that you will be required to consult, quote, and cite an additional secondary source for each revision.

Email: All of you, as you know, are assigned an email account when you arrive. Get to know it and **get into the habit of checking your email every evening.** I will frequently send reminders, copies of assignments, and other important stuff via email, and it's your responsibility to make sure you get it.

Plagiarism: Do not shortchange yourself and mislead your colleagues by presenting the work of another as your own. Plagiarism is **THE** cardinal academic sin, and I take it very seriously. Proof of this offense will result at the very least in failure for that assignment, and the penalties can get much more serious very quickly. Think your own thoughts, do your own work, and broadcast it proudly. Know too that plagiarism is always easy to detect and prove, and that, frankly, it's less work to do your own work than to craft a convincing piece of plagiarism. For more information on university standards of academic conduct, follow this link:

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>

CALENDAR

Wk 1 (9/2-9/3)

- Introduction
- Read Hurston's "How it Feels to be Colored Me" (on our Canvas page in the Hurston Secondary Sources module)
- Read *Rules for Writers* (RW) 78-98 on argument
- Introduction to Argument

Wk 2 (9/7-9/10)

- Read *Rules for Writers* (RW) 418-466 on documenting sources in the MLA style
- Introduction to Documentation
- Documentation exercise
- Journal #1 due before class on Monday

Wk 3 (9/13-9/17)

- Begin *Their Eyes were Watching God* (get through chapter IV)
- Introduction to Hurston
- Read "Hurston and Racist Language," located in the Hurston Secondary Sources module on our Canvas page
- Journal #2 due before class on Monday

Wk 4 (9/20-9/24)

- *Their Eyes were Watching God* continued (get through chapter IX)

- Read RW 403-417 on working with sources
- Read Integrating Sources Hurston
- Quoting exercise
- Journal #3 due on Monday

Wk 5 (9/27-10/1)

- *Their Eyes were Watching God* continued (go ahead and finish it up)
- Read RW 40-54 on creating effective paragraphs (¶s) and also 15-16 on Introductory ¶s.
- Journal #4 due before you begin drafting

Wk 6 (10/4-10/8)

- Pre-draft review
- **Draft Paper #1** under timed conditions

Wk 7 (10/11-10/15)

- Peer Review Draft #1 (through Canvas)
- Begin *The Maltese Falcon* (get through chapter V)

Wk 8 (10/18-10/22)

- *The Maltese Falcon* continued (get through chapter XIII)
- Journal #5 due once you receive feedback

Wk 9 (10/25-10/29)

- *The Maltese Falcon* continued (punch through to the thrilling conclusion!)
- Read Integrating Sources Hammett (on our Canvas page in the Hammett Secondary Sources module)
- Quoting exercise
- Journal #6 due on Monday

Wk 10 (11/1-11/5)

- *The Maltese Falcon* continued
- **Journal # 7 due on before drafting**
- **Draft Paper #2** under timed conditions

Wk 11 (11/8-11/12)

- Peer Review Draft #2 (through Canvas)

- Begin *Henry V* (get through act 1)
- Read *RW* 358-390 on research
- Introduction to Library Research
- Watch Branagh's *Henry V*

Wk 12 (11/15-11/19)

- *Henry V* continued (get through act 3)
- Journal #8 after you receive feedback

Wk 13 (11/22-11/24)

- *Henry V* continued (get through act 4)
- Read Integrating Sources Hal (on our Canvas page in the *Henry V* Secondary Sources module)
- Watch Olivier's *Henry V*
- Journal #9 due on Monday

Wk 14 (11/29-12/3)

- *Henry V* continued
- **Journal #10 due before drafting**
- **Draft Paper #3** under timed conditions

Wk 15 (12/6-12/10)

- Peer Review Draft #3
- Conclusions; discuss Portfolios

Wk 16 (12/13-12/17)

- **Portfolios due** during our section's Final Exam period:
 - Sec. 3: TBA