

**UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
GENERAL EDUCATION  
LITERATURE  
MANUAL 2021-22**

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# Section 1: GEL Resources

## CHAIN OF COMMAND

Any concerns and questions you have about your pedagogy may be directed to your assigned Program Associate, your assigned faculty advisor, and the Director of the GEL Program (Blaine Greteman). Policy and other concerns may be directed to GEL Program Director, then the English Department Chair (Claire Fox), and then CLAS. CLAS committees and persons who regulate GEL are (in order of responsibility): The General Education Curriculum Committee, the Educational Policy Committee and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

## STAFF

Barb Pooley (EPB Administrator) [barbara-pooley@uiowa.edu](mailto:barbara-pooley@uiowa.edu)

Rebecca Isaacs (English TA and RA Coordinator) [rebecca-isaacs@uiowa.edu](mailto:rebecca-isaacs@uiowa.edu)

## PROGRAM ASSOCIATES

Five experienced teaching assistants help with the Orientation procedures in April and August, before classes start, and then help new TAs individually and at required weekly meetings during the fall semester. This year, they are Benjamin Batzer, Tiffany Tucker, Darius Steward, Makayla Steiner, and Bambi Whitaker. Meeting with new TAs in groups of five or six, they will help plan classes, discuss works to be read, and advise them on the expected and unexpected problems that come up in teaching. Each program associate will also visit a class session.

## TEACHING ADVISERS

A member of the faculty serves as advisor for each teaching assistant in his/her first year of service. This faculty member will be available for advice, both in the small group meetings and as needed, and will visit at least one class session in the fall semester. In the future, you may want to request that your faculty advisor write a teaching recommendation for you, since the Program Director may not have the opportunity to visit your class and offer a first-hand report on your teaching.

## RESOURCES FOR STUDENT WELFARE/STUDENTS IN CRISIS

We owe our students a concern with their wellbeing and academic success. We may be the ONLY instructors who will have close contact with the students in our classes during their first year at the University of Iowa. That close knowledge gives us added responsibility. If we sense or suspect that one of our students is encountering problems above and beyond his or her academic performance, problems that seem to threaten “student success,” we need to see if we can help by: (1) asking the student if there is a problem, (2) informing the student of the campus resources that may help with a problem, (3) possibly referring the student to appropriate campus resources. Here is the Dean of Students' Office Quick Guide to helping students: <https://dos.uiowa.edu/assets/Uploads/2016-PDF-Faculty-and-Staff-Resource-List.pdf>

We recommend familiarizing yourself with it and keeping a copy handy. If one of your students seems to be at risk (academically, mental health, physical health, economic stress, suicidal thoughts

or depression), **contact one of the leaders of the University's Early-Intervention Team immediately, and let them guide the student to appropriate resources:**

Mirra Anson (335-1497)

[mirra-anson@uiowa.edu](mailto:mirra-anson@uiowa.edu)

Angie Reams (335-1162)

[angela-reams@uiowa.edu](mailto:angela-reams@uiowa.edu)

**Additionally, please alert Prof. Greteman ([blaine-greteman@uiowa.edu](mailto:blaine-greteman@uiowa.edu))**

Here are some other useful links:

The University Counseling Service:

<http://counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu>

The University Tutoring Referral Service: <http://tutor.uiowa.edu>

Academic Advising: <http://www.uiowa.edu/web/advisingcenter/>

Disability Services: <http://www.uiowa.edu/sds/>

Rape Victim Advocacy Program: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~rvap/>

## **RESOURCES FOR GEL INSTRUCTOR WELFARE**

The Office of Academic Support and Retention:

<http://uc.uiowa.edu/retention> The UI Threat Assessment Team:

<http://hr.uiowa.edu/tat>

Department of Public Safety: <http://police.uiowa.edu>

Please do not hesitate to share with Program Director Blaine Greteman any concern you may have with the welfare or conduct of your students.

## **RESOURCES FOR TEACHING IDEAS, METHODS, ASSIGNMENTS ICON**

Each section of Gen Ed Lit must have an activated ICON page on which—at the very least—a copy of the course syllabus and every formal paper assignment will be posted. ICON is also used for the collection and storage of student Reflective Learning Portfolios (see page 17). You can also use ICON to post (and save for future semesters!) handouts, web links, and YouTube videos, stream movies available through Swank Digital Campus, to create and manage discussion boards, an electronic grade book (be sure to keep a hard copy of your grades in case the site goes down) and to collect and run student writing through plagiarism detection software (in ICON DropBox)

### **WordPress Blog**

The Textbook Committee has created a WordPress blog for both new and returning instructors to post material, readings, and share advice. This will be a valuable resource for all GEL personnel.

<https://uiowagel.wordpress.com/>

### **IDEAL (the Iowa Digital Engagement and Learning Initiative)**

<http://ideal.uiowa.edu>

### **SITA (Student Instructional Technology Assistants)**

<http://its.uiowa.edu/sita>

**TILE** (The Transform, Interact, Learn, Engage (TILE) project **offers instructors the**

**opportunity to teach in** spaces are equipped with circular tables, laptops, flat screen monitors, multiple projectors, and whiteboards to encourage and support collaborative and engaged active learning.

<http://tle.uiowa.edu>

**The Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio**

<http://thestudio.uiowa.edu/wp/>

**The Center for Teaching**

<http://cft.uiowa.edu>

**The Writing Center**

<http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/>

**The Speaking Center**

<http://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/speaking-center>

# Section 2: Information About Your Appointment

## **ORAL COMPETENCY**

The University of Iowa requires that students in all classes be given the opportunity to assess their instructor's basic competence in oral communication. One question on the student review will address this issue, but few problems will arise if you simply try to communicate as clearly as possible when you are talking to your students.

## **STIPENDS**

Stipends for 2018-19 are \$6,412 per section with additional compensation for extra duties, such as Program Associate duties. If you have difficulty with your checks, consult the Payroll Office in room 120 University Services Building (corner of Prentiss and Capitol Streets). Remember that you must have a W-4 tax withholding form, an I-9 employment eligibility form, and a direct deposit form on file at the Payroll Office in order to get paid.

## **EXPENSE OF TIME ON A TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP**

You have a great responsibility to your students, but you also have a responsibility to yourself and to your program of graduate study. One course should command approximately 15 to 20 hours a week of your time. Persons new to a course will probably be closer to the higher number, as will those instructors with no previous experience.

Beyond 20 hours a week, however, you are potentially hurting yourself by not giving sufficient attention to your own study and professional training.

Your department's primary consideration in recommending reappointments for teaching assistants is an outstanding academic record and steady progress toward the degree you are seeking. Your department's primary interest is to prepare you efficiently for a professional career. The program is also concerned with your record as a teacher. Given the demands of teaching and the demands of graduate study, you will likely feel that you are regularly short-changing one, the other, or both. Remember that your obligations are to both aspects of your professional life. Focus on developing ways to see these demands as related aspects of the same endeavor.

## **ABSENCES FROM TEACHING**

Missing a class is a serious issue and should be avoided if possible. If an instructor anticipates missing a class, you are required to send a note to the director of the program requesting authorization to be absent and detailing your plan to makeup the class. In the case of an unplanned absence, notify Rebecca as quickly as possible. An instructor may ask Rebecca to cancel a class, or the instructor may ask a colleague in the program to cover the class, but the notification is still necessary.

This notification is required, but it also serves to protect instructors by gaining the program director's authorization.

## **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences website outlines policies established for all the faculty of the college. Go to their homepage at <http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/> and click on "For Faculty." The Center for Teaching TA Handbook (compiled by the University's Center for Teaching 335-6048 in 310 Calvin Hall) also defines obligations for instructors and gives many suggestions for graduate student teachers. You can find a copy of this handbook at: <http://teach.its.uiowa.edu/organizations/about-us> and clicking on "TAs/New Faculty" under "Resources."

Graduate students are represented in University governance through the Student Senate and the U of I Collegiate Associations Council; in the Graduate College through the Graduate Student Senate; in the Department through the Association of Graduate Students in English (AGSE). The graduate student union (COGS) represents graduate students employees in negotiations with the University.

In addition, membership in MLA, the Midwest Modern Language Association (MMLA), NCTE, CCCC and other organizations are available to graduate teaching assistants.

## **REVIEWING YOUR PERFORMANCE (Instructor-Self Review, Program Review)**

With a large number of faculty, students, instructors and sections of General Education Literature Courses in operation throughout the year, it is important to utilize several forms of review to gage assessments of the course and instructor/student interaction.

There are three forms of assessment: Self-Review, the ACE Instructor Evaluations, and your teaching observations. ACE evaluations are made available in the final weeks of class, and you should set aside time in class for students to complete them: this improves completion rates and helps ensure that all students, and not just the especially disgruntled or happy ones, complete your evaluations. Teaching evaluations will also be completed by your PA and Faculty Advisor, who will highlight both your teaching strengths and areas for improvement. The final assessment is the Instructor-Self Reflection (Formally Form A), which tells us how instructors perceive themselves as teachers, and their students as learners -- a self-review.

This form can be found on the General Education Literature website and will be mailed to you by Rebecca Isaacs, or can be obtained from her in 308 BEPB.

# Section 3: What is the Interpretation of Literature course?

## WHO TAKES THIS COURSE?

ENGL:1200, Interpretation of Literature, is not a class designed for English majors. It is the required course in a suite of other options for satisfying the General Education Humanities requirement. Students who declare an English major may satisfy the ENGL:1200 requirement with another Humanities course because ENGL:1200 cannot be applied toward a degree in English. Therefore, students in ENGL:1200 are probably not English majors, although the course often creates interest in the major. Technically, students must satisfy the General Education Rhetoric requirement (i.e. a course focusing on argument, both in writing and in speaking) before taking ENGL:1200. Generally, students in ENGL:1200 are either second-semester freshmen or first-semester sophomores. In reality, enrollment pressures have made it necessary for CLAS to allow first semester students who cannot get into a Rhetoric section to enroll directly in a Gen Ed Lit. course, where they may experience the benefits of a small class during their first semester at Iowa. It is likely there will be growing numbers of “overflow” students who have NOT taken Rhetoric in our classes. This makes it imperative that we use diagnostic exercises and questions early on to determine exactly what kind of academic preparation students have. It also means we have a much increased responsibility to work to improve student writing skills as well as their interpretive skills.

## DEFINING THE COURSE

Interpretation of Literature is not simply a “light” version of an introductory course for English majors, but is instead a rare opportunity to instill in students an awareness of the tremendous payoff of close engagement with the rich and varied body of literary writings in English. While ENGL:1200 is intended for students who are not English majors, we hope that students taking the course will gain knowledge and skills that will promote their becoming lifetime readers of literature, as well as an understanding of contexts that enhance the pleasure and impression that literature imparts. Therefore, it is crucial that we help our students see that interpretation and the critical skills we teach as tools that can enhance every aspect of their lives. It’s also possible that, by sharing with students your passion for literature, you may inspire them to take additional literature courses and possibly even major or minor in English. Still, specialized knowledge considered essential for students at the start of an English major might well be inappropriate for our students in ENGL:1200. Certainly, teaching students literary and critical terms without explaining the value of those terms for their own comprehension and interpretation is not effective pedagogy. In this sense, it is useful for us to remember that as instructors we should stress “interpretation” in the title of this course just as much as “literature.”

**The official CLAS description of Interpretation of Literature:** Building on previously acquired skills of reading and writing, courses approved for the Interpretation of Literature area seek to reinforce in every student a lifetime habit of frequent, intelligent, and satisfying reading. These courses, taught in English in small sections, focus primarily on "ways of reading," asking students to become aware of themselves as readers, to learn how to deal with different kinds of texts, and to understand how texts exist within larger historical, social, political, and/or cultural contexts. These "ways of reading," while growing out of various critical approaches to literature, are also transferable to other fields of study. *Texts should be chosen from*

*several genres (fiction, drama, poetry, essay, etc.) and must span more than a single century.* Diversity of race, gender, and social background among the authors read is encouraged. Courses must be taught in English. Lower-level courses are approved in this area; upper-level course work is not appropriate.

Last year 66 graduate teaching assistants and 3 visiting assistant professor taught 156 sections of General Education Literature Courses for about 4,000 students. More than two-thirds of the teaching assistants work in English, more than a quarter come from the Writers' Workshop, two are from the Literary Translations department, and three are from American Studies.

Although we work from a common syllabus template that includes units on nonfiction, poetry, drama, and fiction, we encourage diversity, experimentation, and individuality in GEL courses. We value creativity in designing class activities, interpreting course objectives and finding appropriate evaluation procedures. Good teaching requires personal resourcefulness in finding plausible paths toward realizable objectives. It also requires taking some responsibility for the success or failure of each student in reaching those goals.

All Interpretation of Literature courses must meet objectives set by the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Each teacher is part of this larger educational process, and our approach seeks to balance individual experimentation with group efforts. If you have doubts about how to maintain this balance feel free to discuss your plans with your teaching advisor, the director, or one of the program associates.

From the English Department's point of view, the General Education Literature Program serves three important outcomes:

1. To reinforce in every student lifetime habits of frequent, sensitive, intelligent, and satisfying reading
2. To give advanced degree candidates in literature a professionally useful internship in college teaching.
3. To provide financial support for graduate students as they advance toward their professional goals.

**CLAS Outcomes for the General Education Literature Program are:**

- Students refine their reading skills by the exposure to a wide variety of genres from multiple centuries.
- Students improve their reading comprehension and analysis by using a range of strategies or “ways of reading” appropriate for the assigned texts
- Students strengthen their analytical and critical responses to texts through the intensive use of oral and written responses.
- Through assigned readings, class discussion, and writing assignments, students begin to recognize the influence of a reader’s individual differences and experiences on interpretation and analysis.
- In discussion and in writing, students consider and begin to understand the crucial connections between individual texts and cultural, historical, political, social, and other contexts.
- Finally, students deepen their vision of themselves as readers, particularly as contrasted to beginning of the course.

**OTHER COURSES OFFERED THROUGH GEN ED LIT**

ENGL:1200, The Interpretation of Literature, is the only required literature course; but students may thereafter elect one or two of the advanced General Education Literature courses (ENGL:1320 through ENGL:1350) in the process of completing their General Education requirements.

The seven elective courses, offered at various times, focus more specifically on literary genres (for example, 8G:6 Fictions), themes (ENGL:1320), and literary modes (ENGL:12002 Comic and Tragic Literature). Both ENGL:1200 and the elective courses share the objectives of breadth and quality; our courses should present books from more than a single century and more than one country. Our reading lists should include a significant diversity of race, gender, and social background among the authors read.

# Section 4: Policies and Procedures

## WRITING

Writing is an essential part of students' experience in general education. Interpretation of Literature should not only recognize but extend skills acquired in freshman rhetoric. Moreover, now that enrollment pressures necessitate that an increasing number of students taking ENGL:1200 will NOT have previously completed freshman rhetoric, we have a new responsibility to ground our students in effective writing practices. It is imperative that you try to ascertain the level of writing effectiveness of your students as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester.

There is a writing requirement of a minimum of 5,000 words. This requirement can be met by assigning formal papers, informal writings, reading responses, creative projects (with a critical reflection in which you ask students to discuss the way their work relates to a source text or inspiration), and other written or typed work. But your syllabus *must* include 2 major, graded writing assignments of 5-10 pages in length, and at least one of these papers should be a critical analysis, with the explicit goal of clarifying the importance of a clearly stated thesis, supporting that thesis by explanation and evidence, and citing that evidence with a formal system such as MLA. Instructors should break up the major assignments with regular writing activities, which may be informal. Do consider requiring more than the 5,000 word minimum and certainly do not allow your students to fall below it.

Use discretion when assigning a large paper due in the final weeks of the semester. Grading final papers the last week of semester will be difficult if you have several article-length papers of your own to write. Always return student writings with feedback and grades before subsequent assignments are turned in. **Students should have a good idea of their course grade as they go into the final exam.** Papers should be assigned in writing and/or by ICON, and should include some indication of the criteria on which you will evaluate the papers.

Students with major writing problems may receive personal assistance from the Writing Center (Rhetoric Program), located in 110 EPB. There is also an online Writing Center service at: <http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/>

## WRITING AND PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an issue we need to understand and address more fully as an intellectual issue as well as an issue of academic misconduct. Our students often regard information on the web as a resource, if not a kind of commons of information, available to all. Any assignment or course exercise that involves new and specialized knowledge is almost certain to send your students to the internet and any ideas or information they encounter there may be very difficult for them to distinguish from their own thinking as they move forward with discussion and/or assignments. Research papers can be a very useful assignment for students to further learn about certain texts, authors or ideas put forth in class. Stress the need for full citation of any web resources your students consult with regards to specific research assignment in which you make web research an explicit part of your course. Obviously, we expect and require our students to acknowledge information and prose taken from the web, but it is much more difficult both for us and for

them to recognize their indebtedness to ideas taken from the web. Teachers are encouraged to confront this issue directly in talking with your students about their use of the internet and the need for attribution of information and ideas taken from the web—as well as for specific or paraphrased language. A helpful exercise to familiarize students to internet-based research techniques/citations might be assigning informal research tasks to fill in knowledge gaps. Ask students to research a writer/theorist on their own and begin the class by a discussion of what they learned. It is also the case that many of our students do not understand that paraphrasing without attribution is also a form of plagiarism. Accordingly, it is imperative that you discuss with your students the fact that this is a course focused on their thinking and their interpretations and not on finding out what others have written about particular texts. Students need to understand what constitutes plagiarism and if they use the internet they are required to record their web visits in a Works Cited addendum to their assignment.

### **Assignment Design to Avoid Plagiarism**

Our responsibility in this matter is much greater than just warning our students not to plagiarize and detecting and punishing them when they do. We owe our students good assignments—they are the best means to forestall cases of plagiarism and to receive good writing. Good assignments make plagiarism not only difficult but beside the point. Assignments that have students apply their understanding of a character or text to their own experiences or in different contexts ask them to use their own interpretations rather than seek others elsewhere. For example, instead of assigning "Discuss Hamlet's character," you could say "Discuss the statement "There is a little bit of Hamlet in every one of us." Better yet, encourage hands-on activities that require them, for example, to visit the Library's Special Collections and write about a particular copy of the play held there, or to discuss the play with someone who has played the role and write about the choices made in a particular scene. Traditional themes and topics have been treated countless times before: in scholarship, "student aids" like Cliff's Notes, fraternity or sorority files, and, of course, on the Internet. It is also easy to buy custom-written papers on standard topics (see: <https://newrepublic.com/article/107118/shadow-scholar-helping-college-kids-cheat-dave-tomar>)

Have students do informal or in-class writing in which you can watch the genesis of original ideas and then compare these with final versions. Having your students keep a "paper trail" will assist them in following the development of their ideas while it gives you ways to foster the development of their writing. Finally, create a classroom atmosphere that encourages students to credit their classmates for helpful ideas. Develop your students' sense of responsibility to other interpreters, whether they are published writers or classmates.

### **CLAS Code of Academic Honesty**

You should try to forestall occurrences of plagiarism by formulating a policy and presenting it to your students early in the semester. Explain to them the following:

- a) What constitutes plagiarism? The CLAS Code of Academic Honesty, which can be found at: <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code>. Have your students read this page and quiz them on it during the first week of the term.
  - a. How students should acknowledge sources, if your written work calls for it.
  - b. The penalties for plagiarism: (see below)
  - c. Gen Ed Lit instructors have access to the electronic TURNITIN program. The point you need to make that will save both you and your students some grief is that TURNITIN makes it nearly certain that plagiarism will be detected.

(The official Gen Ed Lit Statement on Plagiarism addresses most of these points and can be found at: <http://www.english.uiowa.edu/files/english/plagiarismpolicy.pdf>. Your students should be required to read this policy and should be given a brief quiz on it and/or a statement they must sign stating that they

have read and understand the General Education Literature Program's Plagiarism Policy.)

## **TURNITIN**

TURNITIN is an automatic source checker that is now a feature available to any teacher using ICON drop boxes to collect writing assignments. While the pedagogical/philosophical issues involved in running ALL student writing through TURNITIN are complex, the Gen Ed Lit Program requires all Gen Ed Lit teachers to require ALL significant out-of-class writing assignments be submitted to ICON drop boxes in addition to and/or in place of being turned in only as hard copy.

Gen Ed Lit teachers enable the Plagiarism Detection option when setting up new Drop Box folders. There is a box to check on the Add a Folder Page that reads: Plagiarism Detection: Enable for this folder How does Plagiarism Detection work? Teachers will then have the option of looking at the TURNITIN report if a paper is flagged for the possibility of language taken from other sources on the web. TURNITIN can produce "false positives" in the case of widely used terms and language we should not consider plagiarism, so it is a mechanical tool that must be used with discretion and judgment. However, if students know that all of their writing turned in to a Drop Box will be scrutinized by TURNITIN, the likelihood of intentional plagiarism should be decreased.

## **Handling Cases of Plagiarism**

If you find an instance of what appears to be plagiarism you should handle the incident in the following way.

1. Make two copies of the student's paper so that you will have one with you for the rest of the process and one to forward to the program director (or start a digital file).
  - a. Inform the student in a letter that you are considering charging him or her with plagiarism, or in the case of verified plagiarism, that you are submitting a report of academic misconduct. Your letter should contain the student's ID number as part of the address. It should specify the parts of the work by the student you feel are not his or her own work and you should specify in the letter the website and specific URL from which the student seems to have taken work without attribution. The letter must invite the student to discuss this charge with you. Copy the director, Blaine Greteman, on that email. Follow these guidelines for the email: <http://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-guidelines-e-mail-notification-academic-fraud>. Whenever possible, discuss the situation with the student in person. When reporting an incident of academic fraud committed by more than one student, send an individualized e-mail to each student without mentioning the other students' names. Before you talk to the student, you may wish to consult the program director. When you meet with a student, what you say depends very much on whether or not you've found the source(s). If you have, you may wish to underline the unacknowledged passages. If you haven't found a source, then you need to be much more careful; don't accuse the student of plagiarism since there may be some kind of explanation and an outright accusation could be slanderous. Instead, ask the student a series of questions: you might ask the student what is meant by certain passages or words, or you might ask the student to summarize the paper. As you and the student discuss the paper, it will become clearer whether or not the paper is the student's own work. And in the case where you have the source, you will also want to get a sense of whether the plagiarism is

intentional or accidental (that is, even with your explanations of what constitutes plagiarism, the student still hasn't realized the problem).

2. Input the information yourself online (e.g. submit the online reporting form with the uploaded documents, such as TURNITIN). The form is at this link: [https://publicdocs.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofIowa&layout\\_id=2](https://publicdocs.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofIowa&layout_id=2). On the form you will describe the academic fraud and the action taken; attach documentation to support the claim. The report is automatically copied to the Program Director, the student, and to the Associate Dean. Reports may also be sent by e-mail or campus mail. Send copies at the same time to the Program Director, the student, and the Associate Dean.
3. Plagiarized assignments normally receive a zero or F grade. Instructors should consult with the GEL director before failing the student for an entire course because of the instance of academic fraud, and if the case is strong that this should be the penalty we will take it to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum, Cornelia Lang, or Kathy Hall. In many cases, the student will earn an F in the course based on the overall quality of work.
4. After receiving this report, CLAS will enforce the following consequences:
  - **For a first offense:** The student will be placed on disciplinary probation until graduation or until a period of five years from the period of the probation. A notation will not appear on the student's permanent record/transcript for the first offense.
  - **For a second offense:** The student will be suspended for a calendar year or longer from the College and will not be allowed to register during that time at the University. The offense will be recorded on the student's permanent record/transcript during the period of suspension as follows: *Not permitted to Register: Academic Misconduct.*
  - **For a third offense:** The Dean of the College will recommend to the University president that the student be expelled from The University of Iowa. Once expulsion occurs, the offense will be recorded on the student's permanent record/transcript as follows: *Not permitted to Register: Academic Misconduct.*
  - If the academic fraud is minor in nature, the student will receive a letter of disciplinary warning, and the report will be filed until the student graduates or for five years, whichever is sooner. If a second or third report of minor fraud is placed in the student's file, CLAS will treat the fraud according to the guidelines for academic fraud, above.
  - CLAS will report the action taken to the student, to the academic advisor, as appropriate, to the instructor, and to the appropriate DEO. If a student placed on disciplinary probation is planning to receive a degree from a UI college other than CLAS, that college also will be notified of the action taken. In appropriate cases, CLAS will meet with the student to discuss implications of academic fraud.
  - CLAS internal records concerning first and second offenses are destroyed when the student graduates or after five years. Internal reports for a third offense become part of the permanent student record kept in the Office of the Dean of Students.

A student may appeal a decision. For more information, please see the For Students web site pages on the [Code of Academic Honesty](#).

Notify the program director by e-mail of the results of any discussions you have had with the student concerning these charges.

## Plagiarism and Grading Policy

Please note that reporting academic fraud to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences can lead to severe disciplinary penalties, including suspension, but does NOT address the grading implications of a plagiarism case; grade consequences must be set by individual instructors and clearly explained in the course syllabus. We recommend against individual grading policies that call for automatically failing the course as a direct consequence of plagiarism, although the grade of F or O assigned in a case of plagiarism may lead to the student's failing the course when it is averaged in with other grades.

## GRADING AND GRADE COMPLAINTS

When grading keep in mind CLAS guidelines for grade distribution for elementary courses. (<http://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-grading-system-and-distribution>). These are:

A: 15%

B: 34%

**C: 40%**

D: 8%

F: 3 %

Average: 2.50.

Of course, your class will not align perfectly with this chart. But it is vital that you do not veer from it too much. Do not give out more As than Bs. **The grade you most frequently give should be a C.** Please note that the CLAS Educational Policy Committee strongly discourages instructors from assigning the A+ grade. Few or no grades of A+ should ever be awarded except for truly extraordinary work. Grade distribution is a very important issue and will factor into the renewal of GEL appointments.

Carefully consider your announced grading policies since they will assume the status of a contract with your students and must be uniformly applied exactly as described in your syllabus. There are a number of different grading strategies you may choose to employ, but the Gen Ed Lit Program urges you not to adopt an overly complicated grading policy. We owe our students clear and well-explained grading policies and rubrics, but both you and your students should understand that evaluation is not a completely objective or mechanical process. Students should NOT be led to expect that their grades are determined simply by meeting all course requirements and completing all assignments. Ultimately, our responsibility is to evaluate the quality of student work and not simply to assure that students complete all requirements for the course.

Pay particular attention to your explanation of attendance/participation components in your grading policy. Students frequently fail to understand the distinction between attendance and participation in class discussions and activities.

At midterm we report D and F performance only. This is an advisory and warning notice to those below your minimum standards.

A few grade complaints are filed each semester. Most complaints taken to the instructor or director end without going to formal procedure. It would be very unusual for a grade to be changed for any reason but a clear mathematical error.

If a student complains to you, do not send them to the director but make an appointment to meet in person to discuss differences after you've looked over your records and both of you have had time to think things through. Do not try to resolve differences immediately by justifying a grade off the top of your head. Avoid

a debate over the telephone. Do not engage in specific comparison between individual students' grades. Do have an open mind when approached by a student and consider looking again at the work question.

If the discussion fails to resolve the disagreement, the student may e-mail the program director, Blaine Greteman, at [blaine-greteman@uiowa.edu](mailto:blaine-greteman@uiowa.edu) to schedule an appointment. The director may take further steps, either through oral consultation or in writing, to resolve the complaint. The student may thereafter appeal to the Chair of the English Department, and to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

In almost all cases only the instructor of a course has the authority to change a grade. Accordingly, students should understand that their best chance for a successful grade appeal is to resolve the issue with you. Students should also understand that an instructor's *evaluation* of student work, such as a grade on a paper or a grade assigned for participation, cannot be changed by anyone but the instructor.

## TESTING

**Your course MUST include a midterm and a final exam.** Five to ten-minute, factual reading quizzes or other exercises, especially at the beginning of the class hour, are also useful to establish the level of reading expected and foster productive discussion, and your class should include a quiz component, whether these quizzes are daily, weekly, or biweekly.

Give final examinations at the time and place scheduled during finals week. Final exams must not be given at other times. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Policy directs that the act of final assessment should be separate from the acts of instruction. The final examination should be comprehensive in scope and should unify the course experience. Final examinations should be suited to the students' expectations and capacities. Each instructor should put a copy of their final exam, after they have given it, in the MANAGE FILES page on their ICON site, and you can find samples of past final exams on the GEL website. The Gen Ed Lit Program does not allow take-home final exams.

It will prevent misunderstandings and preclude complaints if you make it clear in your syllabus that travel arrangements will NOT be considered a valid reason for rescheduling the final exam. Students (and instructors) will be notified by the Registrar about five weeks into the semester telling them when and where their final exam will be. Students should know that there will be no exceptions to the official schedule.

## PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT

Reflective Learning Portfolios form the core of our Outcomes Assessment process for the program. Additionally, they contribute an important component to the course. Instructors have flexibility in how they use the portfolio. Some choose to make it a major component of their course and grade accordingly; others choose to make it a shorter final reflection assignment and do not grade it as heavily. But all instructors should specify that students cannot pass the class without completing the portfolio. Regardless of how you choose to implement the portfolio requirement, **here are the minimum requirements all instructors must follow:**

Have students upload their portfolios into an ICON dropbox.

1. Each Gen Ed Lit student in Fall 2017 will be required to keep a portfolio of all major written assignments for the course (the instructor will designate the "major written assignments." At a minimum this should include 2-3 assignments.
2. In addition to gathering these materials, each student will add to the portfolio: A final 2-3 page reflective paper on what the student has learned during the course. Note: This is to be more a reflection on the student's own learning processes than an "evaluation" of the course or the

instructor. Students should reflect on how they have grown as writers, readers and thinkers through the course.

3. At the end of the semester, students will create one document containing the major assignments designated by the instructor and their 2-3 page reflection. They will then upload this document to the ICON dropbox under the category clearly marked "Portfolio"
4. After the portfolios have been submitted on ICON, the instructor will reflect on what he/she has learned from reading the portfolios, as part of the FORM B Instructor Self-Review. FORM B will be uploaded to ICON under the "manage files" section so that students cannot see it (see instructions below). This is the same area instructors put copies of their final exam. In this way, we will assemble a "class portfolio," containing the student responses, FORM B, instructor self- review, and student evaluations for the section.
5. Grading: While students must submit a complete portfolio, it need not be graded. However, you are free to make the portfolio a major component of your course, so that it evaluates revision and self-reflection in a more prescriptive way. For example, in addition to the standard portfolio reflection, you may choose to have students critically reflect on each completed assignment, choose one to revise again, and then explain their revision choices. If that is the case, clearly you will grade this aspect of the course. If you do grade the portfolio, be sure to do so in a manner that is commensurate with the time students put into it.

### **Step-by-step Technical Procedure for collecting Portfolios on ICON:**

1. Have students upload their portfolios into an ICON dropbox.
2. When you complete FORM A, include a brief reflection (paragraph) responding to the overall trends you see in your students' portfolios. Upload this FORM A file to the MANAGE FILES section of your course page. The resulting file will not be seen by students, but can be accessed (downloaded) by you and the Gen Ed Lit Program Director.
3. To get to the MANAGE FILES page, click on the CONTENT option for your course, as you do when you upload files for your students to access. To the left of the list of Modules and Files for your course, you'll see a box labeled CONTENT AREAS. The menu in this box reads (top to bottom) VIEW CONTENT, MANAGE CONTENT, REPORTS, SETTINGS, MANAGE FILES.
4. Click on MANAGE FILES. On that page, click on NEW FILE in the menu and record your response in the window that opens OR click on UPLOAD and upload a word file in which you have written your response to the Student Portfolios. Whichever option you choose, title your response FORM A.
5. Send a copy of Form A as an email attachment to Blaine Greteman.

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS**

Students should NOT call the Department of English main office in order to give you a message. Please ask your students to contact you by e-mail or by calling you at home when they need to speak with you about absences, assignments, or other matters pertaining to their work in your class. If they wish to meet with the program director, they may e-mail Blaine Greteman (see section 16. GRADING for information on student grievance procedures). It is important that students know their instructor's University of Iowa email and that instructors check it regularly.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is necessary for the regular class discussion fundamental to our courses. Self-reviews indicate that attendance is a serious and possibly growing problem for all of us. Each day, circulate a class roster for initialing or signing, or keep a written record of all absences.

All GEL sections maintain a standard attendance policy:

For MWF classes, students may miss 3 classes without penalty. Any additional class will result in a 1/3 deduction from their participation grade.

For T/Th or M/W classes, students may miss 3 classes without penalty. Any additional class will result in 1/3 deduction in their participation grade.

For one-day-per-week classes, students may miss 2 classes without penalty. Any additional class will result in a 1/2 deduction in their participation grade.

Let students know that 2-3 absences should cover the ordinary sicknesses and car troubles that arise during a semester – but that you are also aware emergencies/illness come up and make yourself available by meeting with them to discuss how they can mitigate the problems caused by absences, such as missed quizzes.

Instructors should remember that the college does recognize a variety of reasons for excused absences, including participation on athletic teams, the debate team, artistic performances and so on; you should receive a letter from the appropriate sponsoring department or organization, listing the dates that the student will be absent. Serious problems causing a student to miss a number of classes (i.e. family emergency, health crisis) may or may not be reported to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Academic Programs and Services Office; if so, then you will receive a notice in your mailbox. Student health has asked CLAS not to require documentation from a doctor for minor illnesses. If a student turns out to be lying about absences, he or she must be reported for academic misconduct. Instructors have every reason, though, to require documentation for other absences, such as funerals, serious illnesses, and family emergencies.

## **ADD/DROP SLIPS**

To maintain equal section sizes, do not sign add/drop slips or registration forms for students at the beginning of the semester, but admit newcomers presenting approved slips from Rebecca Isaacs. Rebecca tries to maintain all sections at a given hour at even levels. Do NOT allow students who are NOT officially enrolled in your section to remain in the classroom or to continue attending your class. The Registrar is now allowing students to add/drop on ISIS during the first five days of classes, so you need to go into MAUI to check your class list frequently during this time.

## **PASS/NON-PASS REGISTRATION**

The only students allowed to register for our courses on a P/N basis are those in Colleges other than Liberal Arts and Sciences, with instructor's approval. "D" is not considered passing in Liberal Arts and Sciences under P/N registration.

## **UNIVERSITY HONORS DESIGNATION**

Since we offer specific Honors sections of Interpretation of Literature, we are not enthusiastic about having Honors students in “regular” sections sign up for an Honors designation for their work in that section. However, not all Honors students are able to fit an Honors Section into their schedule, so this option must remain available. Honors Students who wish to add the Honors Designation to their work in a regular ENGL:1200 section must complete a form from the University Honors Program that establishes the contract the student must fulfill for work above and beyond the requirements for other students in the class. **This form requires the signature of the Program Director who approves the contract and certifies at the end of the semester that the contract has been successfully fulfilled.** Please contact the Program Director for further guidelines if an Honors student asks you about this option.

## EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

Call the Center for Diversity and Enrichment (335-3555) in 24 Phillips Hall about students enrolled in this program.

## STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

All instructors must make reasonable accommodations for students with physical, mental or learning disabilities. It is the responsibility of students with disabilities to register with the Office of Student Disability Services (3015 Burge Hall, 335-1462) and to present a Student Academic Accommodation Request (the SAAR form) to the instructor when discussing specific requests for accommodation.

The Student Disability Services Office may notify you of students who, because of a disability, have difficulty participating in class activities on an equal basis with other students. If a student reports a special need to you but has not been in contact with Student Disability Services (335-1462) in 3015 Burge Hall, instruct the student to contact them.

## OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND MATERIALS

Some people are easily offended by four-letter words and other language deemed offensive. On occasion students have complained, especially when the instructor, not the class, sets the level of diction. Therefore, civility requires attention to everyone's tastes. Instructors should prepare students for course materials of all kinds in order to create an environment of mutual respect and learning.

## DUPLICATION OF MATERIALS FOR CLASS USE

### Photocopies

You may use one of the two large photocopying machines ("Jack" and "Jill") in the back room of 308 EPB to copy exams and paper assignments. You may not use those machines for personal copying or to violate copyright laws by Xeroxing copyrighted materials such as long stories out of a book. There is a copying limit of 1,000 copies (500 per machine) per each Gen. Ed. Lit. Section you teach for 2017-18. Gen. Ed. Lit. instructors should rely primarily on ICON for getting materials and assignments to students. The copies are put into the machines for the academic year, so if you are teaching in the spring semester do NOT use up all your copies in the fall semester. Pay attention to emails from the staff of EPB, as they will send out your personalized copy code and instructions on how to set up your computer to print to these machines. If you choose not to use Jack and Jill for your classroom printing needs, you will not be reimbursed for the expense of using your personal university printing account on other machines. When you reach your limit on both Xerox machines you will have to go elsewhere to copy and pay for those copies yourself. To help you avoid exceeding your photocopy limit, **we strongly recommend that you ask students to print the syllabus themselves.** Rather than distributing hard copies of your entire syllabus, consider handing out photocopies of your assignment schedule and directing students to the digital copy of the complete syllabus, **which must be posted to ICON by the first week of classes.** Regardless of your choice, you are still required to review the syllabus and policies at the beginning of the semester, and you must hold students responsible for knowing all the policies outlined in the syllabus. To ensure that students understand the syllabus, we recommend that you deliver a quiz on the material covered in the document.

The photocopying machines are available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Don't wait until five minutes before class to make your copies in case there is a line of people waiting to use the machines. Xerox on both sides to save paper. Also, be sure to post ALL significant teaching materials for your course, especially your syllabus, in the CONTENT SECTION of your ICON COURSE SITE.

### Interlibrary Loan

The UI Library has a copy service, available through interlibrary loan, in which you may request copies of

articles of chapters from books. Go to "My Interlibrary Loan" on the library website to learn more. You simply fill out a form specifying the pages you want, and the library takes care of the rest, including copyright clearance, providing you with access to a .pdf you can use in your classes. It typically takes 48-72 hours for the library to copy and send you a .pdf.

### **Course Packs**

Course packs (anthologies of photocopied materials, available for purchase) have mostly gone the way of the fax machine. ICON is typically the most convenient option for distributing copied materials, but if you are attached to retro instructional materials, you may arrange for a course pack for student purchase at one of the commercial copy centers or through the University Bookstore. You will need to do this far enough in advance in case they need to get copyright permission.

### **University Library Reserve Reading Room**

Not a copying service, of course (although copiers are conveniently nearby for students to use if they wish), but one way of having students read materials assigned in a course. The staff of the Reserve Room provides this service. If you do not receive a Reserve Reading form from their staff, request one in person (the Reserve Room is on the first floor of the University Main Library), or call 335-5944, or you can go to the following website: <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/reserve/>. It is also possible to create electronic reserve documents through the Reserve Room.

### **Copyright Law**

A large punitive court settlement against copy center giant Kinko's has made the issue of duplicating material and copy right law a complicated one. The court decision allows the concept of "fair use" to continue, but it muddies the water a good deal about what constitutes "fair use." Clearly, the use of book chapters or entire stories or entire poems in photocopied "anthologies" (without prior permission) violates fair use. There are lots of wrinkles in the court decision. Many of you have probably noticed a change in attitude by the various copy centers downtown and on campus. They are much more cautious about copying copyrighted materials, and they are more vigilant about seeking permissions.

One option that you have is to put a personal copy of any essay or story or poem or book chapter on reserve in the Univ. Library, OR use interlibrary loan to request copies of chapters, stories, or articles. You may then instruct your students to read the material there and/or to make a personal photocopy for themselves, using the library copying machines or printing from ICON. This way, no one is making multiple copies for mass distribution, and no one (except the photocopying machine companies) is profiting from the copying.

The Reserve Reading Room will put a single personal Xerox copy on reserve. You must include on your copy a complete citation of where the material came from. The Reserve Reading Room staff will then also put a copy of the original book on reserve in addition to your personal photocopy. If the library does not own a copy of the book, it will order it. The Reserve Reading Room has a limit of twenty- five items per class and they won't Xerox multiple copies. Barbara Brodersen, the Supervisor of the Reserve Reading Room, will be happy to answer questions and to help you out (335-5944).

To summarize: if you decide to produce multiple copies of copyrighted materials for use in your class, you need to receive permission from the publishers. Photocopying is a huge item in our general expenses, and for that reason, we have established a limit to the number of copies each TA is allowed to make. There are over 200 instructors using the machines, so we also need to practice courtesy and efficiency, and use .pdfs on ICON when possible – it is easier and cheaper.

### **Third-Party Software and Student Classroom Rights**

Legally, instructors cannot require students to register for third-party software. For example, instructors cannot require students to create a Tumblr account to be able to post to a course blog, nor can teachers demand that students create a Gmail account to be able to use Google Docs. Aside from university accounts like Hawkmail and ISIS, the only third-party software for which students can be required to have an account is ICON: by enrolling in the University of Iowa, students confirm their willingness to use this software. Instructors who wish to incorporate a creative digital element into their courses must either set up an account using an email and password created by them, providing students with this login information, *or* they must give students an alternate means to complete the graded assignment. In other words, instructors might invite students to create a WordPress account to post to a course blog but indicate to their students the option of submitting a typed and printed response.

In addition, instructors cannot legally require students to create usernames that disclose personal details, including first and last name. To protect their students' privacy, instructors should encourage students to create pseudonyms when writing in digital spaces.

## **AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES**

All the classrooms in EPB should have permanent AV equipment in them. The equipment can play DVDs and be used to project documents and online content. Also, the Gen. Ed. Lit. Program has one tape/CD player which can be checked out from the front desk in 308 EPB. The Media Services Room of the University Library has many DVDs that can be checked out for class use by filling out a reserve form on the website: <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/services/courseres/>. You can also check the internet to see if the Media Services Room has a copy of a certain DVD by using the following instructions: Go to the University of Iowa Library website: <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu>. At the top of the screen pull the arrow down next to "Find Resources." Click on "InfoHawk Catalog." Click on "Advanced Search" at the top of the screen. Scroll down to the "Format" box and click on the arrow. Click on "Video- DVD Only." Then scroll back up to "Search for" box and put in the title of the DVD. Click on "Search."

You can post videos to ICON, and the UI library also has various streaming services (Kanopy, Globe Online, Alexander Street) which include online versions of films and performances.

## **INCOMPLETES**

Grades of "I" will not be approved without prior consultation with Program Director Blaine Greteman. As a general rule, Incompletes are a bad idea—both for the student and for the instructor. The General Education Literature Program does not grant Incompletes except in cases of well-documented illness or other special circumstances. Students should make their cases for Incompletes with the program director and not with individual instructors. In the rare occasions when an Incomplete is authorized, the instructor and student should agree on written specific instructions for removal of the incomplete with the student and should agree upon a date by which all work for the Incomplete must be turned in. Instructors who are authorized to give a grade of "I" must also leave your future address, phone, and e-mail address with Rebecca Isaacs. Please note that students who for such reasons as illness or accident cannot complete a semester have more than one course of action: students may withdraw from a course up to the end of the 10th week of class; they may cancel their semester's registration up to the end of the 12th week.

## **REPORTS**

Formal requests for information through the semester include:

- a. 4th week class lists done online -- names added and dropped, who is and is not attending.

According to CLAS guidelines, as long as a student has attended at least once during the first 10 days -- even if you've never seen them again -- they should be marked "attending."

- b. Midterm delinquency grade reports done online -- only for students graded D or F.
- c. Course and time preferences and book choices for next term.
- d. Final grade reports done online. These reports must be in on time. A copy of your final grades must be printed off and given to the Gen. Ed. Lit. Coordinator along with filling out a form with instructions for removing each incomplete assigned.
- e. Student Evaluations and Self and Program Review forms.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND CONSENSUAL RELATIONS IN THE ACADEMIC SETTING**

For new teaching assistants, sexual harassment prevention training must be completed by the 8th week of the semester. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has posted the following policy: It is unethical and prohibited for a teaching assistant or faculty member to have an amorous relationship (consensual or not) with a student enrolled in a course he or she is teaching. It is unethical and prohibited for a faculty member to have an amorous relationship with a student whose academic work he or she is supervising, including work as a teaching or research assistant.

Even when the student is not being taught or supervised by the faculty member or TA, University policy discourages such relationships between students and teachers because they pose grave danger of exploitation and easily lead to violations of the teacher's ethical obligations. To prevent a conflict of interest, the faculty member or teaching assistant must remove him or herself from any decisions that affect a student with whom he or she has or had an amorous relationship. (See the University's Policy on Sexual Harassment and Consensual Relationships, Operations Manual, II-4 and II-5, and the Policy on Conflict of Interest in Employment, Operations Manual, III-8. The Operations Manual is available online at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/>.)

# Section 5: Creating Your Interpretation of Literature Course

All GEL classes are required to include units on nonfiction, poetry, fiction, and drama, but you have broad flexibility for developing theme and areas of inquiry within these categories. Before turning to the syllabus template, here are some ideas for organizing your course.

## WAYS OF READING

Since creating a new GEL course from scratch may prove daunting, below we describe one approach called WAYS OF READING. Please feel free to follow closely this model or modify it as you see fit. The syllabus for Ways of Reading entails three approaches to reading, often characterized by focusing on the READER, the TEXT, and the WORLD (although the emphasis and sequence of the three approaches may vary):

- The READER approach includes an autobiographical assignment (called “Autobiography of a Reader”) designed to help students chart their histories as readers and to reflect on the kinds of readers they have been and are becoming. The reader approach also includes assignments having to do with literacy and reader response, and others meant to promote self-reflexivity on the part of students.
- The TEXT includes assignments that focus on genre, intertextuality, creative writing as response, and formalist or close reading.
- The WORLD approach includes assignments that involve students in constructing historical or political contexts, reading place or environment, focusing on specific regions, and addressing social issues.

All of these “Ways of Reading” are essential to interpreting literature, but by articulating them separately, we hope to give students the practice and tools with which to become more aware of the dynamic involved in literary analysis.

## Reading Ourselves; Ourselves as Readers

Your students come to your class as experienced readers. They have studied literature in school, as well as read for their own purposes. They all come with preconceived ideas and assumptions about what literature and literature classes are, or ought to be, about. This reader-centered sequence examines those ideas and assumptions.

The unit begins with the premise that the reader makes a difference. Grounded in reader response criticism, this reader-centered section seeks to empower the reader and place her or him in the center of the interpretive process. Many ENGL:1200 students enter our classrooms with the reified notion that there is an authoritative interpretation of a text whose “hidden meaning” must be uncovered, mostly by the instructor. Starting with an emphasis on the reader challenges these notions. Through discussion of student

experiences with reading and through reading texts that feature characters as readers, students learn not only about their own reading attitudes and histories, but also about each other, which builds classroom community.

This reader-centered sequence also seeks to empower students as writers. One popular writing assignment that makes this possible is the Autobiography of a Reader. This assignment challenges the assumption that a text-centered literary-critical essay is the only possible written response to literature. The assignment, which asks students to explore their identities as readers, makes the reader the center of the writing process as well. Writing that cultivates the imagination and helps students find and appreciate their own voices prepares students to be more effective readers of literature.

Some instructors spend 4-5 weeks on this reader-centered sequence, selecting a novel-length text that highlights the cultural meanings of literacy, such as *Frankenstein*. But whether the works focus specifically on reading, as key passages in *Frankenstein* do, or not, this unit encourages students to explore their responses to literary texts. Regardless of how long you choose to make this sequence, including a reader-centered unit in your course will help you get to know your students as readers, which will serve you well in learning how to teach them.

### Possible goals for this unit or conceptual aspect

- Empower students as active participants in the reading process
- Articulate reading preferences
- Bring to awareness students' reading histories
- Become conscious of how personal experience shapes reading choices and strategies
- Interrogate the function of reading in students' lives
- Identify and challenge students' assumptions about literature
- Build a community of readers in the classroom
- Foster an ongoing interest in reading literature

### Classroom Activities for Reader-Centered Sequence

Ask students to list their favorite books and movies. In pairs, have students interview each other about these preferences. Then make a class list on the board. See if you can categorize the list. Have the class analyze themselves as a generation of readers of literature and film.

Have students make reading timelines that record the history of their reading chronologically. You might make a timeline yourself as a model. Various discussions and/or writing assignments can be based on the timelines. For instance, you might have students locate a place on their timeline when their reading preferences shifted and analyze why. Follow this with a class discussion about what kinds of forces influence our reading habits. You might structure this discussion developmentally: what factors affected them as beginning readers? as elementary school readers? as adolescent readers? young adult readers?

Ask students to list the required reading in their high school literature classes. In small groups, have students compare and analyze the lists. You might ask them to think about what's not on the list and why, what the reading list says about the values of high schools, what they learned about reading in these classes.

### **Reading the Text**

While students may not have considered the roles played by the "reader" and the "world" in the meaning-making process, nearly every student walking into ENGL:1200 will expect to talk and write about the texts

they read. But many students may not know how to do this well—or confidently.

Students are often intimidated by literary texts and claim not to be able to see underlying layers of significance, or “the deep meaning.” For many students, becoming better readers will involve learning to notice more in the text and to think more about the possible significance of what they’ve noticed. The “text” unit (while we will refer to reader/text/world “units” in what follows, it is not necessary that these conceptual aspects of the course be organized into formal units; they may be distributed under different organizing principles, such as “theme” or “genre”), in addition to teaching students to pay more attention while they’re reading, should help students develop strategies for working with texts and give them plenty of practice trying out these strategies.

Possible goals of this unit or conceptual aspect:

- Teach the importance of reading attentively
- Model good questions readers might ask of texts
- Heighten awareness of various aspects of texts, such as language, structure, character development, point of view, etc.
- Acquaint students with different writing styles and genres, and make “difficult” writings, such as poetry, more familiar and approachable
- Provide opportunities for students to practice making textual observations and assembling these observations into coherent interpretations
- Build students’ confidence in their observing and meaning-making skills

Examples of Assignments that Focus on the “Text”

**I. The following assignments are designed to indicate ways you might help students focus on specific features of a LITERARY GENRE:**

A. “Taming a Poem”—This assignment begins with a passage from *The Little Prince* in which the fox tells the prince that “tame” means “to establish ties” and that “if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world...” The analogy suggests that, like taming a fox, we get to know a poem by spending time with it, meeting it for lunch, playing with it, talking to it. The assignment requests a series of writings that ask students to get to know a poem slowly, to see what sort of relationship might grow between them, what ties might be established. The assignments are divided into two parts, one written, one oral. The written part involves a series of writings divided into nine segments. The oral part requires a presentation in a class Poetry Slam that may include background music, posters, pictures, props, costumes, or anything else that helps the student to bring the poem to life for an audience.

B. “Poetry Hunt”—This assignment asks students to look around for examples of poetry in their day-to-day living and make a list of the places in which they locate poems. They may go to obvious places such as library shelves and bookstore poetry sections, but they should also look in unexpected places such as downtown or the mall, in advertising or on TV. They need not limit themselves to poems written on paper. Students keep a list of titles and brief descriptions of poems from as many different places as possible, choosing one that they particularly like. They bring to class the list, their chosen poem, and a paragraph explaining why they chose it. These form the basis for a discussion in class that addresses questions such as— what counts as poetry? Why? This assignment can be modified to address other genres such as narrative, assigning students to look for stories and describe their narrative patterns and the context of the

story-telling. Or they might search for dramatic scenes in the world around them.

C. “Poetry Slam/Poetry Reading”—Students select a poem to present to the class, which they read aloud several times, offering by their performance a different way of interpreting the poem. They may use props, music, their voice and/or body to suggest the different meanings a poem can have depending on how it looks, sounds, and feels. Alternatively, students may use the “Reading” as an opportunity to give an insightful talk about the author of the poem, its historical period, and/or its poetic style to suggest the different meanings a poem can have depending on the “frame” it is placed in.

D. “In Search of Our Artists”—This assignment has been used successfully as a final short essay. It begins by referring to Alice Walker’s essay “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens” in which Walker asks us to reconsider what counts as art and who are our artists. Walker recognizes as artwork her mother’s gardening as well as other black women’s quilting and storytelling. Students are asked to join her in the project of expanding the borders surrounding what gets included under the label of art. They think about someone they know who practices a kind of art work that isn’t usually associated with “Art.” In a 2-3 page typed essay, they explain why this person is an artist. They must use specific details, but beyond close description, also be self-conscious about what, in their opinion, constitutes art.

E. Read a selection of works by the same author (particularly helpful with a single poet, or a single short story writer).

## **II. These assignments are designed to help your students engage in CLOSE READINGS of specific texts:**

A. “Frame Assignment”—This assignment has been used successfully with *Maus* but might be adapted to other visual texts. The instructor projects one “frame” in the sequence onto the classroom wall and guides the class in a collective close reading. Alternatively, students choose one frame and present their readings.

B. “Point of View”—This assignment works best with texts that have a limited point of view. Students are asked to recreate a scene or retell a part of the story or rewrite lines of the poem from a point of view omitted in the original. For example, if the text is Browning’s “My Last Duchess,” students may write the poem or retell its story from the point of view of the Duchess. You may wish to give students a model for this exercise by preceding it with discussions of texts such as *Wide Sargasso Sea* in relation to *Jane Eyre* or *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* in relation to *Hamlet* since these are extended versions of what you are asking students to do.

C. “Cut/Don’t Cut”—The writer chooses a scene which, at first glance, seems cuttable or insignificant, and indicates briefly why the scene looks unnecessary. Then, for the major part of the paper, the task is to justify the importance and placement of the scene. Such an assignment invites students to look carefully at structure, character revelation, atmosphere, thematic usefulness, and stage production.

D. “Staging Paper”—One of the major problems in understanding any play is to see how a text implies a production: how might lines be spoken, what kinds of choices do actors, directors, designers have to make, and how do particular words create emotional responses. Ask students to choose a short scene from a play and in an introduction (a couple of pages), to analyze the major interpretive problems that the scene presents. Then, the writer should direct the scene on paper, using a two-column approach, making sure to explain to the actors what they’re thinking and feeling, and therefore how they are speaking the text. The detailed work with the lines should embody the answers to the problems students raise in their introductions.

## **III. These assignments are designed to help your students interpret a text through its RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER TEXTS, both literary and non-literary.**

- A. “Creation/Recreation”—This assignment works especially well with Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* as the starting point. Students may then write in response to a number of questions that ask them to read the novel alongside any of the following recreations: *Frankenstein* (1931 with Boris Karloff as the monster); Kenneth Branagh’s *Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein* (1994); or *The X-Files* Episode “Postmodern Prometheus.” This assignment can be adapted, however, to address a number of text pairings or clusters such as the play *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell, the short story “A Jury of Her Peers,” and newspaper accounts of the real-life event (which took place in Iowa) ; or *Hamlet* and poems about *Hamlet*.
- B. “Reading a Reading”—This assignment is similar to “Creation/Recreation” except that students read different versions of the same genre. Examples include *Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, “To His Coy Mistress” by Andrew Marvell and “A Fine and Private Place” by Diane Ackerman, or “Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold and “The Dover Bitch” by Anthony Hecht.

#### **IV. These assignments are designed to help your students interpret a text through PERFORMANCE activities.**

Many of these exercises deal (obviously) with plays, but can be adapted to other genres.

A. Playcutting. Divide the entire class into acting groups, and get each group to select a short scene, preferably with balanced roles, to present to the class. Everyone in the group should participate in the acting. Scenes should be memorized and staged as fully as possible. Be sure to allow enough advance preparation time. Discussion afterwards focuses on interpretive choices, how we see the characters, unexpected reactions (comedy is hard to grasp on the page, but visible on the stage).

B. Sound and movement exercises. Choose a short scene that allows for different interpretations, perhaps one with two or three actors (i.e. such as *Hamlet* and *Ophelia*, “Get thee to a nunnery”). Ask groups to work outside of class to prepare a presentation of the scene based on sound and movement only, but not on language. This exercise gets students to isolate the central emotional conflicts and movements of the scene, and to work with dramatic images. Discussion afterwards can focus both on the view of the scene presented and on differences between groups; since the exercise is usually very short (i.e. 30 seconds to a minute), one can have four or five versions of the same scene.

C. Poetry Slam (see I.C.)

D. Use contrasting versions of scenes from plays to raise awareness of and questions about different interpretive choices. CDs (which can be played on a computer and then projected) exist for a number of Shakespeare plays. Short film clips (ranging from 30 seconds to 4 minutes) offering 3-6 versions of particular moments are available for the following plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*.

### **Reading the World**

The reading experience—the interaction between the reader and the text—is easily imagined as a very private experience. But both the creation and interpretation of the text take place within a particular historical circumstance, and both have public consequences. In this unit, you will guide your students through several different ways in which the reading process can affect and be affected by the world outside of the reader and the text. Historical background and biographical information on the author can both

clearly change the way we read a text. You might also examine the non-literary writings of an author, responses by the author's contemporaries to a text, and literary portrayals of the author's physical world in order to improve student understanding of how a text grew out of and responded to a historical circumstance.

Some possible goals of this unit or conceptual aspect might include:

- Examine how a literary text can function as historical evidence
- Understand how an author's particular experience of his or her world manifests itself in a text
- Research how a literary text responded to a contemporary cultural discussion or debate
- Identify the underlying assumptions of a literary text, particularly in terms of race, class, and gender
- Apply the interpretive skills of the class to a physical space in an effort to understand how ideas and cultural beliefs manifest themselves in the built environment
- Show how authors use a real place as complex symbol for a set of ideas or emotions

## Example Subdivisions That Focus on the World

**I. READING HISTORICALLY: This subdivision explores how a knowledge of the conditions of literary production can help us to construct a different and hopefully fuller reading of a literary text.**

A. Multiple Works: Read a text along with other works produced by the author and her/his contemporaries. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" is a good one for this: you can have students read about Gilman's politics, about neurasthenia and S. Weir Mitchell, about her poetry, as well as look at cartoons from her journal, or cartoons lampooning her politics. These materials help establish a "climate" for understanding the writer. William Wells Brown's *Clotel* might be read along with articles discussing abolition and slavery. This approach allows a discussion, too, of "New Historical" reading—how all of these texts interact to provide us with an imagined sense of what history was like.

B. Historical Context: Read a text against a larger historical event depicted in the text by asking students to do outside research on the major event, and discuss how a literary text can serve as a history: what are the limitations? What are the advantages? How, alternatively, is a historical essay like a piece of literature (you might include one historical essay to be read by the entire class)? This works well with Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, or Athol Fugard's "Master Harold" . . . and the boys. You can do this on a smaller scale with a text like Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*, which is based on an actual murder in Iowa: present the students with copies of newspaper accounts of the murder and trial, and discuss what the author leaves out, embellishes, invents, or includes.

C. Reviews: Read a text with critical reviews from the present as well as reviews from the past, to compare how people were reading the text. How does our environment change the way we interact with an apparently unchanging text? Shakespeare would work with this, as would many successful plays: Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, and other commonly anthologized plays.

**II. READING THE ENVIRONMENT: This subdivision attempts to adapt critical interpretive skills to our environment, to show how nonwritten and mass media texts hold meaning in a manner similar to literary texts, and to examine how authors use places to create meanings in their writings.**

A. Everyday "texts": This assignment asks students to look at media and their environment, and decipher the information they impart to us through images, design, or sound. It asks them to look critically at texts

which subtly—or overtly—influence our lives through their messages. There are a number of options concerning texts: 1) have students analyze and critique a magazine or newspaper advertisement; 2) have them keep a TV watching journal for one or more days; 3) have them go to a place you go often—a grocery store, for example—and examine its layout, design, and signs. Spend a day discussing results in class.

B. . Director’s Manual: In this assignment, students produce a director’s manual for a scene from a text in which place/environment plays an important role, such as Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, John Updike’s “A & P,” Dagoberto Gilb’s “Love in L.A.,” or Toni Cade Bambara’s “The Lesson.” Divide the class in groups and have each group describe the way one “scene” should be scripted for film. Students should be attentive to the ways relationships between characters emerge through positioning, how camera position can change point-of-view or mood, characters’ locations in rooms or with respect to one another, and how characters react to the environments where they find themselves.

C. Environment Essay: This essay asks students to bring one writer’s ideas about place or environment to bear on a different text—for example, how would Charlotte Perkins Gilman read the environment of *Trifles*. This encourages students to grapple with the roles environment plays in two texts, and to put the texts in conversation with each other.

D. Environment Essay II: Choose one or more significant space in the text and examine what that space means to one or more characters. What kind of power dynamics, social relationships, personal psychologies, desires, or conflicts are evident in this space? As they “read” this space, students should consider whether their reading corresponds with the characters’. This would work with “The Yellow Wallpaper,” *Frankenstein*, and others.

### **III. READING POLITICALLY: The purpose of this subdivision would be to show how literary texts contain both recommendations and unconscious assumptions about political issues (gender relations, race and class issues, etc.) as well as more general ideas about how the world works and/or should work.**

A. Read a literary work and examine it as a political response, and accompany the text with more directly political essays by the author and her/his contemporaries. How do the two types of texts affect the reader differently? Why write a piece of fiction, drama, or poetry instead of an essay? Which of the two types of texts is more powerful? This works well with *A Raisin in the Sun*, among others.

B. Parodies: Read several parodies or literary responses in order to identify the assumptions within the original text that the parody is responding to—Matthew Arnold’s “Dover Beach” and Anthony Hecht’s “Dover Bitch,” Diane Ackerman’s “A Fine and Private Place” and Andrew Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress.” How does the responding author point out underlying ideas in the original that she/he finds unpalatable or humorous? Then choose another poem (Shakespeare sonnets work well) and have students write their own poetic response, along with a 1 page accompaniment (or a class discussion) that explains how the response comments on or rejects ideas in the original.

C. Courtroom/Town Meeting: The courtroom works well with *Trifles*, because it presents a crime with no trial, but might also be used for Edgar Allen Poe stories, Shakespeare tragedies, or other crime stories. The town meeting works well for more overtly political pieces, or to evaluate a main character’s actions (in a novel like Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*); try reading several short pieces that address a single political issue and creating a fictional town crisis, which students (taking on the roles of authors and/or characters) must resolve. In order to get everyone involved, have two people collaborate on a single role, have role players write an opening statement, and have those not assigned major roles play journalists, jury members, or townspeople who have to write an editorial or a decision after the trial/meeting. Often a more formal structure (3 minute, written opening statements, 2 minute rebuttals, etc.) helps to ensure that students will be involved and on topic.

D. . Historical Comparison: Examine two texts that evaluate a similar political problem in two different time periods, and discuss what accounts for the differences/similarities. For example, pair Ralph Ellison’s “Battle Royal” with Spike Lee’s *Do the Right Thing* (talk about age/youth, violence, self-expression) or James Baldwin’s “Sonny’s Blues” with *A Raisin in the Sun* (manhood and race, urban life). This can produce good discussions of how the conditions of a political problem change or don’t change over time.

E. . “Speaking” Essay: Since we usually associate politics with speaking/campaigning, asks students to write about the role of speaking/writing in one of the texts. How does the story use the ability to speak or write as a means of revealing character, the character’s problems, or political dilemmas? Ask them to consider specific speeches in plays or poems. Ellison’s “Battle Royal” and Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, among others, would work here.

F. Conversation Essay: Have students imagine two authors having a conversation about a political issue, an incident in the news, or a third text. Let your students imagine the setting in which the two authors meet, and ask them to describe how the authors would look, act, and speak. You might ask them to place passages from the authors’ stories or essays into the mouths of their characters to ensure a significant engagement with the texts. Short stories work well with this.

**IV. READING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/SERVICE LEARNING: The purpose of General Education Literature is to foster lifelong readers, and one of the best ways to engage our students is to bring literature outside the classroom and into the community, the campus, and their own lives. Iowa City is famous for its literary scene, and engaged activities allow our students to discover literature in their own backyard. Participating in local museum exhibits, visiting the UI Special Collections, or attending local literary events make literature seem more real to our students. In addition, these activities also give our students a profound sense of investment and ownership in their work. You won't just be giving your students new ways of reading; you'll also be giving them new reasons to read in the first place. You may want to check out several continuing opportunities for adding a civic engagement/service learning component to you class.**

A. Old Capitol Museum: The Old Capitol Museum hosts new exhibits each year and frequently these exhibits are tied to the history of the University of Iowa or to some of its singular programs, such as the Writers’ Workshop. How can you get involved? First, consider teaching any appropriate text featured in an exhibit (it may be difficult to determine what’s available in your first semester). Second, take your students to the exhibit. Use the exhibit to relate themes you’re exploring in the texts you read with real-world issues that will literally strike home for your students. Third, have your students do a research project connected to the exhibit. The University Archives and the Iowa Women’s Archives both include substantial collections of short stories, articles, diaries, and student papers written by UI students and faculty. Tie-ins with Old Capitol exhibits give your students an opportunity to explore literature outside the classroom, it widens their scope of what literature means, and it gives them a sense of ownership and investment in their work and their local community.

B. University Library Special Collections Projects and Exhibits: Recent Projects have included Barry Moser’s fabulous illustrated edition of *Frankenstein*, including separate individual plates of each illustration. Special Collections projects allow our students to think about the materiality of texts, and to explore the rare books collection held by the UI Special Collections department. Special Collections has numerous other rare books that are available for classroom discussions, and a visit to Special Collections is a great way for students to think about publishing history and how a book’s appearance changes over the years in ways that matter for readers.

C. . Iowa City Literary Walk: “From acclaimed poets and playwrights, to accomplished novelists and journalists, Iowa has been both host and home to literary genius. The Iowa Avenue Literary Walk, conceptualized by the Iowa City Public Art Advisory Committee in 1999, celebrates works by 49 writers who

have ties to Iowa. The Literary Walk is comprised of a series of bronze relief panels that feature authors' words as well as attribution. The panels are visually connected by a series of general quotations about books and writing stamped into the concrete sidewalk. All artwork, by Gregg LeFevre, is set in the pavement along both sides of Iowa Avenue from Clinton Street to Gilbert Street. It was installed in conjunction with the Iowa Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project, which took place from 2000 to 2001." (~Introduction, "The Iowa Avenue Literary Walk: A Guide to its Writers). On a nice warm day, take your students for a stroll along the Iowa Avenue Literary Walk, which is an easy walk up the hill from EPB. Ask students to write down 3-4 favorite quotes along with a short one-paragraph reflection on their experience, either relating it to readings/assignments in your class or talking about their reaction to the panels. What is the value of this Literary Walk for our community? What is its value for you? A great accompaniment to this activity is to ask one or two writers from the Nonfiction Writing Program or the Iowa Writers Workshop to do a short 10-15 minute reading during your class. Ask students to read some of the writer's work in advance, and hold a short Q&A session on the writer's work and the literary legacy of Iowa City.

Alternately, assign your students to attend a reading at Prairie Lights Bookstore. Readings take place frequently, and students are often surprised by how much they enjoy listening to someone read, and often impressed to meet a real local literary "celebrity."

# Section 6: Syllabus Template

**A tip:** Some parts of a syllabus describe important policies and procedures that must not be changed. Other parts of a syllabus serve not as an ironclad contract, but as a map of territory that may need to change.

Students are very resentful of syllabus changes that look like they result from indecision or poor planning. It is important that you alert your students to the fact that there will almost certainly be changes in the syllabus, particularly in its schedule, but those changes will be in response to changing conditions and will always be made with an eye toward making course procedures and schedules more fair and reasonable. You know this, but your students need to understand that syllabus changes are designed to help them and do not reflect uncertainty on your part.

**Please Note:** While the syllabus for your course will almost certainly remain a work in progress over the semester, responding to changing circumstances and experiences, those changes should be limited as far as possible to your schedule and requirements for student work. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences tends to hold students to the exact letter of policies and procedures specified in the syllabus we initially give our students, so it is important that your conduct of your class strictly adheres to the specifications in your syllabus. This means that policies concerning attendance, late work, participation, grading, plagiarism, etc. should be specific, but don't straightjacket yourselves with an overly ambitious or overly complicated set of policies and rubrics.

CLAS MANDATES that each course offered in the College provide students with a copy of the syllabus on the first day of class (either passing out a hard copy or putting it on ICON) and MANDATES that each course syllabus contain certain bits of information. The specific CLAS requirements can be found at

<http://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-required-syllabus>

The General Education Literature Program also requires some information on the syllabus and requires that a copy of your syllabus must be available on ICON in the Content section for your course. This means ALL Gen ED Lit sections must have an ACTIVATED ICON PAGE.

# Syllabus Template

**Legend:** Black = Required Language and Information

Blue = You fill this in. See the sample syllabi in the GEL manual for sample language. Feel free to copy, cut & paste, and rewrite any of the information. Information does not need to appear in a specific order.

Interpretation of Literature (ENGL:1200: Your Section #)  
Fall 2018 Time You Meet Room and Building

Instructor: Your Name

Office Hours: (3 hrs minimum per week) and by appointment.

Email: your-address@uiowa.edu (Students should contact you via email; do not list the department phone number as your phone number.)

Department Chair: Chair Name

Department Main Office: 308 EPB

Course Supervisor: Blaine Greteman, Blaine-greteman@uiowa.edu, 474 EPB, 4-1860.

## Course Description

This is where you describe what students should expect in the course and the department goals/outcomes. Usually this section is 1-2 paragraphs in length. It is necessary to specify the goals and learning objectives of our teaching. You can simply use the CLAS and departmental wording as is, or (much better) try to figure how it encompasses your own goals and objectives and go with your own explanation, in 3-4 sentences, of what you expect your students to learn during the semester. Giving your students a specific set of goals and learning objectives will make it easier for you to explain the relevance and importance of classroom assignments and exercises.

## Outcomes

Here are the English Department and CLAS outcomes for GEL:

- Students cultivate lifetime habits of frequent, sensitive, intelligent, and satisfying reading
- Students refine their reading skills by the exposure to a wide variety of genres from multiple centuries.
- Students improve their reading comprehension and analysis by using a range of strategies or “ways of reading” appropriate for the assigned texts
- Students strengthen their analytical and critical responses to texts through the intensive use of oral and written responses.
- Through assigned readings, class discussion, and writing assignments, students begin to recognize the influence of a reader’s individual differences and experiences on interpretation and analysis.
- In discussion and in writing, students consider and begin to understand the crucial connections between individual texts and cultural, historical, political, social, and other contexts.

- Finally, students deepen their vision of themselves as readers, particularly as contrasted to beginning of the course.

And Here is a typical restatement of these outcomes, tailored to a particular class:

- Students will use and refine their skills of reading, speaking, and writing to respond critically and thoughtfully to literary texts and other media
- Students will learn to see themselves as readers, recognizing the influence of individual differences (such as gender, ethnicity, geography) and experiences on interpretation.
- Students will consider the connections between individual texts and broader cultural contexts.

### **Workload expectations**

The University of Iowa expects a 3-hour credit course to entail at least 6 hours of outside preparation per week by students. Sample description: For each semester hour credit in this course, students should expect to spend two hours per week preparing for class sessions. This is a three credit hour course, so your average out-of-class preparation per week is six hours. This will fluctuate throughout the semester; some weeks will be a bit lighter and others more intense.

**List of all required texts** (list all course texts here including author/editor's name, exact title, edition, ISBN number, retail price, date of publication, publisher, and place where books were ordered). Under no circumstances should you order more than 2-3 books in any single genre.

### **Other required materials**

Note the other materials that are required for this course, such as paper and writing utensils for daily activities/quizzes, folders or notebooks for reading journals, and printing money for readings placed on the course website. You can also note here if you require students to print writing assignments and readings so that they have a sense of how much they should expect to spend.

### **Grading policies:**

Participation: 15%

Major Writing Assignment 1: 15 %

Major Writing Assignment 2: 20%

Midterm Exam: 15 %

Final Exam: 15%

Other Assignments (reading responses, quizzes, presentations, etc): 20%

Final Portfolio: required to pass the class (may also be worth up to 5% if you choose)  
= 100%

In this section, provide a brief description of the course work. Will the writing assignments be critical papers, or a combination of critical and creative responses? Will the quizzes be scheduled? What will be in the portfolio, and how will it count? Note where they can find full descriptions of assignments (e.g. if you will provide assignment sheets that outline specific requirements for each assignment and where they will be posted/if they will be handed out).

Note: GEL requires students to submit a final portfolio at the end of the semester, but instructors have flexibility in how to use the portfolio. Some choose to make it a graded component of their course; others choose to make it a shorter assignment and simply give it a completion grade, while making it clear that students cannot pass the class without

completing this assignment. Minimum requirements are: A copy of all major written assignments (minimum 3 assignments, tbd by instructor) and a final 2-3 page reflective paper on what the student learned during the course. See the GEL manual for further details. Below is the standard ICON/Canvas grading scale of an A-F plus/minus scale that you can include. Note that A+ is only used in the case of rare and extraordinary academic achievement.

A	94-100%	A-	90-93.9%	B+	87-89.9%
B	84-86.9%	B-	80-83.9%	C+	77-79.9%
C	74-76.9%	C-	70-73.9%	D+	67-69.9%
D	64-66.9%	D-	61-63.9%	F	60% and below

### Attendance policy

In this section, detail this attendance policy and provide information about the differences between excused vs. unexcused absences, the relationship between attendance and participation, and additional expectations, such as that students are expected to submit assignments on time, even when they will miss a class. You will need to briefly explain whether you will allow students to make up pop quizzes or other work missed due to unexcused absences. You might refer to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences on attendance and absences: <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences> as well as the language on the registrar's website regarding absences: <http://registrar.uiowa.edu/absence-class>

All GEL sections maintain a standard attendance policy:

For MWF classes, students may miss 3 classes without penalty. Any additional unexcused absence will result in a 1/3 deduction from their participation grade.

For T/Th or M/W classes, students may miss 3 classes without penalty. Any additional unexcused absence will result in 1/3 deduction in their participation grade.

For one-day-per-week classes, students may miss 2 classes without penalty. Any additional unexcused absence will result in a 1/2 deduction in their participation grade.

### Sample Attendance Policy Language:

Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive on time. That said, occasionally everyone needs to miss class, whether it is due to illness, family or personal emergency, or even being overwhelmed by work for other classes. Therefore, I allow each student **three absences** without penalty. You do not need to provide any excuse for these absences, though if you know ahead of time you will be missing class, an email is always appreciated.

Each unexcused absence beyond the permitted four will lower your final participation grade by **1/3**. So, with one additional absence, an A becomes an A- and a B- becomes a C+. With two additional absences, an A becomes a B or B+, a B- becomes a C or C-, etc.

There may also be other circumstances in which a student must miss class (e.g. illness, religious obligations, family obligations, athletics or other university activities, etc.) These absences should be documented properly with the University (this requires a form, available from the registrar.) These excused absences **will** count towards the aforementioned three, though you will not be penalized for excused absences accrued beyond the allowed three. For example, if you miss three classes to go to a debate tournament, and then decide to skip a fourth class later in the semester, it will lower your final grade. However, if you need to miss a fourth class because of a documented illness, religious obligation, or family emergency, it will not lower your final grade. For information on excused and unexcused absences, see <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences>

Please note that an absence is not the same as an extension, and I still expect you to turn in via ICON any written assignments due that day. The only exception is reading quizzes, which you will not be penalized for missing as long as the absence is excused or one of your allotted three. If the absence is not one of the three or otherwise excused, you will also receive a 0 on the reading quiz for that day.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct**

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own. It can occur intentionally or unintentionally. Intentional plagiarism is cheating; it's when you deliberately copy another person's words or ideas without acknowledgment. Examples of this include copying all or any portion of an encyclopedia entry or published essay, downloading a paper off the internet, and handing in a paper from a fraternity's files. Keep in mind that your instructors read widely, and have a lot of experience reading student work. Believe us when we tell you that words that are not your own are easy to spot. The consequences for plagiarizing are severe: we report all cases to the college, and the usual consequences is a zero on the assignment and often failing the course.

Unintentional plagiarism is by far the most common form, and usually involves improper citation of your reference sources. The best way to avoid this is to learn how to cite your sources correctly and, when in doubt, to cite anything you've consulted. Careful note-taking and a clear understanding of the rules for quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing sources, according to a recognized manual of style, will help prevent accidental plagiarism. Proper citation tells your instructors where you got your information, and demonstrates to them that you are not trying to cheat.

If you are unsure about which citation form to use, check with your instructor and then visit our Style and Citation webpage at <http://clas.uiowa.edu/history/teaching-and-writing-center/style-and-citation>

### **Late Assignment Policy**

Late work will be **docked 1 letter grade** for every day late, beginning as soon as the original due date has passed. A paper due at 12 p.m. turned in at 12:30 p.m., for example, will be docked 1 letter grade. Late major work submitted over four or more days after the due date will receive an automatic F. If you miss class, you are still responsible for submitting work on time via ICON or email.

Please Note: You can add further explanation of this policy as needed, but it is **IMPERATIVE** that you stress this policy at the beginning of the semester. Obviously, some unavoidable emergencies and/or scheduling conflicts may appear that will cause us to make exceptions to this policy, such as documented family emergencies.

### **Optional Additional Sections: See Sample Syllabi for Examples**

- Technology Policy (what kinds of tech they can bring into the classroom, if you allow computers, e-readers, etc.)
- Submitting Written Work (print, email, course website [Canvas], both print and upload, etc.)
- Additional Resources (Confidential reporting options on and off campus, Writing Center, Tutor Iowa, UI Counseling Services)
- Communication (email etiquette, classroom environment)
- Participation (what counts as engaged participation in your classroom, what are examples of class disruptions)
- Policies for discussing graded work
- Collaboration (CLAS asks that instructors specify if collaboration is allowed on assignments and, if so, your expectations for a student's individual performance. If collaboration is not allowed or is considered academic misconduct, this should be emphasized. The student's responsibility for understanding these boundaries and for asking for clarification should be stressed.

### **Administrative Home**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other policies. These policies vary by college (<https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook>).

### **Electronic Communication**

Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI ([Operations Manual, III.15.2](#)).

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student should then discuss accommodations with the course instructor (<https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/>).

### **Nondiscrimination in the Classroom**

UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, and religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University's Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity at [diversity@uiowa.edu](mailto:diversity@uiowa.edu) or [diversity.uiowa.edu](http://diversity.uiowa.edu).

### **Academic Integrity**

All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](#). Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address.

### **CLAS Final Examination Policies**

The final exam schedule for each semester is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make

travel plans until knowing this final exam information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. (<https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies>.)

### **Making a Complaint**

Students with a complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the Director of Undergraduate Studies in English ([phillip-round@uiowa.edu](mailto:phillip-round@uiowa.edu)) for majors courses, the Director of General Education Literature ([Blaine-Greteman@uiowa.edu](mailto:Blaine-Greteman@uiowa.edu)) for GEL courses, or the Director of Graduate Studies ([stephen-voyce@uiowa.edu](mailto:stephen-voyce@uiowa.edu)) for graduate courses, before appealing, if need be, to the Chair of the English Department ([Ioren-glass@uiowa.edu](mailto:Ioren-glass@uiowa.edu)). Students may then bring the concern to CLAS (<https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities>).

### **Understanding Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, definitions, and the full University policy, see <https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/>.

## FALL 20XX CALENDAR OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

*This is a tentative calendar and is subject to change. Updates will be posted to ICON and/or shared in class. Students are responsible for tracking course activities, readings, and assignments. Note midterm dates and significant deadlines, such as the last day to drop. The master calendar, which includes university holidays and other important deadlines, can be found here: <https://registrar.uiowa.edu/academic-calendar>*

**NOTE:** returning GEL instructors are allowed to change the order of these units (i.e., to begin with Poetry or Drama instead of nonfiction), but the sequence of major assignments and exams should remain roughly the same, and you should aim to devote at least three weeks to each of the genres. This should leave you four weeks to return to one or more of these genres and/or introduce new ones, such as the Graphic Novel, Film and Visual Media, etc.

### Week 1 (August X-X) Unit 1: Essaying and Nonfiction

M: Introduce the syllabus. What is an essay/nonfiction? Why are you reading the ones you've chosen?

W: describe reading and assignments here, et. seq.

F:

### Week 2 (August X-X)

M:

W:

F:

### Week 3 (September X-X)

M: (Check calendar for Labor Day, University Holiday)

W:

F:

### Week 4 (September X-X): Unit 2: Poetry

M: Introduce poetry unit and assign first major writing assignment if you have not done so.

W:

F:

### Week 5 (September X-X)

M:

W:

F:

Week 6 (September X-X)

M:

W:

F:

Week 7 (October X-X): \_\_\_\_\_ Midterm and Unit 3: Narrative Fiction

M: The first major writing assignment is due by now or before

W: Review for midterm and introduce narrative fiction unit and the novel and/or short stories you will be reading.

F: Midterm exam

Week 8 (October X-X):

M:

W:

F:

Week 9 (October X-X)

M:

W:

F:

Week 10 (October X-X)

M:

W:

F: Assign the second major writing assignment by now.

Week 11 (October X-November X) \_\_\_\_\_ Unit 4: Drama

M: Introduce the drama unit and the play(s) you will read

W:

F:

Week 12 (November X-X)

M:

W:

F:

Week 13 (November X-X) \_\_\_\_\_ Final weeks on materials of your choice (Graphic novel, drama, novel, etc)

M:

W:

F: Major writing assignment 2 due by now.

Week 14 (November X-X)

Thanksgiving Holiday (check calendar)

Week 15 (November X-December X)

M:

W:

F:

Week 16 (December X-X)

M: Do not assign any major projects this week

W:

F: Final review and conclusion.

Week 17: Finals Week

The final exam schedule for each semester is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this final exam information.

## Example Syllabi