**UNIVERSITY OF IOWA GENERAL EDUCATION LITERATURE MANUAL 2023-24**

Updated 5/24/23

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

SECTION 1: GEL Resources 4

 Chain of Command 4

Staff 4

 Program Associates 4

 Teaching Advisors 4

 Resources for Student Welfare/Students in Crisis 4

 Resources for GEL Instructor Welfare 5

 Resources for Teaching Ideas, Methods Assignments in ICON 5

General Education Literature Website 5

SECTION 2: Information About Your Appointment 7

 Oral Competency 7

 Stipends 7

 Expense of Time on a Teaching Assistantship 7

 Absences from Teaching 7

Professional Organizations 8

Reviewing Your Performance (Instructor-Self Review, Program Review) 8

SECTION 3: What is the Interpretation of Literature Course? 9

 Who Takes This Course 9

 Defining the Course 9

SECTION 4: Policies and Procedures 11

 Writing 11

AI 11

Writing and Plagiarism 12

Turnitin 13

 Handling Cases of Plagiarism 13

 Plagiarism and Grading Policy 14

Grading and Grade Complaints 14

Testing 15

Portfolio Requirement 16

 Electronic Communications with Students 16

 Attendance 17

Adding/Dropping a Class 18

Pass/Non-Pass Registration 18

 University Honors Designation 18

 Educationally Disadvantaged Students 19

 Students with Special Needs 19

 Offensive Language and Materials 19

 Duplication of Materials for Class Use 19

 Audio-Visual Resources 20

 Incompletes 20

 Reports 20

 Sexual Harassment and Consensual Relations in the Academic Setting 21

SECTION 5: Creating Your Interpretation of Literature Course 22

Ways of Reading 22

Classroom Activities for Reader-Centered Sequence 23

Reading the Text 23

Reading the World 26

SECTION 6: Syllabus Template 31

See the sample syllabi on the GEL website under New Instructor Resources https://gel.sites.uiowa.edu/new-instructor-resources

# 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 (Bluford Adams). Policy and other concerns may be directed to GEL Program Director, then the English Department Chair (Blaine Greteman), 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

Andrea Cramer (English TA and RA Coordinator) andrea-cramer@uiowa.edu

## PROGRAM ASSOCIATES

Five experienced teaching assistants help with the Orientation procedures in May and August, before classes start, and then help new TAs individually and at required weekly meetings during the fall semester. This year, they are Hajrije Kolimja, Sara Luzuriaga, Bronwyn Stewart, Darius Stewart, and PJ Zaborowski. Meeting with new TAs in groups of three or four, 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 ADVISORS

A member of the faculty serves as advisor for each teaching assistant in their 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 their 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/sites/dos.uiowa.edu/files/imports/Uploads/Documents/distress.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:**

Danielle Martinez (335-1497)

danielle-martinez@uiowa.edu

Nikki Hodous, M.A. (335-1162)

nicole-hodous@uiowa.edu

**Additionally, please alert Prof. Adams (Bluford-adams@uiowa.edu)**

Here are some other useful links:

The University Counseling Service: [http://counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu](http://counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu/)

The University Tutoring Referral Service: [http://tutor.uiowa.edu](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](http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/tat/)

Department of Public Safety: [http://police.uiowa.edu](http://police.uiowa.edu/)

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

## RESOURCES FOR TEACHING IDEAS, METHODS, ASSIGNMENTS IN 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, maintain an electronic grade book and collect and run student writing through plagiarism detection software (in ICON ASSIGNMENTS)

GENERAL EDUCATION LITERATURE WEBSITE

The Textbook Committee maintains a Gen. Ed. Lit. website for both new and returning instructors to post material, readings, and advice. This is a valuable resource for all GEL personnel. <https://gel.sites.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://tile.uiowa.edu](http://tile.uiowa.edu/)

The Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio

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

The Center for Teaching

[http://cft.uiowa.edu](http://cft.uiowa.edu/)

The Writing Center

[http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/)

# 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 evaluation will address this issue, but few problems will arise if you simply try to communicate as clearly as possible when talking to your students.

## STIPENDS

Stipends for 2023-24 are $21,360 for 50% appointment (3 courses) and $14,240 for 33.33% appointment (2 courses), 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 Andrea as quickly as possible. An instructor may ask Andrea 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 English Department through the Association of Graduate Students in English (AGSE). The graduate student union (COGS) represents graduate student 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 gauge 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 (aka 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 emailed to you by Andrea Cramer.

# 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 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. Generally, students in ENGL:1200 are either freshmen or sophomores. Some or even all of them will NOT have taken Rhetoric. 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.

Each year more than fifty graduate teaching assistants and several Visiting Assistant Professors teach around 150 sections of General Education Literature Courses for over 3,000 students. More than two-thirds of the teaching assistants work in English, more than a quarter come from the Writers' Workshop, and others come from the Literary Translation department and American Studies.

Although we work from a 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.

# 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 4-6 pages in length**, and at least one of these papers must 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.

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. You should post feedback and grades for each set of student papers within two weeks of the date they were submitted. **Students should have a good idea of their course grade throughout the course and especially as they go into the final exam. IN ICON SETTINGS, DON’T CLICK THE BOX LABELLED: “Hide totals in student grades summary.”** Paper assignments should be posted on ICON and should include some indication of the criteria by which you will evaluate the papers. For example, if you plan to grade with a rubric, post it along with the paper assignment.

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/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/)

**AI**

The emergence of AI has transformed teaching in ways we are only beginning to understand. You can assume that many, if not most, of your students will use this technology unless you explicitly forbid them from doing so (and some will use it anyway). At a minimum you must set down clear guidelines about the use of AI in your syllabus. Will you ban the use of AI entirely? (If so, you should say that any use of AI will be considered plagiarism and treated as such.) Will you allow students to use AI-generated material as a source for their papers, provided that they properly cite it? (If so, you should explain how you want students to cite the AI-generated material.) It is up to you to set boundaries for the use of AI and to make those boundaries clear in your syllabus. You should periodically remind students of your policies on the use of AI throughout the semester, especially when they are working on their papers. For some valuable tips on teaching in the age of AI, including help with syllabus language, see the FAQ’s at <https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/artificial-intelligence-tools-and-teaching>

## 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. 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 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 inspire good writing. Good assignments make plagiarism not only difficult but beside the point. Such assignments might invite students to read a character or text in a specific context or apply it to their own experiences. For example, instead of assigning "Discuss Hamlet's character," you could encourage hands-on activities that require students, for example, to visit the Library’s Special Collections and write about a particular copy of the play held there or to discuss a scene they found particularly memorable in a video of a performance. Traditional themes and topics have been treated countless times before: in scholarship, "student aids" like Cliffs 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>)

The use of scaffolding assignments is another excellent way to head off plagiarism. 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. You might also require students to turn in a précis for their paper that includes a tentative thesis statement. (This will give you a chance to offer early feedback on their ideas.) 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:

* 1. What is meant by the term plagiarism. See the CLAS Code of Academic Honesty, which can be found at: [http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code.](https://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.
1. How students should acknowledge sources if your written work calls for it. Devote class time to teaching them a citation system like MLA. For detailed MLA citation guidelines, see <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html>
2. The penalties for plagiarism (see below).
3. 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.](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 a new assignment. Go to the Assignments tab in ICON and click the yellow button for “+Assignment.” In the box labelled “Submission Type,” select “External Tool” for the upper list box and “Turnitin/Feedback Studio” for the lower one. (DO NOT CLICK the check box for “Load This Tool in a New Tab.”) 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. Whenever possible, discuss the situation with the student in person. Write an email to the student asking them to discuss the situation with you in person or over Zoom. Follow these guidelines for the email: [http://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-guidelines-e-mail-notification-academic-fraud.](http://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-guidelines-e-mail-notification-academic-fraud) 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 highlight 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. If your meeting confirms your suspicion that the student plagiarized, report the incident using this form: [https://publicdocs.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofIowa&layout\_id=2.](https://publicdocs.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofIowa&amp;layout_id=2) On the form you will describe the academic fraud and the action taken; attach documentation (such as Turnitin reports) to support the claim. The report is automatically copied to the Program Director, the student, and to 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. 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 consequences described on its [website](https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/undergraduate-teaching-policies-resources/academic-misconduct).

A student may appeal a decision. For more information, please see the For Students web site pages on the [Code](https://email.uiowa.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=68OgE8Zx9EKCGuZ_mgH7vTR5ezFWatEIIQ1VEu3B5Q65R2xjBsM6ZHKjbrStrGR0X4yL8exGROw.&amp;URL=http%3a%2f%2fttp%2fclas.uiowa.edu%2fstudents%2fhandbook%2facademic-fraud-honor-code) [of Academic Honesty.](https://email.uiowa.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=68OgE8Zx9EKCGuZ_mgH7vTR5ezFWatEIIQ1VEu3B5Q65R2xjBsM6ZHKjbrStrGR0X4yL8exGROw.&amp;URL=http%3a%2f%2fttp%2fclas.uiowa.edu%2fstudents%2fhandbook%2facademic-fraud-honor-code)

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 zero for a plagiarized assignment 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](https://email.uiowa.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=Tuc5Wu6lLEqrJs0QB7aThnTPnkxbatEI_FaCCStdZEfsNeZm0ymqMqeYO4Mikgjp6HUCQEnf-pc.&amp;URL=http%3a%2f%2fclas.uiowa.edu%2ffaculty%2fteaching-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. **Most of your grades should be B+ or below.** 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 ensure 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. You must explain to students that being physically present in the classroom does not constitute participation.

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. Instead, make an appointment with the student to meet in person to discuss differences after you have 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 in question.

If the discussion fails to resolve the disagreement, the student may e-mail the program director, Bluford Adams, at bluford-adams@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 or some substitute exercise, such as a take-home essay**. Brief 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 it is highly recommended that your class include a quiz component, whether these quizzes are daily, weekly, or biweekly.

Give final examinations at the time and place during finals week assigned by the Registrar. 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. Final examinations should be suited to the students' expectations and capacities. 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.

Each instructor should put a copy of their midterm and final exams, after they have given them, in the FILES page of their ICON site. You can find samples of past midterm and final exams on the GEL website.

## 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 drop box ASSIGNMENT named “Portfolios.”

1. Each Gen Ed Lit student 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 drop box.
4. After the portfolios have been submitted on ICON, instructors will reflect on what they have learned from reading the portfolios, as part of the FORM A Instructor Self-Review. Instructors should email a copy of their FORM A to Andrea Cramer and Bluford Adams.
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, 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.

## 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 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 Bluford Adams at bluford-adams@uiowa.edu (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. You should take attendance in class and keep current attendance records on ICON’s Roll Call feature so students can always check absences. If you don’t want Roll Call to be factored into your grades (most instructors don’t), you will need to click the box in Roll Call for “Do Not Count Attendance Toward Final Grade.” To avoid confusion, remember to keep a record of any absences you excuse (note the student and the date). If the student presents you with documentation, let them know at that time whether you are excusing the absence and for what date/s. It is recommended that you require such documentation within two weeks of the absence to avoid misunderstandings over whether a given absence was excused.

All GEL sections maintain a standard attendance policy:

1. All students are allowed up to two weeks of absences without penalty, so MWF sections get 6 allowed absences. Tu/Th and M/W sections get 4. Both excused and unexcused absences count toward these two weeks of allowed absences. (To clarify: it doesn’t matter why the student was absent for those classes. When the two weeks are exhausted, they have no more allowed absences.)
2. Each **unexcused** absence beyond those two weeks of allowed ones will count off on the Final Course Grade (not the Participation Grade) by one-third of a letter.
3. Any student who misses more than a month of classes fails the course. This includes any combination of excused and unexcused absences. In other words, a student who misses 13 classes in a MWF section fails, as does a student who misses 9 classes in a M/W or Tu/Th section.
4. Students who feel that they are unfairly impacted by these attendance policies should be referred to the Program Director.

Attendance and the Student Athlete: The one-month cap on absences does not apply to student athletes who miss more than a month of classes because of UI-sponsored activities. Those official absences must be documented with a letter from the athletic department. Please note: student athletes are not allowed two weeks of unexcused absences **in addition to** the excused absences for their sport (see point 1 above). Once their two weeks of allowed absences are exhausted, any additional unexcused absences reduce the student athlete’s final grade by a third of a letter.

Students with SDS Attendance Accommodations:

Please ask students with SDS attendance accommodations (as indicated on a DRADM form) to meet with you at the beginning of the course. Remember that you are not allowed to ask those students anything about their disability. Please tell those students that, per GEL guidelines, you will waive the penalty for up to 12 absences for MWF section and up to 8 absences for Tu/Thu or M/W section, but any additional absences beyond those limits mean that they fail the course. You should indicate all of this on the student’s DRADM form and you and the student should both sign it to avoid misunderstandings. If students with SDS absence accommodations have additional questions or concerns, please refer them to the Program Director.

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.

Excused Absences:

Instructors should remember that CLAS 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 five or more days of school (e.g., family emergency, health crisis) may be reported to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Student Care and Assistance; if so, you will receive an email from the Registrar with information about the absence. 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, they 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.

## ADDING/DROPPING A CLASS

Students can add or drop your class for the first five days of the semester through MyUI. During the second week of classes, they will need the permission of their advisor and Andrea Cramer to add your class. Andrea tries to maintain all sections at a given hour at even levels. Given the dropping and adding that goes on in the first two weeks, you will need to go to MAUI for an updated class list during that time. Do NOT allow students who are NOT officially enrolled in your section to remain in the classroom or to continue attending your class.

## 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 DRADM 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 copy 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. Gen. Ed. Lit. instructors should rely primarily on ICON for getting materials and assignments to students. You may wish to hand out hard copies of your syllabus on the first day. Whether you do or not, 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 4:30 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 MODULES SECTION or on the HOMEPAGE of your ICON 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.

University Library Course Reserve Services

The UI Libraries has adopted a course reserve software called Course Materials+ that is embedded in ICON and connected to the Libraries catalog, InfoHawk+. This allows instructors to add materials to their courses by searching the online library catalog. For more information, see <https://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/c.php?g=1204800&p=9169034>

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, 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. The Media Collection of the University Library has many DVDs that can be checked out for class use at the Service Desk on the first floor. You can put DVDs on reserve through Course Materials+, which is embedded in ICON. Check the online catalogue to see if the Media Collection 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.](http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/) At the top of the screen pull the arrow down next to "Resources." Click on "InfoHawk+.” Click “Log into InfoHawk+” to login and search for your title.

You can post videos to ICON and stream the videos licensed by the UI library through Swank. To request a video to be posted, use Course Materials+, which is embedded in ICON.

For information about the titles available through Swank, see <https://www.lib.uiowa.edu/services/course-reserves-2/>

## INCOMPLETES

Grades of “I” will not be approved without prior consultation with Program Director Bluford Adams. 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 where the student (1) has a well-documented illness or other special circumstance and (2) has met all the course requirements and completed all coursework except for one assignment or exam. 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 fill out this [form](https://clas.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/CLAS%20UNDERGRADUATE%20INCOMPLETE%20COMPLETION%20AGREEMENT%281%29.pdf), which specifies how the Incomplete can be removed and the 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 Andrea Cramer. 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:

* 1. 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."
	2. Midterm delinquency grade reports done online -- only for students graded D or F.
	3. Course and time preferences and book choices for next term.
	4. Final grade reports done online. These reports must be in on time.
	5. 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 ll-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/him/them 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 is 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”:

1. The following assignments are designed to indicate ways you might help students focus on specific features of a LITERARY GENRE:
2. “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.
3. “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 storytelling. Or they might search for dramatic scenes in the world around them.
4. “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.
5. “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.
6. Read a selection of works by the same author (particularly helpful with a single poet, or a single short story writer).
7. These assignments are designed to help your students engage in CLOSE READINGS of specific texts:
8. “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.
9. “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.
10. “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.
11. “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 are 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.
12. These assignments are designed to help your students interpret a text through its RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER TEXTS, both literary and non-literary.
13. “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*.
14. “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*, and “To His Coy Mistress” by Andrew Marvell and “A Fine and Private Place” by Diane Ackerman.
15. 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.

1. 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).
2. Sound and movement exercises. Choose a short scene that allows for different interpretations, perhaps one with two or three actors (e.g., 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.
3. Poetry Slam (see I.C.)
4. 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/her/their 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:**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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/they 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. “Speaking” Essay: Since we usually associate politics with speaking/campaigning, ask 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.
16. 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.
17. 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.
18. 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 is available in your first semester). Second, take your students to the exhibit. Use the exhibit to relate themes you are 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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 of readings and assignments, but those changes will be in response to changing conditions and will always be made with an eye toward making course procedures and schedules fairer and more 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:** 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 straitjacket 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 policies and 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 your course website. 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 on the GEL website under New Instructor Resources <https://gel.sites.uiowa.edu/new-instructor-resources>. Feel free to copy, cut & paste, and rewrite any of the information. Information does not need to appear in a specific order.

**The University of Iowa
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

Semester, Year

**Interpretation of Literature:** ENGL:1200: Your Section #

Time You Meet    Room and Building

**Department of English:** <https://english.uiowa.edu/undergraduate-programs>

**Course ICON site**: To access the course site, log into [Iowa Courses Online (ICON)](http://icon.uiowa.edu/index.shtml)

https://icon.uiowa.edu/index.shtml using your Hawk ID and password.

**Course Home**

For Undergraduate Courses: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the home of this course, and CLAS governs the add and drop deadlines, the “second-grade only” option (SGO), academic misconduct policies, and other undergraduate policies and procedures. Other UI colleges may have different policies.

**Instructor**: Your Name

Office Location: Building and room number

Student drop-in hours: (i.e., office hours; you are required to hold 3 hours minimum per week; online GEL sections can have all online hours, but in-person sections must have **at least some in-person hours** each 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: Blaine Greteman, blaine-greteman@uiowa.edu; 308 EPB.

Department Main Office: 308 EPB

Course Supervisor: Bluford Adams, Bluford-adams@uiowa.edu, 458 EPB, (319) 335-0461.

**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. You should specify the goals and learning objectives of your course, its themes, and major issues. 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. You should mention that the course is in the “Communication and Literacy” content area of the CLAS General Education CLAS Core.

**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.

**!! All GEL courses should include these assignments with the indicated grade weights:**

**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? REMEMBER: Your students must write at least 5,000 words over the course of the semester. (This includes both formal writing assignments and informal writing exercises.) Will the quizzes be scheduled? What will be in the portfolio, and how will it count? Tell students that you will post full descriptions of all writing assignments on ICON.

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 handbook for further details.

Below is the standard ICON grading scale of an A-F plus/minus scale that you should include. Note that A+ is only used in the case of rare and extraordinary academic achievement.

**Grading System**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 the GEL attendance policy (see below) 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 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>

!!!**Instructors: Please familiarize yourself with the GEL’s new attendance policy as described in the updated handbook.**

\*If you want to use this CLAS [absence form](https://clas.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/ABSENCE%20EXPLANATION%20FORM.pdf), you can put a link to it in your syllabus. (It is also to be found on the Student Tools tab of ICON.) You should tell students it is due within **two weeks** of any absence.

*Instructors: Please paste in EITHER this section OR the next one, depending on whether your class meets 2 or 3 times each week*

Attendance Policy for MWF Class:

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 **six 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 six will lower your **final grade in the course** by **1/3 of a letter grade**. So, with seven unexcused absences, an A becomes an A- and a B- becomes a C+. With eight unexcused absences, an A becomes a B+, a B- becomes a C, etc.

There may also be other circumstances in which a student must miss class because of illness, military service obligations, religious holy day obligations, University-sponsored activities, or [“unavoidable circumstances” as defined by CLAS.](https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/student-attendance-and-absences#absences-unavoidable%20circumstances) Students with mandatory religious obligations or UI-authorized activities must discuss their absences with me as soon as possible. Religious obligations must be communicated within the first three weeks of classes. **I will excuse these absences only if you provide proper documentation (within two weeks of the absence) and make up all missed coursework.** These excused absences **will** count towards the aforementioned six, though you will not be penalized for excused absences accrued beyond the allowed six. For example, if you miss six classes for University-sponsored activities and then decide to skip a seventh class later in the semester, it will lower your final grade. However, if you need to miss a seventh class because of a documented illness, 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**: I will explicitly tell you if an absence is excused. **Otherwise, you should assume the absence is unexcused. I will keep an updated record of your absences on ICON, so you can keep track of how many you have.**

**STUDENTS WITH 13 OR MORE ABSENCES FAIL THE COURSE**

You will automatically fail the class if you accumulate more than twelve total absences, which is over one full month of the semester. **This rule does not apply to student athletes and others who miss more than twelve classes while participating in University-sponsored activities.**

**Tuition Insurance**: Any student who fears they cannot meet these attendance requirements should consider the tuition insurance available through the [UI Billing Office](https://ubill.fo.uiowa.edu/tuition-and-housing-rate-schedules).

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 six. If the absence is not one of the six or otherwise excused, you will also receive a 0 on the reading quiz for that class.

**\*Any student seeking an SDS absence accommodation should meet with me at the beginning of the course as should any student who feels that they will be unfairly impacted by these attendance policies.**

Attendance Policy for M/W or Tu/Th Class:

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 **four 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 grade in the course** by **1/3 of a letter grade**. So, with five unexcused absences, an A becomes an A- and a B- becomes a C+. With six unexcused absences, an A becomes a B+, a B- becomes a C, etc.

There may also be other circumstances in which a student must miss class because of illness, military service obligations, religious holy day obligations, University-sponsored activities, or [“unavoidable circumstances” as defined by CLAS.](https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/student-attendance-and-absences#absences-unavoidable%20circumstances) Students with mandatory religious obligations or UI-authorized activities must discuss their absences with me as soon as possible. Religious obligations must be communicated within the first three weeks of classes. **I will excuse these absences only if you provide proper documentation (within two weeks of the absence) and make up all missed coursework.** These excused absences **will** count towards the aforementioned four, though you will not be penalized for excused absences accrued beyond the allowed four. For example, if you miss four classes for University-sponsored activities and then decide to skip a fifth class later in the semester, it will lower your final grade. However, if you need to miss a fifth class because of a documented illness, 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**: I will explicitly tell you if an absence is excused. **Otherwise, you should assume the absence is unexcused. I will keep an updated record of your absences on ICON, so you can keep track of how many you have.**

**STUDENTS WITH 9 OR MORE ABSENCES FAIL THE COURSE**

You will automatically fail the class if you accumulate more than eight total absences, which is over one full month of the semester. **This rule does not apply to student athletes and others who miss more than eight classes while participating in University-sponsored activities.**

**Tuition Insurance**: Any student who fears they cannot meet these attendance requirements should consider the tuition insurance available through the [UI Billing Office](https://ubill.fo.uiowa.edu/tuition-and-housing-rate-schedules).

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 four. If the absence is not one of the four or otherwise excused, you will also receive a 0 on the reading quiz for that class.

**\*Any student seeking an SDS absence accommodation should meet with me at the beginning of the course as should any student who feels that they will be unfairly impacted by these attendance policies.**

**Policy on the Use of AI**

**Your students are likely to use AI to help them with their assignments, so you must set down clear guidelines about that practice in your syllabus. Will you ban their use of AI entirely? (If so, you should say that any use of AI will be considered plagiarism and treated as such.) Will you allow students to use AI-generated material as a source for their papers, provided that they properly cite it? (If so, you should explain how you want students to cite the AI-generated material.) It is up to you to set boundaries on the use of AI and to make those boundaries clear in your syllabus. You should periodically remind students of your policies on the use of AI throughout the semester, especially when they are working on their papers. For some valuable tips on teaching in the age of AI, including help with syllabus language, see the FAQ’s at** [**https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/artificial-intelligence-tools-and-teaching**](https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/artificial-intelligence-tools-and-teaching)

**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 have consulted. Careful notetaking 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? Do you allow computers, e-readers, 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? Mention that students have a right to a distraction-free learning environment.)
* 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.)

***The following CLAS “Course Policies” and “University Policies” links must be included in your syllabus so just cut and paste this entire section:***

**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) Course Policies**

[**Exam Policies**](https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/examination-policies-and-best-practices)

**Communication: UI Email**

Students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for any communication with instructors or staff in the UI community.

**University Policies**
[**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities)
[**Basic Needs and Support for Students**](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#basic-needs-and-support-for-students)
[**Classroom Expectations**](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#classroom-expectations)
[**Exam Make-up Owing to Absence**](https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/students/absences-class#8.1)
[**Free Speech and Expression**](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#free-speech-and-expression)
[**Mental Health**](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#mental-health)
[**Military Service Obligations**](https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/students/absences-class#8.2)
[**Non-discrimination**](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#non-discrimination-statement)
[**Religious Holy Days**](https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/students/absences-class#8.2)
[**Sexual Harassment/Misconduct and Supportive Measures**](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#sexual-harassment--sexual-misconduct-and-supportive-measures)
[**Sharing of Class Recordings**](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#sharing-of-class-recordings-if-appropriate)

Fall 2023 Calendar of Course Assignments

*This is a tentative calendar and is subject to change. Updates will be posted to ICON and/or announced 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 21-25) 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, etc.

F:

Week 2 (August 28-September1)

M:

W:

F:

Week 3 (September 4-8)

M: Labor Day, University Holiday

W:

F:

Week 4 (September 11-15) Unit 2: Poetry

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

W:

F:

Week 5 (September 18-22)

M:

W:

F:

Week 6 (September 25-29)

M:

W:

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

Week 7 (October 2-6): Midterm and Unit 3: Narrative Fiction

M:

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 9-13)

M:

W:

F:

Week 9 (October 16-20)

M:

W:

F:

Week 10 (October 23-27)

M:

W:

F: Assign the second major writing assignment by now.

Week 11 (October 30-November 3) Unit 4: Drama

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

W:

F:

Week 12 (November 6-10)

M:

W:

F:

Week 13 (November 13-17) 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 20-24)

Fall Break (check calendar)

Week 15 (November 27-December 1)

M:

W:

F:

Week 16 (December 4-8). Do not assign any major projects this week (aside from portfolio submissions). Please remember that final exams may only be given during finals week according to CLAS policy (unless the course is off-cycle). Likewise, no major exams may be given the week before finals week.

M:

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

## See the sample syllabi on the GEL website under New Instructor Resources <https://gel.sites.uiowa.edu/new-instructor-resources>