

# English 2 | Critical Reading, Writing & Thinking

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Office: F61c | Office Hour: Wednesday 12:30 – 1:20pm

## Required Texts

### Primary Text:

- *The Odyssey* by Homer, translated by Emily Wilson (Norton) ISBN 978-0-393-35625-0

### One Secondary Text chosen from:

- *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood (Canongate) ISBN 978-1-78689-248-5
- *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* by Jonathan Shay, MD, PhD (Scribner) ISBN 978-0-7432-1157-4
- *An Odyssey: A Father, A Son, and An Epic* by Daniel Mendelsohn (Vintage) ISBN 978-0-345-80621-5

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Apply critical thinking skills to writing and complex readings
- Demonstrate academic writing based on reading of complex texts
- Demonstrate analysis, comparison, synthesis, and documentation of independent research

## Course Description

The central reading for this section of English 2 is Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, a text that humans have enjoyed for 2,700 years. All of our thinking, writing, and research will orbit around this sun. Why? Because it seems to satisfy so many of the objectives for this course, and because there must be a reason why this strange, magical, violent story has remained so important to human civilization. In a course devoted to thinking, researching, and writing about a complex text, what better task than to find our own answer to this challenge? We'll also read one additional book that offers a contemporary interpretation of *The Odyssey*. As our SLOs announce, the critical thinking goals of analysis, comparison, synthesis, and documentation will form the structure of our inquiry.

## Objectives

In this class we will learn to read for grace, nuance and subtlety; we will learn to interpret, analyze, synthesize, and compare; and we will learn to write with clarity, vigor, and freshness, often incorporating secondary sources (research) into the fabric of our writing. Beyond these academic goals, I hope this course will also engender an appreciation for the literary arts that will enlarge your vision of humanity. So, on a practical level, our objectives are to raise language competency in reading, thinking, and writing with sources. But the bigger picture has to do with not just what you can *do* but with who you *are*. I hope you will see this class as an opportunity to discover more about yourself and the world around you as reflected in our readings, lectures, activities, and

writings. Education is a transformative process. Who are you in the process of becoming? What part will this course play in that process?

## **Assignments**

- *Full-length Essays*—3 full-length essays, approximately 1,000 words, each incorporating a minimum of 3-4 sources, 20 points each.
- *Brief Essay Tests*—6 short interpretive arguments of *The Odyssey*, approximately 500 words. 10 points each.
- *In-class Exploratory Writing Tasks*—A collection of 8 writings, each approximately 500 words, written and collected in our class sessions, (no make-ups for missed classes), 5 points each.
- *Homework assignments in Canvas*—A series of 15 brief written responses to video lectures, approximately 250 words, 5 points each.

## **Grades**

Canvas, our online educational platform, keeps a precise grade calculation, updated with each entry, available to you at any point during the quarter. All grades are final and not open to negotiation.

## **Policies**

### **Required Materials:**

- A personal copy of the Wilson translation of *The Odyssey*, Norton paperback. No other versions or translations are acceptable for this class.
- A personal paperback copy of your choice of secondary text.
- Notebook paper, ink pens, notebook.
- A personal computer with reliable internet connection.

**Attendance:** With only one weekly class session, regular attendance in a hybrid class is essential to success; therefore, if you miss more than two classes, *you will be dropped from the course*. Missing partial class sessions may also be counted as an absence. Perfect attendance in this course will be rewarded: if, at my Week Eleven calculation, you have perfect attendance for the quarter, you will be exempt from the final exam.

**Masking:** Although facemasks are considered optional behavior, they are essential to good citizenship. If you or someone close to you has been sick, please wear a facemask while you are in our class. We do this not just to keep ourselves healthy, but to protect those around us and those they love and care for. Many of your fellow-students have close family members with compromised immune systems. Respect them by not accidentally spreading germs to their loved one.

**Paper Business:** Full-length essay topics will be announced and described in the appropriate Module on our class Canvas site two weeks in advance of their due date. There are *no rewrites* for

poorly written papers; by now, revision and editing should be a regular feature of your composition process.

Turnitin.com: You will submit your papers for this course to Turnitin.com, which is fully integrated into our Canvas site. Among other things, Turnitin.com will search the web for language matches with your paper once you upload it, issuing an “originality report,” which tells the percentage of language your paper shares with other similar writings found on the internet. A certain low-level amount of shared language is probable, considering brief quotes, etc. The sweet spot for shared language in an academic research essay is approximately 10-15%. If your originality report on any paper that you submit to this class reveals plagiarism (more than 30% of shared language), whether intentional or accidental, you will receive a 0 on that assignment.

AI: The use of artificial intelligence in any format to produce or contribute to an original paper for this course is inconsistent with course goals. We will not be using AI in this particular class. If Turnitin.com reveals AI content in your writing, it will be considered plagiarism and you will receive a ‘0’ on that assignment.

Tutoring & Assistance: The overall goal of English 2 is to prepare you to read, think, and write at a level necessary for success at the university and beyond; however, not everyone who enrolls in English 2 is prepared to succeed at this level. If you find yourself struggling or falling behind, please take advantage of the opportunities our campus provides for tutoring or individually-paced skills courses in reading, grammar, or writing. You may find this course particularly challenging if English is not your native language, or if you have a learning disability that causes difficulty in reading and/or writing. If so, seek help early and often from Disability Support Services or the Student Success Center’s Writing and Reading Center.

The Importance of Friday: Each Friday of the quarter I open the new Module in Canvas for the following week. And each Friday is a firm deadline for all work in that week’s Module. There are *no exceptions* to this policy and therefore *no extensions* for any reason. If you are unable to abide by this strict policy, then this might not be the appropriate EWRT 2 section for you.