
English 2

Critical Reading, Writing & Thinking

Text

The Odyssey by Homer (translated by Robert Fagles)

Materials

- Blue or black ink pens for in-class writing
- Journal: composition book with lined paper
- Bluebook for final essay exam

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, research, and discussion will orbit around this sun. Why? Because it seems to satisfy so many of the objectives for this course, and because your professor's got it into his crazy head that there must be a reason why this strange, magical, violent story has remained so important to human civilization. What better task, in a course devoted to thinking, researching, and writing about a complex text than to find our own answer to this challenge? 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 modest 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, discussions, 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

Essays—2 out-of-class essays on *The Odyssey*, each 3–5 pages in length, incorporating a minimum of 4 sources. 200 points possible.

Journal—Contains regular (weekly) both in- and out-of-class writings, often exploratory in nature. 100 points possible.

Reading Quizzes—4 short-answer quizzes on *The Odyssey*. 40 points possible.

Brief Essay Tests—6 one-page in-class interpretive responses to *The Odyssey*. 60 points possible.

Oral Presentation/Research Report—You will present a five-minute oral presentation to the class, including a one-page written report (one print copy for each student and one for your professor), which provides your sources, on a topic that informs our reading of *The Odyssey*. 50 points possible.

Participation—I will regularly call on you to share writing from your journal with the class and to share results of small group investigations. Reading aloud is a regular feature of this course. 100 points possible.

Final Essay Exam—You will write a final in-class essay on your response to our class during our final exam session. 100 points possible. *Note: Those with a perfect attendance/participation record at the end of the course are exempt from the final exam.*

Make-ups—There are no make-ups for missed assignments in this class; however, 50 points **possible extra credit** are available for an additional self-directed but pre-approved oral presentation/research report. See professor for details.

Grades

A+	622-650	C+	445-473
A	592-621	C	415-444
A-	563-591	D+	386-414
B+	533-562	D	356-385
B	504-532	D-	326-355
B-	474-503	F	0 – 325

Policies

Electronic Devices: You will not need a laptop, ipad, or cell phone on your desk for any reason. Please turn them off and pack them away.

Talking: There are no private (non-class related) conversations during our class sessions. The time for socializing is between classes and on your free time. No talking when your classmates or professor is reading aloud.

Materials: I expect you to bring your personal paperback copy of *The Odyssey* and your journal and a blue or black ink pen to class every day. I also expect you to be a fully engaged, active participant in this class while you are enrolled in it. Your credibility as a college student, not to mention your grade, will drop if you violate these expectations.

Participation: This is a very important part of the class. I really expect you to be reading and thinking actively, critically, and creatively. This is not a class in which you can cruise along in neutral gear for long. I will call on you regularly and keep track of your responses. When you're in class, be prepared, focused, on task. I will note your progress in my roll book. When called upon to read, speak loudly and clearly, reading word-for-word what you have written. Done correctly, you will learn more from this activity than

almost any other single activity we do in this class.

Web Access: You must have regular access to the internet to be successful in this class. Among other things, I use my web site to post assignments and links that are required of you. You must also have a regular, working email account. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with my campus web site, especially the page entitled, **EWRT 2**. In fact, you may want to Bookmark it –at least for the next 12 weeks.

Paper Business: Paper topics will be announced and described on our course web site two weeks before their due date (see Study Schedule). There are no rewrites for poorly-written papers; do it right the first time.

Turnitin.com: You will submit your out-of-class papers for this course to this web site. Another Bookmark? Visit the site in advance of our first due date and scroll to the “Training” link on the menu banner. Then click on “Student Training” and watch the video tutorials on how to set up your account and upload a paper. If you’re already familiar with Turnitin.com, you may go straight to the “Student Quickstart Guide” button under the “Resources” menu for a quick review of the process. Our course ID number and password can be found on the first paper assignment instructions on our course web 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 possible, considering brief quotes, etc. But whether intentional or accidental, if your originality report on any given paper that you submit to this class climbs above 25%, you will receive an ‘F’ on that assignment. One chief purpose of this class is to help you with your writing. If you present somebody else’s writing as your own, you will defeat that purpose.

Tutoring & Assistance: The overall goal of English 2 is to prepare you to read, think, and write at the 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 many opportunities on campus for tutoring or individually-paced skills courses in reading, grammar, or writing. You will 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 (<http://www.deanza.edu/dsps>) or the Student Success Center (<http://www.deanza.edu/studentsuccess/wrc>).

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