

## English 2

## Critical Reading, Writing & Thinking

### Required Texts

- *The Odyssey* by Homer (translated by Robert Fagles)
- *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood

### 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 enjoy a satirical feminist revision of *The Odyssey* by Canadian novelist, Margaret Atwood, a thoroughly postmodern take on the ancient tale. 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

- *Essays*—3 full-length essays on *The Odyssey*, 3–5 pages in length, incorporating a minimum of 3–4 sources each. 200 points possible.
- *Journal*—A collection of 17 short exploratory writings. 75 points possible.
- *Reading Quizzes*—4 multiple-choice quizzes on *The Odyssey*. 40 points possible.
- *Brief Essay Tests*—6 short interpretive arguments of *The Odyssey*. 60 points possible.
- *Homework*—A series of brief written responses to video lectures. 75 points possible.

## Grades

(These numbers are close approximations of cumulative scores. Canvas, our online educational platform, keeps a precise grade calculation, which is available to you at any point during the quarter.)

A	394 – 450
B	338 – 393
C	282 – 337
D	226 – 281
F	0 – 225

## Policies

**Required Materials:** A personal copy of the Fagles translation of *The Odyssey*. A personal copy of Atwood’s novel, *The Penelopiad*. A personal computer with reliable internet connection.

**Paper Business:** Paper 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. If your originality report on any paper that you submit to this class reveals plagiarism, whether intentional or accidental, 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.

**The Importance of Friday:** Each Friday of the quarter I open the new Module 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.

**Instructor:** Dave Denny

**Weekly Virtual (Zoom) Office Hour:** Thursday, 1:00 – 2:00pm

**Email:** dennydave@deanza.edu

**Web Site:** <http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/dennydave/>

**Response Time:** Each week during my virtual office hour I will respond to your questions within the hour. Beyond the scope of that hour, I will respond to your emails within 24 hours. I do not read email on the weekends. If you contact me on Saturday or Sunday, I will respond Monday morning.