

English 2 | Critical Reading, Writing & Thinking

Instructor: Dave Denny | Email: dennydave@deanza.edu

Virtual Office Hour: Thursday 12:30 – 1:20pm

Required Texts

Primary Text:

- *The Odyssey* by Homer, translated by Robert Fagles (Penguin) ISBN 978-0-14-026886-7 Deckle Edge

Secondary Text:

- *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood (Canongate) ISBN 978-1-78689-248-5

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*—2 full-length research-based essays, approximately 1,000 words, each incorporating a minimum of 3-4 sources, 100 points each.
- *Brief Essay Tests*—6 short interpretive arguments of *The Odyssey*, approximately 500 words. 10 points each.
- *Journal Writing*—A collection of writings, each approximately 250 words, 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 Fagles translation of *The Odyssey*, Penguin paperback. (No other versions or translations are acceptable for this class.)
- A personal paperback copy of *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood, Canongate.
- A personal computer with reliable internet connection.

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.