

## **EN355: Pirates and Captives in Early Modern Romance**

**4 Credits \* Spring 2022**

**Professor:** Dyani Johns Taff  
**Class Time:** TR 2:30-3:45 pm  
**Class Location:** Miller 319

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**Office:** Miller 225  
**Office Hours:** M 12-2 & By Appt.



Left: late 17<sup>th</sup> C engraving of Mary Read, also known as Mark Read, English pirate. Image from Wikimedia Commons. Right: Luis Teixeira, Portolan Chart showing Mediterranean area. Lisbon, c. 1600. Image from Wikimedia Commons

### **Course Description**

Pirates, slaves, and shipwrecks are ever present in romances from the 16th and 17th centuries. We will place representations of these figures from ballads, plays, poems, and prose fiction—including texts by William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes, Mary Wroth, and Margaret Cavendish—alongside historical accounts of captivity, forced migration, and environmental violence in both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic worlds. We'll examine early modern discourses about race, class, gender, and ability and the ways in which our texts sometimes reinforce and sometimes challenge social prejudices.

Through a variety of reading, writing, creative, discursive, and analytical assignments, this course will contribute to the following English department learning outcomes:

- Reading and making across genres, platforms, and media
- Understanding how representation shapes the world
- Bring both analytical and creative skills to global histories and ecological challenges

## **Texts**

The following required books are available at the Colby College Bookstore. **Please buy these editions in hard copy (not ebook) as soon as possible.** We will use introductions, notes, and additional materials that are only available in these editions; use the ISBN to double check that you have the right version. **If you have trouble locating or paying for these books, contact me and I can help.**

- Miguel de Cervantes, *The Bagnios of Algiers and The Great Sultana*, eds. Barbara Fuchs and Aaron J Ilika, Penn Press, 2012. ISBN 9780812222159
- Thomas Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the West*, ed. Robert K Turner, Regents Renaissance Drama Series, U of Nebraska Press, 1967. ISBN 9780803273306
- Philip Massinger, *The Renegado*, ed. Michael Neill, Arden Shakespeare, 2010. ISBN: 9781904271611
- William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus & Timon of Athens*, eds. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, Penguin Random House, 2011. ISBN 9780812969351
- Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, ed Joanna Lipking, Norton, 1997. ISBN: 978039397014-2

All other readings will be available as PDFs on our Moodle/Perusall sites. Since we will write frequently in this course, I recommend buying a book about writing. My two favorites are Graff and Birkenstein's *They Say / I Say*, 4th edition (ISBN: 9780393631678) and Trimble's *Writing With Style*, 3rd edition (ISBN: 978-0205028 80). The [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) and the [Colby College Library "All About Citations" Guide](#) are excellent, free resources for citation, grammar, and writing help.

## **Grading System**

I will employ a labor-based grading contract system to arrive at your course grade. This system is based on research by scholars including Asao Inoue and Cathy Davidson about how to create equitable, socially just writing classrooms.<sup>1</sup> Their insights apply not only to writing classrooms but also to ones like ours in which we will write in order to pursue our humanistic studies; my goal is to create a classroom in which you feel comfortable taking risks, exploring and being brave about new ways of speaking, reading, and writing, and even experiencing failure: these are key aspects of the process of learning. A labor-based grading contract system enables these experiences by emphasizing process over product and allowing us to build a compassionate classroom community.

**On our Moodle site, you will find our starting point:** a draft contract for the course. During our first week, we will discuss, negotiate, and agree on the terms of this contract together, relying on the work of experts as well as our own sense of what will be best for our community. We will pause mid-semester to return to our contract, reflect on our work so far, and make any necessary changes.

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<sup>1</sup> A few great texts on labor, equity, and grades in the writing classroom are: Cathy Davidson, *Now you see it: How technology and brain science will transform schools and business for the 21st Century* (New York: Penguin, 2011); Asao Inoue, *Labor-based grading contracts: Building equity and inclusion in the compassionate writing classroom* (Fort Collins, Colorado: The WAC Clearinghouse and University Press of Colorado, 2019); and Alfie Kohn, "The case against grades" (*Educational Leadership* 69.3, 28-33, 2011). If you have questions or want to read more, get in touch!

## Assignments

The assignments, **described in detail in the Appendix below**, are the work—the labor, the *doing*—that I will ask of you this semester. For the purposes of your grade, which is based on the labor you complete, all of the assignments both big and small are equally important. You will receive feedback from both me and your peers on your work and we will use assignments that you complete outside of class to shape our in-class work. We will talk about what it's like to *do* the work for this class and how that doing is impacting your practices and progress in your learning. **We'll also take time to reflect on and adjust these assignments as necessary.**

- **Participation:** In order to create and sustain a compassionate community, we all need to commit to preparing for class, showing up, and attending to what members of our community (students and professor) say and ask of us. During our sessions, you will engage in discussion, reading aloud, freewriting, group work, and other activities.
  - **Masking:** I have small children and a high-risk parent at home; although we are all vaccinated, the Omicron variant still puts us all at risk. Given this situation, I will require us all to wear masks when we are in person together in class or in my office. We can meet outside (weather permitting!) for one-on-one meetings without masks. If the community transmission rates in Maine decrease significantly, we can discuss a change to this policy.
  - **Alternative Attendance:** All of our lives are complicated and subject to radical uncertainty because we are STILL living through a global health crisis. If, for any reason at all, you are unable to attend one or more of our class sessions, you may engage with our course records—the class notes document, powerpoints, jamboards, etc.—and then write a ~200 word response in the class notes document, commenting on our discussion, providing new or illuminating examples from our texts, posing new questions, and so on. These responses will count as participation for the relevant class sessions.
  - \*\*\*We'll need a critical mass of folks in class each week. Participating asynchronously (after class has happened) will mean that you will miss out on group work and real-time insights. **Please prioritize synchronous, in-person participation**, but use this option as a back-up whenever you need to.
- **Required Assignments:** See the Appendix for details.
  - **Labor Log Entries:** documenting and reflecting on your work habits.
  - **Passages and Questions (P&Qs):** brief writing assignments due before most classes.
  - **Monday Posts:** longer than P&Qs but still informal writing assignments, due weekly.
  - **Writing Meetings:** two 1-1 meetings: in week 3 or 4, we will meet to discuss your first or second Monday Post. In week 11, we will meet to discuss your final project proposal.
  - **Discussion Leadership:** exploring or creating on a topic/text of your choice and presenting to the class with the goal of sparking discussion.
  - **Final Project:** a 7-10 page thesis driven critical essay with a reflective cover letter; we will move step by step through brainstorming, research, drafting, and peer review before the final version of the project is due.

### **Late Work**

**Once more: we are still living through a global health crisis.** Everything can change, rapidly; communication is key! The grading system gives us a cushion for late assignments and missed class days if you find yourself in crisis mode (for any reason, big or small, internal or external), but if you will need to miss or turn in late assignments beyond that agreement, get in touch and we can find a solution together.

As a general rule, though, please turn in all work by the due dates listed in the syllabus and assignment directions on Moodle/Perusall. I have designed those due dates with our class community in mind. For example, your passages and questions are due *before* class so that we can use them during discussion; your drafts are due such that your peers have time to read and comment on them before turning to new material. If your work is late, you rob us of the time to think carefully about your contributions, and you rob yourself of the thoughtful responses we might otherwise be able to provide you with. For these reasons, **late work will count against your ability to fulfil our grading contract. Keep our community in mind and plan your work schedule accordingly.**

### **Office Hours and Email**

I love working one-on-one with students when you are excited about the material, when you are struggling, when you have quick questions, when you don't know what you need, and so on. My regular, weekly office hours are scheduled so that you can help me to help you and get to know you. For in-person meetings in my office, please wear a mask. We can also meet via zoom or (weather permitting) find somewhere to sit together outside.

To arrange an appointment outside of regular office hours, please email me with your availability. When I send you a time to meet, be sure to respond to confirm the meeting. I am happy to arrange appointments via e-mail and answer short questions about course topics; longer discussions will be easier via zoom or in person. After you have finished reading this syllabus, email your favorite meme, .gif, or cute animal video (ideally pirate, captive, or romance-related) to me at [dtaff@colby.edu](mailto:dtaff@colby.edu). By doing so, you prove both that you have read this syllabus and that you know how to contact me.

### **Resources and Support:**

- **Financial Security:** If you need support so that you can buy textbooks or food, pay rent, buy or borrow a laptop or interview clothes, or any other kind of financial relief, [contact your class Dean](#) (they are friendly and ready to help! If you want help reaching out, let me know!).
- **Access and Disability Services:** In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified students with documented disabilities. Students seeking accommodations should start by contacting the [Office of Student Access & Disability Services](#).
- **Counseling Services:** [Colby College provides cost-free mental health and counseling services](#) to help you manage challenges that threaten your personal or academic wellbeing. **Getting help when you need it is the smart, courageous thing to do!** I am not a mental health professional, but I can make you an appointment, walk with you to Counseling Services, discuss coursework-related stress (and make plans to alleviate it), or help you to see or know when you need to get help beyond my expertise. **Email me any time.**



- **Academic Support:** The Dean of Studies office also offers comprehensive academic support in the form of academic success programs, learning consultants, tutors, and much more. [Consult the academic success page to learn more.](#)
- **The Farnham Writer's Center:** From the FWC's website: "The FWC is a place for you to get skilled feedback on your writing. Our peer writing tutors have experience working with Colby's diverse student populations, and they are eager to engage you in collaborative conversations about your writing." [To learn more and to make an appointment, visit their website.](#) The Writing Center also has a Multilingual Writing Specialist, Dr. Chaoran Wang, who meets individually with international and multilingual students and provides workshops to support multilingual writers. You can reach her at [chaowang@colby.edu](mailto:chaowang@colby.edu). Please feel free to contact her, either to discuss your writing concerns and issues in general, or discuss a specific course-related writing assignment.

### **College Policies:**

- **Academic Integrity:** Please take time to read [the Colby Affirmation](#) and review Colby's policies and resources regarding [academic integrity](#). It is the responsibility of every student and faculty member to be familiar with, and comply with, these expectations for honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility. If you have any questions at any time about whether or how to cite a source, about when it's ok to collaborate and when you must work alone, or other topics relating to your own or others' conduct, please ask me! I am happy to explain how to correctly give credit where credit is due or to discuss other concerns.
- **Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement:** Colby College prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination of any kind. [Colby is legally obligated to investigate sexual misconduct](#) (including, but not limited to sexual assault and sexual harassment). If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact Colby Counseling Services (207-859-4490) or the Director of the Gender and Sexual Diversity Program, Emily Schusterbauer (207-859-4093).
  - Please note that as your professor, I am designated a "responsible employee," a legal category that requires me to report to the Title IX Coordinator, Meg Hatch (207-859-4266) if you disclose an experience related to sexual misconduct. This is not as scary as it sounds: if I contact Meg, she and her office will email you. If you want to follow up, you can. If not, you don't have to. I will support you in however you would like to proceed: I can connect you to community resources for dealing with sexual misconduct without you needing to disclose specific information to me. If you wish to disclose a specific incident to me, I will help to connect you to Meg Hatch. The college will take initial steps to address the incident(s), protect and support those directly affected, and enhance the safety of our community. The Meg Hatch will work with you to determine the best way to proceed.
- **Bias Incident Prevention and Response Team (BIPR):** From the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion website: "BIPR is a non-disciplinary body charged with both responding to bias incident reports and implementing educational initiatives designed to decrease the frequency of bias incidents in our community. Community members who have experienced and/or witnessed a bias incident are encouraged to submit a BIPR report or contact BIPR chair Emily Schusterbauer (207-859-4093)." [To submit a Bias Incident Report, click this link.](#)

## **Course Schedule**

The following schedule will give you an overview of our readings, topics, and schedule of assignments for the semester.

\*\*\***This schedule is subject to change, as needed, throughout the semester.** Our Moodle site will be our home base for the semester. I will update checklists and assignments there regularly. Please keep in touch via email and ask questions early and often!

	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
<b>Week 1:</b>	<u>Th Feb 3:</u> [ON ZOOM] Course Introductions; Alfie Kohn, “The Case Against Grades”
<b>Week 2:</b>	<p><b><u>Unit 1: Romance? Captivity? Piracy?</u></b></p> <p><u>Discussion leaders sign up (any day starting Feb 15; not Apr 7, not May 5)</u></p> <p><u>T Feb 8:</u> Jennifer Morgan, selections from <i>Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic</i></p> <p><u>Th Feb 10:</u> Tiffany Jo Werth, selections from <i>Fabulous Dark Cloister: Romance in England After the Reformation</i> and Claire Jowitt, selections from <i>The Culture of Piracy, 1580-1630: English Literature and Seaborne Crime</i></p>
<b>Week 3:</b> Monday Post meetings	<p><u>Monday Post 1</u></p> <p><u>T Feb 15:</u> Spenser’s <i>Faerie Queene</i> and Sidney’s <i>New Arcadia</i></p> <p><u>Th Feb 17:</u> Wroth’s <i>Urania</i> and Pulter’s <i>Unfortunate Florinda</i></p>
<b>Week 4:</b> Monday Post meetings	<p><u>Monday Post 2</u></p> <p><b><u>Unit 2: Staging the Mediterranean (Travelling by Shipwreck)</u></b></p> <p><u>T Feb 22:</u> Christopher Marlowe, “Hero and Leander”; Cervantes, “The Captive’s Tale” (Quixote part 2); John Fox, “The Worthy Enterprise...”</p> <p><u>Th Feb 24:</u> “The Captive’s Tale” cont.; Cervantes, <i>The Bagnios of Algiers</i>, Act 1</p>
<b>Week 5:</b>	<p><u>Monday Post 3</u></p> <p><u>T Mar 1:</u> Cervantes, <i>The Bagnios of Algiers</i>, Acts 2-3</p> <p><u>Th Mar 3:</u> Cervantes, <i>The Bagnios of Algiers</i>, Acts 4-5; Garces—“Cervantes’s Veiled Woman”</p>

<b>Week 6:</b>	<p><u>Monday Post 4</u></p> <p><u>T Mar 8:</u> Barbara Fuchs, selections from <i>Mimesis and Empire</i>; Daniel Vitkus, selections from <i>Turning Turk</i>; selections from Thomas Overbury's <i>Characters</i>.</p> <p><u>Th Mar 10:</u> Miller Library Special Collections Visit; Thomas Heywood, <i>The Fair Maid of the West</i>, Part I, Act 1</p>
<b>Week 7:</b>	<p><u>Monday Post 5</u></p> <p><u>T Mar 15:</u> Thomas Heywood, <i>The Fair Maid of the West</i>, Part I, Acts 2-3</p> <p><u>Th Mar 17:</u> Thomas Heywood, <i>The Fair Maid of the West</i>, Part I, Act 4-5; Jean Howard, "An English Lass Amid the Moors: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and National Identity in Heywood's <i>The Fair Maid of the West</i>"</p>
<b>Week 8:</b>	<p><u>Mar 19-27: Spring Recess—No Classes</u></p>
<b>Week 9:</b>	<p><u>Monday Post 6</u></p> <p><b><u>Unit 3: Violence in the Old/New World</u></b></p> <p><u>T Mar 29:</u> William Shakespeare, <i>Titus Andronicus</i> Acts 1-2</p> <p><u>Th Mar 31:</u> William Shakespeare, <i>Titus Andronicus</i> Act 3</p> <p><b>Final project brainstorming paragraph due</b></p>
<b>Week 10:</b>	<p><u>Monday Post 7</u></p> <p><u>T Apr 5:</u> William Shakespeare, <i>Titus Andronicus</i> Acts 4-5</p> <p><u>Th Apr 7:</u> Francesca T. Royster's "White-Limed Walls: Whiteness and Gothic Extremism in Shakespeare's <i>Titus Andronicus</i>" and an article from our <i>Titus</i> resources folder.</p> <p><b>One-page project proposal due</b></p>
<b>Week 11:</b> Meetings about project proposals	<p><u>Monday Post 8</u></p> <p><u>T Apr 12:</u> Philip Massinger, <i>The Renegado</i>, Acts 1-3</p> <p><u>Th Apr 14:</u> Philip Massinger, <i>The Renegado</i>, Acts 4-5</p>

<b>Week 12:</b>	<p><u>Monday Post 9</u></p> <p><u>T Apr 19:</u> Margaret Cavendish, <i>Assaulted and Pursued Chastity</i></p> <p><u>Th Apr 21:</u> Margaret Cavendish, <i>Assaulted and Pursued Chastity</i>; article TBD.</p> <p><b>Annotated bibliography due</b></p>
<b>Week 13:</b>	<p><u>Monday Post 10</u></p> <p><u>T Apr 26:</u> Aphra Behn, <i>Oroonoko</i></p> <p><u>Th Apr 28:</u> Wellness day</p> <p><u>F Apr 29:</u> Aphra Behn, <i>Oroonoko</i></p> <p><b>Final project draft due; share with peer review group</b></p>
<b>Week 14:</b>	<p><u>T May 3:</u> Articles from Norton ED of <i>Oroonoko</i></p> <p><u>Th May 5:</u> Final Thoughts: where have we washed up?</p> <p><b>Peer review letters due</b></p>
	<p>F May 13: Final Project, containing a cover letter and polished, revised version of your essay, DUE by midnight</p>



**Appendix: Assignment Sheets**

- Labor Log
- Passage & Questions (P&Qs)
- Monday Posts
- Discussion Leadership
- Final Project
  - Peer Review Letters

## Labor Log

One of my goals for this course is to help you become more aware of your work habits and to prompt reflection about *how* and *why* you are doing the work for this course. Knowing how and why you are working can aid you in making changes to your habits, if you need or want to do so. Knowing your *how* and *why* can also help you protect your health, find intrinsic motivations for your work (i.e. not just for the grade or for credit but because you see value in the labor of learning, reading, and writing for the course), and see progress or change in your own thinking.

This kind of reflective practice, **when done with honesty and care**, can deepen the knowledge you've gained and make it more likely that you'll remember what you've learned in the future.

- In the interest of these goals, I am asking you to complete **a labor log entry for each session of work for my course**. You'll quantify some of your work (tracking when, where, and how many minutes you work for) and you'll also comment on how it felt to work for this class.
- I have created a google sheets template for a labor log: you may create your own copy and share it with me, or you may wish to keep track of your labor in another way (if so, please get in touch to confirm that your method will work).
- **\*\*\*I will never, ever use the information in your labor log to arrive at or alter your grade.** You need only enter information for each of your work sessions and this assignment will be complete. Each entry should take you a minute or less.

Some students can read for hours at a time, and some prefer to read in short bursts. Some students can complete a complex writing assignment in 20 minutes and some need longer. Some students read quickly and some read slowly. **The goal here is not to achieve the most total minutes of work time but rather to *come to know yourself* and to know what conditions create the most successful, satisfying, useful, or otherwise good work sessions for you.**

Basic requirements to complete this assignment:

- Complete one log entry for each work session for this class.

## Passage and Questions

Before each class session, you will select a passage—a sentence or paragraph or ~5-10 lines—from the day's reading that you found beautiful, perplexing, funny, disturbing, confusing, or compelling in some other way. You will note the line/act-scene/page numbers for your passage and then write two or more questions about the lines, designed to prompt discussion. This assignment should take between 5 and 15 minutes per post.

Our maxim: **there are no stupid questions**. Even basic or silly questions can lead to important conversations and can help us dig in to our texts.

Basic requirements to complete this assignment:

- Pick a passage and write two or more questions.
- Post your line/act-scene/pg # (or a screenshot of your passage) on Perusall before the beginning of our class session.

## Monday Posts

My sister has run several marathons (and completed two Iron Man triathlons; I like to brag about her athletic accomplishments!). Based on what she told me about her training, she did not get ready for these epic races by running marathons or swimming the full two miles and so on. She mixed shorter and longer workouts, did interval, slow, and fast runs, and supplemented with yoga and crunches and weights and so on.

The same principle, I think, can be applied to learning to write well. One does not learn to write a long analytical essay well by simply writing a long analytical essay (though that is one way to go about it). One learns to write by writing consistently, often, in several shorter and longer modes, and with a variety of goals. To that end, you will be doing some freewriting in class, logging your labor outside of class, writing your P&Qs, doing research to support your discussion leadership, and completing Monday posts designed to build your close reading skills (or muscles, if you'll permit me to extend the metaphor).

- Every Monday, beginning Feb 14 and continuing through Apr 26, you will write 250-500 words in response to your own or a peer's P&Qs post from the previous week, or in response to a question, idea, or passage from our class sessions that you would like to explore in more detail. Plan to spend ~25-45 minutes writing each post. Depending on your topic, some might take you more or less time.
- If you are aiming for a B, you may miss 3 Monday Posts without penalty (which means you must complete 7 of the 10 possible). For the A, complete all 10.
- These posts do not have to be polished; use them to practice textual analysis, close reading, and argumentation skills, and **most importantly, use them to try out new or out-there or risky ideas**. Push yourself to explore the text and see where it takes you.
- **Up to three** of your posts may be creative in ways beyond the creativity that good analysis requires; you could re-write or even create a multi-media version of our text that responds to the questions or ideas you've decided to address.

### Basic requirements to complete this assignment:

- Do 7 of the 10 posts (for an A, do all 10). Monday Post 1 **must** be done by everyone.
- Each post must:
  - be between 250 and 500 words.
  - contain at least one direct quote from the text (if your post is creative, it must clearly and specifically engage with one page/set of lines, etc. from the text).
  - use the quote as evidence to support your discussion.
  - ideally, contain a mini-thesis, supported with evidence, about why your quote, idea, or question is significant.
- Post each week on Moodle in the relevant assignment.
- **Meet with me** one on one during week 3 or 4 to discuss your post.

## Discussion Leadership

Every student in this course will be responsible for jump-starting one of our class sessions with a short presentation (5 mins or less!) and some questions or activities designed to spark discussion (~10 mins) and engage us closely with the text we have read for the day's session. Presentations will begin on February 15<sup>th</sup> and continue through the end of the semester, with one or two students presenting on many class days. You will be able to choose which day/text you present; sign-up sheet forthcoming. Take us down a rabbit hole you discovered, show us your creativity in adapting or performing part of the text, or use some other means to invite us in to your experience of what we've read.

The structure and content of your discussion leadership project are entirely open. Possibilities:

- You could **read a scholarly, peer-reviewed article or book/book chapter** on the text we're reading, and present that critic's ideas as a means for prompting us to think again about or question a passage or other detail of our text.
- You could **research a performance**—historical or modern—or **watch/read an adaptation or examine a painting or other media** related to the text, and then present that performance or adaptation as a prompt for discussion of a passage or textual detail.
- You could **create your own adaptation** of a page, scene, or set of lines (a comic, a twitter fight, short film, haiku, song, painting, etc.), or you could memorize and perform a scene (strong-arm a friend to help with dialogue, if you want!). You would use your performance or adaptation to present a theory about or reading of the text and pose questions about your scene to prompt a discussion of how your adaptation invites us to re-read the original.
- You could **propose another project** that I haven't even imagined yet. You are free to be as creative with this project as you wish.
- This assignment **may be done individually or in pairs**, though if you choose to work in pairs, you and your partner should meet with me first to ensure that you're planning a good division of labor and timing for your leadership.
- This assignment should take ~60-120 minutes to complete; some options may take more or less time for you.

### Basic requirements to complete this assignment:

- The presentation or performance segment of your project should be no more than 5 minutes. Practice to ensure the part where *you* talk is within the time limit.
- The discussion (all of us talking and thinking together) should be ~10 minutes (this can include small group work, a quick write, or other activities).
- A substantial portion of our discussion should be focused on **a specific paragraph or set of lines from the text;** help us connect scholarship to the actual text we are discussing, or help us see what performances and adaptations might change about how we see the original words, and so on.

**Advice:** Consider using visuals; a powerpoint presentation, flowchart, diagram, or set of props can help you illustrate your points and generate interest in your questions. Prepare more questions than you think you need; it's always difficult to know which questions will spark long discussions and which ones will fall flat, so try to come up with several extra or back up questions.

## Final Project

At the end of the semester, you will run the marathon: that is, you will draw on all of your training in close reading, discussion, question and idea generation, research, and creativity to write that long analytical, argumentative essay. Taking the work by steps, you will propose, research, and write a 7-10 page thesis driven critical analysis of one or more of our syllabus texts, placing your argument in relation to the work of 4-6 critics and supporting your argument with sustained close readings. You might return to and expand one of your Monday Posts or you might take a new direction.

**Step 1: Write an initial brainstorming paragraph (~20-30 mins).** Look back at your Monday posts and P&Qs and our class notes. What questions or topics feel unfinished? Which text was your favorite? Your least favorite? (Sometimes dislike is a great spur to writing!) Which text do you want to spend more time thinking about and why? Freewrite for ~20 minutes in response to these questions, or do some mind-mapping and post the result.

### Basic Requirements:

- Spend at least 20 minutes reviewing, thinking, and writing about what you might do for the final project.
- Submit the resulting writing (not polished! No stupid questions!) in the appropriate assignment on Moodle by 11:55 pm on Friday, Apr 1.

**Step 2: Write a one-page, single-spaced project proposal with preliminary bibliography and meet with me to discuss it (60-120 mins of writing and research; 15-30 mins meeting).**

Return to your initial brainstorming and begin to flesh out your ideas. Which text will you focus on and what do you aim to say about it? What do you know already from our class discussions, articles, and Monday posts? What parts of the text will be key, essential evidence for your point? What do you need to know and what keywords might lead you to articles or books/book chapters that can answer your questions?

Write about a page in response to these questions and then go back over what you've written, reorganizing your ideas into paragraphs and making sure that your proposal communicates what you're really aiming to do. Proofread!

Next, using those keywords and essential ideas you generated, locate at least 6 peer-reviewed, scholarly books, book chapters, or articles that you think will be helpful, and list them as your preliminary bibliography.

### Basic Requirements:

- Proposal must
  - be 1 page, single-spaced, or 400-500 words.
  - include the authors and titles of 6 or more peer-reviewed, scholarly sources in the preliminary bibliography.
  - be submitted in the relevant Moodle assignment by 11:55 pm F Apr 8.
- Meet with me 1-1 to discuss the proposal during week 11.

**Step 3: Write an annotated bibliography with summary and response paragraphs (~300 minutes or more: 60 mins per source for reading and 15 mins per source for writing; PLAN out carefully when you will do this work!)**

Read your sources. As you work on reading, keep asking yourself: is this source helping me answer my questions? If yes, keep reading. If no, circle back to your keywords and research questions to see if you can find better sources. \*\*If you need help with reading efficiently or finding sources, come see me or make an appointment with the librarians!

For each source that is helpful, write an annotation: summarize the source's big idea in 100-150 words or so, and then respond to that idea in another 100-150 words, focusing on whether you agree (and add), disagree (with reasons), or do a bit of both. Include a sentence or two about how this source will help you make *your* point, as you have articulated it. For the response, you might find it useful to include a *short* direct quote from the source.

Remember that sometimes your arguments and ideas change as you conduct research: go with it. Sometimes you can feel impossibly stuck right before making a breakthrough. Trust the process and don't be afraid to revise!

Basic Requirements:

- The annotated bibliography must have 4 or more peer-reviewed, scholarly sources (books, articles, book chapters), each with an annotation of 200-300 words that includes summary and response.
- Submit the annotated bibliography on Moodle in the relevant assignment by 11:55 pm on F Apr 22.

**Step 4: Write a full essay draft (60-120 mins). Send to peer review group.** Return to your syllabus text(s), and muster all of the close reading strength that you've built in writing your Monday posts; while you will be using the research you have conducted to contextualize your argument, **your core evidence for the essay will still come from the text(s)** about which you are writing. Do some more brainstorming and freewriting about the scenes and lines that you think will be most important.

Next, re-read your annotated bibliography and create an outline. Where are you in relation to your sources? How are they helping you to make *your* point? How will you order your evidence? Once you're reasonably confident that you have a direction, go for as full a draft as you can create (no need to write the introduction first; start wherever you want to). **\*\*This is still a draft,** and does not have to be perfect or entirely complete. BUT: the more you can give your peers, the better and more useful their feedback will be. Write out at least 4 full pages (double spaced).

Basic Requirements:

- Spend at least 30 mins freewriting about quotes from the text(s) you're writing about.
- Write as complete a draft of your essay as you can. Minimum: 4 pages, double-spaced.
- Share a google doc of your draft with me and your peer review group by 11:55 pm on F Apr 29.



**Step 5: Read Peers' drafts and write peer review letters (~60-90 mins).** See the assignment sheet below for detailed directions.

Basic Requirements:

- Write two letters with substantive feedback for your peers, making observations about and revision suggestions for argument, evidence, organization, and style/details.
- Share google docs of your letters with your peers and with me by 11:55pm on F May 6.

**Step 6: Read peer review letters and re-read your draft; revise your essay thoroughly paying attention to argument, evidence, organization, and style/details; write a revision memo (90-200 mins).** Read your peers' letters and try to see your essay through your peers' eyes. They are, after all, your first readers. Even if you don't agree with their advice, they may enable you to see something you didn't see before in your essay.

Revise your essay *thoroughly*, equipped with your readers' ideas *and* with your own sense of what needs to change to improve the essay's argument, evidence, organization, and style/details.

Write a memo of ~200 words in which you reflect on the essay process: Who is your imagined audience for this essay and what do you want them to know when they finish reading? What's the bottom line or big take-away? What was the most difficult part of revising and/or what was the easiest? What did you decide to change and why? Which suggestions from your peers or other readers did you take or not take and why—what drove your decision making? What, if anything, are you still thinking about or unsure about in this final version of your writing (i.e. with infinite time, what else would you have done)?

Basic Requirements:

- Read letters from your peers.
- Revise your essay **thoroughly**.
- Write a revision memo of about 200 words.

**Step 7: Polish your essay and write your cover letter (40-60 mins).** Re-read your memo: does your essay actually do, now, what you have said that you want it to do? If not, make some more changes based on what you've realized in writing the memo. If so, do another round of proofreading, check your sources (in text and works cited) and formatting, and polish the essay to the best of your abilities.

Next, step back to look at the big picture: **what is the most important thing you learned** this semester? How does your final project fit into or demonstrate that learning? What text(s), activities, conversations, or other features of the course were essential for you and why? **Decide who needs to know:** me, your professor? Scholars of early modern literature? Your younger or older self? A sibling, parent, or other family member? Our college president? A public figure? A student who plans to take this class in the future? Pick a specific addressee and write a letter of 250-500 words that responds to the questions above. Leave yourself time to shape and proofread your letter; it should incorporate a few specific examples (or even a direct quote or two, if relevant) to support your ideas. It should be organized into paragraphs. Attach your revision memo after your letter signature.

Basic Requirements:

- Use your memo as a tool to help you polish your essay.
- Write your cover letter, which should
  - discuss the most important thing you learned this semester.
  - incorporate a few specific examples of that learning.
  - be addressed to a specific person (a scholar of early modern literature, your past or future self, a politician, a family member, a public figure, a student planning to take this course next year, etc.)
  - be 250-500 words long, organized around a central focus, with ideas divided into paragraphs, and proofread.
- Attach your revision memo to the end of your letter, after your signature.
- Submit your cover letter, memo, and revised, polished final project on Moodle by 11:55 pm on F May 13.

### Peer Review Letter Assignment

In order to facilitate the final project revision process, you will share your final project draft with two peers. Each peer—your first readers!—will write a letter to you after they have read your essay draft. In each letter, you will do the following:

- Open with a greeting (Dear \_\_\_, Hi \_\_\_!, etc.), and write an initial sentence or two about your overall reaction to your peer's essay draft. What's it about, broadly? What did you learn? What do you want to know more about? What do you think is working really well?
- Next, write a paragraph for each of the categories below (argument, evidence, organization/structure, and style/details). **For each category, do two things: 1. describe (about 2 sentences) and 2. offer ideas for revision (about 2 sentences).** If it's helpful, you can follow one or more of the templates below; change them as needed to suit your own voice and purposes, or ignore them if you are already comfortable with providing this kind of feedback.
- Finally, offer some words of encouragement; what would you be excited to see in a new version of this essay? What potential do you see in your peers' work? What do you want to learn more about from your peer? Remember to sign your letter, too!
- A hard truth of writing is that *it is never complete*; writers—from poets to scholars—could tell you any number of things about their *published* works that they would like to change, revise, improve, and so on. No matter the current state of your peer's draft, there is room for revision. **Your goal in this letter is not to “fix” your peer's essay but rather to report your observations about it and aid your peer in seeing where and how revision might happen.**

\*\*\*Share your letter with your peers (either email them the document link or add them with the “share” button at the top of your doc). Submit your two letters on Moodle by the relevant due date.

## Categories and templates for commenting on your peers' drafts

**1. Argument:** what is the main point, purpose, idea, or claim of this essay? If what the writer argues is true, why is it important and to whom? What counterarguments does the writer address?

- Templates for DESCRIBING:
  - In this essay, you are arguing that \_\_\_\_.
  - Your topic in this essay is \_\_\_\_, and your claim about that topic is \_\_\_\_.
  - You say in this essay that \_\_\_\_; this is significant/important because \_\_\_\_.
  - I was confused as I read, because I thought first that you were arguing \_\_\_\_ but then later you wrote about \_\_\_\_.
  - I started to really get interested in your argument in your 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph/in your conclusion/on p. 3 because I understood that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Templates for OFFERING IDEAS:
  - If this were my essay, my next step with the argument would be to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - In the next draft I might keep \_\_\_\_, but change \_\_\_\_\_.
  - If I were writing this essay, I think I would choose \_\_\_\_\_ as my central point, and make \_\_\_\_ a part of a body paragraph or the conclusion because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - I'm not sure how to change/improve \_\_\_\_, but one idea might be to \_\_\_\_\_.

**2. Evidence:** what information does the writer use to support the point, purpose, idea, or claim? How is that information integrated and explained in the service of the argument?

- Templates for DESCRIBING:
  - In this essay, you used \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ as evidence for \_\_\_\_.
  - I liked when you brought in \_\_\_\_\_ to show that \_\_\_\_; this example supported your point that \_\_\_\_.
  - I was interested in your discussion of the \_\_\_\_\_ (info, detail), but I wasn't sure how it supported your argument.
  - You decided not to bring up \_\_\_\_ (info, detail), but when you argued \_\_\_\_, I immediately thought about it and wondered about your choice to leave it out.
- Templates for OFFERING IDEAS:
  - If I were writing this essay, my next step would be to \_\_\_\_\_ so that my evidence would \_\_\_\_\_.
  - How would your argument change if you added \_\_\_\_\_ as supporting information?
  - In your next version, I might spend more time discussing \_\_\_\_ (info/detail) so that the connection to your main point would be clearer.
  - Maybe I'm confused about your point because you included a lot of examples; one approach might be to include fewer and analyze and explain in more detail. I was most interested in \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_; maybe start with those?

**3. Organization and structure:** how is this essay structured? What transitions does the writer use—from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph—to guide the reader through the essay? What choices did the writer make about when to introduce parts of the argument or evidence?

- Templates for DESCRIBING:
  - I noticed that you began with \_\_\_\_ and moved next to \_\_\_\_, concluding by \_\_\_\_.
  - I noticed that you used phrases like \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ to transition between ideas. This was exciting/useful/confusing because \_\_\_\_.
  - When you moved from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ on page 2, I felt interested/disoriented because \_\_\_\_.
  - When I got to paragraph 4, I thought, I needed to know about \_\_\_\_ sooner the essay so that \_\_\_\_.
  - In paragraph 2, you presented \_\_\_\_, but in paragraph 3, you presented not just \_\_\_\_, but also \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_; that seemed like a lot for just one paragraph.
- Templates for OFFERING IDEAS:
  - If this were my essay, my next step with organization would be to \_\_\_\_ (in regard to transitions or order of ideas).
  - What would happen if you took out paragraph 4 and expanded paragraph 5? ... if you broke paragraph 2 into two or three separate paragraphs? ... if you swapped your paragraph about \_\_\_\_ with the one about \_\_\_\_?
  - I'm not sure how to connect \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_; maybe you could try freewriting about them and see if you come up with a transition sentence or even a new paragraph that can help.

**4. Style and details:** what is the writer's tone, voice, and vocabulary in this essay? What kinds of sentences (long, short, straightforward, complex) does the writer use? How do choices about punctuation, word order, and so on aid in conveying the tone or voice?

- Templates for DESCRIBING:
  - I noticed that you used a lot of \_\_\_\_ (long/short/direct/complex) sentences in this essay.
  - I noticed that you have a \_\_\_\_ tone in this essay because you used \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ a lot.
  - I was confused because you started the essay in a \_\_\_\_ tone, but partway through you shifted to \_\_\_\_.
  - I noticed that you used/didn't use a lot of commas [that you repeated the word \_\_\_\_ a lot; that you started sentences with \_\_\_\_ a lot]; sometimes that punctuation / word / sentence structure choice made it hard for me to follow your idea. For example, on page 2 \_\_\_\_.
  - I really liked your \_\_\_\_ tone, but I wonder what a \_\_\_\_ audience would feel if they read your essay.
  - I noticed that your citations in text were \_\_\_\_ and the ones at the end of the essay were \_\_\_\_.
- Templates for OFFERING IDEAS:
  - If this were my essay, my next step would be to \_\_\_\_\_. [vary my sentences more / evaluate my comma use / make sure my vocab and tone are consistent from start to finish]
  - What would happen to this essay if you switched from a casual tone to an academic tone (or the other way around)?
  - I'm not sure how to change \_\_\_\_, but maybe tinkering with your sentence lengths / word order or choice / fixing citations / getting rid of extra words would help.