

# Ways of Reading

## ENG 301

Erik Fredner

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## Course Details

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Updated	June 23, 2025

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## Land Acknowledgment

Oregon State University recognizes the impact that its land grant history had on Indigenous communities in Oregon. Through the Morrill Act of 1862, which established land grant universities in the United States, the federal government seized nearly 11 million acres of land from 250 sovereign tribal nations, with little or no compensation.

In 1868, the state legislature designated Corvallis College as Oregon's land grant institution. Soon after, Oregon received 90,000 acres of federal lands — taken from the Klamath, Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw and Coquille people — to be sold to create an endowment supporting the growth of the new college, which would become Oregon State University.

Oregon State University in Corvallis is located within the traditional homelands of the Marys River or Ampinefu Band of Kalapuya. Following the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855, Kalapuya people were forcibly removed to reservations in Western Oregon. Today, living descendants of these people are part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. Indigenous people are valued, contributing members of the Oregon State community and represent multiple sovereign tribes among students, faculty, staff and alumni.

Oregon State University accepts its responsibility for understanding the continuing impact of that history on these communities. Oregon State is committed — in the spirit of self-reflection, learning, reconciliation and partnership — to ensure that this institution of higher learning will be of enduring benefit, not only to the state of Oregon, but also to the people on whose ancestral lands it is now located.

For more information, see [OSU's Land Acknowledgment](#).

## Description

What's the difference between reading a book for pleasure and reading it for a class? What kinds of skills are necessary for upper-level work as an English major? What exactly is literary criticism? Pursue these questions by studying a selection of texts paired with works providing historical and critical context. Learn how to think and write like a literary critic by reading carefully, discussing these works in class, and writing analytical essays.

See the [course catalog](#).

## Learning Goals

By the end of this course, students will be able to...

- Differentiate literary criticism and literary history
- Characterize the different types of reading that define literary studies
- Write close readings
- Use [Zotero](#)

## Materials

- To every class, please bring...
  - pen and paper
  - a computer or tablet
- Many readings will be available on [Canvas](#).

## Books to buy

- Buy copies of the editions below.
- If you buy books locally:
  - Options include [the OSU bookstore](#), [Grass Roots](#), and [The Book Bin](#).
- If you order online:
  - Consider [Bookshop.org](#) and [Better World Books](#)
  - Search for the ISBN to ensure that you buy the correct edition.

Text	ISBN
Paul Beatty <sup>1</sup>	9781250808240
Mortimer Jerome Adler and Charles Lincoln Van Doren <sup>2</sup>	9780671212094

## Schedule

The schedule lists the major topics to be covered in each meeting as well as required and optional readings.

<sup>1</sup>*The Sellout*, First edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015).

<sup>2</sup>*How to Read a Book*, Touchstone edition (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

## Deadlines

Assignment	Due date
Essay 1	2025-10-01

**2025-09-25**

**Required**

**Optional**

- Joshua Rothman<sup>3</sup>
- Christina Lupton<sup>4</sup>

**2025-09-30**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-10-02**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-10-07**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-10-09**

**Required**

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<sup>3</sup>“What’s Happening to Reading?” *The New Yorker*, June 2025.

<sup>4</sup>*Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018).

**Optional**

**2025-10-14**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-10-16**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-10-21**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-10-23**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-10-28**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-10-30**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-11-04**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-11-06**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-11-13**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-11-18**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-11-20**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-11-25**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-12-02**

**Required**

**Optional**

**2025-12-04**

**Required**

## **Optional**

## **Grades**

### **Course**

Element	Weight
Participation	20%
Reading Quizzes	30%
Essays	50%

### **Letters**

Letter	Low	High
A	93%	100%
A-	90%	92%
B+	88%	89%
B	83%	87%
B-	80%	82%
C+	78%	79%
C	73%	77%
C-	70%	72%
D+	68%	69%
D	63%	67%
D-	60%	62%
F	0%	59%

- I round fractional grades
- I reserve the right to curve grades.
- I reserve the right to award an A+ for exceptional performance.

## **Assignments**

### **Participation**

- Participation includes:



- attendance
  - preparation
  - contribution during class
- “Contributing” takes many forms: responding to questions, asking questions, having good one-on-one discussions, active note-taking, etc.

### Absences

- Everyone gets **two** unexcused absences.
  - Additional unexcused absences harm your participation grade.
- Email me before the class you will miss to request an excused absence.

### Reading quizzes

- **Reading is your most important assignment.**
- Reading quizzes should be relatively easy if you complete the reading.
- Reading quizzes cannot be retaken.
- If you have an excused absence, reading quizzes can be made up.

**Mutual accountability** The purpose of reading quizzes is to create a culture of mutual accountability for doing the reading in this class. Doing the reading is necessary to be prepared for class. Reading quizzes promote this norm. But they are also unnecessary once there is a norm of completing the reading.

So, I make you a special offer: **If everyone averages 90% or better on the first five weeks of reading quizzes, I will not assign reading quizzes in the second half of the class.** Everyone will receive an A for the reading quiz portion of your grade.

### Essays

tk

### Academic Misconduct

In this course, I expect you to uphold [OSU's Code of Student Conduct](#), especially as it pertains to [academic misconduct](#).

If I find that you have committed academic misconduct as defined in the documents above, you will fail the course.

## Generative Artificial Intelligence

**Generative Artificial Intelligence** (GenAI) such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini can be useful for learning. But they can also answer queries incorrectly, such as when they **hallucinate**.

GenAI has also made cheating easier than ever. Specifically, submitting GenAI output as if it were your own work is **plagiarism**.

Below, I provide some examples of permitted and prohibited uses of GenAI in this class in the form of prompts. This is not an exhaustive list. If you would like to use GenAI for work in this course and it is not covered in the examples below, ask me about your specific use.

### General rule

- Uses of GenAI that help you *do your own* thinking and writing are permitted.
- Uses of GenAI that *do your thinking and writing for you* are prohibited.

### Examples of permitted uses

- "I don't understand why this word is in this sentence."
- "I don't understand the main idea of this paragraph. Can you say it in a different way?"
- "What is the difference between Concept X and Concept Y?"
- "I can't figure out how to transition between two sections of this essay. Here are the ways that I'm considering. Can you help me decide which one would be best?"

### Examples of prohibited uses

- "I didn't budget enough time to do the reading. What is this book/article/chapter about?"
- "I like this quote. Write a paper about it."
- "This essay is too hard to read. Can you rewrite the whole thing to in easier language?"
- "I can't figure out how to transition between these two sections of this essay. How should I do it?"

## **Communication**

- Before emailing me (or any of your professors), please check the syllabus to see if it answers your question.
- I respond to email within two business days.
  - If you have not received a response after two business days, please write me again.
- I recommend scheduling your emails to arrive early in the morning (e.g., 6 a.m.) for the fastest response.
  - [Gmail instructions](#)
  - [Outlook instructions](#)

## **Equity**

### **Accessibility**

I strive to make this course accessible. If you encounter barriers to accessibility, please let me know as soon as possible.

### **Health**

- Please do not come to class if you are sick.
- If you are recovering from an illness, are no longer infectious, and are well enough to attend class, please be courteous and wear a mask, use hand sanitizer, etc.

### **Disability Access Services**

[Disability Access Services \(DAS\)](#) facilitates accommodations. If you have accommodations, please communicate with DAS and me about them as soon as possible.

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

Mental health is crucial for academic success. [Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) supports student mental health and academic success.

## **Title IX**

Oregon State University, in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, including Title IX and its regulations, does not unlawfully discriminate and prohibits discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, including in academic admissions and employment. The university prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin (including ancestry and ethnicity), citizenship, marital or family status, pregnancy or related conditions, disability, genetic information, protected veteran status / service in the uniformed service, or any other status protected by law or OSU policy.

Inquiries about Title IX and other types of discrimination based on protected status may be referred to OSU's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both. OSU's Title IX Coordinator is the Executive Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access (EOA). For information on OSU's nondiscrimination policy and procedures, including how to report information about conduct that may constitute discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, contact EOA by phone: 541-737-3556, email: [equal.opportunity@oregonstate.edu](mailto:equal.opportunity@oregonstate.edu), mail/location: 330 Snell Hall, Corvallis OR 97331, or visit [EOA's website](#).

## **Religious Observance**

Oregon State University provides reasonable accommodations for students' sincerely held religious beliefs. It is incumbent on the student making the request to make the faculty member aware of the request as soon as possible prior to the need for the accommodation.

For more information, see OSU's website on [Accommodations and Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Religion](#).

## **Resources**

Oregon State has many resources on campus that may help you succeed.

### **Academic Success Center**

The OSU [Academic Success Center](#)... TK

### **Writing Center** The [OSU Writing Center](#)...

It may be especially helpful for the essays in this course

**Libraries**

I encourage students to take advantage of [the OSU Libraries](#) and their services to help with research.

If you are wondering about the services that the libraries provide, [check the answers page](#).

**Acknowledgments**

The course builds on previous iterations of ENG 301 taught by TK.