Minneapolis Community and Technical College Dr. Kathleen DeVore, Fall 2025

English 1110, College English 1, Deepening Critical Reading and Writing Abilities for College:

# *Being Landed on and Landing in America: Colonization, Immigration, Criminalization, and Resistance in the American Experience- a Decolonizing, Anti-Racist Curriculum*

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## OFFICE HOURS: ZOOM -Weds 2:30-3:30

## Face to Face in H4123:

## Th 2:20-3:20 & by Appt. MAIL: H4123

## A cartoon of a person holding an object and a child Description automatically generated

## **Examining and Writing About Society:**

## “The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for themself, to make their own decisions, to say to themself this is black, or this is white, to decide for themself whether there is a God in heaven or not.  To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way they achieve their own identity.  But no society is really anxious to have that kind of person around.  What societies really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. If a society succeeds in this, that society is about to perish. The obligation of anyone who thinks of themself as responsible is to examine society and try to change it and to fight it – at no matter what risk. This is the only hope society has.This is the only way societies change.” (James Baldwin’s “A Talk to Teachers,” originally published in *The Saturday Review*, December 21, 1963).

## As the Latuff cartoon on the left shows, a cartoon that is 10 years old and was drawn after 12 year old Tamir Rice was killed by Cleveland police, which represents the white supremacy we also saw displayed on Jan 6th 2021 in the takeover of the US capital building in Washington DC, and in the 2020 Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd and many others, as well as what the #Blacklivesmatter, #Nativelivesmatter, #Speakhername, and #MeToo movements seek to address in American society is our national understanding of and struggle over race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, violence, policing, criminality and American identity in this multi-ethnic nation. How we individually and as a society use language to name our experience in this society matters.

**DESCRIPTION AND GOALS**:

Because, as Baldwin tells us above, the purpose of education is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for, and make decisions for themselves, we must write on things that matter; so our reading will often focus on the costs of moving among national, cultural and linguistic worlds, (the last looking at the different languages we use in different settings often called *code switching* and *code mixing*), while our writing will allow us to practice the thesis-driven, evidence-supported, academic conventions most valued in college writing. We will study these formal techniques while practicing a social critique that will make clear why these techniques continue to be valued by those in power in America. And in the last paper of the course students will develop essays on issues very much of your own choosing on topics growing out of but not restricted to the reading, writing and thinking we’ve done throughout the semester (much more on this at the end of the term).

So yes, we will improve your writing for college, but there is no careful, intelligent and critical writing without careful, intelligent, and critical thought so our most important work will be to understand and continue to practice the critical approach to the world necessary for success in college writing. The term “critical” here does not mean negative, but “closely attended to”: staring down stories and ideas, our cultures, society and ourselves into their component parts to see how they work. Further, we will learn about some of the “parts” of writing to make them work for us, and some of these parts include: *Drafting, Revising,* and *Editing*. And at the essay-level we’ll work on: *introductions, thesis* and *claim, organizing evidence, transitioning among ideas,* and *writing conclusions*. While these terms may be new for some of you, after 16 weeks of discussion and written practice I promise they’ll be hard to forget!

One of the main differences between college writing and all other kinds is the move from description, reporting and summary to interpretation and analysis. In much writing it is important to comprehend surface meaning: who/what/where/when? To this important understanding we must now add: **WHY**? Thinking about why writers make the choices they do, why social issues are described as they are, and why you write as you do is interpretation and analysis: it is getting critical, and we are about to do lots of it.

**COURSE MATERIALS**:

**THERE IS A REQUIRED BOOK FOR THIS CLASS!!**

(Buy it online or through MCTC bookstore)

**\*\*REQUIRED\*\*:** *Imagining America: Stories from the Promised Land,* Wesley Brown, ed. Persea Publishing, 2002

**SUGGESTED**: Really, any college writing handbook, and especially useful and FREE are OWL’s - Online Writing Labs which we will explore in class early in the semester.

**D2L**: “Desire 2 Learn” online course support program, which I will use to back-up our classroom work; on this site you can find all course handouts, schedules and readings, and I collect papers through D2L through weekly Drop Boxes I open each week. See college homepage for D2L workshops if you are unfamiliar with this program.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

My pedagogy – teaching style – is based on educational research which has found that we retain 25% of what we read, 50% of what we write about, and 75% of what we speak about, so:

**READING:**

All assignments should be completed by the day they are scheduled to be discussed. Begin now developing your active reading skills by reading with pen in hand – be ready to mark up a text with questions and reactions and/or keep a reading journal with these responses as you read.

**NOTE**: If our reading slips – when the “Blarney” (Irish for B.S.) replaces informed discussion –we will have weekly quizzes on the reading, but I’d much prefer NOT having to do this: so READ!

WRITING:

Reading Log – Rather than a fully developed paper a week, you will produce a one-page entry every other week that will do three things:

***Summary***: shows that you read the piece closely – characters, plot, and overview of the story.

***Analysis***: demonstrates your general understanding of the author’s meaning: their purpose for writing.

***Question***: raises a “why” question you are left with at the end of the story. These questions move beyond “what happened?” toward deeper analysis: who is the speaker, intended audience, author’s purpose, and why has the writer written in the way s/he has?

**Sample Reading Logs will be shared week 1: read and re-read these samples and use them as models for your own logs to understand what a reading log is**.

**\*\*\***The first 3 of these will be graded with comments, and the final logs will be given checks for credit or returned for revision by the end of the term; with 100-150 students and 13 papers per term that’s from 1300 to 1950 papers every term and so due to volume, Reading Logs after the first 3 will be graded at the end of the term**. Please keep record of which logs you have submitted. \*\*\***

Essays – These 2-3 page, typed responses to our readings and discussions are the seed-like beginnings of longer portfolio papers in which you will attempt to answer one of the critical questions we have raised in your Reading Logs or in class. Essays 1 and 2 will be based on our reading (Rhetorical Analysis) where you will turn a critical question into a thesis statement around which you will gather quotes and other evidence to support your thesis’ claim and offer a beginning interpretation of the author’s purpose in a piece of writing. Essay 3 could follow the Rhetorical Analysis format of your earlier essays, or it could grow out of our readings into a piece of “Community Based Writing” exploring a problem that is central to your community, which I’ll explain in class more fully by mid semester. You will write 3 Essays, about one a month throughout the term.

Final Portfolios – This work is due at finals and will contain rough, revised, and final drafts as well as any peer and instructor feedback on **one Essay that you have developed more fully into a 3–5-page paper.** This work will be due at the end of finals week. Along with the revised , more developed, and longer Essay which must have a detailed and interesting introduction, clear and focused thesis, abundant evidence supporting your claims that is quoted and punctuated correctly, clear transitions among paragraphs, a convincing and complete conclusion, and sentence structure and word choice that reflect careful attention and intelligence, you will also include a Reflection Letter describing how your writing has developed in the process of revising for the portfolio, and much more on Portfolios and Reflection Letters will be explained in class.

GRAMMAR: WHERE IS THE GRAMMAR?

My 30 years as a writing teacher have brought me to a school of grammar instruction called *Grammar in Context* whereby problems with sentence structure, verb tense and other kinds of agreement, preposition use, punctuation and spelling are all addressed within your own writing rather than in weekly exercises not written by you. This is also called the *Skills As Needed* approach, and while still less common in writing instruction, my own years of experience have convinced me of its effectiveness. Our online source “Sentence Sense” will also be a site for addressing grammar concerns.

**ATTENDANCE:** this course is run as a workshop, so your presence is essential. And in Emergency Remote Instruction your attendance is recorded by 2 posts a week. These 2 weekly posts can be emails to me, or questions, responses, or comments on our Discussion Boards (DB)

**Last Date of Attendance (LDA):** Beginning in Fall Semester 2006, the College has adopted a new policy and procedure change that will assist in identifying the last date of student attendance for students. Students are expected to regularly attend classes in which they are enrolled and abide by [MCTC Policy 4.05.01 Procedures for Changing Enrollment](http://www.minneapolis.edu/collegepolicies/policy.cfm?policy_id=61). Students who decide to stop attending courses should immediately drop/withdraw from their course(s). Students who fail to officially withdraw from a course (or courses) they are not attending, as defined by "Last Date of Attendance" (above), may be administratively withdrawn from those courses. The student will remain responsible for any financial liability, less applicable refunds they have incurred and for any academic consequences due to this administrative withdrawal. **LDA Process**: Last Date of Attendance shall be determined for students meeting the following criteria:

1. A student who is on the class roster but fails to attend scheduled meetings of a class or log into and participate as directed in an online course during the first week of the course; or
2. A student who has missed all scheduled meetings of a class within a two week time frame or has not participated as stated in the syllabus without contacting the college course instructor; or
3. A student in an online course who has not participated as stated in the syllabus and/or accessed online class materials and/or the faculty member has not received any communication or assignments from the student within a period of fourteen calendar days; or
4. A student who has missed a minimum of one-eighth of a short term course (including summer term courses meaning one week) without contacting the college course instructor.

**LATE PAPERS**: All written assignments must be typed and you must turn in every assignment to pass the course. Unexcused late papers will be graded down ½ grade for each day late including weekends and holidays. If you know you will be absent when a paper is due, turn in your work early. If you anticipate a problem meeting a deadline, contact me at least a day in advance.

**INCOMPLETES:** I do not give incompletes. If during the progress of the course you become unable to complete the work talk with me immediately and I will likely suggest you withdraw from the course. Waiting until the final weeks of the semester to deal with missing work is a bad idea and often leads to dreams of an Incomplete to create more time- this strategy often fails as the subsequent semester carries with it its own workload and complications. Manage the work or drop the class: blunt but true!

**FINAL WITHDRAWAL DATE**:  and Grade Point Average (GPA). For example, last spring 16 of my 120 students, nearly 1 in 10 forgot to withdraw and got Fs – again: do the work of the course or drop the class!

**MCTC POLICIES**: Policies on scholastic dishonesty and sexual harassment apply. Basically, we have neither the room nor the time for it here and MCTC Administration will be notified if either arises – if necessary, notify me of any conduct that jeopardizes your learning. **An extra note on plagiarism – it takes instructors on average 5 seconds to find a paper downloaded from the internet, really!** If you are unclear on how to work the ideas of others into your own writing, ask me how to do it. This is a legal and fundamental practice in college writing; the outright theft of someone else’s work, like most theft, is not legal.

**STATEMENT ON AI USE**: The use of generative AI writing tools (such as ChatGPT, Grammarly GO, GPT-3, GPT-4, BERT, or others) is allowed in this class **IN A LIMITED SENSE**: within specific contexts and only if such use is properly acknowledged. Assignments for the course have been designed to help you develop as a writer, and some of them may call on you to practice writing with the help of such tools. As your instructor, I will assume that any use of these tools will be only within the contexts the assignment allows (for instance, you can use ChatGPT for brainstorming if the assignment asks you to do so). **You must acknowledge the use of AI in your assignment in an "Acknowledgement of AI Use" statement** that: · Specifies which technology was used and on what date (ChatGPT, GPT-3, etc.) · Includes explicit descriptions of how the information was generated · Identifies the prompts used · Explains how the output was used in your work. The use of AI outside of contexts where the instructor specifies its use, or failure to acknowledge any use of AI technologies in your work will be considered an academic integrity violation, addressed according to the course’s scholastic dishonesty policy noted above, **and work will receive 0 points, which is a failing grade**. You are the author of your work for the course and authorship means you take responsibility for your words and claims, regardless of which tools you use. Please see me if you have any questions about this policy. (\*Resource composed by Annette Vee. CC-BY-NC (Creative Commons By-Noncommercial license). Free to adapt and use for educational contexts with acknowledgement.)

**ACCESSABILITY STATEMENT:** Minneapolis Community and Technical College is committed to providing equal access to education for all students. Students who have a disability, or believe they may have a disability, are invited to contact the Accessibility Resource Center as soon as possible to determine eligibility and/or request accommodations. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Accessibility Resource Center at 612-659-6730, [accessibility@minneapolis.edu](mailto:accessibility@minneapolis.edu), or stop by T.2400 to request reasonable accommodations. For additional information, visit the  [Accessibility Resource Center’s](https://www.minneapolis.edu/student-services/accessibility-resource-center) website.

The accommodations authorized on your forms should be discussed with your instructor. All discussions will remain confidential. Accommodations are not provided retroactively, so it is essential to discuss your needs at the beginning of the semester. Additionally, only accommodations approved by the Accessibility Resource Center will be provided.

This syllabus is available in alternate formats to individuals with disabilities upon request.

Minneapolis College is an equal opportunity employer and educator and member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.

**Accommodations for Veterans and Active Military Members**:

Minneapolis College is dedicated to assisting veterans and eligible family members in achieving their educational goals. Military members who are currently serving should advise their instructor of all regularly scheduled military training and duties that conflict with scheduled course requirements.  Instructors will work with the student to address issues that arise.  For further information on this, refer to Minn State Procedure [5.12.1 Military Service and Disabled Veterans](http://www.minnstate.edu/board/procedure/512p1.html).

**Religious Observation Accommodations:**

Minneapolis College is dedicated to our core values of diversity and inclusion, including non-discrimination based on religion. Please provide reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which you will be absent. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve you from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence, but it is my responsibility to make reasonable accommodations, so you do not need to choose between religious observance and academic work

**GRADING:** *“How could it be clear, it was deep?”*

Finding Clarity and Depth…

Grades will be attached to the end of each returned assignment as your grade grows from your work, and my grading will follow the general guidelines of the College and centers on my finding evidence of clarity and depth in both your class discussion and writing. These are two features with which students often struggle, so we will discuss these in depth during the semester. Grades can be obtained by emailing me or coming to my office hours but are NOT posted online as this fosters a grade-fixation rather than attention to improved writing. Further, **I do not give grades: you earn them.**

**50%** - Reading Log Entries, Rough Drafts, Rotating Chair Presentation, whole-class writing workshop feedback, meeting deadlines, attendance

**50%** - Final Essays and Portfolios

**Personal Grade Record:**

* Keep track of your grades so you know your own grade, as due to volume (100 students a term = 1100 logs,

300 essays, 200 portfolios) I average much of my grading at the end of term.

Reading Logs Essays:

1. 1.
2. 2. Absences:
3. 3.

6. Final Portfolio: