

#####English 1102: Reading Literature and Culture (Online)

#####Digital Culture - Winter 2017 - Douglas College

#####How to Do Well in this Course

General Definitions:

Course Module - refers to the materials we will cover over the course of a week, usually. Sometimes, a module will correspond to a specific theme--a week where we discuss the representation of Race in **Ready Player One**, for example. Sometimes, a course module will focus on a single text, sometimes more than one text.

Sometimes, a course module will explore literary terminology, close reading strategies, or essay writing. Point is, a course module is simply a way of organizing the course materials into a focused topic that we can discuss for a given period of time.

Blackboard or Blackboard LMS or LMS - LMS stands for Learning Management System. We'll do most of the course work inside the LMS. But, Blackboard has limitations, so I often post lectures and other materials to the class website. The class website is hosted outside in the real world and can be found here: <http://digitalcultureslab.ca/douglascollege-online1102/winter2017/>. You should be comfortable checking both these spaces on your own, but I will always link to both in the Blackboard LMS. Make sure you understand that there's a difference between Blackboard and the class website. The easiest distinction to remember is that Blackboard is interactive, the class website is not.

Email - When we're not in discussion threads, writing blog posts, or making comments, Email is the main mode of communication between you and I. I will hold online office hours in Blackboard through the chat function, but if you have a quick question or need to hand in an essay, Email is the way to go. Please maintain a level of formality when you Email me and include the following:

1. Your name
2. The course you are registered in--including the section number
3. A salutation
4. Your query, what you are handing in, or the content of your message
5. If you need something from me, or need me to do something, state clearly what it is you want to happen

Course Outline / Syllabus - This document represents a binding contract between you and I. If there's ever any questions about what I expect or what the course requirements are, this is where you should look for the answers. Always read the course outline / syllabus **before** you Email me questions about expectations, due dates, assignment requirements.

Here are a few tips for doing well in this course:

- Stay engaged. Get in the habit of checking into the online spaces for the course on a regular basis--set a schedule and stick to it. Try to come up with a question or comment about a text or concept we've discussed at least once a week, and post it

to a discussion thread. Because it lives in the online ether, this course is easy to forget about. Keeping up and engaging on a regular basis is essential.

- Give yourself time to deal with the technology. The internet breaks, Blackboard goes down, it's hard to figure out new online spaces. Be patient, follow the help tutorials and give yourself plenty of time--particularly at the beginning--to counteract the annoyances of Blackboard and taking an online course.

- Read the books before we discuss them. Otherwise, you will not be able to follow lectures or discussions. Plus, demonstrating you've read the book means you'll likely do well on the final exam.

- Write while you read. For me this means annotating a text as I read it. You can annotate print and digital texts. (Ask me if you need ideas or resources.)

- Come to discussions with ideas and questions. Be curious. Seek connections not only between texts but also between this course and other courses you're taking.

- Take notes when you read. A good portion of the exams will cover what we discuss in comment threads or what's included in the online lectures. Students who take good notes not only understand but also retain the material better. They also do better on the exams than students who do not take notes.

- Let me know when you don't follow what I'm saying (or doing). I find this stuff fascinating, but I will not always know what you want to investigate or learn more about. If you have questions, then please don't hesitate to ask them. There's no need to feel like an imposter in this course.

- Persuasive writing takes time. Before you submit an essay, consider writing and circulating drafts. Ask friends or peers to give your writing a gander. Consider how your writing can extend and even complicate our discussions. Also, avoid writing that is primarily descriptive. Push your work into an analysis of the assumptions, aesthetics, and ambiguity at work in literature.

- Be concrete when you comment on anyone's work (including the texts we're

discussing). Quote it. Speak to specific gestures. And then respond with your own interpretations. When the work is by a peer, affirm their ideas (e.g., “I like how you...”).

- Use discussion threads to share ideas, but also discuss what we’re reading outside of class (stuff we don't *need* to discuss as part of the class module. If you have a question, then ask me or your classmates. If you hear something you want to remember, then write it down for later reference. If you feel like we’re ignoring something important in our discussion, then bring it to our attention. Consider forming reading and writing groups for the course.
