

**Course Outline / Syllbus: ENGL 1102.090: Reading Literature and Culture
(Online)**

**Digital Culture - Winter 2017 - Douglas College Dr. David N. Wright /
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Online Office Hours (Chat): Tues. 11am - 12pm

Disclaimer:

Please note that this section of English 1102 is a fully online class. This means that there are no face-to-face meetings, but students are expected to log into the course a minimum of 2 times each week and should plan to spend at least 3.5 hours online each week in course activities (excluding reading the assigned novels and preparing assignments). Students must have access to a computer and, usually, a high-speed internet connection to be able to take this class, as well as be proficient with word processing, attaching documents, and other computer applications. Please take note of the unique features and requirements of this course. It is your responsibility to keep up-to-date with what's happening in the class and to do all the required reading and other work.

If you are not a self-motivated student, you may want to consider whether an online course is the right choice for you. This type of course can sometimes be difficult for those who aren't prepared to take on the responsibility for learning the course material on their own time and scheduling the required time to complete the work. You will be expected to do a good deal of learning on your own. I will guide you, but often you will be required to find your own way and report your

findings without the benefit of my council.

We will be using the Blackboard Version 9 course management platform (LMS) for the course. Emails will usually be sent within the course using the course internal messages function and will not usually be sent to your external email address. This means you will need to check into the course regularly each week (daily is recommended) to check on whether you have any emails from your instructor or classmates. Emails will not usually be sent to external email addresses.

Course Description:

In this course, we will examine artistic (primarily literary) representations of digital culture. We'll look at texts that represent coders, hackers, and computers, analyzing how those texts reflect or interpret our digital world. In particular, we'll look at how digital culture reflects traditional literary themes such as gender, race, labour, anxiety, and gaming, among many others. The course will offer an opportunity to see how artistic production represents the structures of our digital lives. As we work to understand representations of digital culture, we'll pay attention to how digital culture reflects social attitudes, cultural practices, and political movements. The aim is to understand how the devices of literary interpretation—character, setting, theme, narrative—can help us dissect the underlying currents of an emerging digital environment.

Required Texts:

- Cline, Ernest. *Ready Player One: A Novel*. (ISBN: 978–0307887443)
- Coupland, Douglas. *JPod*. (ISBN: 978–0679314257)
- Padua, Sydney. *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage*. (ISBN: 978–0307908278)
- Sloan, Robin. *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore*. (ISBN: 978–1443415798)
- All the course readings and other texts that appear on the Blackboard LMS.

Please note that these online materials are **not optional**. You should not expect to complete the class assignments successfully without having read these online materials.

A note about the class readings: This course makes extensive use of secondary information freely available on the Internet. Links to required readings and other materials will be linked through Blackboard. Please make every effort to do the readings. **You must purchase the texts above**; these novels require a hard copy—paper, digital or otherwise. You can purchase all the books for this course at the Douglas College Bookstore or, using the ISBN numbers above, through another source, such as Amazon. You do not need the specific editions above, any edition will do, but the page numbers I mention may not be the same—that's your responsibility. If you order a book for the course from an online retailer, please be aware that delivery timelines may not mesh with the course timelines. Make sure you have the book in time to complete the reading before we begin discussing the text in class. It's best to buy all the books at the beginning of the course, but consult the course schedule for specific dates.

You may be asked to access other materials, ie. film adaptations, either at the College library or, for those students attending remotely, through resources local to you. You will be given plenty of notice should you need to access these

materials.

Assignment Weights and Due Dates (Subject to Change, with Notice):

Assignment	Weight	Notes	Due Date(s)
Essay #1	20%	~1200 words	Due Feb. 15, 2017 11:59pm
Essay #2	20%	~1200 words	April 12, 2017 11:59pm, marked <i>with</i> comments; April 18, 2017 11:59pm, marked <i>without</i> comments
Exam #1	15%	Timed, 1.5 hours, short answer close reading	Feb. 22–23, 2017 - Available for 24 hours starting at 5am Feb. 22, 2017 and ending Feb. 23, 2017 at 5am
Exam #2*	15%	In-person at Douglas College New Westminster Campus date TBA, or proctored (see below)	Please contact me ASAP if you will be writing the final exam remotely (not in person)
		Two blog posts of	

Reading Response Blog Posts	20%	~500 words on two different texts we cover in the course, each worth 10%	Various Due Dates
Class Discussion Comments on Response Blog Posts	10%	Students must post at least one comment of minimum 150 words on Blog Posts	Various Due Dates

*Please note that all English classes at Douglas College require an in-person, in-class writing component. Those of you who are in the Greater Vancouver area will come to the New Westminster campus of Douglas College to write the final exam. The exam is scheduled by the College and cannot be rescheduled for any reason. Please do not make plans to be away from campus before the end of the formal exam period (April 19 - 27, inclusive).

Those of you taking this course remotely will be required to schedule a proctoring for your final exam. Please contact me for more information about this process, and do not leave it to the last minute.

General Course Policies:

1. Essay assignments must be Emailed to the instructor at the address above. Emailed assignments should be submitted in a compatible format (I.e.: .doc /

.docx/ .pdf **no Pages (Apple OS doc) files please—export as .docx or .doc file**) on the day of the deadline to the Email address above. Please include your name in the filename (e.g., essay1_davidnwright.docx). I will acknowledge the receipt of your essay by Email within 24 hours. If you submit your essay via an Email address other than the one assigned by Douglas College upon your enrolment, please be advised that you may be subject to the terms and conditions of the United States Patriot Act.

2. You are responsible for reading ALL the readings listed in the course schedule and available through the class website.

3. All exams and other tests, assignments, or comment threads, are due on the assigned date. There are no make up exams, tests, assignments, or comment threads. You must keep up with the required due dates and complete the course as required by course communications, the course calendar, and this course outline. If you miss an exam, other required tests, assignments, or comment threads, you will receive a grade of 0/100 for that element.

4. Late essays will be accepted for 7 days after the due date as determined by Email date stamp. **No late essays will receive any written comments.** Extensions beyond 7 days or extended absences should be accounted for in person and will require proper substantiating documentation (i.e.: a doctor's note) or may receive a penalty of 5% per day, including weekends, beginning from the **original due date**.

5. Essays and other class assignments cannot be rewritten. **Proper [MLA citation formatting](#) is required for all essays** and essays must be formatted according to MLA citation style. Correct citation, according to the rules of the MLA style guide, is mandatory for all essays. Failure to cite correctly will result in a marked essay with no marginal notes.

6. Though not explicitly stated above, **draft writing is a required element for**

this course. Please be sure to make yourself aware of editing session dates and any penalties associated with missing them.

7. Students who do not submit both essays and complete both exams (70% of the course work) will receive a final grade of UN (unofficial withdrawal) for the course, which will later become an F.

8. Plagiarism—using the ideas or words of another—a published source, website, chat-room, forum thread, internet portal, social networking site, tutor, or friend—in your writing without proper acknowledgement—is a serious offence that will result in your work being forwarded to the Associate Dean, LLPA for assessment and may result in a note being placed in the student’s file, which could be grounds for expulsion. Plagiarism penalties apply to **any assessed component of this course** and I will show no pity toward examples of plagiarism. Ignorance is not an excuse. By taking this course, you agree that all submitted assignments may be subject to an originality review.

9. All Douglas College policies apply in this course; in particular, I draw your attention to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and the [User Conduct policy](#).

Explanations:

Essays: The course will require two formal essays. In order to pass—a grade of P—the course, students must submit both essays. Topics for the essays will be distributed well in advance of the due date. Essays should be typed, double-spaced, in a legible 12pt font, with minimum 1 inch margins and be formatted as noted in the course policies above—in MLA style with a title, proper in-text citation

and a work(s) cited page. They should be submitted via Email and include your name in the file name as noted in the policies above.

For those of you unfamiliar with the requirements of an English course, please remember that good writing is imperative for a positive assessment. Essays should include a relevant thesis statement supported by exposition that is clear and logical. Errors in sentence structure, argumentative logic and grammar, spelling, etc., will affect your grade negatively. Take the time to proof-read your work for typos, formal problems and logic. Keep an extra copy of all essays (except those written in exam booklets). It is your responsibility to provide a copy of your essay—or other work—should it go missing.

General Grading Rubric for Essays:

A+: The content exceeds expectations of the prompt. It is incredibly focused and coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis. It demonstrates awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers multiple perspectives when appropriate. It reflects in-depth engagement with the selected text, and the argument is incredibly persuasive.

A- through A: The content exceeds expectations of the prompt. It is focused and coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis. It demonstrates awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers multiple perspectives when appropriate. It reflects in-depth engagement with the selected text, and the argument is persuasive.

B- through B+: The content meets expectations of the prompt. It is focused and coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis. It demonstrates some awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers multiple perspectives when appropriate. It reflects engagement with the selected text, and the argument is sound.

C through C+: The content meets some expectations of the prompt. It is somewhat focused and integrates some examples with explanations or analysis. It demonstrates minimal awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers few perspectives. It reflects engagement with the selected text; however, the argument is not as sound as it could be.

C- through P: The content does not meet expectations of the prompt. It is not focused, or it does not integrate examples with explanations or analysis. It does not demonstrate awareness of its own limitations or implications, or it does not consider multiple perspectives. It does not reflect engagement with the selected text, and the argument is not sound.

F: Serious errors in basic language use. Incomprehensible. The content is missing or falls extremely short of the word count or does not address any aspect of the prompt's expected outcomes.

Exams (30% of your final mark – 15% each):

Exams: Exams will require a good knowledge of the texts assigned in the course

and the literary terminology that might be applied to a reading of them.

Questions will be a mix of short answer and essay questions that ask the student to demonstrate an acquired and applied knowledge of the texts and concepts covered in the course. In every instance, the emphasis is on the student's ability to explain clearly and accurately, with a degree of originality, the major concepts of the course.

Online Course Discussion Requirements

This course requires participation in online discussion threads. These discussions are the online equivalent of class attendance. While your participation in these online discussion threads is not assessed, it is essential for the successful completion of the course. Please refer to the below and the Course Conduct and Expectations for further details about what is expected for online participation.

Discussion Thread Participation:

Since conversations are essential to the quality of this class, we will work together to create an atmosphere premised on difference. College-level discourse does not shy away from sensitive issues, including questions of race, gender, class, sexuality, politics, and religion, and neither will we. There are going to be differences in opinions, beliefs, and interpretations when we read literature, question it, and engage history and culture. You need not agree with the arguments presented in discussion threads or with what your peers or I have

to say. In fact, it is important to think critically and question course material. But please do so intelligently, without the assumption that everyone agrees with you or shares your experiences. Difference is central to creating a discussion in which a variety of ideas can be exchanged and points of view can be explored. Ultimately, what is crucial to this course is that you are comfortable expressing yourself and your ideas. If, for whatever reason, you are not, then you should notify me immediately. I understand that some people are more comfortable discussing ideas, concepts, or what they have learned, than others. That said, participation augments learning. If you are not comfortable in discussion threads, as written statements that reflect your level of knowledge and comprehension, you will have difficulty getting anything out of this course. You cannot “troll” discussion threads, contributing nothing, and expect to be successful in the course learning objectives. As with many other things, you will get out of discussion what you put into it.

Expectations for Discussion Threads:

I expect that you will be spending anywhere from 6–8 hours each week working on the materials for the course, either through reading, the discussion threads, the Reader Responses, or essay drafting (or all four). If you are doing less than that, you’re not meeting the expectations for the class and can expect the results that come with lack of effort and engagement.

How much time should you spend in the discussion threads? That’s up to you. You’ll have no doubt noticed by now that the comment threads are not a graded aspect of this course. Suffice to say, you should spend at minimum two hours a week, especially if you do not have a Reader Response due, discussing the

course in discussion threads. In general, the time you spend contributing to the discussion threads is the same as time you would be physically present in the classroom.

Discussion Climate:

Douglas College is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe working and learning environment for all its members. Students and faculty members are expected to adhere to the [User Conduct Policy](#). Students should alert me immediately if they have any questions about this policy and its application, or if they have concerns about course proceedings or participants. I reserve the right to exclude individuals from discussions if their conduct does not reflect the above.

Trigger Warning:

In this course, we will encounter descriptive scenes that some might find unsettling—drug abuse, murder, poverty, child abuse. If at any point you feel uncomfortable being present while the material is being discussed, please feel free to remove yourself from that discussion, either before that discussion happens or, if you are caught unaware, in real time. No explanation is needed. However, if the analysis of the course texts will be difficult enough to prevent

your success in the course, please contact me by Email; discussions between you and I through Email remain private. Plot synopses of all the texts we will encounter are readily available on Wikipedia, feel free to consult the synopsis beforehand and decide if the content of this course is the right fit for you.

Ethics Statement:

This course prioritizes the formal requirements of “academic writing” usually understood as proper citation, the logical development of persuasive claims, and a somewhat formal voice. You have an ethical responsibility to write at a level that reflects the absolute best of your abilities in the English language.

Remember, your completed essay is a reflection of your effort. Your essays will be graded for the application of course content in the service of making a claim, grammar, vocabulary, argumentation, rhetorical style, organization, and for their attention to the rules of proper academic essay format. All of these components figure equally into your final grade.

Academic Honesty:

As a student, your primary job is to demonstrate academic integrity in everything you do: the way you conduct yourself in class, the way you present your ideas in assignments, and the way you demonstrate competency during exams.

Academic integrity embodies everything from treating your classmates and me with respect to coming to class prepared to citing all of your sources in your written work. Acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism (using the ideas of another without giving credit), handing in an essay already submitted for credit in a previous class, cheating on a test or exam,

allowing another person (even an editor or a tutor) to rewrite segments of your assignments, or knowingly handing in work that is not your own. I take academic dishonesty very seriously; it represents not only a failure to meet course requirements, but an act of intellectual theft and a contravention of the social contract of the college. I will fully pursue all cases of academic dishonesty, without exception. Familiarize yourself with the college's policies on this and other relevant academic matters: <http://www.douglascollege.ca/programs-courses/general-information/grading>

Peer Evaluators / Tutors:

While having others respond to your work outside of class can be helpful, if someone else does more than point out errors and problems and discuss corrections in a general way (if a friend, family member, or an individual solicited on-line rewrites your sentences, adds words that are not your own, or provides you with a thesis or structure for your essay) you are not learning to improve your work. Having others write all or part of your essay or assignments is plagiarism and academic dishonesty. If you are working with a tutor on your essays, you should inform me of that fact and be prepared to submit, if requested, all notes and drafts of your home essays so that I can see what kind of help you have received. Failure to do so will result in an F/0% on the assignment in question.

You are encouraged to use the Douglas College online tutoring service, especially if you are not able to see a tutor in person. Check the Learning Centre website for more information: <http://www.douglas.bc.ca/services/learning-centre.html>

Statement of Responsibilities:

My responsibilities for this course are to introduce a wide range of examples and explanations that will illuminate the texts and guide your interpretation of them. I will also offer guidance on academic writing styles, and offer strategies for generating, organizing, and writing essays. If there is ever something you do not understand, please do not hesitate to raise questions. As well, feel free to Email me if you want clarifications, suggestions, or general guidance. However, be prepared with something to talk about, or some general ideas about your problem(s). I will not develop, write, proofread, etc., your paper for you. I encourage you to take advantage of my Email with questions should you have any problems, but I will not teach the course directly to individuals who do not participate fully in the online spaces for the course.

Explanation of Grading Procedures:

If you receive a grade you are unhappy with, or do not understand, you should make every effort to address it promptly. Do not let grades fester or take on undue gravity. I am more than willing to explain where you went wrong and give you plenty of pointers for improvement. If you do not attend to issues with your writing, you cannot expect to improve. I am never grading your work with an eye for cruelty. I am grading your work in order to show you where you stand amongst students who take—or have taken—an English literature course at Douglas College. As much as possible, try to manage your expectations where grades are concerned. The point of the course is to improve your writing. If your

writing did not need improvement, or assessment in a college context, you would not be here. This course is difficult because it demands a level of writing that reflects college and university contexts, not the aptitude of your personal expression or comprehension. In this course, I am grading your writing and how you present the content of your essay.

E-Mail:

With the exception of holidays and weekends, I will respond to your emails within twenty-four hours. Please maintain a sense of formality in your Emails to me. I have many students in many different courses. Please tell me what course you are in and what your name is when you Email me.

Learning Climate:

Douglas College is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe working and learning environment for all its members. Students and faculty members are expected to adhere to the [User Conduct Policy](#). Students should alert me immediately if they have any questions about this policy and its application, or if they have concerns about course proceedings or participants.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of any first-year English literature course, the successful

student should be able to:

- read receptively and reflectively, with sensitivity to the subtleties of language;
- recognize and understand literary devices;
- practice writing as a process involving pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing;
- write an essay of literary criticism that develops an interpretive thesis supported by appropriate and correctly cited evidence; and
- give and receive constructive criticism on written work.

Upon completion of English 1102, the successful student should also be able to

- recognize and understand the elements of theme in literature;
- understand and analyze the relationship of theme to other literary elements, such as plot, character, setting, figurative language and irony; and
- recognize and appreciate connections between the theme(s) studied in the course and social issues.
- recognize the characteristics of figurative language (such as imagery, metaphor and symbolism)

Peer Acknowledgements:

- Aspects of the grading rubric were borrowed from a syllabus by Mark Sample
- “How to Do Well in this Course” was adapted from a syllabus by Christopher Douglas

- Aspects of the assignment structure, and discussion parameters were adapted from a syllabus by Jentery Sayers
-