

# Patricia R. Taylor

## Teaching Portfolio

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# Statement of Teaching Philosophy

I begin with the desire for students to learn to use rather than simply consume texts. My teaching philosophy is grounded in adaptation theory: I believe that adaptation and appropriation are important building blocks of both academic writing and cultural production, whether in a form as complex as *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*' reworking of *Pride and Prejudice* across YouTube video blogs, Pinterest boards, Tumblr sites, and Twitter feeds, or as simple as quotation. By exposing students to a wide range of adaptations and appropriations, and giving assignments that incorporate these techniques in both analog and digital forms, I teach two important things: careful consideration of the words and forms that texts take, and the manipulation of those same words and forms for new audiences and situations. Learning to rewrite texts in both academic and creative ways is useful to college students who are studying a variety of disciplines, for if students can be introduced to the ways in which authors and readers collaborate in the construction of knowledge by interpreting texts and putting them to work, then they can see themselves in the same light, and become more critical and self-aware participants in a variety of disciplines and intellectual communities.

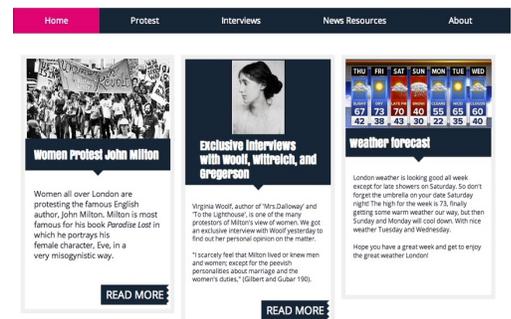


Kenneth Branagh performs his soliloquy in front of a two-way mirror, behind which Polonius and Claudius hide.

One way I put adaptation theory into practice in my classroom can be seen in how I approach a text such as the “To be or not to be” soliloquy from *Hamlet*. In my Introduction to Literature and Shakespeare courses, we begin by close reading the soliloquy, asking how the speech builds its train of thought, and how it relates to the larger scene, earlier scenes from the play, and early modern views of religion and suicide. Then, we watch and discuss performances of the soliloquy from traditional film and theater adaptations (performances by Olivier, Burton, Branagh, Gibson, and Tennant) as well more divergent rewritings in TV shows like *Slings and Arrows* and *Sesame Street*. I ask students to consider how a change of setting (from the vertiginous castle turret in Olivier’s version to the crypt in Gibson’s) or a change in audience

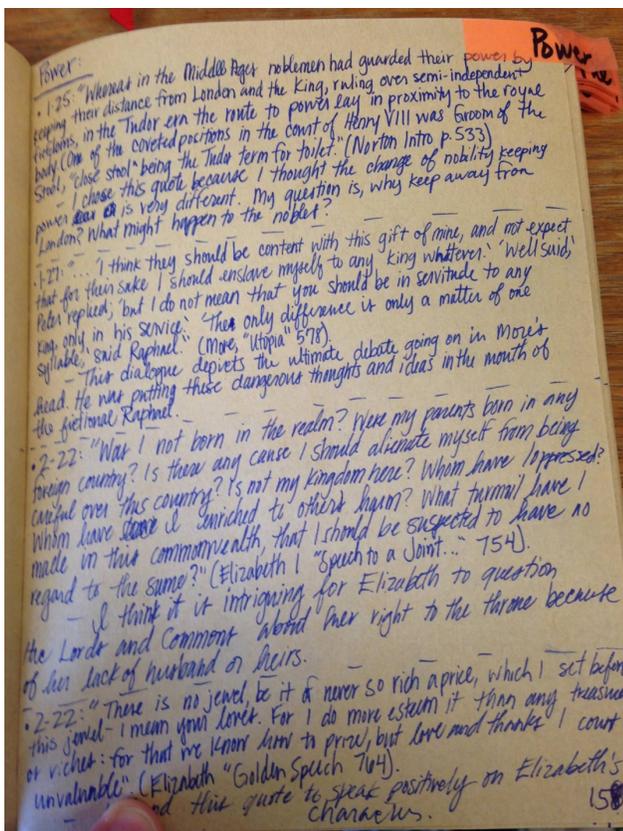
(from Claudius and Polonius in Branagh’s version to the theoretical theater-goers who have all seen *Hamlet* multiple times in *Slings and Arrows*) can add new resonances, and even change the significance or meaning of the lines. Watching such a wide range of performances, each of which gives the scene a different interpretation, tone, or purpose, helped students become aware of the multiplicities of meaning that can be part of a text.

Once we have examined a text in its historical context as well as how others have adapted it, I ask my students to use adaptation techniques to advance their own inquiry into a text. For example, in my 2014 course on *Paradise Lost*, I worked with students to adapt both the poem and academic research into new forms of their choice. One student imagined a group of feminist scholars protesting Milton’s depiction of women in the poem, and created a news website that reported on the protest. She wrote editorials discussing the poem’s depiction of Eve as well as “interviews” with Virginia Woolf, Joseph Wittreich, and Linda Gregerson. Other students created board games that explored Milton’s depictions of free will and predestination, poetry that commented on echoes of Milton in popular culture, and artwork that criticized Milton’s representation of the Fall. Each project was paired with a reflective essay that explained their creative choices. Ultimately, students produced creative work that made sophisticated use of Milton’s poem, and their critical analysis of their projects demonstrated their mastery of both adaptation theory and academic research. I use variations on this assignment in general education literature surveys as well as upper-division courses, and my students consistently tell me they find the projects both challenging and rewarding.



A student website reports on imagined protests over the apparent misogyny of Milton’s poem (Spring 2014).

By focusing on adaptation and appropriation, I create a classroom that introduces students to the conversations that exist across a liberal arts education, and that are so crucial to academic writing. While some projects like the adaptation exercise ask students to do the work of interpreting and producing creative texts, others require students to do the same work in more traditionally academic modes. I begin by introducing students to the process of using adaptive moves in an academic context by discussing how scholars respond to and build on the ideas of others. This is not a new theory, of course: Kenneth Burke's metaphor of the parlor conversation is a centerpiece of composition textbooks such as Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say* and Joseph Harris's *Rewriting*. However, I find it works particular well in classes where we explicitly discuss adaptation. For example, I often assign a chapter from Julie Sanders' *Adaptation and Appropriation* alongside a piece of one of the sources she quotes from, such as T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" or Julia Kristeva's *Word, Dialogue and Novel*. In class, I asked students to examine the extent to which Sanders' own definitions of adaptation and appropriation help us understand how she uses her source material. By framing quotations as a form of adaptation, students learn that quoting a text requires a particular sort of fidelity to the original: they must read a text generously and attempt to represent, as best they can, the author's intentions. However, quotation can also be a form of appropriation: once students have understood and represented a text's meaning, they can transform quotations into something that serves their own intellectual projects.



Page from a student commonplace book (Spring 2017)

My commonplace book assignment advances my goal of teaching students to think intertextually and adapt quotations to their own purposes. I ask students to follow the examples of writers such as John Milton, who kept track of important passages from different texts by recording them under "commonplace" themes, and then later returning to the commonplace book when it came time to write their own texts. In my classroom, the commonplace book becomes a cross between organized note taking and short response papers, designed to help students develop a systematic awareness of the themes we are working with in class and to make connections between the texts we read. Students learn to pay close attention to language as they record quotations from each day's readings and then comment on them. At the beginning of a class session, I often ask each student to tell me one quotation they recorded in their commonplace book that they think is important we discuss as a whole class, and I shape our conversation to focus on those passages. Students also use the contents to develop ideas for their longer papers, moving from collection to inquiry and argumentation. This process encourages students to think of literary and critical texts as spaces where authors and readers talk with one another—even over the space of a hundred or a thousand years—rather than as objects that must simply be consumed either for education or entertainment. In turn, they can understand that their own responses to literature serve not just as fodder for class discussion, but also as part of much larger intellectual conversations.

My students regularly report that my classes are among the most intellectually challenging of their time in college, in part because I push students to creatively and critically do things with texts. As one student put it in a Spring 2017 course evaluation, "I think Dr. Taylor challenges and expects more from students than many professors, but I think we ought to rise to the occasion and appreciate the fact that someone . . . has every confidence that we can create great work." The popular vision of a literature class is one in which students and teachers read and discuss great work, consuming and digesting it. Certainly this is an important part of what we do—but hopefully, we do more than that. As my student puts it, I want my classroom and assignments to help students learn to *create* great work, too.

# Course Descriptions and Syllabi

## Briar Cliff University, ENGL 320: Renaissance Literature

Spring 2017 Syllabus and Assignment Guide: <https://goo.gl/4yders>

Welcome to English 320, a survey of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century British literature! We will use two terms to describe this period: “Renaissance” and “early modern.” Both terms have their uses and problems; “Renaissance” with its meaning of “rebirth” draws attention to the prominence of classical literature and philosophy in education and culture; however, it sometimes neglects the continuity that still existed with medieval literature and ideas. “Early modern,” on the other hand, hints at how the changes of the period set up our own, more modern era, influenced in no small part by the burgeoning print industry and increasing literacy rates. [ . . . ] We will be studying a variety of writings from this period—sonnets and sermons, epics and epigrams, tracts and tragedies, and much, much more. We will examine these texts in their historical, religious, philosophical, and literary contexts, as well as in relationship to issues such as gender, sexuality, race, print culture, and so on. The works we will cover are challenging, shocking, and often entertaining. Many of the authors we will read were actively trying to define what it meant to create a distinctly English literary tradition. Others had more practical—or propagandist—goals. By exploring the range of texts produced in the period, I hope we will get a sense of the potential value and power of the written word in a variety of contexts. Your assignments will include keeping a commonplace book, creating adaptations of early modern texts, and writing both short and long essays.

**ENGLISH 320: BRITISH RENAISSANCE LITERATURE**  
SPRING 2017, MWF 2:00-2:50

Dr. Patricia Taylor Email: [patricia.taylor@briarcliff.edu](mailto:patricia.taylor@briarcliff.edu) Office Hours: MWF 11:00-12:00  
Office Phone: 712-275-5216 Office: Heslin Hall 303 TTh 2:00-3:00

**1.1 REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**  
Norton *Anthology of English Literature*, 9th Edition, Volume B. ISBN 978-0-393-01250-0  
A blank book, smaller than this 11, dedicated to this class  
Daily access to e-mail and BrightSpace

**1.2 RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**  
Joseph Harris, *Recovering *How to Do Things with Text**, Utah State UP, 2005. ISBN 978-0742161621

**2.1 COURSE DESCRIPTION**  
Welcome to English 320, a survey of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century British literature! We will use two terms to describe this period: “Renaissance” and “early modern.” Both terms have their uses and problems: “Renaissance” with its connotation of “rebirth” draws attention to the returning prominence of classical literature and philosophy in education and culture; however, it sometimes neglects the continuity that still existed with medieval literature and ideas. “Early modern,” on the other hand, hints at how the changes of the period set up our own, more modern era, influenced in no small part by the burgeoning print industry and increasing literacy rates.

This course is organized around three main intellectual, religious, and political developments in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-century England: Humanism, Reformation, and Revolution. Humanism, as you will read about in our textbook, emphasized the importance of individual human beings and of human art; it started with the re-discovery and new appreciation of classical texts, but had brought about a new flowering of vernacular literature. The Reformation officially took hold in England when Henry VIII had himself declared the “Supreme Head” of the Church of England so that he might divorce his Catholic wife Catherine, but the country saw persistent arguments and bloodshed over the next century and a half as the English people argued over the direction that the church would take. The English Revolution came in the form of civil war and the beheading of King Charles I; the revolution was partly a result of tensions over religion, for Charles was perceived by many to be attempting to return England to Catholicism. These historical events had lasting effects on the development of English literature with the proliferation of literary, authorial, and genre.

We will be studying a variety of writings from early modern England—sonnets and sermons, epics and epigrams, tracts and tragedies, and much, much more. We will examine these texts in their historical, religious, philosophical, and literary contexts. The works we will cover are challenging, shocking, and sometimes even entertaining. Many of the authors we will read were actively trying to define what it meant to create a distinctly English literary tradition. Others had more practical—or propagandist—goals. By exploring the range of texts produced in the period, I hope we will get a sense of the potential value and power of the written word in a variety of contexts.



## Briar Cliff University, ENGL 243: Shakespeare

Fall 2017 Syllabus and Assignment Guide: <https://goo.gl/s95SPi>

Fall 2016 Syllabus and Assignment Guide: <https://goo.gl/UNPMhY>

Shakespeare is perhaps the single most important author in the English literary canon. His ability to reshape common narratives, to combine multiple stories, to explore emotions and politics and social issues, to play with words and invent new ones, have made him one of the most well-known and influential writers not only in English, but around the world. This semester, we will read five of his plays (*Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, and *Measure for Measure*), watch performances, and read scholars’ responses to Shakespeare’s work. This class is a reading and writing intensive class. Your assignments will include daily responses to the reading, logical outlines, creative performances, and several papers.

**Shakespeare ENGL 243**

**Briar Cliff Univ.**  
Fall 2016

Dr. Patricia Taylor  
Patricia.Taylor@briarcliff.edu  
Office: Heslin Hall 303  
Office Phone: 712-275-5216

**Office Hours**  
M-F 11:00-12:00  
T-TH 2:00-3:00  
Office Hours Sign-up: <https://www.briarcliff.edu/academic/office-hours>  
E-mail for office hours request: [patricia.taylor@briarcliff.edu](mailto:patricia.taylor@briarcliff.edu)

**Required Textbooks**  
Norton Shakespeare, 3rd Edition,  
W.W. Norton, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-393-96344-0

Please note that you are required to use the Norton college published edition sometimes have very different versions of the plays’ texts, and only the Norton has the proper secondary materials. While the final edition is the current one and available on the bookstore, if you have an earlier edition (first or second), you may not be able to get photocopies of the introductory material from the final edition from a bookstore.

Other readings are available on Brightspace. Please print and bring to class when they are on the schedule.

Class format is a 400+ production of *Measure for Measure* by University Theatre Briar Cliff.



## Briar Cliff University, ENGL 110: Introduction to Literature

Fall 2017 Syllabus and Assignment Guide: <https://goo.gl/ygMhbp>

English 110 is an Aesthetic Foundation (AE) course. This means that one of our goals this semester is to develop the ability to comprehend the creative, expressive and structural dimension of literature by expanding our knowledge and appreciation of various literary forms and of their application throughout history. Our course includes texts from five centuries of literature written in English, across two continents. We will read a novel, a play, poetry, short stories, letters, and speeches, all on a wide range of

**ENGLISH 110**  
**INTRO TO LIT**  
FALL 2017

**DR. PATRICIA TAYLOR**

**AESTHETICS FOUNDATION**



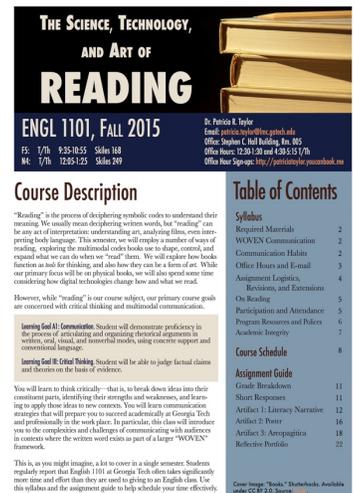
topics: seeking revenge for the murder of a father, coming of age on a Native American reservation, fighting injustice in a world of slavery and oppression, grieving the death of a national leader, understanding how new technology affects our minds, or the difficulty of loving people who are very different from ourselves. Despite such variety, this class will only give you a small taste of the different kinds of writing that humans have done in order to express themselves and respond to the world around them. Rather than covering the breadth of literature, we will focus on depth of study. We will have some classes where we spend a whole class period discussing and responding to a single poem—working out how it was written, what it could mean, and how it might shape people’s views of the world.

In other words, we will be looking beyond the idea of literature as *entertainment*; certainly much of what we will read will be entertaining, but it will be more than just entertainment. Philip Sidney said that the highest goal of poetry, and indeed of all literature, should be “to teach and delight.” Other writers have said that the goal should be to evoke the sublime—the powerful ideas and emotions in our world that are somehow just beyond our ability to fully grasp, or that are the most difficult to express. By writing about such things, by trying to both teach and delight, these authors help us better to understand and confront the world we live in, even the parts we would like to ignore, or that we take for granted. For assignments, you should expect to answer reading questions, write essays, take exams, and creatively adapt one text into a different medium.

## Georgia Tech, ENGL 1101: The Science, Technology and Art of Reading

Fall 2015 Syllabus and Assignment Guide: <https://goo.gl/wKezEj>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** “Reading” is the process of deciphering symbolic codes to understand their meaning. We usually mean deciphering written words, but “reading” can be any act of interpretation: understanding art, analyzing films, even interpreting body language. This semester, we will employ a number of ways of reading, exploring the multimodal codes books use to shape, control, and expand what we can do when we “read” them. We will explore how books function as tools for thinking, and also how they can be a form of art. While our primary focus will be on physical books from the medieval period through today, we will also spend some time considering how digital technologies change how and what we read. Of course, while “reading” is our topic, our goals concern general critical thinking and communication skills. You will learn to think critically—that is, to break down ideas into their constituent parts, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and learning to apply those ideas to new contexts. In particular, this class will introduce you to the complexities and challenges of communicating with audiences in contexts where the written word exists as part of a larger “WOVEN” framework. Assignments will include a literacy narrative, an argumentative poster project with voice over presentation, a book design project, and multimodal portfolio.



**THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ART OF READING**

**ENGL 1101, FALL 2015**

Dr. Patrick S. Taylor  
Email: [patrick.taylor@ga.institute.edu](mailto:patrick.taylor@ga.institute.edu)  
Office: Student Center Building, Box 885  
Office Hours: 12:30-1:30 and 4:30-5:15/Th  
Office Hour Sign-up: <http://patricktaylor.pbworks.com>

**Course Description**

“Reading” is the process of deciphering symbolic codes to understand their meaning. We usually mean deciphering written words, but “reading” can be any act of interpretation: understanding art, analyzing films, even interpreting body language. This semester, we will employ a number of ways of reading, exploring the multimodal codes books use to shape, control, and expand what we can do when we “read” them. We will explore how books function as tools for thinking, and also how they can be a form of art. While our primary focus will be on physical books from the medieval period through today, we will also spend some time considering how digital technologies change how and what we read.

However, while “reading” is our course subject, our primary course goals are concerned with critical thinking and multimedial communication.

**Learning Goal 1: Communication.** Student will demonstrate proficiency in the process of analyzing and organizing rhetorical arguments in written, oral, visual, and multimodal modes, using concrete support and credible evidence.

**Learning Goal 2: Critical Thinking.** Student will be able to judge factual claims and theories on the basis of evidence.

You will learn to think critically—that is, to break down ideas into their constituent parts, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and learning to apply those ideas to new contexts. You will learn communication strategies that will prepare you to succeed academically at Georgia Tech and professionally in the work place. In particular, this class will introduce you to the complexities and challenges of communicating with audiences in contexts where the written word exists as part of a larger “WOVEN” framework.

This is, as you might imagine, a lot to cover in a single semester. Students regularly report that English 1101 at Georgia Tech often takes significantly more time and effort than they are used to giving to an English class. Use this syllabus and the assignment guide to help schedule your time effectively.

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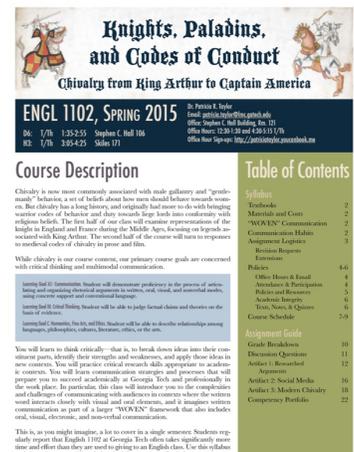
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Course Image: “Book,” Shutterstock, Available under CC BY 3.0 license

## Georgia Tech, Engl 1102: Chivalry from King Arthur to Captain America

Spring 2015 Syllabus and Assignment Guide: <https://goo.gl/JyTW5V>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Today, chivalry is most commonly associated with “gentlemanly” behavior, a set of beliefs about how men should behave towards women. But chivalry has a long history, and its origins had more to do with attempting to bring warrior codes of behavior and duty towards liege lords into conformity with religious ethics rather than regulating behavior towards women alone. The first half of our class will examine representations of the knight in England, Wales, and France during the Middle Ages, focusing on legends associated with King Arthur. We will consider how gender, religion, and knightly codes of conduct interacted to create the complex ideals we now think of as “chivalry.” In the second half of the class, we will turn to responses to the codes of chivalry described in these texts: the parody of chivalry in texts like *Don Quixote* and *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, and attempts to create new versions of



**Knights, Paladins, and Codes of Conduct**

**Chivalry from King Arthur to Captain America**

**ENGL 1102, SPRING 2015**

Dr. Patrick S. Taylor  
Email: [patrick.taylor@ga.institute.edu](mailto:patrick.taylor@ga.institute.edu)  
Office: Student Center Building, Box 885  
Office Hours: 12:30-1:30 and 4:30-5:15/Th  
Office Hour Sign-up: <http://patricktaylor.pbworks.com>

**Course Description**

Chivalry is most commonly associated with male gallantry and “gentlemanly” behavior, a set of beliefs about how men should behave towards women. But chivalry has a long history, and its origins had more to do with bringing warrior codes of behavior and duty towards liege lords into conformity with religious beliefs. The first half of our class will examine representations of the knight in England and France during the Middle Ages, focusing on legends associated with King Arthur. The second half of the course will turn to responses to medieval codes of chivalry in prose and film.

While chivalry is our course content, our primary course goals are concerned with critical thinking and multimedial communication.

**Learning Goal 1: Communication.** Student will demonstrate proficiency in the process of analyzing and organizing rhetorical arguments in written, oral, visual, and multimodal modes, using concrete support and credible evidence.

**Learning Goal 2: Critical Thinking.** Student will be able to judge factual claims and theories on the basis of evidence.

Course Image: “Book,” Shutterstock, Available under CC BY 3.0 license

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chivalry and knighthood in Marvel’s *Captain America* comics and movies and Lois McMaster Bujold’s short story “The Mountains of Mourning.” The assignments in this course include visualizations and oral performances of poems, a social media project, a modern chivalry adaptation website, and a multimodal portfolio.

## GEORGIA TECH, ENGL 1102: PARADISE LOST

Spring 2016 Syllabus and Schedule: <https://goo.gl/TU4x7B>

Spring 2016 Assignment Guide: <https://goo.gl/WxvGKh>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Tyranny. Revolution. War. Free Will. Angels. Demons. God. Sex. Chaos. Sin. Forgiveness. Redemption. John Milton’s seventeenth-century epic poem *Paradise Lost*, often considered one of the pinnacles of English literature, addresses all these issues in ways that provoke readers to respond. *Paradise Lost* has served as inspiration for authors, classical composers, heavy metal bands, scientists, political radicals, artists, filmmakers, and television shows. In this class, we will explore *Paradise Lost* as a product of the political, religious, and cultural contexts of the seventeenth century, and then turn to how the poem has been adapted and used in the centuries since—and what it might mean for us today. We will use *Paradise Lost* and its adaptations to work on your communication skills. This means you should expect to be writing constantly, and combining your writing with oral, visual, electronic, and non-verbal communication. Assignments include a commonplace book, a poetry performance with essay, book art with explanatory artist’s statement, a research presentation, and a multimodal portfolio. Additionally, we will host a 10-hour marathon reading of the poem for the campus community.

**Dr. Patricia R. Taylor**  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Writing and Communication Program

*Paradise Lost*  
by John Milton

Spring 2014 **English 1102** A 9:05 Crough 125  
J1 10:05 Crough 127  
G 12:05 Crough 125

**Contact Information**  
Email: [patricia.taylor@tc.gatech.edu](mailto:patricia.taylor@tc.gatech.edu)  
Office: Stephen C. Hall, Room 121  
Office Hours: MWF 1:00-2:00 PM  
<http://coursesandfor.com/book/the>  
Office Phone: 404-894-5316  
Class Website: <http://tc.gatech.edu/courses/1102/paradiselost/>

**Required Texts**  
John Milton, *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Gordon Teskey. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2005.  
Grant Hart, *The Argument*. Domino Records, 2013. MP3 or CD.  
WOWENTZ. Purchase access here: <http://books2.library.com/gatech.php>

**Materials and Costs**  
You will need Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. You may find having Adobe Photoshop and InDesign useful, but the Library’s Multimedia Studio has both. You should expect to pay for printing, photocopying, and fabrication expenses related to class projects.

**Course Description**  
Tyranny. Liberty. Revolution. War. Free Will. Angels. Demons. Sex. Chaos. Theology. Sin. Redemption. Forgiveness.  
Often considered one of the pinnacles of English literature, John Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost* has served as inspiration for authors (Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett), classical composers (Joseph Haydn), heavy metal bands (Cradle of Filth), political radicals (Malcolm X), artists (Gustav Doré), filmmakers (Scott Derrickson), and television shows (*Supernatural*). In this class, we will explore *Paradise Lost* as a product of the political, religious, and cultural contexts of the seventeenth century, as well as how the poem has been adapted and used in the centuries since—and what it might mean for us today.  
But while *Paradise Lost* is our topic, our goals concern communication skills. In this class, you will learn to think critically and communicate in ways that will prepare you to succeed academically at Georgia Tech and professionally in the work place. The class will introduce you to the complexities and challenges of communicating with audiences in contexts where the written word intersects closely with visual and oral elements, and it imagines written communication as part of a larger “WOWEN” framework that also includes oral, visual, electronic, and non-verbal communication.  
Art on page 1-4 of this syllabus comes from Scott Derrickson’s film that was never made, *Paradise Lost* (concept art from 2011/12). Used with permission. Images on page 5 come from Gustav Doré’s 1865 illustrated edition, and images on page 6-7 come from William Blake’s 1808 illustrations.

# Sample Assignment Sequence

The following four assignments represent the sequence of work from a single course, English 243: Shakespeare. One of this course's main purposes in our curriculum is to serve as the "benchmark" course for a core outcome for the English major: the ability to "analyze and assess the elements of well-crafted literature, expressing ideas through logical arguments supported by evidence." As such, my emphasis is on making sure students are well trained in close reading and argumentation, bringing in a variety of tools to help them develop those skills.

## Essay 1: OED Close Reading Assignment

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**Prompt:** Many words have multiple connotations. Your assignment is to pick one such word from *Richard III* and write an essay (800-1000 words) examining the way it is used in the play, through the lens of the different definitions you find in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). The OED not only provides definitions of words; it also provides you a history of the word's usage through quoted examples. Any dictionary can tell you what a word means now; the OED can tell you what a word like "nice" meant in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As you can imagine, this makes the OED a useful tool for reading Shakespeare's plays, as meanings have shifted, fallen out of used, or developed new connotations.

**Purpose:** For this assignment, I would like you to learn two things: (1) how to use the OED; and (2) how to use the multiple meanings of words to read, reread, and even transform the meaning of passages you thought you understood.

**Skills you will need:** Close reading, using the OED, argumentation

**Knowledge you will need:** Major characters, themes, symbols, and issues in *Richard III*

### Task:

We will go over this process in class with a few examples to help you get familiar with the process. This is to remind you of all the steps when you work independently.

1. Choose a word from *Richard III* that strikes you as being particularly loaded with meaning. Words that have both literal and symbolic meaning may be particularly rich subjects for this paper. Note: the first word you choose might not be the best word for this assignment. You will want to look up definitions of several words before you settle on one for this assignment.
2. Consider the meanings of the word that you can deduce from context. Does the word appear more than once? What does the word mean where it first caught your eye? Does its meaning change over the course of text? What are its connotations? Does it appear to mean something different in other appearances? Does the word appear in different grammatical variations (verb, noun, adjective, adverb) that might need to each be examined separately?
3. Look up the word and any variations in the OED.
  - a. If you are on campus, just type "oed.com" into your browser.
  - b. If you are off campus, to get to the OED, go to the Library homepage; click on "Databases," and then search for the OED (databases are listed alphabetically). Sign in once you click on the link.
  - c. Search for your word in the OED. Click on the various versions, and read through all the definitions.
4. Consider the various meanings of the word, and make note of the different uses from the examples provided the OED. Does the word appear to have a complicated history?
  - a. The OED cites examples of usage from the beginnings of modern English until now, and you can chart the interesting shifts in the meaning of words. **Make sure you get all the appropriate meanings** (definitions with examples only from the eighteenth century onward are not applicable). Note which definitions are "obs" or obscure, and don't hinge your arguments on these definitions.
  - b. Check if the word is derived from another word, or if there are other terms associated with the word with which you need to repeat the process.
5. Develop a logical outline (see outline directions in the writing guide) that answers a question about how the word's multiple definitions work together or against one another to create meaning in the passage or larger play. Consider the following questions as potential points for the paper:
  - a. What are the possible slants, implications, or innuendoes of the word?
  - b. How do the different meanings influence the way you read the passage or poem?
  - c. How does the word affect/complicate a larger theme?
  - d. How does the word embody/implode its own meaning?
6. Meet with Dr. Taylor about your outline.
7. Using feedback from your meeting, write and revise your outline into a paper.

## Essay 2: Performance Close Reading

**Prompt:** Choose a passage from *Julius Caesar* or *Measure for Measure* that you find particularly important, interesting, difficult, or problematic. Write an essay of 1000-1250 words that “comes to terms with” or close reads the passage while paying attention to rhetorical and dramatic purpose. You should make an argument about the importance, purpose, and meaning of the passage, providing plenty of textual evidence and analysis to prove your claim. Additionally, you should record yourself in a video performing the passage in character or in a way that illustrates and reinforces your argument.



Austin Braswell, a student in a Spring 2016 course on *Paradise Lost*, prepares to deliver a performance of Moloch's speech from Book 2. Used with Permission.

**Purpose:** Shakespeare's plays were meant to be performed, not just read. Often times, it can be difficult to understand a text without thinking through what it would mean to perform it. This assignment is designed to help you think through what the words of a speech mean by requiring you to perform it. Usually, performing the text and writing about what it means are mutually reinforcing and helpful practices.

**Skills to Practice:** Close Reading, Oral Performance

**Knowledge to Use:** Literary and Rhetorical Devices, Characters, Themes and Issues in the Plays

### Task:

As we discussed in class when we read Joseph Harris's book chapter, “coming to terms” with a text doesn't merely mean to quote from, restate, and explain it. “To make effective use of the work of other writers,” Harris argues, “you have to show the force of their thinking to suggest in your rewriting of their work why they said what they said in the particular ways they said it” (19). Thus, as you proceed, make sure you use the techniques for coming to terms that Harris outlines in his chapter:

- Define the project of the speaker and/or author. What is the speaker or author trying to achieve? What issues or problems do the speaker(s) and/or author explore? Is the speaker's goal different from the author's? (Be very careful not to conflate the author and the speaker.)
- Note and explain keywords in the poem or passage. Use quotations from the speech, and explain why specific terms are important to the meaning of the text. If you need to define a term using the dictionary, use the OED.
- Identify and explore the poet or speaker's methods. Is the speaker's purpose or method the same as Shakespeare's? What literary and rhetorical devices does the passage use? (Consider metaphors, symbols, rhythm, rhyme, allusion, emotional appeals, logical appeals, etc.). How do those devices help or challenge the audience?
- Assess the uses and limits of the poet or speaker's project. Push beyond merely evaluating the passage as “effective,” or “cruel,” or “interesting.” Consider instead: why is the issue the speaker or author is addressing important? How does the passage help us understand a character, theme, or pattern in the play? What is useful about thinking through an issue from this perspective? Is there anything dangerous or limiting about the perspective?

Obviously, these are not individual and discrete steps. Your essay should be organized in a way makes an argument, rather than just answering these questions in order. Follow the usual instructions for creating an outline/paper, meet with me concerning the outline, and then revise.

### Tips:

- Feel free to work in pairs on your performances so long as each person performs *at least* fourteen lines. You may not work in pairs on your papers, except to provide one another with feedback.
- When writing your essay, you are not limited to using evidence only from the passage you perform. You may include evidence from elsewhere in the play to support your argument about the function, style, structure, or meaning of the passage.
- I recommend that you start practicing and memorizing the poem or passage for your performance as you write your logical outline. Students in past classes have told me that writing the logical outline was much more effective if they were figuring out how they wanted to perform the poem/passage at the same time.

- For your recording, I recommend you use your laptop's camera, or a camera from a computer in the library. You can, if you must, use a cell phone, but make sure you have a way to hold it steady and at an angle that is not distracting. You are welcome to have a friend help you with filming.

### Essay 3: Voyant and Distant Reading

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**Background:** This project asks you to combine distant reading with close reading, using the data-mining software Voyant. Data-mining software gives you the ability to step back from the text, and can help you see patterns and ideas you might have missed when close reading. It reduces and abstracts the text, providing a different point of view. With fewer elements, you can develop a sense of overall connectedness of the work. In class, we will have two or three days where we experiment with using Voyant, both with *King Lear* and some of the other plays we will be reading in class.

**Prompt:** Write an essay (1250-1800) words that makes an argument about *King Lear* (or an aspect of the play) using both distant and close reading evidence.

**Skills:** Close Reading, Distant Reading, Identification of Patterns, argumentation

**Knowledge:** Major characters, themes, symbols, and issues in *King Lear*

**Task:**

Here is a link that will allow you to analyze *King Lear* with Voyant: <https://goo.gl/qXNvhh>

1. Start with a word cloud or word clouds of the entire work of literature. Does anything stand out? A word or phrase? A surprising emphasis?
  - a. Try modifying the stop-word list; see if changing which types of words changes the word cloud. (For example: take out all of the proper names; what stands out now that didn't stand out before?)
2. Start using the other tools to trace the things you find interesting. What do the different tools reveal to you that you didn't notice before? How do they direct your attention back to the text? Are there words or relationships that seem more or less important than they did when you were reading the text without the tools?
3. Create 2-5 visualizations using Voyant that you think together show something interesting, or that prompt a question for you about the text. Export and save these visualizations to use in your paper.
4. Use these visualizations to start writing a logical outline. As you are writing, go back and re-read the text (or parts of the text) with what you saw in the visualizations in mind. What do you see differently now? Does close reading help answer the questions you developed? Did distant reading help answer questions you had when you were first reading the text?
  - a. Embed your visualizations in your outline so it is easier to discuss them during our meeting.

### Essay 4: Student Choice Textual Analysis

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**Prompt:** Write a 1800+ word essay that engages in complex analysis of some aspect of the play *Macbeth* to make an argument of your choice.

**Purpose:** While your previous three essays had a specific tool or method that you were supposed to use to help complete your analysis (the OED, performance, and Voyant), this assignment largely leaves open the choice of tools to you. Your goal should be to show that you are capable of asking good questions; choosing the best tools and evidence to help you answer those questions; and making well organized, logical arguments using that evidence and your own analysis.

**Skills:** Close reading, argumentation, use of OED or Voyant if necessary

**Knowledge:** Major characters, themes, symbols, and issues in *Macbeth*

**Task:** As with previous papers, you need to develop a question, create a logical outline than answers the question, meet with Dr. Taylor about your outline, and revise into a paper.

# Sample Student Work

In many of my courses, I require that students complete at least one multimodal assignment, weaving together written, oral, visual, electronic, and/or non-verbal modes. Below, you will find example student work from some of these assignments. All work is shared with student permission, though some students requested anonymity. Their names have been redacted.

## Extended Mind Poster Project

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In my course on “The Science, Technology, and Art of Reading,” I asked students to create a poster that analyzes the visual design of one of their textbooks using concepts from Andrew Clark and David Chalmer’s “The Extended Mind,” Clark’s “Magic Words,” and/or Ellen Lupton’s *Thinking with Type*. Additionally, they created a voiceover that explained and contextualized the poster’s argument in greater detail. The assignment required students to practice visual design skills (including software skills using InDesign), argumentation, writing for orality, and oral presentation.

Miyeon Bae

Poster: <http://bit.ly/1Xvn3ik>

Voiceover: <http://bit.ly/1Q6UCBq>

Becky Hardie:

Poster: <http://bit.ly/1WrHIFz>

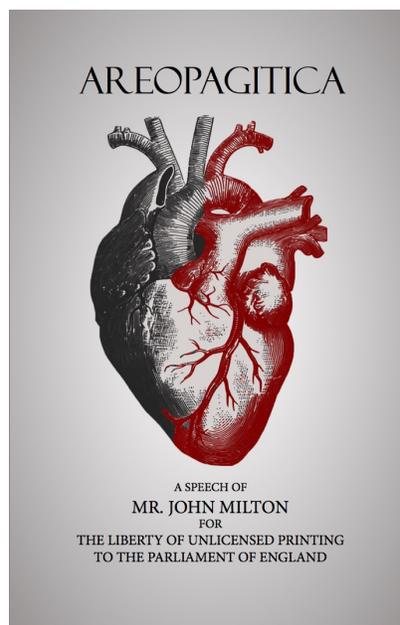
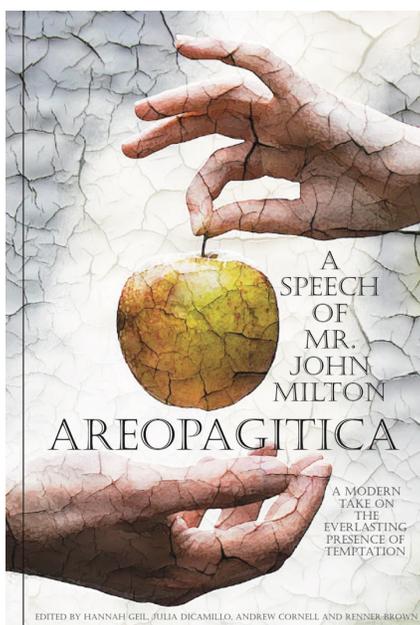
Voiceover: [https://prezi.com/tr\\_w9svndq1u/chemistry-and-cognition/](https://prezi.com/tr_w9svndq1u/chemistry-and-cognition/)

## Book Design Project

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Following the assignment on cognition, typography, and book design, I asked students to put their expertise to work in designing their own editions of John Milton’s *Areopagitica*. They had to develop a unique vision for an edition that made an argument about an aspect of the text, write an introduction, and design a cover and/or interior that would support the argument and help the reader make sense of this difficult, seventeenth-century text.

Two groups focused their attention on the exterior of the book to illustrate their argument about Milton’s *Areopagitica*. One group argued that Milton’s most important claim is that books are essential tools for training people to resist temptation; their cover (below left) draws on Milton’s use of the story of Adam and Eve’s temptation to illustrate this theme. Another group used their cover (below right) as part of an argument about how Milton’s complex metaphors of the human body and corruption have contributed to the lasting power of Milton’s text.



Another group created a children's book (<http://bit.ly/1VIXP8b>) that would be embedded in their own annotated version of Milton's text. Here's how one group member, Natalie Zuckerman, described the project in her reflections:

*Mr. Milton loves England. But he doesn't want to lie by saying his home is perfect. He wants to show how much he cares by trying to make it even better!*



“When approaching this project, my group and I all knew we wanted this project not only to exhibit *Areopagitica*, but also to explore Milton's fear as part of a modern reality: the reduction of reading to immature, robotic process. When brainstorming ideas, all of us mentioned the idea of a “mature” reader. I wondered what it would look like if something as sophisticated as *Areopagitica* was reduced to an unsophisticated version for an “immature” reader. Since Milton used the analogy of Parliament treating the people as a parent would his or her child, I brought up the idea of a children's story. We settled on the idea of embedding children's summaries and illustrations of Milton's key arguments into the text. We thought the multimodal illustrations would help establish an environment conducive to a children's book. The idea of pairing the children's illustrations and summaries with the actual text came from the fact that it would largely expand our argument if a mature reader could tell for themselves how much is lost when literature is oversimplified.”

## Social Media Assignment

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My social media assignment asks students to adapt a persona from a text we read in class for a digital social media platform, considering how different personalities and goals might better fit different venues. We discuss how each social media platform has different affordances: Twitter privileges pithy, concise ideas that can be disseminated to a wide audience. Tumblr is image heavy, and relies on humorous tags and reply threads. Facebook is increasingly a platform for sharing content by other writers, and offers opportunities to deliver slightly longer texts to more controlled audiences. Blogging fosters more sustained, argumentative discourse. In my course on “Knights, Paladins and Codes of Conduct: Chivalry from King Arthur to Captain America,” I asked students to consider the similarities (and differences) between the forms of didacticism in medieval chivalric texts and what is found on social media platforms. They chose a text (such as *The Knight's Own Book of Chivalry*, “The Wife of Bath's Tale,” *Yvain and the Lion*, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, or *Don Quixote*) and a character or narrator from that text as a “persona” or a “role” whose perspective they could perform on social media. They researched the character and text, chose a social media platform, and had their character give advice on chivalrous (or, in some cases, unchivalrous) behavior. Additionally, they had to write a 1000-1200 word essay explaining how the electronic performance of the persona reveals something interesting or important about the character, story, or text in which that persona appears.

**Sample student work** shared with permission under condition of anonymity. Links take you to the student essay, which contain links to the student social media pages.

“Dealing with People through Positive Reinforcement”: <https://goo.gl/hDjPZs>

“Gawain in *Le Morte d'Arthur*”: <https://goo.gl/KBt5GH>

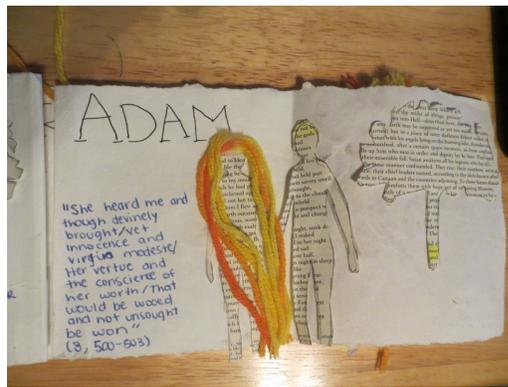
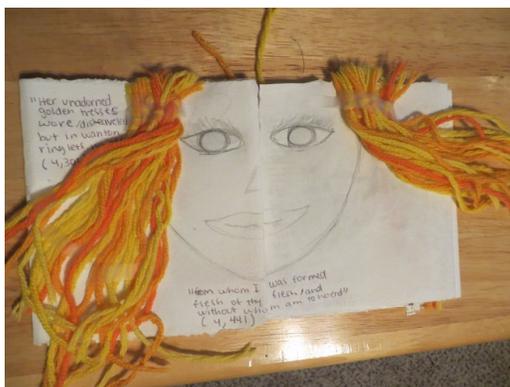
## Book Art Project

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For the second assignment in my course “Finding *Paradise Lost*,” I asked students to make a one-of-a-kind artist's book that would enrich an audience's understanding of *Paradise Lost* using carefully chosen quotations and visuals, and write two artist's statements (one short, meant for display alongside the work at an exhibition, the other longer, for more depth and textual analysis) explaining the work. Their goal was to reveal layers of meaning, or different ways of interpreting the structure, themes, or ideas of the poem. Most students used paper they made at the Robert C. Williams Paper Museum as the basis of the book.

### Example 1: *Beauty Casting Shadows Over Women* by Andrea Diaz.

Short Artist's Statement: Beauty overshadows Eve's other qualities throughout *Paradise Lost*. In the first half of the poem, we see her character through Satan and Adam's lenses and she is constantly described for her physical qualities, making her appear inferior to Adam. She was not for God, but rather "for God in him" (4.299). However, once we see her character through her actions, she is no longer governed by her beauty, but defined by deeper qualities. She becomes the hero of the story since she does what post-fall Adam cannot even imagine: she offers to take all the blame and become the martyr of this story. This book art demonstrates how through Satan and Adam's viewpoint, Eve is only seen as an object of beauty and little else. This is symbolized by her long golden tresses and how they seem to cover and hide Eve. However, throughout the book we slowly get to see the real Eve, as her long golden tresses (although a part of her) no longer dominate her. We see that she craves knowledge and equality, she values God and his grace, and she is willing to sacrifice herself. We are not able to see the true Eve, the Eve that is strong and heroic, until we stop seeing her through male dominated narratives.



### Example 2: *Polar Equals* by Trupti Patel.

Short Artist's Statement: *Polar Equals* engages various quotes from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* to highlight the differences and similarities between the characters of Adam and Eve. By incorporating the 17<sup>th</sup>-century quotes in an abstract, artistic book, Trupti Patel demonstrates how Milton's Adam and Eve are dynamic and complex characters, individuals who are very different and yet equal in their humanity and fall. The book reflects the theme of differences in gender and sin, as well as overlap between the choices and actions of these characters, through the oxymoronic title, illustrations, structure, and style. Because the title is "Polar Equals," the book is structured to create two opposite illustrations at each end of the book that come together in the middle to create one. On the cover, the title is placed over bifurcated colors of blue and red to lead the reader to visually understand the oxymoronic overlap of differences between Adam and Eve. The illustrations inside the book create a visual metaphor that emphasize the dynamic characteristics of Adam and Eve and also describe the implications of their fall- without being too blunt or forthright. Patel anticipates catalyzing the reader to think abstractly and ask more complex, powerful, questions just as Milton has guided her to do through his work.



# Sample Comments on Student Work

## Sample Formative Comments: Outline for Literacy Narrative Paper

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Dear Sam,

There's some really fantastic thinking going on in this outline. My comments in the attached document (<https://goo.gl/DkAKmg>) are aimed at pushing your thinking so that you can do some work clarifying your ideas and responding to potential counter arguments. Here are the three biggest issues I want you to focus on as you transition to a full draft:

1. The literacy narrative is a bit weak as *narrative*. There's only minimal description of your personal experience; you simply state that you love books, essentially. Use the literacy narrative to build a bit more ethos and pathos--especially trying to find common ground through experience with your reader.
2. I found the comparison with artwork and vinyl really interesting and central to your argument, but also potentially problematic. What if books really do become a niche, rather than something common? Isn't that more what Carr is afraid of, rather than the loss of the form just for the sake of the form?
3. Some of the sources you cite are a bit dated, and in a couple of cases the statistics they cite aren't in line with the most recent reports. I've put in a few links from more recent studies (esp. for the social media statistics) that you might want to consider.

Please let me know if you have any questions, and feel free to stop by during office hours to discuss the revision process.

## Sample Formative Comments: Outline for Poster and Artist's Statement

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Dear Reed,

There's some great stuff in this outline. You start with a good, though broad question, but you dig into specifics fairly quickly, and you have some great observations about the relationship of the typography to cognitive load (and good use of evidence from Lupton to support it). Here are the two biggest issues I want you to focus on as you flesh out the draft into the poster and artist's statement:

1. Be a bit more critical of the textbook. While it's using consistent design principles, there are perhaps some inconsistencies in the way (for example) the "i" symbol sometimes contains important information/clarifications, and others where it includes really tangential information. What does that do to the reader? Is the lack of linearity that this creates increasing the cognitive load in some places and decreasing it in others?
2. We need more quotation and exploration of Clark and Chalmers. You reference their points, but not in a way that is specific enough for a reader to always understand which element of their argument you're thinking of or building on.

I have attached (<https://goo.gl/8mx6Ak>) further comments on specific points to your outline. Please let me know if you have any questions, and feel free to stop by during office hours to discuss the project as you move forward.

## Sample Summative Comments: Student "Code of Conduct" Website

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Dear Cameron, Camille, Sofia, and Maimuna,

Really excellent job with your project! I was impressed by thoroughness and professionalism of your website, especially the code of conduct document, which was well designed and thoughtfully written. Your written material did an especially good job highlighting the issues of privilege that come with celebrity status, and how a code of conduct asks individuals to respond to those issues. You also did a good job situating the same issues with regards to your audience—the Robert Downey Jr. example worked particularly well in that respect as you acknowledged his previous problems and showed how following elements that corresponded with your code of conduct were key to his own public relations recovery. The video was well edited, easy to follow, and made some interesting points. I think the interview perhaps misses some

nuances that are a bit problematic, especially with regards to gender (it might have been nice to contrast attitudes towards women celebrities with attitudes towards male celebrities who have similar agendas/controversies, for example), but for the most part, this was also a useful and relevant element of your project.

In other words, the strengths of your project lie in your rhetorical awareness of audience, your design and use of modes and media, and the organization of your overarching project, which met or surpassed my expectations. Your argument and development of ideas were solid, but could have been articulated with more careful attention to nuance.

Please let me know if you have any questions about my comments or the attached rubrics.

## **Sample Summative Comments: Student Presentation on Milton in Visual Art**

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Dear Sushruta, Emily, Kaci, and Kate,

Your argument for your presentation—that the different cultural contexts and attitudes of an artist allow for different types of exploration/adaptation or appropriation—is a really nice one. I think the written explanation of your thesis could have been more explicit; your presentation focused specifically on *religious* contexts and attitudes, and the limits this places (or doesn't place) on adapting Milton's work. Framing your thesis to more specifically note that this issue is the core of your presentation would have given it more depth and complexity.

All of you had really interesting content and plenty of evidence and analysis to support your arguments. Your comparisons of Doré to other artists, the analysis of the different visual elements of Doré's art, and your explanation of the difference in media between graphic novels and Doré's art all worked really well, with plenty of substance and logical development. Sushruta and Kaci did a good job explaining and comparing the historical contexts of Doré and Lucifer; the one major problem was that at least one of the Venn diagrams was covered too quickly—I didn't even have time to read all of the content, and you didn't cover it verbally. This is a problem in communicating effectively with your audience. Some of the other sections were not as well organized as they could or needed to be. Kate's section, for example, went back and forth between Doré and Lucifer too quickly and too often, and this led to some unneeded repetition.

Two points of your argument were left relatively unsupported and thus confusing. One was your point about modern adaptations being more tolerant of appropriations. While certainly this is true, and the comic *Lucifer* is a great example of it, Kaci also referenced two other modern Biblical examples but didn't sufficiently explain how they supported your arguments. I'm also left unconvinced by Emily's argument that the absence of the Son in *Lucifer* represents the unredeemable nature of Humanity; given that you point out that Lucifer quite literally takes on the "son" role to God the father, I'm left wondering if the comics or show might be challenging the idea that humanity *needs* to be redeemed instead. Basically, I needed more evidence and analysis for some of these points to be ultimately convincing.

While I really liked the Venn Diagrams as a visual element, the slides were in general too text heavy and a bit visually cluttered (you can see that many of your fellow students commented on this as well when you read their comments). Work on reducing text in slides to only what is essential, and reserve additional complexity for your verbal components. While many of your images were very effective and allowed you to do analysis on the spot in front of your classmates, you needed more captions, especially for the images that weren't from Doré and Milton. I think it was Kaci's slide that had some sort of diagram of a brain that wasn't really explained? Additionally, one of your images from Doré wasn't even a *Paradise Lost* image—it was an image from his illustration of Dante's *Inferno*! Captions would help your audience make sense of what you included, and perhaps help keep you from making such mistakes.

Please let me know if you have any questions about my comments or the attached rubrics.

# Student Evaluations

Students ranked instructors on a scale of 1-5 (1 = very poor, 5 = exceptional). N/A applies when fewer than 5 students filled out evaluations. Note: BCU averages are self-computed.

School	Course	Term	Mean	
BCU	<b>English 320: Renaissance Literature</b> (1 section, 12 students)	Spring 2017	4.6	
	<b>English 295: Jane Austen and Adaptation</b> (1 section, 3 students)	Spring 2017	N/A	
	<b>English 243: Shakespeare</b> (1 section, 8 students)	Fall 2016	N/A	
	<b>English 110: Introduction to Literature</b> (Briar Cliff U) 1 section, 25 students 1 section, 18 students	Spring 2017 Fall 2016	4.7 4.6	
	<b>Core 131: Writing in the Digital Age</b> (Briar Cliff U) 1 section, 12 students 2 sections, 32 students	Spring 2017 Fall 2016	4.5 4.6	
Georgia Tech	<b>English 1102: Composition 2</b> (Georgia Institute of Technology) Finding <i>Paradise Lost</i> (45 students, 2 sections) Knights, Paladins, and Codes of Conduct: Chivalry from King Arthur to Captain America (40 students, 2 sections) Finding <i>Paradise Lost</i> (30 students, 2 sections) Science Fiction and Ethics (75 students, 3 sections)	Spring 2016 Spring 2015 Spring 2014 Fall 2013	4.6 4.8 4.5 3.9	
	<b>English 1101: Composition 1</b> (Georgia Institute of Technology) The Science, Technology, & Art of Reading (2 sections, 50 students) The Science, Technology, & Art of Reading (2 sections, 42 students)	Fall 2015 Fall 2014	4.6 4.0	
	UConn	<b>English 2011: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Film</b> (1 section, 14 students)	Spring 2013	4.5
		<b>English 1011: Seminar in Academic Writing through Literature</b>	Fall 2012	4.0

At the University of Connecticut, from 2005 to 2011 students ranked instructors on a scale of 1-10 (1 = unacceptable, 10 = outstanding). Upper-level “W” courses (writing intensive) received a second score based on use of comments, writing assignments, and how much students felt they improved in their writing.

School	Course	Term	Mean
UConn	<b>English 3113W: Renaissance Literature</b> (1 section, 12 students)	Spring 2011	9.6, 9.8
	<b>English 1503: Introduction to Shakespeare</b> (1 section, 37 students)	Spring 2011	9.3
	<b>English 1011: Seminar in Academic Writing through Literature</b> Caped Crusader Goes Literary (1 section, 9 students) Paradise Lost (1 section, 18 students) Images of Hell and Apocalypse (1 section, 20 students) Science Fiction (1 section, 19 students)	Summer 2009	8.8
		Spring 2008	8.1
		Fall 2007	9.5
		Spring 2007	8.5
	<b>English 1010: Seminar in Academic Writing</b> Social Science and Technology (1 section, 15 students) Science and the Body/Disability Studies (1 section, 20 students) Ways of Reading (1 section, 18 students)	Fall 2006	8.1
Spring 2006		9.0	
Fall 2005		8.7	

# Sample Student Comments

## **ENGL 320: Renaissance Literature, Spring 2017 (BCU)**

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I really loved this course! Although it was challenging, Dr. Taylor was always available to help us when we had questions and was always patient in her explanations. She is so sharp and intelligent, it's awesome to have a professor who cares so much and is so enthusiastic!

I think Dr. Taylor challenges and expects more from students than many professors, which can make some students push back, but I think we ought to rise to the occasion and appreciate the fact that someone (who is exceptional in their field) has every confidence that we can create great work. Even though there were several assignments, each is broken down into manageable parts (a logical outline, one on one conference, and a final draft). The syllabus was very thorough, which was nice. Grading was tough, but fair and well explained. Overall, I learned so much in this class, thank you!

I think the best assignment for me was the OED project. It helped me learn more about the way language has changed and affected the text. I really appreciate the individual conferences—they help me get a better grip on what I am doing on my projects.

## **ENGL 110: Introduction to Literature, Spring 2017 (BCU)**

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I really enjoyed this class and Dr. Patricia Taylor was very helpful in making me understand everything about literature, especially breaking down poetry. This class taught me more than I ever learned in high school.

I liked the projects that we did throughout the course and they helped us get more engaged. The readings that we did weren't boring, they were pretty fun to read.

Overall I really loved this class. I thought that you did an amazing job teaching this course. I felt that you held us to a little higher standard as if this class was a higher level course, but I thank you for that.

I loved the large variety of genres/styles that is covered in the class and Dr. Taylor does an amazing job of covering different insights and viewpoints of each text.

## **CORE 131: Writing in the Digital age, Spring 2017 (BCU)**

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Dr. Taylor was VERY helpful towards me every time I would communicate with her how much I was struggling. She knows English very well and is an amazing teacher, but sometimes I would have a hard time understanding things because of the high level vocabulary she used. She talked like a high level English teacher which was difficult to keep pace with at times, but if I asked for help or asked her to re-explain things better she would do that. Replied fast to e-mails and communicated with us the entire time. Learned a ton from this course that I can apply to later classes.

This class helped me become not only a better writer, but also a better thinker.

This course was very challenging but it made me grow as a student and expand my horizon and made me challenge myself and not just wait for the professor to challenge me.

This class was an eye opener for many reasons, mostly because it taught me that I need to get my act together. I thought college would be just like high school and a cake walk, but I was wrong. Even though Patricia Taylor's class was challenging, I know for a fact I grew in this course not only on the subject of writing but as a person and to help me mature some before my sophomore year.

## **ENGL 1101: Composition 1, Fall 2014 and 2015 (GT)**

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Dr. Taylor [is] always available for office hours and meetings and is ready and willing to help students maximize their potential whenever they need a boost. I loved having Dr. Taylor as a professor because she makes it clear what needs to be done to succeed in this class, teaches the material clearly and at an understandable level, and she provided me with knowledge and skills that I will be able to take beyond this class.

Dr. Taylor's greatest strength was definitely providing helpful comments on returned logical outlines/process documents and insightful feedback during office hours. Even when I began a project not entirely sure what I was doing, by the time I wrote the final draft, I had a clear understanding of the prompts/goals of the assignment from a combination of written and oral feedback from Dr. Taylor.

Overall, Dr. Taylor was an enthusiastic professor who managed to make somewhat obscure topics interesting. Even though the class was not at all what I expected in terms of content or organization, Dr. Taylor definitely helped me to improve my writing abilities.

It was such a privilege and surprise, especially at Georgia Tech, to have a professor that is not only passionate about the material, but passionate about her students' success. Tech can be a very competitive and demotivating place at times, but professors like you remind students that we are cared for and important. I thoroughly enjoyed the course as the classroom discussions were always very stimulating and engaging, and because the curriculum included all my academic interests. I always felt as though my presence in the classroom was a wanted one, and that you wanted me to succeed as much as I did. Professors like you are the ones who make Tech the great place it is.

She was always open to our ideas and wanted everyone to participate in class, which actually made the class more enjoyable (once people started to talk). I also liked how much help we could get if we actually needed help!

Each [assignment] was unique in its way I absorbed the course goals, but completing them left me with the ability to take what I learned in class and apply it *outside* of class.

The best part about this class was that it was unique compared to any other English course I have taken. It covered very different topics and concepts from any English course I could have taken in high school and required a lot of creativity.

## **ENGL 1102: Composition 2, Fall 2013, Spring 2014 - 2016 (GT)**

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Our instructor was fantastic in interacting with the students. I was able to secure a great amount of help from the instructor both in and out of class, and feedback on assignments was always very in depth and helpful.

I have never felt more fortunate than to have enrolled in Dr. Taylor's class. One of the biggest problems I have seen with English courses at Tech has been the disconnect between the professors and students, but I never felt that with Dr. Taylor's class, which is why I think I was able to take so much away from this course.

I found that the discussions in class were the best facet of this course, in that the readings were evaluated by the entire class as a whole. This information allowed me to better understand the content and meaning of what we read, and helped me in all subsequent assignments.

Dr. Taylor was a very enthusiastic professor. I found her very engaging as she was very interested and well versed in the topic we were studying. She was also very fair and gave us enough time to work on assignments and also did not overload us with work. I feel like her schedule was very planned and spaced out.

Dr. Taylor did a great job of teaching. Every assignment had a clear-cut place in building the skills that were outlined in the course syllabus, and feedback from both professor and peers were incredibly useful in polishing those skills.

I think Dr. Taylor's enthusiasm was really helpful; she was always up for helping you do better on your assignments and she really likes Milton and that transferred over to how I approached this course and the assignments in it.

The comments given after the assignments were turned in were extremely helpful for me to revise and make a better project. It was awesome that you took that time to make sure you gave great comments.

Dr. Taylor is one of the best, if not the best, English professors to have taught me, including those before coming to Georgia Tech.

## **ENGL 3113W: Renaissance English Literature, Spring 2011 (UConn)**

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Enthusiasm for the material and teaching in general was clearly evident. Deep knowledge of the period and relevant outside literature—great recommendations when I was struggling for research for the major papers. Engagement with the ideas of every student, both in and out of class. Feedback was thoughtful, pertinent, and constructive. Seriously great job, one of my favorite professors in a long time.

This instructor was very good and provoking her students to think with specific questions about the text by letting the students come up with ideas about the text, rather than tell us what the material meant to her. She also seemed to learn new ideas from us about our material by provoking the students to think and stimulating the students to interpret the material themselves. I feel like I learned a lot about the material through critically analyzing the text myself.

## **ENGL 1503: Introduction to Shakespeare, Spring 2011 (UConn)**

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She was very enthusiastic about the course material, which in turn made me more receptive to learning about it. She made Shakespeare fun! I would say that the most memorable [part of the class] would be when we acted out the ghost scene from *Richard III* because it made me think about the ways a play can be performed. I learned how to analyze text better from this course.

She always made an effort to listen to what we wanted to discuss. This allowed the whole class to get involved and stimulated interest. The most memorable thing for me was the amount of people who participated in the class because of the fun assignments given, such as writing dialogue for the end of the play or performing scenes for each other.

She was always knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the plays we were reading, the course objectives, and her students. The most memorable elements of the class were when we got into groups and did interesting presentations such as turning *Twelfth Night* into a movie or editing *Hamlet*.

She stimulated discussion and didn't tell us exactly what to analyze. She led us in the direction, but let us draw the conclusions ourselves. It made us understand it better because we came to the conclusions ourselves. I will always remember the texts just because I have such a passion for Shakespeare now. I wish we could have done more.