

Guide to Literary Criticism Online at Longwood University

Contact Information

Questions about the course content, objectives, and requirements?
Contact the instructor, Dr. Shawn Smith, at: smithsb@longwood.edu

Questions about registration? Go to: <http://www.longwood.edu/online/>

Questions about or problems with Blackboard, or questions about other technology issues? Contact Longwood's User Support Services at helpdesk@longwood.edu, or call 434-395-4357 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Longwood's online graduate literary criticism course (ENGL 652) will be conducted using Blackboard, a online course management service that Longwood subscribes to. You can access the course on Blackboard at: <http://blackboard.longwood.edu>. Follow the instructions on the Blackboard login page, and after you have successfully entered Blackboard, select the link for ENGL 562 and familiarize yourself with the various parts of the course. If you have difficulty accessing Blackboard, contact Longwood's User Support Services at the e-mail address or phone number above.

The purpose of this guide is to give you a road map to the menu items for this course in Blackboard. Because Blackboard requires a password, course lecture materials, our weekly discussions, your grades, and any copyrighted materials the instructor wants to make available to the class will remain private. Note that other course materials, such as the study guides, links to research materials, and handouts, do not require such protection. You will be able to access all of these materials on Blackboard, but you can also access them without going through Blackboard at: <http://www.longwoodshakespeare.org/online/litcrit/>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The instructor will post information here as regularly as possible about what's going on in the course. Any changes in the syllabus or schedule will be announced here. The instructor will also post reminders about upcoming assignments and exams here.

If serious problems arise with Blackboard and you are unable to access the course materials or announcements there, go to the non-Blackboard web site (address above) for announcements. If Blackboard goes down, stay current with the readings and make notes that you can cut and paste into Blackboard when it becomes available again. In the unlikely event that both Blackboard and the non-Blackboard site are down for an unreasonable period of time, e-mail the instructor at: smithsb@longwood.edu, smithsb@longwoodshakespeare.org, or smithsb@verizon.net.

COURSE INFORMATION

Information on the course objectives, policies, and requirements are available here. Make sure you print out the course calendar so you can use it as a guide to the required readings and discussions from week to week. There are also links to research tools and the instructor's main web site here. Please make sure you read the course plagiarism policy and take the Plagiarism Self Assessment until you get all of the answers correct. Please e-mail the instructor at smithsb@longwood.edu with a message indicating that you understand the plagiarism policy.

DISCUSSION AREA

This is the most important area of the course. The time you spend contributing to the discussion area substitutes for the time you would spend in the classroom in a regular literary criticism course. You can expect to spend close to three hours per day (summer session classes are 2:45 minutes per day, Monday through Friday) here reading the comments of other students and the instructor, and making contributions of your own. Your responses to questions for the first group of readings will be due by midnight on Sundays through Thursdays of each week. Feel free to start submitting responses as early in the week as you want, including the weekend preceding each week. But it is also important for you to check in on the discussion regularly, and make follow-up responses throughout the week.

You will be expected to read *all* of the submissions made to the discussion area by other students and the instructor each week, and you will be expected to make a minimum of three of your own submissions to the discussion area per day. These submissions can either be direct responses to one of the questions posed in the discussion area by the instructor, or responses to other students' responses. Feel free to make more than three submissions per day. The instructor will not respond to every submission, and students are encouraged to ask questions amongst themselves rather than appeal to the instructor for clarification on each topic. The instructor will address issues that arise throughout the week, and try to tie things together as the discussion comes to a close, but you should not expect the instructor to dominate the discussion.

At the end of each "class day," you will receive a grade (posted on Blackboard) on the previous day's submissions to the Discussion Area. You will receive a grade of 1-10 points per day, and at the end of the semester the average of your weekly grades will be multiplied by 10, and this grade will account for 40% of your final grade. This grade is based on the quality of your contributions, and will take into account the following factors: ability to understand and analyze the text, ability to generate questions that engage other students, and ability to make connections between specific passages and episodes and larger themes in a literary work. You will lose points if you merely paraphrase the weekly readings, and if you make frequent errors of spelling, grammar, and usage. Quality submissions that are spread out throughout the course of the week will receive higher grades than submissions that appear to have been generated in one sitting per week. You should try to balance direct responses to instructor questions with responses to other students. Abbreviations, acronyms, slang, and forms of shorthand common in other Internet discussion forums are discouraged. There will be a number of issues on which class participants disagree, but you should make every effort to maintain a civil, respectful, and constructive tone of discourse. If our discussion touches on issues of theology, keep in mind that it is unlikely that everyone in the class shares your religious beliefs. Try to be tolerant of perspectives different from your own. Uncivil, hostile, and profane responses will receive a 0, and may be turned over to the Honor Board for adjudication as honor violations. If you have questions about your discussion grades, contact the instructor at: smithsb@longwood.edu.

TEXTS AND DOCUMENTS

Although most of the readings for this course will be in the books you buy from the university bookstore before the beginning of the semester, we will also read a few supplemental texts that will be made available here in Adobe .pdf format (make sure you have Adobe Acrobat Reader, available free from www.adobe.com, on your machine). The instructor will also make maps, pictures, and other supplemental texts and documents available here throughout the semester.

EXAMS

There will a final essay exam in this course. It should be submitted to the digital drop box on an assigned date in one of the following formats: MS Word, Corel WordPerfect, Adobe Acrobat, or OpenOffice. Please see the Announcements and Syllabus sections for more details on exams.

GRADES

Access your grades here. Information on course requirements and grading policies can be found in the Syllabus section of Blackboard.

DIGITAL DROPBOX

Submit written assignments and written portions of the exams here. Acceptable submission formats are: MS Word, Corel WordPerfect, Adobe Acrobat, and OpenOffice.

COMMUNICATION

Contact the Instructor or other students in the class here. The instructor's e-mail address is: smithsb@longwood.edu.