

## STUDENT HANDBOOK AND CONTRACT (SHC)

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The following material, which is an extension of the syllabus, consists of information and practices with which students taking this course are expected to be familiar **by no later than the start of the second class session. Students will be held accountable to the information in this document by the start of the second class session and throughout the entire semester.** The most important information on this document will be reviewed on the first day of class.

### C. 1. READING – WHAT IT MEANS

§ 1. Reading is defined as moving your eyes across the pages of an actual, assigned text (as opposed to a text downloaded from the Internet) carefully and thoughtfully. Listening to audiobooks will result in poor grades on quizzes and exams. Reading summaries of or skimming assigned texts will also result in poor grades on quizzes and exams.

### C. 2. RESEARCH ESSAYS (REQUIRED ONLY IN CERTAIN CLASSES – SEE SYLLABUS)

§ 1. This class will not teach you how to conduct academic research in English literature. Consider it a prerequisite for this course that you should know in advance the basics of how to conduct research on your own.

§ 2. Students are expected to know the difference between a primary and a secondary text. A primary text designates source material contemporary with the period studied: an original document, source or text rather than one of criticism, discussion or summary. A secondary text designates analytical or critical commentary on material which forms the primary subject of study: a text, that is, with another text as its subject. When you are asked to conduct research, you will, for the most part, be looking for secondary texts.

§ 3. Students are expected to know what generally counts as a secondary text and what does not. Acceptable secondary texts include **academic books and academic articles published in scholarly journals**. In the majority of cases, articles published in scholarly journals originate in print and have since become digitized and available online as downloadable PDFs. Priority should be given to books and articles published between 1960 and the present. Criticism prior to 1960 may be relevant, but it is usually outdated, and less helpful in situating your assignment within a current and relevant critical conversation. **Websites, lectures, book reviews, hand-outs, PowerPoint presentations and the like DO NOT count as secondary sources.** Occasionally, however, there *are* websites maintained by experts in the field that *do* count as secondary sources: e.g., *The William Blake Archive* or *The Rossetti Archive*. These, nonetheless, are rare. You should consult me if you have any doubt of the legitimacy of a secondary source to avoid grade-related penalties.

§ 4. All students are expected to know how to use the resources in our library pertinent to research in literary criticism. These include, but are not limited to, the available databases for scholars and critics in the

Humanities used to find secondary texts. One of the most important of these databases is the MLA International Bibliography (powered by EBSCO). Students are also responsible for knowing how to use CSU+. You will need to move beyond what is merely convenient for you to find, and locate instead that set of secondary texts most conducive to contextualizing and supporting your assignment. See C. 12 from PGC, entitled “Finding Sources,” for more information.

### C. 3. ACADEMIC WRITING

§ 1. Most of the information in this section applies to all formal writing assignments, with the exception of section b, which has to do specifically with formal writing assignments requiring academic research. If you are writing an introductory essay to an annotated bibliography, this information will also be useful. Students are expected to know what it means to write an academic argument within the discipline of English literature. This task includes, but is not limited to, the following points, many of which are spelled out in detail in the other important course document, called PGC:

- a. drafting an incisive and original academic argument, or thesis, which **persuades the reader of a specific position**, rather than states a fact or summarizes a text;
- b. positioning your argument **within a scholarly conversation**, so that your argument remains the primary focus of the essay while nonetheless being informed by what other scholars and critics have said about the text, author or period under discussion, a standard template for an academic argument being to suggest what other critics have said about the text(s) under discussion, and subsequently to intervene within this critical conversation with an original and informed interpretation, substantiated by close reading;
- c. writing paragraphs that are cohesive – i.e., about one sub-topic – and that relate logically to the main argument;
- d. including meaningful transitions within and between paragraphs;
- e. being familiar with how to closely read, analyze and interpret a literary text, which presupposes accurate knowledge of any and all of its language (e.g., if you are writing an essay entirely on a single poem, you need to know what **all the words in the poem mean**);
- f. writing and formatting an essay according to the rules of the Modern Language Association (hereafter MLA – we will discuss different “editions” of the MLA in class, and which is appropriate – which includes citing shorter passages of poetry and/or prose via parenthetical citations, citing larger quotations of poetry and/or prose via block quotations and documenting all primary and secondary sources accurately in a Works Cited page; and
- g. **writing with grammatical and syntactical correctness** appropriate to the college level.

§ 2. All writing assignments must be turned in to me on time, in a hard copy, in a digital copy on Canvas or both, depending on the syllabus; formatted according to the conventions of the MLA; be **free of last-minute, hand-written corrections**; and **stapled**. I reserve the right to return an essay without evaluating it if it is written with numerous grammatical or syntactical errors, unstapled, formatted incorrectly and/or obviously does not meet the requirements. If you intend to earn a decent grade on a writing assignment, yet are aware that you have difficulty writing with grammatical and syntactical correctness, you will need to get help outside of class on your own time. Information on MLA format is available online via the Purdue Online Writing Lab (do a Google search and you can find it).

§ 3. Essays that are not formatted accurately, and/or contain numerous grammatical/syntactical errors, will, in the majority of cases, not earn grades beyond the “C” range.

### C. 3. QUIZZES – “POP” OR OTHERWISE

§ 1. I administer either “pop” reading quizzes or scheduled reading quizzes throughout the semester (the syllabus will make it clear which sort of quizzes apply to this course). You should be prepared to take a quiz **on every day the class is scheduled to meet**. These reading quizzes will test your ability to retain the content of the literary and/or critical texts you have been assigned, the lectures I have given and the discussions the class has had. Check the syllabus for more specific information on the kinds of question likely to be on each quiz.

§ 2. Your responses on quiz, if the quiz is a written-response quiz, will be graded according to the quality of the response as measured against the responses of your peers in the class.

§ 3. Note that if you leave before the class is over, in an in-person class, any quiz you will have turned in will result in a zero. Quizzes may be administered at the beginning or the end of class.

§ 4. **Missed quizzes cannot be made up under any circumstances.** A missed quiz may be *excused* only on the condition that a student provide a clear note from a physician or health professional certifying that the student was receiving medical care on the day a quiz was administered. Thus the specific date of absence must be noted on the documentation.

### C. 4. ABSENCE POLICY

§ 1. The attendance policy for a graduate or an undergraduate class will be specified in the syllabus. If there is no absence policy, that means that **you should not be in class if you have not read the material, brought the material with you in hard copy and come ready to participate**. Students who do not want to be in a class and, furthermore, are incapable of managing their lack of interest or difficult personal lives in the presence of me and the other students, should not come to class. See C. 9 for more information.

### C. 5. LATE WORK POLICY

§ 1. All assignments are due in person or on Canvas (or both) on the date marked on the syllabus. **The grade for major assignments, such as essays – not including minor assignments like weekly quizzes, discussion posts or writing exercises – will be reduced by one grade unit (C to C- and the like) for each day late beyond the original due-date.** Minor assignments, such as weekly quizzes, discussion posts or writing exercises, cannot be made up unless medical documentation or the equivalent is provided.

§ 2. Exceptions to the late policy are on a case-by-case basis. Generally, if you provide sufficient and approved documentation from a health professional or the equivalent, extensions or alterations may be possible for major assignments. Otherwise, the rules will apply without exception.

### C. 6. TAKING NOTES

§ 1. Note anything you do not understand. If a speaker, or narrator, or character, or writer says or does something that confuses you, note it in the margin. If you find some aspect of an author’s argument unclear, make a note of what perplexes you and bring it up in class. Note anything you think is especially important. Look for those passages that strike you as particularly significant. Try to express why they attract

your attention and hold your interest. Note all the connections you perceive between different parts of the reading. If you begin to see a pattern in the author's use of a word or words or in a character's actions, make a note to remind yourself to look again at related passages. Note anything about which you feel strongly. If you disagree with an author's argument, make a note about why you differ. If a character's actions trouble you, explain your response in the margin. Noting your agreement can be equally useful. Passages that cause you to respond strongly, either positively or negatively, will often provoke a similar reaction in others, and might therefore contain a problem on which to focus in discussion. Read with a dictionary nearby. When words come up that you don't understand and can't figure out from the context of the sentence, look them up and note the definition on the page.

Note that you need to take notes not only on the texts as you read them, but also during class. In a class with exams, the highlights, so to speak, from class lectures and discussions up to the point of an exam – major texts we discussed, major passages we discussed, points we emphasized and so on – will need to be retained in order for you to perform well on this portion of the exam. Make sure not to write your notes on the back of a sheet on which a quiz is taken or an in-class writing exercise is completed, as quizzes and writing exercises will be turned in.

### C. 7. DEFINITION OF GRADE SYMBOLS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

§ 1. Letter Grades to Number Grades: The following chart represents how all my courses calculate letter grades as number grades:

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
< 60	F

§ 2. Note that there is minimal grade inflation in my courses, with the result that a grade in the “C” range means what it has traditionally meant – a statistically average grade relative to all of the students who are evaluated for such and such assignments at this particular time in this particular course. Grades in the “A” range are determined by the quality of work submitted by a percentage of the top students in the course. The grades and tiers below the “A” range, accordingly, are determined by the quality of work submitted by a percentage of students slightly below the top percent, and so on, until we reach the end of the list. This means that your quizzes, essays or exams will be graded not according to the effort you may have put in, or according to any progress you may have made throughout the course, but **according to the quality of the response as measured against the responses of your peers in the class.**

§ 3. Below are the CSUS definitions of grade symbols, which can be found at the following website: <https://www.csus.edu/umannual/acad/umg05150.htm>. Below each definition of a grade syllable are criteria specific to student writing.

- A. Exemplary achievement of the course objectives. In addition to being clearly and significantly above the requirements, work exhibited is of an independent, creative, contributory nature.

The writing-specific criteria for a grade in this range are as follows:

- a. an insightful, original and interesting thesis that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the text(s) and a masterful handling of language and course content
  - b. persuasive and graceful argumentation: strong topic sentences and smooth transitions
  - c. careful, detailed, informed and intelligent close reading, including close reading of key textual passages to support the argument; if this is a research essay or an introduction to an annotated bibliography, the secondary sources must be meaningfully and gracefully integrated within the argument, so as to indicate a significant contribution to the field of literary criticism in English;
  - d. concise, elegant writing unmarred by proofreading errors, grammatical problems, spelling mistakes, MLA-related formatting errors or typographical errors
- B. Superior achievement of the course objectives. The performance is clearly and significantly above the satisfactory fulfilment of course requirements.

The writing-specific criteria for a grade in this range are as follows:

- a. an interesting thesis that demonstrates a good understanding of the text(s) and a good handling of language and course content
  - b. mostly clear argumentation: solid topic sentences and transitions
  - c. mostly careful and intelligent close reading of key textual passages to support the argument; if this is a research essay or an introduction to an annotated bibliography, the secondary sources are meaningfully and gracefully integrated within the argument
  - d. reasonably clear writing with minimal to no proofreading errors, grammatical problems, spelling mistakes, MLA-related formatting errors or typographical errors
- C. Satisfactory achievement of the course objectives. The student is now prepared for advanced work or study. Note: The letter grade 'C' does not imply satisfactory achievement at the graduate level.

The writing-specific criteria for a grade in this range are as follows:

- a. a somewhat interesting, albeit unoriginal or non-contributory, thesis that demonstrates a decent understanding of the text(s) and a decent handling of language and course content
  - b. somewhat clear argumentation: somewhat solid topic sentences and transitions
  - c. somewhat decent close reading, including close reading of key textual passages to support the argument; if this is a research essay or an introduction to an annotated bibliography, the secondary sources are sometimes but not always well integrated within the argument
  - d. mostly clear writing, but with enough proofreading errors, grammatical problems, spelling mistakes, MLA-related formatting errors and/or typographical errors that reading becomes difficult in parts
- D. Unsatisfactory achievement of course objectives, yet achievement of a sufficient proportion of the objectives so that it is not necessary to repeat the course unless required to do so by the academic department.

The writing-specific criteria for a grade in this range are as follows:

- a. the thesis is not very clear; course content is not demonstrably understood and/or integrated within the essay
  - b. generally unclear argumentation; confusing topic sentences and transitions
  - c. unclear or ineffective close reading, including close reading of key textual passages to support the argument; if this is a research essay, the secondary sources are either not present or not well integrated within the argument
  - d. mostly unclear writing, including numerous proofreading errors, grammatical problems, spelling mistakes, MLA-related formatting errors and/or typographical errors
  - e. specific objectives of the actual writing assignment – i.e., font, page length or other such objectives, are not all met
- F. Unsatisfactory achievement of course objectives to an extent that the student must repeat the course to receive credit.

### C. 8. CONFERENCES AND COMMUNICATION

- § 1. One or more weeks of a course may be devoted to student conferences. During these weeks, a certain window of time – most likely one hour and fifteen minutes – will be made available for students to have a conference with me. I will announce when this window will be during the course of the semester. Conferences will be held either in my office in Calaveras Hall, room 157 or in a predetermined Zoom chatroom (with a waiting-room). I will have set up a Doodle poll, moreover, about a week prior to the weeks during which conferences are held, so that you can sign up in advance.
- § 2. Each conference will last up to fifteen or twenty minutes. You need to come in with one or two specific questions. I cannot read and discuss a draft of an essay during a fifteen- or twenty-minute conference, though I can read and discuss a single paragraph, or answer one or two questions about the writing process as a whole. If we cannot cover everything you need in a conference, you will have opportunities to come again. You will not be penalized if you do not schedule a conference: the conferences are optional, but highly recommended for students who want to earn good grades.
- § 3. As to communication with me outside of class, please read the document entitled “How to Email Your Professor,” which is available on our Canvas website under “Files,” before emailing me.

### C. 9. PARTICIPATION, CLASS ETIQUETTE AND THEIR EFFECT ON FINAL GRADES

In accordance with university policy, disruptive behavior in the classroom will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior is defined as any actions that interfere with the process of teaching and learning. **If your behavior is perceived to be disruptive, you will first i) be informed by me, either in class or in an email, that your actions are disruptive and asked to cease the behavior. This is considered your first and only “warning.” If any disruptive behavior happens a second time, ii) your final grade will be reduced by one letter grade. If any disruptive behavior happens a third time, iii) you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and may be dismissed from the class.** If you fail to leave the class, the University Police Department will provide assistance. As a student, it is important to understand and abide by these policies in order to maintain a positive and productive classroom environment. The full policy can be found here: <https://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/stu-0112.htm>

- § 1. Participation works as follows. Students who show up regularly to class, who participate meaningfully and often, who demonstrate that they have read, who ask questions and offer careful readings of literary texts, who respect others and the class, et c., may find see their final grades improved *beyond* the grades they earn

through the standard method of evaluation, as noted on the syllabus. But this is the case only for students with outstanding participation.

Note that there will frequently be in-class writing activities that I will collect and read outside of class. I will not assign individual grades to these, but I will review them immediately prior to assigning final grades, and let them serve as additional evidence of participation for any given student. The syllabus will specify how these in-class writing exercises will be used in class.

- § 2. The following behaviors are unacceptable in a college classroom; they will be grounds, first, for an initial warning by me, then a grade penalty, and finally a report to the Office of Student conduct, as described immediately below the C. 9 heading above.
- a. Raising your hand and being called on is a prerequisite for ALL communication during class time (unless during assigned group work, like peer review), whether physically or via the appropriate Zoom feature. Interrupting me or other students **by communicating at any point during our session with anyone or anything that is not the entire class is unacceptable.**
  - b. Using any electronic devices (including cell phones, laptops, headphones, Kindles or any other kind of e-reader) between the start and end of class. A laptop or similar device is acceptable only if I have the appropriate documentation from Disability Services, **and/or you speak to me about it in advance and I approve of it.** If the syllabus specifies that laptops are to be used during certain writing exercises, then and only then is it appropriate to be using electronics.
  - c. Sleeping, or falling asleep; body language – especially recurrent body language – that common sense detects as rude, unprofessional or distracting: e.g., yawning loudly and repeatedly and with all the limbs, stretching the legs out, shuffling frequently and so on. This distracts me and other students.
  - d. Coming to class late or leaving early. If you cannot get here on time, you must speak to me before the semester begins. Coming to class late or leaving class early is disruptive to me and to the rest of the class.
  - e. **Coming to class without actual, printed copies of whatever texts we are studying.** If you are unable or unwilling to purchase any required texts, and/or you are unable or unwilling to print any required reading material during the semester, you will need to contact me as soon as possible to avoid grade-related penalties. In certain cases, appropriate alternate texts (e.g., earlier editions of a Norton anthology) may be acceptable. I will, nonetheless, handle these exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Do not come to class without all of the exact assigned texts (**books or printed material**) unless you have worked out an alternative with me first.

## C. 10. UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- § 1. Academic Honesty. The University policy on academic honesty will be adhered to and enforced; it can be found *in totum* at this site: <https://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/stu-100.htm>. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, in particular of using chatGPT, based on the report submitted by Turnitin, the student will be immediately reported to the Office of Student Conduct, and will be subject to failing the assignment, the course or both at the discretion of the instructor and the Office of Student Conduct.

- § 2. Students with Disabilities. Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided. See the following site for more details: <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/>.
- § 3. Health and Counseling Services (SHCS). Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCS offers: Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peer-led health education and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost. See the following site for more details: <https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling/>.
- § 4. Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES). If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away. The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student. See the following site for more details: <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/crisis-assistance-resource-education-support/>.
- § 5. Add and Drop Policies. Information on University policies regarding adding and dropping from classes may be found here: [https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/internal/\\_internal/\\_documents/drop-and-withdrawal-policy.pdf](https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/internal/_internal/_documents/drop-and-withdrawal-policy.pdf).
- § 6. Additional Campus Resources:
- a. Academic Advising: <https://www.csus.edu/student-life/academic-advising/>.
  - b. Information Resources and Technology: <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/>.
  - c. Student Rights and Responsibilities: <https://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/stu-0119.htm>.