

**Syllabus and Assignment Schedule**  
**English 1020, Critical Thinking and Argumentation, Section 908**

**Instructor:** Mr. Dennis Prater

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**Office Hours:** Mondays on Zoom 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., and by appointment

**Zoom Link to Office Hours:** <https://etsu.zoom.us/j/96507892062?pwd=K1dYOFJXdFdaZ3lZRmoyVnJQY1lvZz09>

**Course Description:** “English 1020: Scientific Exploration will explore the implications of scientific and technical advancements in the everyday world. These sections are open to students of any major; research and writing projects may relate to technology, environmental studies, philosophy, physical sciences, mathematics, and medicine.”

In English 1020, students will embark on a semester-long sequence of research, reading, discussion, and writing culminating in the creation of a ten-page research paper engaging real-world issues and addressing an authentic audience.

This course is meant to teach critical thinking, argumentation, writing, and research skills that you will use throughout your college career and beyond.

Critical Thinking:

-is exploring questions about and solutions for issues which are not clearly defined and for which there are no clear-cut answers.

-is the process of evaluating propositions or hypotheses and making judgments about them on the basis of reasoning and evidence.

-is a philosophical tradition that encourages analysis, looking for propositions and arguments for and against them.

Oxford English Dictionary: [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/critical\\_thinking](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/critical_thinking)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/critical-thinking/>

The Foundation for Critical Thinking: <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/our-conception-of-critical-thinking/411>

**Materials Requirements:** All required materials for this course will be available through D2L, email, and Sherrod Library. Please familiarize yourself with the contents of our course page, and please check your email regularly. The internet also has a number of free resources, including dictionaries. One good online resource for grammar, mechanics, and writing is the Purdue OWL.

**Grading:**

The weights for grading are as follows:

Critical Thinking, Argumentation, and Research Assignments: 13%

Web Literacy Assignment:	2%
Discussion Board Assignments:	10%
Project Proposal Paper (1,500 words):	20%
Annotated Bibliography:	20%
Research Paper (10 pages/2,500 words):	35%

You must complete all major assignments in order to pass this course. You will not pass this course if your work shows serious patterns of error and lack of organization at the end of the term. In keeping with Department of Literature and Language policy, **you must earn a grade of “C” or better to pass this course.**

A: 93-100 points  
 A-: 90-92  
 B+: 87-89  
 B: 83-86  
 B-: 80-82  
 C+: 77-79  
 C: 70-76  
 D+: 67-69  
 D: 60-66  
 F: 0-59

A: Exceptional. Advanced levels of skill and knowledge evident.  
 B: Above average. Demonstrates talent, motivation, and discipline.  
 C: Average. Some knowledge and effort visible, but not enough.  
 D: Below average. Needs significant improvement in mechanics. Lack of effort is obvious.  
 F: Unacceptable. Shows complete lack of basic grammatical/mechanical skills, understanding of key concepts, and/or organization.

If you have a question about a grade you receive on an assignment, please feel free to discuss it with me.

**Resources for Writing:** ETSU offers a number of resources that can help you to improve your writing. Here are three of them. Remember: The pros practice, and one can always improve one’s writing.

1. Center for Academic Achievement (CFAA): It's always a good idea to have someone review your work. This is an excellent resource for individual tutoring in writing:

<https://www.etsu.edu/students/cfaa/learning/online-help.php>

2. Library Services: Our school librarians are trained to help students with research:

<https://libraries.etsu.edu/c.php?g=841452&p=6012384>

3. Composition Web Page: This web page of the Department of Literature & Language offers a variety of helpful resources, including links and other aids. The web address is:

<http://www.etsu.edu/cas/litlang/composition>. (Note: If you google search for it, the wrong site

comes up.)

**Late Assignments:** Unless you provide me with compelling evidence supporting an accommodation, all assignments are due by noon on the specified due date. I am under no obligation to accept smaller assignments that are late, and I am under no obligation to accept papers that are more than one week late. **Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day, including weekends.**

Please be aware that I will not contact you to prompt your making up missed papers.

**Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:** Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this department, and the consequences of such behavior are serious. Cheating, incorrect documentation, or plagiarism results in an automatic failure (with a grade of 0) for that assignment. Proven willful plagiarism will result in failure of the course and may include dismissal from the university. The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (2009) defines plagiarism in the following manner:

Plagiarism involves two kinds of wrongs. Using another person's ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledging that person's work constitutes intellectual theft. Passing off another person's ideas, information, or expressions as your own to get a better grade or gain some other advantage constitutes fraud (52).

To further your understanding of this concept, I will provide you with a lesson on proper documentation and integration of source material to help you avoid plagiarism. I strongly encourage you to inform yourself on how to avoid plagiarism and to raise any questions you may have concerning what constitutes plagiarism.

Although it may seem counter-intuitive, it is possible to plagiarize oneself. Professors assume that the work you do in their classes is original to those classes. Therefore, while it is permissible to write on similar themes or subject matter as you have in other classes, it is not permissible to reuse even your own papers from other classes.

I use a plagiarism detection program. Each of your assignments will be uploaded to its database, which will then search both students' essays from throughout the U.S. as well as published works for matches. Academic integrity and proper source use are fundamental components of this and other courses.

### **A Writing Community**

Please consider every piece of writing you do for this class to be, in a sense, "public property." Part of becoming a good writer is learning to appreciate the ideas and criticisms of others, and part of the strength of university study is that it is easier for us to come together as a writing and thinking community. Remember that you may be expected to share your writing with others, so avoid writing about things that you may not be prepared to subject to public scrutiny or things about which you are not prepared to listen to opinions other than your own. This does not mean that you are not entitled to an opinion but that you adopt positions responsibly, contemplating

their possible effect on others.

### **Free Academic Inquiry and Mutual Respect**

We are all working together in a professional setting of free academic inquiry, which functions on the basis of mutual respect. Showing respect includes refraining from belittling others' ideas and points of view, attacking them personally, or otherwise making it difficult for them to learn. Please read the following article on “netiquette,” which is also linked as an announcement on the D2L page: <https://www.rasmussen.edu/student-experience/college-life/netiquette-guidelines-every-online-student-needs-to-know/>. We will all be responsible for upholding these rules. When in doubt, remember the general rule of thumb for online discussions: If you wouldn't do or say something in person, don't do it online, either.

In this class, we will respect and value the voice of every person in the course. Our diversity as a class—in race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, language, ability, social class, and ethnicity—is an asset to our learning experience.

Scientific exploration is complex and wondrous. It also, at times, has content that can be difficult or even disturbing. In this course, we will confront difficult content together with sensitivity, both to the subject matter itself and to each other.

In this class, you may encounter ideas that you find disagreeable or uncomfortable. Although it is never my intention to offend you, it is my job to cause you to question your assumptions and encourage you to think critically. Please remember the words of Aristotle: “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”

**Mental Health Services:** Students often have questions about mental health resources, whether for themselves or a friend or family member. There are many resources available on the ETSU campus, including: ETSU Counseling Center (423) 439-4841; ETSU Behavioral Health & Wellness Clinic (423) 439-7777; ETSU Community Counseling Clinic: (423) 439-4187. If you or a friend are in immediate crisis, call 911. Twenty-four-hour help is available at the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

**Accommodation:** Any student with a special need for an accommodation in course activities should make arrangements with the instructor and the Office of Disability Services.

**Instructor Availability:** Please contact me by email, at [praterd@etsu.edu](mailto:praterd@etsu.edu). You can expect a response from me within 24-48 hours. I'm also happy to schedule a Zoom meeting with you, if that would be helpful.

**Communication:** When emailing, please identify the class you are in, in the subject line, and do remember to give your name in your message. In professional communications, it's always a good idea to maintain proper grammar and mechanics.

### **Tips for Success:**

- ★ Ask for help when needed. Classmates can prove valuable as resources, too.
- ★ Read actively, taking notes as you go. Look up words and references you don't know.

- ★ Asking questions is the portal of discovery.
- ★ Participate actively. This is your education. You get out of it what you put into it.
- ★ Keep up with assignments. When students do not succeed in this course, it is often because papers have piled up.
- ★ Pace yourself for involved assignments. Give yourself time to write a draft, set it aside, and come back to revise it with fresh eyes.
- ★ Keep all graded work until you receive your final grade for this class.
- ★ Don't panic.

**Formatting:** All work completed outside of class must be word-processed and double-spaced using 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. All assignments must be submitted as one of the following file types: .docx, .odt, .pdf, .rtf. Other file types, including photographs converted to .pdf files, will not be accepted.

### **Course Schedule:**

Any necessary changes to the course schedule will be announced over email.

Unless otherwise noted, **graded assignments are due on the due date by noon.** All work must be submitted through D2L.

#### Week 1: August 24-30

##### Assignments

#### **Wednesday, August 26: Introductory Survey Due**

Course Introduction Video

Choosing a Research Topic Video

Read One of the Generating Questions Assignment Essays

See Discussion Board Prompt: Choose and Read an Article to Post

##### Topics Covered

Syllabus and Schedule Review

Research Project Overview

Project Proposal Paper Assigned

Sherrod Library Introduction to Academic Research

Finding a Topic You're Curious About (Video)

Narrowing Your Topic (Video)

The Trouble With Strong Opinions (Video)

What Makes a Good Research Question? (PDF)

Active Reading and Keeping a Working Bibliography

#### Week 2: August 31-September 6

##### Assignments

**Monday, August 31: Generating Questions Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, September 2: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, September 4: Response to Student Post Due**

Evaluating Sources Video

Read at Least One for Discussion Board:

Lee Rainie and Janna Anderson, “Code-Dependent: Pros and Cons of the Algorithm Age”

Stuart A. Thompson and Charlie Warzel, “Twelve Million Phones, One Dataset, Zero Privacy”

#### Topics Covered

The CRAAP TEST (Video)

Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources (Video)

Identify Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources (Link)

Popular vs. Scholarly (Video)

Periodicals: Scholarly, Popular, or Trade? (PDF)

Scholarly, Trade, and Popular Publications (Link)

#### Optional Further Viewing

How Do I Evaluate Sources, ProQuest (Short Video Series)

Lateral Reading (Video)

\*\*\*Sunday, September 6 – Last Day to Drop a Course Without a “W” on Your Transcript\*\*\*

#### Week 3: September 7-13

##### Assignments

**Tuesday, September 8: CRAAP Test Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, September 9: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, September 11: Response to Student Post Due**

Finding Sources Video

Begin Reading for Web Literacy Assignment:

Mike Caulfield, *Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers*

Read for Discussion Board:

Rachel Carson, “The Obligation to Endure”

Mary Ellen Hannibal, “Why The Beaver Should Thank the Wolf”

Annie Leonard, “The Story of Bottled Water: A Footnoted and Annotated Text”

#### Topics Covered

OneSearch, Databases, Database Search Tips

Pathway to Good Information (PDF)

Google Scholar, Domain Searching

Background Research: Finding Tertiary Sources

#### Week 4: September 14-20

##### Assignments

**Monday, September 14: Web Literacy Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, September 16: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, September 18: Response to Student Post Due**

Introduction to Annotated Bibliography Video

Avoiding Plagiarism and Citing Sources Video

### Topics Covered

Annotated Bibliography Assignment  
MLA Style, Eighth Edition  
Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

### Week 5: September 21-27

#### Assignments

**Monday, September 21: Project Proposal Paper Section 1, “Description of the Topic” Due**

**Wednesday, September 23: Peer Comments on Proposed Research Topic Due**

Introduction to Argumentation Video

### Topics Covered

Source Evaluation Aid, ProQuest Research Companion (Link)

Rhetoric and the Three Appeals

The Toulmin Model of Argument

Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

#### Optional Further Reading

Argument – The Writing Center (Link)

### Week 6: September 28-October 4

#### Assignments

**Monday, September 28: Toulmin Model Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, September 30: Draft Project Proposal Paper Due**

**Friday, October 2: Peer Review of Project Proposal Paper Due**

Argumentation and Logical Fallacies Video

### Week 7: October 5-11

#### Assignments

**Monday, October 5: Logical Fallacies Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, October 7: Project Proposal Paper Due**

Building an Argument Video

Read for Argument Analysis Exercise:

Stephen Jay Gould, “Sex, Drugs, Disasters, and the Extinction of Dinosaurs”

Read at Least One for Discussion Board:

Rebecca Skloot, “The Woman in the Photograph”

Terry Tempest Williams, “The Clan of One-Breasted Women”

### Topics Covered

What Counts as Evidence (Video)

\*\*\*Monday, October 12 – Last Day to Drop with a “W” without Dean's Permission\*\*\*

Week 8: October 12-18

Assignments

**Monday, October 12: Argument Analysis Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, October 14: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, October 16: Response to Student Post Due**

Read for Discussion Board:

Corey Doctorow, "Printcrime"

Week 9: October 19-25

Assignments

**Monday, October 19: Example Annotated Bibliography Entry Due**

**Wednesday, October 21: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, October 23: Response to Student Post Due**

Read for Discussion Board:

Stephen Jay Gould, "Nonoverlapping Magisteria"

Week 10: October 26-November 1

Assignments

**Monday, October 26: Refutation and Confirmation Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, October 28: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, October 30: Response to Student Post Due**

Grammar and Punctuation Video

Topics Covered

Parts of Speech & Phrases

Clauses, Sentence Fragments, and Run-Ons

Semicolons and Colons

The Comma

Week 11: November 2-8

Assignments

**Monday, November 2: Grammar and Punctuation Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, November 4: Annotated Bibliography Due**

Thesis Statements, Essay Structure, and Writing an Outline Video

Week 12: November 9-15

Assignments

**Monday, November 9: Research Paper Outline with Working Thesis Statement Due**

**Wednesday, November 11: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, November 13: Response to Student Post Due**



Week 13: November 16-22

Assignments

**Student-Instructor Conferences**

\*\*\*Thanksgiving Break: No Classes Monday, November 23 - Friday, November 27\*\*\*

Week 14: November 30-December 4

Assignments

**Wednesday, December 2: Draft Research Paper Due**

**Friday, December 4: Peer Review of Research Paper Due**

\*\*\*Last Day of Classes: Friday, December 4\*\*\*

Final Exam Week: December 5-10

**Wednesday, December 9: Research Paper Due**