



EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Language and Literature

## ENGL 1020 - Critical Thinking and Argumentation

### Course Description:

*Prerequisites:* ENGL 1010 or equivalent. Writing essays based on critical analyses of various literary texts. Emphasis on sound argumentative techniques. Requires documented research paper.

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 [on critical thinking](#).

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy [on critical thinking](#).

The Foundation for Critical Thinking [on critical thinking](#).

### Required Textbook:

Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. *A Pocket Style Manual*. 8th ed., Bedford/St. Martins, 2018.  
ISBN: 9781319057404

**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 Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill](#).

### Grading:

The weights for grading are as follows:

Dropbox Assignments:	14%
Web Literacy Assignment:	2%

OFFICIAL SYLLABUS WILL BE PROVIDED IN THE COURSE

Discussion Board Assignments:	9%
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. An average course grade of “D+” or below will be recorded as an “F.”**

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

- 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.
2. [Library Services](#): Our school librarians are trained to help students with research.
3. [Composition Web Page](#): This web page of the Department of Literature & Language offers a variety of helpful resources, including links and other aids. (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 the end of the day 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. 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.

Cultural expression is complex and wondrous. It also, at times, has content that can be difficult or 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, including section number, and do remember to give your name in your message so that I know how to properly address you. 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 image files 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 by the end of the due date.** All work must be submitted through D2L.

Week 1: January 18-24

Assignments

**Thursday, January 21: 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: January 25-31

#### Assignments

**Monday, January 25: Generating Questions Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, January 27: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, January 29: Response to Student Post Due**

Evaluating Sources (Video)

What Is Culture? (Video)

Read for Discussion Board:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story"

Jonathan Gottschall, "Why Fiction Is Good for You"

Begin Reading for Web Literacy Assignment:

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

### 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)

\*\*\*Monday, February 1 – Last Day to Drop a Course Without a "W" on Your Transcript\*\*\*

### Week 3: February 1-7

#### Assignments

**Monday, February 1: CRAAP Test Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, February 3: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, February 5: Response to Student Post Due**

Watch Finding Sources (Video)

Read for Discussion Board:

N. Scott Momaday, Excerpt from *The Way to Rainy Mountain*  
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, "Decolonizing the Mind"

Topics Covered

OneSearch, Databases, Database Search Tips  
Pathway to Good Information (PDF)  
Google Scholar, Domain Searching  
Background Research: Finding Tertiary Sources

Week 4: February 8-14

Assignments

**Monday, February 8: Web Literacy Exercise Due**  
**Wednesday, February 10: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**  
**Friday, February 12: 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: February 15-21

Assignments

**Monday, February 15: Project Proposal Paper Section 1, "Description of the Topic" Due**  
**Wednesday, February 17: 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)

\*\*\*Thursday, February 18 & Friday, February 19 – Break Day: No Classes, University Open\*\*\*

Week 6: February 22-28

Assignments

**Monday, February 22: Toulmin Model Exercise Due**  
**Wednesday, February 24: Draft Project Proposal Paper Due**  
**Friday, February 26: Peer Review of Project Proposal Paper Due**  
Argumentation and Logical Fallacies (Video)

Week 7: March 1-7

Assignments

**Monday, March 1: Logical Fallacies Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, March 3: Project Proposal Paper Due**

Building an Argument (Video)

Read for Argument Analysis Exercise:

James Baldwin, "Stranger in the Village"

Topics Covered

What Counts as Evidence (Video)

\*\*\*Tuesday, March 9 – Last Day to Drop with a "W" without Dean's Permission\*\*\*

Week 8: March 8-14

Assignments

**Monday, March 8: Argument Analysis Exercise Due**

Read for Discussion Board:

Amy Wilentz, "A Zombie Is a Slave Forever"

Virginia Woolf, "In Search of a Room of One's Own"

Week 9: March 15-21

\*\*\*Monday, March 15 & Tuesday, March 16 – Break Day: No Classes, University Open\*\*\*

Assignments

**Wednesday, March 17: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Friday, March 19: Response to Student Post Due**

Week 10: March 22-28

Assignments

**Monday, March 22: Example Annotated Bibliography Entry Due**

Read One for Discussion Board:

James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"

Sui Sin Far, "Mrs. Spring Fragrance"

Grammar and Punctuation (Video)

Topics Covered

Parts of Speech & Phrases

Clauses, Sentence Fragments, and Run-Ons

Semicolons and Colons

The Comma

Week 11: March 29-April 4

Assignments

**Monday, March 29: Grammar and Punctuation Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, March 31: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

**Thursday, April 1: Response to Student Post Due**

\*\*\*Friday, April 2 – University Closed\*\*\*

Week 12: April 5-11

Assignments

**Monday, April 5: Sentence Style Exercise Due**

**Wednesday, April 7: Annotated Bibliography Due**

Thesis Statements, Essay Structure, and Writing an Outline (Video)

Week 13: April 12-18

Assignments

**Monday, April 12: Research Paper Outline with Working Thesis Statement Due**

**Thursday, April 15: Response to Discussion Prompt Due**

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

\*\*\*Wednesday, April 14 – Break Day: No Classes, University Open\*\*\*

Week 14: April 19-25

Assignments

**Student-Instructor Conferences**

Week 15: April 26-May 2

Assignments

**Wednesday, April 28: Draft Research Paper Due**

**Friday, April 30: Peer Review of Research Paper Due**

\*\*\*Last Day of Classes: Friday, April 30\*\*\*

Final Exam Week: May 3-7

**Tuesday, May 4: Research Paper Due**