

ENGL C1003: CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING THROUGH LITERATURE

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2026
Units:	5
Hours:	5 lecture per week (60 total per quarter)
Prerequisite:	Successful completion of college-level composition (ENGL C1000 / ENGL C1000H / ENGL C1000E / C-ID ENGL 100) or equivalent.
Advisory:	Not open to students with credit in ENGL 1B, ENGL 1BH, or ENGL C1003H.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 1B: Oral Communication & Critical Thinking
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable
Formerly:	ENGL 1B

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to formulate an arguable thesis
- Students will be able to make logical inferences to arrive at an interpretation

Description

In this course, students receive instruction in analytical, critical, and argumentative writing. Students develop critical thinking, close reading and literary analysis skills, research strategies, information literacy, and knowledge of accurate documentation through the study of diverse literary works from a variety of literary genres, developing an appreciation for literature. Course focuses on literary works that represent a broad spectrum of opinions and ideas, writing styles, and cultural experiences. Formal instruction in composition and critical thinking.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Critically read, analyze, compare, and evaluate diverse complex literary texts.
2. Reflect critically on one's own thought processes to identify and avoid cognitive biases and common fallacies of language and thought.
3. Compose thesis-driven arguments to suit a variety of rhetorical situations, including interpretation, evaluation, and literary analysis, supporting them with a variety of appropriate textual evidence and examples.

4. Identify a text's premise(s) and/or assumptions in various social, historical, cultural, psychological, or aesthetic contexts.
5. Analyze and employ logical and structural methods such as inductive and deductive reasoning, causation, and supporting claims with reasons, evidence, and responding to diverse perspectives and values.
6. Find, analyze, interpret, and evaluate primary and secondary sources, incorporating them into written work using appropriate documentation format without plagiarism.
7. Draft and revise writing for style, diction, and tone showing awareness of audience and social context, and the purpose of the specific writing task; engage in a revision process so that language use does not impede clarity or disrupt meaning.
8. Identify key elements of major genres (including poetry, drama, fiction) in order to analyze and interpret texts.
9. Define common literary terms and apply these to analysis of specific texts.
10. Recognize differences in value systems based on culture in a given text.
11. Draw comparisons to other works and contexts.
12. Write extended compositions based on class reading and demonstrate interpretive as well as critical thinking skills.
13. Use techniques of research, especially textual citations and proper documentation.

Course Content

1. Writing and active reading skills for logical reasoning and argumentation.
2. A minimum of 3 literary genres, including poetry, drama, and fiction (novel and/or short story) from diverse authors representing a wide range of cultures, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Critical approaches to literature and effective use of literary terms and devices.
4. Explication, interpretation, and literary analysis.
5. Writing critically about literature.
6. Minimum 5,000 words of revised formal writing.

Reading:

1. Read and analyze literature totaling at least two book-length college-level texts in separate or anthology form, covering at minimum the major literary genres: poetry, drama, and fiction (novel and short story), but not excluding nonfiction
 - a. Comprehend and evaluate a text's main themes
 - b. Draw reasoned inferences based on close reading of a text
2. Literary and rhetorical analysis
 - a. Analyze varieties in voice, rhetorical style and purpose, genre
 - b. Identify and analyze literary devices in connection with a text's main themes
3. Establish cultural and historical contexts for a text and determine how those contexts shape that literature
4. Draw connections that synthesize two or more texts, and/or the student's individual experiences and ideas
5. Read and analyze texts to demonstrate critical thinking skills
 - a. Distinguish denotation from connotation, the abstract from the concrete, and the literal from the inferential (including analogy, extended metaphor, and symbol)

- b. Identify logic and logical fallacies such as syllogistic reasoning, abstractions, undefined terms, name-calling, false analogy, ad hominem, and ad populum arguments
- c. Recognize and evaluate assumptions underlying an argument
- d. Draw and assess inferences and recognize distinctions among assumptions, inferences, facts, and opinions

Writing:

1. Write a total of at least 5,000 words: thesis-driven compositions, the shortest of which will be 750 words, demonstrating critical thinking skills
2. Writing as process (discovery and synthesis)
 - a. Invention, generation, collection of ideas
 - b. Formulation of arguable thesis
 - c. Organization, development, proper use of textual evidence
 - d. Drafting, revision, editing
 - e. Synthesis of texts and student ideas
3. Writing as product
 - a. Attention to technical detail
 - b. Rhetorical features (structure, analysis, insight)
4. Research methods
 - a. Proper use of quotations and documentation
 - b. Focus on variety of sources (print/digital) with evaluation of credibility and relevance of same
5. Critical thinking and writing that demonstrates awareness of logic and reasoning in course writing, including logical fallacies, assumptions, inferences, and opinions

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. When taught on campus, no special facility or equipment needed.
2. When taught virtually, ongoing access to computer, internet, and email.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Methods of evaluation used to observe or measure students' achievement of course outcomes are at the discretion of local faculty but must include primarily written assignments and a minimum of 5,000 words of revised formal writing.

Formal writing (including essays) that receives instructor feedback and that goes through a revision process.

Informal writing (examples include journals, discussions, annotations, reader responses, in-class writing, and responses to questions).

Other evaluation methods may include assignments such as essay exams, quizzes, projects, presentations, and portfolios.

Final examination: a clearly reasoned composition within a limited period of time.

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lectures
Discussions

Structured small-group exercises

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Note: Multiple texts may be necessary to fulfill the purposes of this course. Any individual text listed below may not stand alone as sufficient. Text selection should include a diverse set of authorial voices that may include a range of cultures, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Open Educational Resources (OER) may be used in place of any type of text.

Sample Textbooks, Manuals, or Other Support Materials (most recent edition):

- Texts containing culturally diverse college-level fiction, poetry, drama texts.
- A college-level handbook on writing about literature and documentation.
- A writing handbook must be included.

List of possible textbooks, not comprehensive or exclusive:

Representative Literature Textbooks:

- Schilb, John, and John Clifford. Making Arguments about Literature. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 4th edition, 2024.
- James, Missy, and Alan P. Merickel. Reading Literature and Writing Argument. New York: Longman, 7th edition, 2021.
- Morgan, Meg, et al. Strategies for Reading and Arguing About Literature. Longman.
- Meyer, Michael. The Bedford Introduction to Literature: Reading, Writing, Thinking. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Barnett, Sylvan, et al. An Introduction to Literature. New York: Longman.

Representative Writing Handbook:

- Gardner, Janet E. Writing About Literature: A Portable Guide. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins (also available with MLA insert), 6th, 2025.
- Bullock, Richard, et al. The Little Seagull Handbook, 5th edition. W.W. Norton & Company. 2024.
- Harmon, William, and C. Hugh Holman. A Handbook to Literature. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Texts used by individual institutions and even individual sections will vary.

Textbooks older than 7 years must be clearly labeled as classic or legacy.

Where possible, it is recommended that OER options be noted.

Two book-length college-level texts of fiction, and supplemental critical thinking and nonfiction literature presented in either separate or anthology form, covering at a minimum, three major genres. To be supplemented at the instructor's discretion with additional readings, handbook, and/or rhetoric. OR one literary anthology with embedded critical thinking and at least two additional book-length college-level texts.

Although some of the following texts are older than 5 years, they are considered classics in the field.

The following is a suggested literary anthology with embedded critical thinking:

Mayes, Kelly J. The Norton Introduction to Literature. 15th ed. New York: Norton, 2025.

The following are suggested critical thinking books for the course:

Barnet, Sylvan, and Hugo Bedau. From Critical Thinking to Argument. New York: Bedford, 2014.

Moore, Brooke, and Richard Parker. Critical Thinking. New York: McGraw Hill, 2011.

Cooper, Sheila, and Rosemary Patton. Writing Logically, Thinking Critically. 8th ed. New York: Longman, 2014.

Beesley, Paula. The Critical Thinking Tool Kit. Sage Publications. 2026.

Morrow, David R., and Anthony Weston. A Workbook for Arguments: A Complete Course in Critical Thinking. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2019.

The following are examples of texts to be assigned in addition to one of the critical thinking texts listed above:

Machado, Carmen Maria. Her Body and Other Parties. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2017.

Martel, Yann. Life of Pi. New York: Mariner, 2003.

Morrison, Toni. Beloved. New York: Everyman, 2006.

Ma, Ling. Bliss Montage. Farrar, 2022.

Orange, Tommy. Wandering Stars. Knopfs: 2024.

O'Brien, Tim. The Things They Carried. New York: Mariner, 2009.

Parks, Suzan Lori. Top Dog Under Dog. 2001.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Reading poetry, short stories, drama, novels, and/or non-fiction books and articles to supplement the practice of critical thinking.
2. Writing informal journal responses to readings.
3. Writing formal analyses of readings in college academic essay format.

Discipline(s)

English