

MOUNT SAINT MARY COLLEGE  
Newburgh, NY 12550  
Summer 2021

Forms of Literature (ENG 1020-T1-OL)  
06-28-21 through 07-29-21

Dr. Peter Witkowsky  
[peter.witkowsky@msmc.edu](mailto:peter.witkowsky@msmc.edu)

Office Hours: I can meet students who wish to have a face-to-face conversation using either Skype (peter.witkowsky) or Zoom (PMI: 870-585-9840). We can arrange this at a time convenient for both. To access my calendar, go to <https://calendly.com/peter-witkowsky>

### **COURSE OUTCOMES**

ENG-1020 is defined in the college catalog as “a study of the literary forms of fiction, drama, and poetry with attention to characterization, plot development and structure, use of figurative language, and understanding of literary techniques.” My approach to teaching it emphasizes two objectives above all others: first, reading literature more critically than you might normally be inclined to do and, then, writing about it as a natural extension of the reading process, a method of working through ideas. Each assignment is designed with these particular objectives in mind.

Among the specific skills you can expect to practice, the following are the most essential:

- \* putting the works we read in context, culturally as well as historically
- \* distinguishing the elements that matter to a reading from those that do not
- \* developing a critical vocabulary with which to articulate what you know
- \* conveying your ideas logically, coherently, and succinctly
- \* using sources responsibly

Several college-wide General Education outcomes connect this course to the wider goals of our core curriculum, specifically:

- I. Possess communication, problem-solving, and technological skills in a variety of contexts as demonstrated in the ability to
  1. write a clear, well-organized paper that incorporates relevant details, sources, and examples, while following standards for style, usage, and documentation appropriate to the discipline and
  4. accurately interpret, analyze, and evaluate evidence in order to construct well-supported arguments that justify clearly stated conclusions.
- II. Acquire and integrate knowledge essential to the understanding of:
  1. representative literary works and how artistic forms such as literature, art, music, theater, and film convey meaning and
  6. issues related to diversity and the interconnectedness of cultures, including non-Western and underrepresented groups.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

I will provide links to all readings via eCLASS.

### **EVALUATION**

**TWO SHORT ESSAYS (30 PTS):** The most important work of the course will be the essays you will turn in during weeks two, three, and (or) four. Week two will be devoted to poetry, week three to fiction, and week four to drama. Assignments are divided into three categories (analysis, research, and imitation), with rubrics to match. You must write two essays. If you write a third, I will count your best two grades.

**DISCUSSION FORUMS (25 PTS):** During the first four weeks of the course, I'll initiate two discussion forums per week relating to the poems, stories, and/or plays assigned for that week. One will be for general participation, a “Question-of-the-Week” on an open-ended topic that you'll each post about once. *Here, there is no need to respond to each other.* The other will be a forum for small group discussion (groups TBD) that will require you to engage with what your peers have posted on the topic. For the general forum, I'll average your scores for the four weeks into a single, composite score of between 0 and 5. By contrast, each of the small group forums will constitute a separate grade, making five forum grades in all.

QUIZZES (10 PTS): During the first four weeks of the course, there will also be three 10-question quizzes per week to establish objective facts about the poems, stories, or plays and to identify any possible confusion you may be experiencing. Quizzes will be multiple-choice and true-false, or possibly very short answer. I will permit two attempts, which will be timed. The higher grade will be the grade that counts.

EXAM (20 PTS): The exam will include objective questions (either new or repeated), as well as short quotations for identification. However, the primary emphasis will be on essay questions that will ask you to reflect on one or more of the texts you have read during the course. I will provide at least one poetry, fiction, and drama option, and you will answer a question about two of the three genres.

FINAL PROJECT (15 PTS): You will each select a poem, short story, or dramatic scene from our schedule of readings to examine from a variety of angles and in so doing create a succinct record of the text and your particular response to it. I will provide models of the one-page, detail-rich documents I have in mind. I will also facilitate the assignment of texts, to prevent needless overlap and to ensure you are assigned a poem, story, or play that you have some interest in working on.

In general, the Division of Arts and Letters adheres to the following grading scale:

POINTS	GRADE EQUIVALENT	QUALITY POINTS	MEANING
100-95	A	4.0	SUPERIOR
94-90	A-	3.67	OUTSTANDING
89-87	B+	3.33	EXCELLENT
86-83	B	3.0	VERY GOOD
82-80	B-	2.67	GOOD
79-77	C+	2.33	ABOVE AVERAGE
76-73	C	2.0	AVERAGE
72-70	C-	1.67	BELOW AVERAGE
69-65	D+	1.33	POOR
64-60	D	1.0	PASSING
59-0	F	0.0	FAILING

### OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS

COMMITMENT TO THE COURSE: In order to do well in this course, you will need to participate in the weekly activities and complete the assigned readings, adhering to the established schedule. A prolonged period of inactivity or inattentiveness will put you at a disadvantage, since you will be unable to participate belatedly in graded work such as Discussion Forums or reading quizzes, both of which do inevitably have deadlines. *If circumstances require you to be offline for any period, and especially if this is something you can try to mitigate in advance—meaning that it isn’t an emergency—I urge you to communicate your circumstances to me by email. Direct, honest communication with me is always your best option.*

LATE PAPERS: You will submit your work to me via Turnitin. Those who miss the deadlines will need to reach out to me by email. Whether I accept the work or not will then depend on the circumstances. Keep in mind that the quality of the excuse is less important than when the request is made. I’m also unlikely to tolerate habitual lateness, particularly since our deadlines are so tight.

REVISING: I consider revision to be an important part of the writing process and will return your work to you with comments and suggestions intended to point you in the right direction if you choose to resubmit. There are four categories of improvement: “surface-level,” “getting there,” “substantial,” and “exceptional,” with points corresponding to each. *Due to the timing of the course, only essays submitted on the first two due dates (7/9 and 7/16) may be revised.* The final project is likewise one-draft-only. However, I will gladly give you casual feedback about that assignment if you get an early start with it and share your work-in-progress.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: The mission of Mount Saint Mary College is concerned with “...the development of sound values, goals and commitments on the part of students. Equipping students to play responsible roles in society has been a consistent aim of our institution.” Instances of academic dishonesty subvert the mission of the College and the experience students derive from it. These instances harm the offender as well as students who maintain academic honesty. The Mount community, therefore, commits itself to do all in its power to prevent such dishonesty and imposes impartial sanctions upon those who harm themselves, their fellow students and the College in this way.

Generally, academic dishonesty may be defined in the following ways:

- a. Cheating: using or attempting to use, giving or attempting to give, unauthorized materials, information, assistance or study aids in any academic exercise or evaluation, unless the nature of the academic exercise legitimizes cooperative learning;
- b. Plagiarism: copying or imitating the language, ideas or thoughts of another person, and passing off the same as one's original work;
- c. Falsification: forgery, alteration or misuse of academic documents, records or forms.

For additional information, please go to the Student Handbook located at [www.msmc.edu](http://www.msmc.edu) under Student Life.

Suffice it to say, I will not tolerate academic dishonesty of any kind. If you have questions about what constitutes the responsible use of source materials, please ask. Recently, Turnitin.com was integrated into eClass. Assignments posted there will automatically be scanned by the website and the results made available to both of us.

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

**Office of Disability Services:** It is the policy of Mount Saint Mary College to accommodate students with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws. If you, as a student with a disability, have difficulty accessing any part of the course materials or activities for this class, please notify the instructor immediately. Accommodations for test-taking should be arranged in advance. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations can be determined. Please call the office at 845-569-3638, or email them at [disabilityservices@msmc.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@msmc.edu).

*If you have met with the Coordinator in the Disability Services Office and have been given an accommodation letter, please make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss the logistics and implementation of your accommodations.*

**Tutoring:** Free individualized and small group tutoring is available to all MSMC undergraduates in most major subject areas through the Office of Student Success. Drop-in tutoring only is available for some Natural Science and Nursing courses with no appointment necessary. A schedule for the drop-in tutoring is posted every semester on the tutoring site.

**Counseling Services:** Many students face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academics, social life, or emotional well-being. MSMC Counseling Services offers a variety of confidential services to help students through difficult times including counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, and mental health screenings. Students can contact Counseling Services by phone at 845-569-3115 or email at [counseling@msmc.edu](mailto:counseling@msmc.edu).

**The Writing Center:** The Writing Center is the home for writing at Mount Saint Mary College. Their primary function is to support students as they are completing academic writing assignments. The Writing Center's team of trained writing tutors assists Mount students in all stages of the writing process: brainstorming and organizing ideas; structuring sentences, paragraphs, and essays; strengthening argumentation; incorporating research and appropriate systems of citation; improving grammar and style; and more!

**Kaplan Family Library:** The MSMC Library creates a dynamic, responsive learning environment by connecting people with information. They facilitate teaching and learning, foster scholarship, and create a vibrant intellectual and social gathering place for the Mount Saint Mary College community. They offer outstanding information resources, expert information literacy instruction, attentive personal service, and relevant programming in a space designed for study, discovery, collaboration, and inspiration.

**Office of Digital Learning and Instructional Design Services:** The Office of Digital Learning and Instructional Design Services supports the various users of the College's learning management system Moodle (eClass). This office also promotes student learning and academic success in web-enhanced, blended-hybrid, and fully online course formats by offering training and resources. They foster, support, and enhance innovative teaching, collaborative and active learning techniques in web-enhanced, blended-hybrid, partially online, and fully online courses. The website linked above contains tutorials and tips for success videos for online learners. *While this office is here to support your learning, all Moodle (eClass) related questions or concerns should primarily be directed to your instructor.*

### **Office of Information Technology/IT Support Center:**

The IT Support Center is here to assist you with your general technology needs including Mount Account support, computer hardware/software issues, printing, on-campus internet services and more. Please visit <https://helpdesk.msmc.edu/support/> to submit a ticket or email [it.support@msmc.edu](mailto:it.support@msmc.edu).

Here are twelve essay options for the course. Only two essays are required, but I will collect them on three dates, as noted. Those who wish to turn in something on each of the submission dates may do so; I will then drop the lowest of the three grades. Only essays submitted on the first two dates may be revised, given the timing of the course.

<p>1<sup>ST</sup> DATE Due 7/8 by 11:59 pm. <i>Select one of the six options in these first two rows.</i></p>	<p>Paying careful attention to language and, in particular, to the connotations of words, allusions, figurative language, rhythm, sound, and so forth, explicate (analyze closely) a poem of your choice. Focus on the text and on the type of speaker the lines suggest, leaving aside anything you may happen to know about the poet or poem itself. <u>Do</u> say something about form, i.e. about how the poem is put together. For a model explication, see the student essay I've posted on Dickinson's "There's a certain Slant of light." For a convenient online anthology of suitable poems, see <a href="http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/">www.loc.gov/poetry/180/</a>.</p> <p>Rubric: Analysis</p>	<p>Select a brief passage (&lt; one page) from Zora Neale Hurston's "The Gilded Six-Bits" and explicate its meaning. As with the assignment directly to the left, this means paying careful attention to language. Do not simply summarize the passage you've selected. Put it in context to indicate when it appears, and explain why it demands our close attention. If you'd like, connect it to something specific, such as character, setting, or point of view. Be sure to quote directly. If you are not sure which passage to use, I will gladly make a suggestion or two. For a quick online example of how to explicate short fiction, see <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkoEib59VjA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkoEib59VjA</a>.</p> <p>Rubric: Analysis</p>	<p>Compare and contrast the Dudley Fitts &amp; Robert Fitzgerald translation of a short sequence of monologue or dialogue from <i>Oedipus Rex</i> with the corresponding passage I've made available to you in Week Two from the translation by Ian Johnston. I don't have a specific model to share with you, but you should aim for the detail of the Emily Dickinson explication also posted among the First Essay Resources. The story being told is the same; explain how the subtle points differ in the competing translations.</p> <p>Rubric: Analysis</p>
<p>2<sup>ND</sup> DATE Due 7/16 by 11:59 pm. <i>Select one of the three options in this row or any of the prior options.</i></p>	<p>First, choose a poem from among those assigned in Week Two and read the interview that accompanied its publication at <a href="http://howapoemhappens.blogspot.com">http://howapoemhappens.blogspot.com</a>. Then, give me: (1) a bibliographic entry for the interview in MLA or APA style; (2) a page or so summarizing – not paraphrasing – the interview; and (3) another page or so subjectively assessing the interview and, by extension, the poem. If you don't get much from the question and answer, consider saying what questions you would have asked the poet, and why.</p> <p>Rubric: Research</p>	<p>Watch the 29-minute adaptation of Zora Neale Hurston's "The Gilded Six-Bits" directed by Booker T. Mattison and starring Chad Coleman and T'Keyah Crystal Keymah posted in Week One. Next, read the interview with Mattison I've also posted. Finally, give me (1) a bibliographic entry for the interview and film, in MLA or APA style; (2) a complete, accurate, and objective summary of the Question-and-Answer; and (3) a page or two more of subjective assessment, in which you give your own candid thoughts about the interview and/or film.</p> <p>Rubric: Research</p>	<p>Write me a poem, but not just any poem. Let it be a <i>counterfeit</i>, borrowing the logic or even the syntax of a poem we have read. (I will provide at least one sample.) Or consider a fixed form poem developed from the 6-word memoir you composed as an ice breaker – or really <u>any</u> six words. I'll share models for the backward shrinking sestina and the <i>ovillejo</i>. Follow up with a page or two of analysis. This is not – or not only – an exercise in creativity. I'd like to hear about your process and about what you think of the work you produce.</p> <p>Rubric: Imitation</p>
<p>3<sup>RD</sup> DATE Due 7/23 by 11:59 pm. <i>Any option you haven't done already is fine.</i></p>	<p>Select a brief passage (&lt; one page) from one of the three stories assigned during Week Three and explicate its meaning. As with the corresponding assignment from the first row above, this means paying careful attention to language. Do not simply summarize the passage you've selected. Put it in context to indicate when it appears, and explain why it demands our close attention. If you'd like, connect it to something specific, such as character, setting, or point of view. Be sure to quote directly. If you are not sure which passage to use, I will gladly make a suggestion or two. For a quick online example of how to explicate short fiction, see <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkoEib59VjA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkoEib59VjA</a>.</p> <p>Rubric: Analysis</p>	<p>Read one of the author interviews corresponding to a story from Week Three posted among the Second Essay Resources. Then, give me (1) a bibliographic entry for the interview, in MLA or APA style; (2) a complete, accurate, and objective summary of the questions and answers; and (3) a page or two more of subjective assessment, in which you give your candid impression of the interview. If you don't get much from the question and answer, consider what questions you would have asked, and why.</p> <p>Rubric: Research</p>	<p>Write me a story, but not just any story. Let it relate in some essential way to one of the stories we've read and discussed – or more than one. If you'd like, write a sequel, prequel, or "lost" scene from any of the stories. Or retell a portion of the existing story from someone else's point-of-view – Slemmons's, for example, or Perry's, Bernadette's or William's, or the lump under the bedspread's in "Ba Baboon." Tell your own true or fictional story of "Modern Families." I'm thinking out loud here. If you have some other idea, run it by me. As with the corresponding poetry option just above, please follow up with a page or two of explanation.</p> <p>Rubric: Imitation</p>
	<p>Compare and contrast the three short video clips showing the first stages of Ophelia's madness that I've posted in Week Four, together with the text of the scene in question. Apart from the shared storyline, what (if anything) do the three versions share in common? How do they differ? Which is the most successful in your view – and why?</p> <p>Rubric: Analysis</p>	<p>Watch Franco Zeffirelli's <i>Hamlet</i>, which can be purchased cheaply on <i>YouTube</i>, and read the two reviews of the film I've posted in Week Four. Give me (1) a bibliographic entry in MLA or APA style for each review; (2) a couple of pages comparing and contrasting the reviews; and (3) a couple more pages of subjective assessment. In this last part, while it's ok to agree with one or both of the reviewers, please avoid repeating what they said needlessly.</p> <p>Rubric: Research</p>	<p>Write me a play, but not just any play. For models, I'm thinking of the "Shouts and Murmurs" column in <i>The New Yorker</i>. I've posted a sample titled "Donald Trump Performs Shakespeare's Soliloquies." The first is from Hamlet and ought to sound at least vaguely familiar. You wouldn't have to channel the POTUS; in fact, it might be better if you didn't. But can you take a speech and rewrite it for a larger-than-life performer? I'll look for additional mini-dramas that aren't necessarily Shakespeare related. As with the poetry and fiction options above, please follow up with a page or two of explanation.</p> <p>Rubric: Imitation</p>

WEEK	DESCRIPTION	SPECIFIC READINGS SUBJECT TO CHANGE PRIOR TO JUNE 28 <sup>TH</sup>	REQUIRED READINGS	COMPLETE-BY DATES – TO-DO LIST														
1	POETRY, FICTION, DRAMA	<p>The assigned readings for this week provide a sampling of the three genres the course will cover: four poems, one short story, and an excerpt from a play. I've copied the specific texts into the Resource Book (Print). In the Resource Book (Audio-Visual), you'll find a link to a 29-minute film adaptation of Hurston's "The Gilded Six-Bits" that I've invited you to write about in an essay option and also a 10-minute clip from the start of a 1984 production of <i>Oedipus</i>, starring Michael Pennington in the title role. It's not the same translation as the one we're reading, but it should still be possible to follow along, if interested. Before attempting the <i>Oedipus</i> quiz, you should certainly review my timeline of the play.</p>	<p>"There's a certain Slant of light" (Emily Dickinson)            "American Cheese" (Jim Daniels)            "Dandelion" (Julie Lechevsky)            "Love Poem with Toast" (Miller Williams)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Three of the four poems above appear in the online anthology <i>Poetry 180</i>.</p> </div> <p>"The Gilded Six-Bits" (Zora Neale Hurston)            "The Prologue," from <i>Oedipus Rex</i> (Sophocles)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>Th</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> <th>Su</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6/28</td> <td>6/29</td> <td>6/30</td> <td>7/1</td> <td>7/2</td> <td>7/3</td> <td>7/4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su	6/28	6/29	6/30	7/1	7/2	7/3	7/4
	M			T	W	Th	F	S	Su									
	6/28			6/29	6/30	7/1	7/2	7/3	7/4									
	review eCLASS site – register with Turnitin																	
	complete ice breaker (6/29)																	
	complete quizzes (6/30)																	
	make initial small group forum post (6/30)																	
	respond in small group forum (7/3)																	
Question-of-the-Week response (7/4)																		
update profile – add picture (7/4)																		
2	THE BEST WORDS	<p>What have poets said poetry is? "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off," Emily Dickinson once wrote, "I know that is poetry." According to Dylan Thomas, poetry is "what, in a poem, makes you laugh, cry, prickle, be silent, [and] makes your toenails twinkle." Samuel Taylor Coleridge put it more simply: "the best words in their best order." For this second week, I've selected nine poems featured at the blog "How a Poem Happens," along with interviews the authors gave. I've grouped the poems not quite randomly into three clusters: poems about language, poems that tell a story with some dialogue, and poems about truth and fiction.</p>	<p>"Happiness and Happenstance Share the Same Root" (Mari L'Esperance), "Trans" (Idra Novey), and "Adjectives of Order" (Alexandra Teague)</p> <p>"I'm Starting to Speak the Language" (Nicole Cooley), "To the Young Man Who Cried Out . . . When I Backed into his Car" (Lynne Knight), and "Minor Miracle" (Marilyn Nelson)</p> <p>"Lesser Evils" (Joel Brouwer), "Believe It or Not" (Jean Monahan), and "Day Players in the Makeup Trailer" (Hayden Saunier)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>Th</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> <th>Su</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7/5</td> <td>7/6</td> <td>7/7</td> <td>7/8</td> <td>7/9</td> <td>7/10</td> <td>7/11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su	7/5	7/6	7/7	7/8	7/9	7/10	7/11
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	7/5			7/6	7/7	7/8	7/9	7/10	7/11									
	complete quizzes (7/7)																	
	make initial small group forum post (7/7)																	
	submit essay if applicable (7/9)																	
	respond in small group forum (7/10)																	
	Question-of-the-Week response (7/11)																	
3	MODERN FAMILIES	<p>If <i>Poetry 180</i> and <i>How a Poem Happens</i> are my current go-to sources for readable poems, my source for short fiction is <i>The New Yorker</i>. Among other things, I like to read the stories alongside the short author interviews published online. Here are three stories published in the magazine within the last few years. The interviews are posted among the documents connected to the second essay due date. Even if you are not completing that essay, you might still have a look. However, the three quizzes are about the stories only.</p>	<p>"Demeter" (Maile Meloy)            "First Husband" (Antonya Nelson)            "Ba Baboon" (Thomas Pierce)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>Th</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> <th>Su</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7/12</td> <td>7/13</td> <td>7/14</td> <td>7/15</td> <td>7/16</td> <td>7/17</td> <td>7/18</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su	7/12	7/13	7/14	7/15	7/16	7/17	7/18
	M			T	W	Th	F	S	Su									
	7/12			7/13	7/14	7/15	7/16	7/17	7/18									
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	Question-of-the-Week response (7/18)																	

WEEK	DESCRIPTION	REQUIRED READINGS	COMPLETE-BY DATES – TO-DO LIST							
			M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su	
4	THE COLLABORATIVE GENRE	<p><i>Hamlet, Prince of Denmark</i> (William Shakespeare)</p> <p>FULL TEXT OF THE PLAY (ONLINE)</p> <p><i>I provide a link to the full text for reference. However, I don't expect you to spend hours reading the play. Read at least the three scenes I single out below and take advantage of the timelines I've also posted.</i></p> <p>Act One, Scene Two (Hamlet's introduction)</p> <p>Act Three, Scene One (the so-called "nunnery" scene)</p> <p>Act Five, Scene Two (the play's final scene)</p>	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su	
	Drama is defined as "a composition in prose or verse, adapted to be acted upon a stage, in which a story is related by means of dialogue and action, and is represented with accompanying gesture, costume, and scenery, as in real life" (OED). What such a definition leaves out is drama's <i>collaborative</i> element, unique to the genre, where it's the extraordinary work of directors and actors and costume or set designers, make-up artists and lighting experts, etc. that brings words on a page to life.		7/19	7/20	7/21	7/22	7/23	7/24	7/25	
	complete quizzes (7/21)									
	make initial small group forum post (7/21)									
	submit essay if applicable (7/23)									
	respond in small group forum (7/24)									
	Question-of-the-Week response (7/25)									
	submit final project by (7/25)									
5	BACKWARD AND FORWARD		M	T	W	Th				
	This last, partial week of the course will be given over to the final exam and to (optional) extra credit work, both of which must be turned in by June 25th.		7/20	7/21	7/22	7/25				
	submit exam (7/25)									
	submit extra credit if applicable (7/25)									