

**Geoffrey B. Elliott, PhD**

**ENGL 2340.01: World Literature through the Renaissance Reference Document**

**Fall 2016**

Appearing on the following pages are best versions of the major documents distributed to students in my section of ENGL 2340: World Literature through the Renaissance during the Fall 2016 instructional term at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas. They appear much as they were distributed to students; minor adjustments and corrections have been made without comment. In order, the documents are

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Owing to similarities among assignments, some materials may be repeated or closely paralleled without much comment.

**Geoffrey B. Elliott, PhD**

**ENGL 2340.01: World Literature through the Renaissance Syllabus and Course Calendar  
Revision**

**Fall 2016**

**Office** Weir 209

**Office Phone** 830-792-7416

**Office Email** [GElliott@schreiner.edu](mailto:GElliott@schreiner.edu)

**Office Hours** MWF, 1200-1250, and by  
appointment

Note that information on this syllabus is subject to change. Reasonable efforts will be made to inform students of any such changes that occur.

This syllabus is updated as of 28 July 2016 to include released final exam information.

### **Course Description**

Per the University catalog, ENGL 2340: World Literature through the Renaissance is described as “A survey of the masterpieces of world literature from the ancient world through the Renaissance, this course emphasizes historical, generic, and thematic connections. Prerequisite: ENGL 1302.”

### **Course Objectives**

This specific section of the course will focus on humor (despite the boilerplate materials in the syllabus). That is, it will look at such things as

- What in selected works of literature was likely funny for its expected original audiences,
- What is funny to modern readers in such works,
- How the humor in each case works (i.e., what makes the funny funny?), and
- What the similarities and differences reveal about the author/s, the original reader/s, and those of us who read things now.

To find the funny bits, some of which are subtle, students will need to do a number of things:

- Read and develop familiarity with a number of works of world literature, demonstrating the familiarity through in- and out-of-class discussions as well as occasional quizzes and formal exams;
- Develop familiarity with literary critical terms and practices, demonstrating the familiarity through in- and out-of-class discussions as well as occasional quizzes and formal exams;
- Develop familiarity with underlying ideas of humor, including the social and situational standards that allow for its effect, demonstrating the familiarity through in- and out-of-class discussions; and
- Apply the knowledge of literary critical terms and practices developed during the class to works of literature outside the assigned reading list to analyze and evaluate the function of humor in them, doing so in the form of two relatively short papers (1,300-1,625 words plus MLA-style Works Cited lists) suitable for publication in undergraduate journals.

It sounds like a lot, but that is because there is a lot to do, and there is not much time in which to do it. With diligence and attention, though, it can be done, and done well. I look forward to working with you as you do it.

## Textbook

The course requires one text: Puchner, Martin, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Package 1 (Vols. A, B, and C). W.W. Norton, 2012 (ISBN 978-0-393-93365-9).

The age of the texts that will be studied means that many of them are readily available in other editions, not seldom for free online. Many such editions may be helpful in completing the work of the class (such as the papers), but for purposes of in-class discussion, the *Norton Anthology of World Literature* (NAWL) will be expected. People have to understand the reference to get the joke, and working from a common edition helps them get the reference.

The textbook may be available in electronic editions as well as print. Students who opt to use an electronic textbook should note that they, and they alone, are responsible for securing access to the text during class time and for any hardware or software problems attendant upon their doing so.

## Other Resources

In addition to the required textbook, the following resources will be helpful or vital in carrying out the tasks of the course:

- The University Writing Center, Dickey Hall, Room 106,  
<http://www.schreiner.edu/academics/academic-support/center-for-teaching-learning/student-academic-success/writing-center.aspx>
- The University Undergraduate Research Center,  
<http://www.schreiner.edu/academics/undergraduate-research.aspx>
- Elliott RWI, [www.elliotttrwi.com](http://www.elliotttrwi.com)
- Purdue University Online Writing Lab, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- The International Society for Humor Studies (yes, there is such a thing),  
<http://www.humorstudies.org/index.htm?submit2=ISHS+Home>
  - *HUMOR*, the Society journal, <http://www.humorstudies.org/JournalCenter.htm>
- Major English-language dictionary, such as those from Oxford University (preferred) and Merriam-Webster
- Access to campus email and *Schreiner One*
- Pen/pencil and paper every class meeting

## Evaluation

How grades happen can seem a bit complicated. How individual assignments and groups of assignments contribute to a student's overall course grade is laid out in Table 1, below.

**Table 1: Grade Distribution**

Assignment or Category	Percent of Grade
Minor Assignments (MinAss)	10
Online Discussions (Discus)	15
Paper 1 (Ppr 1)*	20
Midterm Exam (MTEEx)*	10
Paper 2 (Ppr 2)*	20
Final Exam (FinEx)*	15
Professionalism (Prof)	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Indicates a major assignment.

The papers and many other assignments will be assessed in terms of their demonstrated performance in several areas (the areas will be discussed in more detail on individual assignments' materials). Specific areas on such assignments will be assigned a number of "steps," motions through the grading scale indicated on Table 2, below. The total number of steps, positive or negative, will indicate the final assignment score.

More explanation of my grading practices can be found on *Elliott RWI* as "Some Remarks about Grading," <https://elliotttrwi.com/2016/02/28/some-remarks-about-grading/>.

Some assignments will only be offered an overall score. Such scores also conform to Table 2, below.

**Table 2: Grading Scale**

<b>Score</b>	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F	0
<b>Steps</b>	+7	+6	+5	+4	+3	+2	+1	+0	-1	-2	-3 or more	N/A*
<b>Numerical Equivalent</b>	98	95	92	88	85	82	78	75	72	65	55	0

\*Grades of zero (0) result from non-submission of assignments or for academic integrity violations.

Final grades will be reported according to the scale in Tale 3, below.

**Table 3: Final Grades**

<b>Grade</b>	A	B	C	D	F
<b>Overall Score</b>	90+	80-89.999	70-79.999	60-69.999	Below 60

Ppr 1 and Ppr 2 are expected to be submitted as works of polished prose, meaning that they should be written and revised more than once. Some class time will be given over to reading and critique of the work done for the class. As such, you will need to be ready to read and comment appropriately on the work of your classmates, as well as to have them do the same to your work. **Peer review is a vital component of this class, and is to be conducted respectfully and only within the context of the classroom.**

Please note that you may be asked to read your work aloud for the class to critique; sometimes talking through a piece is just what is needed. As with peer review, **presentations will be conducted respectfully and only within the classroom context.**

Please note that many assignments will be submitted through Schreiner One and that the originality-checking software included in it will be applied to the materials submitted through it.

I generally grade fairly holistically. This does not mean that I shall not mark or penalize your errors, but I shall do my best to give you better and more useful feedback on the work you do than simply "fixing" your punctuation and spelling and slapping a grade on the work. Mechanical "correctness" is important, but organization, depth, and originality of thought are more so.

In this class, the fact that you or somebody else paid for you to have a seat does not entitle you to any specific grade. By registering and meeting the requirements for this class, you have earned

the right to have access to higher learning and the **opportunity to earn** credit, much as you have to pay to take a martial arts class but are not assured of earning any specific belt. I do not **give** you a grade, you **earn** a grade; I report to you on the quality of the work you turn in to me, as measured against standards expressed for each assignment.

### **Discussion of Grades and Progress**

I am always happy to discuss your progress and grades with you. I am not going to discuss your grades with your parents, your siblings, your roommates, your spouses, your children, or anyone else except as required by my superiors and the law. I am also not going to discuss your grades over the phone or through email; if you want to know your grades, come see me during office hours or set up an appointment, and we can go over how you are doing, what you have done well, and what you can improve upon.

### **Attendance**

Attendance will be taken during each class meeting, whether formally through the submission of a piece of writing or informally through some convenient means. Ideally, every student will attend every class meeting. Things happen that ought not to happen, however, and so some allowance for absence is made. Students may miss five (5) class meetings without direct penalty; no explanation of the absence is requested or required. Each absence after the fifth will lower the student's grade by ten percent. That is, a sixth absence will drop a grade of 92 to an 82. A seventh will drop a grade of 92 to 72. An eighth will drop a grade of 92 to 62, and a ninth will drop a grade of 92 to a 52

There are limited exceptions to the attendance policy noted above. Perhaps the most pressing is that necessitated by military or judicial service. Students in military or military reserve units called to duty, or who are summoned for judicial proceedings, will have their absences excused (i.e., not counted against the number of absences allowed to the student) once appropriate documentation (e.g., a copy of mobilization orders, an email from the student's commanding officer, or a court summons) is provided. Students absent from class for University (**not student organization, intramurals, or Greek life**) events will have their absences excused, as well, once appropriate documentation is provided. Other absences may be excused at the discretion of the instructor, the Department Chair, the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts, or higher-level administration, but such circumstances are rare. Assignments due during excused absences will be handled on a case-by-case basis, as circumstances warrant.

### **Tardiness and Early Departure**

Please be in class when it is scheduled to begin, and please remain in class for the scheduled duration. Students who arrive late or leave early are subject to being counted absent without in-class comment. So are students who are out of the room for protracted periods during class or multiple times in a given class period. Showing up late makes it hard to get the joke, and leaving early makes it hard to hear the punchline.

### **Late Work**

Late work is generally not acceptable, and many instructors (as well as employers and authorities) will not accept it. In this class, minor assignments are not accepted if they are submitted late. The exams generally may not be taken late, although certain extenuating

circumstances (e.g., military or judicial service) may make other arrangements appropriate. If you believe your circumstances merit consideration, please discuss them with me during office hours. The major papers (Ppr 1 and Ppr 2) will be accepted late, albeit at an automatic grade of F; late papers will generally receive minimal or no feedback other than the grade.

### Revisions

I encourage revision of papers, but I think that effective revision takes outside guidance. Thus, students desiring to revise any assignment for a higher grade must consult with me before so doing. I shall determine on a case-by-case basis what the revision must entail and whether or not the revision will result in a change of grade for the assignment. Be advised also that I will tend to allow more leeway in revision on late work the less late it is. Trying to turn in late work during the last week of class and hoping to get to revise it up to an A is not going to get you anywhere, but if you miss the deadline by a day or two, you might just make it in revision.

### Student Professionalism

Please treat the classroom with the same degree of attention and consideration as any professional space. Please show up to class prepared and on time; **this means having necessary materials, having completed the assigned readings, and having prepared any assignments upon entry into the classroom.** Silence or deactivate cell phones during class time, and refrain from private conversations outside of group/class discussion. If you are late, please be respectful of the instructor and others in the classroom by quietly and quickly finding a seat without gratuitous comment, questioning, or other obtrusive behavior (this includes interrupting lecture or discussion to explain your tardiness, ask what the class is doing, or make other comments). The same requests also apply to those who need to leave early. If you feel the need to discuss late arrival or early departure, please do so via email, during office hours, or before or after class.

Please note that excessive tardiness or early departure will negatively impact my assessment of your professionalism. Please note also that egregious violations of professional conduct will result in your being asked to leave; if you are thusly asked to leave, you will be counted absent for the class.

### Section 504 (per University Standards)

Schreiner University is compliant with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 with respect to providing academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to qualified students. Students requiring such accommodations should contact the Section 504 Coordinator in Dickey Hall, Room 218. Should a faculty office prove inaccessible, special arrangements to meet outside the office can be made for students with mobility impairments.

### Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty in any of its various forms (e.g., plagiarism, presenting hired writing as work done, patchwriting, Rogeting, unauthorized use of papers for/from other classes) is unacceptable and subject to adverse actions ranging from failure of an assignment to failure of the course and other University-imposed sanctions. This class will follow the University's Code of Academic Conduct, which may be found in the *Student Handbook*, in print and online at <http://students.schreiner.edu/handbook/docs/su-201516-handbook-dos-edits-pa.ge.pdf>.

### **Contact Policy and Schreiner One**

Email is my preferred mode of contact outside of class time; I check my email at least once (and usually more often) each day I am scheduled to teach, usually in the morning. As a note, I do not sit up all night waiting for my email inbox to chime, and I may not have time to read and answer all emails before class.

Per University standards, “All email communication for this course will be done via our schreiner.edu email accounts. Emails sent to me without schreiner.edu addresses will *not* [emphasis in original] be accepted by my faculty inbox. Grades, attendance, due dates, and handouts will be posted to Schreiner One on a regular basis.”

### **Agreements**

Students who remain enrolled in the class past the last day to add, drop, or change sections online signal their understanding of, and agreement to, the policies and procedures outlined in this syllabus.

Late in the term, a form asking after students’ agreement to allow instructor use of their materials in future teaching, research, and professional development will be distributed. Whether permission is granted or not will not affect the course grade, but a clear answer will be greatly appreciated.

## Course Calendar

Readings and daily assignments not already on the course calendar may be announced in class. When they are, they are to be treated as appearing on the calendar at the correct time. Also, readings may not always be discussed in class. You are still responsible for knowing the material; the readings form the bases for discussions and are likely to undergird any necessary quizzes.

“Readings Due” indicates that the readings listed are assigned **to be completed before the beginning of class** on the day listed, unless otherwise noted. “NAWL” in the calendar (Table 4, below) refers to *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*; reading assignments are listed by volume and page numbers. “Assignment Due” indicates that the activities listed are to be completed and submitted at the time and in the manner indicated.

In the event that a given day has neither reading nor activity listed, class will still meet normally (and class will probably continue discussion from earlier. The only times class does not meet as scheduled will be announced in advance (if possible) or posted on the door to the classroom.

**Table 4: Course Calendar**

Week	Date	Readings Due	Assignment Due
1	24 Aug.	• Syllabus (in class)	•
	26 Aug.	•	•
2	29 Aug.	• “The Invention of Writing and the Earliest Literatures,” NAWLA 3-21; “Ancient Egyptian Literature,” NAWLA 57-59; “Egyptian Love Poems,” NAWLA 76-81	•
	31 Aug.	• “Setne Khamwas and Naneferkaptah,” NAWLA 81-91	•
	2 Sept.	• “The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant,” NAWLA 1124-29	•
3	7 Sept.	• “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” NAWLA 95-151	•
	9 Sept.	•	• Discus 1 (online before class begins)
4	12 Sept.	• “Ancient Athenian Drama,” NAWLA 644-49; “Aristophanes,” NAWLA 823-25; <i>Lysistrata</i> , NAWLA 825-62	•
	14 Sept.	•	•
	16 Sept.	• “Frogs,” NAWLA 1133-43	• Discus 2 (online before class begins)
5	19 Sept.	•	• Ppr 1 PV (in class)
	21 Sept.	• “Catullus,” NAWLA 940-59	•
	23 Sept.	•	• Discus 3 (online before class begins)
6	26 Sept.	• “India’s Ancient Epics and Tales,” NAWLA 1161-69; <i>The Ramayana</i> , NAWLA 1170-1234	• Ppr 1 RV (online before class begins)
	28 Sept.	•	•
	30 Sept.	•	• Discus 4 (online before class begins)

Week	Date	Readings Due	Assignment Due
7	3 Oct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Early Chinese Literature and Thought,” NAWLA 1311-1319; “Classic of Poetry,” NAWLA 1320-1330</li> </ul>	•
	5 Oct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Zhuangzi</i>, NAWLA 1374-98, 1424-27</li> </ul>	•
	7 Oct.	•	• Ppr 1 (online before class begins)
8	12 Oct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Circling the Mediterranean: Europe and the Islamic World,” NAWLB 3-17; “Apuleius,” NAWLB 34-35; <i>The Golden Ass</i>, 36-44</li> </ul>	•
	14 Oct.	•	• MTEEx (in class)
9	17 Oct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Aboloqasem Ferdowsi,” NAWLB 182-85; <i>Shahnameh</i>, NAWLB 185-207</li> </ul>	•
	19 Oct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Song of Roland</i>, NAWLB 219-84</li> </ul>	•
	21 Oct.	•	• Discus 5 (online before class begins)
10	24 Oct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Thousand and One Nights</i>, NAWLB 552-605</li> </ul>	•
	26 Oct.	•	•
	28 Oct.	•	• Discus 6 (online before class begins)
11	31 Oct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“India’s Classical Age,” NAWLB 837-45; “Visnusarman,” NAWLB 846-48; <i>Pañcatantra</i>, NAWLB 848-55</li> </ul>	•
	2 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The Classical Sanskrit Lyric,” NAWLB 943-59</li> </ul>	•
	4 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Somadeva,” NAWLB 960-62; <i>Kathasaritsagara</i>, NAWLB 962-67</li> </ul>	• Discus 7 (online before class begins)
12	7 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Medieval Chinese Literature,” NAWLB 969-77; Li Bo, NAWLB 1022-29; Du Fu, NAWLB 1030-35</li> </ul>	•
	9 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Han Yu,” NAWLB 1047-48; “The Biography of Tipp O’Hair,” NAWLB 1048-51; “Liu Zongyuan,” NAWLB 1051; “A Theory of Heaven,” NAWLB 1051-53</li> </ul>	•
	11 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Japan’s Classical Age,” NAWLB 1073-81; “Poetry of the Heian Court,” NAWLB 1099; “Sugawara no Michizane,” NAWLB 1100-1104</li> </ul>	• Discus 8 (online before class begins)
13	14 Nov.	•	• Ppr 2 PV (in class)
	16 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Kokinshu</i>, NAWLB 1104-18; Ki no Tsurayuki, NAWLB 1118-1119; <i>Tosa Diary</i>, NAWLB 1119-26</li> </ul>	•
	18 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Sei Shonagon,” NAWLB 1127-31; <i>The Pillow Book</i>, 1131-53</li> </ul>	• Discus 9 (online before class begins)

Week	Date	Readings Due	Assignment Due
14	21 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Encounters with Islam,” NAWLC 3-11; “Evilya Çelebi,” NAWLC 84-86; <i>The Book of Travels</i>, NAWLC 87-92</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ppr 2 RV (online before class begins)</li> </ul>
15	28 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Europe and the New World,” NAWLC 123-33; “Ludovico Ariosto,” NAWLC 191-93; <i>Orlando Furioso</i>, NAWLC 193-204</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
	30 Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Lazarillo de Tormes,” NAWLC 302-03; <i>The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes and of His Fortunes and Adversities</i>, NAWLC 304-41</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
	2 Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discus 10 (online before class begins)</li> </ul>
16	5 Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Miguel de Cervantes,” NAWLC 381-86; <i>Don Quixote</i>, NAWL 386-515</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ppr 2 (online before class begins)</li> </ul>
	7 Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<b>***FinEx (in class), 13 December 2016, 1030 to 1230***</b>			

### Dates to Remember

- 30 August, last day to add, drop, or change sections online
- 1 September, last day to drop a class without a grade
- 5 September, Labor Day holiday
- 10-11 October, Fall Break
- 27 October, last day to withdraw from a course (1pm)
- 23-25 November, Thanksgiving holiday
- 7 December, last day of classes
- 8 December, Reading Day
- 9-14 December, final exams; term ends

Other dates may be announced.

**Geoffrey B. Elliott**

**ENGL 2340: World Literature through the Renaissance, Papers 1 and 2 Assignment Sheet  
Fall 2016**

Below appears a print version of the guidelines for Paper 1 (Ppr 1) and Paper 2 (Ppr 2) posted online at <https://elliotttrwi.com/instruction/schreiner-university/schreiner-university-engl-2340-world-literature-through-the-renaissance/schreiner-university-engl-2340-world-literature-through-the-renaissance-papers-1-and-2/>. The online version is to be considered authoritative, superseding any previously published information regarding the Pprs.

As noted for another, similar assignment, that the assignment sheet is long is understood. It is also an artifact of trying to be detailed and explicit about expectations for the project. Additionally, it offers practice in attending closely to detail, which is likely to be of benefit

One of the tasks of ENGL 2340 is to introduce students to the shape of literary study. As such, it is just and fitting that students be asked to try their hands at the kinds of tasks expected of literary scholars, and among the chief such tasks is writing literary explicatory papers. As students in the class are generally presumed to be relatively new to the field, however, some scaffolding is in order; it is perhaps overly ambitious to ask novice students to produce conference or seminar papers without having built up to the work of doing so. Accordingly, students in Dr. Elliott's section of the course are asked to draft two relatively short pieces of explicatory prose.

Completing each paper will require students to accomplish several tasks:

- Identify a topic of discussion;
- Identify a specific humorous construction embedded in the topic, asserting a thesis applicable thereto;
- Explain the humorous construction;
- Explicate how the selected topic displays the construction;
- Explain the effect of the construction on prior or contemporary readers;
- Collect the materials above into a cohesive essay of 1,300 to 1,625 words (exclusive of heading, title, and end-citations), bringing the essay to class at the assigned time for in-class peer review (Ppr 1 PV and Ppr 2 PV), from which a minor assignment score will be derived;
- Revise the earlier version of the paper in light of peer commentaries, submitting the resulting version online at the assigned time for instructor review as a minor assignment (Ppr 1 RV and Ppr 2 RV); and
- Revise the submitted version of the paper in light of instructor comments, submitting the resulting text online at the assigned time for instructor assessment as a major assignment worth 20 % of the total course grade (Ppr 1 and Ppr 2).

Information about each follows, along with a copy of the relevant grading rubric and notes.

### **Identify a Topic of Discussion**

Writing a paper requires having something about which to write it. Fortunately, the class is amply equipped with such materials, working from an extensive anthology of texts that cannot be fully treated during the course of instruction. In the interests of offering students the chance to customize their course experiences and follow their interests to some degree, as well as to foster additional reading (always to the good for literary scholars), the papers should each treat a text

**contained in the NAWL A, B, or C, but not listed among the assigned readings for the course.** Additionally, in the interest of fostering the international, cross-cultural aspects of the class, each paper should treat a work **not from the British Isles unless demonstrably originally in one of the non-English languages indigenous to the islands, and not from the English colonial holdings once they became colonial holdings.** And each paper a student will write must be on a different work. While it may seem that such restrictions are overly harsh, they still leave a great deal of material open to treatment, so students should be able to find something that speaks to them, their interests, and their senses of humor.

Additionally, students may petition to treat other topics. Such topics must be from the appropriate historical period (i.e., prior to the outbreak of the European Renaissance, treated for purposes of the papers and the sake of convenience as 1492 CE), and they should preferably originate outside the English-speaking world (i.e., not from the British Isles unless demonstrably originally in one of the non-English languages indigenous to the islands, and not from the English colonial holdings once they became colonial holdings). Petitions must be made to the instructor in writing, preferably early on in the process to facilitate review and possible approval. **Papers treating non-approved topics will automatically receive failing grades,** so getting a start on permission for desired non-standard topics is worth doing.

### **Find the Humor and Assert a Thesis about It**

Given the stated focus of the course on humor, the papers should treat humor. As such, students should look in their selected texts for something funny—and they should do so initially without deep thought, responding to surface readings and understandings to find their laughter in the work. Parts of the selected text that do evoke laughter should be noted; only afterwards should thought be given to how and why any given funny thing **is** funny. The joke should be appreciated before it is studied.

Once a particular bit of humor is selected, though, something about how and why it works—and for whom it works—needs to be said. That is, some thesis needs to be advanced, something on the order of “Humor on display in *A Work* serves to point out the foibles of the mighty for its early readers” or “That current readers see *Another Work* as laughable bespeaks a shift in what is permissible for public discussion.” Any number of arguments can be made—and, indeed, one of the hallmarks of artistic quality is that a work sustains multiple arguments—but, given the focus of the class, those treating how humor happens are to be pursued. (They can’t run quickly, so they should be easy to catch.)

### **Explain the Funny Principle**

For a particular thing to be regarded as funny, there needs to be some standard or rubric applied that permits of funniness. What that is will vary for each reader, of course, but for others to understand what makes something funny for a given person, they need to have some indication of what kinds of things the writer thinks is funny. At root, the paper-writer will need to lay out some definition of funniness—or at least one type of funniness—so that others can follow the line of reasoning involved.

The International Society for Humor Studies is a valuable resource for such discussions, both in itself and in its journal, *HUMOR*. Links to each are provided on the course syllabus.

Additionally, Isaac Asimov, in his *Treasury of Humor* and *Asimov Laughs Again*, articulates some useful, if non-scholarly, ideas about what makes things funny; they may be useful. Comedians' reports may also be helpful in constructing critical frames for the papers; attestation of them abounds.

### **Explain the Shape of the Joke**

While some readers will doubtlessly be familiar with the text treated in each paper, most will not. Too, those readers who are familiar with the selected text will benefit from having their attention called to specifics of the text. As such, writers should identify where in the text they take their example of humor from, and they should give a summary of it. That is, they should provide illustrative examples of the funny bits they mean to discuss.

### **Explain How the Joke Works—and for Whom It Works**

Armed with a critical frame—the funny principle—and a funny thing, it remains only to apply the principle to the evidence, demonstrating how the evidence supports the conclusion to be drawn from it. That is, how the humor identified in the selected text functions, how it supports the thesis, needs to be shown. Keeping in mind that the joke is presumed to do a certain thing for a certain audience, how it does the thing for the audience needs to be demonstrated. The more detailed the progression from evidence through critical frame to thesis can be, the better off. (Think of baking; smaller, more detailed steps will likely result in better pie—all the better for throwing later on.)

### **Compose the Ppr 1 or 2 PV**

Taken together, the five items noted above constitute a sequence of prewriting that should guide student thinking about the topic and the desired approach to it. That is, the aforementioned do not produce deliverable writing in themselves, but they lead towards the first deliverable for the project: the Ppr 1 or Ppr 2 PV.

Each PV should be a reasonably complete explication of how the selected topic performs an identified humorous function for a specified audience. The explication should be written towards a primary audience of interested literary scholars, and it should keep in mind secondary readers such as future undergraduate literature students. Textual and critical details should be presented plainly and explicitly, their functions attested in detail and in such a way as facilitates easy reading by the primary audiences.

The PV of each paper should be approximately 1,300 to 1,625 words in length, exclusive of heading (student name, instructor name, course/section, and date of composition), title, and any necessary end-citations. It should be typed in black, double-spaced, 12-point Garamond, Georgia, or Times New Roman font on letter-sized pages; the heading should be flush left, the title centered horizontally, and the body flush left with the first lines of paragraphs indented one-half inch from the left margin. Page numbers should be in the margin at the top of the page on the right margin, preceded by the writer's surname, and in the same typeface as the rest of the paper.

**Each writer should bring a PV that represents the writer's best work to class as a typed, physical copy on the assigned day—19 September 2016 for Ppr 1 and 14 November 2016**

**for Ppr 2.** Class those days will be taken up with peer review, during which other writers will read and comment upon the content and organization (**not the mechanics**) of the paper, making suggestions for improvement and indicating places where the paper works well—and explaining the comments so that the underlying principles can be used in future writing.

As peer review progresses, the instructor will call for individual papers, checking to see if they are present as requested and whether or not, in general terms, they do what they need to do. Time constraints in class will prevent detailed reading by the instructor during peer review, so specific comments will be few, but the setting does allow for a holistic sense of each paper's direction to be developed. That sense will be noted as the score for **a minor assignment grade**; the score will conform to the grading scale in Table 2 of the course syllabus. (Obviously, those students who do not arrive in class with their PVs in hand will not be able to receive any helpful score for the assignment. Note the "Late Work" section of the course syllabus.)

Although a reasonably complete paper is expected, it is understood that the each PV is a work in progress. Changes to it are therefore also expected; they should not be viewed as failures, but seized upon as opportunities to improve writing techniques and to enhance the connections between writer and topic and writer and readers.

#### **Revise the PV into the Ppr 1 or Ppr 2 RV**

After peer review, writers should take their papers, review the comments made by their readers, and incorporate those found useful into their ongoing work. That is, they should work to improve how they present and support their theses, enhancing the clarity of evidence and explanation and ensuring that their papers encourage reading rather than interfering with it. The result will become the RV for each paper.

Each RV should still present a reasonably complete explication of how the selected topic performs an identified humorous function for a specified audience. The explication should continue to be written towards a primary audience of interested literary scholars, and it should yet keep in mind secondary readers such as future undergraduate literature students. Textual and critical details should still be presented plainly and explicitly, their functions attested in detail and in such a way as facilitates easy reading by the primary audiences.

The RV of each paper should continue to be approximately 1,300 to 1,625 words in length, exclusive of heading (student name, instructor name, course/section, and date of composition), title, and any necessary end-citations. It should yet be typed in black, double-spaced, 12-point Garamond, Georgia, or Times New Roman font on letter-sized pages; the heading should be flush left, the title centered horizontally, and the body flush left with the first lines of paragraphs indented one-half inch from the left margin. Page numbers should still be in the margin at the top of the page on the right margin, preceded by the writer's surname, and in the same typeface as the rest of the paper.

**Each writer should submit a typed, electronic copy of each RV to the instructor through *Schreiner One* before the beginning of class time on the assigned day—26 September 2016 for the Ppr 1 RV, 21 November 2016 for the Ppr 2 RV.** The copy needs to be in .doc, .docx, or .rtf format so that it can be opened and read by the instructor; other file formats potentially

present difficulties in that regard, and a paper that cannot be read cannot receive a useful score or commentary. It will be assessed according to the grading rubric below for **a minor assignment grade**, and comments will be offered on a copy thereof that are meant to guide further improvements to the work. (Obviously, those students who do not submit either RV in timely fashion should not expect to receive any helpful score or commentary for the assignment. Note the “Late Work” section of the course syllabus.)

Although a reasonably complete paper is expected, it is understood that each RV is still a work in progress. Some changes to it are therefore also expected; they should not be viewed as failures, but seized upon as more opportunities to improve writing techniques further and to enhance the connections between writer and topic and writer and readers yet more.

### **Revise the RV into Ppr 1 or Ppr 2**

After receiving instructor feedback, writers should take their papers, review the comments made by their reader, and incorporate those found useful into their ongoing work. That is, they should work to improve how they present and support their theses, enhancing the clarity of evidence and explanation and ensuring that their papers encourage reading rather than interfering with it. The result will be the full and final version of each paper.

Ppr 1 and Ppr 2 should each still present a reasonably complete explication of how the selected topic performs an identified humorous function for a specified audience. The explication should continue to be written towards a primary audience of interested literary scholars, and it should yet keep in mind secondary readers such as future undergraduate literature students. Textual and critical details should still be presented plainly and explicitly, their functions attested in detail and in such a way as facilitates easy reading by the primary audiences.

Each paper should continue to be approximately 1,300 to 1,625 words in length, exclusive of heading (student name, instructor name, course/section, and date of composition), title, and any necessary end-citations. It should yet be typed in black, double-spaced, 12-point Garamond, Georgia, or Times New Roman font on letter-sized pages; the heading should be flush left, the title centered horizontally, and the body flush left with the first lines of paragraphs indented one-half inch from the left margin. Page numbers should still be in the margin at the top of the page on the right margin, preceded by the writer’s surname, and in the same typeface as the rest of the paper.

**Each writer should submit a typed, electronic copy of Ppr 1 and Ppr 2 to the instructor through *Schreiner One* before the beginning of class time on the assigned date—7 October 2016 for Ppr 1 and 5 December 2016 for Ppr 2.** The copy needs to be in .doc, .docx, or .rtf format so that it can be opened and read by the instructor; other file formats potentially present difficulties in that regard, and a paper that cannot be read cannot receive a useful score or commentary. Each will be assessed according to the grading rubric below as **a major assignment worth 20 % of the total course grade**, and comments will be offered on a copy thereof that are meant to guide further improvements to the writer’s technique. (Please note the “Late Work” and “Revisions” sections of the course syllabus.)

## Grading Rubric/s

The rubric that appears below will be applied to Ppr 1 RV, Ppr 2 RV, Ppr 1, and Ppr 2; grading for the PVs is generally holistic, as noted above. Generally, the papers being assessed will be read and a copy of the rubric filled out during the reading; the copy of the rubric will be emailed to the paper-writer as an attachment. Retaining copies of the submitted papers suggests itself as a good idea.

Please note that, in the interest of offering students practice in proofreading and editing their own work, comments offered through reproductions of the form below are general in nature. That is, they identify systematic problems and make broad suggestions rather than making line-by-line corrections.

Note that all papers begin at C.

Assessment Category	Comments	Steps Yes/No
Assigned Guidelines Met?	•	+0/-3
Thesis Clear and Appropriate?	•	+2/-1
Evidence Clear and Appropriate?	•	+2/-1
Explanations Clear and Appropriate?	•	+2/-1
Formatting Correct?	•	+0/-1
Mechanics Correct?	•	+0/-1
Engagement Developed?	•	+1/+0
<b>Total</b>		
<b>Overall Comments</b>		

Assessment categories are defined below.

- Assigned Guidelines Met?—Does the paper present a work of literary explication of 1,300 to 1,625 words in length (exclusive of heading, title, and end-citations)? Is it submitted in .doc, .docx, or .rtf format?
- Thesis Clear and Appropriate?—Does the paper present a clear thesis? Is the thesis one that addresses the function of humor in the work?
- Evidence Clear and Appropriate?—Does the paper present clear primary, and possibly secondary and critical, evidence to support the thesis? Is the evidence likely to be sufficient to the needs of the presumed primary readership of interested literary scholars? Is the evidence attested appropriately, per prevailing Modern Language Association of America standards?
- Explanations Clear and Appropriate?—Does the paper connect the evidence to the thesis systematically, explaining the justification for the thesis in a way the presumed primary readership of interested literary scholars is likely to accept as valid?
- Formatting Correct?—Does the paper appear in double-spaced 12-point Garamond, Georgia, or Times New Roman typeface on letter-sized paper with one-inch margins?

Are an appropriate title and heading provided? Are page numbers present, in their appropriate positions, and in the same typeface as the rest of the text?

- Mechanics Correct?—Does the paper adhere to the conventions of edited American English promulgated by the Modern Language Association of America and articulated in course materials? Does it evidence a level of diction and usage accordant with the likely expectations of the presumed primary readership?
- Engagement Developed?—As a sort of extra-credit item, does the paper avoid the use of trite and/or cliché phrasing? Does it offer some unusual perspective? Does it present materials in such a way as stand out favorably against common expectations for undergraduate college writing?

## Notes

As has been noted during class discussion, the model of essay provided by *The Explicator* is one worth following. Students are encouraged to look over the articles in its pages for examples of how to craft their own texts.

Other examples of similar works are available. One such is “Sample Textual Analysis: Picking apart a Fictional Puzzle,” available here: <https://elliotttrwi.com/2015/09/30/sample-textual-analysis-picking-apart-a-fictional-puzzle/>. Another, targeted to the current class, is being written; it will be posted to the course site when it is complete.

As exercises in literary explication, particularly exercises that will filter perspectives through critical lenses, it is expected that there will be need for formal citation in the papers. **Failure to provide such citation may be investigated as an academic integrity violation, with potentially adverse effects on students.**

**Geoffrey B. Elliott**  
**ENGL 2340: World Literature through the Renaissance, Midterm Exam Assignment**  
**Sheet**  
**Fall 2016**

Below appears a print version of the guidelines for the Midterm Exam (MTE<sub>x</sub>) posted online at <https://elliotttrwi.com/instruction/schreiner-university/schreiner-university-engl-2340-world-literature-through-the-renaissance/schreiner-university-engl-2340-world-literature-through-the-renaissance-midterm-exam/>. The online version is to be considered authoritative, superseding any previously published information regarding the MTE<sub>x</sub>.

One of the tasks of ENGL 2340 is to introduce students to the shape of literary study. As such, it is just and fitting that students be asked to demonstrate knowledge of key pieces of literature and terms associated with the interpretation and analysis of literature. Accordingly, students in Dr. Elliott's section of the course are asked to respond to a series of identification items in the form of an exam—the MTE<sub>x</sub>.

Completing the MTE<sub>x</sub> will require students to

- Review the quizzes administered during the term to date and
- Sit for the exam.

Information about both follows, along with information about assessment and notes.

### **Review Quizzes Administered**

Students in the class will have taken a number of quizzes, typically 20-minute exercises administered at the end of each class week that ask students to accurately identify or explain three of five terms derived from lecture and assigned readings. Typically, the beginning of the next class week sees announcement of correct quiz answers—those answered by students and those not answered. The questions asked on the MTE<sub>x</sub> will be taken directly from those asked on the quizzes throughout the term so far. Not all the questions posed on the quizzes will appear again on the exam, and which questions will be posed will not be announced until the exam is administered, so students need to be familiar with all of the terms asked to date.

### **Sit for the MTE<sub>x</sub>**

**Before class time on 14 October 2016**, students will need to arrive in class with something with which to write; no other materials are required for class that day, as the entire period will be devoted to completing the MTE<sub>x</sub>. An exam form will be provided, and all answers are expected to be recorded on it.

The form will present twelve items, taken directly from quizzes previously administered. Students will be asked to respond to any ten of them, identifying or explaining each in two or three full sentences that should conform to usage standards promulgated by the Modern Language Association of America.

Once an individual student has completed the MTE<sub>x</sub>, that student should submit the exam form to the instructor. As the MTE<sub>x</sub> is the only activity planned for the day, students are free to go after completing it. Consultation with the instructor will be discouraged so as not to impede the progress of students still sitting for their exams.

## Assessment

As with the quizzes from which the MTEx derives, the exam will be assessed in terms of the accuracy of answers, the thoroughness of answers, and the adherence of usage in the answers to Modern Language Association standards, with a holistic score assigned to each and the average of those scores recorded as the exam grade—a **major assignment grade worth 10% of the total course grade**. In effect, then, each of the ten items expected to be answered accounts for one percent of the total course.

Students who wish to answer more than ten items are invited to do so; the ten items displaying the most accuracy, thoroughness, and adherence to usage standards will be scored, the others dropped. Students who address fewer than ten items will suffer substantial penalties to their overall scores, regardless of their performance on any individual items.

## Notes

The MTEx is a closed-book, closed-note, closed-source individual assignment. Students thought to be collaborating during the exam period will be subject to academic integrity proceedings, with substantially adverse effects.

Students with documented learning differences or other approved grounds for accommodation need to coordinate with the instructor and the relevant University offices to arrange for appropriate handling of the MTEx. Working on such things early is better than working on them late, as more time to prepare allows for a better experience.

**Geoffrey B. Elliott**

**Fall 2016**

**ENGL 2340: World Literature through the Renaissance, Midterm Exam**

<b>Student Name</b>	
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Below appear twelve items, whether literary critical concepts or works of literature. For **any ten** of them, write two or three sentences that explain the meaning or significance of the item. The accuracy of the answer, the thoroughness of the answer, and the correctness of usage (per MLA standards) will be assessed holistically and the performance in all three regards averaged for the overall score on this exercise, a minor assignment grade.

*Items assessed are listed in the order given on the assignment. Lines for responses were provided to students in the exam. Lines for instructor response also followed.*

- Apposition
- *Classic of Poetry*
- Epic
- Frame Narrative
- Genre
- *Gilgamesh*
- Literary Canon
- Lyric Poetry
- *Lysistrata*
- Paratextual
- *Ramayana*
- Reception Studies

Below appears a print version of the guidelines for the Final Exam (FinEx) posted online at <https://elliotttwi.com/instruction/schreiner-university/schreiner-university-engl-2340-world-literature-through-the-renaissance/schreiner-university-engl-2340-world-literature-through-the-renaissance-final-exam/>. The online version is to be considered authoritative, superseding any previously published information regarding the FinEx.

One of the tasks of ENGL 2340 is to introduce students to the shape of literary study. As such, it is just and fitting that students be asked to demonstrate knowledge of key pieces of literature and terms associated with the interpretation and analysis of literature. Accordingly, students in Dr. Elliott's section of the course are asked to respond to a series of identification items in the form of an exam—the FinEx.

Completing the FinEx will require students to

- Review the quizzes administered throughout the term to date and
- Sit for the exam.

Information about both follows, along with information about assessment and notes.

### **Review Quizzes Administered**

Students in the class will have taken a number of quizzes, typically 20-minute exercises administered at the end of each class week that ask students to accurately identify or explain three of five terms derived from lecture and assigned readings. Typically, the beginning of the next class week sees announcement of correct quiz answers—those answered by students and those not answered. The questions asked on the FinEx will be taken directly from those asked on the quizzes throughout the term, emphasizing those presented after the earlier MTEx but including some items from before that assignment and at least one that appeared on the MTEx. Not all the questions posed on the quizzes will appear again on the exam, and which questions will be posed will not be announced until the exam is administered, so students need to be familiar with all of the terms asked to date.

### **Sit for the FinEx**

**Before 1030 on 13 December 2016**, students will need to arrive in the regular classroom with something with which to write; no other materials are required for class that day, as the entire period will be devoted to completing the FinEx. An exam form will be provided, and all answers are expected to be recorded on it.

The form will present twenty items, taken directly from quizzes previously administered. Students will be asked to respond to any fifteen of them, identifying or explaining each in two or three full sentences that should conform to usage standards promulgated by the Modern Language Association of America.

Once an individual student has completed the FinEx, that student should submit the exam form to the instructor. As the FinEx is the only activity planned for the day, students are free to go after completing it. Consultation with the instructor will be discouraged so as not to impede the progress of students still sitting for their exams.

## Assessment

As with the quizzes from which the FinEx derives, the exam will be assessed in terms of the accuracy of answers, the thoroughness of answers, and the adherence of usage in the answers to Modern Language Association standards, with a holistic score assigned to each and the average of those scores recorded as the exam grade—a **major assignment grade worth 15% of the total course grade**. In effect, then, each of the fifteen items expected to be answered accounts for one percent of the total course.

Students who wish to answer more than fifteen items are invited to do so; the fifteen items displaying the most accuracy, thoroughness, and adherence to usage standards will be scored, the others dropped. Students who address fewer than fifteen items will suffer substantial penalties to their overall scores, regardless of their performance on any individual items.

## Notes

The FinEx is a closed-book, closed-note, closed-source individual assignment. Students thought to be collaborating during the exam period will be subject to academic integrity proceedings, with substantially adverse effects.

Students with documented learning differences or other approved grounds for accommodation need to coordinate with the instructor and the relevant University offices to arrange for appropriate handling of the FinEx. Working on such things early is better than working on them late, as more time to prepare allows for a better experience.

**Geoffrey B. Elliott**

**Fall 2016**

**ENGL 2340: World Literature through the Renaissance, Final Exam**

<b>Student Name</b>	
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Below appear twenty items, whether literary critical concepts or works of literature. For **any fifteen** of them, write two or three sentences that explain the meaning or significance of the item. The accuracy of the answer, the thoroughness of the answer, and the correctness of usage (per MLA standards) will be assessed holistically and the performance in all three regards averaged for the overall score on this exercise, a minor assignment grade.

*Items assessed are listed in the order given on the assignment. Lines for responses were provided to students in the exam. Lines for instructor response also followed.*

- Diamond Sutra
- Explicate
- Frame Narrative
- Heterodox
- Literary Canon
- Litotes
- Orientalism
- Panegyric
- Paratextual
- Performativity
- *Picaresque*
- Poetics
- Postcolonialism
- Reception Studies
- Romance
- Sir Richard Burton
- Taurascatics
- Transliteration
- Travel Narrative
- *Waka*

Below appears a print version of the guidelines for the Online Discussions (Discus) for the course, posted online at <https://elliotttwi.com/instruction/schreiner-university/schreiner-university-engl-2340-world-literature-through-the-renaissance/schreiner-university-engl-2340-world-literature-through-the-renaissance-online-discussions/>. The online version is to be considered authoritative, superseding any previously published information regarding the Discus.

Among the most important parts of developing critical insight into any art are persistent attention to it and practice with it. Because English studies works primarily with words, persistent attention and practice take the form of repeated, extensive reading and discussion about what is read. The readings are taken care of by the readings due listed on the course calendar. Discussion is accounted for in part by the physical classroom. However, the assigned class meetings must also include some lecture and overt instruction, meaning they cannot be wholly given over to the kind of talk that allows for critical approaches to develop—and assigned class meetings are not enough time to do so even if they can be dedicated entirely to talk. Literature classes do well, therefore, to extend their discussions outside the regularly scheduled times; online discussion postings are a useful means through which to offer such extension.

Accordingly, the course asks students to compose numbers of substantive posts each week, of which

- One must begin a new thread of discussion,
- One must respond to a discussion already in progress,
- One must occur on or before the midpoint of each discussion period, and
- One must occur after the midpoint of each discussion period.

Information about each task follows, along with a copy of the relevant grading rubric and notes.

### **Substantive Posts**

Part of developing critical insight inheres in following thoughts and exploring them. Doing so means that a certain minimal amount of time and effort must be spent in laying out and substantiating ideas. For this course, a minimum of 125 words in a post will be necessary for it to be considered substantial. As noted for a similar assignment at another institution, “More will not necessarily be better, as padded prose is generally annoying, but fewer will not typically have enough heft to be useful.”

Also, given the positioning and orientation of the course, it is to be hoped that posts will be relatively free of mechanical and grammatical errors, as well as displaying an appropriate style—all as provided for by MLA standards and as treated in class. Since posts should work towards having enduring value for the course, leaving them such that they are easily readable by others throughout the term will be of benefit.

Posts of exceptional quality, loosely interpreted, may be rewarded at a higher rate. Also, additional substantive posts may occasion greater rewards.

### **Beginning New Threads**

Beginning a new thread is beginning a new conversation, and, as with any conversation, it needs to lay out what is being discussed and what idea about it is being advanced. In some senses, a

new thread functions as a formal paragraph, identifying a topic, advancing a claim about it, and substantiating that claim in some way. That claim, however, need not be argumentative (although it can be); expressing that a given passage in the reading gives pause or occasions some wholly reactive comment or question is entirely okay. For example, in a class that deals with Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, a discussion thread might open with a post similar to what appears below:

As I was reading early on in "The Wedding of King Arthur," where Gawain and Gaheris chase a hart into a castle, and Gawain ends up in a fight (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/MaloryWks2/1:5.7?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>), I was struck by the idea that a person—however noble a lady—could actually *gift* a deer to another. Were deer somehow more nearly domesticated in the Britain of the text, that they could be given as gifts? Or is the matter rather one that betokens the lady's power? But if it is, then should she not be able to do more with Gawain than fall across her lover and before his sword, losing her head in the process? Something in the passage reads strangely to me; am I the only one for whom this is true?

Further, while the readings and assignments for the course are likely to—and should—undergird much of the ongoing discussion, other materials relevant to them may be brought in for consideration and discussion. As such, another discussion thread in a class that deals with Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* might begin with something like what appears below:

I saw a commentary on Malory, <https://literaryanalysis.net/2009/09/05/literature-commentary-le-morte-darthur/>, and I notice that the author makes much of the difficult language. That is, the writer notes that "Le Morte d'Arthur' [*sic*] makes Shakespeare or the King James Version look positively modern" and remarks on "a 500-page chunk in the middle of the book that is dry as dust. There just aren't that many ways of describing jousts, tournaments, and one-on-one duels. Things get really old, really fast. [...] It's tedious, dull, and probably the most difficult book [the online writer has] ever read." If it *is* so hard to read and dull, why do we continue to read it at all? Why not just go to the "shorter, snappier, simpler, and more fun to read" versions of which the online writer writes?

In both cases, the post-writer brings a specific item to attention, outlines a reaction to it, and gives some reason to have such a reaction. While no formal argument is made in the samples, each could serve as a useful springboard for discussion, allowing for considered response that leads to new knowledge. And, again, more formal argument is also entirely fine; another discussion thread in a class dealing with Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* could begin more argumentatively, as in the example below:

The beginning of Malory's work (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/MaloryWks2/1:3.1?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>) gives us a vision of a disunited England, one in which nobles war against their kings openly. It also gives us one in which the king is a lecher, lusting after a married woman and conspiring to get at her by whatever means—even deceitful magic. Arthur's origin is in something far less than pleasant in the text, then, and that very unpleasantness—conceived through what we, reading the next now, have to call rape, since Igrayne could not give informed consent to the sex-act that resulted in Arthur's conception—foreshadows Arthur's own sexual problems (being raped by his sister and siring Mordred, being unable to conceive a legitimate child with Guinevere, being cuckolded by her and Lancelot) and the political failures that result therefrom.

Other modes of introducing new threads could be found, certainly, but those laid out above suggest themselves as reasonably accessible—and easy to respond to. The latter is helpful, since responses are required.

### Responding to Threads

It is not enough to simply advance ideas; the ideas of others must be responded to if knowledge and understanding are to be advanced. (Indeed, each of the thread-beginning techniques noted above is, in fact, a response to another's idea.) To help the class move along, then, discussions require students to respond to one another. Doing so tends to be easier than starting new

discussions; conversations have inertia no less than physical objects do. Discussions that begin by asking questions make responses easy via answering them. Discussions that advance more formal arguments invite response, whether agreement and extension, disagreement and explanation, or nuance and explication. Whatever the response may be, it will need to make clear what is being responded to, what the response is, and what substantiation is available for the response.

As such, simple affirmation—“I agree,” “Yes,” or the like—or denial—“No,” “That’s wrong,” or the like—will not suffice. Something like “I agree because, later in the text, we can see...” or “I disagree. If we look at...” will be more helpful, however, because it gives the reader more with which to work to move forward. Again, the point of the exercise is to arrive at better understandings, and doing so is aided by seeing how others are thinking.

As an example, a response to the “Wedding of King Arthur” comment, above, might look like what appears below:

I’m not sure it’s an issue of deer being domesticated—or more like domesticated—so much as it is an issue of who owns hunting rights and lands. Common understandings hold hunting as a restricted privilege in medieval times; that’s part of what annoys the authorities about Robin Hood and the Merry Men, that they hunt in the (protected) forest where they live, if I recall. It seems to me, then, that the lady gave her knight a special deer, taken alive and therefore with great effort and at great cost; it is a display of her wealth that she could do such a thing. Given that, it makes sense that the knight would want to protect it, and I know I’d have something to say to someone whose dogs came after my pets.

Similarly, a response to the foreshadowing comment, above, might look like what appears below:

There is something to be said about the idea of foreshadowing—but it does rely on *our* sensibilities more than on those of Malory’s contemporaries. The sexual misconduct noted would not have been perceived quite so broadly then as it is (more rightly) now. Merlin, remember, goes along with Uther’s plans to take Igrayne, even as Uther knows Igrayne is married. The same Merlin notes the rebuke Arthur will receive for having sex with his half-sister (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/MaloryWks2/1:3.18?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>), even though Arthur is unaware of who she is at the time (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/MaloryWks2/1:3.17?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>). A misogynistic view of sexuality and sexual responsibility is suggested, to be sure, but it is the one in force as the text was composed; it is the one we have to use if we are to treat the text appropriately. And I think that weakens the foreshadowing somewhat.

In both cases, the item occasioning response is identified, a claim is made, and that claim is supported—whether by anecdotal and commonplace evidence or by direct textual reference. The responses also directly engage the ideas presented, rather than commenting on the person who advances the ideas. The latter point is particularly important, not only to avoid instances of the *ad hominem* fallacy, but also to ensure that discussion remains civil despite its treatment of less-than-pleasant, potentially triggering subject matter—and a civil environment is necessary for people to feel safe enough to be able to advance ideas and benefit from the experience of doing so.

### **Discussion Periods and Their Midpoints**

The periods over which online discussions are to be made are not evenly distributed. Accordingly, they will have different midpoints, and they will require different numbers of posts, as outlined below.

<b>Discussion Period (Discus)</b>	<b>Midpoint</b>	<b>Minimum Number of Posts</b>
1 (24 August to 9 September)	31 August	5
2 (9 to 16 September)	13 September	3
3 (16 to 23 September)	20 September	3
4 (23 to 30 September)	27 September	3
5 (30 September to 21 October)	12 October	9
6 (21 to 28 October)	25 October	3
7 (28 October to 4 November)	1 November	3
8 (4 to 11 November)	8 November	3
9 (11 to 18 November)	15 November	3
10 (18 November to 2 December)	27 November	7

Discus 1 is lengthened against late registration and roster instability. Discus 5 is lengthened to allow more focus on Ppr 1 and the MTEEx. Discus 10 is lengthened against the Thanksgiving holiday. Keep in mind that each Discus ends at the moment class begins on the specified class day (i.e., Discus 2 ends when class is scheduled to begin on 16 September); posts made on the day but after class begins will be regarded as belonging to the next available Discus.

As is noted elsewhere, posting during assigned class times is inadvisable, as it argues against being engaged with what is happening in the physical classroom.

### **Grading Rubric/s**

Please note that, in the interest of offering students practice in proofreading and editing their own work, comments offered through reproductions of the form below are general in nature. That is, they identify systematic problems and make broad suggestions rather than making line-by-line corrections. Specific points of excellence, however, are likely to be identified.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Steps Yes/No</b>
Minimal Number of Substantive Posts Made?	•	+2/-1
New Thread of Discussion Begun?	•	+1/+0
Responded to a Thread in Progress?	•	+1/+0
Posted before Midpoint?	•	+1/+0
Posted after Midpoint?	•	+1/+0
Mechanics Correct?	•	+0/-1
Engagement/Exceptional Quality Displayed?	•	+1/+0
<b>Total Steps Change and Grade</b>		
<b>Overall Comments</b>		

Minimal Number of Substantive Posts Made?—Did the student make the required minimum number of posts for the Discus? Were they substantive, as described?

New Thread of Discussion Begun?—Did the student begin at least one new thread of discussion via a substantive post? Was it of an appropriate sort, as described?

Responded to a Thread in Progress?—Did the student make at least one substantive response to an ongoing thread of discussion? Was it of an appropriate sort, as described?

Posted before Midpoint?—Did the student make at least one substantive post before the midpoint of the Discus?

Posted after Midpoint?—Did the student make at least one substantive post after the midpoint of the Discus?

Mechanics Correct?—Were the substantive posts the student made generally free from grammatical and mechanical error, and were the posts stylistically appropriate, as laid out by MLA standards and during class time? Do they reflect a level of usage consistent with what is to be expected from students in their second year of higher education?

Engagement/Exceptional Quality Displayed?—Do one or more of the substantive posts made display some quality that commands attention or evidences some level of engagement unusual for students in a sophomore-level class?

### **Notes**

As motioned towards above, some of the materials treated in any literature class—or any discussion of literature—may be triggering. They are not brought up for the purposes of triggering those who may be triggered, but they are part of the literature and the context in which the literature exists; understanding both may necessitate treating such materials. Every attempt will be made to do so with respect to participants in the discussion.

**Geoffrey B. Elliott**  
**ENGL 2340: World Literature through the Renaissance Compiled Quizzes**

*During the term, students were offered several vocabulary quizzes, all following the same model. The assignment instructions are reproduced below. After, lists of the vocabulary items assessed are provided, grouped by quiz date.*

<b>Student Name</b>	
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Below appear five items, whether literary critical concepts or works of literature. For **any three** of them, write two or three sentences that explain the meaning or significance of the item. The accuracy of the answer, the thoroughness of the answer, and the correctness of usage (per MLA standards) will be assessed holistically and the performance in all three regards averaged for the overall score on this exercise, a minor assignment grade.

**20160916**

- Genre
- *Gilgamesh*
- Literary Canon
- Reception Studies
- *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*

**20160923**

- Alliteration
- Epic
- Epyllion
- Flyting
- *Lysistrata*

**20160930**

- Alpha-syllabary
- Apposition
- Frame Narrative
- Mantra
- *Ramayana*

**20161007**

- *Classic of Poetry*
- Lyric Poetry
- Masters Literature
- Paratextual
- Third-person Limited Narration

**20161021**

- Explicate
- Orientalism
- Romance
- *Shahnameh*
- Taurascatics

**20161028**

- Heterodox
- *Mawwaliya*
- Postcolonialism
- Sir Richard Burton
- *Thousand and One Nights*

**20161104**

- Emblematic
- Litotes
- *Pañcatantra*
- Poetics
- *Subhasita*

**20161111**

- “Autumn Meditations”
- “Ballad of the Firewood Vendors”
- “The Biography of Tipp O’Hair”
- Diamond Sutra
- Transliteration

**20161118**

- Agglutinative
- *Kokinshū*
- *Man'yōshū*
- Panegyric
- *Waka*

**20161202**

- *Book of Travels*
- Manuscript Lineage
- Performativity
- *Picaresque*
- Travel Narrative