

Course Topic: Kentucky Literature
Course Title: ENG 200: Introduction to Literature
Winter 2023 Online
(Dec 11-29, 2023)

As you know, this is a three-week winter class, so considerable weekly reading and writing is required. This syllabus is a guide to knowing what work is required and when things are due. Read this carefully and often, especially the weekly reading and writing schedule. If you have questions about activities, etc., send me a well-written email and I'll respond to you personally or to the whole class with a Blackboard announcement if your question is applicable to all students.

Professor: Wes Berry

Email: wes.berry@wku.edu

Office Hours: Zoom, by appointment

Required Texts and Technological Needs

- Survant, Joe. *The Land We Dreamed*. ISBN 9780813144580
- Berry, Wendell. *How It Went: Thirteen More Stories of the Port William Membership*
ISBN 9781640095816
- Reece, Erik. *Lost Mountain: A Year in the Vanishing Wilderness* ISBN 9781594482366
- Selected texts by other Kentucky writers, provided to you in PDFs on Blackboard
- **Blackboard Fluency:** You will be expected to be comfortable using Blackboard (Bb), WKU's online learning management system. This three-week whirlwind of a course is not the time to also be learning how to use it.
- You will need access to a desktop, laptop, or tablet to participate in this course. Many functions of Blackboard are not accessible on phones. If you do not currently have access to a desktop, laptop, or tablet, please get in touch with [TopperTech](#) to borrow one.
- Access to a fast, secure internet connection
- **Microsoft Word:** You are required to upload formal writing (close reading assignment, essay) as Word documents. As a WKU student, you can download [Microsoft Office 365](#) (which includes Word) for free.

Course Description

Howdy! Welcome to Introduction to Literature, the course that turned this country redneck into a professor. Yep. That's right. I took this course in spring 1989 at WKU and read **canonical** stories, drama, and poems, and I got excited about how literature touches on many "fields" of knowing, like psychology, history, ecology, and the sciences. I've read literature diligently since 1991 and have taught literature courses since 1995. I've taught many versions of this course that correspond with my areas of expertise. Since I teach a course titled "Kentucky Literature" every two years, I decided to focus on KY writers for this abbreviated winter term course.

Catalog Description

Introductory study of fiction, poetry, and drama demonstrating techniques by which literary artists reflect the human experience. Substantial student writing about literature will be required. This course fulfills the B.1 (Humanities/Literature) general education requirement. It will help students attain these general education objectives: proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking an informed acquaintance with major achievements in the arts and humanities.

Colonnade Program Description

English 200 provides an introduction to a variety of literature at the college level. Assignments encourage critique and analysis and give students introductory knowledge of key literary terms, concepts, and reading strategies. Students apply this knowledge in discussing and writing about literary texts and consider how literature inscribes the human experience. Because these classes emphasize the reading of primary texts, instructors will focus on literacy skills to supplement content course work.

Colonnade Learning Outcomes Met by This Course

English 200 helps to fulfill the Arts and Humanities (AH) Colonnade requirement. Upon completion of this English 200, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of specific disciplines within the Arts and Humanities.
2. Distinguish among various kinds of evidence by identifying reliable sources and valid arguments.
3. Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the Arts and Humanities.
4. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.
5. Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.
6. Read, comprehend, and analyze primary texts independently and proficiently.

Course Policies

Communication

I will communicate with you as a class almost exclusively through our Blackboard announcements page, so check it daily. If I need to communicate with you individually, I will do so through your WKU topper account, so be sure you have access to that and also check that daily.

Another important way I will communicate with you is by leaving you feedback on your assignments. You can find this feedback by going to Blackboard and accessing the My Grades folder. Inside that folder, there will be a list of assignments along with your scores. When I leave you feedback, **a blue bubble will appear in this area.** Click that bubble to read your feedback so that you can continue improving your work.

Deadlines & Late Work

This accelerated course requires students to keep up and complete reading and writing assignments in a timely manner. See "Evaluation of Student Work" below to see how submitting late work will be reflected in grading.

Understanding Letter Grades

This course doesn't work on a traditional point system of 1-100. Instead, at the end of the term I'll assign a letter grade that reflects your performance, based on the following **holistic criteria** and using a five-point scale for assignments to keep students aware of their progress:

Holistic Criteria/Five Point Scale = Final Letter Grade Assigned				
Outstanding (5) = A	Proficient (4) = B	Progressing (3) = C	Needs Work (2) = D	Minimal Evidence (1) = F
Consistently demonstrates high-level understanding/application of learning objectives and a commitment to thoughtful, curious work throughout the semester.	Often demonstrates understanding/application of learning objectives and a commitment to thoughtful, curious work throughout the semester.	Inconsistently demonstrates understanding/application of learning objectives and a commitment to thoughtful, curious work throughout the semester.	Rarely demonstrates understanding or shows application of learning objectives. Rarely commits to thoughtful, curious work throughout the semester.	Student has not submitted or produced much evidence of understanding or shown application of learning objectives.

***** In the following grading category descriptions, “attendance” means completing work by the deadlines*****

A = Outstanding Work: For students who demonstrate careful reading of texts throughout the semester and who create writing projects that offer unique insights into the literature explored, with **skillful attention to textual details and accomplished use of paraphrase and quotations for evidence.**

Qualities of the “A” grade:

- Superior attendance
- Course-enriching participation in class discussions (meaning Blackboard posts for this online course); **supporting opinions with evidence** from the texts
- Reading quiz responses reveal high-level engagement of readings with **accurate and detailed responses** to questions
- Skillful writing: **paying close attention to textual details** and **making clearly-written analytical observations** in **well-organized essays**; **skillful use of paraphrase and quotations** and **MLA research style, especially in-text documentation**

B = Proficient Work: Qualities of the “B” grade:

- Good attendance
- Commenting on readings in a way that reveals the student has read the material
- Reading quiz responses are mostly on point but not as detailed and analytically astute as the “outstanding” responses.
- Writing about the readings in a way that demonstrates familiarity with the conventions of literary analysis, including knowing how to provide textual evidence to support claims, competent use of paraphrase and quotations and the basics of MLA style

C = Progressing (satisfactory, but not exceptional or especially good)

Qualities of the “C” grade:

- Average attendance (some late submissions)
- Writings reveal a mediocre effort to read and respond to the texts
- Student writing sometimes lacks clarity and doesn’t use sources well

D = Needs Work

- Excessive absences (lots of late submissions)
- Writings reflect **sketchy knowledge of course readings** and **meagre efforts to submit quality work** per the criteria listed in “A” and “B” descriptions above

F = Excessive absences, failure to submit original writing assignments, academic dishonesty, plagiarism

Evaluation of Student Work

All work will be evaluated on a 1-5 scale.

5 = Outstanding

4 = Proficient

3 = Progressing

2 = Needs work

1 = Little evidence of learning

Academic Honesty, Artificial Intelligence, Plagiarism

You know plagiarism—passing off someone else’s ideas as your own—is shameful, right? As Kevin Jacob Kelley explains in his *Inside Higher Ed* article “Teaching Actual Student Writing in an AI World,” he puts the following policy in his syllabus to let students know that using AI to generate course writing is unacceptable: **“The use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce writing for this course is not allowed unless it is otherwise stated by the instructor. If a student is found to have used AI-generated content for an assignment, that student may fail the assignment or the course.”** I’m borrowing this policy and giving Professor Kelley credit by putting his language into quotation marks and acknowledging the publication (*Inside Higher Ed*) and giving the “Works Cited” info. below. I put this quotation in bold for emphasis—to make it stand out in this busy syllabus. You’ll want to avoid using bold in your course writing.

Kelley, Kevin Jacob. “Teaching Actual Student Writing in an AI World.” *Inside Higher Ed*, 19 Jan. 2023,
https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2023/01/19/ways-prevent-students-using-ai-tools-their-classes-opinion?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=0c750586a8-DNU_2021_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbc04421-0c750586a8-236321149&mc_cid=0c750586a8&

Educate yourself on common types of plagiarism here:
<https://www.bowdoin.edu/dean-of-students/conduct-review-board/academic-honesty-and-plagiarism/common-types-of-plagiarism.html>

Reading Responses / Quizzes / Discussion Posts: You will complete several informal responses to readings over the course of the term. These will be a mix of subjective and objective responses (short answers, multiple choice).

Formal Writing Assignments:

Close Reading Assignment: At the end of week #1, you'll choose a passage from the poetry unit to analyze. This will help you practice close reading: focusing on how specific words, phrases, characters, and events contribute to overall meaning in a literary text.

Essay Proposal: At the end of week two, you'll submit a proposal for what you will write your essay about. You'll find detailed instructions in "Essay Proposal" in the Blackboard menu. I'll evaluate the proposals and give some feedback so that you can begin work on your course essay.

Seminar Essay: At the end of week three, you'll submit a **reader response** analysis, a scholarly paper focused on a course reading that incorporates peer-reviewed research. You'll find detailed instructions in "Essay Assignment" in the Blackboard menu.

If you don't submit an original essay, you won't pass the course.

Reading Comprehension & Reference Materials: You'll encounter words you don't know in the readings. Scholars who want to self-improve will look up definitions of unfamiliar words in a dictionary. You may have a print dictionary, and if it's fairly current, that will serve you well. There are also several credible online sources such as the Oxford English Dictionary, which also gives the history of the word, the Cambridge Free Dictionary and Thesaurus, and the Merriam-Webster Dictionary online.

Click here to access the Oxford English Dictionary if you're on campus: <https://www-oed-com.libsrv.wku.edu/> For off campus access, 1) Go to WKU Library <https://www.wku.edu/library/> 2) Click on "Databases" 3) Click on the "O" in the alphabetical options 4) Click on Oxford English Dictionary and search for words

Course Calendar / Reading Schedule / Due Dates

*** All readings and videos are located in "Reading Assignments" in Blackboard unless otherwise noted***

Week 1 (Dec. 11-17): Poetry (I've arranged these Kentucky poets chronologically by year of the poet's birth)

M Read the following texts and take Quiz #1 by noon on Tuesday—quizzes are located in "Reading Quizzes" on Blackboard and will be available from midnight to noon on the day the quiz is due

- 1) Watch "Prof. Berry's Introductory Video for Online ENG 200--Course Overview" in Instructional Videos in the Blackboard menu
- 2) Read the course syllabus (located in "Syllabus" on Blackboard)
- 3) Read "Kentucky Writers in Kentucky" by Wendell Berry
- 4) Read "Responding to Literature" (pp. 3-6, "Why We Read Literature" and "Reading Actively and Critically" & pp. 11-17, "Reading Poetry," including the poetry terms and "Questions for Exploring Poetry")
- 5) Robert Penn Warren (born in Guthrie, KY, in nearby Todd Co.)
 - a. Read the first 4 paragraphs of Warren's biography on the Poetry Foundation's website
 - b. "School Lesson Based on Word of Tragic Death of Entire Gillum Family"
 - c. "American Portrait: Old Style"
 - d. "Boy Wandering Simms' Valley"
 - e. "Orphanage Boy"
 - f. Watch Robert Penn Warren / Kentucky Life / KET on Youtube (this 8 minute video is an excerpt of a 1 hour documentary on RPW's life and work)

T 1) Do the reading quiz on Monday's readings and the RPW video by **noon today** (the reading quiz will be available to take at 12:00 a.m. on Tuesday—the quiz will remain open after the deadline, so you can still take it, but keep in mind that missed deadlines will be considered "tardiness"—habitual missed deadlines will affect the overall course grade per the language in the Understanding Letter Grades part of the syllabus)

- 2) Do the Discussion Forum post on Robert Penn Warren's poems by **11:59 p.m. on Tuesday**

2) Read the following to prepare for Wednesday's discussion forum post (due at noontime on Wednesday)

Wendell Berry (Henry Co., KY) (read and watch the following to prepare for a discussion board post for Wednesday)

a. first 5 paragraphs of Berry's biography on Poetry Foundation

b. "The Contrariness of the Mad Farmer"

c. "The Peace of Wild Things"

d. VI: It Is Hard to Have Hope

e. "How to Be a Poet"

f. "The Vacation"

g. Watch *Wendell Berry, Poet and Prophet* (40-minute interview with respected old school journalist Bill Moyers)

W 1) Do the Discussion Forum post on Tuesday's readings and the Bill Moyer's interview with Wendell Berry by **noontime** today

2) Joe Survant (Davies Co./Owensboro)

a. Read biography of Joe Survant on the Kentucky Arts Council website

b. Watch video of Survant speaking at Kentucky Writer's Day

c. Read the **epigraph** and **Preface** and sections I and II of *The Land We Dreamed* (pp. 3-41); this book is a poetic imagining of the history of Kentucky, from the prehistoric hunters to the early settler pioneers of the 1700s

Th Read sections III-IV of *The Land We Dreamed* (pp. 43-88)

F 1) Read sections V-VI of *The Land We Dreamed* (pp. 89-end)

2) Write discussion forum post on *The Land We Dreamed* by **11:59 p.m. (midnight)** on Friday

Sa 1) Watch "Frank X. Walker: Affrilachian Poet / Snapshot Biography"

2) Read biography of Frank X. Walker and the poems "Kentucke" and the selected poems from *Buffalo Dance: The Journey of York* (PDF)

3) Watch Frank X. Walker reading "Kentucke"

4) To prepare for the close reading assignment, read the following:

a. Walt Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"

b. Brynna Rafferty's close reading assignment on Whitman's poem

c. William Carlos Williams, "The Young Housewife"

d. John Rain's close reading assignment on Williams' poem

Su 1) Discussion Forum post on Saturday readings due at **noon**

2) Close reading assignment on *The Land We Dreamed* due at **11:59 p.m. (midnight)**

Week 2 (Dec. 18-24): Fiction (short stories by Kentucky writers)

- M** 1) Read "Responding to Literature" (pp. 6-11, "Reading Fiction," fiction terms, "Questions for Exploring Fiction)—this is the same PDF you read from at the beginning of the poetry unit
 2) Read stories by Gurney Norman ("Fat Monroe" and "Maxine")
 3) Watch "2021 Hall of Fame Gurney Norman"
 4) Read stories by Barbara Kingsolver ("Covered Bridges" & "Extinctions")
 5) Watch excerpt from *Kentucky Life's* biography of Barbara Kingsolver https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUA_KGuo7vA
- T** 1) Complete reading quiz on Monday's readings and videos by **noon**
 2) Read Chris Offutt's story "Sawdust"
 3) Watch Silas House / Southern Storytellers / KET
 4) Watch Silas House / KY Poet Laureate 2023-24 Induction Remarks
 5) Read Silas House's "Another Country" (short story)
 5) Read stories from Wendell Berry's *How It Went* (pp. 3-20)
- W** Read stories from *How It Went* (pp. 21-81)
- Th** 1) Complete quiz on Tuesday-Wednesday readings by **noon** today
 2) Read *How It Went* (pp. 83-157)
- F** Read *How It Went* (pp. 159-end)
- Sa** 1) Complete quiz on Th-F readings by **noon**
 2) Complete discussion post on Wendell Berry's short stories by **noon**
 3) Work on essay proposal (due by noon on Sunday)—see "Essay Proposal" in Blackboard for instructions and models
- Su** Upload essay proposal by **noon**
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Week 3 (Dec. 25-29): Creative nonfiction, "gonzo journalism"

- M** Watch "Erik Reece Reads Poems at the Berry Center's Kentucky Arts and Letters Day 2022"
 Watch *The Last Mountain* (the first 40 minutes at least)
 Read "Forward" to *Lost Mountain* + pp. 3-26, 33-36
- T** Read *Lost Mountain* (pp. 41-68, 92-119, 127-142)
 * Essay proposals responded to by end of day
 * Start writing seminar essay
- W** 1) Complete reading quiz on M-T reading by **noon**
 2) Read pp. 207-243 of *Lost Mountain*
 3) Continue working on seminar essay
- Th** 1) Complete discussion forum post on *Lost Mountain* by **noon**
 2) Continue writing seminar essay
- F** Seminar essay with research due by 11:59 p.m. (**midnight**)