# Course Description

What is the purpose of imaginative literature? Why do people read and write fiction and poetry? How can you determine what some writer who lived hundreds of years ago wanted his or her readers to understand? What do we mean when we talk about the "literary value" of something? Are some pieces of writing naturally "literary" while others are not? And are some pieces of writing "valuable" while others are not? More fundamentally, how does one even begin to talk about a piece of writing in the first place?

English 2326, an introductory-level study of literature in English, examines these and other questions by investigating some of the “greatest hits” of literature. We will sample an array of fiction and poetry, as well as a fascinating full-length book that blends non-fiction writing and subject matter with striking literary techniques. We will assemble along the way a framework that you can use for thinking more carefully and critically about what you read—whether it be a story, a newspaper article, or even an advertisement. The course aims to gird you with some of the vocabulary and basic skills you need not only to enjoy imaginative literature more thoroughly, but also to think more critically about all the texts you encounter in your life. It also aims for you to think more “globally,” by which I mean the ability to think about other people’s perspectives and understandings of the world and of the world, even if they are vastly different from your own. It's a good course to take if you’re contemplating a major in English, but it's also good to take if you want to learn to be a better, more careful reader—a crucial skill no matter who you are.

# Student Learning Outcomes

For assessment purposes, I have designated two specific Student Learning Outcomes, which I will measure over the course of the term.

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of key literary terms, as measured by an ungraded pretest and post-test.
- Students will demonstrate effective writing by composing passage analyses that meet or exceed expectations, as measured by a rubric used in evaluating the second writing assignment. The rubric is available in the DocSharing portion of eCollege.

# Required Texts

The following two works are required for this course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Breakdown</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion board participation</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal for <em>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</em></td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment 1: Story passage analysis (3-4 pages)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment 2: Poetry passage analysis (3-4 pages)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Course Structure**

In brief, this course will use reading, lectures, online discussion, papers, and a reading journal.

- **Reading Notes.** These will be generally brief notes that you should always read before you read the works assigned for the week. The Reading Notes will introduce you to important literary terms and some contexts and ideas you should remember when reading the assignment.

- **Online discussions.** This is the most substantive part of your week-to-week grade for the course. For specific instructions on discussion threads and deadlines, see the weekly breakdown on this syllabus. Each week the discussion board will close on Saturday night, at midnight. However, I encourage you, emphatically, to begin posting early in the week, even if you have not finished the reading assignment—sometimes it is very instructive to see people’s responses when they are only mid-way through a book.

I am not going to set a specific quota for how many posts you need to provide each week. However, as a very general guideline, I will be looking for perhaps four substantive posts per week to earn a “C” for that week’s discussion. By substantive, I mean posts that are more than just two or three vague sentences in length, posts that are detailed and specific, posts that work to enrich the conversation—not, in other words, short, overly-generalized posts that simply say “I really liked this story.” Take a look at what other students are doing. Who are the students whose posts are most thought provoking, that dig deep into the text, that provide lots of detail and reference to specific portions of the reading assignment/quotes from the texts? These will be the ones that merit a higher grade. Who, on the other hand, just seems to stick to basic ideas or plot summary, who doesn’t respond to other people’s posts, who posts just once and then is done with it? These will merit a lower grade.

I urge you to write your comments in response to what others have posted. The whole idea is to get a discussion going! I will step in and participate occasionally in these discussions, and I will read everything, but I will not respond to each and every posting because I am more interested in what you have to say about the pieces we read than in what I have to say.

- **Writing.** You will have two “passage analysis” writing assignments. For each, you will be given a number of passages or lines of poetry from the stories/poems we have read for that unit. You will be asked to choose three of the four passages and do the following:

  (a) Identify the author and title of the story or poem from which the passage is taken; and
  (b) Write about 300-400 words analyzing the details as significance of the passage in terms of what is important within that passage and in terms of the
themes, style, etc. of the story or poem overall. Basically, I am looking for a
detailed “close reading” of the passage. What literary elements do you notice,
and how do those contribute to the passage’s significance? How does the
passage itself contribute to the story or poem overall, in terms of meaning? Can
you say anything about how context may be important to the passage? What do
the details of the passage reveal to you as a reader, within the context of the
overall work and what we’ve been discussing in the class?

Although you will not see the four selected passages until the weeks of the
writing assignments (weeks 6 and 12), you will have the whole week in which to
craft your analysis.

In DocSharing, I have provided a sample passage (titled “Sample Passage
Paper One”) so that you can see what I have in mind, and there I point out some
of the kinds of details you could write about if you were analyzing that sample
passage for this kind of assignment. I also have provided a grading rubric there
(titled “2326Rubric for Single Passage Analysis”). It’s a good idea to study this
rubric so that you can take note of the things I will be looking for.

Note: I will not accept late papers unless under the most exceptional of
circumstances (e.g. death of immediate family member, documented
hospitalization, etc.). Technology problems will not be accepted as an excuse
for late work of any kind.

▪ **Journal.** During the last two weeks of class, we will be discussing the entire
book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. In order to ensure that everyone has
finished the book in time for this discussion, I have asked you to begin reading it
halfway through the semester and to write on each assignment in the “Journal”
portion of eCollege—write there about your observations, reactions, questions,
etc. These reading journals will be graded on a pass/fail basis, only I will see
them, and they will be due by midnight of the Sunday of the week each one is
assigned. Then, when we get to the end of the semester, you can review your
journal entries to refresh your memory about the early parts of the book, in
preparation for our discussion. Be assured that I will read every journal entry,
though I may not comment on them.

▪ And of course lots and lots of **reading**.

Each week you should review the schedule on the syllabus carefully each
week and make sure you are looking at the "Reading Notes," "Assignment," and "Discussion" areas under the "Week" tabs on the left
side of the screen (and “Journal,” as well, when we get to that part of the
course). Be thorough in looking over relevant areas of the eCollege
website, and let me know if you can't find something or if you find an
error.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td>This course will be run using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by TAMU-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to <a href="https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx">https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx</a>. You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or <a href="mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu">helpdesk@tamuc.edu</a>. To access eCollege, you will need a computer with</td>
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internet access (high speed recommended, not dial-up), and a word processor equipped with Microsoft Word. Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, 8.0). Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

### Additional Policies

- Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, and acts of plagiarism can lead to immediate failure of the assignment and/or course. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion (*Texas A&M University—Commerce Code of Student Conduct* 5.b[1,2,3]). Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to cutting and pasting information directly from online sources, copying material from books without providing source documentation, taking essays wholesale from online sources, having someone else write a paper for you, and turning in work that you have already submitted for another class.

- All students enrolled at the University must follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. Additionally, I enforce standards of inclusiveness in my classes. What that means is that I will not tolerate discrimination and disrespect in regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Gee Library 132, Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835, Fax (903) 468-8148. [StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu).

- You are responsible for reading and understanding all the information on this syllabus, as well as on any additional materials I distribute during the course.

### Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments (except the ones from *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*) come from the book *Literature: A Portable Anthology*.

**Week 1**

**1/14 - 1/19**

**Deadline:** Saturday, January 19, 11:59 p.m.

**SHORT STORIES: Classic Stories with an Eerie Edge**
- Read entire course syllabus first
- Take ungraded, anonymous pretest (under "Quiz" in Week 1) next
- Study the Reading Notes
- Read “The Role of Good Reading” (pages 1178-1191)
- Read Edgar Allan Poe, “The Cask of Amontillado” (pages 14-19)
- Read Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery” (pages 242-249)
- Read Joyce Carol Oates, “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” (pages 318-331)

**Week 2**  
**1/21 - 1/26**  
**Deadline:** Saturday, January 26, 11:59 p.m.  
**SHORT STORIES: Women’s Changing Condition**  
- Reading Notes  
- Guy Maupassant, “The Necklace” (pages 59-65)  
- Kate Chopin, “The Story of an Hour” (pages 66-67)  
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (pages 70-83)

**Week 3**  
**1/28 – 2/2**  
**Deadline:** Saturday, February 2, 11:59 p.m.  
**SHORT STORIES: Racial and Ethnic Identities**  
- Reading Notes  
- Ralph Ellison, “Battle Royal” (pages 230-242)  
- Alice Walker, “Everyday Use” (pages 368-374)  
- Sandra Cisneros, “The House on Mango Street” (414-415)

**Week 4**  
**2/4 – 2/9**  
**Deadline:** Saturday, February 9, 11:59 p.m.  
**SHORT STORIES: More Classic Short Stories**  
- Reading Notes  
- Amy Tan, “Two Kinds” (pages 405-413)  
- Tim O’Brien, “The Things They Carried” (pages 375-390)  
- James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues” (pages 250-276)

**Week 5**  
**1/11 – 2/16**  
**Deadline:** Saturday, February 16, 11:59 p.m.  
**SHORT STORIES: More Classic Short Stories**  
- Katherine Anne Porter, “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” (pages 158-165)  
- Margaret Atwood, “Death by Landscape” (pages 332-347)  
- Lorrie Moore, “How to Become a Writer” (pages 432-438)

**Week 6**  
**2/18 – 2/23**  
**Deadline:** Paper should be placed in Week 6 Dropbox by Saturday, February 23, 11:59 p.m.
### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1
Passage Analysis: Short Stories

**Before you begin writing,** read pages 1192-1204 and 1207-1218 in your anthology.

In DocSharing, you will find four passages from the stories we have read for that unit (titled “Passages for Short Story Analysis”). You will be asked to choose three of the four passages and do the following:

(a) Identify the author and title of the story from which the passage is taken; and

(b) Write about 300-400 words analyzing the details as significance of the passage in terms of what is important within that passage and in terms of the themes, style, etc. of the story overall. I am looking for a detailed “close reading” of the passage. What literary elements do you notice, and how do those contribute to the passage’s significance? How does the passage itself contribute to the story overall, in terms of meaning? Can you say anything about how context may be important to the passage? What do the details of the passage reveal to you as a reader, within the context of the overall work and what we’ve been discussing in the class?

In DocSharing, I have provided a sample passage (titled “Sample Passage Paper One”) so that you can see what I have in mind, and there I point out some of the kinds of details you could write about if you were analyzing that sample passage for this kind of assignment. I also have provided a grading rubric there (titled “2326Rubric for Single Passage Analysis”). It’s a good idea to study this rubric so that you can take note of the things I will be looking for.

Note: I will not accept late papers unless under the most exceptional of circumstances (e.g. death of immediate family member, documented hospitalization, etc.). Technology problems will not be accepted as an excuse for late work of any kind.

### Week 7
2/25 – 3/3

**Deadlines:**
Discussion board: Saturday, March 2, 11:59 p.m.

**POETRY: Poetic Form**
- Anne Bradstreet, “To My Dear and Loving Husband” (page 475)
- Andrew Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress” (pages 476-477)
- Robert Herrick, “To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time” (page 471)
- Langston Hughes, “Harlem” (page 577)

**NON-FICTION: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, reading assignment**
- Read The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, pages xiii-55 (“A Few Words About This Book” – Chapter 6)
### Week 8
3/4 - 3/10

**Deadlines:**
- Discussion board: Saturday, March 9, 11:59 p.m.
- Journal entry for Henrietta Lacks: Sunday, March 10, 11:59 p.m.

**POETRY: The Sonnet**
- Reading Notes
  - Edmund Spenser, “One day I wrote her name upon the strand” (page 464)
  - William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 18” (pages 465-466)
  - William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 73” (page 466)
  - John Donne, “Death, be not proud” (page 469)
  - Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “How do I love thee?” (page 508)
  - Kim Addonizio, “The Sound” (page 707)

**NON-FICTION: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, reading assignment**
- Read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, pages 56-109 (Chapter 7 - Chapter 14)
- Write about what you have read in the eCollege Journal—reactions, observations, thoughts, questions, etc.

### Week 9
3/18 – 3/24

**Deadlines:**
- Discussion board: Saturday, March 23, 11:59 p.m.
- Journal entry for Henrietta Lacks: Sunday, March 24, 11:59 p.m.

**POETRY: Poetry: Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender**
- Reading Notes
  - Paul Laurence Dunbar, “We Wear the Mask” (page 548)
  - Langston Hughes, “Theme for English B” (pages 575-576)
  - Countee Cullen, “Incident” (pages 577-578)
  - Dudley Randall, “Ballad of Birmingham” (pages 588-589)
  - Martín Espada, “The Saint Vincent de Paul Food Pantry Stomp” (page 717)
  - Philip Levine, “What Work Is” (pages 615-616)

**NON-FICTION: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, reading assignment**
- Read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, pages 110-157 (Chapter 15 - Chapter 20)
- Write about what you have read in the eCollege Journal—reactions, observations, thoughts, questions, etc.

### Week 10
3/25 – 3/31

**Deadlines:**
- Discussion board: Saturday, March 30, 11:59 p.m.
- Journal entry for Henrietta Lacks: Sunday, March 31, 11:59 p.m.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>4/1 – 4/7</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>POETRY: More Classic Poems</strong></td>
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<td>Richard Garcia, “Why I Left the Church” (pages 659-660)</td>
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<td>Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est” (page 570)</td>
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<td>Randall Jarrell, “The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner” (page 592)</td>
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<td>Yusef Komunyakaa, “Facing It” (page 673)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NON-FICTION: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, reading assignment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Read The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, pages 158-211 (Chapter 21 - Chapter 26)</td>
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<td>Write about what you have read in the eCollege Journal—reactions, observations, thoughts, questions, etc.</td>
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<th>Week 12</th>
<th>4/8 – 4/13</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 11 Deadlines:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion board: Saturday, April 6, 11:59 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal entry for Henrietta Lacks: Sunday, April 7, 11:59 p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>POETRY: More Classic Poems</strong></td>
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<td>A. E. Housman, “To an Athlete Dying Young” (pages 542-543)</td>
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<td>Hart Crane, “My Grandmother’s Love Letters” (pages 573-574)</td>
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<td>Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays” (page 587)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dylan Thomas, “Do not go gentle into that good night” (pages 591-592)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NON-FICTION: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, reading assignment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Read The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, pages 212-267 (Chapter 27 - Chapter 32)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write about what you have read in the eCollege Journal—reactions, observations, thoughts, questions, etc.</td>
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(Your final Henrietta Lacks journal entry will not be due until next week.)

**Deadline:**
Writing Assignment: Due in Week 12 Dropbox, Saturday, April 13, 11:59 p.m.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2**
Passage Analysis: Poetry

Before you begin writing, read pages 1238-1247 in your anthology.

**YOU WILL HAVE TWO OPTIONS FOR THE SECOND PAPER.**

**OPTION 1**

In DocSharing, you will find four passages from the poems we have read (titled “Passages for Poetry Analysis”). You will be asked to choose three of the four passages and do the following:
(a) Identify the author and title of the poem from which the passage is taken; and
(b) Write about 300-400 words analyzing the details and significance of the passage in terms of what is important within that passage and in terms of the themes, style, etc. of the poem overall. I am looking for a detailed “close reading” of the passage. What literary elements do you notice, and how do those contribute to the passage’s significance? How does the passage itself contribute to the poem overall, in terms of meaning? Can you say anything about how context may be important to the passage? What do the details of the passage reveal to you as a reader, within the context of the overall work and what we’ve been discussing in the class?

I will use the same grading rubric for this assignment that I used for the first.

Note: I will not accept late papers unless under the most exceptional of circumstances (e.g. death of immediate family member, documented hospitalization, etc.). Technology problems will not be accepted as an excuse for late work of any kind.

OPTION 2

Write your own sonnet, following correct sonnet form (either English/Shakespearean or Italian/Petrarchan rhyme scheme), about any subject of your choosing. Then, in 2-3 pages (double-spaced, one inch margins, 12 point font), write a critical reflection on the writing process. What did you learn about sonnets by doing this paper? What was challenging? What worked? What didn’t?

NON-FICTION: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, reading assignment

- Read The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, pages 268-328 (Chapter 33 - Afterword)
- Write about what you have read in the eCollege Journal—reactions, observations, thoughts, questions, etc.

Week 13
4/15 – 4/20

Deadline: Final journal entry for Henrietta Lacks: Sunday, April 14, 11:59 p.m.

Week 14
4/22 – 4/27

Deadlines:
Discussion board: Saturday, April 27, 11:59 p.m.

NON-FICTION: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, discussion

- Before the end of the term, take the ungraded, anonymous post-test (under "Quiz" in Week 15)
- In the Discussion board for this week, I have set up a number of threads about The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks. Remember, we are discussion the book in entirety.
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<th>Week 15</th>
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<td>4/29 – 5/4</td>
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**Deadlines:**
Discussion board: Saturday, May 4, 11:59 p.m.

**NON-FICTION: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, discussion**

- As with last week, I have set up various threads in the Discussion board for *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. In addition, I have made a thread for topics that you would like to introduce on your own, so feel free to start your own discussion about the book!