

## Syllabus for: (name of class) English 1B: Critical Inquiry and Literature

<b>Semester &amp; Year:</b>	Spring 2013
<b>Course ID and Section Number:</b>	English 1B Section 1791
<b>Number of Credits/Units:</b>	3
<b>Day/Time:</b>	MW 10:05-11:30
<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Instructor's Name:</b>	Johnston
<b>Contact Information:</b>	Office location and hours: CA 129 MTW 11:40-2:40 Phone: 707-476-4375 Email: <a href="mailto:John-Johnston@redwoods.edu">John-Johnston@redwoods.edu</a>

**Course Description (catalog description as described in course outline):** A course using literature as a basis for critical thinking and composition. Students analyze issues, problems, and situations represented in literature and develop effective short and long written arguments (6000 minimum word total) in support of an analysis. This course is designed for those students who seek to satisfy both the full year composition and the critical thinking transfer requirements.

- **Student Learning Outcomes (as described in course outline) :**
- Analyze and employ appeals (e.g. logical, emotion, faulty, etc.) in written texts.
- Write logical, well-developed, thesis-driven essays that respond to questions at issue raised by literary works.
- Locate, evaluate, use, and document evidence from primary and secondary sources (both electronic and print) to support, develop, or validate judgments.
- Identify and evaluate rhetorical and literary devices as representational and persuasive tools.

**Special accommodations:** College of the Redwoods complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request at least one week before the first test so that necessary arrangements can be made. No last-minute arrangements or post-test adjustments will be made. If you have a disability or believe you might benefit from disability related services and may need accommodations, please see me or contact Disabled Students Programs and Services. Students may make requests for alternative media by contacting DSPS.

**Academic Misconduct:** Cheating, plagiarism, collusion, abuse of resource materials, computer misuse, fabrication or falsification, multiple submissions, complicity in academic misconduct, and/ or bearing false witness will not be tolerated. Violations will be dealt with according to the procedures and sanctions proscribed by the College of the Redwoods. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating on exams will receive an "F" in the course.

The student code of conduct is available on the College of the Redwoods website at:  
<http://redwoods.edu/District/Board/New/Chapter5/AP%205500%20Conduct%20Code%20final%2002-07-2012.pdf>

Additional information about the rights and responsibilities of students, Board policies, and administrative procedures is located in the college catalog and on the College of the Redwoods homepage.

College of the Redwoods is committed to equal opportunity in employment, admission to the college, and in the conduct of all of its programs and activities.

**English 1B: Critical Inquiry and Literature Spring 2013**

**Section E1790 MW 8:30-9:55 Room SS109**

**Section E1791 MW 10:05-11:30 Room SS109**

**Course Website: <http://www.redwoods.edu/Instruct/JJohnston>**

*Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities. –Voltaire*

*Men in general are quick to believe that which they wish to be true. –Julius Caesar*

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Instructor: John Johnston

Office hours: MTW 11:40-2:40

Email: [John-Johnston@redwoods.edu](mailto:John-Johnston@redwoods.edu)

Phone: 707-476-4375

Office: CA 129

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**Contacting your instructor:** The best way for you to contact me is via email. Doing so enables me to send to you any course documents handed out in class or PowerPoint presentations we discussed. **When you email me, be sure to put ENGLISH 1B in the subject heading so I don't mistake your email for junk mail and delete it.** Also, if you type in my email address correctly, I'll get your email. If you don't, I won't. Each semester, I hear from many frustrated students who don't include the dash between my first and last name and others who think my last name is spelled "Johnson" instead of "Johnston" or my first name is spelled "Jhon." So when you send me an email, make sure you type my address carefully.

**PREREQUISITE: English 1A or English 1AH**

**What you need for this course:**

- Pirsig, Robert M. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*. NY: Harper Collins, 1974. ISBN: 978-0-06-058946-2
- O'Brien, Tim. *In the Lake of the Woods*. NY: Mariner, 1994. ISBN: 061870986X
- Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers. *The Bedford Handbook* 8<sup>th</sup> ed. NY: Bedford, 2010. ISBN: 978-0312-48013-4
- Daily (including weekends) access to an internet-connected computer.
- Obsessive commitment to being on time and prepared.
- Burning curiosity.
- Boundless enthusiasm.
- An unquenchable thirst for knowledge.
- Steadfast dedication to your learning.

**Course Description (from the CR Catalog)**

A course using literature as a basis for critical thinking and composition. Students analyze issues, problems, and situations represented in literature and develop effective short and long written arguments (6000 minimum word total) in support of an analysis. This course is designed for those students who seek to satisfy both the full year composition and the critical thinking transfer requirements.

**Course Outcomes/Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to

- Analyze and employ appeals (e.g. logical, emotion, faulty, etc.) in written texts.
- Write logical, well-developed, thesis-driven essays that respond to questions at issue raised by literary works.

- Locate, evaluate, use, and document evidence from primary and secondary sources (both electronic and print) to support, develop, or validate judgments.
- Identify and evaluate rhetorical and literary devices as representational and persuasive tools.

### **A More Detailed Description of this Particular Course**

In order to know who you should vote for, what you should study in college, what you should eat for dinner, what to do when a water pipe bursts in your house...actually, in order to survive and simply function on a day to day basis, you must recognize patterns, make connections, interpret information, make judgments and evaluations, solve problems, and offer arguments. But all interpretations are not equally valuable, all judgments are not equally sound, all evaluations are not equally accurate, all solutions are not equally good, and all arguments are not equally valid. In short, some ideas are better than others. It is the responsibility of the thinking person to figure out which ideas are worth accepting, to what degree these ideas are worth accepting, and which ideas should be rejected. We have to believe and disbelieve, but we need reasons for believing and disbelieving, and the way we discover what is worth believing is *to inquire*—that is, we engage a process of discovering what (if anything) is worth believing about a topic and to what degree it is worth believing.

Unfortunately, we live in an age that presents no shortage of challenges to our ability to inquire. Politicians speak in sound bites because they know that most people care less for the quality of their ideas and more for the “feeling” they get from particular politicians. Studies show that we respond powerfully to the barrage of illogical and incoherent messages advertisers bombard us with, even though these messages usually don’t lend themselves to being thought about, questioned, evaluated, or argued about. Even public education, the arena that is supposed to strengthen our ability to inquire, has begun to challenge our ability to thoughtfully process the world we live in by focusing increasingly on standardized tests that require little actual thinking, creativity, or imagination. Many colleges and universities have largely dropped the pursuit of “liberal” education that seeks to synthesize the mind with the material world in order to pursue rigorous work-force and career training. These institutions, typically, measure their success not by how well graduates are able to think critically and offer insight but by how well they are prepared to perform particular workplace tasks. In short, in much of modern education, it is less important for you to know how to think and understand your experience of the world than it is for you to know the acceptable responses to particular situations and the proper ways to do a job in a way your employer or the marketplace rewards.

To engage in inquiry is to challenge these forces and phenomena by learning to practice the skills that enable you to take charge of the ideas and experiences that run your life. It is to think consciously and deliberately and skillfully in ways that transform yourself. It is to become aware of yourself as an intellect and to begin to remake your mind. With these things in mind, this course is concerned primarily with the development of two abilities: 1. the ability to use inquiry in order to better understand events in the world around you, your thoughts and feelings, the literature we read, and the actions and statements of others; 2. to use inquiry, logic, and sound reasoning in your own writing to create intelligent, insightful essays. By the end of this course, you should understand both the power of inquiry and reasoned thinking.

### **Course Requirements (the things you need to do in order to succeed in this course)**

**Struggling:** It is a requirement of this course that you struggle. Your books and I are not simply going to present a body of information for you to consume and then regurgitate on exams or in reports. We will explore complex historical, moral, cultural, philosophical, and political questions, and if you don’t struggle with these, it means you’re either a god (in which case we’ll make an exception) or a human being thinking about these things only superficially. In other words, if you don’t struggle, it probably means you are not thinking. And if you’re not thinking....well, how can you write something that offers fresh insight if you’re relying only on what you and others already know?

**Essays:** If you honestly and rigorously grapple with questions that matter, you will gain insight into the reading, the issues we discuss and, ultimately, the world you live in and the ideas that shape our understanding of it. The essays you’ll write this semester are opportunities to explore important questions. Essays will vary between

600-1800 words (2-7 typed, double-spaced pages) and will be in response to the issues raised in our reading. When you submit an essay, I will score it, identify strengths, and identify areas for improvement.

All essays will be submitted through our class MyCR site as Microsoft Word files (.doc or docx). I will read, comment on, score, and return your essays through MyCR. If you do not have off-campus access to Microsoft Word, you can use the computers in the CR library to format and submit your essays. I will not accept paper copies of essays.

**Late Papers:** I may not accept a late essay unless prior arrangements have been made with me, and if I do accept a late paper, it may be docked 5% for each day late (including weekends). If you're going to miss a deadline, be sure you talk with me so we can figure out your best course of action.

**MLA Format:** Essays brought to workshop and essays submitted for grades must be double-spaced and typed in accordance with MLA guidelines (MLA format is described in the "How to Format an Essay" handout linked to our course schedule).

**Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation Fixes:** My comments on each graded essay will include indications of grammar, usage, and punctuation errors and references to appropriate sections of *The Bedford Handbook* to help you figure out how to fix the errors. Within two weeks of receiving a graded/commented-on essay, you can submit fixes of these errors. Consult the "Sample Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation Fixes" posted on the course schedule as an example of proper format. An important point to remember here is this: the fewer errors there are in your essay, the fewer fixes you have to submit AND the lesser the negative impact errors can have on your overall essay grade; on the other hand, the more errors there are in your essay, the more fixes you have to submit AND the greater the negative impact errors can have on your overall essay grade. Consequently, you should work hard to proofread your essays carefully for correctness before submitting.

**Computer:** You must have regular access to an internet-connected computer. All assignments are word processed, exams are done via MyCR, and many assignments (including major essays) are available online only. Talk with me ASAP if you anticipate computer access problems.

**Logic & Reasoning Exams:** There will be fill-in-the-blank/short answer exams that involve identification of logical fallacies, reasoning strategies, and language use in short pieces of writing. The exams are equally weighted, but the difficulty of each increases.

**Activities:** I will assign various activities to be done in class. You must be in class at the beginning of the activity (i.e. at the beginning of class) and stay for the entire activity to receive credit. You cannot make up a missed activity. What this means is that if you are late (for any reason), if you leave early (for any reason), or if you do not come prepared to do the day's work (for any reason), you will not receive credit. You will likely encounter circumstances this semester that challenge your ability to come to every class on time and prepared. You may have car trouble, day care problems, illness, a death in the family, etc. Plan for the unexpected by committing to being on time and prepared as much as you can be. I will post activity scores in the MyCR gradebook weekly. If you find that you receive a score of 0 for an activity you completed, you must bring the error to my attention within five days after scores are posted. After five days, there will be no changes made to activity scores.

**Reading:** The pattern that's emerged over the years is clear: those who carefully and actively read their course texts score higher on their essays and exams than those who read them only superficially (those who "skim" the reading or who read for the "gist" tend to score far below their potential and usually don't understand why). Write in your books (doing so doesn't affect the buyback price at all) and on your handouts. Make notes of what you read and bring questions about what we've read to class. The more actively you read, the more you'll learn and the better you'll perform. If you find yourself falling behind in your reading, don't suffer in silence. Come talk to me, and hopefully, we can figure out a way to keep you from becoming swallowed up.

**Attendance:** From the CR Catalog: “Since regular attendance is a critical factor in student success, students at the College are expected to attend all sessions of each class in which they are enrolled. In general, absences may be considered excessive when the number of absences total the number of hours that the class meets during the week.” For this section of English 1B, four absences may be considered “excessive” and cause you to be dropped from the course via AP 5075 (that the CR policy number that allows instructors to drop you for excessive absences). If you miss four classes, you must talk with me to find out if you can remain enrolled in the course. If you simply stop attending the course, it is your responsibility to protect your transcript and initiate an official withdrawal. Any student who is not withdrawn is still enrolled, and final grades reflect a student’s current level of activity and achievement. I cannot sign withdrawal slips after **March 29, 2013**, and I am required to issue grades for all enrolled students at the end of the semester. Do not have your academic transcript blemished by an F for a class you stopped attending.

**Academic Honesty:** “Academic honesty” is a term that refers to your relationship to your college learning. If you are forthright in your work—that is, if you do not share answers with other students, do not accept or steal test answers from other students, and do not use the words or ideas of others as if they are your own in your essays, then you are academically honest. This is a label you should cherish and protect. It is, essentially, the value of your word in college. If, though, you cheat (for whatever reason) or offer someone else’s words or ideas as if they are your own (whether you do this intentionally or unintentionally) you may have committed academic dishonesty. College of the Redwoods takes academic dishonesty very seriously. We’ll discuss in class how to avoid plagiarism and how to preserve your status as an honest academic.

**Grading:** The grading for this course breaks down as follows:

		<i>Points Earned</i>	<i>Course Grade</i>
		100-93	A
Essay #1	12 points	92-90	A-
Essay #2	12 points	89-87	B+
Essay #3	12 points	86-83	B
Essay #4	24 points	82-80	B-
Logic & Reasoning Exams	25 points	79-77	C+
Activities	5 points	76-70	C
GUP Fixes	10 points	69-60	D
		59-0	F

**Extra Credit:** As per CR English Department policy, there is NO extra credit available in this course. But hey, just look at all the opportunity for credit you have available in the required assignments.

### Checking Your Grade

It is your responsibility to check your grade regularly and keep informed about your course performance (You can access a complete, current breakdown of your grade in MyCR). You should save ALL returned graded work in case I neglect to enter the grade or enter it incorrectly.

**Special Needs:** If you have special needs due to a verifiable physical, psychological, or learning disability, you are legally entitled to appropriate accommodations. The college offers a variety of services to support students with special needs, and you should talk with me as soon as possible if you would like my help with arranging accommodations to ensure your success in this course. I’m eager to help in whatever ways I can.

**Non Students in Class:** As per College of the Redwoods policy, only students currently enrolled in a specific section of a course may attend class meetings of that course. This means that friends and children of enrolled students may not sit in on class meetings.

**English 1B Spring 2013 Schedule is available on the course webpage**

# My Papa's Waltz

By Theodore Roethke

The whiskey on your breath  
Could make a small boy dizzy;  
But I hung on like death:  
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans  
Slid from the kitchen shelf;  
My mother's countenance  
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist  
Was battered on one knuckle;  
At every step you missed  
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head  
With a palm caked hard by dirt,  
Then waltzed me off to bed  
Still clinging to your shirt.

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