



# Welcome to English 1B V2001

**Course Name:** English 1B: Critical Inquiry and Literature

**Section #:** V2001

**Instructor:** Ms. Shannon Mondor

**Instructor Contact Information:** shannon-mondor@redwoods.edu

**Course delivery:** This course is delivered and taught 100% online; there are no classroom meetings. This course is 100% asynchronous. There are no required Zoom meetings.

**Course Description:** 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 Readiness:** Are you ready for online classes? Please take about 15 minutes to review what it means to take an online class by watching the [Introduction to Online Learning](#) presentation.

**Student Commitment:** Your commitment will require at least as much time as you dedicate to a traditional face-to-face class, possibly more time if you need to get your computer skills up to speed to complete online work. This course is worth 3 units, which means a face-to-face version of this class would meet for 3 hours each week. In college, a reliable formula is that for every hour in class, students should expect to work at least 2 hours outside of class completing assigned work. For this class, that means a minimum of 9 hours of your life need to be available for reading, writing, thinking, taking notes, analyzing, researching, typing, revising, responding, and reflecting on our work each week.

Please expect to spend 1-2 hours each day devoted to this course to complete all the reading, assignments, and activities at a level of quality that meets expectations. You will need to be able to be online for a chunk of that time at least 3 days each week. Evaluate what time you have available for a dedicated and focused commitment to being an engaged and active participant in our learning community: you'll get out what you put in.

Needed intellectual, interpersonal, and emotional skills include:

- The *determination* to carefully read online assignment descriptions and course texts
- The *willingness* and *dedication* to participate in online activities, watch occasional online videos, contribute to weekly online discussions with small groups and the whole class, participate in writing workshops, take detailed critical reading notes, and complete weekly assignments on time and to outlined criteria and specifications (when the sun is shining and the river is calling)
- The *resilience* to persist and try again when you do not always succeed the first time
- The *self-advocacy* to communicate with the instructor and other students when you need individual help or explanations beyond what are provided in the course
- The *bravery* and *confidence* to try new things and push beyond your comfort zone
- The *humility* to respect ideas that might conflict with or challenge your own, and the *trust* that our community will support your growth and insights, even if we do not always agree.

Conscientiousness, attention to details, respecting due dates, using email to communicate when you're stuck or confused, and decent skills in reading and writing are critical for success.

**Computer Skills:** Online courses require adequate computer skills. You must be able to:

- navigate the course Learning Management System (Canvas)
- receive and respond to your CR email and Canvas email messages
- download and upload files to Canvas as well as access files there, and
- use a word processing program such as Microsoft Word or a free version of it

It is your responsibility to meet the technological demands of the course. There's lots of help available from CR since Covid-19 forced us all to go online more than a year ago. Make use of those resources, which range from laptops you can check out to very low-cost WiFi connections.

**Computer Requirements:** You should have high-speed Internet (such as broadband) service from cable, DSL, or satellite providers. You need to have reliable access to the Internet for the duration of the course. Anticipate problems with your computer and Internet access (including power outages) by not waiting until the last minute to submit assignments. It is your responsibility to meet the class deadlines, which will happen twice each week. Assignments will be due by 11:59 pm on Thursday and Sunday each week. Our weeks will run from Monday through Sunday, and each Monday you'll get a new module.

*Portable Devices vs. Computers:* Although you can use late-model portable devices (such as Android or iOS phones & tablets) for some things, you should plan on doing the majority of your work from a reasonably late-model notebook or desktop computer (Mac or PC). **Do NOT plan to participate in this class solely from a portable device.** I can't imagine the strain on your eyes trying to read class documents off a cell phone or compose full papers on a phone, but of course, I'm getting to the age where glasses are in my near future. If you do decide to use your portable device for *some* of your class work, use the free Canvas app (called "Canvas by Instructure") available in iTunes (for iOS) and the Google Play Store (for Android). Do not try to connect to Canvas using a web browser on a portable device. Your experience with Canvas will be a lot better using the app. Also, you're invited to download and use Pronto, a special educational version of a social media type app for connecting instantly with your peers in the course (sort of like SnapChat for school, without the fun filters). You can chat, hold instant video meetings, or just send little emojiis or memes to your classmates through Pronto.

**Proctored Exams:** There are no proctored exams for this class. There are no exams, period.

**Textbooks:** We have 4 required textbooks for our class. Order them all as soon as possible. We will read them in the order listed, beginning with *Wild*. Three of the books are memoirs, and the last book is a heady collection of poetic analysis of life experiences folx of color are dealing with on the daily. Gear up for making your way through about 50-75 pages of scintillating reading each week and having something to share about your reactions to these fabulous texts. You can buy them all new for around \$45. Used copies will be much cheaper and can probably be found at local bookstores. Used copies will work just fine.

Here's the link to the required books at the [CR Bookstore](#) (prices may vary from what's listed):

1. ***Wild*** by Cheryl Strayed (\$12), **Paperback:** 336 pages, **Publisher:** Vintage; Reprint edition (November 18, 2014), **ISBN-13:** 978-1101873441.
2. ***When They Call You A Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*** by Patrisse Khan-Cullors and Asha Bandele (\$13), **Paperback:** 288 pages, **Publisher:** Griffin; Reprint edition (January 14, 2020), **ISBN-13:** 978-1250306906.
3. ***Citizen: An American Lyric*** by Claudia Rankine (\$12), **Paperback:** 160 pages, **Publisher:** Graywolf Press; 1 edition (October 7, 2014), **ISBN-13:** 978-1555976903.
4. ***Yes, Chef: A Memoir*** by Marcus Samuelsson and Veronica Chambers (\$10), **Paperback:** 336 pages, **Publisher:** Random House Trade Paperbacks, illustrated edition (May 21, 2013) **ISBN-13:** 978-0385342612.

**Please purchase the correct version of the texts so that our page numbers will match.** Or pay close attention to other ways to read the correct chunk of the book each week.

**Other Materials:** There will also be electronic handouts, electronic documents, videos, and links available through the course's Canvas site. Make sure that you can access these materials at the start of the course and early each week when we begin a new module. The course is organized into weekly modules that should make it super easy to navigate and stay on the right track.

Please let me know immediately by email if there are any problems with downloads, with opening any of the course materials, or with submitting files or assignments. Never wait. Tell me right away so that I can correct any identified issues and make our learning as seamless and hassle-free as possible.

**Course Availability** The course will be available on CR's Canvas system no later than 9:00 am on Saturday, August 21, 2021.

On or after that date, you must login to Canvas at <https://redwoods.instructure.com> to enter our "classroom" and confirm your membership in our awesome learning community by posting a profile picture and a little information about yourself. I might be able to get the course running earlier so that you have some time to check it out before we plunge into our breakneck summer pace of work, but that depends on how much progress I make between now and then. Contractually, this course will exist between August 21<sup>st</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup>. No work can be assigned or submitted outside of those dates, though I may be able to publish it prior to 8/21 so you can get the hang of how things will go.

#### **Login instructions for Canvas:**

1. Open your web browser and go to <https://redwoods.instructure.com>
2. Your Username is the same as your **Webadvisor User ID** (e.g., flast123 - first initial + lastname + last 3 digits of your student ID number.) Your initial password is your 8-digit birthdate (mmddyyyy).
3. Once logged in, on top left-hand side of the screen you should see a drop-down menu of your Courses.

#### **Canvas Help:**

There are instructions on the basics of Canvas and additional help with preparation for taking an online course at College of the Redwoods on the [CR-Online](#) web page.

**Confirm your presence in the online classroom:** Log in to the website and post to the “Student Introductions” discussion forum no later than 11:59pm on Thursday, August 26 to confirm your presence in the online classroom. Doing so will confirm your enrollment in the course and avoid your being dropped as a “no show.” You can and will be dropped from the class if you do not log in and post to the “Student Introductions” discussion forum inside the online classroom by 11:59 PM Thursday, August 26 unless you notify me of your intent to remain in the course by email by that same deadline. No exceptions will be made. A student from the waiting list will then be added in your place.

**Additional Information from the Instructor:**

Hello and welcome to class!

I am very excited you are here. Stoked, really. I look forward to learning with and from you over the next 16 weeks of online study. These books we’ll read are amazing, and every time I hear what people think about them and how they connect with them, I learn something new. I truly hope you’re bringing your creativity and whole self to this journey we’ll take together.

Some caveats: Taking an online class is a different type of commitment than taking a class in a classroom on campus, as we’ve all been forced to learn this past year dealing with Covid-19. I have figured out that you will need key skills to be successful in a fully online, asynchronous course. Most importantly, what you will need is a magic combination of strong internal drive and dedication (or self-discipline) to remain connected to the class, manage your time well, and be a self-starter (also defined as a hustler or pistol, which is rather hilarious). This course is not going to complete itself, and if you think you can phone it in from the comfort of your bed in your pajamas, you actually can, as long as you do the work and meet the deadlines. That’s a pretty rad possibility for earning college credits.

I’ll provide the following overview of our expected time commitment to help you assess what this course will ask of you against your current life schedule and other competing responsibilities. If you have a silent Buddhist retreat away from electricity planned for the month of October, for example, you shouldn’t take this class. Or if you’ll be stowed away on some mountainside doing agricultural work and not have a computer or WiFi for several weeks during harvest season, it’s probably not a good idea to take this class either. The beauty of online learning is that you can be in college wherever you are in the world, but the tough thing about that freedom is that what’s in your immediate surroundings often draws your attention away from the folks and tasks online. Build in a system of accountability that is going to have you checking in often and keeping up with the work every week, and you’re golden.

It will be very important for you to create a schedule for yourself and stick to that religiously, no matter what, each day and each week, likely resisting many exciting temptations to do other more immediately fun and gratifying things instead. But passing this class is like training for a marathon: a bit of conscious, focused (possibly even painful) practice each day is the only surefire way to build up the strength and stamina to cross the finish line. You can do anything for 16 weeks. We’ve been on shelter in place and social distancing restrictions for more than a year at this point. We wear masks every time we leave the house to venture into public. Some of us wear masks *in* the house to protect ourselves or our loved ones. You’re surviving a global pandemic. You can definitely pass this course. You can even do exceptionally well in this course if you really buckle down and complete all the tasks with skill, dedication, and a bit of distinction or originality.

## An overview of time commitments for English 1B:

### Myths and false assumptions that typically lead students to struggle (and flail):

Three common but very harmful assumptions students make when entering English 1B have to do with attempting to reduce the time commitments of this course by taking shortcuts. They are the following:

- **MYTH #1:** I don't really need to do the reading/do the reading thoroughly. I can skim and be fine.
- **MYTH #2:** I write best under pressure. (Can you hear me laughing? I *can* tell...)
- **MYTH #3:** Online courses mean that the hours I no longer spend in a classroom each week can be used to complete the reading and homework. That's all it will take.

### Believing any one of these myths or false assumptions often results in not passing the course.

**TRUTH #1.** The reading in this class is part of the work necessary to complete writing assignments. The reading is everything: it is all done in the service of the writing, the critical thinking, and our discussions. The major arguments, ideas, rhetorical techniques, and details of the writing itself in our assigned books is the evidence students will use in their analysis and essays. If a student hasn't read closely, there will be little high-quality or original research available as material and evidence for the writing assignments. Everything in this class is about making the case for your own interpretation of the readings and supporting that with evidence from the texts. Careful reading so that you have something to write that is worth listening to is the heart of this course.

**TRUTH #2.** Power writing just hours before a deadline *feels* dynamic because of the adrenaline coursing through your body. A *passionate* essay can happen in a short amount of time, but a *strong* essay (a thorough, well-researched, clearly supported and well-organized original analysis of a text) cannot be assembled in a day from start to finish, especially without the time and care spent in TRUTH #1, which is digging in to the reading and giving it your all to make connections to your life. An interesting essay that your reader is excited to dive into and learn from will not typically happen in a single day. Just because you write something in a caffeine-fueled panic does not mean a reader is going to think you've made a strong or impressive argument. Meeting the word count is not the same as providing a reader with a quality experience that they're glad they spent time out of their lives to encounter. Shannon is an experienced reader with high expectations. 1B is college writing. It's not possible to deliver a quality product that meets expectations with inadequate preparation and thinking time. Spend regular time engaged in reading, note-taking, thinking, and reflecting throughout the course, in step with the staggered due dates of assignments that are designed to help you build robust essays over time.

**TRUTH #3.** An online course is no less of a time commitment than a face-to-face course. It may be more of a time commitment since you need to be more active and independent in how you organize your participation in the course and its content. You can't just appear in a seat for 90 minutes at a shot and leave it at that. You have to do things and submit work to signal your participation online. To earn 3 units like fellow CR students in a traditional face-to-face 1B class, the time commitments online need to equal or exceed those required in a traditional class. Expect to set aside at least 3 hours for being "online" and at least 6 hours of "homework" each week—or some combination of time that works for your unique skills and situation.

### Whoa...this sounds really hard. Is it?

Before you decide to run away screaming, notice that none of the explanations above have said the work is the hardest thing you'll ever do. In fact, once you get the hang of class, you'll realize that this class is built to walk all students of all incoming abilities step by step, at a reasonable pace, to reach the end goal of passing and earning credit. I truly want you all to succeed. It's totally doable—by design.

**1B does not require you to be a “good” writer or reader. It requires you to be dedicated. It requires regular, scheduled practice and focus on completing most of the things, one small step at a time.**

Many students who enter class terrified of writing and/or reading end up earning good grades. The work isn't meant to be too hard; it is thorough, real, deep, (fun, even!) and designed in sequences that ask you to create small chunks that over time add up to longer and more complex work. If you can commit to the time each week and be disciplined as well as patient, you'll reach the goals of the assignments, understand the material, arrive at insights about what you think and feel about our texts and the arguable ideas in them, and be successful. **But skipping the little stuff basically leaves you in a very bad place, because then you have no building blocks for the big projects and will not have time to catch up.** Trying to run a marathon without adequate training or preparation will mean you crash and burn. Be consistent. Carve out a method that works for you. If what you're doing doesn't work well at first, be willing to experiment, change, and ask for help figuring out a better plan of attack.

**Students who do not contribute online and cut corners on reading homework or time commitments tend to struggle...**and often flail or fail miserably (refer back to those 3 myths and their corresponding truths). Clinging to those myths will leave you confused in Canvas, behind on assignments, and out of the loop on class discussions, which typically leads to losing hope and direction, often escalating to simply giving up or checking out mentally, and growing silent but panicked at what you're facing.

Believing the myths will mean you retreat into a fixed mindset instead of embracing the challenges and growth that comes with acknowledging the hard truths of college courses, and meeting and beating the obstacles inherent in all learning situations, but that are magnified in online classes. Falling for the myths creates a dysfunctional dynamic that becomes a very tough pit of doom and despair to climb out of: one that will inevitably lead to you begging and groveling for special accommodations and extended grace periods that are just not realistic for me or you to work around. I encourage you to realistically review your responsibilities and commitments outside of this class, be clear and honest about your available time and study habits, and then plunge into a dynamic and amazing learning experience with me and your fellow classmates. You could meet a book or a human in this course that changes your life in most unexpected and welcome ways. For that to go down, everyone has to show up and be real.

My goal in this explanation of the myths is not to scare you, but to be honest and realistic. I want you to be well informed and empowered so you can make the best decision for you about how to spend, schedule, and commit your time for this class as well as honor your other life responsibilities.

Whenever you have questions, please email me. I am always happy to help, clarify, or offer suggestions. Your questions are never unwelcome or a strain on my time: I am here to support your success—it's my whole purpose, really. Don't apologize for reaching out. I get truly stoked to see engagement and interest on your part. I look forward to working and learning with you soon!

\*\*I'll be posting a link here once I get the course happening, so that you can access more information and materials (like the syllabus and very brief assignment calendar), whether you're registered for the class or not. Check out the syllabus for English 1B from summer 2020 to get a feel for the workload, although we will be reading one additional book this fall semester given the luxury of having 16 weeks together.

**For more information contact:** Shannon Mondor at [shannon-mondor@redwoods.edu](mailto:shannon-mondor@redwoods.edu)