

SCLA 102 Transformative Texts: Critical Thinking & Communication II: Modern World

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY -- FALL 2023**

**FOUR SECTIONS: MWF 10:30-11:20 (006) in WALC 3132 MWF 11:30-12:20 (007) in WALC 3132  
MWF 2:30-3:20 (008) in WALC 3132 MWF 3:30-4:20 (015) in WALC 3132**

**Professor William White – Office: Beering Hall (BRNG) 2259 - Office Hours: MWF 12:45-2:00  
and by appointment email --- white660@purdue.edu - phone 765-494-3680**

**“If you’re an inch off on landing, no big deal. If you’re an inch off on takeoff, you miss the moon by a million miles.” Neil Armstrong, quoted in *ESPN The Magazine*, page 31, July 2019**

**“If you don’t go out there and define yourself, you’ll be quickly and inaccurately described by others.” Michelle Obama quoted in *Chicago Tribune*, 11/13,18**

**“Even the finest sword plunged into salt water will rust.” Sun Tzu**

**“Both optimists and pessimists contribute to society. The optimist invents the airplane, the pessimist the parachute.” Most often attributed to George Bernard Shaw.**

**1) COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

SCLA 102 is based on the fundamental premise that great texts, including novels, plays, speeches, essays, or poetry, as well as film and digital media, inform and inspire students, encourage their creative and imaginative capacities, help them see the world from different perspectives and broaden their worldviews. Students will examine a series of texts, seeking to understand the contexts in which these texts were produced as well as what they mean to us today. What do our readings tell us about the pains and pleasures of being human, the use and abuse of power, and our relationship with nature and communities? How do they advance our self-understanding? How do they increase our understanding of other people and their perspectives?

SCLA 102 fulfills the Oral Communication requirement in the University’s Core Curriculum. It is dedicated to developing our students’ ability to convey information through oral presentations, advancing their understanding of the importance of rhetorical situations and choices; analyzing and constructing presentations for different audiences; gathering and evaluating sources for presentations, and using visual aids effectively.

SCLA 102 fulfills 3 credit hours of the 15-credit hour *Cornerstone Certificate Program*. Purdue’s nationally recognized Cornerstone program shares the wisdom and vision of the Liberal Arts with all Purdue students, enhancing their foundational knowledge while deepening their ability to see unity across disciplines, appreciate ambiguity, and love learning. Cornerstone seeks to develop engaged Purdue graduates who can respond creatively and flexibly to the challenges of a diverse world.

**OUR** class will ask us to reflect, discuss, and occasionally disagree about issues raised in 5 texts ranging from Malcolm Gladwell’s *Outliers* to a futuristic novel, *Oryx and Crake*. The best way to discuss our books, podcasts, speeches, etc. is to read/listen to them rather than getting a shorthand version from *Spark Notes*. We will focus on oral communication. Sometimes I will ask you to simply summarize; other times you will

be giving formal thesis/debate presentations. Part of speaking is listening. We will often meet in small groups of 4-6 as we discuss the assigned reading for the day. I hope that our readings keep you questioning what you believe in – **not to change your values but to make sure you truly understand why you believe what you do.** Many Supreme Court cases have involved Justices arguing that the best way to support your side is to have it challenged.

## 2) **LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Oral Communication

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Demonstrate effective, professional delivery, designing and adapting appropriate verbal appeals through vocal intonation and non-verbal cues.
2. Distinguish and apply appropriate informative, persuasive, explanatory, interrogatory and argumentative strategies and techniques in the discussions and in formal presentations
3. Organize presentations with effective supporting materials.
4. Locate and evaluate effective sources of information.
5. Engage critically with transformative texts, drawing on multiple perspectives, including the individual, the historical, and the contemporary.

## 3) **REQUIRED TEXTS**

**I want you to get the specific editions in the following list.** If you choose to read online, other editions, or listen to audiobooks the pages may differ, and they may not contain the same material. If you do not use the editions listed below, please check with me **in advance on the pages due each day.** You can access additional reading online or through Brightspace. **Bring assigned reading to class.**

1. Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, (Anchor Books)
2. Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (Little, Brown and Company)
3. Tara Westover, *Educated* (Random House Trade Paperbacks)
4. August Wilson, *Radio Golf*, (Theatre Communications Group)
5. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, (Penguin Classics) – This is the original 1818 version.

### **READING ONLINE IN CLASS**

Gwendolyn Brooks, “Sadie & Maud” and Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken”

## 4) **GRADING IN SCLA 102**

First class presentation – **Impromptu Speech** – 10 points – **SPEECH # 1**

Second class presentation -- **Persuasive Speech/“Debate”** – 40 points – **SPEECH # 2**

Third class presentation – **Informative Speech** – 40 points – **SPEECH # 3**

**Discussion Paper** – 30 points

6-12 quizzes on the day's **assigned reading or what we watch, hear, or read in any class period** – 3-10 points each. I am **not dropping** your lowest quiz score, but there may be occasional opportunities to earn a few bonus points on quizzes.

\*\*\*\*\* **Make-up procedure for missed/EXCUSED quizzes is outlined below.** \*\*\*\*\*

**Excused quizzes -- to get an excused quiz you must document your illness with a Dr.’s note or PUSH and notify me that you will not be attending class in advance of the class.** Other recognized excused absences are Purdue Quarantine, family emergency, car wreck, school trips, etc. All excused quizzes will be made up by inserting your subsequent quiz % into the excused slot. **There are no class participation points and no extra credit projects.**

### **GRADING SCALE: %**

Excellent: A (94-100), A- (90-93)

Above Average: B+ (87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83)

Average: C+ (77-79), C (74-76), C- (70-73)

Below Average: D+ (67-69), D (64-66), D- (60-63)

Below 60 is failing

\*\*\* Note – I round up from .5, thus 86.5 = B+, etc. When you realize what your final grade is going to be, please do not ask me for an extra credit project. **MAKE HULK ANGRY!!** Teachers make mistakes, too. Please check the point totals I have entered in Brightspace after each graded assignment.

**5) Class Policies** – I expect you to attend every class, wear a mask if required by Purdue, reading done and reading in hand. We will follow the syllabus as closely as feasible. I will often give you verbal reminders of what is coming up. **Quizzes are NOT announced in advance. Presentations are due on the assigned dates – grade = 0 if you do not deliver your speech. Reason will prevail in enforcing this policy – e. g. car wreck, family emergency, Purdue Quarantine, etc. – you must notify me in a timely fashion – before class if you miss a graded assignment.** “Ultimately students are responsible for all required coursework and bear full responsibility for any academic consequences that may result due to absences.” (Purdue University Senate Document 6-5, March 19, 2007)

You may bring cell phones and laptops to class in the event that a Purdue ALERT text or other urgent message is sent, **but use them only when I have you read material online.**

### **ESSAY/DISCUSSION PAPER – VALUE 30 POINTS**

I expect all papers to be written by you although you may have the Purdue On-Campus writing lab assist in their preparation. Submitting AI-generated writing or research as your own is academic dishonesty and carries the same penalties as **plagiarism**. If any portion of your assignment was generated by a chatbox, you are in violation of the academic integrity expectations of this course and the university. Your case will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for further review of your status at this University.

Use specific examples from **5 different things we read or watched during the semester** to reflect on important people in your life. How have our course materials **CHANGED, REINFORCED OR SOMEWHAT ALTERED** the way you think about those people? Your grade will be based on your insights and **the variety of examples you use from both those people and FIVE of our class assignments. You must use at least 3 direct quotes from course material.**

Turn the paper in as a hard copy at the start of class on Wednesday, November 29. You will **lose 3 points for every increment of 4 hours late.** It should be a minimum of **3 full pages.** No citations are required in this paper. Mechanics for this paper -- 12 font, double-spaced, with just your name and class time on the 1<sup>st</sup> page (no cover page or filler).

### **GRADED SPEECHES –**

***Please consider making an appointment to use the Purdue Presentation Center in Beering 2294 in the Lamb School of Communication to practice your last 2 graded speeches (you cannot practice your impromptu – hence the name). You will receive 1-on-1 help from trained tutors.***

**Formal Presentation** – SPEECH #1 – Impromptu – Value 10 points – I will give you 2-3 prompts and a brief period to think –**Fill your impromptu with examples/details!!!!!!** – Time --3 minutes maximum

**Formal Presentation** -- SPEECH #2—Value 40 points -- Persuasive “debate” – teams of 2 – *Each graded separately* --Each of you defends a position on a policy issue. Begin by introducing the topic, the sides, and why it is important, e.g. should there be a free market for human organs? I will provide a wide variety of policy issues. Time -- **7 minutes minimum-10 minutes maximum per person.** Powerpoint slides and a one-minute video clip per person during the debate are OK.

**Formal Presentation** – SPEECH #3 – Value 40 points -- Brief informative presentation –Speech on a topic of your choice **related in some way to our class material,** what we watched or read --**(6 minutes minimum - 8 minutes maximum).** Powerpoint slides and a 30 second video clip are OK. Your informative speech

cannot be on any of the debate topics.

## Daily Schedule:

- Aug. 21 M Introduction to the course and each other – Watch/discuss Malcolm Gladwell, *David and Goliath* – **Talks at Google**
- 23 W Discuss Lon Fuller’s **Harvard Law Review** article, *The Case of the Speluncean Explorers*, **read online or in Brightspace before class and pick two Justices that you will paraphrase.** Pick 2-3 Malcolm Gladwell’s podcasts, *Revisionist History* to summarize on Friday and Monday (25&28) – You will only summarize one but come to class with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices in case someone else takes your 1<sup>st</sup> choice.
- 25 F 6-minute oral summaries of Gladwell – **NOT GRADED** ---- **RELAX**
- 28 M 6-minute Gladwell oral summaries cont.
- 30 W Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, pages 3-92, chapters 1-4
- Sept. 1 F Atwood, pages 95-144, chapters 5 and 6
- 4 M \*\*\*\*LABOR DAY – NO CLASSES\*\*\*\*
- 6 W Atwood, pages 147-238, chapters 7-9 and review **Debate Topics list for SPEECH # 2**
- 8 F Atwood, pages 241-306, chapters 10-part of 12 (to “Crake in Love”)
- 11 M **Watch in class --** PBS, *Nova, Picture a Scientist*
- 13 W Atwood, pages 307-end of the book and **Choose dates for SPEECH # 2 by today**
- 15 F **SPEECH # 1 --IMPROMPTU SPEECHES**
- 18 M **SPEECH # 1 –IMPROMPTU SPEECHES cont.** \*\**Last Day to Withdraw or add a course*
- 20 W Gladwell, *Outliers*, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2, pages 3-68
- 22 F Gladwell, Chapters 3, 4, and 5, pages, 69-158 and watch (**in class**) a student’s debate presentation from Spring, 2020
- 25 M Watch **in class** and discuss, PBS – **Frontline, TikTok, Boom**
- 27 W Gladwell, Chapters 6, and 7, pages 161-223
- 29 F **SPEECH # 2 – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS**
- Oct. 2 M **SPEECH # 2 – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS**
- 4 W Gladwell, chapters 8, 9, and epilogue, pages 224-285 (end)
- 6 F **SPEECH # 2 – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS**
- 9 M \*\*\*\*OCTOBER BREAK – NO CLASSES\*\*\*\*
- 11 W **SPEECH # 2 – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS**
- 13 F **SPEECH # 2 – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS**
- 16 M Watch **in class** and discuss portions of PBS, **Frontline, In the Age of AI**
- 18 W **SPEECH # 2 – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS**
- 20 F **SPEECH # 2 – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS**
- 23 M Westover, *Educated*, pages, Prologue-75 (stop at chapter 8)
- 25 W **SPEECH # 2 – DEBATE -- 1 TEAM** and Eli Saslow, “Breaking America: Nothing on This Page is Real” **read in Brightspace**
- 27 F Westover, pages, 76-141 (stop at chapter 16) and **Choose dates for SPEECH # 3 by today**
- 30 M Westover, pages, 142-197 (stop at chapter 23) and watch (**in class**) a former student’s Informative Speech
- Nov. 1 W Westover, pages, 198-251 (stop at PART THREE)
- 3 F Watch in class and discuss, PBS -- **Frontline, A Class Divided**
- 6 M Westover pages, 255- end of the book

- 8 W **SPEECH # 3 – 6 Students**  
 10 F **SPEECH # 3 – 6 Students**  
 13 M Wilson, *Radio Golf*, Act One, pages 7-52  
 15 W **SPEECH # 3 – 6 Students**  
 17 F Wilson, Act Two, pages 53-end  
 20 M **SPEECH # 3 – 6 Students**  
 \*\*\* **THANKSGIVING VACATION – NO CLASSES \*\*\*\*\***  
 27 M **SPEECH # 3 – 6 students**  
 29 W Shelley, *Frankenstein*, pages, 7-77 – Volume I \*\*\* **AND PAPER DUE\*\*\***  
**Dec.** 1 F Shelley, pages, 81-141 – Volume II

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING PURDUE POLICY – “Courses that will conduct or collect an assessment during the final exam period shall refrain from assigning or collecting assessments during the Quiet Period.” *Meaning—we have NO Final Exam and therefore can have quizzes this week.*

- 4 M Shelley, pages, 145-216- Volume III -- end of book  
 6 W **Read online before class**, Gary Smith, “Higher Education,” *Sports Illustrated* – first published March 5, 2001, and reprinted December 12, 2014  
 8 F **Read online in class** and discuss Robert Frost’s poem, “The Road Not Taken” and Gwendolyn Brooks’ poem, “Sadie & Maud”

“Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age. National origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran.” (See Purdue “Nondiscrimination Policy Statement” – please familiarize yourself with this policy. See [https://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea\\_eou\\_statement.php](https://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.php)). We will conduct class based on the precept of universal human dignity.

\*\*\*\* Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. Please provide me with a “letter of accommodation” at your earliest opportunity. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone: 765-494-1247.

\*\*\*\* If you have special scheduling needs for religious observances see me in the 1st two weeks of class so that we can find alternative times for you to fulfill your course obligations.

**Any dishonest behavior will result in a 0 for that assignment and, at my discretion, may result in a failing grade for the course and referral to the Office of the Dean of Students for further action. Students can report issues of academic integrity that they observe either through the Office of the dean of Students, call 765-494-8778 or email: [integrity@purdue.edu](mailto:integrity@purdue.edu)**

**If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 765-494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, weekends and holidays. Counselors are available during business hours in the Purdue University Student Health Center on the second floor of Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH).**

Name:

Date:

Topic:

**SCLA Oral Presentation Rubric – Speech # 2 – Persuasive/Debate**

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
<b>Introduction</b>				
How well did the beginning grab the audience’s attention?				
How effectively did the speaker introduce the topic? <b>Were the objectives made clear from the start – e. g. my arguments are 1. 2. 3.</b>				
<b>Body</b>				
How effectively did the presentation flow? Was the body well organized? <b>Argument stays on target throughout your speech</b>				
How well did the presentation utilize credible supportive evidence? Were there sufficient details (explanations, examples, illustrations, etc.) to support the principal ideas of the presentation? <b>Clear references to your sources!</b>				
Was the central message clear? Was there a clear main point/thesis/“take away” that was easy to identify?				
<b>Conclusion</b>				
How well did the speaker bring the presentation to an end?				
<b>Delivery</b>				
How effective was the speaker’s eye contact? <b>Your presentation was spoken NOT READ</b>				
How effective was the physical delivery? (posture, gestures, distracting movements, movement)				
How effective was the verbal delivery? Tone, rate, volume. Limited use of vocal fillers – um, so, now, etc.				
How well did the speaker use language (vocabulary, terminology if applicable, sentence structure)? Was the language appropriate for the audience and did it support the effectiveness of the presentation?				
<b>Additional criteria:</b>				
Speaker was dressed semi-professionally – e. g. <b>no hats, sweatshirts, tee shirts or shorts</b>				
<b>Speech Time – 7 minutes minimum-10 minutes maximum – yes or no</b>				
<b>TOTAL SCORE: /40</b>				

Adapted from AAC&U VALUE Rubric for Oral Communication

