



"I think that all of the great stories in literature deal with loneliness. Sometimes it's by way of heartbreak, sometimes it's by way of injustice, sometimes it's by way of fate. There's an infinite number of ways to examine it."

Tom Hanks

Marsala's English 201B

Composition: Introduction to Literature/Critical Thinking

Welcome! My name is Susan Marsala and if you are reading this letter, then you must be considering taking this class online. Let me begin by saying that this is an English class and not boot camp. It does require you to work, but it doesn't have to be unpleasant work. This is a course where you will explore the nature of fiction, poetry, drama, and film. Papers, discussions and exercises will allow you to reflect and explore your own responses to a variety of texts. The study of literature can be a mirror which offers us the opportunity to examine our own experiences, character, and place in the world. If you have "suffered" through literature classes before, I would ask you to think about trying one more time. In my view, the study of literature finds its relevance when it focuses upon individualism, human conflict, and the richness of life. This approach to literary study allows us to see our connection to the complexity of human experience. Taken from this approach, these works become compelling and germane to our lives as we live in the moment.

Concerned About Taking an Online Class for the First Time? The idea of choosing a course that takes place exclusively online can be daunting. However, both the technology and the content of the course are very manageable. I will be available whenever you need help.

My Online Teaching Philosophy: I believe that distance education should not be "disengaged education"; the distance in miles should have no bearing on the contact and attention a student gives or receives in a cyber "classroom." The most wonderful aspect of online technology is its capacity to be a bridge between where we are and where we want to be. My attitude about online teaching is exactly the same as it is in a traditional classroom. I like students; I like teaching; I love exploring ideas. For that reason, I want my online classes to have the same level of personal connection as any classroom-based course. What changes for me is the modality, not my approach to education. Providing a "classroom" where such engagement is not only possible but also effectively realized is my primary goal as an educator. I look forward to having you in class.

Start Date For Course: *Monday, August 21st 2017.*

This course takes place exclusively online; there are no face-to-face meetings.

Instructor: Susan Marsala

Email: smarsala@cuesta.edu

Office Hours: M-TR 8:9:30 and always by appointment

SKYPE, Phone, or Facetime conferences are always possible.

Learning Management System (Course site): We will be using the campus CANVAS site for this class. You will find all assignments and class information posted there. Please familiarize yourself with the site. Here are a couple of links that will help you:

Access to *Canvas*: "Quick Reference Guide":

http://www.cuesta.edu/student/documents/distance_ed_students/Canvas_Quick_Reference_Students.pdf

Access to Video Tours of Canvas Features:

http://www.cuesta.edu/academics/distance/fac_de_resources/Student_Videos.html

Please note that I will be unavailable before classes begin (other than to contact you about class materials), so please wait until the beginning of the semester to contact me. All enrolled students will receive an email a day or two before class starts with essential class information.

Things to Consider in Determining if an Online Class is Right for You: An online English course is not a self-paced course. The class has required assignments and specific due dates. In practice, an online course is the same as a classroom course.

Course Prerequisite: Successful completion of English 201A, Freshman Composition or equivalent with a grade of C or better.

Course Description: Composition: Introduction to Literature/Composition. Presents an advanced composition course beyond ENGL 201A. This class provides an introduction to the study of literature with an emphasis in both literary composition and critical thinking. This course develops critical thinking and writing skills through the close study of major genres of literature: poetry, fiction, and drama. Students receive instruction in analytic and argumentative writing by studying literature and criticism and by identifying sound and fallacious methods of reasoning in assessments of literature. UC and CSU transferable; meets requirement for critical thinking.

Student Learning Outcomes for English 201B:

Upon completing English 201B successfully, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate advanced critical thinking and reasoning skills in a literary context.
2. Write interpretive literary arguments using advanced rhetorical and composition skills.
3. Demonstrate information fluency in a literary context.

The Devil and the Details:

- You must participate in the course as class work requires;
- You will write approximately 300-500 words a week (discussion forums, exercises and papers);
- You will have assignments due each week (primarily short ones; only 2 longer [3-4-page] papers required).
- There will be a longer paper or project due during the last week of the course.

Required Textbooks: There is only one recommended textbook for this class, available at the Cuesta bookstore or online. (Yay!) All the literary works we need are available online. However, you are responsible for downloading and printing posted reading assignments.

Waitlist Procedure and Add Policy: People wishing to add, including those on the waitlist, should send me an email on the first day of the semester, and I will add students as spots become available. I know that adding can be difficult; however, I will do my best to accommodate as many students as I can.

Drop Policy: On the first day of class, you must log into our CANVAS class site by 11:59 PM PST. Please understand I often have 15 or more students waiting to add. As a courtesy to other students, please log in as early as possible on the first day. Once you do, your place in the class is secured. Failure to login may result in being dropped from the roster.

Finally, I want you to know that I love teaching these courses, and I have become a true believer in online education. Additionally, I think that learning can and should be engaging—even fun. Using online resources such as videos, engaging reading assignments, and multimedia resources adds depth and interest to this course. More importantly, I have found that the key to student success, in any modality, is achieved by frequent and consistent contact—from both sides. You will find that I will initiate such contact several times a week; I want my students comfortable contacting me with any and all questions and concerns. A student who needs help is never a “bother” to me. I am here because you are here.

Cheers,
Susan

For additional information about Canvas and online resources, see the links directly below.

Canvas Information:

The following link will explain the system requirements and computer specifications needed to use *Canvas*:

http://www.cuesta.edu/student/aboutacad/distance/faqs_technical.html

FAQ for Technical Considerations:

http://www.cuesta.edu/student/aboutacad/distance/faqs_technical.html

Access to *Canvas*: "Quick Reference Guide":

http://www.cuesta.edu/student/documents/distance_ed_students/Canvas_Quick_Reference_Students.pdf

Access to Video Tours of Canvas Features:

http://www.cuesta.edu/academics/distance/fac_de_resources/Student_Videos.html

Access to Class Site: This link takes you to the dashboard for our class homepage:

<https://cuesta.instructure.com>

Mobile app to access Canvas:

<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-9208>