

RESET, REFRESH, RENEW:

**THINKING ABOUT SYLLABI AND
COURSE DESIGN AS WE RETURN TO
CAMPUS**

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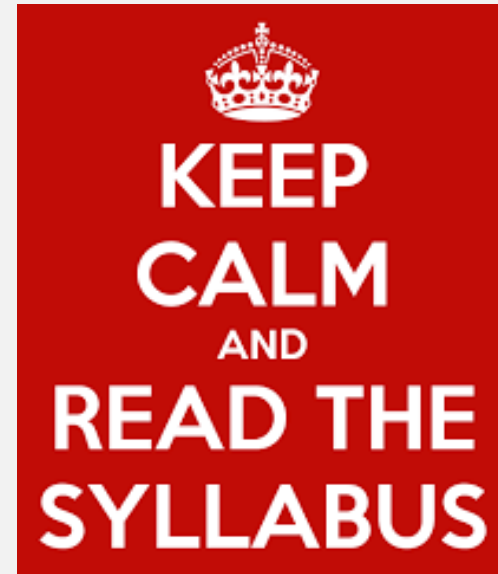
Office of Faculty Development

Pre-semester Workshop

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BRIEF OUTLINE

- 1. Syllabus as narrative
- 2. Empathy & Equity
- 3. Transparency
- 4. Learning Outcomes
- 5. Assessment
- 6. Before & After



SYLLABUS AS NARRATIVE

- What story does my syllabus tell about my course? About my students' learning? About my classroom instruction?
- Does this story have a logical beginning, middle, and end?
- Is the main character the instructor or the students?
- What words am I using to tell that story? What tone do they set?
- How does my syllabus articulate a vision for engaged, active learning?

EMPATHY & EQUITY

- **Tone shifts:** from “policies” to “community,” “participation” to “engagement”
- Multiple **pathways to engagement**
 - Articulate (on syllabus, in class, on MyCourses) different ways students can engage the material
 - [Lang](#) (2016): evaluating “engagement” in a variety of ways as opposed to *only* attendance and participation
 - [Cain](#) (2012): participation often slanted toward vocal activity/speaking, often to exclusion of introverts. How would someone engage the course material meaningfully but without necessarily talking every class?
- Practical **flexibility** *and* intellectual **rigor**
- **Access** and **accessibility** (technology, library, textbooks, other resources)
- **Humanize** the learning experience
 - Students and instructors are people
 - Define and discuss the “hidden curriculum”
 - Syllabus statement expressing support, encouragement, and willingness to work with students who may be impacted in unforeseeable ways during the coming semester

SAMPLE “COVID-19” SYLLABUS STATEMENT

- From ENL 319, Spring 2021 (retained + modified for Fall 2021):

General Statement Regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic: I recognize that these are challenging times on many levels, and I recognize that the uncertain trajectory of COVID-19 may require flexibility and mutual understanding on all our parts. I am committed to helping you complete this course successfully, and I am prepared to provide a certain degree of flexibility and accommodation to all students. **Therefore, I ask that you communicate with me if you anticipate or encounter a problem (expected or unexpected).** If you find yourself not well, or a family member is not well, please let me know (you need not, and should not, go into detail—a simple notification will suffice); if you find yourself having internet or computer access issues, please let me know; if you are encountering difficulty with childcare or work, please let me know. In short, I cannot help you if I don't know about your situation, so I encourage you to contact me early and often so we can make as proactive a plan as possible. I am here to help you, and I hope we can all work together to find intellectual joy and community amid these challenging times.

TRANSPARENCY

- **“What are we doing and why are we doing it?”**
 - Task (What?)
 - Purpose (Why?)
 - Criteria (How?) (M.Winkelmes, qtd. in [Barrett](#), 2020)
- **Modalities**
 - Why is this course is delivered and organized in a certain way?
 - If blended, how does the “seat time” and the “online time” complement and interact?
 - If face-to-face, what instructional technologies (including MyCourses) will we use? Why? How?
- **Practical strategies**
 - “How this course works” statement on syllabus/MyCourses
 - Tour My Course
 - Weekly introductions and/or recaps on MyCourses
 - Short ”how to” recordings posted to MyCourses
 - Video responses to discussion threads

”HOW THIS COURSE WORKS”

- From ENL 300 syllabus, Fall 2021:

How this Class Works: “Blended & Flipped” : ENL 300 is organized as a *blended* course, which means that a certain portion of the scheduled class meetings (roughly 30%) take place online and the remaining portion takes place in the classroom (roughly 70%). In this case, our Monday and Wednesday meetings will be in class and our Friday meetings online. To understand why the course is organized this way, you need to think about the *flipped classroom*. When we “flip” the classroom, we will transfer the presentation of key historical contexts, literary terms and concepts, and background material to online lectures. We will also use the online components to complete various course activities and assessments ranging from reading quizzes to response papers and discussion posts to unit exams and essays. These lectures and assessments are very important—indeed crucial—to your progress in this course, but delivering them online will ensure that our in-classroom time on Monday and Wednesday can be devoted to a more active engagement with the texts and course concepts through discussion, dialogue, and groupwork activity. On Mondays and Wednesday’s I will not repeat in detail the lecture material covered on Friday (though I will answer questions or clarify muddy points); rather, we will devote our time to conversation—that is, our classroom meetings will rely on *you* to participate and shape our study of a given text. Thus you must be prepared always, which means: (1) coming to class regularly; (2) completing the reading (including annotating your text); (3) bringing your text to class; (4) engaging meaningfully in discussion. The “blended/flipped” modality will enable us to cover all of the contextual and conceptual information we need to as well as allow sufficient classroom time for discussion of and active engagement with the fascinating literary texts we’ll be studying.

REFOCUS LEARNING OUTCOMES

- What do I want my students to be able to *do* at the end of this course?
 - [Bloom's Taxonomy](#): link specific, active verbs to concrete, assessable actions
 - Link those actions to specific course activities you can evaluate
- How will I assess their progress?
- How will I communicate learning outcomes to students?
 - Weekly MyCourses setup
 - What are we doing this week (substitute: “unit,” “module,” et al)?
 - Why are we doing it?
 - What will you do to demonstrate your learning?

SAMPLE MY COURSES OVERVIEW

UMass Dartmouth QuickLaunch - myUMassD Module #1: What is annotation? - ENL 258 - MASTER ...

ENL 258 - MASTER SECTION: Literary Studies - On-Line (2020 Fall)

ENL 258 Syllabus Fall 2020

ENL 258 Office Hours

MyCourses Help

Week 1: Course Introduction, W 9/2-Sun 9/6

Week 2: Close Reading and Annotation, M 9/7-Sun 9/13

Week 3: Poetry Basics, M 9/14-Sun 9/20

Textual Practice #1: Using the OED, due Sun 9/20

Week 4: Tropes and Figures, part 1

Textual Practice #2: Practice Explication, due Sun 9/27

Week 5: Tropes and Figures, part 2

EXPLICATION #1 (due by 11.59 p.m., Sun 10/4)

Week 6: The Sounds of Poetry

Textual Practice #3: The Sounds of Poetry, due Sun 10/11

Week 7: Literary Argumentation and Writing Literary Analysis Essays

Week 8: Short Fiction

EXPLICATION #2 (due by 11.59 p.m., Sun 10/11)

Table of Contents

- Module #1 Overview
- What are we doing and why are we doing it? (Learning Outcomes)
- Annotation Tutorial
- Sample Annotated Text
- William Carlos Williams
- Robert Frost, "Design"
- Annotation Assignment

Build Content Assessments Tools Partner Content

Module #1 Overview

In this module, we will take our first step toward practicing reading for form: annotation.

Annotation refers, quite simply, to the act of marking up a text. When we read not just for a text's meaning but also for how it makes that meaning, we enter into a conversation with the literature before us. That conversation, like any other, requires at least 2 voices: that of the text and that of the reader. When we annotate, we don't read silently, just scanning the words before us. Rather, we read *actively* by taking our pen or pencil (or keyboard, as it were) and making entrances into a text. We collaborate with the text as we search out curious words--or difficult words; as we identify key figures of speech that are creating various meanings in the text; and as we try to engage the fascinating play of words on the page before us. In other words, when we annotate, we confront a living text--a text in motion--rather than a flat collection of words.

As we annotate, we want to mark the text up; in this way, your annotations serve as a record of your engagement with a text. Part of the pleasure of reading literature is that our first set of annotations may be different from the next set -- and one person's annotations will likely be different from another's. Texts offer us many points of entry and a virtually limitless play of language. We need only step in.

What are we doing and why are we doing it? (Learning Outcomes)

What do I want to be able to do upon completing this module?

1. Define *annotation* as the act of marking up a text, and thereby engaging its formal features;
2. Practice annotation on a variety of short poems so as to identify key words and phrases as well as figures of speech working in a text.

How will I work toward meeting these outcomes?

1. View Prof. Zysk's tutorial on annotation
2. Review/study sample annotated text
3. Read the 2 poems assigned in this module, making your own annotations as you read
4. Complete a full annotation of one poem assigned in this module

I will complete the following course activities...

Annotation Assignment due in MyCourses by 11.59 p.m. on W 9/9 (instructions below)

Annotation Tutorial

Annotation Tutorial (1:4:44)

ASSESSMENT

- Small-stakes vs. high stakes
 - “Keep it small, keep it frequent” (Lang 2016)
 - Thinking in terms of several small activities rather than 2 or 3 “major” activities
 - **What kind and how many** assessments do I need to determine how effectively students have met learning outcomes?
- Write clearer, more transparent assignment prompts
 - Explicit tie between activity and learning outcomes
 - Explain + model each stage of the assignment (cf. Winkelmes)
 - What are we doing? (Task)
 - Why are we doing it? (Purpose)
 - How will it be assessed? (Criteria)
- **Practical strategies:**
 - Short reading quizzes (shorter quizzes more often → emphasize giving credit for reading material)
 - Padlet discussions (or other short independent and collaborative activities)
 - Blogs
 - Polls (build in assessments of your teaching and student learning)

BEFORE & AFTER...

ENL 319 SYLLABUS, SPRING 2019

- **Modality:** face-to-face with MyCourses site
- **Pathways to engagement:** speaking during class discussion, short writings, service learning activities
- **Learning outcomes** stated on syllabus but not discussed
- Stated **penalties** for late assignments (focus on deadlines)
- No statements regarding empathy, flexibility, et al.
- Clear, rigorous **technology policy** (no phones in class, laptops for notetaking only)
- No free online alternatives to required course texts

ENL 300 SYLLABUS, FALL 2021

- **Modality:** Blended/flipped (2 classroom meetings, 1 asynchronous online module)
- **Pathways to engagement** will include polls, Padlet, short writings,, online quizzes and lectures, discussion and group work in class
- **Learning outcomes** frequently discussed (What? Why? How?)
- More **flexibility** on late submission (focus on student + work)
- “General Statement Regarding COVID-19”
- No tech policy (obviously!) for F21, revised via Lang ([2021](#)):
 - What can our phones help us do during this class session?
 - Differentiating appropriate device use in class vs. inappropriate device use
- Required print texts with stated **free online alternatives** and a number of **free online resources**



IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.

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