

**SCLA 101 Transformative Texts: Critical Thinking & Communication I:
Antiquity to Modernity**



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Section: SCLA 101-13
Classroom: BRNG 1254
Time: TTH 10:30am-11:45am

Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:00pm-3:00pm
Thursday, 1:00pm-2:00pm
Or by Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

SCLA 101 is based on the fundamental premise that great texts inform and inspire students, encouraging their creative and imaginative capacities, helping students see the world from different perspectives and broadening their worldview. Students will examine a series of texts, seeking to understand the contexts in which they were produced, as well as what these texts mean to us today. What do these books tell us about the pains and pleasures of being human; the use and abuse of power; the existence and nature of God or gods; and the power and limits of human reason? What do these texts tell us about others and ourselves? How do they advance our self-understanding? How do they increase our understanding of other people and their perspectives?

SCLA 101 is part of Level I of the Cornerstone certificate program. It fulfills the Written Communication and Information Literacy requirements in the University Core Curriculum. The course is dedicated to developing and enhancing the ability of students to write clearly, advance their understanding of rhetorical situations and choices; analyze and construct arguments as well as finding and evaluating sources.

Our theme this semester will be **Utopia/Dystopia**. Throughout history, people have tried to imagine the perfect society. The corollary, of course, is that if we can mold society to serve humankind's best instincts, we can also create societies that reflect our worst

impulses. This semester we will read the following utopian and dystopian texts that touch on every aspect of what makes us human.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- **Plato, *Republic*** (Hackett Publishing Company, Second Edition, 1992)
- **Thomas More, *Utopia*** (Penguin Classics Edition, 2012)
- **George Orwell, *1984*** (Berkeley Reprint Edition, 2003)
- **Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*** (Anchor, Media Tie in Edition, 2017)

All of the books are available at the University Bookstores and online. It is essential that you buy the **specific editions** indicated above, otherwise it will be impossible for the class to literally be on the same page in our discussions. **All of the reading assignments listed in the course syllabus are required** and it is important that you complete each week's reading before you come to class. Assignments will draw on the material in these readings.

SCLA 101 LEARNING OUTCOMES

Written Communication

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Write with clarity, coherence, and concision in a variety of genres.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of rhetorical situations and choices for a variety of audiences and contexts.
3. Demonstrate critical thinking about writing through reading, analysis, discussion, composing and revising texts in a range of genres.
4. Apply a clear understanding of the process of writing and successfully organize, present, and communicate meaning to fellow readers.
5. Identify, analyze, and evaluate the claims of a variety of sources.
6. Engage critically with transformative texts, drawing on multiple perspectives including the individual, the historical, and the contemporary.

Information Literacy

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Conduct research, engaging search strategies and locating the relevant sources.
2. Determine the quantity of information needed, including supplemental sources, in order to satisfy a well-designed research question.
3. Demonstrate the ability to summarize, synthesize, quote, and document sources, using an appropriate documentation style.
4. Critically evaluate information for its quality, accuracy, bias, authority, and relevance.
5. Display an understanding of the historical, ethical, and cultural contexts of both a research question and the sources used to answer it.
6. Express a clear understanding of the issues of intellectual property (such as fair use, plagiarism, and copyright).

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

The following elements will constitute your final grade:

Attendance & Participation	(10%)
Reading Response	(10%)
Essay #1	(20%)
Essay #2	(20%)
Final Project	(30%)
Presentation	(10%)

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Class attendance and participation will account for 10% of your final grade. You are expected to come to class prepared to participate in discussions. Consistent lateness or missed classes will negatively affect your overall grade. You should email me in advance if you know you cannot attend section for any reason other than illness. Your final attendance grade will be based not only on your presence in class, but also on the regularity and substance of your participation. Perfect attendance without regular participation will at most earn you a B-. Similarly, each unexcused absence will result in a diminution of your final attendance and participation grade.

You must turn off your cell phone before class begins. Persistent disruptive behavior of any kind will also result in a reduction of your overall participation and attendance grade. I will be happy to answer any questions you have so do not hesitate to email me (after class...), or better yet, come to my office hours.

READING RESPONSES

By 10:00am before every class (unless otherwise noted), each student will post a **one paragraph (between 100-125 words) reading response on the class blackboard site** based on a **question I will pose in advance**.

Your grade for this will be **P/F** (100% or 0%). If you have a thoughtful response that answers the question, then you will receive a passing grade for that journal entry. If you do not, then you will fail. If you fail more than three journal responses, then you will fail this assignment.

Your cumulative score on these responses will account for **10% of your final grade**.

ESSAYS

You will produce three other pieces of work in this class. I will provide more details as we progress, but for now here is what you will be expected to do.

Essay 1: Choose one major problem that you think is prominent in both Plato's *Republic* and More's *Utopia*, and answer the following question: Whose conception of utopia offers the best solution to that problem and why?

Your essay should address the following things:

- Clearly identify the issue you are considering, and explain why you have chosen that particular theme
- Compare and contrast how both authors address that issue. What do they have in common? How do they differ? Why do they differ?
- Explain why you believe that one author makes a more compelling case than the other
- Place the problem in a contemporary context. What do you think the benefits to implementing this solution today?
- What do you think will be the challenges of implementing this solution today?

This paper should be **4-5 pages** (1,000-1,250 words) in length, and it is due in class on **Tuesday, February 19.**

Essay 2: Identify one major theme of social control that you think emerges from the dystopias devised by Orwell and Atwood, and answer the following question: what does this theme tell us about how Orwell and Atwood conceive of power?

Your essay should address the following things:

- Clearly identify the issue you are considering, and explain why you have chosen that particular theme. What does that particular theme tell us about how power is gained, how power is wielded, and how power is challenged?
- Compare and contrast how both authors address that issue. What do they have in common? How do they differ? Why do they differ?
- Consider the contemporary United States. Does this form of social control exist in any form in our society? What factors might facilitate its imposition? What factors might mitigate against its imposition?

This paper should be **4-5 pages** (1,000-1,250 words) in length, and it is due in class on **Tuesday, April 2.**

Final Project: In this final piece of work, each student will create their own vision of a utopia or dystopia, depending on your disposition. What this final project looks like is entirely open ended. It can be fiction or non-fiction, contemporaneous or historical, visual or written. Whatever you choose to do, I strongly encourage you to play to your personal strengths in conceiving of this work, and as long as it engages with the idea of utopia and

dystopia I am open to almost anything: that can include poetry, a short story, music, a short film, a piece of art, or an idea for a video game.

While of course there is no set length for this project and it will necessarily depend on the media you choose. Written projects should be **5 pages** (1,250 words) in length. Projects that make use of other media should come with a **2-3 page** (500-750 words) outline explaining your creative choices, how the project relates to the themes of the book(s) etc. I will provide a rubric and set of guiding questions closer to the due date, which will be due on **Tuesday April 23**.

PRESENTATIONS

Each student will present their final project to the class sometime **between April 4 and April 18**. We will determine the exact date each student will present early in the semester. These presentations can take whatever form is most appropriate to the student's final project.

We will discuss the details nearer the time, but you will be expected to address the questions I posed in reference to the final project above. Each presentation will last **no longer than 7 minutes**, and there will be time for Q&A from the rest of the class.

Cheating / Plagiarism

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contain further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. **You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials.** Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office. Please make sure that you are familiar with Purdue's academic integrity policies:

<https://www.purdue.edu/provost/teachinglearning/honor-pledge.html>

"As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue."

Disclaimer

In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines, and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted once the course resumes on Blackboard or can be obtained by contacting me via email at atkinsod@purdue.edu.

CLASS TOPICS & READING ASSIGNMENTS

Tues. Jan. 8: **Introduction**

Thurs. Jan. 10: **Why & How We Write (and Read)**

Reading: George Orwell, "Why I Write"
Joan Didion, "Why I Write"
Neil Gaiman, "Where Do You Get Your Ideas?"

Tues. Jan. 15: **Utopia & Dystopia**

Reading: Jill Lepore, "A Golden Age for Dystopian Fiction"
Laura Miller, "Fresh Hell: What's Behind the
Boom in Dystopian Fiction for Young
Readers?"

Writing: What is Close Reading?

Assignment: Reading Response Due By 9am

Thurs. Jan 17: **Plato's *Republic*: Justice**

Reading: Book I-II (327a-348b; 357a-369d)

Assignment: Reading Response Due By 9am

Tues. Jan. 22: **Plato's *Republic*: Justice**

Reading: Book III-IV (408c-421c; 427d-445e)

Writing: What is Prewriting?

Assignment: Reading Response Due By 9am

- Thurs. Jan. 24: **Plato's *Republic*: Rule**
- Reading:** Book V-VI (471c-502c)
- Writing:** Thesis Statements
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
- Tues. Jan. 29: **Plato's *Republic*: Rule**
- Reading:** Book VI-VII (502c-541b)
- Writing:** Outlining
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
- Thurs. Jan. 31: **Plato's *Republic*: Rule**
- Reading:** Book VIII
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
- Tues. Feb. 5: **Plato's *Republic*: Injustice**
- Reading:** Book IX
- Writing:** Rhetoric
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
- Thurs. Feb. 7: **Information Literacy**
- Tues. Feb. 12: **More's *Utopia*: Book One**
- Reading:** pp. 11-55
- Writing:** Logic
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am

- Thurs. Feb. 14: **More's *Utopia*: Book Two**
- Reading:** pp. 57-90
- Writing:** Proofreading
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
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- Tues. Feb. 19: **More's *Utopia*: Book Two, Part II**
- Reading:** pp. 91-122
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
- Assignment:** Essay #1 due in Class
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- Thurs. Feb. 21: **Orwell's *1984***
- Reading:** pp. 1-30
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
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- Tues. Feb. 26: **Orwell's *1984***
- Reading:** pp. 31-106
- Writing:** Style
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
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- Thurs. Feb. 28: **Orwell's *1984***
- Reading:** pp. 106-224
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am

- Tues. Mar. 5: **Orwell's 1984**
- Reading:** pp. 224-284
- Writing:** Evaluating and Using Sources
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
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- Thurs. Mar. 7: **Orwell's 1984**
- Reading:** pp. 284-337
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
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- Tues. Mar. 12: **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS**
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- Thurs. Mar. 14: **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS**
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- Tues. Mar. 19: **Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale, I***
- Reading:** pp. 3-40
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
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- Thurs. Mar. 21: **Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale, II***
- Reading:** pp. 43-99
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am
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- Tues. Mar. 26: **Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale, II***
- Reading:** pp. 103-188
- Assignment:** Reading Response Due By 9am

- Thurs. Mar. 28: **Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, III**
 Reading: pp. 191-255
 Assignment: Reading Response Due By 9am
- Tues. Apr. 2: **Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, IV**
 Reading: pp. 259-311
 Assignment: Reading Response Due By 9am
 Essay #2 Due in Class
- Thurs. Apr. 4: **Presentations I**
- Tues. Apr. 9: **Presentations II**
- Thurs. Apr. 11: **Presentations III**
- Tues. Apr. 16: **Presentations IV**
- Thurs. Apr. 18: **Presentation V**
- Tues. Apr. 23: **NO CLASS**
 Assignment: Final Project due
- Thurs. Apr. 25: **NO CLASS**

GRADE SCALE

A	93-100
A-	92-90
B+	88-89
B	83-87
B-	82-80
C+	78-79
C	73-77
C-	72-70
D	60-69
F	0-59

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

GRIEF ABSENCE POLICY

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). Students will be excused from classes for funeral leave and given the opportunity to complete missed assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The DRC recommends the following statement be included in your syllabus. "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. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247."

<http://www.purdue.edu/drc/faculty/syllabus.html>

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state

and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in Executive Memorandum No. D-1, which provides specific contractual rights and remedies.

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR POLICY

Purdue University is committed to providing a safe and secure campus environment. Purdue strives to create an educational environment for students and work environment for employees that promote educational and career goals. Violent behavior impedes such goals. Therefore, violent behavior is prohibited in or on any university facility or while participating in any university activity.

CAPS INFORMATION

If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try WellTrack, <https://purdue.welltrack.com/>. Sign in and find information and tools at your fingertips, available to you at any time.

If you need support and information about options and resources, please see the Office of the Dean of Students, <http://www.purdue.edu/odos>, for drop-in hours (M-F, 8 am- 5 pm).

If you're struggling and need mental health services: Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765)494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES are based on a simple concept – if you hear a fire alarm inside, proceed outside. If you hear a siren outside, proceed inside.

Indoor Fire Alarms mean to stop class or research and immediately **evacuate** the building. Proceed to your Emergency Assembly Area away from building doors. **Remain outside** until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

All Hazards Outdoor Emergency Warning Sirens mean to immediately seek shelter (**Shelter in Place**) in a safe location within the closest building. o “Shelter in place” means seeking immediate shelter inside a building or University residence. This course of action may need to be taken during a tornado, a civil disturbance including a shooting or release of hazardous materials in the outside air. Once safely inside, find out more details about the emergency*. **Remain in place** until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

**In both cases, you should seek additional clarifying information by all means possible...Purdue Home page, email alert, TV, radio, etc...review the Purdue Emergency Warning Notification System multi-communication layers at http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/warning-system.html*

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES:

- Review the **Emergency Procedures Guidelines**

https://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/flipchart/index.html

- Review the **Building Emergency Plan** (available from the building deputy) for:
 - o evacuation routes, exit points, and emergency assembly area
 - o when and how to evacuate the building.
 - o shelter in place procedures and locations
 - o additional building specific procedures and requirements.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AWARENESS VIDEOS

- "Shots Fired on Campus: When Lightning Strikes," is a 20-minute active shooter awareness video that illustrates what to look for and how to prepare and react to this type of incident. See: <http://www.purdue.edu/securePurdue/news/2010/emergency-preparedness-shots-fired-on-campus-video.cfm> (Link is also located on the EP website)

MORE INFORMATION

Reference the Emergency Preparedness web site for additional information:

http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness