

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

*Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?  
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?*

T.S. Eliot



***Wanderer above the Sea of Fog (1818)***

**Dr. Melinda Zook**

Office Phone: 494-4134

Email: [mzook@purdue.edu](mailto:mzook@purdue.edu)

Office: BRNG 6162

Student hours: 2:30-3:15 & by appointment; please email me.

SCLA 101 (Fall 2024)

Classroom: BRNG 1242

MWF, 3:30-4:40

**Course Description:** SCLA 101 is based on the fundamental premise that great texts inform and inspire students, encouraging their creative and imaginative capacities, helping them see the world from different perspectives, and broadening their worldviews. Students will examine a series of texts, seeking to

understand their historical context as well as what these texts mean to us today. What do our readings tell us about the pain and pleasure 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 they tell us about our relationship with nature and our communities? How do they advance our self-understanding? How do they increase our understanding of other people and their perspectives?

SCLA 101 fulfills the Written Communication and Information Literacy requirements in the University Core Curriculum and is dedicated to developing the ability of students to write clearly, advance their understanding of rhetorical situations and choices; analyze and construct arguments as well as find and evaluate sources.

SCLA 101 fulfills 3 credit hours of the 15-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 Themes:** We will explore multiple themes together, but primarily we will focus on finding our authentic selves, the role of teachers and mentors in our lives, and the journeys life takes us on. Who are we? Who helps us discover ourselves and our potential? How are we tested? And how do stories tell about ourselves?

### **Required Texts**

Sophocles, *Antigone* [442 BCE] (Dover Thrift)  
Dante, *The Divine Comedy: Volume 1: Inferno* [1308-20] (Penguin, 200)  
Thomas More, *Utopia* [1516] (Penguin, 2013)  
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* [first published 1623] (Folger, 2007)  
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* [1818] (Penguin, 2018)  
Herman Hesse, *Siddhartha* [1922] (Penguin, 2002)

### **Materials Provided**

SCLA 101 Poetry Packet

You will need to bring paper and pen/pencil to class and the book we are reading to every class. Please keep your poetry packet with you as well.

### **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 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).

**We will meet these goals in our class through the following activities:**

Essay writing and revising  
 Writing exercises focused on specific skills  
 Class Discussion & Oral Presentations  
 Classroom Activities and Collaboration  
 Weekly Props (related to our readings)

### **Grades will be calculated as follows:**

Participation 20%  
 Weekly Free Writes: 15%  
 Short Essay Assignments 30% (2 at 15% each)  
 Research Paper 15%  
 Class Presentations: 15%  
 Experiencing Frankenstein: 5%

**Participation (20%):** The success of this course depends on your regular attendance and active participation. You are expected to share your opinions on the readings, ask questions, and listen carefully to your fellow students. Our class is democracy in action where we can share our opinions, calmly and rationally, based on the evidence. Students must bring the day's readings and thoughtful notes to each class and be well-prepared for assigned presentations and short writing and research exercises.

### **Class Presentations (15%): Poetry, Lyrical & Image Fridays**

#### Poetry Fridays:

Starting on August 30, we will start every Friday by asking if anyone would like to:

- a) Recite a poem in the poetry packet from memory. You may choose a short poem (such as Frost, "Nothing Gold Can Stay") or a longer poem so long as you memorize at least 1 or 2 stanzas.

Email me ([mzook@purdue.edu](mailto:mzook@purdue.edu)) if you have any questions about the poem you would like to memorize. Worth up to 5 points for an accurate recital.

- b) Or you may give a *dramatic* reading of a poem from the poetry packet and describe briefly what it means to you. Worth up to 3 points for an eloquent reading.

### Lyrical Fridays

On October 11 and 18 we will talk about the song lyrics. Bring in those lyrics and a recording of the song. To present your lyrics, use PowerPoint slides: who is the artist? When did the song premiere? What is the artist trying to say and why what does it mean to you? Worth up to 5 points for an intelligent presentation.

### Image Fridays

Starting on November 1, we will switch to Image Fridays. You may choose to show and discuss a famous painting or photo and speak to *its significance* - on a large scale (historical or cultural) as well as what it means to you. You must know: who is the artist? When was the image produced? **And why does it matter?** Worth up to 5 points for an intelligent presentation.

**Weekly Free Writes (15%):** This class requires that you answer questions concerning the readings every week in class. You will receive a question based on your reading at the outset of class. Be prepared to write a one or three-paragraph response. Be clear and concise. Refer to the readings as you answer the question, and use your own words, apart from brief quotations to support your reasoning.

**Two Short Essay Assignments (Each is worth 15%):** Each essay assignment (2 to 3 pages each) will focus on a different genre or mode of writing and focus on one or more of our 'transformative texts.'

**Research Paper (25%)** This paper (4 to 5 pages) will involve outside research on one or more of the transformative texts (books and poems) read in class. Students will need to develop a question that suits the scope of this project, and an argument addressing that question, using relevant evidence.

### **Experiencing Frankenstein (5%)**

To enrich your understanding of this classic novel, please plan to attend either the theatrical performance or the film fest. You will need to bring me a screenshot of yourself at the performance or film screening and write a one-page reflection on what you experienced at the event.

Here are the details.

- a) **Purdue Theatre Presents: Mary Shelley's Frankenstein:**



Cornerstone students can purchase discounted tickets to the Purdue Theater's production of [MARY SHELLEY PRESENTS: FRANKENSTEIN](#). The production runs from November 8 to November 17 in Pao Hall

- **Dates:** 11/7/2024, 11/8/2024, 11/9/2024, 11/14/2024, 11/15/2024, 11/16/2024

The discount code is **CORNERSTONE25**, good for one \$10 ticket for any showing of each production. There are three ways students can purchase tickets:

- 1.) **Online:** by visiting <https://am.ticketmaster.com/purdue/buy>. They select the performance they would like to attend and write the code **CORNERSTONE25** in the promo code box and hit 'apply'
- 2.) **At the box office:** Students can claim their tickets at the Loeb Playhouse Box Office located in the main lobby of Stewart Center. Open Monday - Friday from 10:00 am - 6:00 pm.
- 3.) **On the phone:** They can also call (765) 494-3933 or (888) 914-SHOW and give the representative the promo code.

**b) The Frankenstein Film Fest: Prepare to meet the monster!**



- When: Wednesday, October 16
- Where: Loeb Playhouse, 7:00 to 9:30 pm

## Rules of the Game:

**Attendance** is important. If you are going to miss class, please email me as soon as you know. Missing class often without an excuse from the Dean of Students Office will result in a lower final grade.

When you come into class, place the day's reading, your pen and your notebook on your desk. Silence and stow your phone. Laptops are not permitted without the instructor's approval.

Use proper **email etiquette** when you communicate with the instructors (an email should begin with a salutation such as "Dear Professor Zook" or "Hello Professor Zook," and end with a proper closing, such as "Sincerely" or "Yours."

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 chatbot, 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.

## Freedom of Expression

In this class, students are encouraged to exercise their right to free inquiry and expression. You are welcome to express any view on the subject matter introduced by the instructor or other class members within the structure of the course. While you are responsible for learning the content of this course, you remain free to take a reasoned exception to the views presented and to reserve judgment about matters of conscience, controversy, or opinion. When you encounter ideas that you find offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed, you are encouraged to engage them with reasons, evidence, and arguments. Your course grade will be based on your academic performance, not on the opinions you express. Our commitment to freedom of expression means that no relevant ideas or positions are out of bounds, but disruptive or disorderly behavior, threats, or harassment are strictly prohibited and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. See the University's "Commitment to Freedom of Expression" and "Bill of Student Rights" in the University Policies and Statements module on Brightspace.

## SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSIONS AND READINGS

M/Aug. 19	<b>Introduction to the Course &amp; Cornerstone</b> Why is this class important? What are transformative texts?
W/Aug. 21	<b>Our Odyssey Begins: "Let us go then you and I"</b> Class Discussion: T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
F/Aug. 23	<b>"Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons, I have measured out my life with coffee spoons"</b> Class Discussion: Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
M/Aug. 26	<b>"That's America"</b> Class Discussion: Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B"

W/ Aug. 28	<b>What is Justice?</b> Thinking about Sophocles' <i>Antigone</i> Read: Act 1, pages 1-36
F/Aug. 30	<b>First Poetry Friday</b> <b>Workshop on Writing</b> Read Act 2, pages 37-52; prepare to write
M/Sept. 2	<b>Labor Day: No Class</b>
W/ Sept. 4	<b>Finish Antigone and begin Dante's <i>Inferno</i></b> Read Cantos I-V (67-121)
F/Sept. 6	<b>Poetry Friday.... And Lost in a Dark Wood</b> Read and prepare to discuss Cantos, I-V (67-121)
M/Sept. 9	<b>Abandon All Hope</b> Read and prepare to write about Cantos, I-V (67-121)
W/Sept. 11	<b>When Paolo met Francesca: discussion of Canto V</b> Reread Canto V, start reading Cantos VI-XIII (121-196)
F/Sept. 13	<b>Poetry Friday.... Feeling hungry, enter the circle of gluttony</b> Read and prepare to discuss Cantos VI-XIII (121-196)
M/Sept. 16	<b>Class Discussion: Dante's <i>Inferno</i></b> Read and prepare to present on Cantos XIV-XVII (196-231)
W/Sept. 18	<b>Continue Discussion of Dante</b> Read and prepare to write on Cantos XIV-XVII (196-231)
F/Sept. 20	<b>Poetry Friday</b> <b>Writing Workshop</b> <b>Final Thoughts on Dante &amp; the Renaissance and Writing</b>

M/Sept. 23	<b>Sir Thomas More: Humanist, Scholar, Martyr</b> Read pages 49-82 of Book 2, <i>Utopia</i>
W/Sept. 25	<b>A Perfect Place (not necessarily quiet)</b> <b>Workshop on Writing</b> Read and prepare to discuss pages 83-113
F/Sept. 27	<b>Poetry Friday</b> Reread More's <i>Utopia</i> and prepare to write
M/Sept. 30	<b>Your Utopia</b> <b>Workshop on Research</b> Prepare to discuss your Utopia
W/Oct. 2	<b>Your Utopia Continued</b>
F/Oct. 4	<b>Final Poetry Friday</b> Bring your favorite poem
M/ Oct. 7	<b>Fall Break: No Class</b>
W/Oct. 9	<b>Well, something is rotten in Denmark: how to approach <i>Hamlet</i></b> Read <i>Hamlet</i> , Act I
F/Oct. 11	<b>First Lyrical Friday</b> Prepare to discuss <i>Hamlet</i> , Act I
M/Oct. 14	<b>Words, words, words....</b> Read Act II and prepare to write about it
M/Oct. 16	<b>What's Hamlet's problem?</b> Reread Act II and read Act III and prepare to discuss
F/Oct. 18	<b>Last Lyrical Friday</b> Continue discussing Hamlet's problems Read Act IV



M/Oct. 21	<b><i>Hamlet on Film, part 1</i></b> Prepare to discuss Acts IV and V
W/Oct. 23-F/25	<b>Writing and Research Workshop</b>
M/Oct. 28	<b><i>Hamlet on Film, part 2</i></b> Prepare to write about Hamlet on Film
W/Oct. 30	<b>Imaging Hamlet</b> Prepare to write about <i>Hamlet</i>
F/Nov. 1	<b>First Image Friday</b> Continue writing about Hamlet
M/Nov. 4	<b>Mary Shelly and the Enlightenment</b> Read the introduction of your penguin paperback Start reading the novel, pages 23-51
W/Nov. 6	<b>How to read <i>Frankenstein</i></b> Prepare to discuss pages 23-51
F/Nov. 8	<b>Image Friday</b> <b>Writing Workshop</b> Read and prepare to write about <i>Frankenstein</i> , pages 23-51
M/Nov. 11	<b>Discussion of <i>Frankenstein</i>: what's Victor's problem?</b> Discussion of pages 52-77
W/Nov. 13	<b>Meet your Monster!</b> Read and prepare to discuss pages 81-100
F/ Nov. 14	<b>Image Friday</b> <b>Writing Workshop</b> Continue discussion and prepare to write about pages 81-100

M/Nov. 18	<b>Frankenstein lives!</b> Read and prepare to discuss pages 101-127
W/Nov. 20	<b>“Why do I live?”</b> Read and prepare to write about pages 101-127
F/Nov. 22	<b>A Special Image Friday: Frankenstein/AI images only!</b> Continue discussing <i>Frankenstein</i> ; read pages 128-141
M/Nov. 25	<b>Peer Review and Writing Workshop</b>
W-F Nov. 27-19	<b>Thanksgiving Break; No Classes</b>
M/Dec.2	<b>Frankenstein: who’s the real monster?</b> Discussion of pages 146-168
W/Dec. 4	<b>Conclude discussion of <i>Frankenstein</i></b> Discussion of pages 169-216
F/Dec. 6	<b>Last Class &amp; Final Image Friday</b>

### **Final Research Project Paper**

The final research paper in SCLA 101 asks students to create something new and innovative such as the design for a new video game, a graphic short story, or even a consumer product that is inspired by one or more of their transformative texts. Their paper is designed as a pitch to investors or executives who might sponsor their product. Students must have a full understanding of the texts that inspire their product as well as the supporting data on their audience, market, and competition.

Sample topics:

- Designing a video game [for example, using *Utopia* or *Frankenstein*]
- Designing a graphic short story [based on one of our readings]
- Creating an action or animated film [any of our readings would work]

- The design for a new theatrical interpretation [for example, *Hamlet* or *Frankenstein*]
- A new podcast series based on transformative texts