

## **EN355: Greenworlds and Changeable Bodies in Early Modern Drama**

**4 Credits \* Spring 2026**

**Professor:** Dyani Johns Taff

**Class Time:** MW 11:00-12:15

**Class Location:** Miller 220

**Contact:** [dtaff@colby.edu](mailto:dtaff@colby.edu)

**Office:** Miller 225

**Office Hours:** W 1-3 pm & By Appt.



William Blake, "Comus and His Revelers" (c.1815)



Figure three: Margaret Cavendish, Frontispiece from *Grounds of natural philosophy* (1668)

### **Course Description**

In 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century English drama, clothing can make or unmake the (wo)man, bodies and identities are malleable, and greenworlds—forests, rivers, seashores, and battlefields—upend social norms and trouble human/nonhuman boundaries. Students will use a range of ecocritical and sexuality studies theories to explore and write about queer bodies—capaciously defined—in plays including John Lyly's *Gallathea*, William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Margaret Cavendish's *Love's Adventures*, and John Milton's *Comus: A Mask*. Through a variety of reading, writing, creative, discursive, and analytical assignments, this course will contribute to the following English department learning outcomes:

- Building community and listening across difference: Students will practice listening carefully to writers from the past; doing so effectively will take community building in the present, as students aid each other in understanding theoretical concepts, dramatic form, difficult language, and a set of 400-year-old customs and ideologies. Students will

learn how to listen to the past and also how to speak back to it, adapting our texts and translating our concepts for use in challenging interconnected gender- and sexuality-based bigotry and environmental violence in our own time.

- Bringing both analytical and creative skills to global histories and ecological challenges: Students will study how our four central plays—written by English playwrights—both represent and resist a culture that was gaining wealth via environmental violence and human trafficking on the global stage. Students will attend to early modern English ideologies that sought to control bodies and environments and to the legacies of those ideologies in our present.
- Finding pleasure and personal meaning in reading and writing together: In the face of national anti-trans legislation and the current administration's cutting of programs designed to protect our bodies and our planet, students in my course will create space for solidarity, humor, and play; we will use our deep, careful study of the past to gain perspective on the present and to model environments of care that support all kinds of bodies.

### Texts

Please buy the following books in hard copy (not ebook) as soon as possible. **If you have trouble locating or paying for these books, please contact me and I can help.**

- John Lyly, *Galatea*, ed. Leah Scragg, Revels Student Editions, 2012, ISBN: 9789719088056
- William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night: A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Natasha Korda, 2025, ISBN: 9780393264258
  - **NOTE:** you MUST buy this edition of the play because we will be making use of the additional materials that Korda has selected and included.
- Margaret Cavendish, *The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays*, ed. Anne Shaver, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, ISBN: 9780801861000

John Milton's *Comus: A Maske* and all other texts will be provided as PDFs on our Google Drive (accessible through Moodle). **You are responsible for printing these texts and bringing hard copies** to class. I recommend acquiring a folder or binder and printing our readings as you go on a personal printer or at the library. **You must bring your course texts—books and hard copy PDFs—to class with you each day.** If you do not have your course texts, you will be marked **absent** for the day. Please contact me if printing readings will be an issue for you.

Since we will write frequently in this course, I recommend buying a book about writing. My two favorites are Graff and Birkenstein's *They Say / I Say*, 5th edition (ISBN: 9780393538700) and Trimble's *Writing With Style*, 3rd edition (ISBN: 978-0205028 80). We may read excerpts of these books during the semester, which I will provide as pdfs; both are excellent, friendly guides to learning to write well. The [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) and the [Colby College Library "All About Citations" Guide](#) are excellent, free resources for citation, grammar, and writing help.

### **Grading System**

I take a holistic approach to grading, aiming to reward process, collective support, and *learning* in as many forms as we can imagine it. I am inspired by the research of scholars including Alfie Kohn, Asao Inoue, Cathy Davidson, and Jesse Stommel; their work and my own observations of students during my seventeen years of teaching have led me to believe that numerical and letter grades are not especially useful tools for assessment and feedback. They can, in fact, cause harm and reflect systemic biases.

I have modeled our assignments and assessment structure on labor-based contract grading and ungrading systems. These systems seek to measure students' work differently, accounting for as many modes of learning as possible, and seeking to create equitable, socially just classrooms where students feel comfortable taking risks, exploring and being brave about new ways of speaking, reading, and writing, and even experiencing failure: these are key aspects of the process of learning.

We will work together—as a class community as well as in our one-on-one meetings—to reflect on and assess the work—the labor—that I ask you to complete this semester. I have designed all assignments for this course with care; everything I ask you to do is meant to support your work in **four core areas** that I take to be vital to learning at the college level:

#### **1. Community**

Proximity—simply being together in a room—does not equal community: making our class into a community takes the hard, rewarding work of being an engaged citizen. Assignments include: arriving on time to class sessions having completed **reading and other assignments, participating** fully during class **verbally or otherwise**, taking a turn (or two) as **class note taker**, large and small group work, **peer support/feedback**, and leading class **discussion**.

#### **2. Textual Engagement**

Our texts are essential materials for learning in this course; they function like lab equipment for a science course or paints and brushes for an art course. We'll learn about greenworlds, changeable bodies, 17<sup>th</sup> century drama, writing, ourselves, and each other by *reading* and engaging actively with our texts both before and during class. To promote active reading, and to extend our learning community beyond the classroom, you will form **Read Aloud groups** with your peers and you will keep **commonplace books (a 17<sup>th</sup> century practice adapted for our course)** in which you will collect observations, ideas, research, and questions about our texts as you prepare for class.

#### **3. Writing**

We often think of writing as a medium of communication, which it is. But writing can also serve as a means for thinking itself; I often use messy drafts and freewriting to work out what I *actually* think or feel about a topic, or to organize my understanding, or to work through or synthesize complex or overwhelming scholarly work. We will do many kinds of writing in this class, and your **commonplace books (CPBs)** will serve not only as a means for deep textual engagement but also for frequent, informal writing practice. Longer assignments will include the **Annotation Leadership and Letter-Writing Project**, a mid-term **Collective**

**Essay**, and a **Memorization and Performance Project** (for CLAS). Your CPBs will directly support your work for these assignments. We will engage in drafting and revision work throughout the semester, and you will **meet with me 1-1 at least twice** to discuss your writing.

#### **4. Reflection and Revision**

As you complete your work for this course, I want you to think actively about *why* and *how* you are doing the work you are engaged in, and about how your work will influence your next steps within and beyond my course. Honest reflection is a powerful tool, and sustained learning cannot take place without it. To promote reflective thinking, you will track your time in a **labor log** for a month, and complete two detailed **self-assessments** (one at mid-semester and one at the end as a part of your **Final Portfolio**).

Detailed assignment directions are available on Moodle and in the assignment handbook.

**You will assess your work in these core areas, and I will use your self-assessments to arrive at your course grade.** As a general baseline, completing all assignments in a timely, thoughtful manner will earn you a B; rushed, missing, or otherwise lack-luster work will earn you a lower grade; work that exceeds expectations, deepens your own or the community's learning, or otherwise goes **above and beyond** will earn you a higher grade.

#### **Community Care Policies and Resources**

We are subject to a welter of social, political, environmental, and other circumstances that can affect our mental and physical health. In response, **we need to prioritize an ethic of care: caring for yourself and caring for your community.** Here are policies designed to promote self and community care:

- **Attendance and missing class:** In order to create and sustain a compassionate community, we all need to commit to preparing for class, showing up, participating fully, and attending to what members of our community (students and professor) say and ask of us. That said, our lives are complicated; if, for any reason at all, you are unable to attend one or more of our class sessions, you may complete an **alternative attendance** assignment, described in the in-class notes document, that will count for participation in the missed session.
  - \*\*\*We'll need a critical mass of folks in class each week. Participating asynchronously (after class has happened) will mean that you will miss out on group work and real-time insights. **Please prioritize synchronous, in-person participation**, but use this option as a back-up whenever you need to.
  - **Masking in class is optional**, but I encourage you to wear a mask if you have a cold or other respiratory illness, if you have recently traveled by bus, train, or plane, if you think you might have been exposed to someone who is sick, or for any other reason that you might have to keep germs in or out. I will always have masks on hand; just ask if you need one.

- **Late work:** Completing course assignments on time is part of how you show your commitment to community, textual engagement, and writing work. Completing assignments on time will also save you from the stress of having assignments pile up. And yet, we all sometimes find ourselves overwhelmed or in need of more time for one reason or another. One or two late assignments is fine. Chronic lateness will affect your grade because it will affect your ability to complete the course work in a thoughtful, timely way.
- **Academic Support:** The Dean of Studies office offers comprehensive academic support in the form of academic success programs, learning consultants, tutors, and much more. [Consult the academic success page to learn more.](#)
- **Financial Security:** If you need support so that you can buy textbooks or food, pay rent, buy or borrow a laptop or interview clothes, or any other kind of financial relief, [contact your class Dean](#) (they are friendly and ready to help! If you want help reaching out, let me know!).
- **Counseling Services:** [Colby College provides cost-free mental health and counseling services](#) to help you manage challenges that threaten your personal or academic wellbeing. **Getting help when you need it is the smart, courageous thing to do.** I am not a mental health professional, but I can make you an appointment, walk with you to Counseling Services, discuss coursework-related stress (and make plans to alleviate it), or help you to see or know when you need to get help beyond my expertise. **Email me any time.**
- **Access and Disability Services:** In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified students with documented disabilities. Students seeking accommodations should start by contacting the [Office of Student Access & Disability Services](#).
- **The Farnham Writers' Center:** From the FWC's website: "The FWC is a place for you to get skilled feedback on your writing. Our peer writing tutors have experience working with Colby's diverse student populations, and they are eager to engage you in collaborative conversations about your writing." [To learn more and to make an appointment, visit their website.](#) The Writers' Center also has a Multilingual Writing Specialist, Dr. Chaoran Wang, who meets individually with international and multilingual students and provides workshops to support multilingual writers. You can reach her at [chaowang@colby.edu](mailto:chaowang@colby.edu). Please feel free to contact her, either to discuss your writing concerns and issues in general or to discuss a specific course-related writing assignment.
- **Academic Integrity:** Please read [the Colby Affirmation](#) and review Colby's policies and resources regarding [academic integrity](#). It is the responsibility of every student and faculty member to be familiar with, and comply with, these expectations for honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility. If you have any questions at any time about whether or how to cite a source, about when it's ok to collaborate and when you must work alone, or other topics relating to your own or others' conduct, please ask me! I am happy to explain how to correctly give credit where credit is due or to discuss other concerns.

- **Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT** are tools that generate text probabilistically, outputting the most likely next word. They are trained on large amounts of text taken from the internet *without the writers' permission*. I do not yet know, fully, what I think about LLMs. I do know two things:
  - ChatGPT and other LLMs raise **serious labor and ethics concerns**: who's making money from these tools? Who's losing jobs? What happens when it is *so* easy to generate plausible but fake, misleading, harmful information?
  - **Writing is thinking** and thinking well is difficult and vital. Reading difficult texts with care and attention changes your brain. If you let the LLM or AI assistant do your reading, summarizing, or writing for you, you are not learning to *think*.

**For this course, please do all of your own reading and writing at each stage, including summarizing, brainstorming, drafting, revising, and polishing.** Reading and writing are hard and time consuming, but putting in that time will enable your intellectual growth, deepen your understanding of our texts, and hone your communication skills. If you would like to experiment with an LLM (and analyze and cite what it generates!), get in touch and we can discuss your plans.

- **Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement:** Colby College prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination of any kind. [Colby is legally obligated to investigate sexual misconduct](#) (including, but not limited to sexual assault and sexual harassment). If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact Colby Counseling Services (207-859-4490) or Kate Smanik, the Confidential Resource Advisor and Dean of Religious and Spiritual Life (207-859-4272).
  - Please note that as your professor, I am designated a “responsible employee,” a legal category that requires me to report to the Title IX Coordinator, Emily Schusterbauer (207-859-4266), if you disclose an experience related to sexual misconduct. This is not as scary as it sounds: if I contact Emily, she and her office will email you. If you want to follow up, you can. If not, you don't have to.
  - **I will support you whatever you decide:** I can connect you to community resources for dealing with sexual misconduct without you needing to disclose specific information to me. If you wish to disclose a specific incident to me, I will help to connect you to Emily Schusterbauer. The college will take initial steps to address the incident(s), protect and support those directly affected, and enhance the safety of our community. Emily will work with you to determine the best way to proceed.
- **Bias Incident Prevention and Response Team (BIPR):** From the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion website: “BIPR is a non-disciplinary body charged with both responding to bias incident reports and implementing educational initiatives designed to decrease the frequency of bias incidents in our community. Community members who have experienced and/or witnessed a bias incident are encouraged to submit a BIPR report or contact BIPR chair Emily Schusterbauer (207-859-4093).” [To submit a Bias Incident Report, click this link.](#)

## **Course Schedule**

The following schedule will give you an overview of our readings, topics, and schedule of assignments for the semester.

**\*\*\*This schedule is subject to change, as needed, throughout the semester.** Our Moodle site will be our home base: I will update checklists and assignments there regularly.

**Reminder:** for a 4-credit course, you should expect to spend approximately 8 hours per week on your work *outside of class*. Some weeks you will need more than 8 hours and some less; I have designed my assignments with that time frame in mind. Plan your time outside of class accordingly and get in touch if you have questions!

|                | Readings and Assignments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Week 1:</b> | <p><b><u>Unit 1: Greenworlds? Changeable Bodies?</u></b></p> <p><u>W Feb 4:</u> Course Introductions; read Rotella, “I’m a Professor. A.I. Has Changed My Classroom...” and listen to The Ezra Klein Show, “This is your Brain on Deep Reading.”</p> <p><b>***BUY YOUR BOOKS! Read the Syllabus! Begin your CPBs and labor logs!</b></p>                                                       |
| <b>Week 2:</b> | <p><u>M Feb 9:</u> Northrup Frye, from <i>Anatomy of Criticism</i>; Alfie Kohn, “The Case Against Grades.”</p> <p><u>W Feb 11:</u> Colby Gordon, from <i>Glorious Bodies</i>; Simone Chess, “Queer Residue.”</p> <p><b>Writing Goals DUE by 11:55pm F Feb 13</b></p>                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Week 3:</b> | <p><u>M Feb 16:</u> Lyly, <i>Galatea</i>, Acts 1-2.</p> <p><u>W Feb 18:</u> Lyly, <i>Galatea</i>, Act 3; Leah Scragg, Introduction to our edition of the play; watch Simone Chess’s introduction to The Show Must Go Online’s production (optional: watch the whole production):<br/><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jtzmJJ3OeQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jtzmJJ3OeQ</a></p> |
| <b>Week 4:</b> | <p><u>M Feb 23:</u> Lyly, <i>Galatea</i>, Acts 4-5; Nardizzi, from <i>Wooden Os</i>.</p> <p><u>W Feb 25:</u> Joseph Gamble, from <i>Sex Lives</i>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Week 5:</b>                                    | <p><u>M Mar 2:</u> Mary Floyd-Wilson, from <i>English Ethnicity</i>.</p> <p><u>W Mar 4:</u> Shakespeare, <i>Twelfth Night</i>, Acts 1-2; Pare, “Of the Changing of Sex” and Crooke, “Of Tribades and Hermaphrodites,” pp. 181-5 in our edition.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Week 6:</b>                                    | <p><u>M Mar 9:</u> Shakespeare, <i>Twelfth Night</i>, Act 3; select and read three items of your choice from the “Intertexts” section of our edition as well as two items from the “Criticism” section of our edition (excluding Arvas and Kemp).</p> <p><u>W Mar 11:</u> Shakespeare, <i>Twelfth Night</i>, Acts 4-5; Arvas, “Early Modern Eunuchs,” and Kemp, “Transgender Rhetoric,” pp. 296-306 in our edition; also read the “Interviews” section, pp. 331-50.</p> |
| <b>Week 7:</b>                                    | <p><u>M Mar 16:</u> Midterm: Collective Essay Writing I</p> <p><u>W Mar 18:</u> Midterm: Collective Essay Writing II</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Mid-Semester Self-Assessment DUE F Mar 20 by 11:55pm</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Week 8:</b>                                    | <p><u>Mar 21-29:</u> Spring Recess—No Classes</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Week 9:</b>                                    | <p><b><u>Unit 2: Adapting and Performing Greenworlds</u></b></p> <p><u>M Mar 30:</u> Cavendish, <i>Loves Adventures</i> Part I, Acts 1-3; also read Anne Shaver’s introduction in our edition, pp. 1-20.</p> <p><u>W Apr 1:</u> Cavendish, <i>Loves Adventures</i> Part I, Acts 4-5; Mihoko Suzuki, “Gender, the Political Subject, and Dramatic Authorship.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Collective Essay Revision DUE F Apr 3 by 11:55pm</b></p>             |
| <b>Week 10:</b><br><br>1-1<br>Writing<br>Meetings | <p><u>M Apr 6:</u> Cavendish, <i>Loves Adventures</i> Part II, Acts 1-2; Chess, “Teaching Transfeminisms.”</p> <p><u>W Apr 8:</u> Cavendish, <i>Loves Adventures</i> Part II, Acts 3-5; Blake, “The Grounds of Literature and Science: Margaret Cavendish’s Creature Manifesto.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Week 11:</b>                                 | <p><u>M Apr 13:</u> Cavendish, “Love’s Cure”; Mary Wroth, from <i>Urania</i>.</p> <p><u>W Apr 15:</u> Milton, <i>A Masque</i> [Comus], lines 1-658.</p>                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Week 12:</b>                                 | <p><u>M Apr 20:</u> Milton, <i>A Masque</i> [Comus], lines 659-end.</p> <p><u>W Apr 22:</u> Connie Scozzaro, “Caring for Chastity”; Sharon Achinstein, “Milton and the Geographies of <i>A Mask</i>”; Kat Lecky, “Naturalization in the <i>Mirror</i> and <i>A Mask</i>.”</p> |
| <b>Week 13:</b>                                 | <p><u>M Apr 27:</u> Memorization/Performance Project Rehearsal</p> <p><u>W Apr 29:</u> Memorization/Performance Project Rehearsal</p> <p><u>Th Apr 30:</u> Memorization and Performance Project: CLAS (outside, weather permitting?!)</p>                                     |
| <b>Week 14:</b><br>1-1<br>Portfolio<br>Meetings | <p><u>M May 4:</u> CLAS Reflection and letter writing</p> <p><u>W May 6:</u> Closing thoughts</p>                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                 | <b>Final Portfolio with self-assessment DUE M May 18 by 11:55pm</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## A few notes on reading

All students read at different rates and different texts require different kinds of attention and time. Think about how it feels to read a social media feed, a novel, a comic, a text from a friend, an art book, a poem, a play, a scholarly article, a scientific paper: these texts all invite you to engage in very different ways. This semester, we will be reading a wide variety of texts of varying length, topic, and density. **If you are struggling, or if it feels difficult to read our texts, don't worry:** that probably means you're doing it right! I can guarantee that you aren't alone in those feelings of struggle and difficulty. Here are a few things to try when the reading gets tough:

- **Assess your time/space:** try reading at a different time of day or in a different location. Some texts might require perfect silence, and some might actually feel easier to read with some ambient noise or music (in a coffee house, for instance).
- **Poems and other artistic texts:** re-reading is key! Read once quickly, for sound and initial impressions. Read again for comprehension. Read again for line breaks, rhymes, puns, metaphors, and so on. Your subsequent reads need not be linear; you might start in the middle or end. The key is to make time and space for reading slowly and re-reading.
- **Scholarly articles:** master the strategic skim. Read the first ~5 pages slowly and carefully, looking for the writer's central argument or point. Next, read section titles and topic sentences, and consider slowing down for a few paragraphs in the middle to see how the writer is using evidence (and to see what kind of evidence they're using). Next, read the conclusion or the final 3 paragraphs slowly. With your remaining time, go back and re-read as needed to clarify your understanding, ask questions, apply ideas, etc.
- **Use your resources (be a skeptical googler!):** bring the power of the internet to bear on your reading; I fully support you using SparkNotes, LitCharts, Schmoop, Wikipedia, and so on to aid you in understanding our texts. BUT: please note that although these sites provide great summaries, they also have errors and frequently provide one-dimensional or overly simplistic analyses. **The same goes for AI assistants/overviews:** they can give you the big picture, but they can't give you what you need to fully and deeply understand a text. **ALSO: always, always, always** cite if you make use of these or any other aids in your writing!
- **Listen to an audio book while you follow along in the text:** If listening while you read is helpful, check out LibriVox: they have crowd-sourced, FREE audio versions of many, many texts. One cautionary note: the reader quality is variable, and intonation IS interpretation, in my view. BUT: do you want to know how I got through reading James Joyce's *Ulysses* in college and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* in grad school (twice!)? I read along while listening to LibriVox recordings. Particularly useful for difficult or long texts, but helpful for anything you're reading.
- **Come to office hours:** I am always happy to talk more about our texts, to read sections slowly with you, to clarify key concepts, and so on.

**The Most Important Thing:** embrace uncertainty and do your best.

Reading *some* is infinitely better than reading *none*; sit calmly with your confusion about or boredom with or other reaction to a text you're reading, read as much of it as you can, and then, crucially, try to articulate your confusion to our class. Engagement does not mean mastery: spend time, slowly, with our texts, and then bring your reactions, observations, perplexities, and so on with you to your journals and to class for discussion.

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# Assignment Handbook

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## Grading System Overview

### Community

- Attendance and Participation
- Discussion Leadership
- Peer Support and Feedback

### Textual Engagement

- Notes on Reading
- Read Aloud Groups
- Commonplace Books

### Writing

- Annotation Leadership and Letter-Writing Project
- Midterm: Collective Essay Writing
- Memorization/Performance Project

### Reflection and Revision

- Labor Log
- Self-Assessment
- Portfolio

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## Grading System Overview

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this class, and your **commonplace books (CPBs)** will serve not only as a means for deep textual engagement but also for frequent, informal writing practice. Longer assignments will include the **Annotation Leadership and Letter-writing Project**, a mid-term **Collective Essay**, and a **Memorization/Performance Project** (for CLAS). Your CPBs will directly support your work for these assignments. We will engage in drafting, peer-review, and revision work throughout the semester, and you will **meet with me 1-1 at least twice** to discuss your writing.

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Our four core areas of work overlap in productive ways. This document sets out the work I have sorted into each of our categories, but remember that all assignments require work that might usefully be categorized into any of our four areas. For example, you cannot complete any of the writing projects without substantial revision or without contributing to our community's learning by presenting your annotations and CPB research or without engaging deeply with our texts. As long as you are completing the assignments with thought and care, you will be growing, learning, and supporting our community in each core area.

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# Community

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## Attendance and Participation

Your central task for engaging in community work will be to arrive on time to class having completed your reading and other assignments. Once you are in class, you will need to participate fully, verbally or otherwise. Modes of participation include reading aloud, asking questions, offering ideas, taking your turn as class note-taker, sharing your in-class writing, responding to your peers' ideas, listening actively and using your body to signal active listening, discussion leadership, peer feedback and writing review, and so on.

As noted in the syllabus, our lives are complicated in terms of physical and mental health, and I assume that you have commitments beyond my class; if you must miss class for any reason, you may complete an **alternative attendance assignment** to make up for your absence. Do the following: first, catch up on any work from the day's checklist (see Moodle) and contact a peer or two to ask if you can have a look at their CPB entries and in-class writing for the day you missed. Next, review the day's in-class notes as well as any class slides or other relevant materials. Finally, below the day's in class notes, make an entry marked "Alternative Attendance by \_\_\_\_ [name]"; write about 200 words in response to what you see in the notes, class slides, prep books, etc. adding to or commenting on what your peers were discussing, bringing in a new part of the reading, asking a new question, and so on.

Remember that alternative attendance is a back-up plan: use it when you need it, **but please prioritize in person attendance!**

**Basic Requirements:** Attend and fully participate in all class sessions and complete alternative attendance assignments if you must miss class.

- Missing 4 or more class sessions (i.e. 2 full weeks), even if you complete alternative attendance, will seriously impede your ability to complete your work for the Community category, and will result in a lower course grade.
- If you miss 6 or more sessions (i.e. 3 full weeks), you cannot pass the course.

**\*\*\*If you find yourself in crisis mode, for any reason, get in touch as soon as you can! I am happy to work with you and the class dean to make assignment adjustments and to support your learning in this course.**

## Discussion Leadership

During many of our class sessions, you will engage in small group work that leads to whole-class discussions as well as other informal activities that are designed to aid you in gaining confidence speaking in front of peers and in deepening our learning through creativity, research, and close reading. In addition to informal activities, each student will lead a whole class discussion twice and then will recite and present during the Colby Liberal Arts Symposium (CLAS) on Th Apr 30.

During Unit 1 (weeks 3-6), students thoroughly annotate a section of the day's readings and then use their annotations to lead discussion (for full directions, see **Annotation Leadership** below).

During Unit 2 (weeks 9-12), Read Aloud groups will work together to lead a discussion based on observations, conversations, and annotations of our readings drawn from their read aloud meetings (for full directions, see **Read Aloud Groups** below).

At the end of the semester, each student will memorize and perform sections of our texts at CLAS (for full directions, see **Memorization/Performance Project** below).

**Basic Requirements:** Complete all informal discussion leadership activities with thought and care. Lead two discussions based on annotation work and Read Aloud group work. Perform and present at CLAS (Th Apr 30).

## Peer Support and Feedback

One of my goals is for you to learn from your peers: from each other, you can learn to provide and respond to targeted, constructive feedback on your writing as well as your presentation style, you can expand your vocabulary and ability to ask questions, and you can learn to see our course texts and topics from perspectives (plural!) outside of your own. I will regularly ask you to respond to your peers' writing and ideas, and a **basic requirement** for the course is that you respond with care and attention, in a timely way, and to the best of your abilities. Peer support and feedback activities will include (but will not be limited to): sharing CPB entries, collective writing, letter writing, project idea sharing, group adaptation projects, and revision exercises.

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# Textual Engagement

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## Notes on Reading

All students read at different rates and different texts require different kinds of attention and time. Think about how it feels to read a social media feed, a novel, a comic, a text from a friend, an art book, a poem, a play, a scholarly article, a scientific paper: these texts all invite you to engage in very different ways. This semester, we will be reading a wide variety of texts of varying length, topic, and density. **If you are struggling, or if it feels difficult to read our texts, don't worry:** that probably means you're doing it right! I can guarantee that you aren't alone in those feelings of struggle and difficulty. Here are a few things to try when the reading gets tough:

- **Assess your time/space:** try reading at a different time of day or in a different location. Some texts might require perfect silence, and some might actually feel easier to read with some ambient noise or music (in a coffee house, for instance).
- **Poems and other artistic texts:** re-reading is key! Read once quickly, for sound and initial impressions. Read again for comprehension. Read again for line breaks, rhymes, puns, metaphors, and so on. Your subsequent reads need not be linear; you might start in the middle or end. The key is to make time and space for reading slowly and re-reading.
- **Scholarly articles:** master the strategic skim. Read the first ~5 pages slowly and carefully, looking for the writer's central argument or point. Next, read section titles and topic sentences, and consider slowing down for a few paragraphs in the middle to see how the writer is using evidence (and to see what kind of evidence they're using). Next, read the conclusion or the final 3 paragraphs slowly. With your remaining time, go back and re-read as needed to clarify your understanding, ask questions, apply ideas, etc.
- **Use your resources (be a skeptical googler!):** bring the power of the internet to bear on your reading; I fully support you using SparkNotes, LitCharts, Schmoop, Wikipedia, and so on to aid you in understanding our texts. BUT: please note that although these sites provide great summaries, they also have errors and frequently provide one-dimensional or overly simplistic analyses. **The same goes for AI assistants/overviews:** they can give you the big picture, but they can't give you what you need to fully and deeply understand a text. ALSO: **always, always, always** cite if you make use of these or any other aids in your writing!
- **Listen to an audio book while you follow along in the text:** If listening while you read is helpful, check out LibriVox: they have crowd-sourced, FREE audio versions of many, many texts. One cautionary note: the reader quality is variable, and intonation IS interpretation, in my view. BUT: do you want to know how I got through reading James Joyce's *Ulysses* in college and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* in grad school (twice!)? I read along while listening to LibriVox recordings. Particularly useful for difficult or long texts, but helpful for anything you're reading.

- **Come to office hours:** I am always happy to talk more about our texts, to read sections slowly with you, to clarify key concepts, and so on.

**The Most Important Thing:** embrace uncertainty and do your best.

Reading *some* is infinitely better than reading *none*; sit calmly with your confusion about or boredom with or other reaction to a text you're reading, read as much of it as you can, and then, crucially, try to articulate your confusion to our class. Engagement does not mean mastery; spend time, slowly, with our texts, and then bring your reactions, observations, perplexities, and so on with you to your journals and to class for discussion.

## Read Aloud Groups

Reading can sometimes feel like a joyfully—or arduously—solitary activity; in the age of ChatGPT and LLMs/AI Assistants, the tech bros of the world are trying to remove that arduousness—and that joy—entirely. To resist the cultural mandate to speed up, to summarize, to optimize, and so on, we will engage together in a slow reading practice designed to make reading for this course into a community activity that can promote sustained attention to our texts.

Beginning in week 2, you will form groups of three or four. Each week, you and your group will meet for at least 30 minutes—in person or on zoom—and take turns **reading our class texts out loud to each other**. After each meeting, your group will add an entry to our Read Aloud Forum on Moodle that takes **one** of the following forms:

- An audio file that contains ~30 seconds of each group member reading aloud a favorite or confusing or essential or enraging or otherwise notable set of lines or sentence/s.
- An audio file that contains ~2-4 minutes of conversation and reflection about what you read; each group member should contribute to the conversation.
- Another method by which to record and share your group's work; get in touch before posting to confirm that your method meets assignment requirements.

The Moodle forum has a built-in tool for recording audio, so you can use that tool or post a link to an audio file hosted elsewhere.

You and your group are welcome to read aloud for longer than 30 minutes and to meet more than once per week; you can post as many times as you would like to.

**Read Aloud Discussion Leadership:** During Unit 2, (weeks 9-12), you and your read aloud group will be responsible for leading a class discussion based on your read aloud meeting for the week. More detailed directions for this leadership project will be available in class and on Moodle.

**Basic Requirements:** Meet and read our class texts aloud with your group for 30 minutes each week. Create a forum post after each meeting according to the assignment guidelines. You and your group will meet and post a total of nine times (no meeting or post due in weeks 7, 8, 13, or 14).

## Commonplace Books (CPBs)

From antiquity forward, readers have written down parts of what they read and heard as a means for remembering and for organizing knowledge. Methods and practices of knowledge collection were important for all kinds of readers in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, who recorded their favorite or most intriguing or troubling quotations in what we now call commonplace books (CPBs). The CPB you keep this semester will aid you in noticing connections between different course texts *and* texts from beyond our class. The goal is to develop a textured understanding of what you are reading and learning, and to gather quotations that will aid you in joining and leading discussion as well as in writing for your class projects.

The keyword here is *informal*; **your CPB does not need to be perfect**. In fact, the most useful CPBs are often messy or serendipitous or eclectic records of your thinking or interests for the period during which you keep the book. When I check your book, I am looking for mess, for process, for active reading and thinking, not neat or polished curation / analysis. Aim for legibility in your handwriting; it doesn't need to be beautiful, but I do need to be able to read it!

**Step 1:** [Read this article](#); it provides one example of how a writer made use of a CPB. Consider: How do you anticipate that your CPB this semester will differ from the one the writer describes? In what ways might it be similar?

**Step 2:** Acquire a book; use the composition book I handed out in class or buy another. You may not keep an electronic book and you may not use loose sheets of paper in a binder.

- \*\*\* Why a physical book? Hardcopy CPBs can be quite beautiful and quirky; the act of writing by hand is distinct in interesting ways from typing and copy/paste; and the physical pages enforce some of the *mess* (or the collision of seemingly unconnected quotes) that can be generative in the process of keeping a CPB.
- Here are a few 17<sup>th</sup> century CPBs, for inspiration:
  - [William Hill's](#)
  - [Stephen Batman's \(with lovely, weird illustrations!\)](#)
  - [Wikipedia on CPBs](#)
  - [Another short article with pictures!](#)

**Step 3:** Start collecting! There's no wrong way to go about this; see below for advice about how to get the most out of the experience. You just need a **minimum of two quotes/entries per class period**.

**Step 4:** Bring your CPB with **you to class every day. If you do not have your CPB in class, I will mark you absent for that day** (though you can complete the alternative attendance assignment to offset). We'll use your quotes plus any annotations, questions, or drawings you choose to include to support our conversations.

### **Advice for generative commonplacing:**

- Make a *habit* or a *practice* of writing down a quote or two directly after finishing each reading session; without this routine, it's easy to forget to add quotations.

- Quotes might be as short as a few words or as long as a paragraph.
- For each quote, include a brief citation, following one of these formats:
  - **Author/title example:** John Lyly, *Gallatea*, 2.1.20-25.
  - **Character/title example:** Sir P. Studios, *Loves Adventures*, 4.19, p. 53.
- You might feel the urge to **annotate, comment, or illustrate**: follow that urge! You might also want only to write down your quote; sometimes a quote just *speaks* to you, and you're not sure why. Allow yourself to just record others' words OR to annotate/comment/draw OR to do both: do whatever feels right to you.
- Make a priority of including quotes from our syllabus texts, but **feel free to also include** song lyrics, TV show or documentary quotes, lines of poetry, and so on; **connect** what we are working on together to other classes and other parts of your life.
- Once you have several entries, you will **begin to notice themes**, reoccurring words or concepts, and keywords. As your book grows, turn some of these themes, words, or concepts into sections: **create a section heading** and then leave a few blank pages. The next time you go to record a quote, see if it fits under an existing heading or if it needs a new one.
  - **Some sections may (and will) die out as you work through our time together and others may grow more than you anticipated.** If they die, let them die; you might have sections with just one or two quotes, and that's perfect. If a section gets too big, just continue it later in the book and make a note at the end of the original section.
  - **Some section headings will work better than others:** For example, ideas like "Science" or "Religion" may be too broad, but topics like "Weather," "Faith," "Skirts," or "Trees" may work better. There is no right or wrong way to determine your section headings, as long as they reflect something about the nature of the quotations you're collecting together.
  - **The first pages of your book will *always* be uncategorized, indicative of the process.** That's perfect! Keep the mess! You are free to re-write quotes into your sections once you create them, but there's also no need to do so.
- When you have a sizeable collection, experiment with returning to earlier entries; **you might enjoy making readers marks**: you might underline key words or create new headings based on subtopics you've found interesting in your earlier headings and entries. You might add [manicules](#) or marginal notes to your favorite entries.

At the end of the semester, create a **title page and table of contents** (perhaps illustrated!) for your book; you could include page numbers to facilitate your return to your book in the future or as aids in sharing your book with others.

## **In Class Writing and Study-The-Text Prompts**

Throughout the semester, you will additionally use your CPB to complete in-class writing exercises and to study our texts in preparation for class. You can expect between one and four of these entries per week; study-the-text prompts will be due before class and in-class writing happens during our class sessions. You may wish to create a section of your book specifically dedicated to in-class writing and study-the-text prompts or you may wish to just put them in as you go (we embrace mess, here!). Either way, **be sure to clearly label your in-class writing with the date and prompt title on my slides and your study-the-text work with the date and prompt title from our Moodle daily checklist.**

**\*\*\*I will collect your CPB each Wednesday at the end of class;** I will read the week's entries and then place your CPB in the wire basket outside my office door for you to pick up. If you need to miss class on a Wednesday, you can turn in your CPB early or late at my office or send your book in with a peer.

### **Basic Requirements:**

- Bring your CPB to class **every class period**.
- Collect a minimum of **two quotes** or entries per class period in your CPB.
- Once you have several quotes, experiment with creating **sections**. At the end of the semester, **create a title page and table of contents** for your CPB.
- Keep track of your work sessions at the back of your CPB for a month (see **Labor Log** directions below).
- Respond to all in-class writing and study-the-text prompts; **clearly label** all of these entries and consider creating a separate section (or sections) in your CPB for this work.

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## Writing

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My sister has run several marathons (and completed two Iron Man triathlons; I like to brag about her athletic accomplishments!). Based on what she has told me about her training, she did not get ready for these epic races by running marathons or swimming the full two miles and so on. She mixed shorter and longer workouts, did interval, slow, and fast runs, and supplemented with yoga and crunches and weights and so on.

The same principle, I think, can be applied to learning to write well. One does not learn to write a long analytical essay well by simply writing a long analytical essay (though that is one way to go about it). One learns to write by writing consistently, often, in several shorter and longer modes, and with a variety of goals. To that end, you will be completing commonplace book study-the-text entries, freewriting in class, logging your labor outside of class, doing research to support your discussion leadership, and completing a variety of in- and out-of-class exercises designed to build your close reading and writing skills (or muscles, if you'll permit me to extend the metaphor). We will also experiment this semester with several kinds of letter-writing, a collective essay writing midterm, and a project that will require interconnected memorization, performance, and writing.

### Writing Goals Forum Post

Your first writing assignment of the semester is a brief Moodle forum post (~250 words) about your writing goals for the semester. Read through the syllabus and assignments for the semester, and then in your CPB, freewrite in response to the following questions (no need to answer them all; write about the ones that feel interesting or useful):

- What is your favorite or least favorite part of the writing process?
- What would you like to be able to DO as a writer, or what audience(s) would you like to be able to reach?
- Describe a past writing project: what was difficult about it and why? What (if anything) was fun, and why?
- What are you looking forward to or dreading about our assignments for this course?

After freewriting, step back, and write 1-3 specific, measurable goals for your writing this semester.

**Shape your freewriting and goals into 1-2 paragraphs and post it/them on the Moodle forum by 11:55pm on F Feb 13.**

We will look back together at your post during our writing meeting in week 10 and again during our Portfolio meeting to assess your progress toward your goal(s) and to adjust as necessary.

## Annotation Leadership and Letter-Writing Project

During Unit 1, each student will sign up to lead discussion during one class period, based on their thorough annotation of a passage from the day's reading. Next, two peers will write letters (500 words) to the leader, describing in detail what they learned from the annotation discussion. Finally, the leader will write a detailed letter (500 words) to me about what they learned from the process of preparing and leading discussion and from their peers' letters (handed in to me with the leader's letter).

### Annotation Preparation and Leadership

Step 1: Select a passage (~1 page; ~15-20 lines) from the day's reading and then annotate that page thoroughly, by hand (not digitally/electronically).

- You may choose to write all over your book or to make a copy of your selected passage and then write all over the copy. You could also re-type and print or rewrite your passage, and write all over that (sometimes double-spacing is nice!).
- Bring all of your **close reading skills** to bear as you annotate. Consider the following:
  - Use the Oxford English Dictionary (Colby Libraries → Databases A-Z → "O" → Oxford English Dictionary → Sign in with your Colby credentials) to **look up words** that you don't know or words that you find interesting.
  - Think about word order (**syntax**) and grammatical structures—circle verbs, square nouns, underline prepositions and conjunctions, star pronouns or make up another method (highlighters, different color pens, etc.) to note grammatical function; pay attention to repetitions, patterns, breaks in the pattern.
  - Think about **sound**: rhyme, rhythm, alliteration / assonance / consonance, caesura, line breaks, enjambment.
  - Think about **rhetorical figures**: image, allusion, metaphor, hyperbole, litotes.
  - Think about **plot and character**: who's speaking to whom, what happens before and after your passage, what does the speaker feel or know or not know.
  - Think about your own **reactions**: did the passage make you feel interested, disgusted, curious, confused, excited? Did you laugh?
  - Write some **questions**: what are the tricky bits or what do you want to know more about or what parts connect to another text or idea we've studied so far?
- **\*\*\*There's no right or wrong way to annotate.** These bullet points are suggestions to get you going. Work hard to fill your page and spend time with the language; aim for curiosity, mess, and deep thought, *not mastery*.

Step 2: Send a picture of your annotated passage to me **by 11:55pm** the evening before your leadership day. I will send your passage to your peer respondents in the morning (see directions below). During class I will project your annotated passage.

Step 3: During class, **read your passage aloud** (slowly and clearly, with gusto and feeling!) and then give us the **highlights**: what are the most important or interesting 1-3 details you noticed as you annotated your passage? No need to take us through all of your annotations. Just point us to what you found to be most significant, and say a bit about why.

- Your peers and I will then respond, asking questions or making comments about your annotations, about your passage, and about connections between your passage and the larger text or about your passage and other texts we've studied.
- Plan to be in charge of our discussion for about **10-15 minutes**.

## Letter Writing

Each student will be responsible for writing three total letters (500 words each) in connection with the Annotation project. Each student will write one letter for two peers, responding to their discussion leadership, and each student will write one letter to me after receiving letters from two peers. You will deliver your **letters in hard copy to your peers and to me**; you can choose whether to write by hand or to type and then print. I will scan and post all letters on Moodle to create a repository of knowledge about our Unit 1 texts.

Response Letters: When it is your turn to be a respondent, you will receive your peer's annotation before our class session (if possible, read the passage and annotations before we begin!). During class, pay extra attention to your peer's Annotation leadership session, taking notes and joining in the conversation even more fully than you would regularly do. After class, **write a letter to your peer (500 words) in which you describe what you learned from the session**. Your letter should arise organically from the experience of participating in your peer's discussion leadership; what's sticking with you? What new questions do you have (about the text under discussion or about other texts we've studied)? What ideas (if any) changed? Be sure to **discuss specific details** (include direct quotes!!) from the passage under discussion and, if relevant, from our other course texts.

- Deliver a **hard copy** (typed or handwritten—your choice) of your letter to your peer in class no later than one week after their annotation leadership (e.g. your peer led discussion on Feb 16; your letter is due at the start of class on Feb 23). Envelope optional! You can deliver your letter early, if you choose.

Reflection Letter: No later than one week after you lead discussion, you will receive two letters from your peers, detailing what they learned during your leadership. Read their letters thoroughly, and then **write a letter to me (500 words) in which you describe what you learned from the whole process of selecting a passage, annotating, leading discussion, and reading your peers' responses**. You might choose to focus on the most important word or phrase from your passage and discuss how your ideas about that word/phrase evolved (changed or deepened or became more nuanced, etc.) or you could focus on the most difficult or the most fun part of the process and bring in a direct quote or two from your passage and our other course texts to

support your discussion or you might choose another focus. Be sure to **discuss specific details** (include direct quotes!) from your passage, from your peers' letters, and, if relevant, from our other course texts.

- Deliver **your peers' letters AND a hard copy of your own letter** (typed or handwritten—your choice) to me in class no later than one week after your peers' letter due date (e.g. you led discussion on Feb 16; your peers delivered letters to you in class on either Feb 18 or 23<sup>rd</sup>; your letter is due to me at the start of class on Mar 2). Envelope optional! You can deliver your letter early, if you choose.

**Basic Requirements:**

- Select, annotate, and lead discussion about a passage of your choice.
- Write a total of three letters: two response letters (one each for two peers) and one reflection letter after completing your discussion leadership and receiving letters from your peers.
- Deliver your letters in hard copy (typed or handwritten; envelope optional) in class; response letters are due one week after discussion leadership and reflection letter is due one week after response letters.

Completing all of the steps of this project in a timely, thoughtful manner will support your work in all four of our core areas (community, textual engagement, writing, reflection/revision). **Your peers are counting on you!** Submitting letters late or not responding to your peers' letters will substantially impede your ability to fully engage in this work.

## Midterm: Collective Essay Writing

At mid-semester, in place of a traditional essay or a midterm exam, we will write an essay collectively over the course of two intensive class sessions. My goal is for us to approach the writing process from a new angle, in real time, supporting each other in thinking deeply about our texts and learning to build on and develop each other's ideas.

For this assignment to succeed, each member of the class will need to **study**: before our first session, review all of your commonplace book entries, class slides, the annotation project letter repository, Read Aloud forum, and notes on our texts, as well as the in-class notes document. Use these materials to direct strategic re-reading of our primary and secondary texts so that you have **a thorough, working knowledge of material we have covered in our first six weeks.**

### Collective Essay Writing I

- **Bring to Class:** your CPB and all printed readings and books from Unit 1. Also bring several of your favorite writing implements (pens, pencils). Be sure that you have **STUDIED** thoroughly before you arrive. \*\*\*Leave phones and laptops and watches at home or in your bag.
- **Procedure:**
  - I will hand out a copy of one passage from our texts, along with an ID slip. I will then read the passage aloud.
  - Your first task will be to **identify** on your ID slip the text's author, the character(s) speaking (if relevant), the text's title, and the text's date of composition **WITHOUT** using your books, readings, or notes.
  - Once you have turned in your ID slip, you may use all of your books, readings, and notes; you will have 20-30 minutes to **annotate the passage** as fully as you can. In your annotations, show me what you know and what you can see in a text when you slow down and read it closely.
  - For the second half of our class session, each student will share their most interesting/significant 1-3 annotations; **we will create a collectively annotated version** of the passage.
  - Finally, working from our collective annotations, we will **generate ideas for an essay topic** in which our passage serves as central evidence. If possible, we will vote on and select an essay topic together; if we run out of time, we will vote via email.
  - I will collect your annotations at the end of our session.

## Collective Essay Writing II

- **Bring to Class:** your CPB and all printed readings and books from Unit 1. Also bring several of your favorite writing implements. **REFLECT and STUDY:** what did you learn from our first collective writing session? What will you need to have at your fingertips for day 2, when we get into writing the essay itself? \*\*\*Leave phones and laptops and watches at home or in your bag.
- **Procedure:**
  - I will hand back your annotations along with a green book for you to write in.
  - With our essay topic and annotations in hand, we will create a working outline, and then we'll start writing a **shitty first draft** of our essay, sentence by sentence: everyone will write a sentence in their green book and then one student will share and I will type the sentence in our collective document. Then, every student writes a next sentence, and then a new student will share. **Each student will take at least two turns offering the sentence they wrote in their green book.** And so on: we will aim to write as much as we possibly can during our class session, pulling in details from secondary texts or the other parts of the text from which our passage comes as needed.
  - **We are aiming for a shitty first draft!** No need for these sentences to be perfect or polished. Draw on what you have studied and build on each other's ideas.
  - At the end of the session, I will collect annotations and green books.

## Collective Essay Revision

In class on Mar 30, I will hand out a hard copy of our collectively written essay, double spaced and with extra pages. Your task will be to mark up the draft with ideas for revision at all levels: how would you improve the argument, evidence, organization, and style of our shitty first draft? On the extra pages and/or in the remaining pages of your green book, you will write at least a new introduction, first paragraph, and conclusion, along with specific notes about what changes you made or would make and why. Your **Collective Essay Revision will be due in the wire basket outside my office door by 11:55pm on F Apr 3.**

During week 10, we will meet 1-1 to discuss your revision packet, compare your writing progress so far to the goals you set out in week 2, and make a writing plan for the remainder of the semester.

**Basic Requirements:**

- Study for and participate fully in day 1 and day 2 of our Collective Essay Writing; complete and turn in your passage ID slip, passage annotation, and green book at the appropriate times.
- Complete your Collective Essay Revision packet by 11:55pm on F Apr 3.
- Meet with me 1-1 to discuss revision, progress on writing goals, and end-of-semester writing plans.

Engaging fully in each step of this project will support your learning in all four of our core areas; missing or late or rushed work at any step will impede your ability to be a full community member, to engage deeply with our texts, to write, and to revise.

## Memorization and Performance Project (for CLAS)

At the end of our semester reading, annotating, and discussing dramatic texts, we will turn our attention fully toward performance: we will aim to bring scenes from our texts to life and to showcase what we have learned during a session at the Colby Liberal Arts Symposium (CLAS) on Th Apr 30.

Step 1: Select 10 or more lines to memorize and perform. You may work individually or in a pair or group; **each student *must* memorize at least 10 lines.** Your lines should come from one of our four main plays, though you may also memorize and adapt for performance a portion of Cavendish's "Love's Cure" or Wroth's *Urania*. If you would like to work on Milton's weird and wonderful masque, I highly recommend reading ahead.

Step 2: Annotate, study, and write about your chosen lines. Bring all of the close reading and research skills you have practiced throughout the semester to your lines; read and re-read, annotate, summarize, paraphrase, and think as deeply about what's *really going on* in your passage as you possibly can. **Use freewriting and analytical thinking to help you unpack your lines: in your CPB,** record your initial ideas, observations, and research about the passage, and play around with what argument you might make about your passage if you were to write an essay about it.

Step 3: Read your lines aloud in three different locations and reflect. Read aloud on the Miller Street or by the flag pole or in the chapel or in a chemistry lab or in the woods or in downtown Waterville; **pick three locations** that are distinct from each other (empty, busy, indoors, outdoors, etc.). Read with feeling, and in each place, try on a different interpretation: BIG emotions (melodrama!!) or BIG movements (what happens if you run or jump or lay down during the lines?) or BIG changes (start as loud as you can and then get quiet; start fast and then stop and continue slowly). **After each reading, write two paragraphs in your CPB** about what it felt like to read in the place you chose and with the interpretation you chose. What did you learn about your character and lines?

Step 4: Memorize and rehearse. Memorize your lines before class M Apr 27 if not before. During class on Apr 27 and 29, we will practice performing our lines / scenes and giving each other feedback. Before class on W Apr 29, you (or you and your partner/group) will write a 2-4 minute introduction for your lines / scene, aimed at our CLAS audience, with the goal of setting up what the audience needs to know in order to understand your performance. \*\*\*Costumes and props are optional. You **MUST** memorize and have a clear understanding of your intonation, pace, and blocking choices.

Step 5: Perform at CLAS! I will book a session at CLAS for our class; invite your friends and teach them about what we've learned this semester.

During class on M May 4, we will reflect as a group on the experience of preparing, memorizing, and performing our lines / scenes; we will discuss what we've learned, how we might change our process, highlights and challenges, and so on, and we will do some reflective writing, as well.

**Before class on W May 6, you will post a letter (500-1000 words) on Moodle, addressed to our whole class, about what you learned from the Memorization and Performance Project (as in your annotation letters, be sure to include specific details—direct quotes!—from your text and about your process and performance). You will also deliver a hard copy of your letter to me in class.**

**Basic Requirements:**

- Select and memorize at least 10 lines from one of our plays, working individually, as a pair, or in a group.
- Annotate and study your lines, keeping notes in your CPB.
- Read your lines aloud in three locations and with three distinct interpretations (movement, intonation, pace, emotion, etc); write two paragraphs in your CPB after each read-aloud. Due before class M Apr 27.
- Fully memorize your lines before class on M Apr 27.
- Rehearse your lines / scene in class and respond to feedback; prepare an introduction for your lines / scenes for our CLAS audience: M Apr 27 and W Apr 29.
- Perform your lines / scene at CLAS, Th Apr 30.
- Post a letter on Moodle reflecting on what you learned from the memorization and performance project before class on W May 6. Deliver a hard copy of your letter to me in class on the same day.

Engaging fully in each step of this project will support your learning in all four of our core areas; missing or late or rushed work at any step will impede your ability to be a full community member, to engage deeply with our texts, to write, and to revise.

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## Reflection and Revision

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### Labor Log

One of my goals for this course is to help you become more aware of your work habits and to prompt reflection about *how* and *why* you are doing the work for this course. Knowing how and why you are working can aid you in making changes to your habits, if you need or want to do so. Knowing your *how* and *why* can also help you protect your health, find intrinsic motivations for your work (i.e. not just for the grade or for credit but because you see value in the labor of learning, reading, and writing for the course), and see progress or change in your own thinking.

This kind of reflective practice, **when done with honesty and care**, can deepen the knowledge you've gained and make it more likely that you'll remember what you've learned in the future.

- In the interest of these goals, I am asking you to keep **a labor log** during our first four weeks together, from F Feb 6 to F Mar 6.
- For each day or for each work session during which you complete labor for my course, you'll create an entry in your log. How much and what kind of information you keep is up to you, but students seem to find the labor log most helpful when they quantify some of their work (tracking when, where, and how many minutes) and also make qualitative notes by commenting on how it felt to complete work for this class.
- Each entry should take you 5 minutes max, and likely only a minute or less.
- By the end of the day on F Mar 6 you'll be responsible for writing a **reflective paragraph** in which you look back at your labor log entries, notice patterns, and articulate your goals for the rest of the semester.

**\*\*\*I will never, ever use the information in your labor log to arrive at or alter your grade.**

If you enjoyed the labor log or found it helpful, continue keeping it! If not, think strategically about how you will track and reflect on your work for the remainder of the semester and write a sentence or two about your plans in your reflection paragraph.

**In order to begin your log**, follow these steps:

1. Flip to the back of your CPB and write "Labor Log" at the top of the last page.
2. Create columns and label them with the information you intend to collect about your work habits.

- Suggested columns: Date, Location, Start/End Time, Total Session Minutes, Activity (reading, writing, talking to peers, etc.), Engagement Level (high, medium, low), “I felt \_\_\_\_\_”, and Notes. **Feel free to create your own set of columns; aim for both quantitative and qualitative measures.**
3. For each work session, fill in your columns with as much or as little information as feels right to you.

Some students can read for hours at a time, and some prefer to read in short bursts. Some students can complete a complex writing assignment in 20 minutes and some need longer. Some students read quickly and some read slowly. **The goal here is not to achieve the most total minutes of work time but rather to *come to know yourself* and to know what conditions create the most successful, satisfying, useful, or otherwise good work sessions *for you*.**

**Basic requirements:**

- Complete one log entry for each work day or session for this class, beginning F Feb 6 and continuing through F Mar 6.
- At the end of your labor log, write a paragraph or two (at least 5 sentences) reflecting on your log, noticing patterns you see in it, and articulating labor goals moving forward. **DUE before class on W Mar 11;** I will check your log when I do my weekly CPB check.

## Self-Assessment

A little after the midpoint of the semester, you will pause, reflect on your work so far, and assess your work according to the scale below. The mid-semester grade that you assign yourself is advisory only; it should aid you and me in taking a pause, communicating, and making any necessary adjustments. I will contact you if I feel that you are being too hard (or too easy!) on yourself in the grade you've chosen.

As a part of the final portfolio process, you will complete a second self-assessment, reflecting on and assessing your *entire* semester's worth of work. Once again, if I feel that you are being too hard or too easy on yourself in terms of the grade you have assigned, I will reach out, and we'll have a conversation about your work.

In the assessment section (step 2), you will find guidelines and rules for scoring your work. We can negotiate these guidelines and rules if circumstances warrant it (as in the case of major illness, death in the family, other big or unforeseen crisis). We will make adjustments *only* with the help of your class dean.

**This is a reflective exercise:** HONESTY is key and will help you get the most out of this work.

### **Step 1: Reflect (about 40 mins; ~5-10 mins per set of questions)**

Free write in response to the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers; there's no need to respond to all questions (but do read and think about each category).

#### 1. Community:

- What have you learned from your peers? How have you contributed to your peers' learning? How have you participated both during class sessions and outside of them?
- What challenges do you see or face or what goals do you have for yourself or for our community? How have you been working toward solving challenges or achieving goals? Who might help and how?
- Have you completed most or all community assignments in a thoughtful, timely way, meeting the basic assignment requirements (i.e. the baseline / B / 2 level)? Have you attended and arrived on time for class? Have you offset any absences with alternative attendance assignments?
  - If you struggled with community work, please describe how so and why; reflect on how you might change your work habits or ask for help in the future.
  - If you have gone above and beyond assignment requirements in your community work, please describe how so in terms of the depth of your learning, the improvement or progression of your skills, your commitment to your peers, the scope of your writing or research, or along another axis that you can describe here.

## 2. Textual engagement:

- What has it been like to read for this class, aloud and silently? What have you learned from our texts? What have you learned through creating your CPB entries or discussion with your peers?
- What do you do when the reading feels difficult, in terms of content or comprehension or otherwise? What textual engagement goals do you have for our class or for yourself?
- Have you completed most or all textual engagement assignments in a thoughtful, timely way, meeting the basic assignment requirements (i.e. the baseline / B / 2 level)?
  - If you struggled with textual engagement assignments, please describe how so and why; reflect on how you might change your work habits or ask for help in the future.
  - If you have gone above and beyond assignment requirements in your textual engagement work, please describe how so in terms of the depth of your learning, the improvement or progression of your skills, your commitment to your peers, the scope of your writing or research, or along another axis that you can describe here.

## 3. Writing:

- What has it been like to write for this class? What have you learned about our course topics, about yourself, about our texts, about your peers through writing?
- What do you do when the writing feels difficult? What writing goals do you have for our class or for yourself?
- Have you completed most or all writing assignments in a thoughtful, timely way, meeting the basic assignment requirements (i.e. the baseline / B / 2 level)?
  - If you struggled with writing assignments, please describe how so and why; reflect on how you might change your work habits or ask for help in the future.
  - If you have gone above and beyond assignment requirements in your writing work, please describe how so in terms of the depth of your learning, the improvement or progression of your skills, your commitment to your peers, the scope of your writing or research, or along another axis that you can describe here.

## 4. Reflection and Revision:

- How does it feel to work for this course, in the classroom and out of it? How engaged were you in the work? How do you arrange your time and what pressures—social, academic, other—do you have to negotiate as you work for my class?
- What did you learn from completing the labor log? From writing and revision work? Did you change anything about your work habits across the semester? Why or why not? What goals do you have for your scheduling or labor?
- Have you completed your reflection and revision assignments in a thoughtful, timely way, meeting the basic assignment requirements (i.e. the baseline / B / 2 level)?
- Are you satisfied or unsatisfied with your work for this course? How so? Have you struggled? Have you pushed yourself to go above and beyond? What work that you've been doing, if any, is **not** captured by what you've written so far?

## Step 2: Assess

After completing your freewriting, **return to your assignment tracker and look at your Y, N, L, and Alt scores for each of our four categories.** Remember that the tracker shows whether or not you have met the basic assignment requirements (baseline / B / 2); you are responsible for keeping track of any above and beyond work, and you should describe that work in your freewriting above, if applicable.

Assess yourself holistically, thinking about both your tracker and your freewriting, and give yourself a score 0-3 in **each of our four categories.** You may use a .5 if you feel that your work falls between whole numbers. Use the following rubric as a guide:

**0** = Most or all assignments are late, missing, or incomplete; something major has interrupted my ability to complete the work for this category.

**1** = I would describe **some** of my work for this category using one or more of the following: **late, missing, incomplete, rushed, not my best effort,** I know I can do better, more thorough, or more thoughtful work. **Rules:**

- If a given category has any Ns, you cannot score yourself higher than a 1 for that category.

**2** = I would describe **most** or all of my work for this category as **complete** according to the assignment's basic requirements, **on time, thoughtful, thorough, and respectful** of my own and others' time and ideas. Even if I struggled, I tried my best and **learned through the process;** I am committed to consistency and improvement. **Rules:**

- If a given category has more than 2 Ls, you cannot score yourself higher than a 2 for that category.
- If you have more than 3 Alts, you cannot score yourself higher than a 2 for community.

**3** = I would describe **all** of my work for this category as **exceptional** in terms of thoroughness and attention to detail; I have gone **above and beyond assignment requirements** in the depth of my learning, the improvement or progression of my skills, my commitment to my peers, the scope of my writing or research, or along another axis that I have described in my reflective freewriting. **Rules:**

- To give yourself a 2.5 or 3 in any category, you must describe in your freewriting and/or in the rubric box how **specifically** you have completed exceptional or above and beyond work in that category.
- If you did not complete the annotation response letter assignments on time, you cannot give yourself a 3 for community.
- If you missed and/or had to be prompted to reschedule your writing meetings, you cannot give yourself a 3 for writing.

| Category            | Scores | If you are scoring yourself higher than a 2 in any category, please provide a few sentences or bullet points in the box below describing <b><u>specifically</u></b> how and why you have gone above and beyond assignment requirements in your work for that category. You can copy/paste from your freewriting above if you have already written about that above and beyond work. You may also use this box to describe how or why you have struggled with work in a specific category or how you're planning to improve. |
|---------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Community           |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Textual Engagement  |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Writing             |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Reflection/Revision |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                     |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Total:              |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

Total scores translate to the following letter grades:

|    |    |   |    |     |         |
|----|----|---|----|-----|---------|
| 12 | A  | 9 | B+ | 6   | C+      |
| 11 | A- | 8 | B  | 5   | C       |
| 10 | B+ | 7 | B- | 4   | C-      |
|    |    |   |    | 3-0 | D+ to F |

**Basic Requirements:**

- Freewrite for ~40 minutes, spending about 10 minutes on each category.
- Assess your learning in each category holistically, using your freewriting, your assignment tracker, and the rubric.
- Complete the self-assessment twice, once at mid-semester (DUE F Mar 20 by 11:55pm on Moodle) and once at the end of the semester (DUE in the Final Portfolio M May 18 by 11:55pm).

## Final Portfolio

At the end of the semester, you will construct a portfolio (both hard copy and digital version) that enables you to reflect on and showcase your semester's worth of learning. As you collect your work, consider what you want to demonstrate to your reader: for practical purposes, your audience for the portfolio is me and your classmates, but it's worth thinking, also, **about who might need to know or be interested in your work beyond this course**. What you decide to showcase will shape your decisions about what to include and how you will describe these materials in your cover letter. So, do you want to show progress, growth, creativity, risk taking, steadfastness, perseverance, learning for the sake of learning, or some other purpose that I haven't imagined yet?

With your purpose in mind, you will assemble your materials, which will include:

- **A cover letter (~500-1500 words):** in this letter, you will state your **purpose** (see below for suggestions) and then **introduce each item** in the portfolio and how it fits in to demonstrating that purpose. As you introduce each item, you'll also describe how it resulted from, benefitted from, or shows your work in one or more of our four categories: **community, textual engagement, writing, and revision/reflection**. Finally, write a broader paragraph or two describing the **most important thing** you learned this semester (wide open!) and describing what you're planning to carry forward after this class ends.
- **Class Artifacts:** at least four pieces of work from the course that help you demonstrate your learning; **these do not need to be revised**, though you may revise them if you wish (and describe what you changed and why in your cover letter). See below for suggestions about what to include.
- **Final Self-Assessment:** after assembling your artifacts and writing your cover letter, you'll take another look at your assignment tracker, and then think holistically about your work for the semester. **Freewrite (20-40 mins)** about any aspect of your work in our four categories (community, textual engagement, writing, and revision/reflection) that you feel your cover letter and artifacts **do not** address: describe any areas of struggle or above and beyond work or aspects of your learning that you would like me to consider. Finally, **use the same rubric you used at mid-semester to assign yourself scores 0-3 in each category** (rubric is reproduced below). Include your freewriting and your final assessment at the end of your portfolio.

### What is your purpose for your portfolio?

There is no right or wrong way to go about selecting a purpose to guide your portfolio construction; pick one that feels meaningful for you. Who, besides me and your peers, might need to know about your work for this class, and why? **Consider the following options**, but remember that they are just *options* that I've imagined; you might come up with a different purpose that suits your needs more fully than my ideas. Do you want to show....

- **progress or growth:** if you want your portfolio to show change over time in some aspect of your learning, you might elect to include an early draft (perhaps a CPB entry or first pass at an annotation letter) and the final version. In your cover letter, you would then point out how your final version has progressed or grown from your early version. Or you could include a CPB entry from the beginning of the semester and one from the end to show how you grew in textual engagement skills and you'd describe that growth in a few sentences in your cover letter. Or you might include your labor log (or an entry or two) and describe changes or growth in your approach to how, where, and when you work. Or you could include a question that your peer asked you in class or in a letter or that I asked you in a writing meeting that pushed you to move from x to y in your writing or thinking about our topics. Many other assignments or "artifacts" from the semester could help you show progress or growth.
- **creativity and/or risk taking:** perhaps you want to show your creative approach to learning: you might choose a CPB entry that pushed out of your comfort zone, or a letter or collective essay component or memorization project piece that felt experimental, or your annotation leadership that turned the assignment on its head, or a radical revision of earlier writing, or some combination of these. Then you'd use your cover letter to describe how the artifact/s demonstrate your willingness to take risks or how creativity informed your learning.
- **steadfastness or perseverance:** perhaps you want to show how you stuck with a question or idea or problem throughout the semester: you could pick a few CPB entries, an in-class activity, a letter, and a project component that show how you've been working on the same ideas (and deepening your learning about them) over the long term. Or, you struggled with some aspect of writing or literary study from the beginning of the semester, but have identified and worked all semester to improve (pick artifacts—labor log entry, CPB entry, peer letter, annotation leadership exercise, project component, etc.—that show what and how so!).
- **learning for the sake of learning:** perhaps you want to show how you made an assignment your own or went above and beyond the basic assignment requirements because you wanted to (not because of grades). You could pick any assignment, big or small, in class or out, individual or group, that shows how you went down a rabbit hole, or pushed yourself in a surprising way, or learned beyond what you thought you would, and so on.

Another purpose, clearly articulated, will work just as well or better than these options: follow your instincts, and aim for the purpose that will best allow you to demonstrate your semester's worth of learning in your portfolio.

### **Final Self-Assessment Rubric:**

After freewriting according to the prompt above, **return to your assignment tracker and look at your Y, N, L, and Alt scores for each of our four categories.** Remember that the tracker shows whether or not you have met the basic assignment requirements (baseline / B / 2); you are responsible for keeping track of any above and beyond work, and you should describe that work in your freewriting above, if applicable.

Assess yourself holistically, thinking about both your tracker and your freewriting, and give yourself a score 0-3 in **each of our four categories.** You may use a .5 if you feel that your work falls between whole numbers. Use the following rubric as a guide:

**0** = Most or all assignments are late, missing, or incomplete; something major has interrupted my ability to complete the work for this category.

**1** = I would describe **some** of my work for this category using one or more of the following: **late, missing, incomplete, rushed, not my best effort**, I know I can do better, more thorough, or more thoughtful work. **Rules:**

- If a given category has any Ns, you cannot score yourself higher than a 1 for that category.

**2** = I would describe **most** or all of my work for this category as **complete** according to the assignment's basic requirements, **on time, thoughtful, thorough, and respectful** of my own and others' time and ideas. Even if I struggled, I tried my best and **learned through the process**; I am committed to consistency and improvement. **Rules:**

- If a given category has more than 2 Ls, you cannot score yourself higher than a 2 for that category.
- If you have more than 3 Alts, you cannot score yourself higher than a 2 for community.

**3** = I would describe **all** of my work for this category as **exceptional** in terms of thoroughness and attention to detail; I have gone **above and beyond assignment requirements** in the depth of my learning, the improvement or progression of my skills, my commitment to my peers, the scope of my writing or research, or along another axis that I have described in my reflective freewriting. **Rules:**

- To give yourself a 2.5 or 3 in any category, you must describe in your freewriting and/or in the rubric box how **specifically** you have completed exceptional or above and beyond work in that category.
- If you did not complete the annotation response letter assignments on time, you cannot give yourself a 3 for community.
- If you missed and/or had to be prompted to reschedule your writing meetings, you cannot give yourself a 3 for writing.

| Category            | Scores | If you are scoring yourself higher than a 2 in any category, please provide a few sentences or bullet points in the box below describing <b><u>specifically</u></b> how and why you have gone above and beyond assignment requirements in your work for that category. You can copy/paste from your freewriting above if you have already written about that above and beyond work. You may also use this box to describe how or why you have struggled with work in a specific category or how you're planning to improve. |
|---------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Community           |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Textual Engagement  |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Writing             |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Reflection/Revision |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                     |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Total:              |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

Total scores translate to the following letter grades:

|    |    |   |    |     |         |
|----|----|---|----|-----|---------|
| 12 | A  | 9 | B+ | 6   | C+      |
| 11 | A- | 8 | B  | 5   | C       |
| 10 | B+ | 7 | B- | 4   | C-      |
|    |    |   |    | 3-0 | D+ to F |

### **Basic Requirements:**

- **By 11:55pm on M May 18**, submit your complete, polished Portfolio in hard copy (in the box outside of my office door) AND as a single .pdf on Moodle. It must contain your:
  - Cover Letter (500-1500 words; 1. purpose, 2. discussion of portfolio contents including connections to category work, and 3. the most important thing you learned)
  - At least 4 Class Artifacts
  - Final Self-Assessment (freewriting and assessment scores)