

Syllabus for writing course on the Twilight series

In a review of the Twilight series, Jo Keroes wrote, “Good books deal with themes of longing and loneliness, sexual passion and human frailty, alienation and fear just as the Twilight books do. But they do so by engaging us with complexities of feeling and subtleties of character, expressed in language that rises above banal mediocrity. Their reward is something more than just an escape into banal mediocrity. We deserve something better to get hooked on.” Keroes’s review raises two important questions that have haunted Gothic fiction since its rise to popularity in late eighteenth-century Britain. First, concerned citizens have asked, “Do Gothic texts send messages to readers that are dangerous, unhealthy, subversive, or perhaps even beneficial?” Second, many readers have asked, “What makes a work of writing good, and why do we need to have these standards?” Informed by these questions, this semester’s writing assignments will examine how Gothic horror of 21st-century America and 19th-century Britain equips its readers with ways of thinking and acting. We will also examine how the role of the popular culture critic and digital communication can help develop our reading, writing, and rhetorical skills.

The general goal of English 1023 is to help students with the reading, thinking, and writing processes associated with academic discourse. In this particular course, our assignments will fulfill the following learning goals:

1. Students will strengthen their critical reading skills through reading many different types of texts.
2. Students will develop a language that enables them to articulate the inner workings of various academic and nonacademic texts and the impact of those inner workings on a reader.
3. Students will synthesize, analyze, and evaluate reliable secondary sources and use those sources to enter popular conversations about important issues.
4. Students will extract cultural implications from texts, communicate these intricacies to others, and posit their own solutions to the problems raised in the texts.

Project One	10%
Project Two	15%
Project Three	15%
Project Four	20%
Blogs	10%
Writing Groups	10%
Midterm Exam	10%
Homework and Participation	10%
Total	100%

Unit One: Course introduction, critiquing, and genres.

Week One: Course introduction; interactive reading.

Week Two: Audience; evaluating; purpose. Read Breaking Dawn, chapters 1-7, “The Harsh Bigotry of Twilight-Haters” by Erika Christakis ([link here](#)), and “Bite Me! (Or Don’t)” by Christine Seifert ([link here](#)). Receive Project One assignment.

Week Three: Structure; analyzing; genre. Read “Violence, Agency, and the Women of Twilight” by Anne Torkelson (pdf on Blackboard), “Another Feminist Defense of Twilight” by Kate Harding ([link here](#)), and Northanger Abbey, Volume I, chapters 1-5. Bring two potential sources for Project One.

Week Four: Genre, Part II; drafting; paragraphing. Read Northanger Abbey, Volume I, chapters 6-15 and Volume II, chapters 1-2.

Week Five: Attributing to sources. Editing. Writing Groups. Finish Northanger Abbey.

Unit Two: Synthesizing and arguing.

Week Six: Synthesizing. Read “The Vampyre” and Breaking Dawn, chapters 8-11. Project One due.

Week Seven: Argumentation; essay exams; midterm exam. Read Breaking Dawn, chapters 12-18.

Week Eight: Writing about poetry; providing evidence. Read “The Giaour,” Breaking Dawn, chapters 19-21, and “Civilized

Vampires Versus Savage Werewolves: Race and Ethnicity in the Twilight Series" by Natalie Wilson (pdf on Blackboard).

Week Nine: Providing evidence, Part II; writing groups. Read Breaking Dawn, chapters 22-30. Project Two due.

Unit Three: Researching, evaluating sources, and writing to an audience

Week Ten: Audience analysis; research methods; academic sources. Read Carmilla, chapters 1-16.

Week Eleven: Annotated bibliographies; writing and speaking. Read Breaking Dawn, chapters 31-39 and Dracula, chapters 1-3.

Week Twelve: Writing groups; presentation rehearsal; project three presentations. Read Dracula, chapters 4-6.

Unit Four: Digital communication

Week Thirteen: Writing with multimedia; cyberculture. Read Dracula, chapters 7-15.

Week Fourteen: Writing for social change; social media; problem-solving and participatory culture. Read Dracula, chapters 16-24.

Week Fifteen: Writing in the future; writing groups. Finish Dracula. Project Four due.