FOUNDATIONS OF THE ENGLISH MAJOR: TEXT/CLOSE READING  
Profs. Laskaya and Pyle

Description  
The Foundations of the English Major is a three-course sequence (ENG 303, ENG 304, ENG 305) that introduces students to the discipline of English as it is practiced at the University of Oregon. The sequence provides English majors with a common intellectual experience and a foundation for future coursework in literary, media, and cultural studies and folklore. All English majors are required to take 303 and then (as of Fall 2020) can choose to take one or both ENG 304 and 305. In 2021-22, ENG 303 and 305 are offered; in 2022-23, ENG 303 and 304 will occur.

ENG 303 is the first part of the year-long Foundations of the English Major series, and it is offered each Fall term and is required of all majors. ENG 303 focuses on the close reading of particulars texts. We will study primarily literary and some visual texts with a focus on the following questions: how do the verbal, formal, aesthetic, literal, and figurative elements of texts generate their meanings? how do readers draw on those components to understand and argue for interpretations of these texts? how do our conceptions of form change over time and across media?

ENG 303 will pursue these questions and their possible answers by reading a few texts chosen from the Medieval and 19th-century Romantic periods. This variety challenges you to engage the task of close reading using very different texts. Read and reread the material assigned for each class rigorously before attending lecture and discussion sections.

Learning Outcomes  
By the end of this course, students will have
(1) gained a strong understanding of the importance and centrality of close reading to argumentation in the discipline of English.
(2) gained an understanding how close reading differs from other argumentation techniques.
(3) become familiar with a variety of close reading techniques.
(4) gained a strong introductory understanding of how to apply such techniques variably to different forms and genres, and
(5) discussed, practiced, and begun refining these techniques in discussion and multiple writing assignments.

ENG 303 large class lectures/sessions occur Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00-1:20 pm.  
Students also enroll in a one-hour small discussion section with a GE (Graduate Student Employee) who will provide an additional, discussion-section syllabi. Pre- or Co-Requisite: ENG 205.
Required Course Materials and Texts, all available on Canvas:
Paul de Man, Essay on Close Reading: “The Return to Philology” Read for 1st day of class
Caedmon’s Hymn (prose account of the Hymn's origin from Bede’s History & the song/poem itself)
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, trans. Marie Borroff
William Blake, selections from Songs of Innocence and Experience, Marriage of Heaven and Hell
John Keats, selected poems and letters
Emily Dickinson, selected poems
--Reading Questions to help you prepare for lectures, assignments. All handouts will be available on Canvas.
--Lecture sessions will be recorded and uploaded after each class.

Contact information and office hours for professors and GEs:
Prof. Laskaya (she, hers), email: laskaya@uoregon.edu
  Office hours (via Zoom): Mondays 1:30-3 pm, Wednesdays 9:30-11 am, and by individual appointment on Canvas Chat or Zoom. Zoom room for Office hrs: 928 0848 2904

Prof. Pyle (he, his) email: trespyle@uoregon.edu
  Office hours (via Zoom): Wednesdays 1:30-3 pm, and by individual appointment on Chat or Zoom.

Ashley Ecklund, email: aecklun6@uoregon.edu
  Office hours: Fridays 12-3 pm on Zoom (see discussion syllabus for details), and by appointment.

Travis Heeren, email: theeren@uoregon.edu
  Office hours: Wednesdays 12-3 pm on Zoom (see discussion syllabus for details), and by appointment.

Raye Hendrix, email: rhendrix@uoregon.edu
  Office hours: Tues and Thurs 2-3:30 pm on Zoom (see discussion syllabus for details), and by appointment.

Communication is KEY. Check Canvas and your UOregen email nearly every day for updates concerning all your courses, and be sure you keep track of assignments and the course schedule. Ask your GEs or professors questions when you have them and, if possible, connect with other students in the course.

Creating a study schedule has been shown to be helpful for students. To stay on track, use a calendar, phone app (reminder), or a paper agenda to keep track of due dates and study times.

It will help you to be active in the course and with the reading by reviewing course material and giving yourself some 'thinking time' beyond reading. Take notes on lectures and readings. Down-load texts to make paper copies and physically annotate or gloss each assigned reading before and perhaps after lecture. Write down your own questions about (and responses to) texts, lectures, or discussions. Try reading our texts out loud. Call, text, or message with someone else in our class or speak with a friend or family member about what you are learning. Put what you learn
into your own words and reflect on it. Comparing notes with a study partner or a small group can assist you with the course; please feel free to collaborate as you learn (however, see caveat under ‘academic integrity’ below).

Since lectures will be recorded and available on Canvas, each of you will be able to review lectures and large class sessions. See the tip sheet on ‘active reading’ (going up on Canvas soon).

If you need additional assistance, contact your GE first. The UO also offers study skills and time management assistance. Check out https://engage.uoregon.edu/ or https://owl.uoregon.edu/ The UO has compiled a list of other support services you can access remotely, including tutoring, technology troubleshooting, advising, counseling, and more: https://remote.uoregon.edu/student

Useful Resources when Reading, Writing, and Citing
For unfamiliar words, https://www.merriam-webster.com offers a high quality online dictionary; it is also a standard source to assist you with your own writing. You can also access this resource through the UO library online catalog.

For words whose meanings may have changed over time, such as words in Blake and Keats texts, use the OED (Oxford English Dictionary), which tracks such changes and can help you figure out what meanings are likely/possible/impossible in those text. Since we will be reading Old English (OE) and Middle English (ME) selections in translation, you may find the OED useful. On the library’s homepage, click on “databases,” then on the letter O, then on the OED (scroll down to ‘Oxford’) and use your DuckID to log in.

Nota Bene (abbreviated as ‘NB’ means ‘Note well!’): For Medieval English texts in their original languages, the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) IS NOT reliable or preferred. If you want to explore specific Old English words we encounter, please consult Prof. Laskaya for a list of resources designed for Old English language study, and to explore specific Middle English words in the original Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, consult the Middle English Dictionary (MED) from the University of Michigan. The MED can be difficult to navigate because standardized spelling did not exist in the Middle Ages; contact Prof. Laskaya if you have difficulty using this free online resource: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary

SCHEDULE (subject to slight changes: see Canvas for up-to-date information)
WEEK ONE
U 9/28 Introductory: the aims, map of course. In this moment of stressful socio-economic-racial, environmental, and political division and strain, why literature? Why engage in Close Reading? What is Close Reading?
**Read and Prepare de Man, “The Return to Philology” BEFORE our first class session.

Section I: Medieval texts in translation for close reading
H 9/30 ‘Caedmon’s Hymn’. OE Alliterative Verse. Slight changes/meaning issues in the multiple MS versions of the poem. Alliteration, Song, Lexicon, Religion and Poetry, caesura, epithet rhetorical situation, our 21st editions as interpretations (often unremarked)
WEEK TWO
U 10/5  *Dream of the Rood.* OE lyric, Dream Vision.
  Prosopopeia, multi-cultural expressions of the divine; structure, perspective,
  description, didactic aims, other poetic and rhetorical features.

H 10/7 *Dream of the Rood* continued. Ruthwell Cross: stone image, design, word and the poem.
  Reading the material object.

WEEK THREE
*M 10/11* Close Reading Short Paper #1 due (1-2 page paper, about 500 words)

U 10/12 *Sir Gawain & Green Knight*, Part I
  Genre: Romance. Verse Form: Alliterative verse with Bob & Wheel. Close reading of
  opening. Lineage, ‘authority,’ time, nature, culture.

H 10/14 *Sir Gawain & Green Knight*, Part I. Arthur’s Court. Intrusion of the ‘other’
  Gawain’s speech acts, the ‘monstrous’ vs. the ‘refined,’ The green man, color symbolism,
  potentialities, ‘game’

WEEK FOUR
U 10/19 *Sir Gawain & Green Knight*, Part II. Arming scene, imagery, contrast, juxtapositioning,
  visual/verbal echoes, Bertilak’s Court, ‘hospitality,’ game

H 10/21 *Sir Gawain & Green Knight*, Part III. Focus on seduction scenes & hunting scenes.
  Courtly Love topoi. Nature & Human, animal & human, intense close
  reading of description. Imagery/symbolism, game, irony

WEEK FIVE
U 10/26 *SGGK* (Part III continued, if needed). Part IV: Gawain’s preparation, Green Chapel,
  Gawain’s misogyny (verbal outburst). Irony. Mystery revealed: the magic of Morgan le Fey.
  Game. Time.

H 10/28 *SGGK*/Re-Examine Pentangle from Part II in depth: image, symbol. Part IV continued.
  Narrative structure. Final Court scene. Ambiguity, irony. The sash and meaning.

*M 11/1* Close reading paper of *SGGK* due: 1050-1250 words.

Section II: Romantic texts for Close Reading

WEEK SIX
*M 11/11* Close reading of *SGGK* due: 1050-1250 words.

U 11/2 William Blake, from *Songs of Innocence*: “Introduction,” “The Lamb,” “The Little Black
  Song, text & image, simplicity, innocence, irony

WEEK SEVEN
*M 11/8* short close reading of one “song” of “innocence” or “experience” we didn’t discuss 1-2 pp

U 11/9  Blake, “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell”
Prose poetry, proverbs, contraries, visions, excess, printing

H 11/11  Veterans’ Day Holiday: No Class

WEEK EIGHT
Sonnet, blank verse, sublimity, ekphrasis, rhyme, iambic pentameter, ballad, femme fatale, “negative capability.”

H 11/18  Keats, “Ode to Psyche,” “Ode to a Nightingale,” “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” “Ode on Melancholy,” “To Autumn,” “This living hand.”
Ode, beauty, immersion, ekphrasis, pastoral, repetition, chiasmus, apostrophe, ambiguity

WEEK NINE
U 11/23  Emily Dickinson, “I taste a liquor never brewed” (214), “There’s a certain Slant of light” (258), “I would not paint -- a picture” (348), “This was a Poet” (448), “Beauty be not caused -- It is --” (654), “The Missing All” (985), “Tell the Truth but tell it slant” (1129), “To pile like thunder to it’s close” (1353), “To tell the Beauty would decrease” (1689)
Ballad, beauty, adage, “dashes,” gender

H 11/25  THANKSGIVING

WEEK TEN
Ballad, sublimity, death, aporia


*H 12/2* Close Reading Paper on Blake, Keats, or Dickinson 4-5 pp. Due 12/2.

FINALS WEEK
*FINAL* Take-Home Final Exam: Due Finals Week: XX am Thursday, December 9th.
**Participation**

Come to class lecture and discussion sessions having read/reviewed the assigned material and prepared to discuss it with your instructors and peers. Please arrive to class sessions on time, with appropriate materials on hand (course readings and implements for taking notes); be ready to focus on the day’s activities. Lectures may not be copied, taped, or videotaped. They will be uploaded to Canvas for your review and as a resource, should you need to consult them. Copying, distributing or sharing lecture video/audio files is not allowed; these files are for the use of members of our immediate course community only.

We may use a chat function during lecture which will allow you to write questions or comments on readings and lecture material. We will turn to questions shared in chat between sections of lecture and/or at the end of a day’s lecture. Chat creates a permanent file, so we can see each individual’s participation in addition to your careful listening during lecture and your work in open discussion. Your questions and comments are important. If we don’t get to your question or comment, your participation in chat still records your active learning, listening, and thinking. Some follow up on Chat comments can then occur in discussion sections for any questions needing further exploration OR ones we didn’t get to during lecture sessions.

The participation grade (see “Grades” below) rewards students who take an active and engaged role in discussions, who are willing to contribute thoughtfully and constructively to the collaborative process of in-class dialogue, and who contribute in a collegial and respectful way. Participation can take many forms: asking questions, offering ideas, making room for others to contribute, visibly paying attention. Conversely, you can hurt your participation grade by talking over others, surfing or using technology for non-class activities, not listening, not treating others with generosity and respect, or by distracting others.

Please pay attention for the duration of lectures and discussion meetings and do not prevent others from doing so. Turn off and put away any technology when not needed for lecture and/or discussion sessions. Surfing the internet or working on other tasks while lecture or discussion is underway will inhibit your own learning and can easily interfere with other students' focus. Any activity that disrupts or distracts others from course material obviously may inhibit teaching and learning, so GEs may ask you to refrain. Read or reread the UO Code of Conduct regarding Classroom and learning expectations. Please be considerate and respectful of those around you and online with you.

**Attendance**

Attending both lectures and discussion sections consistently is a way you commit to your own education. **This is particularly important for an English Major, for whom the close engagement with texts and contexts is paramount.** Class sessions, as well as written work, provide opportunities for you to participate and demonstrate your commitment to your English Major.

One discussion section absence is allowed, in case you are ill or absolutely need to miss a section meeting; consistent attendance and participation in discussion section meetings will figure into your final course grade.
COVID Protocols: We will follow the University of Oregon protocols for Covid prevention, containment, and support. Students are expected to wear masks -- and wear them properly -- at all times. If fully vaccinated, instructors are permitted to remove masks during instruction. Prof. Laskaya, while fully vaccinated, is seriously immune-compromised and will be instructing via Zoom. Prof. Pyle is also fully vaccinated and will be instructing in the classroom, either masked or with the protection of a transparent “face-shield.”

The following is the “Classroom Citizenship” guide published by the university:

Good Classroom Citizenship
- Wear your mask and make sure it fits you well
- Stay home if you’re sick
- Get to know your neighbors in class, and let them know if you test positive
- Get tested regularly
- Watch for signs and symptoms with the daily symptom self-check
- Wash your hands frequently or use hand sanitizer
- Complete the UO COVID-19 case and contact reporting form if you test positive or are a close contact of someone who tests positive.

Resilience Planning: In the event of a campus disruption that impacts our course, note that academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about such changes in our course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are unable to meet in person, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also expected to continue coursework as outlined in this syllabus or other instructions on Canvas. In the event that an ENG 303 instructor has to quarantine, we may need to switch to an online format for a period of time.

Grades
ENG 303 can only be taken for a grade by English Majors; and it must be passed with a solid ‘C’ grade to count toward the English Major requirements. Final course grades will be based on:

10% Participation in section discussion and lecture chat
15% Quizzes (5 best out of 6 quizzes)
15% 2 Short Close Reading Exercises (due 10/11 and 11/1)
40% 2 Formal Close Reading Papers (due 11/8 and 12/2)
20% Final Take-home Essay (2 hours writing time, due 12/9)

**All major assignments and participation must be completed to pass the course, whether taken for a Grade or P/NP.

Grading Scale
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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A+</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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Assignments are due by the day/time indicated on the syllabus. Late assignments will be docked approximately 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late, unless explicit arrangements have been made in advance with your GE discussion instructor (see “Extensions” below). Assignments that are extended will be judged late, if not handed in by the written and confirmed extended deadline.

**Extensions** You may ask for an extension; the earlier the better. When you contact your GE, please let them know how long an extension you are requesting. Using email, confirm the date and time limits of the extension in writing. This allows the teaching team to maintain equity among the extension requests and eliminate misunderstandings. In case of a looming or unexpected disaster, consideration will be given if you keep your instructors in the loop and communicate in advance. Stay in touch.

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Oregon values academic honesty. Students are informed of the University’s policies and expectations about conduct and academic honesty when they matriculate. You are here because you clearly have the ability to engage your own mind in rigorous intellectual work. If you need a quick review of our campus community’s assumptions about academic integrity and conduct, see the Conduct Code on the UO website: https://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct

Writing assignments in ENG 303 will be analytical and ask you to apply what you’re learning in our course; they will not require outside research. You may find yourself curious about something or wanting more information at times; great—read on, and bravo for curiosity! However, students will not receive higher grades simply because they read beyond course materials or use research in papers or exams.

Please consult the UO library’s website: https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism/styleguides for information on documentation, should you need it, and for discussions of how to avoid plagiarism. See your GE if you have any concerns about documentation and/or academic honesty. For this course, an honest and obvious effort to document is absolutely critical and far more important than commas, abbreviations, or 'correct' formatting. Either MLA or Chicago Style provide acceptable resources and formats for advanced work in literature.

**Course policy on Academic Integrity:** All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. Any use of sources (ideas, quotations, and paraphrases) beyond our lectures and discussion must be properly documented. This includes ideas you get from your classmates (discussion and kicking ideas around is encouraged, so long as you document where discussion with a peer has impacted your argument). Also document any ideas you get from websites as well as books and other media. You are not allowed to cut and paste from internet sites into your paper. N.B. Most internet essays aimed at students are not written at the college level. Lifting material from this work, even in the case that you are not caught, often results in a lower grade. In other words, rely on your own grey matter, and wrestle well, yourself, with the course material. Protect the integrity of your own work and that of others’. In cases of clearly established plagiarism or cheating, a final course grade of “F” will be recorded, and all incidents will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, as required by the University.
Inclusion and Accessibility
This is an inclusive learning environment. We will do our best to assist any student facing challenges. We recognize our texts are overwhelmingly drawn from white, hetero-dominant cultural material and encourage you to think about ways each may directly, or subtly, contribute to (or resist) oppressive power dynamics. Our purpose is to help you hone your close reading skills, but we hope you will also reflect on issues of power as they arise in the material, given the textual features and historical contexts of each text. As we will discuss the first day of class, rigorous close reading can disturb our initial assumptions about what a passage, a poem, or a narrative may mean. The work we do this term can apply to your subsequent readings of texts from any historical period and writers from all backgrounds, as well as any communication you hear, see, or read, whether literary or not.

Please notify one of the professors teaching this course by the end of week 2 if there are aspects of the instruction or course design that result in disability-related barriers to your participation, so that we may make accommodations in line with what the Office for Accessible Education recommends. It is your responsibility to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu for resources and support.

NB: If your work with AEC determines you may need accommodations, you must meet with your GE or one of the faculty within a week of meeting with the AEC to discuss details of the accommodations.

A note about student names and pronouns: class rosters provide instructors with only students’ legal names. Please let us know (in person or by email) if the names or pronouns we have for you are not accurate. And please let us know if we are not pronouncing your name correctly. It is important to us that you are addressed correctly and respectfully.

Course Content
You should be aware that the texts we will read this term deal with adult themes and subject matter. Encountering, analyzing, and discussing aesthetic, political, and cultural differences—including differences that challenge and even offend current day beliefs and ideals—and learning about the histories that helped shape current urgent debates, struggles, and conflicts are essential aspects of the discipline of the English major and the work of majoring in English. We believe that cultivating these skills will help best prepare students to live as effective and ethical citizens. To develop these skills, we remind all of you that it is vital that each of you is able to take risks and explore arguments—arguments you may continue to revise or may move away from. Similarly, we ask each of you to be respectful of viewpoints with which you may disagree strongly.