

# ENG 235: WOMEN'S WRITING

Dr Katherine Turner



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I have an office telephone number but will not be using it during the summer, so please use email to communicate. Thanks!

**Welcome, and thank you for choosing  
this course; I look forward to working  
with you!**

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a three-semester-hour course which earns LO2 credit for Gender. Students choose to take it at either the 200-level, earning LO3 credit for Writing, or the 300-level, earning LO3 credit for Research. Students may not repeat the course at a different level. It is an elective for the English major and the Women's Studies minor.

Students will read works by women within the Anglo-American literary world, from *c.* 1660 to the present day, in a variety of genres. Analysis will be grounded in feminist and gender theory and will consider the historical contexts of poems, novels and essays, as well as their significance for later readers.

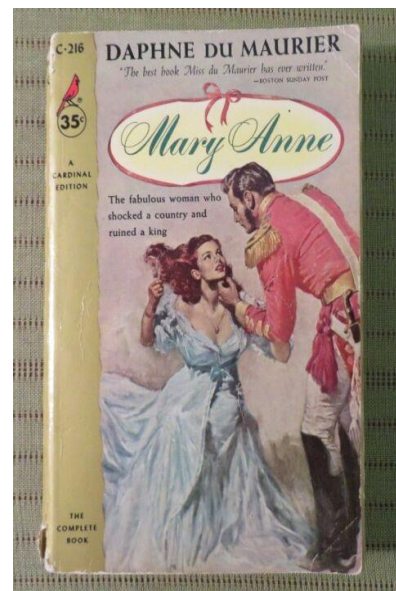
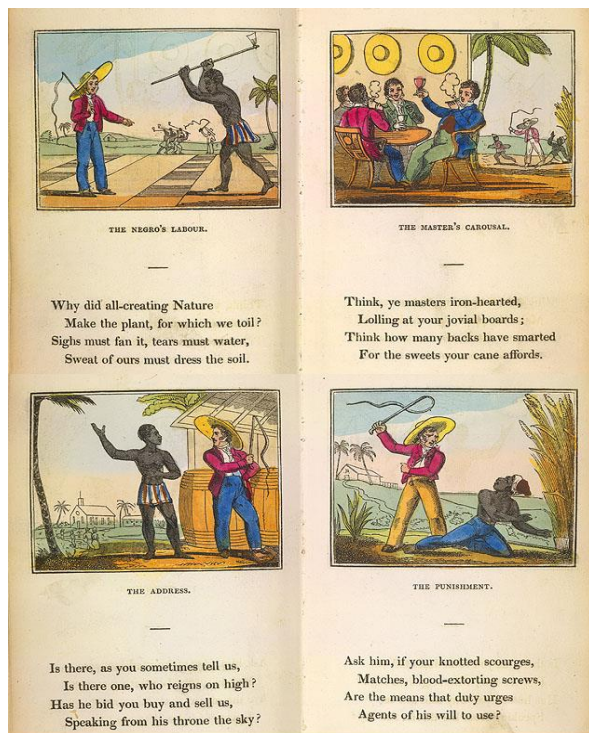
## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- A knowledge of broad trends and key texts and authors in the development of women's writing in the Anglo-American tradition, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present;
- An understanding of key concepts such as the canon and literary "value"; patriarchy and the emergence of feminism; a female literary tradition; sex, gender & otherness; gender & performance; gender & race; "womanism";
- An ability to deploy a range of literary-critical techniques to enhance understanding and enjoyment of women's writing.

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

I am a Professor in the English department at Mary Baldwin University, having previously taught at the University of Oxford and for many American study abroad programmes in England. I have a BA, MPhil and PhD from the University of Oxford (Balliol College). My primary research fields are the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but I enjoy teaching a wide span of literature. My particular interests include travel writing, women's writing, eighteenth-century poetry, and the literature of slavery & abolition. I have edited Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* for Broadview Press and several volumes of women's scandalous memoirs from the Romantic period for Pickering & Chatto.

Recent publications include "Women Travel Writers" for *The History of British Women's Writing, 1750-1830*, "Travel Narratives" for the Wylie Blackwell *Encyclopedia of British Literature, 1660-1789*, and essays on eighteenth-century Georgia, on Daphne du Maurier's novel *Mary Anne*, and on the anti-slavery poems of William Cowper.



### Contacting Me

Email me at [kturner@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:kturner@marybaldwin.edu). I will generally respond to emails within 24 hours (longer at weekends). If you have not received a response within 36 hours, please resend your message. Always put your class name in the subject line so I know it is not junk mail.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

The **poems and short works** we'll be studying will all be provided via Canvas, either as pdf files or as links to online texts. If you have a copy of the two-volume *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English*, edited by Sandra Gilbert & Susan Gubar, you will find all the readings except Austen & Morrison in that, but I am not requiring students to purchase the Norton.

We are also studying several **novels** (some are very short). I encourage you to purchase your own copies, and below I indicate my preferred editions. However, if you have financial constraints you will be able to find electronic copies of most of the novels, whether via kindle, Project Gutenberg, or other sites. Check with me if you're unsure whether a particular source is reliable. Audio versions of the novels are also available if you like to listen to novels (but you will need to look at the texts for study, discussion and essay-writing). There are also movie & TV adaptations of some, which we'll discuss as we go along. I encourage you to watch *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre* – the various recent TV miniseries or movie versions really bring the novels to life and will help particularly with *Jane Eyre*, which is quite long!

I am listing the novels in the order we're studying them – so go ahead and start getting hold of them. You can find many of them as used books via Amazon or Abe Books for between \$5 and \$10 each. If you use online texts via Project Gutenberg, the EPUB versions are much easier on the eye (they look like pages of a real book!) than the html versions.

- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford World's Classics edition preferred, ISBN 9780199535569; or online via Project Gutenberg: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/42671>)
- Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre* (Oxford World's Classics edition preferred, ISBN 978-0199535590, or online via Project Gutenberg: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1260>)
- Chopin, Kate, *The Awakening* (any edition – often collected with other short stories by Chopin; or you can use the online version provided by [katechopin.org](https://www.katechopin.org/the-awakening-text/): <https://www.katechopin.org/the-awakening-text/>)
- McCullers, Carson, *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (any edition – often collected with other short stories by McCullers; there are also a couple of pdf versions online of dubious legality ...)
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved* (Vintage edition, ISBN 9781400033416).

## SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- If you need to hone your writing skills, brush up on grammar, or check up on correct referencing conventions (MLA is the system to follow), use Diana Hacker's *Rules for Writers*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (earlier editions are not up-to-date on MLA format), especially the closing section "Writing about Literature"; or Axelrod & Cooper's *Concise Guide to Writing*, especially chapter 9, "Strategies for Writing Critically." Alternatively, you can consult – free of charge – the generally reliable Online Writing Lab at Purdue University: ([https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)). The Purdue OWL has a useful subsection on Writing about Literature: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/writing\\_in\\_literature/writing\\_about\\_literature/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/writing_about_literature/index.html) – here you can find good advice on, for instance, creating effective thesis statements and finding good essay topics.
- On the **Canvas** site which accompanies this course, in a folder entitled "**Writing Tips**," you will find handouts offering advice on how to read effectively as a student of literature and how to write papers of literary analysis, as well as some sample student essays. Some important guidelines are also included later in this syllabus (pages 13-15).

## CANVAS

The Canvas site which anchors this course presents all the information you need, arranged in modules which generally cover one to two weeks of the course (see the Course Schedule on pages 9-11 of this syllabus). Within Canvas you will find:

- **Readings** (either as pdf files or links to web-sources), in particular the poems and shorter works we'll be studying.
- **Reading Notes**, which you **must** download – these are designed to prepare you for the readings and help you think constructively about analyzing them.
- **Links** to websites of interest, movies, etc.
- **Discussion** sites for each module, where you will also upload your **presentations**.
- **Paper topics** for the SPAs and formal essays, and guidelines on preparing your **presentation** and your final **portfolio**.
- **Assignments** folder where you will upload your SPAs and formal essays – they will be run through a plagiarism checker.
- **Grades** folder where you will see your grades and my feedback.
- **Writing Tips**, which you should consult frequently (especially if you are new to writing English Literature papers).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Reading Load

You will need to spend between **six and eight hours a week** doing the reading, thinking about the study questions, contributing to the online discussion board, and working on the formal essay assignments.

### Assignments

- **Discussion** - You must contribute to the discussion for each of the eight modules. You need to post at least twice (one formal posting and one response to another student), and you should aim to post more to earn maximum marks. See page 8 below for further information on Discussion procedures and deadlines, and see page 12 for the Discussion grading rubric. Online classes work best when students post often, with enthusiasm!
- **Two** short (1½–2 pages) pieces of text analysis (**SPAs**) during Weeks 1 and 2. These assignments will (re)familiarize you with the basic skills for writing about literary texts.
- **Three papers**, between 3 and 4 pages long, due in Weeks 7, 10 and 12. These assignments enable you to develop your analytical skills – you will make an argument about the text(s) and illustrate it with quotation and commentary. Papers 1 and 2 **MUST** be revised unless they achieve a grade of B or above – this is a Writing Emphasis class.
- **One Powerpoint presentation** on an individual poet (Week 8).
- **Final portfolio** with reflective analysis on the course.

### Grading

Eight discussions (one per module)	2.5% each (total of 20%)
Two short poem/prose analysis (SPA)	5% each (total of 10%)
Three papers:	15% each (total of 45%)
Presentation:	15%
Final portfolio/reflection	10%

Late assignments will incur grade penalties unless there is a valid reason for their tardiness.

## REVISIONS

Students are encouraged to revise essays for a higher grade. Revisions should ideally be turned in within three weeks of the original assignment deadline, but I will accept revisions any time before the end of the course. There will be no opportunity to revise the final essay. **Essay revisions must be accompanied by a short paragraph in which you explain how you have revised your work.** Upload them to Canvas, in the same place that you uploaded the original version. This is a Writing Emphasis class, so it's designed to help you improve as a writer through feedback and revision!

## FEEDBACK

When I grade assignments, I also write comments on your paper, using the Canvas mark-up facility for online submissions. Be sure you can see my comments – they may not show up on a Mac or an i-phone.

## DATES FOR SUBMISSION OF SPAs AND ESSAYS

- SPA 1 – Sunday 7 June (end of Week 2)
- SPA 2 – Sunday 21 June (end of Week 4)
- Paper 1 – Friday 10 July (Week 7)
- Paper 2 – Monday 27 July (Week 10)
- Paper 3 – Friday 14 August (Week 12)
- Portfolio and Reflection – Sunday 16 August.

**You must turn in ALL of the assignments in order to pass the course.**

**NOTE: because of the significant discussion component of the course, Incomplete or Extra Time options are only granted under exceptional circumstances, and can only accommodate late papers, NOT overdue DB postings. ICs or ETs will not be granted to students who have completed less than 60% of the required work.**

## HONOR CODE

Mary Baldwin students pledge to uphold the Honor Code. They pledge to refrain from cheating on assignments, papers and tests, to refrain from plagiarism, and always to be honest in their dealings with faculty, staff and other students. To maintain the integrity of the system, students, faculty and staff who witness Honor Code infractions are expected to report them. You can find the new Honor Code, along with honor council procedures and exam “dos and don’ts,” here on the MBU website: <http://www.marybaldwin.edu/student/sga/honorcode/>.

If I become aware of an Honor Code offense in this class, I will encourage the student to self-report by e-mailing the Honor Council chairwoman or by filing an incident report (searchable as a “Contact Report” and available within the “Honor Code” section of the MBU website). Here is a link to the incident report page:

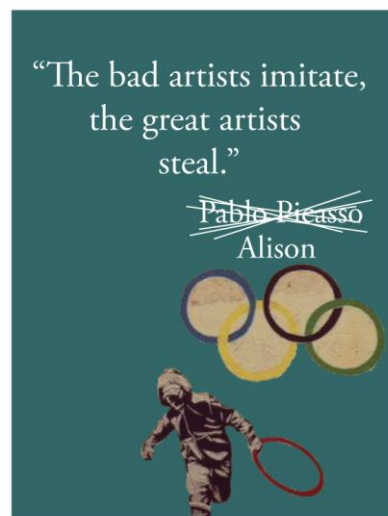
[https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MaryBaldwin&layout\\_id=0](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MaryBaldwin&layout_id=0).

If the student does not self-report within 24 hours, I will submit the report myself.

If the Honor Code offense is related to a course assignment, the assignment will not receive an official grade until the Honor Council investigation (and, if necessary, hearing) is complete. I will not assess a grade penalty for an Honor Code infraction unless a student is found responsible by (or admits responsibility to) the Honor Council.

### Plagiarism

Downloading papers from the internet, allowing someone else to write, rewrite or edit your work, to suggest structure, to alter the substance of your ideas, or to do your research, are serious Honor Code violations. Borrowing other writers’ words or ideas without proper citation of those words or ideas constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious honor code violation and will be prosecuted. If in doubt, acknowledge any help you have received, including sessions you may have held with tutors in the Writing Center – which is an excellent resource that you are encouraged to use. Just remember to acknowledge it!



## DISCUSSIONS ON CANVAS

The **Discussions** area on Canvas is our virtual classroom. Bear in mind that on-campus students are in class for two and a half hours each week: I don't expect you to spend that long on the Discussions, but nor is it acceptable to make just one or two five-minute visits. Each module's Discussion is designed around questions which you can answer without having read everything for that module – the sooner you get into the discussions, the more lively and productive they will be for everyone. You should visit each Discussion three or four times, so that you are having a conversation with others, not simply posting a mini-essay at the end of the module. Your grade will reflect the frequency of your engagement as well as the quality of your contribution(s). See the **grading rubric** towards the end of this syllabus (page 12), which makes it clear, for example, that to gain an "A" grade you'll need to make at least three meaningful posts; and that if you contribute little more than "great post, I agree," or "I didn't like this poem," you are unlikely to gain a passing grade for that module's discussion.

Discussion postings can range from sentence-length comments on others' ideas, to more substantial paragraph entries of up to about 300 words (**more than this tends to weary other readers**). Your postings should show engagement with the primary material: you should back up your points with appropriate quotation (correctly referenced) from the text, and comment on how the passages you have quoted help the text to generate its effect. Discussion postings during the first few weeks will receive instructor feedback on these fundamental skills in literary analysis, as preparation for the formal written assignments required by the course – so you must **engage with the Discussions right from the start**.

I expect you to *read everything on the discussion*, including questions which you did not respond to and postings that might have been made after you finished posting, by other students and by me (I often post some important wrap-up observations). **Therefore, you will need to revisit the discussion board after it has closed to posting, to make sure you have read everyone's comments including mine.**

The discussion will still be visible, and indeed worth revisiting many times as you prepare for formal essays; but anyone who posts past the due date will not receive credit (unless I grant you special permission). This means that **if you do not keep up with your postings, you will lose your opportunity to post, which will negatively affect your final grade.**

Discussions close at 11:59 pm on the last Sunday of each module.



## SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### MODULE ONE – EARLY POETS, SACRED AND PROFANE

**(Weeks 1 and 2, Tuesday 26 May through Sunday 7 June)**

Virginia Woolf, from *A Room of One's Own*

Aphra Behn, "The Willing Mistress," "The Disappointment" & "To the Fair Clorinda"

Anne Bradstreet, "The Prologue" & "The Author to her Book"

Mary Chudleigh, "To the Ladies"

Anne Ingram, "An Epistle to Mr Pope"

**SPA 1 due on Sunday 7 June.**

### MODULE TWO – THE RISE OF JANE AUSTEN

**(Weeks 3 and 4, Monday 8 June through Sunday 21 June)**

Mary Wollstonecraft, excerpts from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

Mary Alcock, "A Receipt for Writing a Novel"

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

**SPA 2 due on Sunday 21 June.**

### MODULE THREE – THE FEMINISM OF CHARLOTTE BRONTE

**(Weeks 5 and 6, Monday 22 June through Sunday 5 July)**

Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*

**MODULE FOUR – SISTERHOOD AND SAME-SEX DESIRE**

**(Week 7, Monday 6 July through Sunday 12 July)**



Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market”

Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence”

Paper 1 due Friday 10 July

Begin work on presentations for Week 8 (see list below)

**MODULE FIVE - PRESENTATIONS ON POETS**

**(Week 8, Monday 13 through Sunday 19 July)**

Emily Dickinson; Michael Field; Stevie Smith; Gwendolyn Brooks; Sylvia Plath;  
Joy Harjo; Sharon Olds, Rita Dove, Maya Angelou (I am open to other  
suggestions)

**MODULE SIX – DANGEROUS DESIRE?**

**(Week 9, Monday 20 through Sunday 26 July)**

Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*

**MODULE SEVEN – GENDER AND PERFORMANCE**

**(Week 10, Monday 27 July through Sunday 2 August)**

Carson McCullers, *The Ballad of the Sad Café*

Excerpts from Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*

Paper 2 due Monday 27 July

**Module Eight – *Beloved* and the African American experience**

**(Weeks 11 and 12, Monday 2 through Friday 14 August)**

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Alice Walker, “In Search of our Mothers’ Gardens”



Paper 3 due Friday 14 August

Final Portfolio due Sunday 16 August (instructors must submit grades by noon on Wednesday 19 August)

## DISCUSSIONS GRADING RUBRIC

<p><b>A</b> <b>Exceptional for college-level work</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarks are well written and argued effectively, above the level normally expected of college students.</li> <li>• Observations are backed up with close reference to and quotation from the literary texts; and there is some analysis of the quoted material.</li> <li>• The student visits the discussion at least 3 or 4 times, reads the discussion posts and responds to the postings of fellow students. The student engages collaboratively with others, interacting intelligently and thoughtfully, supplementing existing posts with additional new and relevant material (properly cited). The student may challenge existing posts and ask probing questions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B</b> <b>Above average for college-level work</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarks are at or above the collegiate level in writing and argument.</li> <li>• Observations are generally backed up with close reference to and quotation from the literary texts.</li> <li>• The student visits the discussion at least 2 or 3 times, reads the posts and responds to the postings of fellow students. Most interactions are collaborative and advance the conversation; they are thought-provoking and motivate responses from others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>C</b> <b>Average participation for college-level work</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarks, in general, are at the collegiate level in writing and argument.</li> <li>• The student visits the discussion once or twice and contributes to the dialogue. Interactions with others, however, are generally one-way and do not lead to probing thought; they seldom advance a conversation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>D</b> <b>Below average participation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarks are poorly written and/or argued.</li> <li>• The student visits the discussion just once, or inconsistently throughout the semester. Contributions are rarely interactive or engaging and do not advance the conversation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>F</b> <b>Unacceptable level and quality of participation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little or no participation; remarks, when written, do not advance the conversation.</li> <li>• The student visits the discussion board less than once and makes little or no meaningful contribution to the dialogue.</li> </ul>

## A GUIDE TO WRITING A SUCCESSFUL ESSAY OF LITERARY ANALYSIS

### STRUCTURE & ARGUMENT

In the first sentence or two, identify the **text** and (if known!) the **author** of the text(s) you'll be discussing. You may also wish to give the **date**, especially if you are making any kind of historical or contextual argument. Then write a few sentences introducing the **topic** about which you will be writing (avoid huge generalizations such as "since the beginning of time ..."); build up to a nice clear **thesis statement** at the end of your first paragraph. Make sure it is a statement (not a question) and that it's sufficiently interesting to form a viable argument for your whole essay.

Advance your **argument** with meaningful **paragraphs** – each should be a discrete unit of thought. Make sure each paragraph begins with a clear **topic sentence** which tells us what the paragraph will be doing; but also try to link BACK to the previous paragraph first, to create a logical flow for your essay (using phrases such as "in contrast," or "although").

Use detailed close **analysis** of the literary text(s) to support your argument – be sure to pick key moments in the text. Avoid too much simple summary and description: you can assume that your reader has a basic knowledge of the text.

Use frequent **quotation** from the text(s) you are discussing – try to illustrate every point you make with a clinching quotation. Short quotations of key sentences, lines, or phrases woven elegantly into your own sentence are much more effective than long quotations, which make it look as if you are trying to fill your word-count. Make sure each quotation is correctly **referenced** (page numbers for prose, line numbers for poems or plays) and corresponds clearly to an edition of the text in your **Works Cited** page.

When you've introduced a quotation to back up your point, take time to **comment on how it works**; comment on how particular words, phrases, images, sound patterns contribute to the **EFFECT** of the quoted passage. This is the key to performing literary analysis.

Aim for a punchy **conclusion** which not only shows the reader how you have argued what you said you would argue in your introduction; but also adds something about the "so what" factor of your argument – what have we learned through reading your essay. Do NOT restate your introduction.

Now, edit and proofread! Check correct **FORMAT, STYLE, AND GRAMMAR – GUIDELINES ON NEXT PAGE**

## FORMAT, STYLE, AND GRAMMAR

Be sure you are using correct MLA format; so, you'll need **headings** on page 1 (your name, professor name, course code and date of the paper) and a **header on each page** which contains your last name and the page #.

Your essay needs a **title**, centered but with no other funky formatting. Not just 'Paper 1'.

Read through to check that your argument makes sense and **flows** logically.

Read through again to check that you have correctly **integrated all your quotations** (see section below, on "Quotations and References").

Read through to check for **stylistic flaws** such as repetitive sentence structure, vague use of "it," "this," "they" and other pronouns, flabby "there is/are" constructions, gush words such as "incredibly" or "wonderful." If you have lots of short choppy sentences, merge some with meaningful connecting words.

Read through at least one more time to check for common **grammatical errors**, such as comma splices or run-on sentences, sentence fragments, missing commas after introductory clauses or before co-ordinating conjunction (FANBOYS), inconsistent verb tenses. Always **use the present tense when describing what happens in literary texts**, but the past tense when describing historical events or contexts ('Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark', not 'Hamlet was the Prince of Denmark' – this is a timeless literary work, not a piece of history.)

## QUOTATIONS AND REFERENCES

If you are referring to other texts, remember that titles of separately published works (novels, plays, long poems, newspapers, magazines) go into italics (*The Hunger Games*; *Paradise Lost*; *Newsweek*): titles of poems, short stories, essays or articles go into quotation marks ("The Wanderer," "A Good Man is Hard to Find," "Consider the Lobster").

Introduce quotations properly (use signal phrases!) with proper grammatical consistency (or "flow") between YOUR sentence and the quoted material. Use a colon if you introduce a quotation with a full independent clause of your own.

Lay out quotations from poems with proper attention to LINES. Set off quotations of more than four lines of poems as an indented block. Don't use quotation marks when you indent longer

quotations: the indentation performs the same function as quotation marks for shorter, non-indented quotations. For fewer than four lines, incorporate the quotation into your own sentence and paragraph; if you quote more than one line, indicate line breaks with a slash /

Punctuate quotations correctly – pay attention to where the quotation marks, periods, and parenthetical references should all go, in relation to each other. Avoid "dropped quotations" (DQ) where you stick a quotation into your paper without incorporating it into one of your sentences.

Reference quotations correctly (line #s for poems, page #s but no 'p' or anything funky for prose texts).

Provide a correct Works Cited list of all the texts you have cited at the end of the paper (on a separate page) in correct MLA format (there is a full guide to this on Canvas and on the Grafton Library website). Use a hanging indent for each entry and be sure your entries are in A-Z order. Here are some examples:

#### Works Cited

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature*, edited by Joseph Black et al., Broadview Press, 2007, pp. 217-317.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. "The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale." *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature*, edited by Joseph Black et al., Broadview Press, 2007, pp. 282-303.

"Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature*, edited by Joseph Black et al., Broadview Press, 2007, pp. 144-209. [The author of this poem is unknown, hence I have cited it by title only.]