

## English 28: Intermediate Reading and Composition Fall 2012

Section: 0216

Meeting times: T/Th, 10:40-12:05

Classroom: CSB 205

**Instructor:** Michael Robinson, Ph.D.

**Office location:** TBA

**Office hours:** T/Th 12:05-1:05 p.m. or by appointment

**E-mail:** [merobi@gmail.com](mailto:merobi@gmail.com)

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He compared L.A. and Mexico City (which he knew well) to volcanoes, spilling  
wreckage and desire in ever-widening circles over a denuded countryside. It was  
never wise, he averred, to live too near a volcano.

- Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*

When I am in California, I am not in the West. I am west of the West.

- Theodore Roosevelt

### Course Description and Theme

This section of 28 will offer an introduction to critical thinking, reading and writing at the college level. You will be writing about representations of urban space in literature and films about Southern California.

### Required Course Texts (with ISBNs)

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior*. New York: Vintage, 1989. (0679721886)  
Chandler, Raymond. *The Big Sleep*. 1939. New York: Vintage, 1988. (0394758285)  
West, Nathanael. *Miss Lonelyhearts* and *The Day of the Locust*. New York: New Directions, 2009.  
(9780811218221) (Note: you will only be responsible for *Locust*.)  
Mosley, Walter. *Devil in a Blue Dress*. 1990. New York: Washington Square Press, 2002.  
(0743451791)  
Clines and Cobb. *Research Writing Simplified*. Longman, 2012.

### Other Required Course Materials

Pearson MyLab online resource (*important: see information sheet below for more information*)

#### Films:

*Chinatown*. Dir. Roman Polanski. 1974. (to be watched on your own--see schedule below)

*Blade Runner*. Dir. Ridley Scott. 2007 "Final Cut" version. (space in schedule permitting)

*Killer of Sheep*. Dir. Charles Burnett. 1979. (to be screened in class)

### Recommended and Optional Materials

*The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (see this web site for some of the MLA citation rules: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>)

*The Los Angeles Times* (<http://www.latimes.com>)

*L.A. Weekly* (<http://www.laweekly.com>)

Los Angeles Conservancy (<http://www.laconservancy.org>)

Friends of Watts Towers Art Center (<http://www.wattstowers.org>)

Web site of artist J. Michael Walker (<http://jmichaelwalker.com>)

L.A. County Metro (<http://www.mta.net>)

Water and Power Associates ([http://waterandpower.org/museum/Early\\_City\\_Views%20\(1800s\).html](http://waterandpower.org/museum/Early_City_Views%20(1800s).html))

### MyPearson Cafe's MyWritingLab Information

To get access to the online portion of the course (MyWritingLab), you will need your own email address. You will also need the following:

1. **This access code:** english25971

2. **The code on the Student Access Code Card provided with your copy of *Research Simplified*, which is available at the bookstore with the other books for this course.**

The online portion of the course is mandatory. I will say more about this requirement in class. For more detailed information about how to access Pearson and even a video that shows you how to log in, see the attached sheet from Pearson at the end of the syllabus.

### Course Requirements/Grade Breakdown

Attendance, participation (including peer review, group work, and quizzes): 15%

Pearson MyLab online: 15%

Final exam: 10%

Presentation: 10%

Essays: 50% total

Assignment 1: 5%

Assignments 2-4: 10% each

Assignment 5: 15%

### Assignments

**Essays.** Assignment #1 will serve as a self-introduction to your classmates to be posted to the course discussion board. It will also serve as practice at **memoir**. Assignment #2 offers practice in unstructured textual analysis--no thesis statement necessary. Assignment #3 asks for a **function outline** of a coherent essay with a thesis statement. Assignment #4 requires each student to put her ideas in conversation with other critics and to make a **persuasive argument** for the validity of her own point of view. Assignment #5 challenges each student to do all of the above while supporting her claims with independent **research**.

**Quizzes.** Regular unannounced quizzes will be used to help you keep up with the reading. These cannot be made up for any reason (**including tardiness**), but the lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

**Workshops.** You will be asked to prepare for and participate in one or more peer-review workshops. Workshop preparation and participation will be graded. Details and a handout for the workshops will be forthcoming.

**Presentation. 1) Describe and narrate** your experience of a place (such as your own neighborhood), paying special attention to the way the built environment and its design have influenced your experience and **2) report on your research** into the history of the place. Your final research project can be based on this presentation. Length: 5-10 minutes. Use of A/V aids is encouraged. Please let me know in advance what media you will need so I can provide it (if possible) on the day of your presentation. **Note:** pay especially close attention to the reading by Mike Davis, "Fortress L.A.," for a model of how to conduct a critical analysis of an urban space. **Also, I encourage you to base Assignment #5, the research paper, on this presentation. Instructions:** Come to class on 9/6 with at least two possible topics in mind. Students will be selected at random and asked for their topics. You will also be asked to sign up for a presentation slot on the course schedule on 9/6. Presentations will begin during Week 3. See below for a list of possible presentation topics.

**Presentation Topic Ideas [Note: if you would like to choose a topic not on the list, please ask me about it in advance.]**

-your own Southern California neighborhood (history, description, analysis)

-another neighborhood or area in L.A. or Southern California (Venice, Chinatown, Chavez Ravine, Hollywood, the Valley, Downtown, Westlake, Malibu, Santa Monica, Torrance, South L.A., Watts, Compton, Jefferson Park, East L.A., West Hollywood, Koreatown, Boyle Heights, Echo Park, Highland Park, Pasadena, Bunker Hill, Chinatown, etc.)

-an open public space or park in SoCal (examples: MacArthur Park, Olvera Street, Griffith Park, the Santa Monica Pier, the L.A. River)

-a privately owned attraction, building or space in SoCal (examples: Beverly Center, Universal Studios, The Grove, the Bradbury Building, L.A. Live, Dodger Stadium, Gamble House)

-a state- or city-owned historic monument or structure (examples: El Pueblo Monument, Union Station, Watts Towers, Heritage Square Park, L.A. Central Library)

### Classroom Etiquette

This writing classroom is an **electronics-free zone**. Phones must be **silenced and put away** before class begins. MP3 players, laptops, tablets, etc., **are not allowed** in class except when permission has been granted in advance. See also: "Attendance Policy."

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate and ask about any work or assignments that were missed. You are also responsible for turning in any work that is due the day that you return to class.

### Attendance Policy

Absences beyond five **for any reason** will earn you a deduction of 5% from your course grade **per absence**. Chronic tardiness will also hurt your grade.

### Policy on Late Work

Work turned in late will receive a daily deduction.

### Communication

I will communicate with the class via e-mail and MyPearson Cafe and may occasionally post required course materials online. **Please check your e-mail regularly so that you do not miss any messages about posts to Blackboard, changes to assignments or changes to the schedule.** It is your responsibility to follow any instructions for completing assignments and downloading or reading course materials online.

### Submitting Your Work

Hard copies of essay assignments will be collected at the beginning of class on due dates. Papers should be formatted according to **MLA** guidelines. Citations should also be in MLA format. Occasionally, I may request an electronic copy of your assignment instead. **Please pay attention to instructions about how and when to turn in work since they may vary from assignment to assignment.**

Late work (see "Policy on Late Work" above) should be e-mailed to me unless I specify otherwise. If an essay is turned in electronically, feedback may also be given electronically.

### Explanation of Grading (Rubric)

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**"A" paper:** An "A" paper is an excellent essay and is free from careless grammatical, spelling, and organizational errors. It begins with a clear thesis. It has seamless transitions from paragraph to paragraph, never losing sight of its focal point. It draws a logical conclusion that answers a problem stated in the thesis. It meets the length requirement of the assignment. It has an original point of view that is lively and interesting to read. It has no format errors and is turned in on time. An "A" represents a writing level of unusual polish and style, and often takes a surprising angle in developing the thesis. This level of writing is rare because it shows consistent excellence. It always surpasses assignment expectations.

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**"B" paper:** A "B" paper is a good essay and has many of the qualities found in an "A" paper, but it might have one too many writing errors. It often lacks the depth of explanation and originality seen in an "A" paper. It represents solid, readable writing that does what the assignment asks. "B" level writing demonstrates concrete support for claims, fine organization, and substantive thoughtfulness.

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**"C" paper:** A "C" paper is an adequate essay. It may have errors but not enough to hurt its clarity. It shows some of the qualities of an "A" or a "B" paper, but it does not develop the idea to its fullest. It is adequately organized but is rather simplistic. It satisfies all the requirements of the assignment, but it lacks sufficient, concrete support needed to illustrate its assertions or prove its point. It also shows lapses in editing proficiency and contains careless errors.

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**"D" paper:** A "D" paper is inadequate. It contains all of some of the following problems: it is too short, has many errors, lacks clarity and focus, lacks logical organization, rambles, is too general, or doesn't satisfy the requirements of the assignment.

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**"F" paper:** An "F" paper is off-topic, poorly written and contains too many errors in grammar, mechanics and spelling.

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### English 28 Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

- 1) Produce a 350-500 word essay, utilizing standard rhetorical modes and maintaining unity and coherence. 2) Produce a 4 to 5 page research paper which supports an argument. For the SLO's of this and other courses, see: <http://www.lamission.edu/facstaff/slo/courseslos.aspx?disid=27>.

#### Class Schedule (Overview)

##### **Week 2: Assignment 1**

Due: a short autobiographical reflection posted to the discussion board

##### **Week 5: Assignment 2**

Text: *The Woman Warrior*

Writing skills: the critical process: critical thinking, critical reading

Due in Week 5: an *unstructured* critical **analysis** of an excerpt or excerpts from Kingston's novel

##### **Week 8: Assignment 3**

Text: *The Day of the Locust*

Writing skills: the writing process: pre-writing, organization, thesis

Due in Week 8: a detailed **function outline** of a thesis-driven argument about West's representation of the "American Dream"; employ at least one critical source.

##### **Week 12: Assignment 4**

Text: *The Big Sleep*, *Chinatown*, or *Devil in a Blue Dress*

Writing skills: the art of the persuasive essay

Due in Week 12: a coherent, **thesis-driven persuasive essay** critiquing the representation of women and minorities in *noir*; use two critical sources.

##### **Week 15: Assignment 5**

Writing skills: research, revision and the writer's art: sentence, paragraph, and word

Due in Week 15: a **research project** combining narrative, description and research. Topic: narrate and describe how the history, design and development of an area or site in L.A. (such as your own neighborhood) have influenced your experience of it. (Additional details will be forthcoming.)

**Class Schedule (Week by Week)** (Note: may be subject to change.)

Please note: each reading assignment is due on the day next to which it appears on the schedule.

#### **Unit 1: *The Woman Warrior***

Week 1

**Discussion topics:** introduction, course overview, the narrative essay and descriptive essay (examples to be distributed in class); MLA format; Assignment #1 description

**Tue., 8/28:** Introductions, syllabus, course overview

**Thurs., 8/30:** Read "No Name Woman," the short first chapter of *The Woman Warrior*, for class today.

Week 2

**Assignment #1** (web assignment): autobiographical reflection due as an upload to the discussion board by 2:00 p.m. on 9/6 at the latest.

**Discussion topics:** critical thinking/reading, *The Woman Warrior*

Sign up for a presentation slot in class on 9/6.

**Reading:**

**Tue., 9/4:** "White Tigers" in *Warrior*

**Thurs., 9/6:** "Shaman" in *Warrior*

Week 3

**Discussion topics:** Mike Davis's "Fortress L.A.," *The Woman Warrior*, critical thinking/reading, basic grammar

**Presentations** (max of 2 presentations per class meeting)

**Reading:**

**Tue., 9/11:** Read first half of "At the Western Palace" in *Warrior* and read Davis, "Fortress L.A."--handout or download from Blackboard.

**Thurs., 9/13:** Finish "At the Western Palace" and read the first half of "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe" in *Warrior*.

**Web:**

In Pearson MyLab online, complete the W1 (Basic Grammar) "Skills Check." If your score is less than 80, you must complete the rest of the Basic Grammar unit (W1.1-11), including the short "Post-test." Please do this before the class meets on Thursday so that I can address any questions you have in class before moving on to the next unit.

Week 4

**Discussion topics:** critical thinking/reading, sentences, *The Woman Warrior*

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 9/18:** Finish *Warrior*.

**Thurs., 9/20:** Begin reading *The Day of the Locust*.

**Web:**

In Pearson MyLab online, complete the W2 (Sentence Skills) "Skills Check." If your score is less than 80, you must complete the rest of the Sentence Skills unit (W2.1-11), including the short "Post-test." Please do this before the class meets on Thursday so that I can address any questions you have in class before moving on to the next unit.

**Unit 2: *The Day of the Locust***

Week 5

**Assignment #2** due this week (unstructured close analysis)

**Discussion topics:** West and *Locust*; boosterism, L.A. and the American Dream

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 9/25:** *Locust*, Chs. 1-5

**Thurs., 9/27:** *Locust*, Chs. 6-10

Week 6

**Discussion topics:** *Locust*, paragraphs

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 10/2:** *Locust*, Chs. 11-15

**Thurs., 10/4:** *Locust*, Chs. 16-22

**Web:**

In Pearson MyLab online, complete the **W6** (Paragraph Development) unit beginning with the "Skills Check" and ending with the short "Post-test." Please do this before the class meets on Thursday so that I can address any questions you have in class before moving on to the next unit.

Week 7

**Discussion topics:** *Locust*, using examples

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 10/9:** Finish *Locust*.

**Web:**

**Thurs., 10/11:** Read "Sunshine or *Noir*?" from Davis--handout or download--and begin *The Big Sleep*.

**Web:**

In Pearson MyLab online, complete the **W7** (Essay Development) unit beginning with the "Skills Check" and ending with the short "Post-test." Please do this

before the class meets on Thursday so that I can address any questions you have in class before moving on to the next unit.

**Unit 3: *The Big Sleep* (themes: the *femme fatale*, the hardboiled detective, urban erasure, *noir*)**

Week 8

**Assignment #3** [function outline] due this week

**Discussion topics:** division and classification, Chandler

**Discussion questions/passages:**

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 10/16:** *The Big Sleep*, Chs. 1-13

**Thurs., 10/18:** *Sleep*, Chs. 14-18

Week 9

**Discussion topics:** Chandler

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 10/23:** *Sleep*, Chs. 19-24

**Thurs., 10/25:** *Sleep*, Chs. 25-28

**Web:**

In Pearson MyLab online, complete the **W3** (Punctuation, Mechanics and Spelling) "Skills Check." If your score is less than 80, you are strongly encouraged to complete the rest of the Punctuation, Mechanics and Spelling unit (W3.1-8), including the short "Post-test." Please do this before the class meets on Thursday so that I can address any questions you have in class before moving on to the next unit.

**Unit 4: *Chinatown* and *Devil in a Blue Dress* (neo-*noir*, revision, race and the experience of space)**

Week 10

**Discussion topics:** thesis, cause and effect, Chandler, *Chinatown*

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 10/30:** Finish *Sleep* and watch *Chinatown* on your own for class today. [add 'Water!' in CM? or Morrow Mayo]

**Thurs., 11/1:** Read excerpt from Erie, *Beyond Chinatown*--handout or download--and *Devil in a Blue Dress*, Chs. 1-3.

**Web:**

In Pearson MyLab online, complete the **W4** (Usage and Style) unit beginning with the "Skills Check" and ending with the "Post-test." Please do this before the class meets on Thursday so that I can address any questions you have in class before moving on to the next unit.

Week 11

**Discussion topics:** peer review, revision

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 11/6:** *Devil*, Chs. 4-7

**Thurs., 11/8:** *Devil*, Chs. 8-10; Essay #3 rough drafts are due in class for **peer review**

**Web:**

In Pearson MyLab online, complete the **W5** (The Craft of Writing) unit beginning with the “Skills Check” and ending with the “Post-test.” Please do this before the class meets on Thursday so that I can address any questions you have in class before moving on to the next unit.

Week 12

**Assignment #4** (thesis-driven persuasive essay) due on 11/15 in class

**Discussion topics:** the research paper--getting started, choosing a topic, writing a thesis

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 11/13:** *Devil*, Chs. 11-17

**Thurs., 11/15:** *Devil*, Chs. 18-25

Week 13

**Web assignment:** rough draft of research paper due to Pearson’s Smart Tutor

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 11/20:** Finish *Devil*.

**Thurs., 11/22:** TBA

**Web:**

In Pearson MyLab online, complete **W8** (Research) unit (there is no “Skills Check” this time). Please do this before the class meets on Thursday so that I can address any questions you have in class before moving on to the next unit.

Week 14

**On 11/29: rough draft of Assignment #5 due in class for peer review**

**Presentations**

**Reading:**

**Tue., 11/27:** Watch *Blade Runner* [2007 “Final Cut” version] on your own for class today and read “Building Blade Runner” by Klein--handout or download.

**Thurs., 11/29:** Screening of *Killer of Sheep*

Week 15

**Assignment #5** due this week.

**Presentations**

**Tue., 12/4:** Film screening cont’d (if necessary)

**Thurs., 12/6:** Wrap up

**Statement on Disability**

If you are a student with a disability and require classroom accommodations, please see me to discuss arrangements. The sooner I am aware that you are eligible for accommodations, the quicker I will be able to provide them. If you have not done so already, you may also wish to contact the DSP&S Office in Instruction Building 1018 (phone #818.364. 7732/TTD 818.364.7861) and bring a letter stating the accommodations that are needed.

This course supports the **LAMC Institutional Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)**.

PLEASE NOTE: You will be surveyed towards the end of the semester to garner how well we have met these outcomes.

As a result of the English or Speech course that should be able to:

- a) **Research information**
- b) **Evaluate information**
- c) **Solve problems and use logical reasoning (critical thinking) and to develop strategies for solutions**
- d) **Analyze global issues from multiple perspectives**
- e) **Communicate the merits of works of art, music, or literature**
- f) **Make value judgments and ethical decisions**

The following chart shows how your courses meet these PLOs.

Institutional PLOs	How English addresses these PLOs
<p><b>Written and Oral Communication</b> Students will demonstrate the interactive nature of communication involving speaking, writing, listening and reading. Evidence will be the student’s ability to make a clear, well-organized verbal presentation employing appropriate evidence to support the arguments or conclusions and to write a clear, well-organized paper using documentation and quantitative tools when appropriate.</p>	<p><b>PLO 1:</b> Analyze written text to identify underlying logic and point of view Develop a well-organized paper which develops cogent main ideas stated in a thesis and which has adequate support for statements made.</p>
<p><b>Information Competency</b> Students will demonstrate information competency by combining aspects of library literacy, research methods and technological literacy. It includes consideration of ethical and legal implications of information and requires the application of both critical thinking and communication skills. Evidence will be the ability to find, evaluate, use, and communicate information in all its various formats.</p>	<p><b>PLO 2:</b> Utilize diverse sources of information, to research a topic. Attribute quotes and other information gleaned from print and electronic sources, according to MLA style</p>
<p><b>Problem Solving</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to solve problems by examining, selecting, using and evaluating various approaches to developing solutions. Evidence will be the ability to observe and draw reasonable inferences from observations, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant data, define problems, analyze the structure of discipline or profession-based problem solving frameworks and to use such frameworks and strategies to develop solutions.</p>	<p><b>PLO 3:</b> Evaluate arguments for validity, objectivity and soundness Argue a point after having gathered and synthesized relevant information, data and evidence.</p>
<p><b>Aesthetic Responsiveness</b> Students will demonstrate aesthetic responsiveness by taking a position on and communicating the merits of specific works of art, music and literature and how those works reflect human values. Evidence will be written or oral communications that articulate a personal response to works of art, explain how personal and formal factors shape that response and connect works of art to broader contexts.</p>	<p><b>PLO 4:</b> Critique text in terms of style and relate a text to the period in which it was written.</p>
<p><b>Ethics and Values applied to decision-making:</b> Students will demonstrate facility in making value judgments and ethical decisions by analyzing and formulating the value foundation/framework of a specific area of knowledge in its theory and practice or in a professional context. Evidence will be the ability to identify own values, infer and analyze values in artistic and humanistic works as well as scientific and technological developments and to engage in values-inflected and ethical decision-making in multiple contexts.</p>	<p><b>PLO 5:</b> Distinguish fallacies in arguments and be able to recognize the validity or lack of validity of various points of view.</p>

## MyLab Course Registration Instructions

Dear Student,

Your instructor chose MyLab resource to help you succeed in this course. With rich media, an optional eText, and much more, your MyLab course provides you with the resources you need to master even the most difficult concepts. Your MyLab course is designed to help you get a better grade!

If you have a Smartphone or tablet with a QR code reader, scan the QR code on the right to instantly watch a Student Registration Video. Or go to the website: <http://goo.gl/KWMt5>



### What You Need to Enroll in your Instructor's Online Course

- ✓ **A Course ID:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Your instructor will give you this.)
- ✓ **A valid email address that you check regularly**
- ✓ **A student access code** (Or, you can pay with a credit card or a PayPal account.)  
This pre-paid code is printed inside the Student Access Code Card. The code card may be packaged with your new textbook or it may be available for purchase separately from your school's bookstore.

### To Register and Sign in to Your Instructor's Course the First Time

- Go to [www.pearsonmylab.com](http://www.pearsonmylab.com)
- Click **Student** under Register.
- Enter your Course ID and click **Continue**.
- Read and accept the licensing agreement
- You have a Pearson account if you have used other Pearson online products. Enter your username and password, and click **Next**.
- If you don't have a Pearson account, click "No" or "Not sure" to search for possible accounts.
- Complete your account set up by entering your name, email address, a username and password, and any other required information.
- Complete the registration process.
- Paying for your course access.
  - If using a credit card or PayPal, you will be prompted to enter your payment information before your registration process is complete.
- Print the Confirmation & Summary

**You now have access to your instructor's online course.** Click **Go To Your Course**, and then in the left panel, click the course name to start your work.

### To Sign in to Your Course Again Later

- Return to [www.pearsonmylab.com](http://www.pearsonmylab.com)
- Click **Sign In**.
- Enter your Pearson account username and password and click **Sign In**.
- In the left panel, click the course name to continue your work.