

LAGRANGE

COLLEGE

HANDBOOK OF RHETORIC & COMPOSITION

2017-2018

LaGrange College challenges the minds and inspires the souls of its students.

*Founded in 1831 and committed to its relationship with
the United Methodist Church and its Wesleyan and liberal arts traditions,
the college supports students in their search for truth.*

*An ethical and caring community
valuing civility, diversity, service and excellence,
LaGrange College prepares students to become successful, responsible citizens
who aspire to lives of integrity and moral courage.*

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Introduction

The purpose of all English courses at LaGrange College is to challenge and inspire students to become acquainted with their literary heritage and to equip them to become independent thinkers and to express their ideas in clear, concise English prose.

To achieve this purpose, the faculty who teach English offer a wide range of courses:

- introductory composition
- history of English language
- single author courses
- British and American literature surveys
- genre courses (novel, drama, poetry, literary journalism)
- creative writing (fiction & poetry)
- advanced composition
- argumentation

In addition to course offerings in composition and literature, the English faculty encourages student writers to display their talents by contributing to *The Scroll*, LaGrange College's journal of creative arts. Published each spring, the magazine features the best of fiction, poetry, essays, and artwork by the students and faculty of the college. In conjunction with the publication of *The Scroll*, the English faculty and the Writing Center award prizes for the best poems, stories, and essays submitted for judging in the LaGrange College Writing Contest. Students interested in journalism and expository nonfiction should join the staff of *The Hilltop News*, our student newspaper.

LaGrange College maintains a Writing Center, which serves the college community by providing advice and support for student writers. The Writing Center is located in Room 305 of the Frank & Laura Lewis Library and is directed by Dr. Justin Thurman, who trains students to serve as peer writing consultants. These tutors are available Monday through Thursday evenings, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. or by appointment.

Students who would like to serve as peer tutors but are ineligible for work-study funding may enroll in **TCHA 4492 (On-Campus Tutoring Internship)** and thus earn one to three (1-3) semester hours of academic credit for their service. Note that these hours do not count toward any major or minor program. This course may be repeated for credit. Grading is on a "Pass/No credit" basis. *Prerequisites:* Recommendation from a full-time faculty member and approval by the Director of the Writing Center.

Objectives

The primary goal of courses in composition and literature is to help students become competent readers and writers by providing them with challenging texts and ample opportunities to practice their skills of critical thinking and written expression. Toward this end, our department has set the following four objectives:

All students who have completed the core curriculum in English (i.e., ENGL 1101 and 1102) should demonstrate

- proficiency in expository writing with Standard American grammar, punctuation, and usage
- proficiency in critical reading
- the ability to assimilate, organize, and develop ideas logically and effectively

- an understanding of the rudiments of research-based writing, including accurate and ethical citation and MLA documentation

Advanced Placement

Most LaGrange College students will take Rhetoric and Composition I and II (ENGL 1101 and 1102) during their freshman year. Some students will receive credit for one of these courses based on the **Advanced Placement Test**.

- Students who earn a score of 4 or 5 on the **AP Test in English Language and Composition** will receive three (3) hours of credit for Rhetoric and Composition I [ENGL 1101].
- Students who earn a score of 4 or 5 on the **AP Test in English Literature and Composition** will receive three (3) hours of credit for Rhetoric and Composition II [ENGL 1102].
- Students who earn a score of 4 or 5 on both tests must choose which course they prefer to exempt. Only one exemption is allowed.
- Only the AP Tests in English Language or English Literature are accepted for credit in the LaGrange College English program.

Other inquiries about exempting freshman composition courses (e.g., for those students who have taken International Baccalaureate courses in high school) should be referred to the English faculty for appropriate placement. Such exemptions will be made at the discretion of the English program coordinator.

Transient Credit

No transient credit will be accepted for courses in freshman composition (ENGL 1101 or 1102).

Policies

The following policies apply to all sections of ENGL 1101 and 1102:

- **Attendance Policy:**

Classroom interaction—with your instructor as well as with your peers—is essential to your success in Rhetoric and Composition. Consequently, you should make it a priority to attend every class meeting. You are expected to attend all classes for all courses for which you are registered. You, the student, are solely responsible for accounting to your instructor for any absence. An instructor may recommend that the Registrar drop from class, with a grade of "W," any student whose absences are interfering with satisfactory performance in the course.

You may be excused from class if you provide a doctor's note that includes the specific date(s) when your illness or medical appointment justifies your missing class.

If you consistently arrive late, sleep, or give less than full attention to class proceedings, then your grade may suffer additional penalties.

This excerpt from page 71 of the *LaGrange College Undergraduate Bulletin 2017-2018* [available on the LC Web page or on PantherNet] offers further clarity:

Students are responsible for understanding the policy presented by the instructor in the syllabus for each course, including the implications of the policy regarding successful performance in that course. For undergraduate students, absences are excused for two reasons. These absences shall have no direct penalty for the student; the student shall have the opportunity to make up any missed work occasioned by such excused absences.

1. Medical reasons, when a medical professional has provided documentation indicating the date and time of an appointment, and/ or dates on which the student must not attend class related to the illness or condition.

2. Participation in an official college event at which the student represents the college as a whole (e.g., athletic competitions and musical performances).

- **Make-up Policy:**

Make-up work is accepted only at the discretion of your instructor.

- **Late Assignments:**

All essays and other assignments are due **in class** on the date assigned, unless otherwise stipulated by your instructor. If the paper is not turned in by the specified deadline, then it is automatically late. Penalties for late work might range from a reduction in the grade to a zero on the assignment.

- **Withdrawals:**

A student who chooses to withdraw from a class **prior to the close of the Drop/Add period** may do so without the course appearing on his or her official transcript in any form. The Drop/Add period will normally end one calendar week following the first day of classes (except in situations in which a class has not yet met, in which case the Drop/Add period will extend one day beyond the first meeting of that class or classes, but only for students enrolled in such classes).

A student who chooses to withdraw from a class **on or before the “Last Day to Withdraw with a ‘W’”** will receive a “W” on his or her official transcript, regardless of standing in the class. The “Last Day to Withdraw with a ‘W’” will normally occur two (2) weeks prior to the last day of classes.

Normally, no student will be permitted to withdraw officially from a class **after the “Last Day to Withdraw with a ‘W.’”** Exceptions may be granted for extenuating circumstances but must be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Normally, students who encounter hardship near the end of the term (serious illness, injury, family crises, etc.) will be encouraged to take an incomplete (I) grade for the course and complete unfinished work during the following term.

Please note: This policy does not obviate the possibility of an **“administrative” withdrawal** (in the case, for example, of a student who is disruptive of the learning experience of others) or a **medical withdrawal** (see 2017-2018 Undergraduate Bulletin).

To withdraw from an individual course, a student must confer with the SOURCE Center. Failure to withdraw officially through this office may result in the assignment of an "F."

- **Students with Academic Disabilities:**

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, LaGrange College will provide reasonable accommodation of all medically documented disabilities. If you have a disability and would like the college to provide reasonable accommodations of the disability during this course, please notify your instructor as well as Ms. Pamela Tremblay in the Counseling Office, located in Smith Hall (x8313), as soon as possible, preferably during the first two (2) weeks of class.

Academic Integrity Policy

Many students come to college today having cheated in high school. In fact, research shows that more than half of all high school seniors cheated in some way during that year. They may have

- told others the questions that were on a test;
- given or taken homework to or from another student;
- cheated on a test or quiz;
- submitted another student's paper as his or her own;
- received unauthorized help from a parent or friend;
- "cut and pasted" a paper from Internet sources; or
- downloaded a paper from a cheat site or paper mill.

All of these acts of dishonesty diminish us ethically and undermine scholarship.

The LaGrange College Honor Code requires you do to honest academic work. You may not cheat, plagiarize, or engage in academic fraud. "Academic fraud" means lying about or misrepresenting your work. The faculty at LaGrange College aspires to model honorable academic behavior, and the English faculty, in particular, want to provide you with all the tools necessary to develop respect for this ideal and to apply that respect to your academic pursuits. The following points may be helpful:

1. **All** assignments, regardless of the perceived importance to the course outcome or grade, are subject to the Honor Code.
2. **Plagiarism** is the presentation of someone else's ideas, language, or organization as one's own. Inadequate or faulty **paraphrase** is also plagiarism. If you are unsure of the correctness of a paraphrase, see your instructor.
3. **Writing Center tutors** are not permitted to plan, phrase, or proofread written assignments.
4. **Do not allow anyone else to use your work.** Compositions and research papers are the property of the author, whose responsibility it is to see that they not become the source of plagiarism. Any use of these assignments by another student will result in **both** students facing Honor Code sanctions.
5. Ask for clarification if you are unsure of the acceptable **collaboration** on a specific assignment (where collaboration may be allowed or required).
6. Defacing or mutilating **library materials** is a violation of the Honor Code.
7. You will be asked to sign the **Academic Honor Pledge** for all written work.

Academic Honor Pledge

I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help
on this academic work,
nor have I witnessed any violation of the Honor Code.

Writing Standards

The **C** paper (C = competent)

In **content**, the essay

- meets the assignment;
- expresses a clear, central idea;
- is reasonably well-developed;

but

- delivers thin, commonplace material;
- leaves important questions unanswered and significant ideas unexplored;
- speaks in vague generalities.

In **organization**, the essay

- is reasonably well-organized

but

- makes bumpy transitions or abrupt shifts between paragraphs.

In **style**, the essay

- contains choppy sentences;
- follows a predictable word order (subject-verb-object), with little or no variety;
- repeats itself;
- uses imprecise diction.

In **grammar & mechanics** (including documentation format), the essay

- may contain errors that impede the reader's understanding of the essay;
- may repeat common errors that indicate carelessness or lack of proofreading.

Overall, the essay

- is generally competent (achieves college-level proficiency)

but

- does little to draw in readers;
- gets the job done, but lacks imagination, panache, and intellectual rigor.

The **B** paper
(**B = better than average**)

In **content**, the essay

- delivers substantial information (both in quantity and in interest value).

In **organization**, the essay

- draws the reader in right from the opening of the paper;
- ventures beyond the standard 5-paragraph set-up;
- closes with a satisfying conclusion;
- makes smooth transitions between paragraphs.

In **style**, the essay

- varies its sentence structure;
- uses more precise and concise diction than a **C** paper uses.

In **grammar & mechanics** (including documentation format), the essay

- may contain occasional errors, but those errors do not impede the reader's understanding of the essay.

Overall, the essay

- is significantly more than competent;
- sometimes even shows distinctiveness (finesse and memorability);
- offers substantial information with few distractions

but

- lacks the originality, depth of thought, and mastery of style that characterize an **A** paper.

The **A** paper
(A = accomplished)

In **content**, the essay

- explores relevant ideas in ample depth, using clear logic and concrete, specific evidence.

In **organization**, the essay

- offers an engaging title and opening paragraph, arousing readers' interest from the outset;
- makes artful transitions between paragraphs.

In **style**, the essay

- is marked by stylistic finesse;
- uses tight, fresh, and highly specific phrasing;
- features varied, sophisticated sentence structure and a consistent, appropriate tone.

In **grammar & mechanics** (including documentation format), the essay

- demonstrates the student's mastery of sentence construction and the conventions of standard American English.

Overall: Because of its careful organization and development, the essay

- imparts a feeling of wholeness and unusual clarity;
- delivers enough rich material to make readers feel significantly "taught" by the author, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph;
- stands out from all other papers as a superlative specimen.

NO BUT'S

The **D** paper
(**D = deficient**)

In **content**, the essay

- meets only the basic criteria for the assignment;
- offers only rudimentary treatment and development of the topic;
- presents incoherent thoughts or flaws in logic.

In **organization**, the essay

- may be organized, but not clearly or effectively so.

In **style**, the essay

- contains awkward, ambiguous sentences, often marred by serious grammatical or mechanical errors.

In **grammar & mechanics** (including documentation format), the essay

- contains errors that impede the reader's understanding of the essay;
- shows little evidence of proofreading.

Overall, the essay

- gives the impression of having been conceived and written in haste
- but**
- does not completely obscure the writer's main point.

The **F** paper
(**F = failing**)

In **content**, the essay

- gives its apparent topic only superficial treatment;
- ignores the assigned topic(s);
- fails to state or develop a central idea.

In **organization**, the essay

- lacks discernible organization or coherence.

In **style**, the essay

- uses garbled or stylistically primitive prose.

In **grammar & mechanics** (including documentation format), the essay

- indicates a lack of understanding the conventions of standard American English;
- ignores the conventions of formal documentation.

Overall, the essay

- falls below what is acceptable in college writing.

Use of Electronic Resources

The English faculty recommends that students use electronic databases available through **GALILEO** or the library's **Online Catalog** when conducting research for papers. Those databases include (but are not limited to):

- (1) **MLA (Modern Language Association) Bibliography;**
- (2) **Wilson OmniFile: Full Text Select Edition;**
- (3) **Research Library (at ProQuest);**
- (4) the **Oxford Reference Online: Premium Collection**
- (5) e-books accessed via the **Online Catalog;**
- (6) **Project Muse;**
- (7) **JSTOR;**
- (8) **Literature Resource Center (GALE);**
- (9) **Academic Search Premier;**

The MLA documentation style for electronic sources includes

- author's name, inverted (e.g., Updike, John).
- title of article, inside quotation marks
- title of journal, italicized
- volume and issue number (e.g., Volume 42, Issue 1 = 42.1)
- date of publication (month or season + year) (e.g., Spring 2007)
- medium of publication ("Web.")
- date of access: day-month-year (e.g., 15 Apr. 2006)

Example:

Standish, Peter. "Vargas Llosa's Parrot." *Hispanic Review* 59.2 (Spring 1991): 143-151. JSTOR.

Web. 12 April 2011.

To cite an electronic source in the text of a paper, follow the same rules as for print sources. Your object is to provide adequate information for your reader to locate the source in your Works Cited. If the source has an author and there is a page number, provide both.

Example:

As Peter Standish points out, "The parrot on his shoulders is the symbol which heralded his destiny, which was to become *hablador* and in so find peace in his spiritual home" (150).

Electronic sources often lack page numbers, however. If the source uses some other numbering system, such as paragraphs or sections, specify them ("par." or "sec."). Otherwise, use no number at all.

Description of Courses

Rhetoric and Composition I (ENGL 1101)

Texts

- readings (book, anthology, articles, etc.) selected by your professor
- *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, most recent edition (recommended)
- this *Handbook of Rhetoric and Composition*

Description

ENGL 1101 is designed to help you acquire skills in writing expository essays. Through selected readings, you will be exposed to models of good English prose. Through class discussions and close examination of sample essays, you will consider the various dynamics of the writing process. From time to time, you will be encouraged to visit the Writing Center.

Readings and Assignments

Your instructor will select readings and make other appropriate daily assignments based on the needs and interests of the class. In addition, you will be expected to become familiar with Lewis Library and its resources.

Essays

During this semester, you will compose several graded essays. One or more of these essays will include in-text, parenthetical citations and a “works cited” page prepared according to MLA guidelines. Under normal circumstances, your instructor will return each essay to you before presenting the next writing assignment. Your instructor may also require you to keep all essays and other written work in a folder (available at the campus store). You will also sign the Honor Pledge for each formal essay. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a report to the Honor Council.

Evaluation

Your course grade is determined mainly by the level of competence that you exhibit in your essays and other written assignments. Other factors that may contribute to your course grade include reading quizzes, class participation, and other daily assignments.

Final Exam

The final exam consists of writing an essay on the date designated on the College's "Exam Schedule."

Rhetoric and Composition II (ENGL 1102)

Texts

- a literary anthology and other works selected by your professor
- Lester, James D., and James D. Lester, Jr. *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. 15th ed. New York: Pearson, 2014. (recommended)
- *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, most recent edition (recommended)
- this *Handbook of Rhetoric and Composition*

Description

ENGL 1102 is a course in readings and composition designed to teach you how to analyze and write about literature. You will become acquainted with critical vocabulary appropriate for literary analysis. The primary focus of this course will be your own critical reading and analysis of primary texts. Your essays may, however, include secondary criticism of those texts, if properly documented.

Readings and Assignments

Each instructor will select readings for the course in order to show you the ways in which careful reading and effective writing are integrated. You are expected to be familiar with Lewis Library and its resources.

Essays

During this semester, you will compose several graded essays. Most essays will be written in response to assigned reading selections and will include in-text, parenthetical citations and a “works cited” page prepared according to MLA guidelines. Under normal circumstances, your instructor will return each essay to you before presenting the next writing assignment. Your instructor may ask you to keep all essays and other written work in a folder (available at the campus store). You will also sign the Honor Pledge for each formal essay. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a report to the Honor Council.

Research Paper

A documented research essay is required. Your instructor will determine the nature and number of outside sources that you will consult. You are encouraged to use a variety of academically appropriate sources. All research papers must be typed and submitted in accord with the instructor's guidelines.

Evaluation

The course grade is determined mainly by the level of competence exhibited by your essays and your final examination. Other factors that may contribute to your course grade include objective tests, reading quizzes, and fulfillment of daily assignments.

Final Exam

The final exam consists of writing an essay on the date designated on the College's "Exam Schedule."

Model Essays

Each spring at Honors Day, the English faculty recognizes the most recent outstanding essays composed for a Rhetoric and Composition course (ENGL 1101 and 1102).

Each writer receives a cash award, and the winning essays are published as “model essays” in the following year’s edition of the *LaGrange College Handbook of Freshman English*.

Rhetoric and Composition I (ENGL 1101)

Essay Author: Kirstie Neal (for Dr. Patti Marchesi, Fall 2016)

ProcrastiNation and College Writing

[1175 words]

One thing that I have learned in my short time as a freshman is that high school came nowhere close to preparing me for what I’d have to face in my first month of college. Every writing class I have ever taken before drilled a standardized version of writing into my mind, and gave me a fifty-minute deadline to get through all the steps. As you can probably imagine, this process did not help when writing college papers. I have recently learned that the writing process consists of five basic steps: generating, writing, strengthening, polishing, and proofreading (Israel, Stein, and Washington 38). Lack of writing ability, ultimately, comes not from lack of talent but rather from not spending enough time developing and using the writing process. It is procrastination that prevents us from fully practicing the necessary writing steps, and that causes us to produce unoriginal, uninspiring writing.

One of the hardest and most important parts of the writing process is brainstorming. Procrastination makes us to hurry through or even skip this step. Coming up with a good argument to write about is difficult, and it’s tempting to take the easy way out and write about something boring and unimaginative. The purpose of writing, however, is to grab readers’ attention and persuade them of something. It’s important to be original, to find a suitable writing voice, and to offer something beyond the information we can find through a Google search. Essay writing is a tough sport, indeed: it takes long practice hours, fatigue, and no guaranteed wins.

The first step of the process—generating ideas—does not have to be boring. Here’s my advice: one of the best ways to generate ideas is to relate the arrangement to something that you like to do. For example, if you love using your computer, then use it to research the topic and get ideas from there. Maybe you like listing things out; lists could also be an efficient way to provoke thought. Individuality in writing is key because you cannot tug at someone’s heart strings with a bland and boring paper. Have you ever listened to a speech or essay that moved you and provoked you to act on the subject, such as Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream”? Those famous words certainly weren’t written during a three a.m. coffee-induced panic the day before.

Then there’s the dreaded thesis statement, another crucial step in the process. This is something that was never enforced in my high school. I knew what a thesis was, but my teachers never expected me to develop one as rigorously as I have had to do in college. A thesis statement is a single sentence that introduces your idea to the reader (Israel, Stein, and Washington 42). Writing a thesis can be difficult because you must make an arguable point without making an obvious statement. A well-developed thesis strengthens a paper because it provides a focus for all your paragraphs. This paper, for example, is about procrastination in the writing process, so it should come as no surprise that I’m about to say this: Procrastination affects how well-composed your thesis statement is (or even if you have one). Procrastinators tend to wander off topic and forget the point

they were trying to make. Professors who have to read all of these students' essays really would probably prefer not to read unclear thesis statements, and would probably *really* prefer not to read the kind of stream of consciousness that happens when writers stray off topic and forget the purpose of the essay. Fellow students: Don't torture your professors! Take the time to develop a thesis statement that effectively helps you stay on topic.

What I've realized is that most of us don't think about the work it requires to craft a paper, and we assume that it's ok for our first attempt to be our final draft. According to Megan McArdle's article "Why Writers Are the Worst Procrastinators," most people only ever see the final draft of a work, such as a book, and so never take into consideration how much work it took to write it. Most people also think that they must keep moving once they finish a step, whereas it's perfectly fine to revisit a step several times. It can also be beneficial to jump from step to step. You don't have to write your paper in order. Write your conclusion first and work backwards—whatever works for you. Don't be afraid to try new things when writing. Also, reading your paper out loud after you've finished helps you catch mistakes that spell-check might not notice. Remember, procrastination makes constructing papers in this manner difficult because there isn't enough time to revisit and improve any of the work you've already done. Revise extensively, and perfect your work as you go: Revision takes endurance, but it will ultimately become a useful habit in your academic life.

Because the purpose of writing is to convince someone of something, researching is an important part of the writing process. Logical facts and reasoning strengthen your argument, as do detailed examples. Not surprisingly, procrastination leaves no time for research or opportunity to incorporate it into your paper. It also often prevents you from carefully acknowledging the other side of the argument and conveying your understanding of positions that you might not agree with. Yet research that acknowledges the counterargument shows that you can support your argument while still being aware of other options. Researching can be difficult in today's society because people can write whatever they want on the Internet, and it can be tedious work to find out what's factual and what's opinion. More than ever before, you should make time to investigate the legitimacy of your sources.

If you write in a hurry, then you risk plagiarism, an offense even worse than lack of originality. Incorrectly paraphrasing is where people tend to get into trouble when they leave papers until the last minute. Just replacing a source's original words with synonyms constitutes plagiarism, especially if the sentence structure is the same. Sentences with three or more words from the original can also be considered plagiarized. Last-minute writing can make copying (or half-copying) from the Internet seem tempting, but ultimately plagiarism is unethical and can have dire consequences in your academic career. The only way to fully prevent it is 1) to understand it, and 2) to allow yourself ample time to work on paraphrasing in an acceptable way.

Ultimately, the key to writing is developing a system that works for you. Maybe you like to research all your information before you develop your thesis, and if that is what works for you, then go for it. I've found that allowing myself plenty of time to finish and revisit makes the writing process much more enjoyable and less stressful. It's true: writing *can* be fun if you engage with the process and find your groove. Once you've found it, practice it. The more you do it, the stronger those writing muscles will get.

Works Cited

- McArdle, Megan. "Why Writers Are the Worst Procrastinators." *Atlantic*, 12 Feb. 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/02/why-writers-are-the-worst-procrastinators/283773/>. Accessed September 2016.
- Israel, Deborah, Wayne Stein, and Pam Washington, editors. *Fresh Takes: Explorations in Reading and Writing*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2008.
- Roberts, Paul. "How to Say Nothing in 500 Words." *Fresh Takes*, edited by Deborah Israel, Wayne Stein, and Pam Washington, McGraw Hill, 2008, pp. 195-202.

Rhetoric and Composition II (ENGL 1102)

This year, the award-winning work for ENGL 1102 was not a finished essay but rather an annotated bibliography. The student's efforts here are superlative and resulted in a high quality essay on this topic.

Bibliography Author: Landon Hicks (for Dr. Justin Thurman, Spring 2017)

Annotated Bibliography #1

The Sacred and the Profane in Native American Religion

[2465 words]

Native American religion, though it varies loosely from tribe to tribe, contains numerous commonalities within it that ultimately shape American Indian culture as a whole. Among these definitive elements of Native American culture is the lack of separation between the sacred and the profane, two distinctly different environments. The term "sacred" in this sense refers to any aspect of Native American culture which involves or symbolizes religion, while "profane," in spite of its somewhat misleading title, refers to anything that does not involve religion. While in western culture the sacred and the profane are kept specifically separate, Native American culture often mixes the two and shows no indication that they should be separate. The collision of the sacred and the profane is additionally a common motif in Native American literature, where the combination of the sacred and the profane is abundant and often indicative of a bigger picture in regards to the culture as a whole. Although that it has endured countless changes from its earliest stages to its modern, now toxified society due to western influence, Native American culture has retained its view of the sacred and the profane. In spite of the fluctuations in Native American culture throughout its existence, the theme of the lack of separation between the sacred and the profane remains a constant, integral part of its society.

In the following stories and articles pertaining to Native American culture and religion, the motif of the sacred and the profane is consistently present. In each of the stories, aspects of sacred, spiritual culture clash with the ordinary profane, affirming the lack of separation between the two in Native American society. Within the articles, scholars make an effort to piece together these recurring themes and elements of Native American culture as it progresses from its earliest, purest forms through assimilation into western culture as a result of European influence. While each of the texts differ in their stories and claims, they consistently share the recurring element of the lack of separation between the sacred and the profane, be it through the incestual behavior of White Man's Dog in "Fools Crow" or Nathan Kollar's analysis of the various, definitive aspects of Native American religion. Though ambiguous at times and obvious at others, each of the following entries entertain the concept of the sacred and profane in its own way, confirming the importance of the motif to not only Native American literature, but Native American culture as a society and way of life. As a whole, the lack of separation between the sacred and the profane in Native American culture is a unique characteristic specific to American Indians, and its prevalence in these texts suggests that it continues to shape the culture of Native Americans in spite of the hardships and countless changes they have faced.

Erdrich, Louis. "Fleur." *The Portable Western Reader*, edited by William Kittredge, Penguin Books, 1997, pp. 60-73

Summary: Louis Erdrich's short story "Fleur" highlights the mysterious life and personality of a Native American woman named Fleur Pillager. After telling of her tainted adolescence, Erdrich seems to suggest that Fleur carries demonic, inhuman traits, implying that she is responsible for the destruction of a small town and the deaths of three of her male acquaintances. From this, Erdrich captures the recurring aspect of Native American culture that seems to show no distinction between sacred and profane actions.

Response: While "Fleur" at its surface appears to be a story surrounded with elements of only the profane, Erdrich uses sacred and religious symbols to offset Fleur's witch-like behavior, thus combining it with the sacred. As a result of Native American assimilation into European culture, both Christianity and Native American religions became sacred to American Indians. As Fleur enters the small settlement of Argus, which she will later destroy, Erdrich affirms the presence of Christianity through the three churches in the town, writing that "There was a frame building for Lutherans, a...brick one for Episcopalians, and a...narrow shingled Catholic church" (Erdrich 63). Furthermore, Erdrich subtly identifies that the religious, sacred presence of Argus ultimately drew Fleur into town, stating that "if she hadn't seen that [steeple], that slim prayer, that marker, maybe she would have kept walking" (Erdrich 63). Although she is aware of the prevalence of Christianity in Argus, Fleur carries out her demonic desires without hesitation, acting as a harbinger of certain doom to the town. Through the destruction in which "everything in Argus fell apart and got...thoroughly wrecked," Fleur's mental separation of spiritual and profane actions is non-existent, implying that even through assimilation and toxification of Native American culture, the motif of the sacred and profane remains untouched and in its purest, recurring form.

Graves, John. "The Last Running." *The Portable Western Reader*, edited by William Kittredge, Penguin Books, 1997, pp. 47-60.

Summary: In John Graves's "The Last Running," an elderly Native American man named Starlight and Tom Bird, a Texan, overcome a long history of physical and mental feuding to agree on a sacrificial ritual involving one of Tom's buffalo. Although the two are able to come to an agreement, the manner in which the ritual takes place does not fit the intentions of Starlight, and it contains elements that can both be traced back to a sense Native American indifference to the separation of sacred and profane actions and the effects of Native American assimilation into a more contemporary culture.

Response: Specifically, Starlight and his Native American counterparts express to Tom Bird that they would like to hunt one of his buffalo as they did prior to European assimilation, an action which is considered sacred in Native American culture due to its historical significance. Although Tom allows them to do this, their hunt is done in isolation and shows almost no resemblance to a hunt which would've taken place in the wild. Graves affirms this through narration stating that "It was not fair. Fair did not seem to have much to do with what it was" (Graves 59). Even though the hunt concludes with the killing of the buffalo as Starlight and his counterparts desired, Tom Bird implies that the effect of Native American assimilation has had a detrimental impact not only on the hunt, but on relations with American Indians as a whole, claiming that "We had a world, once" (Graves 60). Because the hunt is completely botched and messy, the action intended to be sacred takes on a profane connotation, which denounces the ritualistic procedure and turns it into a free-for-all murder scene. Despite Tom Bird's apparent guilt for the result of the hunt, Starlight and his counterparts appear somewhat content at the conclusion of the hunt as they quietly leave Bird's farm, giving no sign that they are dissatisfied.

Harjo, Joy. "Deer Dancer." *The Portable Western Reader*, edited by William Kittredge, Penguin Books, 1997, pp. 73-76

Summary: In her short poem "Deer Dancer," Joy Harjo recalls a somewhat legendary tale of a Native American woman who dances naked in a bar among survivors of a long toxification of American Indian culture due to European influence. Through this ambiguous action, Harjo exemplifies the recurring theme that shows no distinction between the sacred and the profane in Native American culture, which remains constant through European assimilation.

Response: Although "Deer Dancer" is short in length and written with somewhat cryptic diction, it successfully portrays the consistent elements of the sacred and profane in Native American culture. When the Native American woman enters the bar and begins to dance, it implies similarity to a type of ritual, a sacred act in Native American culture. Shortly after, Harjo interrupts the dance with immediate profanity, writing that the girl did something "none of us predicted" and "took off her clothes." (Harjo 75). With this odd and indecent action, the Native American woman nonchalantly mixes both a spiritual action and a profane one, suggesting that she sees nothing morally wrong with her actions. In spite of the peculiarity of "Deer Dancer," Harjo implies that the combination of the sacred and profane is a definitive aspect of Native American culture that refuses to die out or evolve over time.

Hessler, Michelle R. "Catholic Nuns and Ojibwa Shamans: Pauline and Fleur in Louise Erdrich's 'Tracks.'" *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1995, pp. 40–45., www.jstor.org/stable/1409041.

Summary: In her article entitled "Catholic Nuns and Ojibwa Shamans: Pauline and Fleur in Louise Erdrich's 'Tracks,'" Michelle Hessler describes the roles of both Christianity and Native American culture in the aforementioned short story, "Fleur." Through her comparison of the two beliefs, Hessler highlights a number of sacred symbols within "Fleur" and explains the importance of spiritualism in the story. Additionally, Hessler includes some of the profane actions from "Fleur," verifying that the sacred and profane again appear as a motif in this story and Native American religion as a whole.

Response: While Hessler covers aspects of Erdrich's works other than "Fleur," her analysis of religion remains constant throughout. Specifically to "Fleur," Hessler confirms the Christian influence on the town of Argus, stating that the story shows "the influence of the Catholic Church on traditional [Native American] beliefs" (Hessler 40). This suggests that a sense of spiritualism, regardless of the fact that it was neither purely Christian nor Native American, enveloped the town of Argus, thus making Fleur's profane actions increasingly mixed with the sacred. Ultimately, Hessler asserts that the prevalence of Christianity in the town collides with the once-dominant Native American beliefs, which could draw a connection between Fleur's profane actions and the multiple sacred symbols that surround her.

Kollar, Nathan R. "Native American Religion." *Salem Press Encyclopedia* (2016): Research Starters. Web. 14 Feb. 2017.

Summary: In his article entitled "Native American Religion," Nathan Kollar describes the ambiguous traditions of religion in Native American culture and puts emphasis on numerous topics such as harmony, balance, the concept of the circle, animism, and the sacred. Kollar additionally explains that most Native American religious traditions remained in the purest forms until European contact and assimilation created a combination of Christian and Native American beliefs that led to the

establishment of the Native American Church. In spite of this, almost all traditional Native American beliefs were communicated verbally, and Kollar verifies that nearly all these traditions have lived on simply through word of mouth.

Response: Kollar's discussion of the sacred suggests that nearly everything in Native American culture can be considered spiritual. According to Kollar, "Indian life was surrounded by the sacred. It was manifested in all nature, in special people... in rituals... and in sacred poles that held up the sky" (Kollar 1). Because of the prevalence of spiritual symbols and practices in Native American religion, it is clear that aspects of everyday life involve the sacred, which likely makes differentiating between the sacred and profane a difficult concept in Indian culture. Furthermore, Kollar affirms that "the sacred was separate from the profane or ordinary," implying that spiritual and non-spiritual actions are distinctly different and should not be practiced simultaneously. As a result, Kollar sets the foundation for the importance of sacred actions and symbols in Native American culture and confirms that a clear distinction between the sacred and profane did not exist from the perspective of Native American religion as a whole.

McClellan, Catherine. "The Girl Who Married the Bear." *The Portable Western Reader*, edited by William Kittredge, Penguin Books, 1997, pp. 7-13.

Summary: Catherine McClellan's "The Girl Who Married the Bear" tells a short story of a young, Native American girl who becomes separated from her family and falls in love with a bear. Eventually, her bear-husband is killed by hunters, which leads to the girl being transformed into a bear and killing her entire family once she is reunited with them. Through the inclusion of an ambiguous Native American ritual in this story, McClellan seems to imply the lack of separation between religious and profane actions in Native American culture.

Response: Knowing that he will soon die, the Native American girl's bear-husband instructs her to perform a ritual with parts of his body once he is dead. He specifically tells her to "build a big fire, and burn my head and tail and sing this song while the head is burning" (McClellan 11). Almost immediately after performing the ritual, the girl undergoes her transformation into a bear and brutally murders her entire family, "even her mother" (McClellan 13). Through this action, McClellan clearly illustrates Native American indifference to the mixing of sacred and profane actions, stating that the girl "couldn't help" her urge to kill her family, yet she "went on her own" afterward with seemingly no remorse for her actions. (McClellan 13). McClellan also indirectly suggests that the ritual has cultural and spiritual significance due to its alignment with the Native American theory of Animism, which is the belief that everything has a soul, regardless of whether or not it is human. For this reason, the girl's attack on her family demonstrates a combination of profane and sacred actions, a recurring, definitive aspect of Native American culture. The age of this story suggests that the mixing of sacred and profane actions can be traced back to the origins of Native American culture, implying that it has been an integral part of the society's way of life since for most of its existence.

Welch, James. "From *Fools Crow*." *The Portable Western Reader*, edited by William Kittredge, Penguin Books, 1997, pp. 23-38.

Summary: In his excerpt from "*Fools Crow*," James Welch tells a brief story about White Man's Dog, a Native American man facing trying times. In addition to enduring physically brutal torturing, White Man's Dog suffers an emotional crucible after committing an act of incest. Through abundant religious symbolism in this excerpt, Welch highlights key aspects of Native American religion as a whole.

Response: Of the pertinent cultural symbols in Welch's excerpt, White Man's Dog's incestual behavior points mostly toward the motif among Native American culture which suggests a lack of distinction between spiritualism and profanity. It is not until White Man's Dog undergoes excruciating torture that he catches his first glimpse of the danger in mixing sacred and profane actions and "[asks] for forgiveness for desiring his father's young wife" (Welch 30). After his torture, White Man's Dog has a mysterious dream, which later seems to result in a spiritual cleansing of his incestual actions. In spite of this, Welch continues to show Native American indifference to the issue of mixing profane and sacred actions through narration by stating that White Man's Dog "didn't know how or why" he had been cleansed (Welch 38). White Man's Dog's ignorance to his spiritual forgiveness suggests he does not recognize a problem with mixing religious and profane actions, and his indifference to the situation can be extrapolated to his tribe and Native American religion in its entirety.

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