# CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM MODIFICATIONS

**COURSE NAME:** English 101

**FACULTY NAME:** Stella Setka, Ph.D.　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**DATE SUBMITTED**: 8/9/24

| COURSE COMPONENT | PREVIOUS VERSION DESCRIPTION | CULTURALLY REPONSIVE CHANGES DESCRIPTION(S) | CULTURES or LEARNING STYLES ADDRESSED THROUGH THESE REVISIONS |
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| **Syllabus** | **Office Hours**<br>In-person: Mondays from 12-1pm and Tuesdays 12-2pm in GC 280H<br>Via Zoom: Wednesdays, 1-2pm<br><br>**Technology**<br>This course takes place within our Canvas course shell. It is your responsibility to learn how to navigate Canvas. That said, having access to the necessary resources is essential! Do not let technical difficulties and time management issues keep you from posting assignments on time. Make sure to save these numbers as well as your login/password information:<br><br>Contact and Communication:<br>➢ The first thing you must do is to check the **Announcements** page for important information and updates every time you login to Canvas (which should be at least once a day M-F). | **Office Hours**<br>In-person: Mondays from 12-1pm and Tuesdays 12-2pm in GC 280H<br>Via Zoom: Wednesdays, 1-2pm (passcode: lovebooks)<br><br>I welcome you to contact me outside of these times. You may email me or contact me via Inbox to schedule a time that works for your schedule.<br><br>**Technology**<br>We will be using Canvas as our primary platform for learning and collaboration. It's important for everyone to become familiar with navigating Canvas to ensure a smooth experience. If you encounter any technical issues or need assistance, please reach out for help—don't let these challenges prevent you from submitting your assignments on time. Make sure to keep your login details and important contact information handy to stay connected and organized throughout the course. Your | The language in these revised areas of the syllabus is more inclusive and friendly. The earlier versions had a slightly adversarial tone and leaned a bit too heavily on "hidden curriculum," whereas the revisions explain the rationale behind the course policies. |

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| | ➢ **Email** ([setkasn@wlac.edu](mailto:setkasn@wlac.edu)): You can also contact me via email, but again, I prefer that you try to reach me via Canvas. **Please sign your email and be sure to reference both the course title and the section number in your communication. Failure to do so will result in delays in my response.** Please observe proper email etiquette. | success is important, and we are here to support you every step of the way!<br><br>**Contact and Communication**<br><br>To stay updated and engaged, please check the Announcements page on Canvas each time you log in—ideally, at least once a day during the week. This page will provide you with important information and updates. For guidance on how to set up notifications so that announcements are forwarded to your preferred email address, please see this [helpful notifications guide.](#)<br><br>**Canvas Inbox:** Canvas features an Inbox tool similar to email. When using this tool, please follow standard email etiquette. The Inbox is the best way to address individual questions or concerns, such as inquiries about grades. I check messages daily during the week and at least once over the weekend, aiming to respond within 24 hours, though responses may be slightly delayed on weekends.<br><br>**Email:** While you can also reach me via email, I encourage using Canvas Inbox for a quicker | |

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| | | response. When emailing, please include your name, the course title, and the section number in your message to avoid any delays. | |
| RESOURCES USED and where to find more information: | | | |
| **Course Units** | 3 units | No change | No change |
| RESOURCES USED and where to find more information: | | | |
| **Reading Assigned/Textbook** | *The Handmaid's Tale* *Writing About American Literature* A variety of short stories and films. | I substituted *Mexican Gothic* for *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Little Seagull Handbook* for *Writing About American Literature*. To my current list of films, I added Jordan Peele's *Get Out.* | My course approaches freshman-level composition through the lens of American gothic literature. Traditionally, gothic literature has been dominated by white perspectives. I want my course texts to reflect the diversity of my class, which is majority Latinx and African American. Replacing *The Handmaid's Tale* with *Mexican Gothic* and adding Jordan Peele's *Get Out* is one way to incorporate a broader diversity of voices and perspectives. *Mexican Gothic*, by Silvia Moreno-Garcia, introduces a Latinx viewpoint to the Gothic genre, offering themes and cultural contexts that resonate with students from various backgrounds, particularly those who may not see themselves represented in something like *The Handmaid's Tale*. Similarly, *Get Out* brings an African American perspective to the horror and Gothic tradition, exploring |

themes of race, identity, and systemic oppression in ways that are deeply relevant to contemporary social issues. By including these works, I seek to encourage my students to engage with the Gothic genre through lenses that reflect their own identities and experiences, promoting critical thinking about the intersection of culture, race, and genre.

Similarly, my decision to replace *Writing About American Literature* with *The Little Seagull Handbook* stems from my desire to prioritize student engagement and encourage equitable learning outcomes. While *Writing About American Literature* is a solid text, it emphasizes a more formal approach to writing about literature. By contrast, *The Little Seagull Handbook* offers a more flexible, skill-based approach to writing that aligns with the diverse needs of a majority Latinx and African American student population. Especially appealing to me is the fact that the book is accompanied by adaptive learning exercises called "InQuizitive." This learning platform gamifies the writing and research processes, making them more engaging and accessible. Further, the adaptive nature of these

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| | | | exercises allows students to focus on areas where they need the most improvement, supporting differentiated learning and recognizing that students come from varied educational backgrounds. Moreover, these assignments are designed to allow students to continue working until they achieve a perfect scores; this model is rooted in a growth-mindset ethos and ensures that learning is a supportive, non-punitive experience. Collectively, my selection of new course texts reflects my commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment that meets students where they are and supports their individual growth and success. |
| **RESOURCES USED and where to find more information:** | | | |
| **Instructional Methods** | A mixture of recorded lectures and instructional videos (YouTube, etc.). | Where possible, I replaced generic YouTube videos with recorded lectures that were more directly related to the assignments students are being asked to complete. Further, to ensure engagement, I added pop-up quizzes to some of the videos; students who complete the quizzes will receive extra credit. | On reflection, replacing generic YouTube videos (e.g. how to write a thesis statement) with tailored recorded lectures that are directly connected to the specific assignments students must complete (e.g. how to write a thesis statement about a text we've read as a class) makes absolute sense. This shift ensures that the content is more relevant and meaningful to students' learning experiences, thereby enhancing their engagement. The addition of pop-up quizzes further promotes active learning and |

|  |  |  | encourages students to interact with the material in real-time. By offering extra credit for completing these quizzes, I am incentivizing participation and acknowledging the effort students put into engaging with the content. This approach makes the learning process more inclusive and responsive to students' needs, ultimately supporting their academic success. |
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| RESOURCES USED and where to find more information: |  |  |  |
| **Assignments** | Reading quizzes | InQuizitive (an adaptive learning tool) | InQuizitive adapts to each student's individual learning pace, style, and level of understanding. This personalization allows students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds to engage with content in ways that are most effective for them. Such tools are extremely valuable because our students come from varied educational experiences. InQuizitive adjusts the difficulty and type of questions accordingly, helping to bridge gaps in knowledge without making students feel singled out.<br><br>Because InQuizitive adjusts to the learner's level, students are less likely to feel the pressure of performing at a fixed standard. This can be especially beneficial for students from |

| | | | underrepresented or marginalized communities, who may face additional pressures in educational environments. The adaptive nature ensures that students encounter challenges that are appropriate to their current level, allowing for growth without the stigma of failure. |
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| | | | Further, InQuizitive provides instant feedback, which helps students understand their mistakes and learn from them in real time. This immediate reinforcement is culturally responsive as it aligns with pedagogical approaches that emphasize iterative learning and growth, rather than punitive assessment. It allows students to continuously improve, fostering a growth mindset that is crucial for learners from all backgrounds. |
| | | | I like the way that InQuizitive requires students to interact with the content, make decisions, and reflect on their learning process. This active learning is culturally responsive because it moves away from passive reception of information, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning in a way that may align with communal or interactive |

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| | | | learning styles present in various cultures.

By design, InQuizitive is designed to be accessible to a wide range of learners, including those who may have different levels of digital literacy or those who might need additional support. This support is built in to the platform (e.g. how-to videos, tips for troubleshooting, and a support chat).

Finally, by allowing students to work at their own pace and choose the areas they wish to focus on, InQuizitive empowers them to take control of their learning journey. This autonomy respects students' individual cultural contexts and the unique ways they may approach learning |
| **RESOURCES USED** and where to find more information: "The Transformative Power of Adaptive Learning in Higher Education" "Adaptive Learning: An Innovative Method for Online Teaching and Learning" | | | |
| **Activities** | Heavily weighted discussion board assignments (essentially 1-2 page essays) that require students to answer analytical questions. | I converted discussion board assignments to more "low-stakes" assignments that invite students to engage in more creative activities, like using Canva to create alternate book covers with a brief rationale explaining rhetorical choices, or locating favorite quotes from the text and explaining how those quotations | By allowing students to engage in creative activities like designing alternate book covers or locating and reflecting on favorite quotes, I provide opportunities for students to express their understanding in ways that resonate with their personal and cultural experiences, which can be especially meaningful for |

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| | | connect to some of the novel's broader themes. | students from underrepresented or marginalized groups, who might see their identities and experiences reflected in the texts. Creative, less formal assignments like these acknowledges and values diverse forms of knowledge and expression beyond traditional academic writing. Further, offering assignments that use tools like Canva introduces visual and digital literacy, which can be more accessible or engaging for students from diverse backgrounds. This approach accommodates different learning styles and strengths, fostering an inclusive learning environment.<br><br>My decision to convert these assignments into "low-stakes" tasks stems from my desire to reduce the pressure and anxiety associated with grading. This can be particularly beneficial for students who may face additional challenges in academic settings due to cultural, linguistic, or socio-economic factors. It allows them to engage more deeply with the material without the fear of negative consequences, which can improve both their learning outcomes and overall educational experience. |

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| RESOURCES USED and where to find more information: Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* | | | |
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| **Classroom Environment** | 1. Student-to-Student engagement was mostly limited to required, high-stakes Discussion Board assignments that required formal writing.<br>2. I'm not sure that this is the best place to address this change, but I used to include an end-of-semester survey. | 1. I created a Student Q & A forum where students can post questions to their peers and receive extra credit for answering the questions of others. Here are the instructions:<br><br>**Student Q & A Forum**<br><br>This "Student Q and A" forum serves as a space for you to ask questions, share insights, and collaboratively seek understanding of the course content. It's a place where diverse perspectives and experiences are valued and where every student's voice can contribute to collective learning. Plus, answering another student's question can earn you extra credit!<br><br>**Guidelines**:<br><br>**Ask Questions Freely**: No question is too simple or too complex. If something isn't clear to you, it's likely that someone else has the same question. Feel empowered to ask about any aspect of the course, whether it's related to the content, assignments, or broader themes. | 1. The Student Q & A forum embodies culturally responsive pedagogy by creating an inclusive space where diverse cultural perspectives are valued. It encourages students to share their unique experiences, fostering a deeper connection to the material. By prioritizing understanding and collaboration over correctness, the forum supports diverse learning styles. Awarding extra credit for participation further incentivizes engagement, acknowledging the value of diverse contributions and encouraging all students to actively participate in the learning community. This approach enriches the educational experience while building a more inclusive classroom environment.<br><br>2. While the end-of-semester survey is valuable for helping me think about how to adjust courses for later |

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| | | This is a judgment-free zone where all inquiries are welcomed.<br><br>**Engage Respectfully with Peers**: When responding to a classmate's question or post, approach the conversation with respect and an open mind. Acknowledge that your peers may come from different cultural backgrounds and may have different ways of understanding or engaging with the material. Your response should be thoughtful and aimed at fostering a deeper understanding for everyone involved.<br><br>**Bring Your Whole Self**: You are encouraged to bring your own cultural, linguistic, and personal experiences into the conversations. When appropriate, connect course material to your lived experiences or cultural knowledge. This enriches the learning environment and helps build a classroom community that values diversity.<br><br>**Support and Collaborate**: Use this forum as an opportunity to support your classmates. If you see a question that you can answer, offer your help. Collaborative learning is a key component of this forum, and your contributions are crucial to | semesters, it doesn't give students an active role in their education. I think it's important for students to have a place to give me anonymous feedback so that I can make timely adjustments that can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the course for my students. Further, including and responding to a mid-semester demonstrates my respect for students' cultural identities and individual voices. |

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| | | making it a success. Remember that explaining a concept to someone else can also deepen your own understanding.<br><br>**Be Open**: When reading others' posts, pay attention to the ideas and perspectives being shared, and respond in a way that shows you have understood and considered them. This practice not only enhances communication but also shows respect for the diverse voices in our classroom.<br><br>**Share Resources**: Feel free to share external resources (articles, videos, cultural references, etc.) that might help answer questions or enrich the discussion. Make sure to explain how the resource is relevant to the topic at hand and how it connects to the course themes. This helps bridge cultural gaps and brings in perspectives that might not be covered in the course materials.<br><br>**Participation Expectations**: Regular participation in the Q and A forum is encouraged. Engaging with the forum will enhance your understanding of the course material and provide opportunities to learn from your peers. There is no penalty for incorrect answers or incomplete | |

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|  |  | understandings; this forum is about learning together, not about being right. Posts that demonstrate active engagement will earn extra credit.<br><br>**Why This Matters:** By participating in the "Student Q and A" forum, you are contributing to a learning environment that values diversity, fosters mutual respect, and supports the academic and personal growth of all students. Thank you for making our classroom a richer place with your unique contributions!<br><br>2. In addition to the end-of-semester survey, I've added a mid-semester survey. |  |

RESOURCES USED and where to find more information: "The role of online discussion forums in supporting learning in higher education" "Presenting a Validated Mid-Semester Evaluation of College Teaching to Improve Online Teaching"

| Grading Policies | No late work accepted. | Students can request extensions for up to three writing assignments. Further, although InQuizitive assignments will have a suggested deadline, they will remain open until the final week of the term to permit students to master skills and earn the highest scores possible. | Shifting from a "no-late-work policy" to a more flexible approach reflects culturally responsive teaching by recognizing and accommodating the diverse life circumstances and learning needs of students. By allowing extensions for writing assignments and keeping |
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| | | | InQuizitive assignments open until the final week, I can provide students with the necessary time to fully engage with the material while also mitigating some of the stress and anxiety that they may experience in relation to assignments. This flexibility respects students' varying cultural, familial, and work responsibilities, ensuring that they have equitable opportunities to succeed. By prioritizing mastery of skills over rigid deadlines, the policy supports a more inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive. |
| RESOURCES USED and where to find more information: | | | |
| **Learning Goals** | No changes | No changes. | No changes |
| RESOURCES USED and where to find more information: | | | |

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| ***Things to keep at the forefront of your mind while modifying curriculum to be culturally responsive and humanizing:** |
| • Seek-out, recognize, and address bias within the curriculum components. <br> • Highlight representations from the cultures that reflect the students we serve. <br> • Seek insights from students to assist in the designing of curriculum and accuracy of portrayals. <br> • Bring real-world and community issues into the curriculum and seek ideas from students regarding actions. <br> • Highlight power dynamics, privilege, and historical oppression. <br> • Utilize multiple perspectives from different cultural groups. <br> • Seek to reach multiple learning styles / intelligences. |