

An important note from your professor for students in English 2600 online!

Hello! My name is Alf Seegert and I am your professor for the course.

Please read the syllabus *carefully* and make sure that this is the right course for you. (Check prerequisites, requirements, timelines, etc.) It's especially important that you have taken Writing 2010 or equivalent. Let me know if you have questions!

Here are some important things for you to note about the online format of this course. In some ways it is like other online courses, but it differs in some crucial ways. (!)

First: the class meets *entirely* online. There are no requirements that we ever meet at any particular place or at any particular time. However, there are still specific deadlines for assignments. Online discussion is a crucial component to the class, so we will go through the material **together** session-by-session in a Monday/Wednesday/Friday format, posting comments and replies back and forth as we go along, in many ways like a traditional classroom setting.

Second: Please really DO take careful note of this course's discussion-based approach. Some students absolutely love it, and some... don't. My course differs radically from those online courses that allow students to finish work at any rate they choose, and which create individually packaged experiences separate from all other students in the course. **I don't do it that way.** I believe that literature only comes alive through close attention via vigorous discussion and interaction, so I need to emphasize that we will be working on the material **together** in this course. Your regular participation in discussions will be **required**. If this approach does not appeal to you, please seriously reconsider if this is the right course for you.

Third: The biggest difference between our course and one conducted in a traditional classroom is that you can do all the work on your own time when it is convenient for you. All essay submissions, quizzes, and exams—in short, everything—will happen online asynchronously (i.e., there is never any **specific** time you have to be online so long as you submit work before deadlines hit).

Because this is an online course with multimedia components, you will want to make sure that you have regular access to a computer with a solid internet connection and decent quality audio/video. We will be watching films and video/audio clips that are streamed for the class. Slow internet connections will make this painful, if not impossible. (All campus computers should work well.)

A final note about the sort of course you are considering taking: because this course is taught entirely online, responsibility falls entirely to YOU to make sure you keep caught up. This is a course for people with strong self-direction and serious self-motivation. I will definitely be “present” to provide lessons and feedback on your work, but ultimately YOU will be the one who needs to make sure you stay caught up with the reading and writing assignments, as well as engaged with the online discussions. If any of this is a problem for you, save yourself some hassle and drop the course right now—I don’t want any of you to be miserable. :)

In terms of CONTENT, the difficulty of this course is pretty much on a par with that of a traditional English 2600 course. The online FORM might appeal to some students more than a traditional classroom—and to some students it will appeal less. Most students find it challenging but rewarding. Some find the online medium a joy because it gives them extra time for reflection before submitting their responses (unlike the real-time demands of a traditional classroom). Others find the online medium unpleasant or alienating and do not enjoy it because they miss the spontaneity and fleshly interaction of sitting in a physical classroom with other students. The online medium, in short, is a mixed bag.

I’ve found that “the Zen you find is the Zen you bring with you.” Students who enjoy this course tend to be those who bring a lot to it, and those who put a lot into it are generally those who find an online medium suitable for the way they like to learn things and express themselves. Think over your own modes of learning and self-expression and see if they match this course’s format. **The lessons and discussions will be presented in typed format—I don’t do video lectures—so prepare for a lot of reading and typing if you take this class.**

Again, please read over the syllabus and think over whether or not this sort of class seems a good match for you.

Many thanks! I look forward to the opportunity to work with you this semester!
Alf

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To make sure I don’t miss your email, please always put “ENGLISH 2600” in the subject header.