

Please read this very important note from your professor for students in English 3600 online!

Hello! My name is Dr. 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 fulfilled the ENGL 2600 prerequisite 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 similar to other online courses -- and in some ways similar to traditional courses -- but it differs from both in some crucial ways. (!)

- 1) **The class meets *almost* entirely online (I'll explain the "almost" in a second).** There are no requirements that the class meet together 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 two-day-a-week format (with lessons and assignment deadlines on Mondays and Wednesdays).** We will all post comments and replies back and forth as we go along, in many ways like a traditional classroom setting.

The only exceptions to the "entirely online" structure of the course are the Midterm and Final Exam. These will require your physical presence at an approved Testing Center (including Marriott Library and approved proctoring locations off campus) during assigned windows of time, one roughly mid-semester and the other during Finals Week. See the syllabus for details. [You can also find out more here at Uonline.](#)

- 2) **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 and theory only come 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 online discussions will be required.** If this approach does not appeal to you, please seriously reconsider if this is the right course for you.
- 3) **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 postings will happen online asynchronously (i.e., there is never any **specific** time you have to be online so long as you read, participate, and submit work before each deadline).

Other important things to consider:

- **Technology.** Because this is an online, computer-mediated course, you will need basic computer literacy skills. We will use Canvas for everything. Because the course will include many multimedia components, you will want to make sure that you have access to a

computer with a solid internet connection and decent quality audio/video. We will be watching films and video clips that are streamed for the class. Slow internet connections will make this process painful, if not impossible. (All campus computers should work well.)

- **Self-motivation.** 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. :)
- **Challenge.** Critical Theory is not an easy subject. In terms of content, the difficulty of this online course is pretty much on a par with that of a traditional English 3600 course, which is to say that it will be highly challenging but also (I hope) highly rewarding. Many students find the traditional English 3600 course to be the most demanding class in the entire English curriculum – you will need to study hard to do well in this course. Please do not take this course during a semester when you load up on the credit hours; this class is time-intensive.
- **Ask yourself: do you like the online medium?** The online form of this class will appeal to some students more than a traditional classroom would—and to some students it will appeal less. Some students 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. **All 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.** Student feedback from my prior online courses has been overwhelmingly in favor of this method of online instruction.

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

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 emails, please always put “ENGLISH 3600” in the subject header)