ENG 4416 Assessment Guidelines

Time and Money in the American Novel
Spring 2026

2 hour written exam + Term Paper

Exam: This is a 2-hour written exam, consisting of 2 parts. The total exam grade counts for 40% of the course grade

The exam consists of two parts:

Part I (Novels)

Short answers about the novels on the syllabus. Students are required to answer 8 questions (they choose 8 out of 9). The answers to these questions should be fairly short: 1-5 sentences. Some questions will only require a phrase or sentence as an answer, while others will require at least 2 or 3 sentences. 50% of exam grade.

Answers will be assessed for their accuracy and completeness. The basic criteria is this: does the answer demonstrate familiarity with, and command of, the novel in question?

Part 2 (Secondary/theoretical readings)

Paragraph-long answers about the key ideas of the secondary readings on the syllabus: this includes Miller, Freeman, Lyotard, Lazzarato, Marx, Genette, and Harvey. Students are required to answer 3 questions (they choose 3 out of 4).
Answers to these questions should be between 5 and 8 sentences long, and they should demonstrate students' full and precise understanding of the reading in question. 50% of exam grade.

Answers will be assessed for their accuracy and completeness. The basic criteria is this: does the answer demonstrate a thorough understanding of the source's key ideas, terms, and concepts?

Overall, the academic quality/grade of the exam will be based on:

+ Student's mastery of the assigned texts, both primary and secondary
+ Demonstrated understanding of the course's key concepts, ideas, and historical contexts
+ The student's grasp of the significance of the primary and secondary materials

Term Paper:

The final paper grade counts for 60% of the course grade

The main purpose of this term paper is for students to demonstrate their understanding of the key analytic issues, theoretical approaches, and literary texts presented over the course of the semester. All successful papers will be well-informed by the relevant resources from the syllabus and from class discussions.

The assignment requires that each paper explore the relationship between time and the American novel. Other topics can be addressed, but every successful paper most have a clear and persuasive account of the relationship between time and the American novel.

The bibliography for each paper must include:

+ at least one novel from the syllabus
+ at least one theoretical source from the syllabus
+ at least 2 other secondary sources related to either the work of literature at the center of the paper, or to the paper's primary theoretical concerns. These sources should be either articles or book chapters.

Essays will be marked holistically, with no specific percentage for any one aspect. The marker will thus be making an overall judgment of the quality of the piece of work as a whole. Weaknesses in one area of the criteria may be compensated for by particular skills in another, and vice versa. Independence of thought and evidence of analytical ability will be rewarded.

- paper should be at least 5 full pages, and no more than 7 pages. This means at least 1950 words, not including references and bibliography.
- paper should be typed, 1.5-spaced, with 2.5 cm margins, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, with no extra spaces between paragraphs;
- paper must include a Works Cited page and use in-text citations according to MLA guidelines

Good:

1. Work at the highest levels will present a precise and sophisticated thesis backed up by relevant evidence and clear, logical argumentation.
2. The essay has a clear structure. The student considers the flow of the argument from paragraph to paragraph and sustains the argument throughout. The various points made are relevant to the problem under consideration in the essay.
3. The essay has well-constructed and well-organized paragraphs. It also has transitions that provide logical and clear connections between paragraphs and between the different sections of the essay.
4. The essay engages in detailed analysis, developing a critical argument about the topic, problematic, or question announced in the thesis.
5. The essay is written in formal English of a high standard, with no mistakes of grammar or spelling.
6. The essay demonstrates a strong understanding of the course's central concepts

Average:

1. Includes a central thesis, which assumes the form of an argument and is for the most part sustained throughout.
2. The essay adopts a clear structure and the points made are relevant to the problem under consideration throughout.
3. The essay engages in analysis, and demonstrates some awareness of the relevant theory and criticism. It presents and to some extent develops the student's own ideas.
4. The essay is written for the most part in correct English, with only minor mistakes of grammar or spelling.
5. The essay demonstrates an adequate understanding of the course's central concepts.

Poor:

1. The student's thesis is excessively general or vague, or lacks substantiating evidence.
2. The structure lacks logic, and the points made are occasionally irrelevant to the problem under consideration.
3. The essay rarely engages in analysis, limiting itself to paraphrases of the literature or theories in question. There are few original analytic ideas, and there may be inaccurate or incomplete presentation of other's ideas.
4. There are errors in grammar and spelling, though these do not prevent understanding of the essay text.
5. The essay demonstrates a poor understanding of the course's cental concepts.

Unacceptable:

1. The essay lacks a thesis.
2. The structure is illogical and confusing. The points made lack relevance.
3. The essay lacks analysis, simply providing more or less adequate paraphrases of the literature or theories in question.
4. The essay is uninformed by the relevant secondary literature from the course's syllabus.
5. The essay is poorly written with numerous errors of grammar and spelling.