



Wayland Baptist University Mission Statement: Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused, and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

Course Name

ENGL 5316.VC01 – Special Topics in English Studies: Literature of Christmas

Class Meeting Time and Location

Fully-online course located on Blackboard

Term and Year

Fall 2, 2022

Instructor

Dr. Karen Beth Strovas

WBU Email

strovask@wbu.edu (email is the best way to reach me!)

Office Location and Phone Number

GH 202A on the WBU Plainview campus, (806) 291-1114, cell (806) 292-3543 (8 am–8 pm only for texts, please. Otherwise, use email.)

Office hours

MWF 9-5; TuTh 9-3; and by appointment

Catalog Description

Topics of special interest to graduate students.

Required Textbook and Resources

-Dickens, Charles, *A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Books*. Oxford World's Classics, 2006. ISBN: 9780191578588

-Access to usernames and passwords for Wayland email and Blackboard, and additional resources necessary to complete and submit a college-level paper, such as a computer, back-up media, Blackboard, etc.

PLEASE NOTE: Dickens's *Christmas Carol* is available as an inclusive access ebook for this course, which means it is available through Blackboard on Day 1 of class and charged to your account. It is a simple version without the same page numbers, illustrations, or layout as the Oxford World's Classics print version. You may use the inclusive ebook for the Dickens readings, or you may "opt out" if you purchase or acquire a book or ebook from a different distributor, such as Amazon, the library, or Project Gutenberg. I have uploaded PDF or hyperlinked free versions of each reading in the weekly folders. No purchase is necessary, but you may desire to find books you can keep and reread each Christmas. 😊

Course Outcome Competencies

Upon the conclusion of this course, students actively engaged in learning will be able to:

1. describe characteristics of the subject and theme of Christmas in literature;
2. demonstrate the ability to read critically and communicate persuasively about the works selected;
3. conduct graduate-level research on a piece of literature related to the subject or theme selected for the course;
4. use above research to complete an essay that demonstrates graduate-level skills in research, writing, argument, and analysis;
5. Develop an awareness of and keener sensitivity to issues of gender and socio-economic diversity and oppression, as exposed or problematized by literature.

The more the student puts into the course, the higher his or her outcome competencies will be.

Attendance Requirements

This WBU Online course is set up on a weekly “module” basis. This means assignments, readings, discussions, papers, etc. will generally be presented and due each week (Monday-Sunday). Therefore, a *minimum* “attendance” of accessing the Blackboard (BB) class at least twice a week is required in order to complete the course successfully. Participation and attendance will be determined through discussion board posts and/or submission of assignments. With that in mind, failure to submit four or more required assignments (including Discussion Board posts) is grounds for receiving an F in the course, regardless of final grade average. Makeup work will be offered at the instructor's discretion and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any authorized makeups must be completed within the time limit set by the instructor; otherwise, the makeup grade will be zero. Finally, recall that WBU’s catalog stipulates students who miss 25% or more of class time will automatically fail the course. 25% of 8 weeks is 2 weeks.

Disability Statement

“In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291- 3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.” Note: If you would like me to accommodate a disability, please provide documentation within the first week of class or as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

No form of cheating will be tolerated. *Plagiarism*—copying or purchasing someone else’s words or ideas and presenting them as your own—is not only a form of cheating but also a serious academic offense. In the very least plagiarism or related forms of cheating will result in an F on the work in question, with the possibility of an F in the class. An official report will also be filed with the Provost/Academic VP. See the [Wayland catalog](#) for further information on the penalties of plagiarism.

Technical Aspects of the course

If you encounter technical problems, find some assistance at [WBU Online](#).

- You are encouraged to visit the [WBUonline Blackboard login page](#) as soon as possible and work through the [Learn Module tutorials](#) if are not familiar with how the service works. If you have problems with Blackboard or your WBU email, please use the WBU Support Contacts available on the [WBUonline Blackboard login page](#) or the contact info above.
- Note: It's been my experience Blackboard works fine with Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge but not Internet Explorer. Make sure your browsers are up to date.

Class Communication, Announcements, and Updates

Official announcements not made in class will be sent to our Blackboard class online, and Blackboard automatically forwards these announcements to your WBU email, as well. It is your responsibility to set up your Wayland email account and check it daily. If you need assistance with your **Wayland email**, call **IT @ (806)291-3540**, OR [access assistance online from IT regarding your email account](#).

Class Expectations and Respect for Others

Students are expected to treat one another and their instructor with respect in all communication, whether that is through email or Blackboard Discussion Boards. Please choose your words well.

*Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Executive Vice President/Provost to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

*Required by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Wayland Baptist University Multidisciplinary Writing Center (FREE!! Online appointments open!)

Mon-Thurs: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Closed Wednesday nights.

Fri: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.; Sun: 7:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Make a tutorial appointment request online at the [Tutorial Services website](#).

Grading Chart

Active participation in discussion boards (weekly)	40%
Christmas Hymn Project and Presentation (due week 6)	20%
Preliminary Essay Email (due week 7)	5%
Research & Analysis Essay + Works Cited (due week 8)	25%
Final Exam (due week 8)	10%

Reading Homework, Quizzes, Discussion Boards, and Participation

Students are responsible for reading, studying, and completing the assigned material. Discussion board posts or written assignments will be required once or twice per week as noted in the syllabus schedule.

Discussion Boards

In general, if you follow directions, turn your DB in on time, answer my prompt fully and thoughtfully, and respond to at least two classmates, you will receive between 90-100%. I will automatically deduct 10 points at each 24-hour mark late. I will deduct 10 points for each missing response to a classmate. Each DB post will be assessed on a case-by-case basis for quality, completion, and professionalism.

Christmas Carol Hymn Project and Presentation

Each student will choose a classic Christmas carol to read, listen to, analyze, and consider. Create a short audio recording, podcast, video, or PowerPoint screen-capture video with voiceover (8-15 minutes). Your video should demonstrate your critical analysis of the hymn based on your own disciplinary interests. If you're a writer or educator, you may want to consider themes, figurative language, and Christmas archetypes. If you're a musician, you may want to consider melodic or rhythmic development and lyrical points of interest, or insight into the composer or author of lyrics. If you're an historian, you may want to consider the social and historical context in which the hymn was written. You may choose a hymn with special meaning to your own home culture or native language. Ideally, your presentation would touch on interdisciplinary interests to give us a personal but well-rounded consideration of the hymn for a more poignant understanding to take with us beyond the weeks of the class. See assignment sheet for more details.

Research & Analysis Essay

This is a 6–10 page researched argument with a thesis of literary or cultural significance, on a topic relating to one or more of the works assigned this semester. In addition to using a primary literary source, locate and use at least 3 secondary sources (books, documentaries, or journal articles that analyze the novel, author, or a literary, historical, or cultural aspect of the time period). Your sources must be academic or scholarly. Use your own reasoning ability and your sources to present your point of view with the necessary support. In-text citations and a Works Cited page in MLA style are required. Essay topic suggestions may be available upon request. See assignment sheet for more details.

Exam

One short exam will be given at the end of the term; it tests your reading completion and comprehension, critical thinking, and writing skills, in addition to your ability to reflect on themes emphasized in discussions, video lectures, or notes.

Course Schedule

Readings for this class are located through your inclusive ebook or online for free as PDFs or hyperlinks on Blackboard (BB). This schedule is subject to revision, although changes are unlikely. Students will be notified in advance of any changes.

Week 1: Monday, Oct. 10–Sunday, Oct. 16:

1. Read “Welcome to ENGL5316” handout on Blackboard (BB) and watch Welcome Video
2. Read through the syllabus and ask questions if you have them on the Syllabus Questions Discussion Board forum.
3. **Complete Discussion Board 1 by Wed., Oct. 12 to be counted present for the university Census**
4. OPT OUT of the course e-book if you will not be using it so that you’re not charged. Find copies of the readings ASAP if you don’t want to read the longer works online.
5. **Read scriptural story of Jesus’s birth from the Bible in at least two different translations (for example KJV, NKJ, NIV, NRSV, CEV, Message, etc.): Matthew 1:18-2:1-23 and Luke 1:1-2:1-40.**
6. Read O. Henry, “[The Gift of the Magi](#)” (1905), Hans Christian Andersen’s “[The Fir-Tree](#)” (1844) and “[The Little Match Girl](#).”
7. Listen to or view “[Burning the Christmas Greens](#)” by William Carlos Williams, audio recording by William Carlos Williams, video recording by Claire Bloom
8. View Dr. Strovas’s Video Lectures: Christmas 1.1 and 1.2
9. Complete Discussion Boards 2 and 3 by Oct. 15

Week 2: Monday, Oct. 17–Sunday, Oct. 23:

1. Read Staves I, II, and III of Charles Dickens’s [A Christmas Carol](#)
2. Read Staves IV and V of Charles Dickens’s [A Christmas Carol](#)
3. OPTIONAL: Read (or listen to) Ch. 29 of [The Pickwick Papers](#) by Charles Dickens, “The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton.”
4. OPTIONAL: [Boris Karloff reads The Story Of The Goblins Who Stole A Sexton - YouTube](#)
5. Read Parable of Jesus, [Luke 16: 19-31; The Rich Man and Lazarus.](#)
6. View Dr. Strovas’s Video Lectures: Christmas 2.1 and 2.2
7. View Documentary “Christmas and a Christmas Carol” (on Blackboard); read essays as assigned.
8. Complete DB 4 by Oct. 22

Week 3: Monday, Oct. 24–Sunday, Oct. 30:

1. Read Charles Dickens’s [The Haunted Man and the Ghost’s Bargain](#), chapters 1-2
2. Read Charles Dickens’s [The Haunted Man and the Ghost’s Bargain](#), chapter 3
3. View *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965). If you don’t own the film or can’t find it on any of your streaming services, it is available as a playlist of 9 free clips on YouTube starting here at part 1: [A Charlie Brown Christmas TV Movie 1965 \(Part 1\) - YouTube](#)
4. OPTIONAL: Read/ view [Read Aloud - How The Grinch Stole Christmas! Read Aloud - Dr. Seuss Children’s bedtime stories. - YouTube](#)
5. View Dr. Strovas’s Video Lectures: Christmas 3.1 and 3.2
6. View documentary or read critical essays as assigned
7. Complete DB 5 by Oct. 29
8. Read through the full assignment sheet for the Research and Analysis Essay. Begin thinking about possible topics. Email if you have questions about the essay assignment.
9. Read through the full assignment sheet for the Christmas Hymn Analysis Presentation. Begin thinking about possible carols. Email if you have questions about the essay assignment.

Week 4: Monday, Oct. 31–Sunday, Nov. 6:

1. Read/listen to Christmas Carols (hymns) readings listed on Blackboard and look at multiple examples, linked on Blackboard
2. View documentary “[Silent Night: The Songs of Christmas](#)” (must be logged into Blackboard; recommended to navigate to the video through the BB link)
3. Read critical essay on hymns as texts
4. Read the following short poems, set at Christmas or in winter, *paying special note to the Christmas motifs and archetypes we’ve been talking about in class*; imagery and sensory details, such as colors and sounds; tone and emotional pulls; other examples of figurative language, such as rhyme, alliteration, metaphor, simile, symbolism, personification, foreshadowing, and repetition:
 - Article and reading, [Christmas Bells - Longfellow House Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)
 - [Music on Christmas Morning - Poem by Anne Bronte \(famouspoetsandpoems.com\)](#)
 - [The House of Christmas - G. K. Chesterton \(hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com\)](#)
 - [The Bells by Edgar Allan Poe - Poems | Academy of American Poets](#)
 - [Winter-Time by Robert Louis Stevenson - Poems | poets.org](#)
 - [XLV \[Before the ice is in the pools\] by Emily Dickinson - Poems | poets.org](#)
 - [\[little tree\] by E. E. Cummings | Poetry Foundation](#)
2. View Dr. Strovas’s Video Lectures: Christmas 4.1 and 4.2
3. Complete DB 6 and DB7 by Nov. 5.

Week 5: Monday, Nov. 7–Sunday, Nov. 13:

1. You’re past the halfway point. Good work!! Pat yourself on the back.
2. Read Gogol’s “[The Night of Christmas Eve](#)” (1832, written at age 22!), pages 1-67 of the archival copy (starts on page 20 of the *Cossack Tales* book if using the dials at the bottom, or you may find an [html text through wikicommons](#). And/or listen to the [BBC Radio Play 1995 production](#).
3. Read Dostoevsky, “[A Christmas Tree and a Wedding](#)” (1848) and “[The Beggar Boy at Christ’s Christmas Tree](#)” (1876) ([LibriVox audio recording](#) of the latter, if you would like to listen).
4. Read Anton Chekhov’s “[At Christmas Time](#)” (1900) or [listen](#)
5. Submit Christmas hymn preliminary ideas through email at strovask@wbu.edu by Thursday, Nov. 10.
6. View Dr. Strovas’s Video Lecture: Christmas 5.1 and 5.2
7. Complete DB 8 by Nov. 12

Week 6: Monday, Nov. 14–Sunday, Nov. 20:

1. Read [The Nutcracker and the Mouse-King](#) by E. T. A. Hoffmann (and/or listen to the story free through LibriVox here: [The Nutcracker](#))
2. View [The Nutcracker by Peter Wright after Lev Ivanov, music by Tchaikovsky \(oclc.org\)](#) Royal Opera House Ballet, London, England production (2020) (must be logged into Blackboard; recommended to navigate to the video through the BB link)
3. Listen to [NPR “All Things Considered” broadcast on Hoffmann and the Nutcracker](#)
4. View Dr. Strovas’s Video Lecture: Christmas 6.1
5. Complete DB 9 by Nov. 19
6. **Complete and post your Christmas Hymn Project and Presentation to Blackboard Discussion Boards by Nov. 20**
7. Read through instructions for final exam in the Final Exam folder on BB.

THANKSGIVING BREAK Nov. 21-27—no assignments due
(Optional—just for fun: [Agatha Christie's Poirot S06E01 Hercule Poirot's Christmas - YouTube](#))

Week 7: Monday, Nov. 28–Sunday, Dec. 4:

1. Re-read through full assignment sheet for the Research and Analysis Essay. Be prepared to turn in your chosen topic and preliminary analyses by mid-week (see #2 below).
2. Submit topic proposal prewriting assignment **by Thursday, Dec. 1** (see assignment sheet for more details).
3. Re-read scriptural story of Jesus's birth from the Bible in at least two different translations (for example KJV, NKJ, NIV, NRSV, CEV, Message, etc.): Matthew 1:18-2:1-23 and Luke 1:1-2:1-40, and start thinking about your scriptural reflection for the final exam.
4. Read T. S. Eliot, "[Journey of the Magi](#)" (1927)
5. Listen to Eliot's radio recording of "Journey of the Magi" at the same site (linked above)
6. Listen to Benjamin Britten's "Canticle IV, Opus 86, "The Journey of the Magi" (linked from Films On Demand database into Blackboard weekly content folder)
7. View Dr. Strovas's Video Lecture: Christmas 7.1
8. Complete DB 10 by Dec. 1
9. This week, try to complete the first 2 or 3 paragraphs or a full outline of your Research & Analysis Essay with source examples. Contact me if questions arise (strovask@wbu.edu).

Week 8: Monday, Dec. 5–Saturday, Dec. 10:

1. Read Dylan Thomas's [A Child's Christmas in Wales](#), read by [Dylan Thomas here](#), and watch/listen to the Richard Burton's reading and film of *Child's Christmas* linked at Blackboard.
2. Continue writing your Research and Analysis Essay.
3. View Dr. Strovas's "Essay Checklist" video
4. **Submit final draft of Research & Analysis Essay to BB by Friday, Dec. 9, midnight Central**
 - See the assignment sheet posted in Blackboard for more details.
5. Work on final exam assignment.
 - Note: this exam should be available by Monday, Dec. 5, located in "Final Exam" folder.
6. **Complete Final Exam on Blackboard by Dec. 10, midnight Central**
 - See the assignment sheet posted in Blackboard for more details.
 - MERRY CHRISTMAS!!
 - [Merry Christmas Bedford Falls - YouTube](#)