

Professor Francus  
English 496: Senior Thesis  
Spring 2017  
109 Woodburn Hall  
Tuesdays, 4:00-6:50  
Office: 227 Colson Hall  
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:15, and by appointment  
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Course Description: In English 496 you will pursue an extensive research project in literary or cultural studies, culminating in a substantial scholarly essay. The course will help you develop your research and writing skills, as you will have an opportunity to explore in depth a particular topic that interests you. If you are considering graduate school in English or a related field, you will find this course especially useful as you work on a writing sample to support your application.

Course Objectives:

- To engage in an extended research project at an advanced undergraduate level.
- To teach students strategies to manage a long-term research project, and ways to respond to the challenges involved in extended research.
- To provide opportunities for students to improve their critical thinking, research, writing, and editing skills.
- To provide opportunities for students to learn, use, and assess the tools of literary and critical theory.
- To provide opportunities for students to improve their oral presentation skills.
- To teach students advanced library skills, including the conventions of rare books.
- To review structures of argument.
- To review the conventions of academic prose.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you should develop an authoritative understanding of a topic within English studies, based on research, evaluation, analysis, and written and oral presentation. Through the assignments, you should be able to demonstrate

- awareness of academic discourse and research on a particular topic.
- skills of research, analysis, argumentative development, and critical thinking.
- appropriate tone, style, and sentence structure of academic writing, including synthesis of research.
- command of academic written English and conventions of documenting research.
- proficiency in oral presentation of research, analysis, explication, and argument.

## Course Schedule

January 10	Introduction/Project Management/Initial Thoughts on Choosing a Topic
January 17	Generating a Topic/Research Questions Critical Reading/Developing Criteria of Argument and Style Katie Kapurch, "Something Else Besides a Daughter?: Maternal Melodrama Meets Postfeminist Girlhood in <i>Tangled</i> and <i>Brave</i> " Philip Nel, "Is there a Text in this Advertising Campaign? Literature, Marketing, and Harry Potter" <b>Paragraph, with initial thoughts on possible topics and research, Due</b>
January 24	Review of Argumentative Strategies
January 31	Operating Thesis/Research Questions/Writing A Prospectus <b>Article Analysis Due</b>
February 7	Preliminary Strategies for Research/Locating and Evaluating Sources/Developing a Bibliography <b>Prospectus, with thesis and research questions, Due</b>
February 14	Individual Conferences
February 21	Drafting a Research Paper/Strategies for Introductions <b>Annotated Bibliography Due</b>
February 28	Drafting a Research Paper/Structure and Strategies
March 7	Spring Break
March 14	Writing Challenges in Process/In-Class Workshop <b>First Draft (minimum 5 pages) Due</b>
March 21	Editing for Argument/Writing a Conclusion
March 28	Documentation of Sources/Citation <b>Second Draft (minimum 10 pages) Due</b>
April 4	Final Editing of Research Paper/Grammar
April 11	Individual Conferences
April 18	Independent Work
April 25	Strategies for Oral Presentations
May 1	<b>Senior Thesis Due</b>

**Course schedule may change at the instructor's discretion.**

### Course Requirements:

You will be expected to keep up with the readings; think and write critically; attend and participate in class, tutorials, and peer workshops; submit drafts on time; read and respond to your peers' work in a timely and helpful fashion; and check your MIX e-mail account daily.

**Paragraph on Initial Thoughts** (~100-200): a preliminary foray into thinking about your research project for the semester. Writing will help focus your thoughts, allow others to provide feedback, and start the process.

**Article Analysis** (~5 pages, double-spaced): an assignment that provides practice in close reading and the assessment of argument and analysis. Since students will be required to cite scholarship in their thesis, it is important that students read scholarship, learn its conventions, and evaluate it.

**Annotated Bibliography** (10 entries, minimum 50 words each): an assignment that helps students determine and evaluate the primary scholarship in the field of their research. This assignment helps students locate their work in the existing scholarship, and facilitates the choice of scholarship cited in the final thesis.

**Prospectus for Research Essay** (~2 pages): a formal conceptualization of the senior thesis, which includes research questions, an operating thesis, the parameters of the project, and strategies for writing and research. The prospectus functions as a justification of the research project, and a provides a plan to complete it.

**Drafts of Research Essay:** writing is a process, which involves outlining, drafting, rumination, editing, thinking, and rethinking. The drafts provide an opportunity for students to receive specific guidance as they work on their senior theses, and help pace the students in their work.

**Senior Thesis** (20-25 pages, double-spaced, with appropriate documentation): the goal of the course—to produce a substantive essay, that reflects critical thinking and research on a literary or cultural topic.

**Oral Presentation:** each student will present their research in a 15-minute talk, time and place to be determined.

### Grading:

Article Analysis	15%
Annotated Bibliography	15%
Prospectus	10%
Oral Presentation	10%
Senior Thesis	50%

The paragraph and the drafts are required, but not graded.

### Grading Criteria:

A (90-100) – Excellent work; the assignments for this course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments are clearly organized, choose compelling evidence to substantiate the analysis, and engage with the subject at hand in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner. Written work requires no substantive or stylistic revisions.

B (80-89) – Good work; the assignments for the course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments show substantial engagement with the subject at hand, but the analysis is either partially incomplete, involving weak evidence, or manifests some difficulty with organization. Written work requires substantive revisions, but few or no stylistic ones.

C (70-79) – Average work; the assignments for the course have been completed, but not necessarily in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments show effort by the student, but the analysis is incomplete, includes inappropriate evidence (or a lack of evidence), or shows significant difficulties with organization. Written work requires significant substantive or stylistic revisions.

D (60-69) - Less than average work; the assignments for the course have not been completed in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments show a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment. Written assignments lack analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are necessary.

F (<59) – Inadequate work; the assignment has not been completed. Written assignments, when submitted, show a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment and the subject matter of the course. Such work is marked by the absence of analysis, evidence, and organization; engagement with the course materials is necessary before extensive revisions are even possible.

### Submission of Assignments:

1. All assignments must include the appropriate heading: name, course title, instructor's name, assignment name, and date. Please include page numbers on all assignments longer than one page.
2. Your papers should be typed (11 or 12 point font), with sufficient space in the margins for comments. (One-inch margins will do). Papers should be double-spaced.
3. Your papers should reflect careful reading and thinking about your subject. Do not summarize the plot of a work or rephrase your class notes in your course assignments.
4. It is highly recommended that you keep a photocopy or a back-up of every assignment that you hand in.
5. Hand in papers on time. Late submissions will receive a lower grade unless the student has a viable reason (such as illness, familial emergency) for his/her lateness, **and** has notified me within 24 hours of the original due date. Your grade will be lowered a fraction for every day your work is late (ex. B to B- for one day late).
6. **Use** the Editing Guidelines and Stylesheet. They will help you hone your critical thinking and writing skills, and strengthen your essays. Please keep in mind that there are resources at the University in addition to yours truly to help with your writing, including the Writing Studio (this semester in Hodges 202; hours: M-Th, 10:00-5:00, Fridays, 10:00-3:00; phone: 304-293-5788), and the Term Paper Clinic in Wise Library.

### Professional Responsibility:

1. Class attendance contributes significantly to academic success. Students who attend classes regularly tend to earn higher grades and have higher passing rates in courses. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. You are granted a maximum of three absences during the course of the semester before absenteeism affects your grade. If you accumulate seven absences (excused and unexcused), you will not pass this course.
2. It is your responsibility to contact me regarding your absences. If you disappear—that is, if you miss class for three, four, five sessions in a row, or more—it is not my responsibility to find you.
3. If you send me an e-mail, I will respond within 24 or 48 hours. If I have not responded to you in that time, it means that I have not received your posting. **Please e-mail me again.** Note: When communicating via email, please write in a professional, courteous manner. Your email should have a salutation (e.g. hello, dear, etc. and the addressee's name), a closing with a signature (e.g. thank you, regards, etc. and your name), and contents that follow the rules of grammar, syntax, and punctuation. You are professional students, and should engage in the conventions of professional correspondence.
4. Please come to class on time. Do not leave in the middle of class; it is distracting and disrespectful. Do not schedule appointments (medical, advising, etc.) during class time.
5. Please turn off all electronic devices during class, unless asked to use them for an in-class assignment.
6. Class participation contributes significantly to student success. Participation involves reading (or in some cases, watching) the course materials in advance, coming to class on time, being ready to discuss the course texts, asking questions, listening and responding to your classmates, and contributing your knowledge and thoughts.
7. Should you need assistance during a time of difficulty or crisis, please contact the Office of Student Life in E. Moore Hall, 304-293-5811.

### **WVU Academic Integrity Statement:**

“The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Catalog at <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicintegritytext>. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.”

Please note the WVU's Sale of Course Material Syllabus Statement: “All course materials, including lectures, class notes, quizzes, exams, handouts, presentations, and other materials provided to students for this course are protected intellectual property. As such, the unauthorized purchase or sale of these materials may result in disciplinary sanctions under the Campus Student Code.”

**Academic Dishonesty:**

West Virginia University's definition of academic dishonesty is available in Student Conduct Code (<http://campuslife.wvu.edu/r/download/220286>), pages 6-7:

“Academic dishonesty. The term “academic dishonesty” means plagiarism; cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects; and forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters.

1) The term “plagiarism” means the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment, including, but not limited to, the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another individual engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

2) The terms “cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects” means (i) giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or any other assignment for a grade; (ii) depending upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in quizzes, tests, examinations, writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (iii) the acquisition or use, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff; or (iv) engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

3) The terms “forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters” means (i) wrongfully altering, or causing to be altered, the record of any grade or other educational record; (ii) use of University documents or instruments of identification with the intent to defraud; (iii) presenting false data or information or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for admission, registration, or withdrawal from the University or from a University course; (iv) knowingly presenting false data or information or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for personal gain; (v) knowingly furnishing the results of research projects or experiments for the inclusion in another's work without proper citation; or (vi) knowingly furnishing false statements in any University academic proceeding.”

**Inclusivity Statement:**

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

**Adverse Weather Commitment:**

In the event of inclement or threatening weather, everyone should use his or her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Safety should be the main concern. If you cannot get to class because of adverse weather conditions, you should contact me as soon as possible. Similarly, if I am unable to reach our class location, I will notify you of any cancellation or change as soon as possible, using MIX, Gmail, and/or eCampus to prevent you from embarking on any unnecessary travel. If you cannot get to class because of weather conditions, I will make allowances relative to required attendance policies, as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.