

ENGL 680: Introduction to Literary Research

Spring 2010 M 4:00-6:50 G18 Colson

Tim Sweet

105 Colson

Office Hours M 3:00-4:00 and by appointment

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Overview

English 680, Introduction to Literary Research, is designed to introduce first-year Master's degree students to the research and writing skills necessary for advanced study in English. While research and writing skills will continue to be developed in other courses, this course provides an explicit foundation for understanding the expectations for and forms of research. The Graduate Program Committee has specified that ENGL 680 cover three areas:

Research methods: locating, evaluating, and incorporating information from a variety of primary and secondary sources

Genres of academic writing: understanding the expectations conventions of academic genres

Textual studies: understanding the technologies of the transmission of texts

This term, we will use Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* as a common primary text from which to work on these areas. Reports on case studies in textual scholarship will open the research context to other fields of British and American literature. In the final project, we will return to Jefferson studies or a closely related research context.

Required texts

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. MLA, 2009. 9781603290241
James L. Harner. *Literary Research Guide: An Annotated Listing of Reference Sources in English Literary Studies*. 5th edition. MLA, 2008. 9780873528085
Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Ed. William Peden. 1955. U of North Carolina P, 1996. 9780807845882
Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Ed. Frank Shuffelton. Penguin, 1999. 9780140436677
William Proctor Williams and Craig S. Abbott. *An Introduction to Bibliographical and Textual Studies*. 4th edition. MLA, 2009. 9781603290401

Policies regarding late work and attendance

Except for extraordinary circumstances, late work will not be accepted. If you must miss class, email me by class time, attaching the work that is due that day (Word 2003 or RTF file). If you must miss class (for contagious illness, emergency, etc.), please notify me ahead of time and provide documentation. For every unexcused absence, your final grade will be lowered by one letter. We will follow WVU policy for cancellation on account of weather.

Assignments and grading Note: *all work must be documented using MLA style.* Further specifications for each assignment will be given separately.

Quiz on Williams and Abbott. 5 points

Seven research assignments, as follows:

1. Report on access to *Notes* via WVU electronic databases. 5 points
2. Comparison between Peden and Shuffelton editions of Jefferson's *Notes*, focusing textual variants. 10 points
3. Enumerative bibliography of all editions of *Notes*, with commentary. 5 points
4. Case study of transmission of a text, plus handouts for presentation. 10 points
5. Report on WVU library holdings from the sub-section of Harner pertinent to the case presented in RA4. 5 points
6. Report on recent major directions in Jefferson studies. 15 points
7. Critique of a book review in Jefferson studies. 5 points
8. Report on web presence of Jefferson's *Notes*. 5 points

Final project, consisting of the following:

- Abstract and annotated bibliography for final paper. 10 points
- Presentation of final paper. 5 points
- Final paper on topic of your choice in Jefferson studies or a related research context (8 pp. plus works cited). 20 points

Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading	Work Due
1/11	Course introduction Library orientation—Kelly Diamond: <i>meet in Library room 136 @ 5:00</i>		
1/18	MLK holiday – no class		
1/25	Textual studies	Shuffelton ed., <i>Notes</i> Peden ed., <i>Notes</i>	RA1: report on access to <i>Notes</i> via WVU electronic databases
2/1	Textual studies	Williams and Abbot	In-class quiz on W and A
2/8	Textual studies	Shuffelton ed., <i>Notes</i> Peden ed., <i>Notes</i>	RA2: comparison of Peden and Shuffelton editions of <i>Notes</i> focusing on variants
2/15	Textual studies—Harold Forbes: <i>meet @ 4:00 in Rare Book Room (library, 6th floor).</i> Reconvene in G18 Colson after the session (approx. 5:30)		RA3: enumerative bibliography of all editions of <i>Notes</i> + comments

Date	Topic	Reading	Work Due
2/22	Textual studies: presentations of case studies		RA4: case study of transmission of a text + handouts for presentations
3/1	Contexts for research	Harner	RA5: report on WVU library holdings from section of Harner re. your RA4
3/8	Contexts for research	Michael Hardt, "Jefferson and Democracy," <i>American Quarterly</i> 59.1 (2007), 41-77. Betsy Erkkila, "Radical Jefferson," <i>American Quarterly</i> 59.2 (2007), 277-89. Barry Shank, "Jefferson, the Impossible," <i>American Quarterly</i> 59.2 (2007), 291-99.	RA6: report on recent directions in Jefferson studies
3/15	Contexts for research	Sample book reviews, TBA	
3/22	Abstracts; annotated bibliographies; conference papers;	Sample abstract, annotated bibliography, conference paper (photocopied)	RA7: critique of a book review in Jefferson studies
3/29	Spring break		
4/5	Presentation of abstracts		Final project: abstract + annotated bibliography for 8-pp. paper
4/12	Media contexts for early texts		RA8: report on the web presence of Jefferson's <i>Notes</i>
4/19	Workshop on drafts		Final project: draft of paper for workshop, including full list of works cited
4/26	Presentations of final projects		Final project: presentation

Final draft of paper due Friday, April 30