

ENGL 496: Capstone for Literary & Cultural Studies/Senior Thesis

In ENGL 496, you will develop the skills you need to write a literary research paper in an area of your choice. You might be inspired by a particular research area (like human rights in literature), a genre (like travel writing), or an author (like Ralph Ellison). You'll learn how to choose a topic, conduct scholarly research, and draft, edit, and revise a high-quality research paper.

Modeling the scholarly processes that professors follow when writing articles or books, the assignments in this course all contribute to developing your final research paper. So, you'll write a research proposal, produce an annotated bibliography, participate in discussion groups, deliver a short conference presentation, and work with your peers as you draft and revise your essay.

Ultimately, you should expect to produce an original, thorough, and polished piece of research writing of publishable standard. Equally important, you will have gained the satisfaction of having made your own discoveries, developed research expertise, and produced new forms of knowledge in an area that's meaningful to you.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students should be able to

- Develop a research project, including area, line of inquiry, methodology, and thesis
- Employ skills in close-reading and critical analysis to develop sustained interpretations of literary texts
- Construct a complex, multi-layered thesis that develops over the course of twenty pages.
- Understand and use the many writing genres that are involved in producing quality research, including oral presentations, short essays, annotated bibliography, and peer review.
- Engage respectfully with peers in a way that encourages collaborative thinking, intellectual stimulation, scholarly community, and individual academic development.

REQUIRED TEXTS (please use *only* the editions below)

- From the bookstore:
- Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *"They Say/I Say": The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* (3rd Edition) ISBN 9780393935844
- *MLA Handbook* (8th edition) ISBN9781603292627
- Several articles, and James Joyce's "The Dead," available on eCampus

ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW (in order of appearance)

eCampus responses x5 5%

Essay 1 (4 pages) 10%

5-minute presentation (ungraded but all participation points are lost if not completed)

Proposal 1 (ungraded but all participation points are lost if not completed)

Annotated bibliography 15%

Essay 2 (6 pages) 15%

12-minute conference presentation 10%

Proposal #2 5%

Research paper (20 pages) 35%

Participation 5%

ASSIGNMENTS (detail)

eCampus Responses: You will write five eCampus responses, each worth 1% of your final grade. These responses will be brief (~200-400 word) critical reflections on various aspects of the research and writing process. They are a crucial component of the course, in that they force you to reflect early and often on your chosen research area, while enabling you to engage with, learn from, and share with all members of the course.

Essay 1: You will write a four-page, thesis-driven essay on an aspect of your chosen area of research.

5-minute Presentation: In this mini conference presentation, you will share your preliminary ideas and research questions with the rest of the group. The presentation is ungraded but all participation points are lost if it isn't completed. Your research will benefit substantially from your participation; hence, it is an absolute expectation of mine that you will spend time preparing and delivering a presentation.

Proposal 1: You will write a 250-300 word preliminary proposal of your research paper. As with the 5-minute presentation, this exercise is ungraded but all participation points are lost if it is not completed. Similarly, it is expected that absolutely everyone will complete this proposal and spend appropriate time doing so.

Annotated Bibliography: This assignment requires you to write critical summaries and argument analyses of **eight** scholarly sources (articles or books, not reviews or interviews). In addition, you will write a working bibliography of all *additional* secondary sources that you intend to use for your final research paper. While you are not required to use any or all of these secondary scholarly materials for your final paper, you will find it easier to manage your time if you annotate scholarly works that are likely to be helpful for your final argument. In other words, you would be wise to be fairly certain about some of the major secondary sources before writing your annotated bibliography; hence, in the interests of time management, I would encourage you to have completed substantial research by the time your annotated bibliography is due.

Essay 2: This essay will build on the work you did in essay 1, but in this case, you will write a six-page paper. You can address a totally new aspect of your research topic (sometimes, we figure out our projects by totally discarding previous writing), or you can develop a more thorough, complex, and detailed working through of ideas that began in essay 1. Either way, this paper will involve new writing. As with essay 1, this assignment will help you to work out your interests, ideas, analyses, and interventions in order to help you write your final paper.

12-minute Conference Presentation: In effect, this twelve-minute conference presentation requires you to deliver a preliminary version of your final paper. Twelve minutes of speaking equals about eight pages of double-spaced writing with 1" margins in a 12-point font (there will be some variation depending on your delivery speed). You are welcome to read from a paper; the presentation will be similar, in some ways, to work that you have already produced in essay form.

Proposal 2: This proposal will be 300-500 words long, and it will be a fuller, more precise, more refined version of the proposal you developed earlier in the semester. Unlike the first proposal, this one is worth 5% of your final grade. You will workshop this proposal in class through peer review.

Research Paper (20 pages): Using all of the skills that you have developed this semester, you will produce a 20-page research paper (double-spaced, 1" margins) on a topic of your choice. The first draft of your paper is due on Thursday, April 18; the final draft is due on Thursday, April 27 (i.e., the last day of class). Completing a full 20-page draft is a course requirement; if you don't complete the draft and attend class on this day, you will fail the course. Absences will be allowed only in documented extenuating circumstances, i.e. with a letter from a medical professional or similar.

Participation: Finally, your full participation in class and in eCampus discussions counts for 5% of your final grade. For a fuller rubric, please see "Participation" under "Policies," below.

Policies

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. **Academic dishonesty is a serious offence with serious consequences.** It is your responsibility to read the university's policies on academic integrity: <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification/#academicintegritytext>

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS: West Virginia University 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 (OAS). For more information on WVU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu/>

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is required in this course. Students who attend classes regularly tend to earn higher grades and have higher passing rates. Regular attendance also substantially enhances the experience for the group as a whole. You are allowed up to three absences without penalty: these include school trips, illnesses, family emergencies, and days of special concern. If you miss four or more classes, you will receive an F for participation unless you have documented extenuating circumstances authorized by the Office of Student Life.

If serious circumstances arise that prevent you from attending class (for instance, prolonged illness, family tragedy, mental health or emotional well-being), please contact the Office of Student Life in Elizabeth Moore Hall (293-5611). The Dean of Student Life will authorize arrangements for you. Please also reach out to relevant support services on campus: e.g., the Carruth Center.

DEADLINES: The dates for work to be submitted are final; I will not accept late assignments. This is because keeping on time is an essential part of long projects: and that goes for your own scheduling (you need to keep up to speed with all assignments and there won't be time for delays) as well as for my own (I won't be able to keep up with grading and returning your assignments in a timely manner if they're not in at the deadline). Exceptions will be made only in cases of illness or personal emergency, for which written documentation (e.g., a doctor's note) is required. Please note, too, that papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date: if they are not handed in at the beginning of class, they will be considered late.

EMAIL: I am happy to respond to your emails but for any kind of substantive discussion about your work you should attend office hours or make an appointment to meet with me. Please expect me to respond to emails Monday to Friday only, and allow at least twenty-four hours for a response.

GRADING: Grades will be provided as letter grades, corresponding to the following percentage range:

A range	90-100%	A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79
B range	80-89%	A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76
C range	70-79%	A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72
D range	60-69%						
F	0-59%						

See, also, <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#gradestext>

PARTICIPATION: Participation includes completing the required reading on time, being punctual and professional, bringing detailed notes or questions to class, contributing to discussion, demonstrating active listening skills, and engaging respectfully with other people's ideas.

Participation will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

- A up to 3 absences and excellent participation
- B up to 3 absences and reasonable participation
- C up to 3 absences and weak participation
- D up to 3 absences and no participation
- F more than 3 absences

Per the assignment protocol listed above (on pages 1 and 2), full participation points will be lost by not completing the 5-minute presentation or proposal 1.

PUBLIC WRITING: The writing that you produce for this course is public work. You should expect to share your writing with your classmates as well as with me. You will share your work online, through e-campus, as well as in class.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS: All assignments *must* be printed out and handed to me: I will not accept emailed assignments. Assignments are due at the start of class unless otherwise stipulated, and they will be considered late if they are not handed in by this time. Papers should be typed in a legible 12pt font and they should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Always number your pages and staple together each essay; on the front page, include your name, my name, and the date. You should always use MLA style (make sure you know how to use it correctly). Finally, always include a title for your assignments.

Resources

ACADEMIC SUPPORT (at WVU and ONLINE)

MLA Style: <https://lib.wvu.edu/instruction/guides/mla.pdf>; & <https://lib.wvu.edu/instruction/guides/citation/>

WVU Library: <https://lib.wvu.edu/collections/>

Online Writing Lab ("OWL") at Purdue University: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Grammar: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/>

Mechanics: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/4/>

MLA Style: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

The Writing Studio: <http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio>

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Counseling Services: http://well.wvu.edu/ccpps/counseling_services

Division of Student Life: <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/about>

Emotional and Physical Wellbeing: <http://well.wvu.edu/>

Student Disability Services: <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/accomm>

NB: The course outline below is subject to change. If changes are made, adequate notice will be given and a new schedule will be distributed.

SCHEDULE

Date	Activity/Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
T 1/10 R 1/12	Introduction and Overview Beginning a big research project		
T 1/17 R 1/19	“The Dead”: identifying topics “The Dead”: research methods class	“The Dead”	eCampus Posting #1
T 1/24 R 1/26	Small group conferences TBC		
T 1/31 R 2/2	Part 1 (“They say”) of <i>They Say/I Say</i> Part 2 (“You say”) of <i>They Say/I Say</i>	Part 1 <i>TS/IS</i> Part 2 <i>TS/IS</i>	Wed at 6pm: Posting #2
T 2/7 R 2/9	Individual Appointments Part 3 (“Tying It All Together”) of <i>They Say/I Say</i>	Part 3 <i>TS/IS</i>	Essay 1 (4 pages)
T 2/14 R 2/16	5-minute Presentations Developing an argument; making claims		5-minute Presentation eCampus Posting #3
T 2/21 R 2/23	Analyzing articles (article to be assigned) Peer Review of proposal 1/thesis statement		Proposal/thesis statement
T 2/28 R 3/2	Small group conferences Introductions and conclusions		eCampus Posting #4
T 3/14 R 3/16	ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY Optional individual conferences		Annotated bibliography
T 3/7 R 3/9	*** SPRING RECESS ***		
T 3/21 R 3/23	MLA style: documenting sources Developing & delivering a short conference paper	Pages TBC	
T 3/28 R 3/30	12-minute presentations 12-minute presentations		12-minute presentation 12-minute presentation
T 4/4 R 4/6	“Grammar: Principles and Pitfalls” Proposal 2 (revised proposal)	“Grammar”	eCampus Posting #5 Proposal 2
T 4/11 R 4/13	Optional individual conferences Optional individual conferences		
T 4/18 R 4/20	Draft 20-page essay due; peer review Individual conferences		Draft essay due
T 4/25 R 4/27	Final details: proofreading Last class meeting; revised 20-page essay due		Final essay due