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## ENG 5000-001 Introduction to Methods and Issues in English Studies

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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**ENG5000.001**  
**INTRODUCTION TO METHODS AND ISSUES IN ENGLISH STUDIES**

Section 001: Face-to-face  
Class time: Monday, 3:30-6:00pm, Coleman Hall 3159  
Professor: Dr. Marjorie Worthington  
Office: Coleman Hall 3321  
Office Hours: MW 12:00pm-2:00pm or by appt.  
email: mgworthington@eiu.edu

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*  
Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*  
Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*  
All other readings can be found, organized by week, in D2L

**Description.**

This seminar provides a foundation for the M.A. in English, serving as an introduction to the methods and issues of advanced-level research and scholarship in English studies. Through our reading and discussions, we will examine the field of English Studies, discuss assumptions and challenges in the field, and develop a strong understanding of what professionals do. This will involve becoming aware of discourse practices, methods of research, and the writing genres that we use in various settings of English.

**Course Objectives include (but are not limited to):**

- understand expectations of graduate-level work;
- explore critical and theoretical issues in English studies;
- get extensive practice in completing graduate-level research;
- become familiar with professional conversations in English studies, including controversies, current trends, and career preparation

**Resources for Student Well-Being:**

You can find that list of resources here: [https://www.eiu.edu/fdic/Student%20 Well-Being 26-July-2022.pdf](https://www.eiu.edu/fdic/Student%20Well-Being%2026-July-2022.pdf). You might want to consider including it in your syllabus, or linking to it in D2L. Either way, it would be great if you would also consider reminding students of those resources a few weeks into the semester and again as the semester progresses.

**Covid statements and policies:**

For current Covid policies on campus (and a link to the CDC's guidelines), see here: <https://www.eiu.edu/covid/>. It remains a good idea for everyone's health to encourage students to stay home when they are sick with respiratory or other contagious illnesses.

**EIU ONLINE ETIQUETTE – These are the official standards we will use in our online interactions:**

Eastern Illinois University (EIU) is committed to open, frank, and insightful dialogue in all of its courses. Diversity has many manifestations, including diversity of thought, opinion, and values. We encourage all learners to be respectful of that diversity and to refrain from inappropriate commentary. Should such inappropriate comments occur, the instructor will intervene, removing inappropriate content. The instructor may also recommend university disciplinary action. Learners as well as faculty should be guided by common sense and basic etiquette. The following are good guidelines to follow:

- Never post, transmit, promote, or distribute content that is known to be illegal.
- Never post harassing, threatening, or embarrassing comments. If you disagree with someone, respond to the subject, not the person. Conflicts of ideas are encouraged, while conflicts of feelings are discouraged.
- Never post content that is harmful, abusive; racially or culturally insensitive, or religiously offensive, vulgar; sexually explicit, or otherwise potentially offensive.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as de-fined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be re-ported to the Office of Student Standards.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as appropriating words or ideas that are not your own without giving proper credit. The temptation to plagiarize can be great, particularly in the advent of extensive computer technology and the collaborative nature of our class. However, the consequences of plagiarism are dire and can result in a grade of F for the assignment and even for the course. It will also result in a report to the Judicial Affairs Office.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Graduate Portfolio Materials:** You likely have heard that the Graduate Program requires you to compile a portfolio of specific materials in order to graduate with your MA. You will begin the compilation process as part of this course. I have uploaded the information you will need, and by the end of the semester, you'll have to upload your resume/vita and statement of purpose, as well as a researched essay, to the English Department's Graduate D2L site. If this all sounds complicated and daunting, it's not – I'll explain it more as the semester goes on. Since this is more a requirement for the **degree** than the **course**, there is no grade assigned to the completion of this task.

**Weekly Short Essays:** In most weeks, you will turn in a 1-2-page *single-spaced* essay that addresses one or more points from that week's reading. A total of 10 of these essays is required. You can do a broad analysis of several (or all) of the course readings for that week, or you can provide a focused discussion of a single reading or even a single issue within a reading.

**NOTE:** These essays are NOT "responses" in that I do not care how you "felt" about what you read, whether or not you "liked" it, or even if you understood it (if you did not understand the reading, read it again more slowly). Instead, these essays should be *thesis-driven*: the introduction should contain a strong thesis statement that is supported by the body of the essay. These essays are due each Monday, should be posted in the designated Discussion Board, and are meant to facilitate discussion. For that reason, late essays are vastly less relevant to our purposes and will not be accepted. Due dates for the essays are indicated on the schedule of assignments as "E1," "E2," "E3," etc.

**CFP Abstract:** A "CFP" or "Call for Papers" is an announcement of a planned conference panel or collection of articles. The CFP describes what the panel or book will be about and invites people to submit their ideas for an essay that could be included in that panel or book. The submission is called an "abstract," which is a several-paragraph description of the essay the sender would like to submit to the panel or book. I will be giving you a CFP and you will need to write craft an abstract as though you were planning to submit an essay in response. You won't have to write the essay, just the several-paragraph abstract. If you're confused, don't worry, I will give a more in-depth assignment and there will always be opportunities for you to ask questions.

**Literary Studies Essay:** For this assignment, you will choose one literary-analytical approach and write an essay that analyzes *Beloved*.

**Statement of Purpose/Resume:** All graduate students need a resume or “curriculum vitae” or “vita” (what you call it depends on the job you are applying for). Based on your eventual career goals, you will craft that suits your purposes. You will also write a statement of purpose that outlines your goals for the MA degree and beyond. In addition to being assignments for this course, these will be included as part of your MA Professional Portfolio.

**Final Essay or Project:** This will be a project of your own choosing (likely a 10-page essay, but it could be another kind of project, like a lesson or unit plan), based on the work we have done in our course combined with your personal interests and/or career goals AND research you do independently. There is a lot of leeway here for you to design and project that suits your needs. If you like this project could be an expansion of one of your short essays. Ultimately, I want this project to be of professional use to you, in whatever form that might take. I will serve as a guide in whatever way you require.

**Participation:** The small size of this class affords us a rare opportunity, IF everyone takes responsibility for the quality of the course. For this reason, you will be expected each week to be an active participant in our discussions. In order to do this, you must be prepared each week, having read and taken notes on the assignment. If you do not prepare regularly and enthusiastically, your grade will be negatively affected.

#### **GRADE BREAKDOWN**

Weekly written essays	40% (4% each)
Call for Papers (CFP) Abstract	10%
Professional Ethics Quiz	5%
Literary Studies Essay	15%
Statement of Purpose (including peer review of classmates' statements)	5%
Resume/CV (including peer review of classmates' CV's)	5%
Final Essay or Project	20%

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1: Aug. 21 Introduction – Professional Portfolio Discussion

WEEK 2: Aug. 28 Humanities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century **CFP Abstract Assigned**

### SEPTEMBER 4-Labor Day – NO CLASS

WEEK 4: Sept. 11 **E1** Humanities 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Cont'd **Final Project assigned**

WEEK 5: Sept. 18 **E2** Critical Media Studies **Professional Ethics Quiz Due**

WEEK 6: Sept. 25 **E3** Public Humanities **CFP Abstract due**

WEEK 7: Oct. 2 **E4** Morrison: *Beloved* **Literary essay assigned**

WEEK 8: Oct. 9 **E5** Tyson: Ch. 3 Marxism & *Beloved* continued

WEEK 9: Oct. 16 **E6** Tyson: Ch. 4 Feminism, Ch. 6 Reader Resp. **Project Ab. due-Disc. Board**

WEEK 10: Oct. 23 **E7** Tyson: Chap. 9 New Historicism & Cultural Crit & Chap. 10 LGBTQ

WEEK 11: Oct. 30 **E8** Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* & Tyson Chap. 11

WEEK 12: Nov. 6 **E9** Digital Humanities/Distant Reading

WEEK 13: Nov. 13 **E10** Creative Writing **Literary essay due**

### THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 14: Nov. 27 **Final Essay/Project “Workshop”** **Project drafts due to Disc Board**

WEEK 15: Dec. 4 **Vita/Resume & Prof. Statement “Workshop” - drafts due to Disc. Board**

EXAM WEEK: Dec. 11 **Final Resume & Statements due to dropbox**

**Dec. 14 FINAL PROJECTS DUE TO DROPBOX**