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ENG 5000-601: Introduction to Methods and Issues in English Studies

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INTRODUCTION TO METHODS & ISSUES IN ENGLISH STUDIES

Prof. R. Beebe
rlbeebe@eiu.edu

8-Week Seminar Online
Jan 11 - March 5, 2021



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.

REQUIREMENTS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| • Project 1 | 10% |
| • Project 2 | 10% |
| • Project 3 | 10% |
| • Project 4 | 15% |
| • Project 5 | 15% |
| • Final Exam & Portfolio | 20% |
| • Discussion/Forum & Writing Groups | 20% |

TEXTS

- R. Powers, *The Echo Maker* (2006). [Print text from TRS]
- Ritzenberg & Mendelsohn, *How Scholars Write* (2020). [available on D2L]
- Other Selected Readings (available on D2L).

OFFICE HOURS COLEMAN HALL 3841:

MWF 9 - 4 pm

Conferences may be done by phone or Zoom. To set up a conference, use the following link:

<https://calendly.com/rlbeebe>

Course Goals.

- 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

“Why do science? Why do art? . . . The things that seem like the least important for our survival are the very things that make us human.”

Savas Dimopoulos, theoretical physicist

Writing Projects & Conferences . . .

See **Overview of Main Projects** for an in-depth description of each of the major projects and due dates.

I encourage you to meet with me often so we can begin a conversation on how to make the course work for you. Use the Calendly link (on the first page) to set up a meeting.

Expectations . . .

Just about everything in this course—and what we will do—is designed to help introduce you to the nature of graduate-level study and, where possible, help you begin defining real projects to pursue in future courses.

It's important, therefore, that you engage carefully and aggressively with the material and course assignments. This means only keeping up with the reading but, even more importantly, being proactive about making the course work for you and your professional goals.

Not everything we discuss or what you may be asked to write about will necessarily relate directly to your field of interest. However, the readings, topics, and tasks have everything to do with the larger field of English studies and are meant to help you better understand the professional nature of the field—to give you a comprehensive view and maybe help you discover an area you may want to pursue in more depth.

Submitting Work & Dues Dates . . .

Unless otherwise indicated, all work (papers and discussion posts) are due by 11:59 pm. on the date indicated. I always allow work to come in up to a day late. In other words, you don't need to ask for an extension. If you think you need more than a day or two to complete a project, just let me know ahead of time.

Here's EIU policy on acceptable etiquette for online courses, which I endorse:

EIU Code of Conduct for Online Courses. . .

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.

Remember you are communicating with real people.

Students and instructors in your course have feelings, lives, jobs, families and a myriad of other issues that you may know little about. Once you have finished writing something, and before you send it, re-read it looking at your words from someone else's perspective. How would they see it? Could it be misinterpreted? Could you rephrase to make it clearer or more on topic?

If someone asks a question, answer it if you are sure of the correct answer or if you have insight that could be helpful.

Write clearly & professionally.

In any course-related communication (emails, chats, discussions), use standard proper English with correct grammar. Using slang, errors in mechanics, and shortcuts maybe difficult for others to understand. Avoid ALL CAPS, bolding and underlining. It could be misinterpreted. Avoid offensive language. Also make sure to sign your name to any post.

Be kind and ethical.

Do not belittle other students or the instructor. You may disagree with what someone says, but focus on the issue, not the person. Behave online as you would in person. Be forgiving of the mistakes of others.

Help others.

If someone asks a question, answer it if you are sure of the correct answer or if you have insight that could be helpful.