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ENG 5000-600: Introduction to Methods and Issues in English Studies

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ENG5000.600:
INTRODUCTION TO METHODS AND ISSUES IN ENGLISH STUDIES

Section 600: Online

Professor: Dr. Marjorie Worthington

Office: Coleman Hall 3321

Office Hours: MF 11:00am-2:00pm or by appt.

Phone: 217-722-8953 (text only, please. We can schedule calls or Zoom meetings that way)

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TEXTBOOKS – We only have two textbooks, but most of your readings can be found in D2L. Each week has a labeled folder that contains that week’s reading.

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*

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

COVID-19 Practices & Expectations on EIU’s Campus.

Since our course is online, the following may not apply to us, but I am including it nonetheless for your information:

UNIVERSITY COVID STATEMENT: The University is asking all of us to take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. EIU’s policy is intended to protect all of us on campus, as well as the community, your roommates, and loved ones at home. All students, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear face coverings during class. Students may sit in any classroom seat where they are most comfortable. All reasonable efforts will be made to provide modifications to classroom seating arrangements if needed; however, this may not be possible in all situations. Students should not attend class if they are ill and should consult the student health clinic if they have any COVID-19-like symptoms. EIU’s COVID-19 campus practices including face coverings, when and where required, avoiding campus if sick, sanitizing surfaces, social distancing, and hand washing all of which are based on the best available public health guidance. Everyone in the campus community is responsible for following practices that reduce

risk. If you have a health condition that may require a potential classroom accommodation or variation from current EIU COVID-19 policy, please contact Student Disability Services (studentdisability@eiu.edu or 581-6583) to determine what options may be available based on current CDC guidance. If you are unable to follow EIU's COVID-19 guidelines, you may be asked to leave class or office hours as compliance with public health guidance is essential. Accommodations for instruction and make-up work will be made for students with documented medical absences according to IGP #43 [<https://castle.eiu.edu/auditing/043.php>]. To view the latest EIU COVID-19 related information and any policy updates, please visit <https://www.eiu.edu/covid/>.

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. 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 Discussion forum on D2L. In order to do this, you must be prepared

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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)
CFP Abstract	5%
Literary Studies Essay	20%
Statement of Purpose	5%
Resume/CV	5%
Final Essay or Project	25%

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1: Aug. 23-27 Introduction – Professional Portfolio Discussion

WEEK 2: Aug. 30-9/3 Humanities in the 21st Century **CFP Abstract Assigned**

Labor Day – NO CLASS

WEEK 3: Sept. 6-10 **E1** Humanities 21st Century, Cont'd **Final Project assigned**

WEEK 4: Sept. 13-17 **E2** Critical Media Studies

WEEK 5: Sept. 20-24 **E3** Public Humanities **CFP Abstract due**

WEEK 6: Sept. 27-10/1 **E4** *Beloved* **Literary essay assigned**

WEEK 7: Oct. 4-8 **E5** Literary Studies: Close Reading & Marxism

WEEK 8: Oct. 11-15 **E6** Lit. Studies: New Historicism & Cultural Crit, **Project Abstract**

WEEK 9: Oct. 18-22 **E7** Literary Studies: Feminism & Post-Colonialism

WEEK 10: Oct. 25-29 **E8** *Playing in the Dark* **Literary essay due**

WEEK 11: Nov. 1-5 **E9** Digital Humanities/Distant Reading

WEEK 12: Nov. 8-12 **E10** Creative Writing

THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 13: Nov. 29-12/3 **Final Essay/Project “Workshop”** **Draft of Final Project due**

WEEK 14: Dec. 6-10 **Vita/Resume & Professional Statement “Workshop”**

WEEK 15: Dec. 13-17 **Resume & Statements due**

Dec. 17 FINAL PROJECTS DUE TO DROPBOX