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

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English 5000 / Fall 2012
Introduction to Methods and Issues in English Studies

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Office hours:
MWF 11-12; T 2-5 & by appointment

English studies is not a single thing: from traditional areas like literary studies, rhetoric and composition, linguistics, and creative writing to newer fields such as new media, digital humanities, and literary study from the perspective of evolutionary psychology, any area of study that takes literature and language as its central subject is claimed by English studies.

This course, then, might seem to be impossible: how can a single course introduce you to the methods and issues in all these areas?

On one hand, the answer is that naturally, no single course can do this. However, no matter how disconnected the various fields of English studies might at first seem to be, in fact they do share certain core values, genres of writing, and methods. The overlap among the various fields is the reason that our curriculum asks students in all tracks to share a core of literary studies. The goal of this course is to develop your familiarity with these values and genres and your skill in using these methods and writing in these genres.

Texts from TRS
Charles Brockden Brown, Wieland (1798)
Brown, Ormond (1799)
Brown, Edgar Huntly (1799)
Brown, Arthur Mervyn (1799-1800)
MLA Handbook

Digital Texts (links in WebCT)
Charles Brockden Brown Digital Archive
Paul Fry lectures, “Introduction to Theory of Literature,” Yale Open Courses

Values: Language matters. The details of anything built out of language are significant. Genres—and the ways in which writers conform to or resist generic conventions—matter. Language, writing, and genre matter, at least in part, because the conversation among human beings, both within and across historical epochs, is an essential component of human society.

Genres: Proposals (for conferences, theses, exams, grants); literature review (this is really a subgenre, but it appears in many places: theses, introductions to creative theses, conference papers, seminar papers, articles); arguments of various lengths (conference papers, 9-10 pages; seminar papers/articles, 15-30).

Methods: Textual analysis (close reading); secondary research and analysis of secondary materials; archival research. (Additional, social-science oriented methods involving human subjects are used in composition, rhetoric, and professional writing, but are not covered in any detail in this course.)

WebCT
Course handouts and PDFs of many articles we will read in common will be saved in our WebCT space, along with other materials that you might need. I will also make your grades available in WebCT.

Information for students with disabilities
If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
Assignments and Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Final Grading Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short writings / research exercises</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>85-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>77-84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>76-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference-length paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>68 and below</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colloquium presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Short writings/research exercises:** In addition to careful preparation of assigned readings, I will ask you to prepare some short written exercises most weeks, especially during the first half of the semester. Of course you should perform to the best of your ability on all these projects; you should also begin them early enough that you can ask me questions during the week, should you need to do so.

**Seminar participation:** The expectations for graduate student participation in a seminar are substantially different than the expectations for undergraduate class participation. We will discuss these expectations and how to prepare for them in class on the first day, but suffice it here to say that the idea of a seminar is that each member of the group is contributing to the education of his/her peers, so you prepare for class as if you might suddenly be required to take a leadership role at any moment. In addition, we expect that graduate students are devoted to their studies and that absences will be extremely rare.

**Annotated bib, literature review, conference paper, seminar paper, colloquium presentation:** These assignments will build on one another, focusing on a topic of your choice that is related to at least one of the literary works or authors we will read together. Those in the rhetoric and composition or professional writing track should be aware that Brown wrote significant nonfiction rhetorical works, and I will be happy to help you explore topics related to these. For the creative writers among us, I encourage you to consider topics that might be of particular interest to writers, including theoretical and/or historical consideration of the nature of authorship, historical studies of the publishing industry, or stylistic/generic analysis of one or more of the works we read. More details on all of these assignments will be forthcoming.

**Colloquium:** As has become a tradition for this course, members of the course will present their conference-length papers in a colloquium that will be open to attendance by all interested faculty and students in English. The colloquium has several purposes: to enable you to hear constructive criticism of your work and to help you improve your final product (the seminar paper), to give you the experience of presenting a paper to a group that has not followed your work from its beginnings, and to give you practice for the kind of experience you will have when you defend your thesis (or M.A. exam).

**Final exam:** The final exam will test your mastery of theoretical concepts and your awareness of generic conventions, scholarly vocabulary, and research tools and methods. The best way to prepare for the final is to prepare readings carefully throughout the semester and to take notes on readings and on our class discussions that will allow you to review effectively.
The Fine Print

**Letters of recommendation:** I happily write careful, detailed, persuasive letters of recommendation for motivated, high-performing students. If you do your best work in this class, please feel free to contact me in future for a letter, but remember these guidelines: (a) give me at least two weeks to prepare a letter and (b) be sure to hold on to your seminar paper, so you can remind me of the work you did in our class.

**Promptness:** Please don’t be late. If you are, come in as inconspicuously as possible, and try to get caught up before you make any contributions to class.

**Late work:** Ideally, you will meet all deadlines. Should you find yourself unable to do so, you must talk with me (that is, contact me by phone or in person) to talk about your options. If you simply come to class without your assignment and without having spoken with me, you are likely to receive a 0 for that assignment. That means, of course, that you can’t start at the last minute.

**The English Department’s statement on plagiarism:** “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Office of Student Standards.”
Schedule

Additional required readings (critical essays) and short written assignments will be announced weekly.

**AUG 20**  Introductions

**AUG 27**  *Wieland* (1798); Fry, lectures 1 and 2; Foucault, “What Is an Author?”

**SEPT 3**  No class—Labor Day. Conferences Thursday and Friday.

**SEPT 10**  *Ormond* (1799); Fry, lectures 3 and 4; Iser “The Reading Process”

**SEPT 17**  *Arthur Mervyn* (1799); Fry, lectures 5 and 6

**SEPT 24**  *Edgar Huntly* (1799); Fry, lectures 16 and 17

**OCT 1**  Fry, lectures 18 and 19; Greenblatt, “The Power of Forms”; digital archive exercise

**OCT 8**  Postcolonialism and racial/ethnic criticism (readings TBA)

**OCT 15**  Feminism, gender studies, queer theory (readings TBA); working bibliography due

**OCT 22**  annotated bibliography and conference paper/seminar paper proposal due

**OCT 29**  literature review due

**NOV 5**  draft of conference paper due; conferences later this week to return drafts

**NOV 12**  revised conference paper + partial draft of seminar paper due

**NOV 19-23**  Thanksgiving break

**NOV 30**  class colloquium part I; complete draft of seminar paper due

**DEC 3**  class colloquium part II

**DEC 10**  final exam

**DEC 13**  final version of seminar paper due by 4 p.m.