ENG 5000-001: Issues and methods in English studies

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Issues and Methods in English Studies

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http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~vietto/5000.html
office hours: M 2-3, W 12-1, R 11-1

Rooms: Coleman Hall 3159 and 3150.
(We will normally meet in 3159 but sometimes will use 3150 for its technology capabilities.)

Overview

This course is designed to introduce you to research methods, critical approaches, and current issues in English studies. The goal is to help you become immersed in the culture of academic studies in English, and to equip you with tools that will help you succeed in the M.A. program and beyond.

Although the research techniques and interpretive strategies we will explore should be of use to you no matter what emphasis you are pursuing, we need some common materials for interpretation and discussion. The writings of Edgar Allan Poe and a variety of critical writings on Poe's work will provide those common materials. Please keep in mind, however, that our purpose in researching and writing about the works of Poe is to help you develop research and interpretive skills that you can transfer to other contexts, as well as to introduce you to the issues that engage scholars in English studies today.

Following are some specific skills and abilities you should have mastered upon successful completion of the course:

- demonstrate, both orally and in writing, advanced skills in close analytical reading
- understand and effectively use specialized vocabulary related to English studies
- know and apply the criteria typically used to evaluate the significance of a potential research or critical project in English studies
- know which databases and other resources are most appropriate to use in order to conduct responsible secondary research and demonstrate familiarity with the use of the most important of these resources
- demonstrate knowledge of techniques and standards of primary research related to texts
- apply the conventions of critical writing as practiced in English studies in the twenty-first century

Disability Information

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
Texts

In addition to the texts listed below, we will frequently read articles available online through Booth Library. These will be assigned in class, and links to them will be provided on the class web site (http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~arvietto/5000.html).

To be issued by TRS:

Brown, Charles Brockden. *Wieland, or the Transformation*
Nicholls, ed. *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures* (3rd ed.)
Poe, Edgar Allan. *Complete Stories and Poems*
Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*
Richter, ed. *Falling Into Theory* (2nd ed.)

To be distributed in class:

Excerpts from Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* (1997); other primary and secondary articles

Recommended for purchase:


Attendance

Don't miss class, and don't be late. Missing class for trivial reasons will negatively affect your final grade in this course, as in other graduate seminars.

Participation

Every member of a seminar shares the responsibility for the success of each week's conversation. Ideally, we should all learn from the exchange of ideas in class. Idle talk—the kind that does not demonstrate engagement with the materials under consideration—does not count as participation. If you have difficulties talking in class, you should talk with me about this in office hours immediately. (By the way, participating in class discussion, ideally, should be both intellectually stimulating and enjoyable.)

Late work

Late work will not receive credit unless you request and receive an extension prior to the due date. Extensions may not be requested via email; talk to me in person or on the phone. You need a very good reason to ask for an extension. I will, however, provide commentary on late work upon request.
Assignments

Detailed assignment sheets will be distributed for each major project. Weekly reading and writing assignments will be made in class.

*Weekly Written Exercises*—Except on weeks when other significant written projects are due, you will be assigned a set of short written exercises each week. (20%)

*Seminar Participation*—Participants in a seminar are expected to make meaningful contributions to discussion each week. That means you must have thoroughly prepared the assigned readings—we’ll discuss what constitutes thorough preparation—and you should come to class with at least a few substantive questions or comments you’d like to share. In addition, of course, you must be a good listener, willing and ready to consider the views and questions of others and to respond in ways that demonstrate close engagement with the materials under consideration. (20%)

*Annotated Bibliography*—After defining a problem or issue you’ll address in the research essay, you’ll prepare an annotated bibliography describing all the sources you can find that bear upon the issue or problem you’ll be engaging. (10%)

*Research Essay*—The research essay must present an original argument, supported with thorough analysis and/or primary research. The essay must also demonstrate awareness of the ongoing conversation(s) that are relevant to your argument and must situate itself in relationship to those conversations. (30%)

*Symposium Presentation*—For the class symposium, you will present a short (conference-paper length) version of your research essay. (10%)

*Final Exam*—We will finish the course with an examination that will assess your mastery of the course materials, focusing on your awareness of major methods and issues in the field as well as your mastery of concepts and specialized vocabulary. (10%)
Schedule

Weekly readings and writing assignments will be made in class each week. For your files, near the end of the semester I will provide a schedule that includes all the readings we’ve completed.

M Jan 7  introduction to course goals and seminar members; in-class reading: Jane Gallop, “The Historicization of Literary Studies and the Fate of Close Reading” (*Profession* 2007); Poe, “The Black Cat” (1845).

M Jan 14  formalism; New Criticism

M Jan 21  Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observed – no class.

**Individual Conferences this week**

M Jan 28  historicism, old and new; textual studies & book history

R Jan 31  Randall Knoper lecture

M Feb 4  Marxist approaches and structuralist approaches

M Feb 11  poststructuralism

T Feb 12  Kwame Dawes reading

M Feb 18  psychoanalytic approaches

M Feb 25  feminist approaches and queer theory

**proposal for research essay due**

M Mar 3  critical race studies

Mar 10-14  spring break

M Mar 17  Susan Bordo lecture during class time; we will discuss arrangements

**annotated bibliography due**

M Mar 24  cultural studies and postcolonialism

**draft of symposium paper due**

W Mar 26  Cary Nelson lecture

M Mar 31  writing workshop

M Apr 7  **class symposium**

M Apr 14  issues in rhetoric, composition, and professional writing

M Apr 21  review for final exam; discussion of research essays

M Apr 28  **final exam; final draft of research essay due**