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

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Course Information:

This course is required of graduate students in their first year of enrollment in the English MA program. Broadly speaking, it’s an introduction to critical ideas, research methods, and current issues in literary and composition studies. English study and all that comprises it—for example, literary study and criticism, writing and composition studies, language studies, textual studies, creative writing, pedagogy and curriculum—finds itself facing all sorts of complex but fundamental concerns. Everywhere we look nowadays in newspapers, journals, and magazines, we’re confronted by the question of the place of the humanities—for us, the study of literature, language, and writing—within rapidly changing priorities for college and university systems, within high school and community college curricula. How can or should we answer this question? It’s important because the issues are complex and the stakes high. More specifically speaking, exploring the concerns and questions will be our errand, and risking some answers will be our goal. We’ll read a wide variety of writers, critics, and theorists who have had something to say about the study of literature, language, and writing, and our discussion will in turn motivate our scrutiny of selected works.

Required Texts:

- Nicholls, ed., *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, 3rd ed.
- Halmi, Magnuson, & Modiano, eds., *Coleridge’s Poetry and Prose*
- Richter, *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*, 2nd ed.
- Tate, Rupiper, & Schick, eds., *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*
- A Course Packet of Readings (available at Copy Express)

Recommended:

- *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Writing*
- A notebook, earmarked for this class, for use in research and writing. I also strongly encourage you to keep a reading journal throughout the semester.

Our errand is ambitious, but we’ll work through it with specific objectives to anchor our work: 1) to get a feel for the requirements of graduate coursework in English; 2) to explore critical and theoretical issues in literary, composition, and textual studies; 3) to use research methods at the graduate level; 4) to learn about and respond to controversies—professional and academic—in English studies; and 5) to engage some fascinating thinkers and writers.

Course Requirements:

1. **Oral presentations:** Throughout the semester, each seminar member will be assigned a critical article or essay (maybe two!) and then be responsible for presenting it to the class and for facilitating discussion of it. It may be possible for people to work collaboratively on an article (we’ll talk more about this later). For each article, you will write a one-page, single-spaced, commentary on the article. The commentary will then function as the script for a presentation to the rest of us and will motivate our discussion of the piece. These presentations will begin during week 4. (15%)

2. **Bibliography exercises:** You will complete three bibliographic exercises, the first, an enumerative bibliography; the second, an annotated bibliography; and the third, a library research exercise focusing on Coleridge. For all three, you will make enough copies for the rest of us and report on your findings in class. (25%)
3. **Annotated bibliography:** On—your choice—the work of Coleridge, or an issue in composition and rhetoric, or a professional/academic issue in English studies. You will use this bibliography in writing a paper proposal and in pursuit of the next requirement. (25%)

4. **Research essay:** Prepared according to MLA format focusing on the issues pursued in the annotated bibliography above. This paper will be presented during our seminar's Class Symposium. (All students will be responding to each other's work in writing.) (35%)

5. **Sustained, engaged, thoughtful and thorough, reading, participation, and contribution throughout the semester. Because we can proceed in a seminar format, we will rely on each other's active involvement.**

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**Schedule of Meetings**

[ALL CHANGES WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CLASS]

| IS | = Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures |
| GCP | = A Guide to Composition Pedagogies |
| FT | = Falling Into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature |
| Norton | = Coleridge’s Poetry and Prose |

**Week 1**

**Introductions,** using the library, library research, research assignment.

**Week 2**

**Generating and evaluating bibliography.**

Report on research.
- Michaels, “The University Déclassé”
- Warren, “Race and Ethnicity” (IS)

Bibliographic project #1 assigned.

**Week 3**

**Composition & rhetoric studies and theory.**

- Sommer, “Language, Culture, and Society” (IS)
- Jarratt, “Rhetoric” (IS)
- Batholomae, “Composition” (IS)

**Week 4**

**Composition & rhetoric – theory and pedagogy.**

Report on Bibliographic Project #1.
- Tobin, “Process Pedagogy” (GCP)
- George and Trimbur, “Cultural Studies and Composition” (GCP)
- McLeod, “The Pedagogy of Writing Across the Curriculum” (GCP)

Bibliographic project #1 due.
Bibliographic project #2 assigned.
Oral presentations.

**Week 5**

**English Studies – critical and literary theory.**

- Searle, “The Conscience of the King: Oedipus, Hamlet, and the Problem of Reading”
- Davidson, “Humanities 2.0: Promise, Perils, Predictions”
- Fitzpatrick, “Obsolescence”

Oral presentations.
week 6
Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere” (1798) and “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (1834).
- Modiano, “Sameness or Difference? Historicist Readings of ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’”
Bibliographic project #2 due.
Bibliographic project #3 assigned.

Week 7
- Abrams, from “Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric” (Norton)
- Bernstein, “Poetics” (IS)
Selected criticism and oral presentations.

Week 8
Coleridge, “Christabel” and “Kubla Khan.”
- Swann, from “‘Christabel’: the Wandering Mother and the Enigma of Form” (Norton)
- Jackson, “Editing and Auditing Marginalia”
- Donadey and Lionnet, “Feminisms, Genders, Sexualities” (IS)
Bibliographic project #3 due.
Selected criticism and oral presentations.

Week 9
Coleridge, Biographia Literaria (1817) and “Essays on the Principles of Method” from The Friend (1818)
Selected criticism and oral presentations.

Week 10
Textual studies
- Marcus, “Textual Scholarship” (IS)
- Searle, “Emerging Questions: Text and Theory in Contemporary Criticism”
- Shillingsburg, “Hagiolatry, Cultural Engineering, Monument Building, and Other Functions of Scholarly Editing”
- Howard, “Literary Geospaces”
- Review of various online databases and other electronic, literary resources

Week 11
Careers and Professional Issues
- Robbins, “The Scholar in Society” (IS)
- Petersen, “Darwin to the Rescue”
- Ohmann, “The Function of English at the Present Time” (FT)
Professional organizations, conferences, and theses: proposals, abstracts, critical essays, reviews, grant applications, conference papers. Career options.

Week 12
Continued Discussion
- Gallagher, “Historical Scholarship” (IS)
- Franco, “Cultural Studies” (IS)
- Friedman, “Migrations, Diasporas, and Borders” (IS)

Week 13
Annotated bibliography & paper proposal
Paper proposal and select annotated bibliography due on the work of Coleridge or a composition and rhetoric issue or textual studies or a professional issue in English Studies of your choice.
Week 14
To be determined; possibly the beginning of the Class Symposium

Week 15
Class Symposium

Finals Week
Class Symposium