ENGLISH 512:
INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDIES

Syllabus

Time & Place: TR 12:00-1:40, Rm. LL 106A


-A variety of other photocopied articles and texts, most of which are on Canvas.


Aims of Course

Congratulations and welcome to Graduate Studies in English.

This course is designed to introduce you to some of the procedures of being a Graduate Student. It also aims to begin to familiarize you with some of the language and ideas that constitute advanced English literary studies today. During the quarter we will explore the program you’ve entered; the proper practices of a graduate student; and the place of the scholar (i.e. you), and of English as a discipline (i.e. your current career), in society and in academe. We will also discuss some of the various literary and critical approaches that are central to the “culture” to which you now belong. The course will by no means answer all of your questions about critical and literary theories. In fact, we will probably raise more questions than we will answer. If so, then we will have successfully entered the conversation that formulates English graduate and post-graduate studies today.

Please note: Attendance is mandatory. You will lose marks if you are absent more than twice.

Format and Evaluation

The class format will include professor-led sessions, class-discussions, and student-led presentations followed by discussion. See the Schedule for Due Dates.

The evaluation will consist of:
Group Researched Presentation on Theory and Readings + Handout* 25%

Group Presentation on Criticism in Action + Handout (Optional Paper)# 20%

Annotated Bibliography, Proposal, and Workshop Input 15%

Final Research Paper: Application of theory to text of choice (10 pp. min.) 35%

Participatory Discussion and Preparedness 5%

*The two presentations have to be on different theories.

#The optional paper is written by an individual student, not a whole group.

You must complete all components of the evaluation, including attendance, to pass.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Group Researched Presentation on Theory and Readings + Handout, 25%:

-Your group is responsible for the whole class period, including time for peer discussion. In the case of an awkward silence, the onus is on you to fill it with material.

-Since these are group presentations and you will have a variety of readings to cover, you must devise a meaningful format. You may want to break down the readings by single-presenter, subgroups, or the whole group. You can pause intermittently or midway to start class discussions or you may prefer to wait until the end, etc. You may present in the form of question and answer, lecture and response, conversation within the group, etc. You may include a short film or use class exercises, etc.

-Your Handout must give an idea of the organization of your presentation, summaries of the essential issues/claims in the readings, the important information you are going to cover, and the discussion items you propose. It must also provide a Works Cited where you mention some of the more important works and / or authors who write on the subject. It must be quite detailed, and cover at least 5 sides of paper.

-During the class session before the one in which you will present, you must hand out a list of discussion questions based on the assigned readings. The questions will facilitate discussion when you give your presentation.

For the presentation your group must:

-read and present on all required readings. This is an important requirement. The group will lose marks if you bypass an article that the rest of the class has had to struggle through;

-perform further research on the theory (i.e. beyond Booker): where did the theory originate and what prompted it? What are its main arguments, intents, etc.? What are the major names involved in it? How has it developed over the years? What are its sub-divisions? **What is its current state today?** What are its strengths, according to you? Its failures? Etc.;

-discuss and critique the articles: how do they fit with the claims of the theory? What are the claims of the article? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the article in terms of its claims and use of the theory? What is your position on the author’s position? Etc.;
-present a list of questions or issues for the class to talk about; the latest you will hand out this list is during the previous class meeting (i.e. do NOT email it the night before your presentation);

-keep the class flowing.

-You will be graded on the depth, complexity, extensiveness and clarity of content; the method of presentation and efficacy of your group dynamics; the efficiency, effectiveness and detail-level of the Handout; and the level of intellectual and critical engagement, etc.

**Group Presentation “Criticism in Action” on Hamlet + Handout or Optional Paper, 20%:**

-Your group is responsible for the whole class period, including time for discussion by your peers. In the case of an awkward silence, the onus is on you to fill it with material.

-You will read the assigned article on *Hamlet* from our text, including the accompanying section on the theory, discuss it out of class, and be ready to present on it during the period.

-This presentation is mainly about analyzing information. Your opinion is of utmost importance here: Be the critic of the critic, keeping in mind both the article and the introductory section.

-Your group must discuss the article prior to the presentation. If you have differences of opinion, great! Bring them to class and let us participate in the conversation.

-Your peers will be involved intrinsically in these discussions – give them more time than you did in the above presentation and make sure you’ve figured out ways to keep them involved and talking. You may choose to engage them by beginning the period with mini-group discussions on assigned topics, or setting exercises, etc.

-During the class session before the one in which you will present, you must hand out a list of discussion questions based on the assigned reading. The questions will facilitate discussion when you give your presentation.

For the presentation your group must:

- summarize the arguments made by the article. Pay attention to all the twists and turns;

- illustrate how the arguments fulfill the theory in question;

- critique (this is really the most important section) both the claims of the article and how these claims fulfill the theory in question. Justify your claims. (Critique means praising and criticizing in an informed manner.) Does the argument hold water? How so? What is convincing, or not convincing, and how so? Does it contradict itself? Do you like it? Why or why not? Etc.;

- present a list of questions or issues for the class to talk about; the latest you will hand out this list is during the class session before the one in which you will present (i.e. do NOT email it the night before your presentation);

- you may conduct further research – either on the author, the claims made by the article, etc., but it is not required. Just make sure you think you have enough material to cover 1 hour and 40 minutes.

- You must have a handout to help anchor the class and organize the discussion, but it needn’t be very long or complicated. It should include the points you want to cover and the questions you would like to discuss.
Optional Paper

- You may also choose to hand in a paper based on your critique. This is an individual option – that is, one member of the group may choose to write a paper while two may not. If all choose to write papers, then I will expect as many papers as there are members of the group – i.e. there will be no group papers.

- The paper must be long enough to cover the whole article – that is, do not write a paper on a section of the article.

- The paper is a critique of the article – i.e. you will do what you have done for the presentation, but in written form. The paper is also a paper, and you are an English graduate student, that is, you must pay attention to cohesion, organizing information, creating arguments, grammar, editing, etc.

- If you choose to write a paper, I will grade you on the presentation and paper combined. You do not have to participate in the making of the handout, in this case.

- You will be graded on the depth of your critique, how informed it is, how convincing you are, how well you know your article, and how well you involved the class.

- If you choose to write the paper, you will be graded on all these issues including clarity of writing etc. You paper will be due one week after you give the presentation, to give you time to revisit the arguments if you want. You may also hand it in the day of the presentation.

Annotated Bibliography (AB), Proposal (1-2 pp), and Preparedness & Participation in Proposal Workshop, 15%:

- We will be reading information on how to perform research for a scholarly seminar paper, and how to prepare an AB for such research. The requirements in this chapter are the requirements for this assignment. Do not start the assignment until we have read this information, or at least you have read it on your own. After we read it, I will re-iterate the length and other requirements of the bibliography. You will also write a Proposal that will function as the precursor to your final paper (see below), and we will spend a day in class work-shopping these proposals. The full assignment instructions will be forthcoming later in the quarter.

Final Research Paper: Application of theory to text of your choice (10 - 15pp), 35%:

- You are now the critic. Choose a theory with which you wish to engage and write a researched paper applying this theory/approach to a text of your choice.

- You may use any of the theories we discussed in class, even one on which you have presented or one we’ve not discussed in class. You must choose any literary text; I will not accept film criticism as you will have plenty of opportunity to do write such papers when and if you take film courses. Please clear your text with me. There may be some limitations.

- Include a section which contextualizes your topic or text; i.e. summarize the most recent (10 years or so) trends in discussions to do with your text. There will be more information on this requirement.

- Your paper must be a minimum 10 pages of writing – the works cited list is in addition to the 10 pp. Do not exceed 15 pages of writing.
-Other than what you need for the “contextualization” section (see bullet 3 in this section), you must cite meaningfully at least 10 sources (i.e. other than the “text” being analyzed). These may cover more readings in the theory, background information; other critics’ writings on the text or the theory, etc. (10 is only the minimum. You may use as many as you like).

-As with any paper, this must be a thesis-driven, clearly written, and edited work of art.

-The full assignment instructions will be forthcoming later in the quarter.

**Participation and Discussion, 5%:**

-Though you may be shy, this is a “talking course,” and you must force yourself to speak! Your grades will suffer, beyond the 5%, if you do not.

-Even when you are not presenting, you must read everything that is assigned for the day and be ready to discuss the material in a knowing and informed way. If you appear unprepared, or if you do not contribute, you will lose grades.

-For the theory articles I expect you to have questions and ideas to bring to class, and to refer to the articles in specific ways. I want to see that you have thought about the work in question.

-You are especially expected to contribute meaningfully in the discussion of the *Hamlet* articles, making precise reference to sections from the text, and giving your opinions on the claims of the writer.

-When we are reading the chapters and handouts on How to be Graduate Students etc., I may give you time to discuss topics during the first part of the class period. You have to be familiar with the articles in order to do so efficiently; make sure you read the handouts carefully at home, think about the questions, and don’t waste time in class.

**Some Extra Information**

You have to be an efficient, professional, and responsible student and scholar. You are also encouraged to disagree – with the material we are reading and/or discussion, with your peers, with the professor, etc. Listen to all opinions, be open-minded to changing or altering your views, but also be ready to voice and defend (courteously) your own positions. While you can disagree about ideas, and are encouraged to do so, please be respectful of others’ gender identification, sexual preferences, political affiliations, social status, veteran status, etc. Be passionate, and above all, have fun.

**I do not accept late work.**

**If you have any recorded disabilities, please let me have your documentation so we can decide how best to serve your needs.**