

English 301, This Is English: Fields + Methods

Section 0701, Mon/Wed 2:00-3:15pm, Tawes Hall 3132

Professor: Scott Trudell
trudell@umd.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays 11:45-1:45pm and by appointment
Tawes Hall 3228

"English" is a little word that means a lot of things. Are you looking for literature, or linguistic study? For writing--creative, critical, or professional? For theater, or debate? For film, or even video games? Do you want to encounter stories across a vast range of media--from the live human voice to printed books, from film to the web. "This is English," the gateway course for the English major, introduces you to all of these areas and more, as well as to our unique resources for studying and enjoying them. The English discipline includes three main interpretive fields: Literary and Cultural Studies; Language, Writing, and Rhetoric; and Media Studies. This course brings together the fundamental concepts and methods for reading and viewing practiced in these fields, launching you into English studies and helping you to choose the major track that is right for you.

Books:

- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine. Folger Shakespeare Library, 2003. ISBN: 9780743477123.

Check www.bookfinder.com and www.amazon.com for used copies. If you already own *Hamlet*, you most likely will be able use your copy; most modern printed editions of the play will work for this course. Electronic editions are not acceptable, however.

All additional required reading will be available for download on ELMS course reserves. **You are required to bring hard copies of the readings on the days we discuss them.**

I strongly advise purchasing a printer if you do not already own one.

Course requirements:

- Weekly blog assignments and comments (20%)
- Participation (15%)
- First paper, 4-5 pages (15%)
- Second paper, 4-5 pages (15%)
- Third paper, 4-5 pages (15%)
- Final (15%)
- Faculty interview assignment (5%)

What to expect:

Writing assignments will include three papers and weekly blogging. Writing is your single most important skill as an English major, and it takes hard work to improve. English 301 prepares you to succeed in the major by emphasizing the revision process necessary to produce a successful paper.

In this course we will discuss how English courses are transferrable to a wide range of professional and civic contexts. You will also learn about the discipline of English and its place in the University. You will interview a faculty member in the department and give a brief oral presentation about what you discover. And we will have classroom visitors who will introduce you to programs including the UMD Writing Center, the English Honors Program, the ARHU Career Center, Study Abroad, the Undergraduate Teaching Assistants Program, and the Maryland General Assembly Internship Program.

Please pay close attention to the due dates on the syllabus: most of your writing assignments have deadlines outside of class, in electronic form. Plan for a final exam that synthesizes all units and asks you to demonstrate your understanding of the following keyterms:

Aesthetics	Canon	Gender	Interpellation
Alienation	Discourse	Genre	Queer
Agency	Essentialism	Historicism	Representation
Audience	Form	Ideology	Race

Blog requirement:

Bloggng is a key part of this course: you will do a lot of your writing in this format, and our discussion in class will emerge from what you say online. In particular, you will be required to read and blog about the upcoming week's readings **by Sunday night** each week.

Please bookmark the blog here and sign up for email updates:

<http://english301fall18.wordpress.com>

The first step will be responding to an auto-generated invitation that you will receive via email. Check for messages from a Wordpress email address, accept the invitation and set up a Wordpress account.

Remember to post by Sunday night and to make at least one comment on your peers' posts during the week. To make a post, it is best to use the "Write a new post" link, in the "Get to work" column on the right (using the drop-down menu sometimes leads to confusion). Note that part of your grade is based on how thoughtfully you comment on your peers' posts, so you will need to keep up with the blog and also engage with your classmates' ideas.

I will provide blog prompts, but you are welcome to come up with your own topic if you prefer. Your posts will be the starting points for your papers; they will respond to and inspire threads of discussion in class; and they will allow you to draw connections between course texts and contemporary culture.

Posts should generally focus on the reading for the coming week. This means that you will need to read ahead. That said, it's okay to pick up on something that came up during class discussion. Try connecting the upcoming reading (which you will have just finished) to what we discussed in class. It's also okay to build on something that interested you about the previous week's discussion, or to focus on something that we did not have time to discuss in class. Just make sure that most of your posts touch on new material.

I encourage you to experiment with pairing texts on the syllabus with texts from other courses, literature of other periods, or digital media. For example, you might link to a clip on YouTube that helps to illuminate something at stake in that week's reading. Make sure to explain how your pairing helps us understand the course text in a new way.

Any topic that relates to the upcoming week's readings is welcome. This is your chance to set the agenda for discussion: if there are poems or issues you'd like to talk about in class, you should bring them up on the blog!

Policies:

- Attendance and participation are extremely important in this course.
- Participation grades will be based on thoughtful, consistent engagement in lecture and in section. This is not simply about speaking often: more important is how you listen and respond to your peers.
- I take attendance daily. Absences that are not excused will result in failing participation grades. You may submit written documentation of excused absences before class begins or outside of class.
- If you miss class for any reason, follow these steps:
 - 1) Send me a brief email before class begins to let me know that you cannot attend.
 - 2) Post a reaction to that day's readings on the course blog. Make-up posts are in addition to your weekly blog posts: they do not count as your post for the week. Post within three days of the class you missed and title it "Make-up post." Failing to submit make-up posts will result in lower or failing grades for participation and blog performance.
 - 3) Obtain notes. Find a partner and exchange contact information early in the semester to help with this.
- Turn off phones and computers completely (not to vibrate or silent) and leave them in your bag. Some students may require an exception: see me if this is the case.
- You are responsible for following the university code on academic honesty. If I detect plagiarism, I will report it to the Honor Council, and you will be subject to receiving an "XF" for the course, with the notation on your transcript, "Failure due to academic dishonesty."
- If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please let me know during the first two weeks of class.
- If there are hardships that will affect your course performance, I encourage you to let me know early in the semester. We can discuss strategies for succeeding.
- For further information on academic integrity, sexual misconduct, non-discrimination, accessibility, copyright, and other course-related policies, see

<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

On this webpage you will find information about free tutoring and learning assistance services as well as campus resources for mental and physical health.

Course schedule

August 27: **Welcome**

- Approaching texts: Tracy Chapman, "Subcity" (in class)
- Introduction to the four components of the major (in class):
 1. Literary and Cultural Studies
 2. Linguistics, Writing and Rhetoric
 3. Media Studies
 4. Creative Writing

August 29: **What Is English?**

- **Create an account on the course blog**
- Terry Eagleton, "The Rise of English" (in *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 3rd ed.)

Unit 1: Literary and Cultural Studies

Studying literature requires detailed attention to the ways of expression as well as to what is being expressed; it also requires attention to how literature, as a cultural force, is caught up in national and global conflicts, networks, and imaginings. This unit introduces students to the history, theories, and methods relevant to the study of literature (poetry, prose, drama) and cultural expression. By the end of the module, students will be able to define key terms in literary and cultural studies, close-read a literary or cultural text, and use preliminary research skills important in cultural studies.

September 4

- **Blog post due by midnight**

September 5: **Introduction to literary and cultural studies**

- Jonathan Culler, "What is Literature and Does It Matter?" (in *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd ed.)
- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume I*, 1-13
- William Carlos Williams, "This is just to say"

September 9

- **Blog post due by midnight**

September 10: **Overview of research methods in literary studies**

- Mario Klarer, "Theoretical Approaches to Literature" (in *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, 2nd ed.)
- Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author"

September 12: **Overview of library research tools**

- Before class, browse the following research guide for the major: <https://lib.guides.umd.edu/english>
- **Meet in McKeldin Library, room 6101**

September 16

- **Blog post due by midnight**
- Survey assessment on library session **due online:**
<https://lib.guides.umd.edu/c.php?g=845956&p=6157020>

September 17: **Voice, tone, and diction**

- Thomas Wyatt, "They flee from me"
- John Keats, "This Living Hand"
- Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess"
- T. S. Eliot "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
- Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool"

September 19: **Figurative language**

- Robert Herrick, "Upon Julia's Breasts"
- Williams Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow"
- Emily Dickinson, "A Route of Evanescence" and "Fame is a bee"
- Craig Raine, "A Martian Sends A Postcard Home"
- Audre Lorde "Coal"

September 23

- **Blog post due by midnight**

September 24: **Rhythm and meter**

- "Mary Hamilton"
- Andrew Marvell, "Bermudas"
- Lord Byron, "So We'll Go No More A-Roving"
- Alfred Tennyson, "Break, Break, Break"
- Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"
- Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar"

September 26: **Performance**

- David Ives, *Sure Thing*
- Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" (in *The Performance Studies Reader*, ed. Bial, 2nd ed.)
- Annotated bibliography and textual report **due in class, in hard copy**

September 30

- **Begin first paper: post an extract on the blog by midnight**

October 1: **Plot and discourse**

- H. Porter Abbott, "Story, Plot, and Narration" (in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. Herman, 2007)
- Jhumpa Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies"

October 3: **Writing workshop**

- **Bring a hard copy of your draft to class**

October 7

- **First paper due: upload to ELMS by midnight**

Unit 2: Language, Writing, and Rhetoric

Studying the essential tools of writing, communication, presentation, and persuasion involves working with rhetorical and linguistic principles as well as local discourse conventions and audience beliefs, both past and present. This unit introduces students to foundational concepts in Western rhetorical education and the branches within rhetoric and writing studies. By the end of the unit, students will be able to understand what rhetoric and writing encompass, recognize key terms and strategies used in developing rhetorical discourse from the Western rhetorical tradition, and apply the concepts to analyzing a text of their choice.

October 8: **Rhetorical situation, rhetorical analysis.**

- Sonja Foss, "The Nature of Rhetorical Criticism" (in *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*)
- Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1354a-1357a
- Kenneth Burke, "Dramatism" (in K. Foss, S. Foss, and R. Trapp, *Readings in Contemporary Rhetoric*)

October 10: **Rhetorical analysis, canons of rhetoric.**

- Foss, "Doing Rhetorical Criticism" (in *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*)
- George Pullman, *Persuasion: History, Theory, Practice*, pp. 108-119

October 14

- **Blog post due by midnight**

October 15: **Invention, arrangement, expression.**

- Pullman, pp. 119-142

October 17: **Invention, arrangement, expression.**

- Pullman, pp. 143-196

October 21

- **Blog post due by midnight**

October 22: **Memory and delivery.**

- Pullman, pp. 197-227.

October 24: **Rhetoric in media other than language. Visual rhetoric.**

- Charles Hill, "The Psychology of Rhetorical Images"
- Anthony Blair, "The Rhetoric of Visual Arguments" (both in Charles Hill and Marguerite Helmers *Defining Visual Rhetorics*)

October 28

- **Begin second paper: post an extract on the blog by midnight**

October 29: **Sonic rhetoric.**

- Justin Eckstein, "Sound Arguments" (*Argumentation and Advocacy* 53.3)
- browse Steph Ceraso's blog "Noise":
<http://stephceraso.com/noise/>

October 31: **Writing workshop**

- **Bring a hard copy of your draft to class**

November 4

- **Second paper due: upload to ELMS by midnight**

Unit 3: Media Studies

Studying media requires close attention to materials, technologies, and cultural practices of transmission. This unit introduces students to media studies, an interdisciplinary field that investigates the nature and history of mass media; the materiality of media artefacts, processes, and networks; as well as the global social, political, and human institutions that shape media production, circulation, and reception. By the end of this unit, students will be able to identify and compare diverse types of media in order to understand how they shape meaning individually and in combination.

November 5: **What is media?**

- Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, ed. Gordon (1944. Gingko Press, 2011), 18-35
- Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, 21-50

November 7: **What is mediatization?**

- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility"
- N. Katherine Hayles, *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*, 202-216

November 11

- **Blog post due by midnight**

November 12: **Theater as medium**

- *Hamlet*

November 14: **Book as medium**

- *Hamlet* (continued)
- Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, "The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text" (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 44, no. 3)
- Class visit to BookLab, Tawes 3248

November 18

- **Blog post due by midnight**

November 19: **Sound as medium**

- *Hamlet* (continued)

Thanksgiving Break!

November 25

- **Blog post due by midnight**

- November 26: **Film and new media**
- Michael Almereyda, dir., *Hamlet* (streaming on ELMS)
 - Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New*, 1-12
- November 28: **Film and new media**
- Gregory Doran, dir., *Hamlet* (streaming on ELMS)
 - Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 1-24
- December 2
- **Begin third paper: post an extract on the blog by midnight**
- December 3: **Writing workshop**
- **Bring a hard copy of your draft to class**
- December 5: **English at work**
- Career paths and the English major (in class)
- December 9
- **Third paper due: upload to ELMS by midnight**
- December 10
- **Review**
- December 15
- **Final exam: 1:30-3:30pm in our normal classroom**

It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there

---William Carlos Williams
from "Asphodel, That Greeny
Flower" (1955)