

English 5330
Graduate Research: Methods and Theories

Fall 2017

Professor J. Blevins
Office: Evans 458B
Phone: 936-294-1402
E-mail: jblevins@shsu.edu

Course Description

This course is designed to familiarize graduate students with various aspects of academic research. As a general rule, class sessions will be broken down into three categories: lecture, discussion, and library/group work.

Student Learner Outcomes

On completion of this course students will be able to do the following:

1. Understand nature and practice of various scholarly pursuits.
2. Locate relevant research material.
3. Analyze, interpret, and evaluate critical literature of the profession.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the profession through the production of scholarly work.
5. Articulate and negotiate the “problems” that face scholars, including the changes in traditional research issues that have resulted from literary theory and cultural studies.
6. Engage in practical professional activities such as applying to doctoral programs, submitting work for presentation/publication, and entering the job market.

Assessments/Requirements

Expect several (six or so) “smallish” library assignments. In addition to the library assignments, you will complete the following:

1. Editing assignment
2. Book/Critical Literature Review; Literary Review
3. Annotated Bibliography of Criticism
4. Final Project

Anyone who fails to complete any of the assignments (including the smaller library assignments) will not pass the course. That aside, the library assignments will constitute 10% of your final grade; the editing assignment will constitute 15% of your final grade; the book review will constitute 15% of your final grade; the annotated bibliography will make up 20%; and the symposium paper/presentation 40%.

University Policies

Academic Honesty

English Department policy states that a paper or assignment, which evidence can support as plagiarized or in any manner not the result of a student's own intellectual endeavors, will receive zero points. **The second offense will result in failure of the course and possible university disciplinary action.** Submitting your own previously written work for a current assignment or submitting an assignment in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors is also considered academically dishonest. For information on plagiarism and other **Classroom Rules of Conduct**, see the following site: <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide>.

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination.

Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the **Office of Services for Students with Disabilities** (SSD) located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936.294.3512, TDD 936.294.3786, and email disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **NOTE: No accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Services for Students with Disabilities.**

Religious Holy Days

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Visitors in the Classroom

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

Instructor Evaluations

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

Tentative Schedule

Week One (Aug 28): Course overview; introduction to academic research and writing; examining scholarly questions; assign readings.

(Labor Day, Sept 4)

Week Two (Sept 11): discuss readings; literary studies; academic writing; MLA index and Dissertations Online; documentation and content notes; assign library work and reading.

Week Three (Sept 18): *Assignment #1 due*; discuss readings; book reviews; assign book review.

Week Four (Sept 25): *Assignment #2 due* (group presentations); Worldcat; evaluating criticism and editions; assign library work and readings.

Week Five (Oct 2): *Assignment #3 due* (group presentations); OED; begin editing assignment.

Week Six (Oct 9): *Book review due*; editing assignment cont.

Week Seven (Oct 16): editing assignment cont.

Week Eight (Oct 23): editing assignment cont.

Week Nine (Oct 30): *Editing assignment due*; Language/Textual studies; problems with reputation and influence; Biographical studies; DNB etc.; assign library work and readings.

Week Ten (Nov 6): *Assignment #4 due*; discuss editing assignment; Historical and cultural criticism cont.; discuss readings. Developing a topic; composing an annotated bibliography; assign bibliography; assign final research assignment.

Week Eleven (Nov 20): *Assignment #5 due*. Scholarly publishing; conference papers; theses; abstracts; assign research abstract.

Week Twelve (Nov 27): *Abstract due and Annotated Bibliography due*; discuss abstracts

Week Thirteen (Dec 4): Final Exam time

Library Assignments

- 1) Using the MLA database, cite eight articles that deal with Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. Four of the eight articles must have been written before 1950. Also, cite two dissertations written on the same play; one must be prior to 1950. You will turn in a list of the ten bibliographical citations (MLA style), typed, in alphabetical order (this assignment will look exactly like a "Works Cited" page but with a heading).
- 2) I will assign groups. Your group will locate five reviews of a specific literary work published between 1900-1950. Your group will present a summary of the reviews' content at the following class meeting (drawing conclusions about the reception of the work, if possible). You can divide the work any way you like, but each member of your group should participate in the 15-minute presentation of the material. Each group should provide me with a list of the five reviews (MLA style) and group members.
- 3) I will assign groups. Each group will be assigned an edition of an author's work. The groups will be responsible for evaluating the quality or usefulness of the edition for scholarly work. You probably should consult reviews of the edition as well as browse through critical works to see if the edition is used by scholars or not—it may not change your view of the work but it should at least be considered.
- 4) Search the OED for five words typically considered today to be "profane." Find the earliest recorded use of each word and *briefly* discuss any changes in the connotations of the word over time. (WARNING—do not be fooled by words that are spelled the same but have no direct relationship to the profane use of the word today—i.e. "Is there is a relationship between the word "bat" for baseball and "bat" for the flying mammal?" There could be but you would need to find out.)
- 5) TBA