

English 299: Introduction to English Studies

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 299 is writing-intensive course designed to help students transition into upper-division English classes. It serves both as an introduction to the field of English Studies as well as a more practical guide to conducting research and writing papers in English classes. In the course, we'll examine the history and current state of the discipline; we'll begin to explore the wide range of literary theories and how these theories are applied to texts; and we'll practice the steps involved in proposing, researching, and drafting the type of papers you will be expected to write in your 300-level English classes.

While the point of this course is not to read and discuss literature per se, we will use Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* as our model text in the course, exploring how critics have applied different types of literary theory to the novel.

BOOKS

- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Dover Thrift Edition)
- Nealon & Giroux, *The Theory Toolbox* (2nd edition, 2011)
- Other course readings are available on the class website (be sure to download these and bring copies to class on the day they are due)

COURSEWORK

Participation (10%). This class is purposely limited in size to encourage exchange among English majors. Required work for the course includes careful reading of all assigned material and active participation in class discussions and workshops. Please come to class prepared with questions and comments about the assigned reading for each day—the success of the course depends on your involvement. Obviously, in order to participate, you must be in class; therefore, attendance is mandatory. I don't distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. For each absence over 4, I will automatically subtract 3 points from your final course average.

Blog (15%). For most days we have assigned readings in the course, students may post a response to the reading on our class blog. I will provide a prompt for each of these days to get you started thinking. You may respond to the prompt if you like, but you may also respond to other students' comments, or to anything else that interests you in the reading. Blog posts must be at least 150 words to receive full credit for the day. Blog posts will not receive letter grades, but you will receive credit for the number of comments you post, with 10 posts equaling 100%.

Formal Writing (75%). One of the main goals of this course is to train you to do the kind of research and writing that will be expected in upper-level English classes. But while you'll be doing most of that work on your own in your 300-level classes, in English 299, we'll devote class time to discussing and practicing the various stages involved in writing a good argument about a literary or cultural text. The formal writing you turn in will allow you to practice these stages. You will be required to write an **article summary (15%)** in which you carefully and thoroughly read and summarize one of the assigned critical articles on *Frankenstein*. The other formal writing in the course will include a series of short assignments leading into a final research paper, all focused on a text of your own choice. These assignments will include a **preliminary proposal (5%)**, a set of **sample annotations (5%)**, a full **annotated bibliography (10%)**, an **introduction/thesis (10%)**, a **final paper (25%)**, and a **presentation (5%)**.

LATE PAPERS

Late papers will be penalized five points for each day or fraction of a day they are late. Your presentation **must** be given on the scheduled date. If you're not prepared on your scheduled day, you will receive a zero for this assignment.

PLAGIARISM

All work submitted must be your own. You may discuss writing assignments and prepare for tests with your classmates (in fact, I strongly **encourage** you to do so), but all that you write should be yours. Incorporating others' words or ideas in your essays without proper acknowledgment, or any other form of academic dishonesty, will result in an "F" for the entire course.

READING SCHEDULE

You will be responsible for having read at least the portions of the works listed below before coming to class for that day. Many of the articles we're reading can be found online on the class website. Please download these and bring them to class on the day that they're due.

Week 1: Introduction to English Studies

M 8 January	Course Introduction
W 10 January	<i>Frankenstein</i> (Author's Introduction – Chapter 5)
F 12 January	Eaglestone essays: "Where did English Come From" and "Doing English Today" (class website)

Week 2: Introduction to English Studies (cont.)

M 15 January	No Class—MLK Day
W 17 January	<i>Frankenstein</i> (Chapters 6 - 9)
F 19 August	<i>Frankenstein</i> (Chapters 10 - 15)

Week 3: What is Theory and Why Does it Matter?

M 22 January	"Why Theory" (Toolbox); Klages, "What is Literary Theory?" (class website)
W 24 January	<i>Frankenstein</i> (Chapters 16 - 21)
F 26 January	<i>Frankenstein</i> (Chapters 22 - 24)

Week 4: Proposals; Close Reading/Formalism

- M 29 January **Draft of Preliminary Proposal Due**
Proposals workshops
- M 31 January “Author/ity,” “Reading” (Toolbox)
- F 2 February Klages, “Interlude: Humanism, Structuralism, and Poststructuralism” (web);
Final Version of Preliminary Proposal Due

Week 5: Psychological Approaches to Literature

- M 5 February “Subjectivity” (Toolbox); Klages, “Psychoanalysis,” & “Interlude: Self to Subject” (web)
- W 7 February Continue discussion
- F 9 February Mary Poovey, “‘My Hideous Progeny’: The Lady and the Monster” (web)

Week 6: Ideology and History

- M 12 February “Ideology” and “History” (Toolbox); Klages, “Interlude: History to Historicism” (web)
- W 14 February Ann Dobie, “Marxist Criticism” (web)
- F 16 February Warren Montag, “The Workshop of Filthy Creation: A Marxist Reading of *Frankenstein*” (web)

Week 7: Article Summaries

- M 19 February **Draft of Article Summary Due**
Summary workshops
- W 21 February Summary workshops
- F 23 February Professor Visits
Final Version of Article Summary Due

Week 8: Film, Media Cultural Studies

- M 26 February “Culture” (Toolbox)
- M 28 February James A.W. Heffernan, “Looking at the Monster: *Frankenstein* and Film” (web)
- F 2 March Continue discussion of Heffernan

Week 9: Annotated Bibliographies

- M 5 March **Draft of Sample Annotations Due**
Annotated Bib. workshops
- W 7 March Annotated Bib. workshops
- F 9 March Professor Visits
Final Version of Sample Annotations Due

Week 10: Feminism/Gender/ Queer Theory

- M 12 March Differences, “Gender” (Toolbox); Klages, “Feminisms” (web)
- W 14 March Differences, “Queer” (Toolbox); Klages, “Queer Theory” (web)
- F 16 March Anne K. Mellor, “Possessing Nature: The Female in *Frankenstein*” (web)
Final Annotated Bibliography Due

Week 11: Spring Break

M 19 March **No Class—Spring Break**
W 21 March **No Class—Spring Break**
F 23 March **No Class—Spring Break**

Week 12: Introductions and Theses

M 26 March **Draft of Introduction/Thesis Due**
Introduction/Thesis workshops
W 28 March Introduction/Thesis workshops
F 30 March Professor Visits
Final Version of Introduction/Thesis Due

Week 13: Race and Postcolonial Theory

M 2 April Differences, “Race,” “Class” (Toolbox); “Postculturalism,” “Postcolonialism”
(Toolbox)
W 4 April Klages, “Race and Postcolonialism” (web)
F 6 April H.L. Malchow, “Frankenstein’s Monster and Images of Race in Nineteenth-
Century Britain” (web)

Week 14: Race and Postcolonial Theory (cont.); Postmodernism

M 9 April “Postmodernism” (Toolbox); Klages, “Postmodernism” (web)
W 11 April Continue discussion
F 13 April **Drafts of Final Paper Due**; Draft Workshops

Week 15: Final Paper Drafts

M 16 April Draft Conferences
W 18 April Draft Conferences
W 20 April **Final Paper Due**

Week 16: Class Ends

M 23 April Last Day of Class—Wrap Up; Discuss Presentations

Presentations: (final exam slot): Monday, April 30, 8:00-11:00 a.m.