

## ENGL 490: SENIOR SEMINAR

Time: Monday & Wednesday 1:00–2:15 p.m.

Classroom: Griffin 301

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 12:00–1:00, 2:15–4:15 p.m.

Office: Griffin 250

Instructor: Professor Maria Seger

Email: maria.seger@louisiana.edu

Phone: 337-482-6970

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### COURSE OVERVIEW

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This course serves as the capstone for advanced undergraduate students majoring in English, giving you the opportunity to develop your research skills to your fullest potential and apply your knowledge of the methods and content of one or more of the various scholarly disciplines housed in English—including literature and culture, folklore, rhetoric and composition, and linguistics—in a semester-long research project. In this course, we’ll investigate and perhaps even rethink what it means to “do research” in humanities disciplines, understanding research as a process of knowledge production that builds on and responds to ongoing conversations in our disciplines using carefully-selected methods. Your capstone research projects will be thoughtfully and intentionally designed and executed not only through reading and writing but also through learning to: conceptualize problems in our disciplines; pose research questions about our topics; situate ourselves in relevant scholarly conversations; and choose and implement relevant methods for gathering and interpreting evidence. In generating our capstone research projects, we’ll come to identify academic writing as a continual process of reading, thinking, writing, and revision.

### COURSE TEXTS TO ACQUIRE

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Abbott, Andrew. *Digital Paper: A Manual for Research and Writing with Library and Internet Materials*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2014. Print. ISBN: 9780226167787.

### COURSE TEXTS ON MOODLE

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Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald. Selections from *The Craft of Research*. 4th ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2016. Print.

Hayot, Eric. Selections from *The Elements of Academic Style: Writing for the Humanities*. New York: Columbia UP, 2014. Print.

### COURSE COMPONENTS

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*Participation:* Attendance and participation are acts of solidarity with your classmates. Because discussion is a collective enterprise, your active participation is vital to everyone’s intellectual growth. Please strive to: 1) be on time to and actively present in class (whether in person or virtual); 2) prepare for and meaningfully contribute to communal inquiries and discussions; and 3) show mutual respect for your classmates. When you submit each of our five major writing assignments, you’ll self-evaluate your participation in the course thus far, and I’ll respond with feedback.

*Writing:* You’ll undertake a variety of scaffolded writing assignments over the course of the term

aimed at developing your research and academic writing skills through your semester-long research project. I'll distribute a prompt for each assignment at least two weeks in advance of the due date.

*Sample Analysis:* You'll write a roughly 500-word analysis of a research essay of interest to you, outlining its argument, intervention, implications, methods, structure, archive, analysis, and citations and bibliography, along with other notable aspects. The goal here is to unpack a research essay to understand how it works on the level of form and content so that you have greater insight into how you'll model your own.

*Proposal:* You'll write a roughly 500-word proposal or design document outlining your topic, including the empirical puzzle, theoretical puzzle, research question, and action items. The goal here is settle on a topic in order to move to the next stage of research while understanding that this document will continue to evolve across the course of the semester.

*Annotated Bibliography:* You'll compile an annotated bibliography with ten source entries of roughly 150 words each. For each source, list a complete citation as well as a summary of the source's argument, how its argument relates to your other sources' arguments, and how you plan to position your argument in response. The goal here is to understand the existing conversation on your topic and begin to position your analysis in response to that conversation.

*Abstract and Outline:* You'll write a roughly 250-word abstract that identifies your argument, intervention, implications, methods, and archive. You'll also complete a roughly 500-word outline of your research essay focused on structure and analysis. The goal here is to make a tentative claim and outline how to elucidate that claim with intentionally structured analysis of evidence.

*Research Essay:* During Finals Week, you'll submit a roughly 3,000-word research essay that previously underwent three rounds of peer review. The goal here is to make an original claim that intervenes in an ongoing scholarly conversation in your discipline, employs a clear methodology, has explicit stakes, and executes well-structured analysis of evidence.

*Workshop Critiques:* Three drafts of your research essay will each undergo a round of peer review: the first on substance, the second on organization, and the third on style/conventions. In each round, you'll write a 500-word workshop critique of your peer's draft. The goal here is to offer specific and actionable feedback on the various elements of that round's focus. I'll distribute a prompt in advance.

*Presentation:* You'll complete a presentation aimed at developing your confidence in speaking about your academic work. Near the end of the semester, you'll briefly present the argument of your research project to the class. You should plan to speak and field questions for roughly ten minutes. I'll distribute a prompt in advance.

## **GRADE BREAKDOWN**

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|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Participation   | 15% |
| Sample Analysis | 10% |

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Proposal               | 10% |
| Annotated Bibliography | 10% |
| Abstract and Outline   | 10% |
| Research Essay         | 25% |
| Workshop Critiques     | 10% |
| Presentation           | 10% |

### **GRADE SCALE**

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A: 100%–90%  
 B: 89%–80%  
 C: 79%–70%  
 D: 69%–60%  
 F: 59%–0%

While individual assignments may receive half letter grades (pluses or minuses), final grades are calculated according to the above scale.

### **COURSE VALUES**

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*Basic Needs:* I'm committed to ensuring that you have access to the living conditions that you need to succeed in this course. If you face challenges securing food or housing, please contact the Dean of Students and me, if you feel comfortable doing so, for support. That way, I can provide you with any resources I have access to.

*Cancellations:* Please check your email and/or our class Teams chat regularly in case of class cancellations or modifications. If class is canceled or being held in an alternate virtual format, I'll send information via email and Teams chat.

*Disabilities:* I'm committed to ensuring that you have access to the learning conditions that you need to succeed in this course. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please contact me as well as the Office of Disability Services as soon as you're able. More information can be found at <https://disability.louisiana.edu>.

*Electronics:* If electronic devices are fundamental to your learning process, please feel free to use them in class. That being said, please be mindful of your ability to distract yourself and others when using electronics for other purposes during class time.

*Format:* Our course is designated *hyflex*, meaning that we may meet in-person, virtually, or any combination of the two. I'll be holding office hours in my office and teaching from our classroom (unless otherwise indicated via email and/or Teams chat). Please feel free to join me in my office and the classroom in person or via Zoom, whichever is more conducive to your learning and comfort on any given day. You can access our Zoom classroom through Moodle and email me for a link to Zoom office hours.

*Late Assignments:* I encourage you to submit assignments on time. That being said, life happens. If you're having trouble submitting an assignment on time, please contact me as soon as you're able so

that we can make alternate arrangements.

*Plagiarism:* Because academic writing creates new knowledge, plagiarism is considered a serious ethical violation. For this reason, plagiarism results in, at a minimum, a failing grade for the assignment, and, at a maximum, dismissal from the university. The university's official definition of plagiarism is: "a specific type of cheating. It occurs when a student claims originality for the ideas or words of another person, when the student presents as a new and original idea or product anything which in fact is derived from an existing work, or when the student makes use of any work or production already created by someone else without giving credit to the source. In short, plagiarism is the use of unacknowledged materials in the preparation of assignments." If you have any questions or concerns about plagiarism, please contact me as soon as you're able.

*Safety:* Your physical, mental, and emotional safety are of the utmost importance to me. In this COVID crisis, please put yours and your loved ones' safety first. If you're in need of alternate arrangements for any aspect of this course, please contact me as soon as you're able. In addition, for everyone's health and wellbeing, please strive to adhere to social distancing standards when you're joining us in the physical classroom, including maintaining six feet of distance from your classmates and wearing a face covering at all times. If you're feeling even a hint of illness, please join us via Zoom.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

| DATE           | READINGS  | DEADLINES              |
|----------------|---|------------------------|
|                | <i>"Doing" Research</i>                               |                        |
| Wednesday 1/13 | Syllabus and Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (ix–xv)     |                        |
| Wednesday 1/20 | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (1–14)                   |                        |
| Monday 1/25    | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (15–35)                  |                        |
| Wednesday 1/27 | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (36–48)                  | Sample Analysis        |
| Monday 2/1     | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (49–63)                  |                        |
|                | <i>Preliminary Phase</i>                              |                        |
| Wednesday 2/3  | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (64–77)                  |                        |
| Monday 2/8     | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (77–90)                  | Proposal               |
|                | <i>Midphase Research</i>                              |                        |
| Wednesday 2/10 | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (91–109)                 |                        |
| Monday 2/22    | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (110–28)                 |                        |
| Wednesday 2/24 | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (129–48)                 |                        |
| Monday 3/1     | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (149–68)                 | Annotated Bibliography |
|                | <i>Midphase Writing</i>                               |                        |
| Wednesday 3/3  | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (169–84)                 |                        |
| Monday 3/8     | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (185–200)                |                        |
| Wednesday 3/10 | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (201–18)                 |                        |
| Monday 3/15    | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (219–37)                 | Abstract and Outline   |
| Wednesday 3/17 | Booth et al., <i>The Craft of Research</i> (110–31)   |                        |
| Monday 3/22    | Hayot, <i>The Elements of Academic Style</i> (59–80)  |                        |
| Wednesday 3/24 | Hayot, <i>The Elements of Academic Style</i> (102–15) |                        |

|   | <i>Endphase</i>  |                                      |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Monday 3/29   | Abbott, <i>Digital Paper</i> (238–47)                  | First Draft                          |
| Wednesday 3/31  |  | Workshop Critiques                   |
| Wednesday 4/7   | Hayot, <i>The Elements of Academic Style</i> (167–87)  | Second Draft                         |
| Monday 4/12   |  | Workshop Critiques                   |
| Wednesday 4/14  | Hayot, <i>The Elements of Academic Style</i> (188–209) | Third Draft by Friday 4/16 at 5 p.m. |
| Monday 4/19   |  | Workshop Critiques                   |
| Wednesday 4/21  |  | Presentation                         |
| Monday 4/26   |  | Presentation                         |
| Wednesday 4/28  |  |                                      |
| Finals Week<br>(exact date and<br>time to be<br>determined) |  | Research Essay                       |