

English 691A: Advanced Topics – Capstone Mentoring Spring 2019

Michael Germana (Instructor)
Nicole Chambers (Mentor)

This course offers an opportunity for English PhD and MA students to gain teaching experience in an advanced undergraduate classroom. This pedagogical experience introduces grad students to new methods of teaching and gives them an opportunity to work one-on-one with senior literature majors.

Graduate Mentors assist with the capstone literature course, ENGL 496: Senior Thesis-Capstone. Mentors help to guide students through an intensive writing process that culminates in a scholarly essay on a topic in literary or cultural studies.

ENGL 496 is dynamic and labor-intensive. It is one of the most difficult, and should be one of the most satisfying, courses in the major. Capstone essays often serve as writing samples for graduate school applications and as material for conference proposals.

Students need assistance at every stage of the writing process—brainstorming a viable topic; doing research; writing an exploratory essay; developing a thesis; crafting a proposal; compiling an annotated bibliography; writing a ten-page essay; offering sound and sustained analyses; rehearsing modes of oral presentation; outlining and global revising; expanding essays into a twenty/twenty-five-page argument; as well as final editing and proofreading.

In addition to learning how to assist undergraduates in a major research project, mentors learn about the undergraduate literary and cultural studies curriculum at WVU. They become familiar with the diversity of undergraduate research and with options for undergraduate publishing and conferencing. Class discussions also address the purpose of higher education, the state of the humanities, and the future of the English major, all topics of relevance to English graduate students.

Requirements*

- **Attendance and participation at class meetings, as agreed upon with instructor**
- **Conferencing with students at designated stages of the writing process**
- **Assisting with public presentations at the end of the semester**
- **Regular communication with the instructor**

*Graduate student participation in this version of ENGL 691 must not entail more time than is typically allotted for a three-credit graduate course.

Catalog Description for ENGL 691A-Z. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours. PR: Consent. Investigation of advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses.