

**English 496: Senior Thesis**  
Professor Jonathan Burton

E-Mail: jburton4@wvu.edu  
Office: 231 Colson Hall  
Office Hours: Th 2:30-3:30 & by  
appointment

### **Course Description**

In ENGL 496 you will pursue an extensive research project in literary or cultural studies, culminating in a substantial scholarly essay. The course will help you develop your research and writing skills, as you will have an opportunity to explore in depth a particular topic that interests you. If you are considering graduate school in English or a related field, you will find this course especially useful as you work on a writing sample to support your application.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, you should develop an authoritative understanding of a topic within English studies, based on research, evaluation, analysis, and written and oral presentation. Through the assignments, you should be able to demonstrate

- 1) awareness of academic discourse and research on a particular topic.
- 2) skills of research, analysis, argumentative development, and critical thinking.
- 3) appropriate tone, style, and sentence structure of academic writing, including synthesis of research.
- 4) command of academic written English and conventions of documenting research.
- 5) proficiency in oral presentation of research, analysis, explication, and argument.

### **Textbook:**

Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2003.

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

<b>Course Requirements and Grading</b>	<b>Points</b>
200-word Abstract Draft	3
Revised 200-word Abstract	4
1-page Source Analysis	10
Library Scavenger Hunt	10
8-item Annotated Bibliography	20
Consultation with Course Librarian	3
3-page draft	10
7-page draft	10
10-page draft	10
17-page draft	10
Peer editing	10
Oral Presentation	20
<u>Completed 20-25 page paper</u>	<u>80</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>

## Course Policies

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance and participation are crucial to this class. **You are allowed three absences. If you miss class a fourth time, you will fail the course.** English 496 encourages collaborative learning through small and large groups, formal and informal writing activities, peer responses, workshops and individual conferences. This course relies upon constructive criticism – being receptive to others’ ideas, and presenting one’s own ideas in a helpful manner. There will be multiple venues for you to offer and receive constructive criticism. On certain days, we will work as a group on individual papers. During peer workshop days, paired students will work together on their drafts. You are responsible to submit assignments electronically if you are going to be absent. In addition, it is your responsibility to obtain any handouts or assignments you may miss, and to make up work (such as the library scavenger hunts, peer editing, etc) prior to the next class meeting.

**Paper Submission:** Papers are to be typed in 12-point Times Roman, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Papers submitted any time after class on the due date will be penalized by a full grade (i.e. a B+ will become a C+) for each day late. Days late are determined not by the calendar but by the 24-hour period following the start of class on the due date. Late submissions may be made by email within 3 days of the due date. After 3 days the assignment will be assigned 0 points.

On the days of editing workshops students should bring to class 2 hard copies.

**Six assignments should be submitted electronically**, as MS Word email attachments, before class on the due date: Abstract, 3-page draft; Annotated Bibliography, 7-page draft; 10-page draft; 17-page draft. Attached files should be named using the following formula: LAST NAME (Assignment Name) Date. For example: JONES (3-Page) 9.2.08

### Course Librarian:

Kelly Diamond: kdiamond@wvu.edu; (304) 293-0332  
Term Paper Clinic hours: M-F 1:30-3:30

### January

- 13 INTRODUCTION: GENERATING A TOPIC
- 15 WRITING AN ABSTRACT
- 20 RESEARCH & WRITING (No Class Meeting)
- 22 CLOSE READING (Bring a primary text to class); **200 word-abstract due**
- 27 RESEARCH TOOLS 1 (Wise Library Room 136); **TS/IS 17-38**
- 29 RESEARCH TOOLS 2 (Wise Library Room 136); **3-page draft due**

### February

- 3 LIBRARY SCAVENGER HUNT; **Source Analysis due**
- 5 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES; **Scavenger hunt due**

- 10 THE STRUCTURE OF ARGUMENT; **Non-Annotated Bibliography**
- 12 HISTORICIZING YOUR WORK; **TS/IS 39-63**
- 17 Research & Writing
- 19 INCORPORATING RESEARCH; **Annotated Bibliography Due**
- 24 Research & Writing
- 26 EDITING WORKSHOP for **7-page draft**

#### March

- 3 KEYWORDS and CONCEPTS; THE COURSE RUBRIC; **TS/IS 64-87**
- 5 Research & Writing
- 10 STYLE; **TS/IS 88-114**
- 12 STRATEGIES FOR ORAL PRESENTATION; **10-page conference paper due**
- 24 6-MINUTE ORAL PRESENTATIONS
- 26 6-MINUTE ORAL PRESENTATIONS
- 31 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

#### April

- 2 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES
- 7 **Revised Abstracts Due; TS/IS 115-35**
- 9 RESEARCH & WRITING
- 14 EDITING WORKSHOP: Evidence and Unity; **17-page draft due**
- 16 EDITING WORKSHOP: Organization and Clarity
- 21 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES
- 23 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES
- 28 RESEARCH & WRITING
- 30 **Senior Thesis Due**

#### **Scholastic Honesty**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course and will result in failure. Plagiarism is defined as follows in the WVU Undergraduate Catalog: "To take or pass off as one's own the ideas, writings, artistic products, etc. of someone else; for example, submitting, without appropriate acknowledgment, a report, notebook, speech, outline theme, thesis, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been knowingly obtained or copied in whole or in part, from the work of others." If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, documentation of sources, or related issues, please feel free to ask.

#### **Learning Environment**

WVU is committed to social justice. I support that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect and non-discrimination. Any suggestion as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700)

## ENGL 496 Senior Thesis

### Assessment rubric for thesis

	failing	below average	average	above average	excellent
<b>Context:</b> The thesis demonstrates awareness of academic discourse and research on its topic.					
<b>Content:</b> The thesis demonstrates skills of research, analysis, argumentative development, and critical thinking.					
<b>Style:</b> The thesis demonstrates appropriate tone, style, and sentence structure of academic writing, including synthesis of research.					
<b>Format/Conventions:</b> The thesis demonstrates command of academic written English and conventions of documenting research.					