

ENGL 3105
Research Methods Workshop
Fall 2009
2:00-2:50 Mondays, Irby 312

Bane

Office: Irby 317B
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Hours: Daily 8:00-9:00; MWF 9:00-10:00
TTh 11:00-12:00 or by
appointment

Website: www.uca.edu/english/facultystaff/cbane.php

Course Description and Course Objectives or “What is this class and what will I learn?”

According to the Undergraduate Bulletin, ENGL 3105 is a “Required course for English majors and minors. This course is designed to introduce students to the use of research in writing papers for literature courses. Students will use techniques and protocols learned in the course to complete a research assignment drawn from a concurrent upper-division course. This course must be taken in conjunction with the student's first upper-division course(s) in English. Lecture, discussion, writing.”

Many scholars believe that learning is more than giving students lectures and asking them to memorize information. These scholars believe in what is called “problem-based learning” in which a teacher gives students the basic background for what they have to do, then asks them to solve problems on their own. ENGL 3105 is precisely this type of course.

During this course, students will

- understand the role of research in the writing of papers about literature;
- learn to critically read and evaluate published scholarship;
- learn to use published scholarship in the writing of papers;
- incorporate research in the writing of a paper assigned in a concurrent upper-division literature course.

Course Texts or “What do I have to buy?”

This is a college class, so unfortunately you have to buy something. Fortunately for you, I myself know the woes of being a lowly (and broke) college student, so your texts are *relatively* inexpensive. The national average cost for a college textbook is \$102.44. The texts for this class can be purchased for just under \$50.00—plus shipping and handling in some cases—if you’re a smart shopper. They are available in the campus bookstore, the local textbook supply stores, all major bookshops (i.e. Barnes and Noble), and online (amazon.com, studentmarket.com, etc.). Shop smart...shop S-Mart.

The primary texts for this class are:

Barnet, Sylvan and William E. Cain. *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature*, 11th ed. (Longman 2008)
MLA. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (MLA 2009)

Course Requirements or “What do I have to do?”

A library assignment, a research exercise, an article summary, a citation assignment, a source comparison, a thesis assignment, a working bibliography, a final paper, and class participation are required. **Note:** Since this is a course on proper research methods, documentation in **each** exercise must be completed perfectly in order to receive credit. If any exercise is not done correctly the first time, you will be required to resubmit the assignment until it is correct.

Research Assignment: One area of literary scholarship that provides an excellent opportunity for problem-based learning is the library. Though many disciplines have all but abandoned the library, the library is the literary scholar’s best friend. As our own Dr. Anderson has said, the internet will never replace a good set of arches (referring to foot, not cathedral, support). Now, anyone who has ever used the library knows that being told how to find something is one thing and actually being able to find it is another. There is simply no way (and I know this from lots of experience) that I or any librarian could ever tell you exactly how to find something in the library or what to do if problems come up. The best way is to go out and simply do it yourself. Your first assignment for this course is a scavenger hunt of sorts. You will be graded both for completion of the assignment and your ability to follow detailed directions. When you have the

assignment in hand, your first reaction will be that it can't be done. Your second reaction, after you've begun, will be to kill me in my sleep. Your third reaction, after you've completed the assignment, will be joy and elation over the fact that you were not only able to complete the assignment but that you now know the library better than most librarians. It's coming. You've been warned.

Article Summary: Prepare a 250-word summary of the argument of a peer-reviewed journal article.

Citation Assignment: Write a paragraph in which you cite a peer-reviewed journal article twice (once in a direct quotation, once in a paraphrase, summary, or indirect quotation).

Source Comparison: Write a 500-word essay comparing three critical sources that take different approaches to the same topic.

Thesis Assignment: Devise a thesis for an argument that draws on the sources in your Source Comparison but does not simply list or summarize them. Write a 250-word abstract of an argument developing that thesis.

Working Bibliography: This will be on the topic of your major research paper, or a topic to be assigned. It will contain at least eight major sources with brief descriptions of their contents and their relevance for your research project.

Final Paper: This paper will be one you are writing for one of your upper-division classes (see me to discuss a topic if this will not work for you). It must cite at least four sources using MLA documentation style. A first draft of your final paper with documentation is due **November 23**. Bring two copies—one to be handed in to me and one to receive peer comments. A second draft of the paper is due **November 30**, the final day of class, to receive one more round of peer comments. Your paper will be evaluated for this course on its use of sources, the correctness of its documentation, and overall effectiveness. Since the instructor of your other course will have different criteria in mind and will be looking for things specific to his/her course, grades awarded on the paper will not necessarily be the same.

Class Participation: Be prepared for class and show that preparation through participation. For each and every class there will be a grade for class participation: 4 points for being actively engaged in the class and giving answers that show insight and appreciation; 3 points for answering questions; 2 points for being present, prepared, and basically attentive; 1 point for being present with your book; 0 points for being absent, late, present without your book, or giving answers that show that the reading hasn't been done. There will be 52 points up for grabs. **Note:** students tend to forget all about this as the semester goes on, so keep up. Also, if you tend to be a particularly "chatty" student, remember everyone needs these points, so make sure you give others their chance to speak.

Grade Distribution or "So, what's all this worth?"

Research Exercise	120 points	Article Summary	120 points
Documentation Assignment	120 points	Source Comparison	120 points
Devising a Thesis	120 points	Working Bibliography	150 points
Paper Draft #1	50 points	Paper Draft #2	25 points
Final Paper	125 points	Class Participation	50 points

Total = 1000 points. For the final grade, 900 or more points will be an A, 800-899 a B, 700-799 a C, and so forth.

Dire warnings, final thoughts, etc. or "How do I stay on your good side?"

You are in college. Act like you belong here. Be considerate of your classmates and the instructor. Do nothing that distracts the instructor or disrupts a colleague's concentration. Visit the restroom before coming to class. Turn off all beepers, watch alarms, and above all **cell phones** before entering the classroom. Conduct private conversations, read the newspaper, do homework, eat snacks, and catch up on sleep outside the classroom.

Come to class. According to the UCA Handbook, "students are expected to attend all class meetings," therefore regular attendance is essential. *Attendance* in this class is defined as being present, engaged, and alert the entire **75 minutes of class**. Being tardy will be penalized as an absence. Leaving early will be penalized as an absence. Disruptive behavior—that is, any behavior which impedes another student's learning process—will be penalized as an absence; seriously disruptive behavior may result in expulsion from the course. Students with five absences will be asked to drop the class or will be dropped with a WF. The four allowed absences include "excused" absences, so there is no need to contact me to explain why you were/will be absent (although you are welcome to do so). **When absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from either a classmate—preferably—or me.**

Work don't whine. The assignments outlined above are sufficient to assess your performance in the class. Do not ask for extra credit. Sustained and intense engagement with the course materials and ideas is the single-most important prerequisite to a good grade. Decide from the outset of the term either to take the course seriously or to drop it. Take notes, mark significant passages in your textbooks for easy reference, and make certain that you understand clearly the major ideas of the course. Take an active role in your education, not a passive one.

READ! The single most effective strategy to success in an English course, or any college class for that matter, is to read the assigned material. The student handbook "suggests a minimum of two hours preparation on the part of the student" for each credit hour taken. That means a class worth three hours of credit requires six hours of preparation per week. Since the average reader can read 150-200 words per minute, you should expect to read approximately 60-80 pages per class.

University Policies or The Fine Print

The university's two academic bulletins – the University of Central Arkansas *Undergraduate Bulletin* and *Graduate Bulletin* – are the official publications for all academic programs and policies. Students are urged to study these bulletins. In addition, students should familiarize themselves with the various policies in the *Student Handbook*, some of which are outlined below. The *Handbook* may be accessed online at http://www.uca.edu/student/dean/student_handbook.php.

Academic Misconduct/Plagiarism. Any student deemed guilty of an act of academic misconduct may fail the course, be placed on probation or suspended from the university for a specific period of time, or be expelled from the university (*Student Handbook* 32-34).

Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment by any faculty member, staff member, or student is a violation of both law and university policy and will not be tolerated at the University of Central Arkansas. Sexual harassment of employees is prohibited under Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and sexual harassment of students may constitute discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (*Student Handbook* 95-99).

Americans with Disabilities Act. The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3135.

Semester Breakdown:

Following is a tentative outline of the course. We will adjust as necessary to cover as much of the material as possible.

For readings, *LIT* refers to *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature* and *MLA* refers to the *MLA Handbook*.

- Aug** 24: Introduction to the course, syllabus, expectations. Introduce MLA documentation techniques and protocols.
31: The Love of Literature: The Writer as Reader/The Reader as Writer, *LIT*, pgs. 1-44.
- Sept** 7: Labor Day Holiday – No School
14: Critical Thinking and Writing, *LIT*, pgs. 45-68 (skim); pgs. 81-127
21: Writing the Research Paper, *LIT*, pgs. 297-333; Visit Torreyson Library. Assign Research Exercise.
28: **Research Exercise due.** In-class peer review of exercises. Discuss finding and evaluating sources (Review *LIT*, pgs. 298-304, 329-333). Assign Article Summary.
- Oct** 5: **Article Summary due.** Peer review and revision of summary. Discuss integration of sources, avoiding plagiarism, and documentation of sources, *MLA*, Ch. 2 (Review *LIT*, pgs. 306-321). Assign Citation Assignment.
12: **Citation Assignment due.** Peer review and revision of assignment. Students bring in research topics from concurrent upper-division courses. Assign Working Bibliography. *MLA*, Ch. 1.5.
19: **Draft Working Bibliography due.** Discuss critical evaluation and comparison of sources, *MLA*, Ch. 1.6. Assign Source Comparison.
26: **Source Comparison due.** Peer review and revision of assignment. Open discussion of topics, sources, and thesis creation. Discuss the preparation of theses for arguments that use research (Review *LIT*, pgs. 29-33). Assign Thesis Assignment.
- Nov** 2: **Thesis Assignment due.** Peer review and revision of assignment.
9: Preliminary bibliographies are assembled and looked at in class. Peer review and revision.
16: **Final Working Bibliography due.** *LIT* pgs. 273-296; review *LIT*, pgs. 33-40
23: First draft of paper due. Peer editing workshop #1. **Hand in first draft for my comments.**
30: Second draft of paper due. Peer editing workshop #2.

EXAM WEEK: Final version of paper due.