Course Description

This course will introduce English majors to the literate practices that define the discipline of English Studies. We will spend time learning about, and practicing, skills and strategies that improve reading, writing, research, and reflection.

Course Objectives

In this course you will:

- improve micro- and macro-reading skills
- recognize the landscape and conventions of literary studies as a discipline
- define different types of authority and expertise in literary scholarship
- navigate, and intervene within, scholarly conversations about literature
- select tools and practices that enhance your own research/writing methodology
- gain strategies for creating an original thesis that draws on a variety of texts
- incorporate reflection into your own literate practice
- measure and evaluate your growth as a scholar of literary studies
Reading List

Please acquire the texts listed below:

- Edson, *Wit: A Play*
- Graff, *They Say, I Say*
- Trethewey, *Bellocq’s Ophelia*

Additional readings will be posted to the course webpage. On days when those readings are due, please bring a copy to class.

Policies and Expectations

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is required! This is not a lecture course in which you can “get the notes” from someone else. Learning is always collaborative; thus, active engagement and participation is required. I expect you to come to class prepared and alert. **Students caught sleeping or texting will be asked to leave and they will receive an absence for the day.**

You are permitted **3 free absences**; any additional absences will result in a deduction of 10 points off of your final grade. **Three late arrivals will constitute one absence.** Consistently getting up to leave in the middle of class (to use the restroom, to receive calls or text messages, etc.) will also affect your final attendance and participation grades.

**Participation:** This course will consist of mostly discussions, and all students are responsible for sustaining the in-class conversations. Hence, it is of utmost importance that you prepare the assigned text(s) as carefully as possible in order to play an active role in the class. Failure to complete the readings will result in a lower class participation grade.

Finally, please remember to be tactful and considerate during in-class discussions. Being respectful of/towards the instructors and your fellow students is important for maintaining a congenial and productive classroom atmosphere.
University Policies

**Honor Code:** “As a Mississippi State student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

All assignments that you hand in must be original work. Cases of academic dishonesty—cheating, plagiarism, fraud—will be dealt with harshly. Turning in plagiarized work could result in:

Multiple submissions of work, what the University defines as “the submission of substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization of the instructor for the class for which the student submits the work,” will not be tolerated.

**ADA:** If you have a disability that may require an accommodation for taking this course, you should contact Student Support Services (5-3350) as soon as possible.

**Title IX:** MSU is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU’s educational programs and activities must be free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence and/or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU’s Director of Title IX/EEO Programs at 325-8124 or by email to titleix@msstate.edu. Additional resources are available at http://www.msstate.edu/web/security, or at http://students.msstate.edu/sexual_misconduct/.

**Student Mentors**

This semester, we are piloting a student mentor program for EN 3414. The goal of this program is to connect students who are currently taking 3414 with students who have completed the course in order to foster dialogue and collaboration between the two groups. You can find the contact information for the student mentors on the course webpage. Please feel free to contact them with questions or concerns.
Assignments and Grading

All assignments must be turned in during class on their due date in order to receive credit. We will not accept assignments late, or by e-mail, except in extenuating circumstances (illness or extreme emergency; documentation must be provided). Printer problems (broken printers, lack of ink or paper, etc.) do not constitute an extenuating circumstance. No work may be made up unless you have spoken with us. It is your responsibility to initiate this meeting. If you know that you will need to miss a class ahead of time, you should make arrangements to turn in assignments before the missed class.

All writing assignments should follow MLA style guidelines as outlined in The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, eighth edition.

Blog Posts: You will be setting up a WordPress website that will serve as an online portfolio for your work. This space will also be used for your personal blog. Throughout the semester, you will be asked to complete blog posts that pertain to both our in-class discussions and to general writing and research issues. Blog posts should be no more than 500 words.

Writing Exercises: You will be asked to complete some writing exercises during class time. These will be accomplished individually and collaboratively. See the reading schedule for relevant dates.

Critical Lens Essay: We will compose a critical lens essay collaboratively during two consecutive class sessions. For your grade, you will complete a self-assessment and brief reflection that comments on your participation in the assignment and what you learned from it.

Discussion Panel Presentations and Mini-Arguments: During five consecutive classes, a panel of 7-8 students will lead the class discussion. These individuals will both present their LitHacks of the text under examination as well as facilitate discourse between themselves and the rest of the class. Students not participating in presentations will be expected to pose questions and respond to the presenting panelists. You will have a chance to sign-up for your presentation days during the first two weeks of the semester. Along with the presentation, you will submit a brief mini-argument (guidelines are on the course webpage).
Researched Essay: The final paper (8-10 pages) will be a close reading and argumentative analysis, considering a specific theme/topic in one or two texts from the list of primary literature. You are required to use at least 10 outside sources for this assignment, in order to strengthen your reading/analysis of your chosen text(s). We will practice researching and reading secondary critical texts throughout the semester. You must also attach a works cited page or bibliography to your first draft, revision, and final paper. You will be submitting a proposal to the instructor after the middle of the semester, in which you will briefly describe your intended topic/thesis/focus. Along with the proposal, you must include a working bibliography of possible sources for your paper. This will include the course texts you are working on and all secondary sources you have consulted during your preliminary research. Additionally, you will submit a rough draft (4-5 pages) and participate in two workshops, during which you will receive feedback on your paper from the instructors and your fellow students. Following the feedback you receive from your peers and instructors, you will submit a revised version (6-7 pages) of your essay. Late essays will not be accepted.

Final Portfolio, Reflection, and Research Process Presentation: At the end of the semester, you will compose a reflection that discusses your overall growth as a writer, reader, thinker, and researcher. More formal guidelines for this will be posted to the course webpage. The reflection, along with your other completed writing assignments, will be posted to your webpage as part of a final portfolio. Finally, you will give a brief presentation that highlights your research process and draws on your reflection.

Grading:

Attendance: 50 points  
Class Participation: 50 points  
Writing Assignments: 250 points  
Mini-Arguments and Discussion Panels: 100 points  
General Blog Posts: 50 points  
Researched Essay (All Components): 400 points  
Final Portfolio, Reflection, and Presentation: 100 points

Total: 1000 points

A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=59 or below
Schedule

T 1/10: Class Intros; Creation of Websites (ELI/GILES)
W 1/11: Library Scavenger Hunt (Blog Post due by noon).
Th 1/12: Student Mentor Panel on Writing and Research

T 1/17: Intro to LitHacks
W 1/18: LitHacks, cont.; Edson, Wit (to page 44)
Th 1/19: LitHacks, cont.; Edson, Wit (44-end)

T 1/24: Mini-Arguments and Discussion Panels; Trethewey, Bellocq’s Ophelia (2-8)
W 1/25: Mini-Arguments and Discussion Panels; Trethewey, Bellocq’s Ophelia (11-19)
Th 1/26: Mini-Arguments and Discussion Panels; Trethewey, Bellocq’s Ophelia (20-9)

T 1/31: Mini-Arguments and Discussion Panels; Trethewey, Bellocq’s Ophelia (30-40)
W 2/1: Mini-Arguments and Discussion Panels; Trethewey, Bellocq’s Ophelia (41-end)
Th 2/2: Info Cycle; Theory and History; Trethewey, “Why I Write”

T 2/7: Secondary Sources: Theory; Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure” (Paraphrase x 3 Blog post)
W 2/8: Secondary Sources: Theory; Re-read Mulvey with Trethewey

T 2/14: Primary Sources: History; Find your own primary source (ELI/GILES)
W 2/15: MLA 8th Edition
Th 2/16: In-Class Critical Lens Essay (Read sample in preparation)

T 2/21: In-Class Critical Lens Essay
W 2/22: Research Process Exercise (Critical Lens Self-Assessment due)
Th 2/23: Idea to Scholarship; What is the “academic” in Academic Writing?

T 2/28: Organizing Sources using Zotero (ELI/GILES)
W 3/1: Establishing a Research Calendar
Th 3/2: NO CLASS; Find articles for 3/9, 3/21, and 3/23 and add to Zotero library
T 3/7: They Say, I Say
W 3/8: They Say, I Say
Th 3/9: Evaluating Critical Sources; Rindge and Leahy, “Become What You Must”

T 3/14: NO CLASS
W 3/15: NO CLASS
Th 3/16: NO CLASS

T 3/21: Evaluating Critical Sources; Debo, “Ophelia Speaks”
W 3/22: Evaluating Critical Sources; McHaney, “Natasha Trethewey’s Triptych”
(Paraphrase x 3 Blog post)
Th 3/23: Topic Generation for Researched Essay; Library Research: The Magic of Interlibrary Loan

T 3/28: Student-Professor Conferences (Proposal due M 3/27 by noon)
W 3/29: Student-Professor Conferences
Th 3/30: Student-Professor Conferences

T 4/4: First Draft Workshop (First draft due; bring 2 copies to class)
W 4/5: Collaborate on Final Essay Rubric
Th 4/6: In-Class Source Sharing; Revision Strategies

T 4/11: Revision Workshop (Revision due; bring 2 copies to class)
W 4/12: Revision Workshop
Th 4/13: From Thesis to Conclusion; Student Mentor Panel #2

T 4/18: Researched Essay due
W 4/19: Work in-class on Final Reflection and Portfolio
Th 4/20: Reflection due; In-class Presentations

T 4/25: In-class Presentations
W 4/26: In-class Presentations

M 5/1: Final Portfolios due by noon.