English 4399 ~ Spring 2018  
Dr. Shannon Forbes  
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 9:30-11 and Mon & Wed 1:30-3, & by appt.  
Office: Malloy 233 ~ Office Phone: (713) 525-3179 ~ email address: forbess@stthom.edu

Course Description and Objectives:  
English 4399 is designed to serve two related purposes: to engage in inquiry surrounding the study of literary art through the vehicle of our selected readings, and to facilitate the timely development and completion of senior projects for students seeking to fulfill the requirements for the English major. Throughout the semester we will meet twice each week. Before each class meeting I will provide you with the reading assignment along with a focus question aimed at helping you prepare for our class discussion. Through these written assignments and in-class discussions you will have an opportunity to reflect upon and to further develop your own composing style and process. In addition, as this course serves as the culmination of your work as an English major and segue to your life beyond graduation, you will have the opportunity to select one reading assignment for our class as well.

During the second half of each class period we will discuss various aspects involved in the process of writing a senior project, from composing a prospectus for capstone projects to selecting a project director and second reader, developing the project in stages, and bringing it to fruition. Furthermore, we will dedicate portions of our class time to peer workshopping as we fine-tune each of the documents due on the respective deadline date, including work done in preparation for your presentation at the Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Required Texts:
- Michael Perry, Population 485, ISBN# 9780061363504
- Anne Lamott, Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life
- selected readings as distributed in class

In addition to the direct work on the project itself, students writing a thesis paper will learn through class meetings and readings how to familiarize themselves with the conventions of documentation in literary studies. To this end, it is recommended that students acquire and consult the following guide to research and citation:

Each of these texts contains information you will find useful about the work you will be doing for your senior project as well as for composing work you will do beyond graduation.

Grading:  
Your final grade will be determined according to the following scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93%</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>84-86%</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>65-69%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59% and under</td>
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Course Requirements:

- Students are expected to work closely with their project director, complete and submit the sequence of deadline requirements in a timely manner, participate in all class meetings and workshopping of deadline requirements, solicit the feedback and criticism of the project director, engage in revision work, and submit the revised and completed project in the appropriate format with the correct apparatus and documentation.

- Students are expected to attend class, prepare for class by doing the focus question freewrites, select readings for one class period, participate in all class discussions and workshops, and compose the end of the semester reflective paper. At the end of each class day, I will give you a question aimed at helping you focus your reading as you prepare for our following class. For each day’s reading assignment, after you finish your reading but before you come to class, you are to freewrite your answer to this question. Each freewrite should be at least one page long. A strong entry will make reference to textual evidence, much as would a formal paper that does literary analysis. I will collect your Focus Question freewrites each day before class starts.

- Students are required to present their project, or portions of it, at the Undergraduate Research Symposium in April. Abstracts are normally due around the end of February. Details will be forthcoming.

The grade you receive in this course will be determined as follows:

- Grade assigned to project: (50% of overall course grade). The director together with the second reader will determine the grade for the completed project. Director – 70%, 2nd Reader – 30%
- Grade assigned by English 4399 instructor based on student’s workshopping of deadline requirements, participation in class discussions, selection of one class reading assignment on designated day, timeliness of 4 semester deadlines, presentation at UGR, and effort/progress on project throughout the semester (25% of overall course grade)
- Grade assigned by English 4399 instructor based on grades received on focus question freewrites and Final Reflective Paper (25% of overall course grade)

Important Deadline Due Dates:

* Tuesday 20 February:
  For students doing literary criticism: Research Prospectus / Abstract
  For students doing creative writing: 1st 10 pages of project
  * All senior project students must also have located a 2nd reader by today.

* Tuesday 6 March:
  For students doing literary criticism: Annotated Bibliography
  For students doing creative writing: 2nd 10 pages of project, plus revisions on 1st 10 pages

Undergraduate Research Symposium: TBD

* Tuesday 17 April:
  For students doing literary criticism: First draft of written thesis
  For students doing creative writing: last 10 pages of project, plus revisions on 1st 20 pages

* Tuesday 1 May:
  For students doing literary criticism: Final draft of thesis, complete with all revisions
For students doing creative writing: Prospectus and final draft of written project, complete with all revisions

*Due date of Final Reflective Paper: ____________________*

*Major Field Exam: Thursday 10 May – 3-5:30*

**Class Participation and Attendance Policy:**

This course will be successful only if everyone participates enthusiastically and regularly. Being present in class is imperative because your comments in class are valuable and constructive; they are therefore necessary if this course is to reach its full potential. Please regularly participate and enjoy speaking in class and asking questions. The more you participate, the more we all will benefit from this course. *Students absent more than three times this semester may find their final course grade lowered one grade (e.g. from C to C-) for each additional absence.*

**Academic Dishonesty:**

I expect to find no instances of plagiarism throughout the semester; plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. I abide by the statement about dishonesty as illustrated in the current edition of the Undergraduate Catalog.

“What a miracle it is that out of … small, flat, rigid squares of paper unfolds world after world after world, worlds that sing to you, comfort and quiet or excite you. Writing helps us understand who we are and how we are to behave. Writing shows us what community and friendship mean; writing shows us how to live and die. Writing is full of all the things that you don't get in real life – we may notice amazing detail during the course of a day but we rarely let ourselves stop and really pay attention. A writer makes one pay attention, and this is a great gift.”

-- Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird*

*Congratulations on making it to this stage, to the substantial project you’ll do as a representation of your final work done as an English major at UST. May your work be fruitful, fulfilling, and enjoyable. As always, feel free to make an appointment or stop by my office at any point to discuss your work on this significant project.*
Thurs 18 Jan:  Introduction:  Getting a Sense of Where We Are & What We’ll be Doing

Tuesday 23 January:
Have read for class:  Chapter 8 of Altick’s *The Art of Literary Research*, “The Scholar’s Life”

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

Thursday 25 January:
Have read for class:  “What is Art?” by Leo Tolstoy (in Richter’s *Critical Tradition*, hereafter referred to as *CT*), pp. 469-480

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

Tuesday 30 February:
Have read for class:  selections from Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (distributed in class on 1-30).

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

Thursday 1 February:
Have read for class:  the first 1/3 of Lamott’s *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

Tuesday 6 February:
Have read for class:  the second 1/3 of *Bird by Bird*

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

Thursday 8 February:
Have read for class:  the final 1/3 of *Bird by Bird*

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

Tuesday 13 February:
Have read for class:  *STUDENT SELECTION DAY*

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

Thursday 15 February:
Have read for class:  “The Poet” by Ralph Waldo Emerson (pp. 372-384 in *CT*)
Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Tuesday 20 February:  **DEADLINE #1 ~ Peer Review**
- *DUE for students doing a thesis paper: Research Prospectus/Abstract*
- *DUE for students doing creative writing: 1st 10 pages of project*
- *All senior project students must also have located a 2nd reader by today*

Thursday 22 February:
- Have read for class: **STUDENT SELECTION DAY**

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Tuesday 27 February:
- Have read for class: “Tradition and the Individual Talent” by T.S. Eliot (pp. 495-503 in **CT**)

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Thursday 1 March:
- Have read for class: **STUDENT SELECTION DAY**

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Tuesday 6 March:  **DEADLINE #2 ~ Peer Review**
- *For students doing a thesis paper: Annotated Bibliography*
- *For students doing creative writing: 2nd 10 pages of project & revisions on 1st 10 pgs*

Thursday 8 March:
- Have read for class: **STUDENT SELECTION DAY**

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

**Monday March 12 – Friday March 16: Spring Break**

*Best wishes for a safe and relaxing vacation.*

Tuesday 20 March:
- Have read for class **STUDENT SELECTION DAY**

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Thursday 22 March:
- Have read for class: **STUDENT SELECTION DAY**

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Tuesday 27 March: **STUDENT SELECTION DAY**
Thursday 29 March and Friday 30 March – Easter Break  
*Best wishes for a reflective and peaceful Easter Vacation*

*Special note: Tuesday 3 April:  PRACTICE PRESENTATION DAY FOR UGRS*

*Special note: Thursday 5 April:  PRACTICE PRESENTATION DAY FOR UGRS*

**Tuesday 10 April:**  
Have read for class:  STUDENT SELECTION DAY

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

**Thursday 12 April:**  
Have read for class:  the first ¼ of *Population 485*

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

**Tuesday 17 April: DEADLINE #3**  
- *For students doing literary criticism: First draft of written thesis*
- *For students doing creative writing: last 10 pages of project, plus revisions on 1st 20 pages*

**Thursday 19 April:**  
Have read for class:  the first ½ of *Population 485*

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

**Tuesday 24 April:**  
Have read for class:  the first ¾ of *Population 485*

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

**Thursday 26 April:**  
Have read for class:  through the end of *Population 485*

Focus question:  ________________________________________________________________

**Tuesday 1 May: DEADLINE #4**  
- *For students doing a thesis paper: Final draft of thesis, complete with all revisions*
- *For students doing creative writing: Prospectus & final draft of written project, complete with all revisions*
Thursday 3 May: *Introduction of Final Reflective Paper & Major Field Exam*

**FINAL EXAM PERIOD:** Thursday 10 May – 3-5:30 pm