

SENIOR WRITING & CRITICAL THINKING SEMINAR

English 495

Course Objectives and Procedures

Senior Writing & Critical Thinking Seminar provides a capstone experience for all BYU-Idaho English majors regardless of emphasis. The course has a three prong approach that culminates and integrates all courses within the English program: scholarly research, ethical criticism, and professional portfolios.

□ Course Objectives

The course goals for English 495 Senior Writing & Critical Thinking Seminar include:

- ❖ Apply BYU-Idaho Learning Model to prepare, teach one another, and ponder/prove.
- ❖ Become more effective communicators and leaders.
- ❖ Demonstrate research and rhetorical expertise through a formal senior-level academic research report.
- ❖ Demonstrate experience in genre writing: business writing, promotional writing, speech writing, script writing, news writing, and technical writing.
- ❖ Develop and apply a personal philosophy describing an ethics of literature that will help determine what literature to read, teach, and study.
- ❖ Prepare a professional portfolio that markets personal knowledge, skills, and experiences.

□ Texts

George, Stephen K., ed. *Ethics, Literature, & Theory: An Introductory Reader*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005.

Individual Reading Choices

Students will read three books throughout the semester representing the traditional literary canon, a recommended text, and a non-fiction text. Students apply ethical literary criticism to their reading choices.

□ Organization of English 495

English 495 has the following assignments:

Senior Research Report

The senior research report demonstrates evidence of scholarly research, thoroughness, coherence, and depth of perception. The finished paper must be a minimum of 12-15 pages, excluding end notes and a works cited page. (300 points)

The senior research report project includes the following minor assignments:

- Topic Proposal (50 points)
- Bibliography (25 points)
- Outline (25 points)
- Notes (25 points)
- Annotated Bibliography (25 points)
- Draft (25 points)

Senior Research Article

The senior research article (reformatted from the research report) reads as a scholarly article in a professional journal. This assignment demonstrates desktop publishing skills and expertise. (100 points)

Spri Research and Ethical Conference Presentation

Students participate in a formal, in-class conference to present findings from their senior research project or from their applied studies of ethical literary criticism. This assignment demonstrates visual and oral presentation skills and expertise. (50 points)

Ethics, Literature, & Theory Readings

Students will establish a theoretical framework by reading both scholarly articles on ethical literary criticism and LDS leaders addressing morality and literature.

Individual Reading Choices

Students will read three books throughout the semester representing the traditional literary canon, a recommended text, and a non-fiction text. Students apply ethical literary criticism to their reading choices.

Critical Synthesis Responses

The two critical synthesis responses allow students to apply ethical critical theory to their own reading choices. These responses can lead to a formal ethical criticism essay. (50 points each; 100 points total)

Literary Companion Critical Analysis

This analytical essay allows students to establish their own ethical criteria for choosing and evaluating the quality of a literary work. (100 points)

Genre Writing

Students will receive introductory instruction and practice in writing within multiple genres. These group exercises will be incorporated into individual professional portfolios.

The types of genre writing include (300 points total):

- Business Writing (50 points)
- Promotional Writing (50 points)
- Speech Writing (50 points)
- Script Writing (50 points)
- News Writing (50 points)
- Technical Writing (50 points)

Book Fest

The Book Fest permits students to share and justify for others an individually chosen book. The Book Fest has three components:

- Reading Guide (50 points)
- Visual Adaptation (25 points)
- PowerPoint Presentation (25 points)

Professional Portfolio

The professional portfolio affords students an opportunity to gather, revise, and present their best writing as a major at BYU-Idaho. This portfolio becomes a permanent document capturing them as writers during this phase of their lives. This portfolio also becomes a marketing tool in entering careers and graduate school.

Students will submit an electronic portfolio (200 points) and a 24-page print portfolio (100 points).

The professional portfolio project includes the following minor assignments:

- Curriculum inventory (25 points)
- Employment inventory (25 points)
- Leadership inventory (25 points)
- Writing inventory (25 points)
- Employer Profile (25 points)
- Accomplishment Statement (50 points)
- Personal Statement (50 points)
- Chronological Resume (25 points)
- Functional Resume (25 points)
- Cover Letter (25 points)

Preparation Checks. The research project and professional portfolio have intermittent checks to mark progress. For instance, the research project has an outline, notes, and drafts while the professional portfolio has web design, artifacts, and postings throughout the semester. These checks are to encourage timely progress. If students do not submit and receive credit for these checks on the due dates, they cannot receive the credit retroactively once they have completed the major assignment.

Mechanics Review and Quizzes

Students will review principles of mechanics and punctuation to prepare them for writing and editing articles. Students will then take a quiz on each of the eight units (10 points each—80 points).

Mechanics Review Exam.

Students will take a comprehensive exam on mechanics and punctuation (100 points).

Assignment Deadlines

The soft deadline is the due date on the syllabus. This date is to pace assignments throughout the week. The hard deadline is Saturday night at midnight of the week assignments are due.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS NOT ACCEPTED

Conduct of the Class

The basic pattern of the course is one of (1) *theory*, (2) *practice*, (3) *critique*. The course of theory are the texts and readings supplemented by materials furnished by the instructor. The theory and principles of each assignment is thoroughly discussed in informal classroom sessions. Included in these discussions are numerous examples of the

application of each principle to teaching language arts.

□ Grading and Evaluation

The teacher will evaluate all formal assignments and comment on what works well and offer suggestions for improvement. The teacher will assign a letter grade and record a number grade in the roll book. Most often the number grade follows the breakdown below

A = 95%	C = 75%
A- = 92%	C- = 72%
B+ = 88%	D+ = 68%
B = 85%	D = 65%
B- = 82%	D- = 62%
C+ = 78%	F = 59%

The teacher reserves the right to slightly alter the number points depending on the student's performance. For example, instead of recording a 92% for an A-, the teacher may record a 90%.

□ Teacher Conferencing

Most student questions and concerns are handled in the classroom through class or individual discussion. Students may schedule an appointment with the teacher for more extended conferencing. Rarely will the teacher read an entire document during a conference but rather will assist the student in identifying the writing frustration and in developing options to solve the communication problems.

Students who wish to conference with the teacher about a graded paper must meet the following two conditions (there are no rewrite options to improve a graded assignment):

1. Wait 24 hours before making an appointment with the teacher.
2. Come to the appointment with a list of suggestions to improve the paper. The teacher will discuss those options with the student.

□ Attendance Requirements

Random quizzes are used to check attendance. The quizzes cannot be made up so class attendance is essential because the quizzes will not be announced. The student has the responsibility to attend class and to be prepared for class. If the student misses class, the student should contact the teacher out of courtesy via office phone-mail or email **prior** to class.

This is a highly interactive course. The success of this course and your individual success depends on your regular presence and promptness, your

thorough preparation for class, and your active participation within class. You may have **three class absences without a grade penalty**.

Please note: I make no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absence. You are responsible for saving your absence leave to accommodate unexpected illness or personal / family need.

Excessive absence will result in *deduction from final average of 1 percentage point per hour of absence over the limit*. If you miss more than three class periods, you will not be able to earn an A in the course. If you miss more than four class periods, the highest grade you can earn in the course is a C. If you miss five or more classes, you will earn an F in the course.

At the end of the semester, if you have **perfect attendance**, you will have a **bonus of 1 percentage point added to your final average**.

□ E-mail

Students must have access to BYU-Idaho e-mail. If students prefer other email servers, students should arrange with their carriers to forward their campus email directly to them.

□ Academic Honesty

"BYU-Idaho students should seek to be totally honest in all their dealings. They should complete their own work and be evaluated for that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct." (*BYU-Idaho Catalog, 2010-2011*, p. 68. See catalog for full discussion of Academic Dishonesty, pp. 68-69.)

□ Special Limitations

To accommodate students with special learning, physical, emotional, mental, social, or other limitations, the student must notify the teacher the first week of class. By law, BYU-Idaho is only required to assist those students who make these issues known during the first week.

□ Caveat

The teacher reserves the right to make changes in course content and policy at any time during the semester.

SENIOR WRITING & CRITICAL THINKING SEMINAR
English 495:1
R. Keller
Winter 2012

Jan 5 H Introduction to Course
 Senior Writing Research Project Assignment
 Topic Selection

Lesson One

10 T Introduction to Course
 Senior Writing Research Project Assignment
 Topic Selection
 Professional Portfolio Assignment
 "Career Portfolio" Reading
 Additional Portfolio Readings
 Curriculum Inventory Submission
 Mechanics review (Commas)

12 H Booth, "Why Ethical Criticism Can Never Be Simple"
 Packer, "The Arts and the Spirit of the Lord"
 Canon Book Justification Submission
 Mechanics review (Semicolons and Colons)

Lesson Two

17 T Business Writing
 Research Principles
 Documentation
 Employment Inventory Submission
 Mechanics review (Other Punctuation)

19 H Topic Proposal Submission
 Gregory, "Ethical Criticism: What It Is and Why It Matters"
 Kimball, "The Gospel Vision of the Arts"
 Literary Company Critical Analysis Assignment
 Mechanics review (Capitalization)

Lesson Three

24 T Business Writing
 Bibliography Submission
 Leadership Inventory Submission
 Outlining
 Mechanics Review (Possessive Nouns and Subject Verb Agreement)

26 H Canon Book Completed
 Posner, "Against Ethical Criticism"
 Cracroft, "An Aid to Perfection"
 Recommended Reading List
 Writing Inventory Submission
 Critical Synthesis Response Assignment

Lesson Four–

31 T Business Writing Due
 Promotional Writing
 Outline Submission
 Note Taking
 Mechanics Review (Pronoun Antecedent and Personal Pronouns)
 Recommended Book Justification Submission
 Employer Profile

Feb 2 H Booth, "Who is Responsible in Ethical Criticism?"
 Ballard, "Filling the World with Goodness and Truth"
 Critical Synthesis Response 1 Submission

Lesson Five

7 T Promotional Writing
 Notes Submission
 Using Evidence and Integrating Sources
 Mechanics Review Exam
 Accomplishment Statement

9 H Young, "Literary Criticism and Religious Values"
 Cracroft, "Questions and Answers [Ethics of Criticism]"
 Accomplishment Statement Submission

Lesson Six

14 T Promotional Writing Due
 Speech Writing
 Annotated Bibliography Submission
 Revising, Editing, Copyediting
 Report Format
 Research Report (pp. 1-8) Submission

16 H Gardner, "Premises on Art and Morality"
 Haight, "Personal Morality"
 Recommended Book Completed
 Personal Statement Submitted
 Chronological Resume Submission

Lesson Seven

21 T Speech Writing
 Research Report (pp. 9-15) Submission
 Non-fiction Reading List
 Non-fiction Book Justification Submission

23 H Rosenstand "Stories and Morals"
 Ballard "In the Language of Eternity"
 Critical Synthesis Response 2 Submission
 Functional Resume Submission

Lesson Eight

- 28 T Speech Writing Due
Script Writing
Senior Research Report Draft Submission
- Mar 1 H Card, "The Problem of Evil in Fiction"
Callister, "Our Refined Heavenly Home"
Major Writing Selections Submission
Minor/Cluster Writing Selections Submission

Lesson Nine

- 6 T Script Writing
Senior Research Report Submission
Web Design
- 8 H Yehoshua, "The Moral Connections of Literary Texts"
Ashton, "Rated A"
Non-fiction Book Completed
Portfolio Web Design Submission
Portfolio Introductions Submission

Lesson Ten

- 13 T Script Writing Due
News Writing
Senior Article Draft Submission
Job Application Cover Letter Submission
Presentations
- 15 H Nussbaum, "The 'Ancient Quarrel': Literature and Moral Philosophy"
King, "Literature and Testimony"
Literary Company Critical Analysis Submission
Miscellaneous Portfolio Documents Submission

Lesson Eleven

- 20 T News Writing Due
Technical Writing
Senior Article Submission
- 22 H Parker, "Evaluative Discourse"
Clark, "Liberating Form"

Lesson Twelve

- 27 T Technical Writing
Portfolio—Electronic Submission
Book Fest Submission
 - Reading Guide
 - Visual Adaptation
 - PowerPoint Presentation

29 H Portfolio—Print Submission
BYU-Idaho English Survey Submission
Cunningham, "Reading for Life"
Larsen, "Building Creativity"
Book Fest Presentation

Lesson Thirteen

- Apr 3 T Conference Presentation Submission
- 6 F Final (10:30-12:00)
Reflective Essay Submission