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# American Public University System

*The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind*

School of Arts and Humanities

ENGL

498

Senior Seminar in English

3 credit hours

8 weeks

## Table of Contents

<a href="#">Instructor Information</a>	<a href="#">Evaluation Procedures</a>
<a href="#">Course Description</a>	<a href="#">Grading Scale</a>
<a href="#">Course Scope</a>	<a href="#">Course Outline</a>
<a href="#">Course Objectives</a>	<a href="#">Policies</a>
<a href="#">Course Delivery Method</a>	<a href="#">Academic Services</a>
<a href="#">Course Materials</a>	<a href="#">Selected Bibliography</a>

### Prerequisites:

This course should be scheduled after completion of all required and core courses in the BA in English degree path.

### Instructor Information

Please visit Syllabus inside of the classroom for contact information.

### Course Description

The culminating point of an undergraduate's career, this senior course offers students the rhetorical knowledge and research practices needed to write and to research successfully in any discourse community within which they might find themselves—as students, professionals, and citizens. While university students are projected to make several career changes within their working lifetimes, these transitions and the challenges of their complex personal and public lives will require critical thinking skills and informed flexibility. This course is designed to polish

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students' writing, analytical, and English skills so that they may confidently confront the challenges and demands of specialized research and written communication. According to their affinity, seniors are invited to pursue literary interests in the compositions of this course, and conduct research in other academic or professional areas. This course will provide students with the opportunity to complete an approved academic research exercise that demonstrates knowledge of a selected field of study.

## Course Scope

Building upon the research and writing skills, acquired during your undergraduate career, you will conduct an advanced research project and compose a senior thesis.

Through the completion of this thesis, you will be refining skills first practiced in other courses: information literacy, research, analysis, critical thinking, rhetorical structure, composition (to include introductions and conclusions, practicing smooth and organized paragraph development, creating insightful thesis statements, using Standard English grammar, and learning to avoid basic sentence-structure errors).

## Course Objectives

Throughout this course, you will be conducting research on a subject of great interest to you and work very closely with your professor, one-on-one, in order to realize this research project. The course objectives are as follows:

1. Demonstrate critical and creative thinking in the conduct and design of this study
2. Produce an undergraduate thesis
3. Analyze findings from diverse, academic sources
4. Construct a structured paper with a proper introduction, conclusion, body paragraphs, transitions

[Table of Contents](#)

## Course Delivery Method

This English course, delivered via distance learning, will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online.

In this course, the student will work closely with a mentor to realize a mini-dissertation, or a senior-thesis of no more than 15 pages. The subject should be one of great interest to the student such that the student will experience enthusiasm in the conduct of their studies. The essay should reflect the objectives of the English Major, which can be found and are discussed within the class lessons.

The student will embark with his or her professor through the stages of coming to terms with

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the research already published on this topic, defining the study, conducting the research, forming an argument, and supporting the argument with proper MLA documentation, analysis, arguments, rhetoric, illustration and appeals.

The instructor will support students throughout the duration of this course in order to grasp the key concepts and present their ideas in proper academic style.

[Table of Contents](#)

## Course Materials

### **Required Core Textbooks:**

Please visit <http://apus.libguides.com/er.php> to locate the eReserve by course #

### **Other Recommended Reading for this Course:**

Review the overview on

"<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/home.html>" <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/home.html>,

Then click and read the section on Humanities, MLA citation in full.

University of Purdue's Owl Writing Webpage

"<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research>"

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research> (on Research and Documentation)

University of Wisconsin's Writing Webpage:

"<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook>" <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook> (on thesis statements), University of North Carolina's Writing Webpage:

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"<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/>"<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/> (on introductions and conclusions, reorganizing drafts, transitions, and on thesis statements)

Sample Outline from Hacker: "<http://www.dianahacker.com/pdfs/Hacker-Levi-MLA-Out.pdf>"<http://www.dianahacker.com/pdfs/Hacker-Levi-MLA-Out.pdf>

Sample MLA Cited Paper:

"<http://www.dianahacker.com/pdfs/Hacker-Daly-MLA.pdf>"<http://www.dianahacker.com/pdfs/Hacker-Daly-MLA.pdf>

[Table of Contents](#)

## Evaluation Procedures

The semester grade will be computed as follows:

Eight discussion board posts worth a total of 30 percent

Two short assignments and a final research essay worth a total of 70 percent

### General Guidance on Grading:

There are several important areas I review when grading academic writing.

First, I examine the *idea*: Was the assignment addressed thoughtfully and creatively? Did the student try to challenge him/herself? Did the paper demonstrate critical reading and clear analysis?

Second, I look for **documentation**: Are the ideas expressed in this paper supported by MLA style citations that come from both primary and secondary sources? Does the author not only cite but also, analyze the citations in order to demonstrate his or her interpretations/assertions? It is very difficult for me to evaluate your work without your demonstrating to me throughout the course where your conclusions are coming from through careful documentation and analysis of the required readings.

Third, I look for *organization*: Is the paper organized in a logical manner? Are there effective connections between ideas? Are the sources relevant and integrated effectively?

Fourth, I look at the *mechanics* of the paper: Does the paper demonstrate sentence variety and control of grammar and punctuation? Does it follow MLA, APA, Chicago, or some other style format?

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Fifth: It is also very important to *manage* your text. In an essay of this length and depth students sometimes wander off and/ or rave on. Be to the point and clear. Do not see the page length as a green light to let loose. A well-managed, focused, and concise essay is more likely to receive an A than an essay that loses that control. On the subject of this....do not hand in a 30 page essay. Your Week 6 rough draft must have no more than 5 pages. However, your Week 8 final draft should have no more than 15 pages. Anything over 15 pages, and you will lose points.

Sixth: Is the research *academic*, relying primarily on scholarly articles?

A paper earning the letter grade of an **A** will be exceptional in each of the above areas; a strong paper will earn a **B**, and an adequate paper will earn a **C**.

I am always available to answer questions and comment on ideas you may have about your writing assignments. Please contact me anytime via messages within the classroom.

All assignments should be completed and submitted on time. Please contact me if something is causing you to fall behind so that we can work out an extension schedule as soon as possible.

[Table of Contents](#)

## Grading Scale

Please see the APUS student handbook.  
<http://www.apus.edu/student-handbook/grading/index.htm>

[Table of Contents](#)

## General Course Outline

APUS policies regarding grading, withdrawals, and extensions are followed in this class, as in all AMU/APU classes. For information about these policies it is essential you review the Syllabus section of this classroom on the left hand side. In this section you will find reference to the

- Grading scale.
- Drop/Withdrawal Policy
- Plagiarism Policy
- Extension Process and Policy

Please review these sections and their related policies. If you have questions please address them to me in the Discussion Board (or related area for student questions and answers in your classroom.)

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Below is an overview of the course but you will need to read all course materials under ‘lessons’ in Sakai in order to get the details for assignments, lectures, and expectations.

<p><b><u>Week One</u></b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<p><b><u>Objectives:</u></b></p> <p>Explore and identify topics for research essay.</p> <p>Discuss and brainstorm ideas for research with peers.</p>	<p><b><u>Forums and Assignments:</u></b></p> <p>Forums: A. 300 word personal introduction and 100 word response to 2 other students.</p> <p><b>For Week One ONLY all postings are due by 11:55 PM Sunday of week 1.</b></p>
<p><b><u>Week Two</u></b></p> <p><b>Paper topic brainstorming</b></p>	<p>Initiate the research process by brainstorming and discussing possible topics.</p>	<p>Forum: Post your thoughts about your different topic ideas. Respond to two other students.</p> <p>See the forum for specifics.</p> <p>The initial posting is due by 11:55PM Thursday of week 2 and responses are due by 11:55PM Sunday of week 2.</p>
<p><b><u>Week Three</u></b></p> <p><b>Annotated Bibliography</b></p>	<p>Write an annotated bibliography.</p> <p>Assess the quality of the research and build on it that research.</p> <p>Express your research with a mixture of summary, paraphrase, and quotation.</p>	<p>Forum: Post your annotated bibliography. (at least 10 sources) no later than 11:55PM Thursday.</p> <p>Respond to at least two of your classmates by 11:55PM Sunday.</p> <p>Assignment: Post your bibliography as an assignment. (at least</p>

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		<p>10 sources) by 11:55PM Sunday</p> <p>See Forums and Assignments for details</p>
<p><b><u>Week Four</u></b></p> <p><b>Working Introduction and Thesis</b></p>	<p>Develop your working introduction and working thesis to help guide you through the writing process.</p>	<p>Forum:</p> <p>Share your Working Introduction and Working Thesis</p> <p>Respond to at least two of your classmates.</p> <p>The initial post is due by 11:55 PM Thursday of week 4 and responses are due by 11:55PM Sunday of week 4.</p> <p>Please see the Forum for specifics.</p>
<p><b><u>Week Five</u></b></p> <p>New Discoveries and Challenges</p>	<p>Reflect on your new discoveries that have led to some new insights for you.</p> <p>Reflect on any challenges you are facing with the writing of your paper.</p>	<p>Forum:</p> <p>Tell us some specific new discoveries you have found while digging into the research.</p> <p>Then discuss what is challenging so far.</p> <p>Where are you struggling? What is most difficult? Where are your stumbling blocks? Give details and examples in your posts.</p> <p>Respond to at least two of your classmates.</p> <p>Initial post due by 11:55 PM Thursday and responses to two classmates by 11:55 PM Sunday of week five. See the forum for more specifics.</p>

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<p><b><u>Week Six</u></b></p> <p><b>4 to 5 page Rough Draft</b></p>	<p>Write a Rough Draft of your paper that includes in-text citations and a work cited.</p>	<p>Forum: Post your 4 to 5 page Rough Draft in the Forum where we will do some workshopping of our papers. Your rough draft should have no more than 5 pages.</p> <p>Initial posting is due no later than 11:55PM Thursday, and responses to at least two of your classmates are due no later than 11:55 PM Sunday.</p> <p>See the forum for specifics.</p> <p>Assignment: Submit your Rough Draft in the</p>
<p><b><u>Week Seven</u></b></p> <p><b>Abstract</b></p>	<p>Write an abstract for your paper.</p>	<p>Forum: Post your one paragraph abstract.</p> <p>Respond to at least two of your classmates postings. Give them feedback for the writing of their abstracts.</p>
<p><b><u>Week Eight</u></b></p> <p><b>The process of revision continues and the 10 to 15 page final draft—no more than 15 pages</b></p>	<p>Re-write portions of the essay.</p> <p>Work on sentence revision and thinking about vocab choice.</p> <p>Submit a final draft of a research essay that reflects your best work as an English Major.</p>	<p>Submit your 10 to 15 page final draft no later than 11:55PM Sunday.</p>

**NOTE:** Detailed assignment directions, examples, lecture notes, and rubrics are located in the weekly lessons. You are responsible for reading this material.

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## Policies

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) reference all University policies. Quick links to frequently asked about policies are listed below. Links are also available from the course menu.

[Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

[Extension Process and Policy](#)

[Disability Accommodations](#)

### WRITING EXPECTATIONS

All written submissions should be submitted in 12 point Times New Roman font and the specific formatting directions for the assignment. It is recommended that students try to adhere to a consistent format, which is described below.

- Typewritten in double-spaced format.
- 12-point font in Times New Roman style.
- Page margins Top, Bottom, Left Side and Right Side = 1 inch, with reasonable accommodation being made for special situations and online submission variances.

### CITATION AND REFERENCE STYLE

This course requires students to use the MLA citation and reference style.

### LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution.

Work posted or submitted after the assignment due date will be reduced by 10% of the potential total score possible for each day late up to a total of five days, including forum posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments. Beginning on the sixth day late through the end of the course, late work, including forum posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments, will be accepted with a grade reduction of 50% of the potential total score earned.

### NETIQUETTE

Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate--both inside and outside the classroom. Discussions on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and “flaming.” Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting--basic academic rules of good behavior and proper “netiquette” must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning that does not include descent to personal attacks or student attempts to stifle the discussion of others.

- Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full-range

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of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple.

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☐ **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and--especially--satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add “emoticons” to help alert your readers: ;-), : ),

#### **DISCLAIMER STATEMENT**

Course content may vary slightly from the outline to meet the needs of a particular class section.

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[Table of Contents](#)

## Academic Services

### ONLINE LIBRARY RESEARCH CENTER & LEARNING RESOURCES

The Online Library is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Online Library provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to [librarian@apus.edu](mailto:librarian@apus.edu).

- ❑ ***Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:*** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors' publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.
- ❑ ***Electronic Books:*** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- ❑ ***Electronic Journals:*** The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.
- ❑ ***Tutoring Services:*** The University offers some free tutoring services to students; use the following link for more information: <http://www.apus.edu/online-library/tutorials/index.htm>

[Table of Contents](#)