**Course**
English 4390  
Section 01R  
ELABS 259  
MW 12:15-1:30pm  
Blackboard  
#UTRGVENGL  
Prerequisite: 24 advanced credit hours of English

**Instructor**
Randall W. Monty, PhD  
randall.monty@utrgv.edu  
@rwmonty  
rwmonty@gmail.com  
Fall 2017 office hours & availability:
- Edinburg - MTF by appointment, W 1:45-3:15pm, R 1:00-3:00pm  
- Brownsville - MF by appointment  
- Synchronous via Hangout by appointment  
- Asynchronous via Twitter & Twitter DM any time  
- Email any time

---

**WELCOME!**

You probably know that writing and teaching are common professional goals of students majoring in the varied English disciplines. In fact, those career options might be reasons you decided to become an English major in the first place! But the English degree can offer you options beyond the expected, as English majors find success in fields and professions such as film (acting and directing), library and museum curation, astrophysics, economics, law and politics, religion and theology, and social activism, to name just a few possibilities.

The study of English (and the Humanities/Liberal Arts, more broadly) can also help you become a thoughtful and engaged citizen, ready to critically participate the contemporary political and cultural moment. Therefore, this course, English 4390: Capstone, is designed
to serve as your link from what you have accomplished so far as an undergraduate to potential graduate study, professional work, and private life.

First, we'll survey every track in the English Major as an experiential learning opportunity, one in which you can apply what you’ve learned so far in your degree by expanding or developing a capstone project in English Studies. You'll work with me and other faculty in the degree program to get that project ready for a public audience by experiencing and navigating a real-world publication process for your work, soliciting feedback, and reflecting on the publication process.

Second, you'll look back at the work you've done throughout your English degree and prepare a portfolio of your best and most meaningfully representative work, revising it and writing a new critical introduction. This will help you understand the scope of and the intersections among the disciplines within English Studies, as well as help our the English faculty at UTRGV better understand how the degree worked for you.

Third, we want to give you sense of what happens after your degree, whether that means more school or the beginning of a new career path. So we'll read about the disciplines in English studies, what we call degree tracks in the BA-English, using Bruce McComiskey's edited collection *English Studies: An Introduction to the Discipline(s)* (note the plural “-s”), a variety of other multimodal discourses including up-to-date online career resources, and a book related to your interests. You'll write about the readings by summarizing, responding to, and exploring potential connections to each of them. And we'll help you get some professional materials in shape for your post-degree job or a Master's program. That means, you'll produce a philosophy statement, a CV, and the necessary letters for submission of work or application to degrees.

**OVERVIEW**

**PREPARING YOURSELF TO WORK**

You may have noticed the letter “R” next to the course section number on your schedule. That is not the MPAA rating for this course, rather that is meant to indicate that this is a “reduced seat” class. For those of you unfamiliar with this type of class, reduced seat means that class meetings and the delivery of course content are to be between 50-80% “hybird” or online. What that means for us, is that we will have a lot of ways to play with how and when we meet online, as a whole group, in small groups, and individually. Check the tentative course calendar (below) for expected meeting dates.

Online: Be prepared to substantially participate in online discussions via the Blackboard discussion board. Each week, you will be assigned a series of readings (or videos, audio, etc.), and each week you will be expected to discuss them. See the “Participation & Discussion” assignment description below for more info.
Whole group: Be on time for the start of each class meeting, and bring your course readings and anything you need to do your writing work to class every day. If we start an activity and you don’t have the necessary materials or walk in late, you won’t be able to constructively contribute to the work, and you may not receive credit for that portion of that assignment. You should expect to meet in whole group once every other week, on average.

Small group: Periodically throughout the semester, you and your disciplinary peers (that is, the other students on the same degree track as you) will be required to meet with me and a representative faculty member from your discipline. These meetings may take place during scheduled class time, or they may take place at another time that meets all of our schedules.

Individual: Twice during the semester, you will be required to meet with your instructor (ahem, me) to discussion your work for this class and plans for the future. The first wave of meetings will take place during the first month of class, and the second meetings will take place before the last month. These meetings will be work-oriented, which in this case means that we should expect to meet for 30-45 minutes, with a goal of getting a lot of planning and discussion work done.

ACCESSIBILITY
This class is designed with the goal of being accessible for all students. If you have a documented condition or ability that may make it difficult for you to carry out the work as we have outlined and/or you need special accommodations or assistance because of the disability, please contact immediately the Disability Services Office (DSO), University Center Rm. 322. Appropriate arrangements and accommodations can be made. Verification of disability and processing for special services, such as note takers, extended time, separate accommodations for testing, is required and will be determined by DSO. Consult DSO Coordinator at (956) 316-7005. Additionally, I am willing to work with you to help make this class meet your needs, so long as you feel comfortable in this regard.

SUPPORT SERVICES
This is a writing intensive course, and writing is a collaborative process - even if you'll be individually assessed on your writing. Fortunately, the UTRGV Writing Center offers tutoring, instruction, and support for all things writing based. Best off, it’s free (or, more accurately, you’ve already paid for it). It can be found in STAC 3.119 (Edinburg) and UBLB 3.206 (Brownsville). In addition to face-to-face consultations, the Writing Center offers synchronous Skype consultations and asynchronous email feedback. Contact the Writing Center at wc@utrgv.edu for more info.

For those aspects of your life that cause stress or pain, UTRGV offers counseling services for all of its students. Balancing work, personal life, and school can be difficult, at times, so
seek support as it's needed. You can reach the UTRGV Counseling service at counseling@utrgv.edu.

**DISCIPLINARY WRITING**
Through in-class and online discussions, we will draw from a variety of topics, themes, concepts, and theories from your previous English undergraduate courses. Importantly, this course is based on praxis, the intersection of theory and practice. This concept will lead us as we critically analyze and produce professional documents, primarily through in-class discussion and exercises derived from simulations or “cases” provided by the textbook and other reading materials.

**WRITING, REVISION, FEEDBACK**
It shouldn’t come as a surprise to find out that successfully navigating this class will involve a lot of writing on your part. Upper division courses are like that. Through composing in a variety of modes, that you will be able to articulate your ideas to a wide range of audiences. Our writing will also serve an epistemological function – writing isn't just how to show what you've learned, but it is the exacting process through which you create meaning. In other words, you learn by writing.

One of my main goals when I teach is to help students develop a sense that writing is a work of process. That is, impactful writing begins well before you type your first word of a given composition, and it continues until well after you've typed your last. To help make your writing the best that it can be, you should expect to meet with me and your peers, individually and in small group, at various points during the semester. While I will not assign grades to each stage of the writing process, you will be required to rethink and revise parts or all of every piece of writing based on the feedback you get. As you work on your drafts, you will need to keep track of the feedback you receive, as well as the revision and editing changes you make, with each successive draft. In doing so, you will create a track record of your work that spans the entire course and semester.

In spite of our better efforts, it can be difficult to estimate your course grade throughout the semester. If you'd like to have an idea of where you stand after you've completed a substantial amount of writing and revision, please make an appointment to meet me outside of class, and I will review your work with you and give you a better sense of where you are, grade-wise. It will be entirely your responsibility to set up a meeting if you're curious or concerned, and it's important that you not wait until the last week or so to start asking about grades. At that point, it will likely be too late for you to do what needs to be done to significantly raise your overall course grade.

**INDIVIDUAL TOPICS**
In order to complete the various tasks and assignment for this course, you will focus on one the following individual topics during the course of this semester: your current major
area of study, your anticipated professional field, your current work or volunteer field, or your anticipated major area of graduate study. This will result in each student in the class having a slightly different focus. However, this individual differentiation will allow the whole group to maintain a focus on the writing, revision, and feedback aspects of the class.

COURSE READINGS, DISCUSSIONS
This is an upper-division course, and as such, you will be expected to read and respond to a considerable amount of scholarship and popular media, and then to contribute to in-class and online discussions related to these readings. Simply scanning over an assigned reading will not be sufficient, rather, you will be expected to peruse each reading thoroughly and carefully, take copious notes, and prepare yourself to talk about, question, and respond to what you have read.

Each assigned reading must be completed by the Monday of the week indicated, with online discussions taking place throughout the week. If at some point you are asked to assign a supplemental reading to the class, you should be sure to prioritize accessibility along with disciplinary usefulness.

Required Textbook

- You can purchase used copies on Amazon or through other online retailers.
- Local bookstores, like Storybook Garden in Weslaco, can order you a copy by calling them at (956) 968-7323.
- I’ve requested a reserve copy for the UTRGV Library in Edinburg. As soon as they get the copy, it will be held exclusively for you to access in 4-hour periods.
- You can hang out in my office and read my copy, when available.

TECHNOLOGICAL ACCESS, RESOURCES
In order to participate in this class, you will need:

- UTRGV e-mail account and ID. These will be needed for email correspondence, access to the course Blackboard, access to the OneDrive cloud, and to conduct secondary research through the UTRGV Library.
- Computer and internet access for in-class work. If you have a laptop, tablet, or smartphone, please bring it with you to class.
- Social Media. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Google, Skype
- Internet access from home. Or, at the very least, a plan for how you can access and use the internet when not on campus.
- Software, such as PDF X-Change Viewer, Adobe Acrobat, or some other program that will allow you to view (and ideally, take notes on) PDFs.
   - Some sort of digital image manipulation software, such as Photoshop, GIMP, or Paint.NET, would be useful, too.
- Check the bookstore for software, receive student discounts.
- You may want some sort of means to save your electronic work, such as a reliable pin drive, or an account with a web-based cloud service (such as Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.).

**ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE**

Your written work is a reflection of your capabilities and efforts, and written assignments will comprise the majority of your final grade. You are therefore expected to produce high-quality, sophisticated documents. Neatness, visual appeal, and mechanical and grammatical correctness are important, although they do not alone guarantee a well-made document (or a desirable grade). Your written documents should have contextually-appropriate margins, spacing, pagination, and formatting. Similarly, your productions in electronic and other media should be well-designed and end-user compatible. In short: take pride in your writing, and aim to produce professional quality work.

Assignment descriptions and rubrics, including those collaboratively composed by the students themselves, will be available on the course Blackboard. All assignments are due by posting online to the appropriate assignment module of discussion thread by 11:30pm of the due date (see course calendar).

You can find out more about individual assignments in the "Assignments" and in each Weekly module. We'll also talk about the assignments during whole group and individual meetings, as well as on the discussion board.

*Participation & Discussion (200 points – 20% of your final grade)*

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in all discussions, activities, and workshops. The class discussions will help you learn to improve your writing, often through guided discussions of a sample student project (sometimes yours, sometimes one written by a classmate, sometimes examples gathered from outside sources). This is part of the work of the course. Thus, you need to be in class on time, with the readings and your work completed, ready to participate and contribute.

In addition, it is vital that students check and participate in the online environment consistently as it is an integral part of the course. (I've been told that I assign more hybrid and out-of-class work than some completely online courses.) On occasion, students will be asked to meet on hybrid days to participate in library research, technology workshops, presentations, or other activities their instructor might need them to be physically present for. Participation in-class and online (i.e.: Blackboard) is mandatory. The activities included in this category ensure that
students learn the material and help them to compose effective projects. Failure to adequately participate during any given class day – hybrid, individual, whole group or small group – will result in no P&D points being earned in addition to the student being marked absent.

**Capstone Project & Presentation (400 – 40%)**

You can either create a new capstone project or design one using one of your portfolio artifacts.

One of the 8 artifacts will be the production of a paper or project suitable for submission to a broader public audience, for example, at the Engaged Scholar Symposium hosted by UTRGV (though the best papers/projects will be ready for even broader audiences). This paper/project can be an expansion and refinement of an assignment from a previous (or contemporaneous?) course or could be the result of a new project. The goal of this project/paper must be identified by the third week of class; depending on the topic, you may need to discuss, develop, and collaborate with outside faculty members. You may also approach them to identify topics.

Students will develop a professional presentation for a general, college-educated audience about your publishable project/paper. The presentation will be presented at either the Engaged Scholar Symposium or a conference dedicated to presentations from all sections of the capstone course.

**Portfolio Preparation & Critical Introduction (200 – 20%)**

In 4390, you’re going to assemble, workshop, and complete a portfolio representing your work in the English major. Developing this portfolio will give you opportunities to reflect on, revise, and integrate materials from the various areas of English Studies. You’ll begin class with a portfolio-in-progress, a collection of potential pieces, and create a portfolio plan during the first week. You’ll continue to work on the portfolio throughout the semester, and the final, revised portfolio is due on our second day of presentations (during the scheduled exam time). As you can tell from the grading setup, you can’t pass 4390 without submitting a complete portfolio.

The first thing you need to create is a portfolio plan. Look back over all the major writing projects you’ve completed in your upper level English classes. Which projects represent your best work, or have the potential to be some of your best work with a little more attention? You’re going to need to choose a minimum of four writing samples (or artifacts as we call them in assessment contexts), one from each concentration area (creative writing, linguistics, literature, and rhetoric and composition class).
Each artifact must be accompanied by a reflective essay placing the artifact in context and, as necessary, explaining it to a general audience, and discussing the reason for its inclusion in the portfolio.

The artifacts can be a range of types (essays, research papers, paragraph responses, poems from creative writing, a website project from a rhet/comp course, a tree diagram from a grammar/linguistics course, etc.). While the artifact may be brief, the artifact plus reflective essay should minimally be 1000 words in length for inclusion in the portfolio. As a result, an essay may have a shorter reflection (though still needs one) while a shorter piece (a poem, grammatical tree structure) would require a larger reflection.

Artifacts must, with the possible exception of the publishable project/paper (see below), have been submitted in another class for a substantive grade. That is, the artifact must have received more than an a complete/not-complete type score.

**Career Investigation (200 – 20%)**

Students will prepare CVs/resumes for further academic or career pursuits. They will investigate possible career pathways or graduate school options and prepare applications, letters of interest, teaching philosophies, etc. as relevant to their goals.

- Career Investigation Interview(s) (50 – 5%)
- Philosophy and/or Statement of Purpose (50 – 5%)
- CV (50 – 5%)
- Letter of Intent, Submission, and/or Application (50 – 5%)

**CHECKLIST**

You don't have to wait on the calendar to get things done. There is a fair amount of researching, drafting, and feedback that should go on for each of your projects. Keep track of what you’ve done and what you need to do with the below checklist.

**Capstone Project (12-15 pp.)**
- Proposal
- Draft
- Final
- Presentation

**Portfolio Preparation & Critical Introduction (CI @ 3-5 pp.)**
- Collection
- Revision
• Reflection
• Introduction Draft
• Final

**Participation & Discussion**
• Week 1: Introduction
• Week 3: Linguistics & Discourse Analysis
• Week 5: Rhetoric & Composition
• Week 7: Creative Writing
• Week 9: Literature & Literary Criticism / Critical Theory & Cultural Studies
• Week 11: English Education

**Career Investigation**
Career Interview(s) (1-2 pp.)
• Draft
• Final

Philosophy and/or Statement of Purpose (1-2 pp.)
• Draft
• Final

CV (1-2 pp.)
• Draft
• Final

Letter(s) of Intent, Submission, and/or Application (2 @ 1-2 pp. each)
• Draft
• Final

**TENTATIVE CALENDAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>WHAT WE’LL READ</th>
<th>WHAT WE’LL DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Group Monday</td>
<td>“Architecting About Dance” + Introduction to English Studies (McComiskey)</td>
<td>Individual Monday &amp; Wednesday Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Wednesday</td>
<td>Students, Course, Projects, Readings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>Discuss Capstone Project, Portfolio, &amp; Book</td>
<td>Linguistics &amp; Discourse Analysis (Barton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Monday &amp; Wednesday Hybrid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>09.11 - 17</td>
<td>Workshop Portfolio &amp; Capstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W4</td>
<td>09.18 - 24</td>
<td>Interview Questions Draft &amp; Workshop Portfolio &amp; Capstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W5</td>
<td>09.25 - 10.01</td>
<td>Update: Portfolio &amp; Capstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W6</td>
<td>10.02 - 08</td>
<td>Philosophy and/or Statement Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W7</td>
<td>10.09 - 15</td>
<td>Philosophy and/or Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W8</td>
<td>10.16 - 22</td>
<td>Interview Write-up CV Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9</td>
<td>10.23 - 29</td>
<td>CV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W10</td>
<td>10.30 - 11.05</td>
<td>Letter(s) of Submission or Application draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W11</td>
<td>11.06 - 11.12</td>
<td>Begin Individual Exit Interviews Critical Introduction Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W12 11.13 - 19</td>
<td>Individual Exit Interviews</td>
<td>Individual Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letter(s) of Submission or Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W13 11.20 - 26</td>
<td>Capstone Project Draft &amp; Feedback</td>
<td>Individual Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W14 11.27 - 12.03</td>
<td>Workshop Portfolio &amp; Capstone Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual Exit Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W15 12.04- end</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capstone Portfolio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ASSESSMENT

**Scoring**
You may have noticed that the possible points for the assignments and activities listed in the section above add up to more than 100 points. In fact, there will be a total of 1000 possible points available to you over the course of this semester, and this move has more meaning than simply adding a zero. What this change does is provides me with a better way to organize and track student data, while providing you with a greater assurance that you will be assessed and credited for each task you are asked to complete. Additionally, this system helps ensure that individual assignments are valued to be commensurate with the work required to complete them. In other words, assignments that require more time and effort are worth more points.

In order to ensure that you receive proper credit for your day-to-day efforts in this course, I will periodically evaluate everything else you do for class (reading responses, workshops, in-class writings, blog posts & comments, homework, etc.), and assign scores based on participation.

This will allow me a chance to let you know how you’re doing in different areas and how you can improve throughout the semester. At the end the semester, there will be a total
number of possible points. Your specific grade will be determined by what percentage of the total points you have accumulated:

1000-900 total points; 90-100% of total possible points = A  
899-800 total points; 80-89% of total possible points = B  
799-700 total points; 70-79% of total possible points = C  
699-600 total points; 60-69% of total possible points = D  
599-0 total points; 0-59% of total possible points = F  

**Formatting**

In order to ease the peer review and submission processes, please use a font and text size that will make it easier for your readers to print and respond to your work. Additionally, when submitting drafts to your instructor, please save and submit your rough drafts in one of the following formats: DOC/DOCX, RTF, or shared via Google Docs.

Submitted final drafts should be saved as PDF, JPEG, or some other final and universal format.

When you save your drafts, use the following naming convention: UTRGV username (your email address before the @ sign), short name for the assignment, due date
For example: randall.monty01 Instructions 03.17.16

You will earn individual scores and a cumulative grade based on your work. Quantity, while important, is no substitute for quality. In other words, simply completing an assignment will not guarantee a certain result – you must produce work befitting an upper-division student.

**A note on grades...**

Meeting course and assignment requirements will result in the student earning an average grade for this course, as in “C” or “B,” not “A.” Likewise, coming to and participating in every class meeting, and submitting every assignment on time, are not acts that earn extra credit; those are expected by you enrolling in this course. A higher grade of “A” will be based on the distinctive quality, development, and reflective nature of your work, as well as your ability to guide a piece of writing through the various stages of a writing process and your willingness to peer review and explore new readings, genres, and techniques.

**POLICIES & RESOURCES**

**ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from
attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

If a student is absent for any combination of more than three (3) whole group class days, hybrid assignments, or group or individual meetings, they will have difficulty passing the course or earning a high final grade. If these absences occur prior to the university’s stated drop date, the student may be dropped from the class.

**LATE WORK**
Late work makes life hard for all of us (you, me, your peers, the program, the department, the institution, the local flora and fauna, etc.), so you should expect and prepare to turn in all assignments by their due dates. Assignments submitted after their due dates may not be accepted. If you know of an upcoming absence, make arrangements to complete and turn in your work early. The hybrid nature of this course allows for some flexibility with regards to participating in class, even when a student is not physically present, but persistent tardiness will only inhibit learning.

**SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY**
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students. If you have questions about whether your use of other sources (such as books, websites, friends, writing center tutors) is fair or not, please ask before turning in the work that you have a question about.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be
contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD
Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:
- Fall 2017 Module 1 Oct. 5 – Oct. 11
- Fall 2017 Module 2 Nov. 29 – Dec. 5
- Fall 2017 (full semester) Nov. 15 – Dec. 6

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND VIOLENCE
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a "Responsible Employee" for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.