Course Description

This course number is the Special Topics number for Literature and Languages: the number exists to provide faculty and students the chance to explore special topics not part of the regular curriculum. English 497 may be taken more than once for credit, as long as the topic changes. This fall, English 497 focuses on J. R. R. Tolkien's novel, *The Hobbit*, primarily on the methods and approaches of source studies. This fall will be the first time an undergraduate course on *The Hobbit* has been taught at A&M University-Commerce! Prerequisites: Eng 1302 and sophomore standing.

Required Texts


Culler Note: there is a second edition of Culler's VSI that has just been published: I have not had a chance to read it, so I am not sure how much of it is new. I encourage you to get the first edition if at all possible!

Anderson Note: Douglas Anderson's *Annotated Hobbit* is a major source study of Tolkien's novel, including annotations (marginal and bibliographical) that give a wealth of information on the text. You must have this edition for our class. You may wish to pick up a mass market paperback edition to be able to read only the narrative, but that is not required for the class.
### Fall 2012 Schedule

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**Office Hours:**
- **Online:** MW 2:00-4:00
- **In Office:** T TH 11:00-1:00

If you are not free at these times, please call or email me to set up an appointment.

**On Line:** During my virtual office hours, I will be at an off-campus location, but I will be logged onto my computer with regular access to my university email and eCollege.

**In Office:** I am physically present in HL 125 to meet (or talk via chat or telephone) during these hours; if a meeting that I must attend is called, I will notify the class by email and by a note on my door. No appointment is necessary during my scheduled office hours. If the door is open, come on in! If the door is shut, but the light is on, knock!

Please: if you think that you are slipping behind for any reason, come talk to me (or call me!).

### Course Learning Outcomes

1. Learners will demonstrate that they understand the basic elements of formal literary terminology and can apply them in a close reading of a literary text in order to analyze it. This outcome will be assessed by evaluation of the **close reading assignment** and the **final draft of the 10-page paper**.

2. Learners will demonstrate that they understand the basic elements of source studies and can apply them in an analytical and argumentative paper focusing on a primary text. This outcome will be assessed by evaluation of the **scholarly review of source studies** assignment and the **final draft of the 10-page paper**.

3. Learners will demonstrate that they have gained thorough understanding of research techniques specific to the field of literary studies. This outcome will be assessed by evaluation of the **research log** and the **annotated bibliography**.

4. Learners will demonstrate that they have engaged in a writing process over the course of the semester. This outcome will be assessed by evaluation of the **drafts of the topic statement, textual analysis, scholarly review of source studies, rough draft, revised draft, and final draft of the 10 page paper**.

5. Learners will demonstrate an understanding of the basic elements of an academic essay: a clearly stated thesis in the introduction which makes an original argument, understanding of the scholarship on the text, the use of primary and secondary evidence in the body of the paper, and clear attribution in the text and
on the Works Cited page. This outcome will be assessed by the final draft of the 10-page paper.
6. Learners will demonstrate that they are active and engaged members of our learning community. This outcome will be assessed by evaluation of posts in the online discussions.

Student Learning Outcomes

These are the specific learning outcomes that I will be assessing for the Department of Literature and Languages' program review; assessing learning outcomes is not the same thing as grading your work.

Student Learning Outcome #1

Learners will demonstrate that they understand the basic elements of source studies and can apply them in a an analytical and argumentative paper focusing on a primary text. This outcome will be assessed by evaluation of the scholarly review of source studies assignment and the final draft of the 10-page paper.

Student Learning Outcome #2

Learners will demonstrate that they have gained thorough understanding of research techniques specific to the field of literary studies. This outcome will be assessed by evaluation of the research log and the annotated bibliography.

Student Learning Outcome #3

Learners will demonstrate that they have engaged in a writing process over the course of the semester. This outcome will be assessed by evaluation of the drafts of the topic statement, textual analysis, scholarly review of source studies, rough draft, revised draft, and final draft of the 10 page paper.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

✓ Students will access and follow all course instructions found in the content area (navigation bar) of the online course platform.
✓ Students will listen/read all online lectures.
✓ Students will use the online class platform's discussion tool to post to classmates in assigned discussions.
✓ Students will complete and submit assignments electronically using the online course platform's dropbox tool/tab or assigned discussions.
✓ Students will access their grades in the eCollege gradebook, including comments uploaded in eCollege as well as marked on drafts that have been uploaded.
Course Assignment Assessment

This course is made up of a series of assignments and assessments to assist you in achieving the course learning objectives/outcomes. Each week you will work on various combinations of assignments.

Assignment handouts I have prepared contain detailed information on due dates, objectives, required content, format, structure, along with information on resources, and grading rubrics. I expect those handouts to be studied, whether online or via hard copy that is printed out, read, and annotated if necessary.

The assignment handouts are posted in the appropriate Unit (at the Unit Home Page, on the Dropbox or Discussion associated with the assignment). Please ask any questions you have about the assignment handouts in the Virtual Office.

Each assignment will be assessed according to the criteria on the assignment handouts, and in the context of the course outcomes, and you will receive a rubric, a grade, and information on revision and future work.

I expect students to prioritize their work based on the percentage of the grade each assignment is worth (the higher the percentage, the more time need be spent). Specific assignments (identified by rough drafts, revised drafts, etc.) may be revised for full credit, and revision is expected.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Graded Discussions: 30%

There will be discussion assignments most weeks; the focus of the discussions will be on both the students' reading of *The Hobbit* and on the assigned essays in the Fisher anthology about source study of Tolkien's work. Students will posting three types of discussion responses (*not* all in the same week): responses to my prompts; responses to some classmates, and summative responses. Responses to my prompts and summative responses must be 300 words long; responses to classmates must be 100 words long. Discussion posts cannot be revised.

Research Log and Annotated Bibliography*: 20%

The primary scholarship to be used in the Individual Project will be selected essays from the Fisher anthology, but students will research additional relevant scholarship in the MLA International Bibliography (relevant to their own topic), and turn in an Annotated Bibliography (with five peer-reviewed sources) and a Research Log. These assignments can be revised for full credit.
Individual Project (10 page source-study essay, research based, analytical): 50%

1. Topic Statement (5%)*
2. Textual Analysis (5%)*
3. Scholarly Review of Sources (5%)*
4. Rough Draft/Revised Draft (10%)*
5. Final Draft (25%)

*The asterisk indicates assignments which can be revised for full credit.

Grading

The class grade is based on a 100 point system, with each assignment being assigned a specific weight (percentage) of the grade. I have set up the gradebook with the assignments weighted: your grades will be entered in percentages, which the program will translate to "points earned."

If at any time you have a question or concern about your grade (which only you and I can access), please contact me (by email or by posting in the appropriate Dropbox). Please do not post about grades in the Virtual Office which is a public space.

90-100% = A
80-89% = B
70-79% = C
60-69% = D
59-lower = F

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION,
TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS & TECH SUPPORT

This course will be taught entirely using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu/login.aspx.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu.

Since this course will be offered partially online, special requirements must be considered. First, and perhaps most important, is that the student enrolled in this course must have access to a computer with the necessary software and services. The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course.

- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)
- Word Processor (i.e. MS Word or Word Perfect)
Additionally, the following hardware and software are necessary to use eCollege:

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the ‘myCourses’ tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services.

If your computer and internet services do not meet the minimum requirements for eCollege, you are welcome to use any of the computer labs on campus.

Secondly, it is also vital that the student have a working knowledge of the hardware and software they will be using. The Distance Education Department maintains a FAQ page for students taking online and web-enhanced courses. The web address for this information can be found at http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/itde/FAQs.asp.

eCollege Student Technical Support

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Chat Support: Click on 'Live Support' on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.

Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

Email: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

Help: Click on the 'Help' button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e. How to submit to dropbox, How to post to discussions etc…)

If you run into problems accessing eCollege through the standard online class link, try this alternate College web address is: http://online.tamuc.org
COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

I have regular office hours for face/face meetings and phone calls. I do not expect students to come to campus if they are enrolled in online courses, but I expect them to realize they may contact me by phone during those office hours.

However, the official medium of communication for the university is email which is handled through our eCollege platform.

All email correspondence for this course will be sent to student myLeo email accounts.

An Adobe Presenter/Breeze presentation is available to demonstrate how to access your Leo email: http://breeze.tamu-commerce.edu/myleomail/. Please make it a habit to check email often and log in to the course daily to stay connected with the class.

Warning: Because this course is offered entirely online, the only way to verify that people emailing me are the students registered in the class is via their email accounts. Please use your official university email if you must email me, especially if you have questions about a grade.

I post information in the "Class Announcements" section of our online course and send it out via email to make sure students get the information in a timely manner. You are responsible for checking your university email and the Class Announcements at least once a week.

INSTRUCTOR, UNIVERSITY, AND DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Take some time to read: university faculty have a good deal of latitude in some of their policy areas.

The first set of policy statements are mine.

The second set of policy statements are mandated by the University and Department of Literature and Languages.

By staying in the class after reading this syllabus, you are contractually obligated to meet class requirements and follow *all* class policies.

Instructor Policies

Late Work: Late work will not be given any credit. In this class, "late" means anytime after the No Penalty Zone (NPZ). However, all the Project assignments must be turned in; since revision is built into the class, your best choice is to turn whatever you have in even if it is not perfect.
The weekly due dates are always Friday, at midnight; the No Penalty Zone is Sunday at midnight.

WARNING ABOUT NPZ: always aim to complete your work the midnight deadline; then, if life intervenes, you have a safety net. If you aim to complete your work by the NPZ and life intervenes, which it will, there will be no safety net.

If you have a medical condition or emergency which affects your ability to do the work for this class, please email me as soon as possible with documentation.

University & Department Policies

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. Academic dishonesty can also include writing assignments for someone else, turning in papers someone else wrote for you, and tests that you took for someone else or that someone else took for you. Turning in work written for another class is also dishonest.

A "Positive Learning Environment" is one which allows and encourages contemplation, thoughtful discourse and critical analysis of information. Since almost all contact will be take place via electronic means, it is important to be courteous and respectful in responding to ideas that may differ from yours. This is an educational environment, and therefore each student should exhibit a decorum that lends itself to the intellectual exchange of views and ideas.

Literature and Languages Policy on Plagiarism: Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty such as collusion. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b [1, 2, 3])

The Department of Literature and Languages defines plagiarism as occurring when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Simply having a list of sources at the end of the project does not sufficiently meet the academic standards for acknowledging sources. The Department defines collusion as selling academic products (any written or recorded or pictorial material intended to be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement). You must acknowledge and document all sources (quoted and paraphrased) in your formal report. Documentation requires clear identification within the text (embedded in your sentences or in parentheses, endnotes, or footnotes) of the
source for material that has been summarized, paraphrased in your own words, or quoted directly. Page numbers must be given for direct quotes.

Plagiarism is not excused by saying "I did not mean to do it!" Intentional and unintentional plagiarism will both result in a failing grade on an assignment, or, in repeated cases, in a failing grade for this class.

Plagiarism or collusion will result in an automatic failing grade on the assignment. A second instance of plagiarism or collusion will result in an automatic F for the class. If you have declared a major, I will notify your Department Head and the Dean of your college of your plagiarism. A report of the incident will also be filed with the Office of the Dean of Students. This report may stay on your permanent collegiate record and you may also be subject to further disciplinary action being taken by the university.

Online resources on plagiarism:

http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html

http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml

**Courtesy:** All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, conduct).

**Drop Policy:** The university drop policy has recently changed because of state mandates.

Effective Fall 2008, a course dropped after census date in a term will receive a grade of “Q”. Drops with “Q” grade will not affect the GPA overall status, but are counted as attempted hours and count towards the 6 drop rule, three-peat, and 45-hour and 30-hour rule. Graduate students are not subject to the six-drop rule, but will have the advantage of the “Q” grade. The date information can be found here and is listed each term in the Schedule:

http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/home/registrar/dropadd.asp

A student may drop a course by logging into their myLeo account and clicking on the hyperlink labeled 'Drop a class' from among the choices found under the myLeo section of the Web page.

**Incomplete Grades:** The Incomplete grade is reserved for those students who have been active in class and have maintained a passing grade until nearly the end of the course. If circumstances in the last few weeks make it impossible for a student to hand in the last assignments(s), then the Incomplete can be granted. The student must supply documentation concerning the circumstances that have made it impossible for course work to be completed.
Students who have failed to turn in assignments in earlier weeks are *not* eligible for an Incomplete and will not be granted one. Anyone who is unable to complete the work in the semester they are enrolled will not be able to do it alone in the following term.

If the missing work is not handed in by the end of the next long semester, the grade automatically goes to an F, by university policy. There is no appeal for that grade.

Since this class is an online class you should be aware of the following university policy: You will be required to complete the course outside of the eCollege platform. The class platform is available for student access for only two weeks after the close of each semester.

**Students with Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library  
Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu