



**ENG 1302: Written Argument and Research  
COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2013**

**Instructor:** Frank Alexander

**Office Location:** HL 215

**Office Hours:** TTH, 8:00 - 9: 30 a.m. and by appt.

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**PLEASE NOTE:** This is a common syllabus used by all graduate students teaching sections of this course.

<b>COURSE INFORMATION</b>
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**Course Description:**

This course is all about conducting research. In the writing program at Texas A&M University Commerce, we believe that students learn to do research best by conducting research products of their own design but with some focus and help of their instructors. Therefore, in this class you will conduct ethnographic research projects in which you will “go out into the field” in efforts to learn something about reading and writing in contexts or in it’s “natural habitat.” You will then become more informed about these findings by comparing what you’ve learned with scholarship conducted by professional researchers and conducting further “library research” to help you create a more informative research report. You’ll finish the semester by presenting your findings in a public forum called The Celebration of Student Writing. The Celebration will be held Friday, May 3 from 2-4PM in the Field House.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students will be able to identify features of ethical research practices.  
Students will be able to evaluate subject position and how it can affect research findings.  
Students will be able to identify conventions of research and citation in academic texts.  
Students will be able to articulate features of academic research writing.

**Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:**

*Textbooks and Materials Required:*

Adkins, Tabettha. *Ethnographic Inquires in Writing*. Southlake, Texas: Fountainhead Press, 2010. 978-59871-435-7

Sunstein, Bonnie Stone and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater. *FieldWorking: Reading and Writing Research*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006. 978-0-312-43841-8

Three-ring binder that will serve as your Research Portfolio (see below)

Thumb drive or other means (dropbox.com account, for example) of storing digital versions of the essays and other written material you generate (always, always keep a backup of everything you turn in!)

A valid, working email address that you check everyday

### *Suggested Supplies from FieldWorking*

- A journal for use at the fieldsite
- Sticky notes for marking and reflecting on readings and portfolio contents
- A binder for double-entry notetaking forms (downloadable from **bedfordstmartins.com/fieldworking**; see example on page 31.)
- Folders and files, plus, perhaps, boxes for creating an archive, organizing data, and sorting through portfolio contents
- Clear plastic or manila envelopes (10 x 13) for portfolio submissions, labeled with students' names
- Disks, writable CDs, or USB memory sticks for saving all writing assignments, electronic data, electronic articles, and digital images
- Access to audio recorders, video recorders, and/or laptops depending on the nature of the data collection. Recording equipment should have:
  - Microphone (built-in or external) capable of picking up human voices and minimizing background noise
  - A counting feature for locating and transcribing sections of interviews
- Power sources for chosen equipment (cables, batteries, rechargers) Audio- or videotapes or disks as necessary for chosen equipment Access to digital, 35mm, or disposable camera

### *Optional Texts:*

Resources for Ethnographic Research (asking good interview questions, professional associations' codes of ethics, etc.)

<http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/firstYearWriting/interviewQuestions.aspx>

The Celebration of Student Writing at Eastern Michigan University

<http://www.emich.edu/english/fycomp/celebration/index.htm>

Some of our past Celebrations:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMWkdAzGYvw>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3r0PGbfhHIo>

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### **Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

#### **Grading:**

We will approach writing as an ongoing process involving a series of revisions. You will write a lot and receive a lot of feedback - this is the only way to become a better writer.

However, the large number of students and drafts means that I must give a lot of feedback with a very short turnaround time. I will spend my grading time giving you meaningful feedback, rather than copy-editing your work.

In order to focus on meaningful feedback, my grading process has been simplified: if you turn in your draft on time, meeting the assignment description and criteria, you will receive a default “B” score for the writing. If your work is exemplary (demonstrates excellent and impressive writing, as well as remarkable and original thought), it will receive an “A” as appropriate. Drafts that are too short or do not meet the draft criteria will receive “C” or lower grades.

Grades are not rewards or punishment. The purpose of grading is to give a fair assessment of the quality of their work. Here are some of my grading policies:

1. As a rule, I do not accept late work. If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, your work is late. If you believe that your situation is special due to extreme circumstances, you must communicate with me – ***before the assignment due date*** – to request an extension.
2. Your grade for any WA will be based on your final copy.
3. I do not accept papers submitted via e-mail unless we previously agreed upon that arrangement.
4. You receive a grade for all work done in class. If you are not in class, your grade for that work will be 0. If your absence is excused, you may ask to make up the work and receive a grade no later than one week after your absence.
5. You must turn in all assignments in order to pass the course.
6. I encourage your questions about your specific grades, but the time to talk about your grades is not during class time. Please come and see me during my office hours to discuss assessments on specific assignments.

#### **How Final Course Grade is Determined:**

**All assignments must conform to MLA conventions and must be typed in 12pt Times New Roman font and double-spaced. This is part of the criteria for all WAs, the annotated bibliography and the final essay.**

*Writing Assignment 1- Research Framework and Methodology (10%):* Using Chapter One from *EIWW*, explain your theory of the concept of “literacy.” What is literacy? How do you know a

“literacy event” when you see it? How will you go about looking for literacy in its “natural habitat” or in context? Think of this essay as the framework you are creating for your study. (Length: 3-5 pages)

*Writing Assignment 2- Research Proposal (5%):* In this short essay, you should explain to your instructor where you’re going to do your research, what you will be looking for and at in that research site, and why this site is appropriate for your research. In interest of conducting ethical research, explain your connection to this site (i.e. you eat lunch there often, you know someone who works there, etc.). You should also explain what you anticipate you will learn about literacy in this site. (Length: 2-3 pages)

*Writing Assignment 3- Informed Consent and Code of Ethics (10%):* Using The Belmont Report as a frame work and the Codes of Ethics developed by professional organizations like [The Modern Language Association](#), [The American Anthropological Association](#), [The Association of Internet Researchers](#), or [The American Folklore Society](#), create a Code of Ethics you will follow in your own research. You may also find information in *EIIW* and *FW* to assist you with this project. Once you have created your Code of Ethics, you will also need to create an Informed Consent form that your research participants will read and sign. Remember that your research participants are the audience for this text, so you’ll want to create an informed consent sheet that makes sense to them but also follows the guidelines and expectations of your instructor. (Length - 7 pages, including informed consent.)

*Writing Assignment 4- Ethnographic Setting Essay (10%):* In this essay, you will show off your ability to use descriptive language to “paint a picture with words.” Your goal is to describe your research site so thoroughly and completely that readers feel they have been there themselves. This essay will eventually become part of your final ethnographic essay. (Length: 4-6 pages.)

*Annotated Bibliography (10%):* Since good ethnographic research involves both fieldwork and traditional library research, you will need to gather sources that inform what you learn in your fieldwork. These sources should be books, peer reviewed journal articles, and other relevant sources approved by your instructor. Since the research you’re doing is scholarly, you will only use scholarly sources to support your claims. (That means no *Wikipedia* or Dictionary entries, for example.) You must annotate **ten items**.

*Informal Writing Assignments and Participation (10%):* This category includes in-class writing assignments, informal writing assignments, homework writing assignments, etc

*Celebration of Student Writing (10%):* Friday, May 3 from 2-4 PM in the Field House. The Celebration of Student Writing is an event held every semester where students enrolled in ENG 1302 demonstrate and show-off what they learned in their research projects. You should create some kind of display with artifacts, visual elements, and information about what you learned in your research. The “celebration” will look like a science fair with rows of tables and projects displayed. Your participation in this event is mandatory. Plan to arrive approximately 20 minutes early to set up.

*Final Ethnographic Essay (20%):* A final essay detailing the results of your study, what your findings mean in relation to the field of literacy studies, etc. Look to chapters four and five in *EIIW* for what this project should *look like*. Keep in mind that other essays you’ve composed this semester including WA1, WA3, WA4, and the annotated bibliography will all be part of this

essay. (Length: 15-18 pages)

*Research Portfolio (15%):* In your research portfolio you'll include your drafts from the semester, informed consent forms, informal writing assignments, double sided observation notes, reflexive writing, research artifacts, and anything else that help create an accurate portrayal of the research you conducted this semester.

### Grading Scale

90-100	A
89-80	B
79-70	C
69-60	D
59 and below	F

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

- Flash drive or other means (dropbox.com account, for example) of storing digital versions of the essays and other written material you generate (always, always keep a backup of everything you turn in!)
- A valid, working email address that you check often (everyday)
- Regular internet access (additional readings available online)
- Access to a computer with a word processing program and a printer (assignments must be typed and printed)

**Technology in the classroom:** Feel free to bring a mobile phone, tablet, or laptop to class if you have one. Electronic devices, however, may only be used during class time at the specific request of the instructor.

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Some supplementary texts for this course exist exclusively online, so you must have Internet access to read and/or view these texts.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Please contact me with any questions you may have. My communication preference is e-mail and my email address is: falexander1@leomail.tamuc.edu. Also, I will be conducting required individual conferences in addition to the three office hours each week that I keep.

**Email policy:** My official policy is that I will reply to your email within 24 hours, excluding Sundays and holidays; however, I check my LeoMail regularly and will often reply to you immediately. If you have questions about an assignment that is due, you should know that your assignment due date will not change, whether you receive a reply from me or not. All emails must come from your official LeoMail account.

### **Grievance Procedure:**

If you have concerns about the class or about me as an instructor, please speak to me about those concerns. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our conversation, the next person in the chain of command is the Director of the Writing Program, Dr. Tabettha Adkins. Her e-mail address is [Tabetha.Adkins@tamuc.edu](mailto:Tabetha.Adkins@tamuc.edu).

See grievance procedures here: <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/firstYearWriting/informationForStudents.aspx>

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures:**

#### *Writing Center*

The Writing Center offers writers free, one-on-one assistance. We welcome all writers, majors, and disciplines—undergraduate and graduate students alike. In fact, we work from the premise that all writers, no matter their ability level, benefit from the feedback of knowledgeable readers. The Writing Center staff is trained to provide writers with just this service. In short, we are here to help you help yourself. In order to ensure the most effective session possible, we offer visitors the following suggestions: (1) Get started on your writing project early, and visit the Writing Center at least one day before your final draft is due. You will need time to work with the ideas and suggestions generated in your tutorial sessions. (2) Bring a written copy of your assignment, any relevant readings, and one or two specific questions or concerns you would like to discuss with us.

The Writing Center is located in the Hall of Languages, Room 103 (903-886-5280) and online at <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx>

#### *Attendance Policy*

- Attendance is mandatory and crucial to your success in this course so you should attend this class as if it were your job! *Attendance is taken daily.*
- The university has no policy for “excused absences” except for university-sanctioned events, so please save your absences for illness, court appearances, child-care arrangements, and other situations when you must miss class.
- Being tardy means you are *less* than 10 minutes late to class. After 10 minutes you are considered absent. Three tardies equal one absence.

- After four absences your final grade will be lowered one full letter grade. After seven absences you will fail this course.
- It is your responsibility to turn in any assignment that is due – *on time* – whether you are present or not.

I encourage students to contact me by email if they have a reason for missing class.

### *Academic Honesty*

The official departmental policy: “Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. 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])

If you ever have any questions about a particular use of a source, always ask your instructor. They want you to avoid plagiarism, too, so they will help you do so whenever and wherever they can. Do what you can to take advantage of this support—to look innocent in addition to being innocent when it comes to charges of plagiarism.

Students guilty of academic dishonesty of plagiarism can expect to fail the assignment in question or the entire course depending on the nature of the incident.

### *On University-Sanctioned Activities*

To accommodate students who participate in university-sanctioned activities, the First-Year Composition Program offers sections of this course at various times of the day and week. If you think that this course may conflict with a university-sanctioned activity in which you are involved--athletics, etc.--please see your instructor after class on the first day.

### **University Specific Procedures:**

#### *ADA Statement*

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 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)

## Student Disability Resources & Services

### *Student Conduct*

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

<b>COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR</b>
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*Ethnographic Inquires in Writing* = EIIW

*FieldWorking* = FW

Schedule subject to change due to learning needs.

**Week 1:** *EIIW* chapter one due by Thursday, January 17.

**Week 2:** “Literacy Practices” by Barton & Hamilton

*FW* 1-24; both readings due by Tuesday, January 22

**Week 3:** “Literacy in Three Metaphors” by Sylvia Scribner in *EIIW*

“Literacy, Opportunity, and Economic Change” by Deborah Brandt in *EIIW*; both readings due by Tuesday, January 29

**Week 4:** Beginning of semester conferences - rm 215, HL; **WA1 first draft due day of conference. Fieldsite observations (two sites) due day of conference**

**Week 5** *FW* 25-64

Introduction to Chapter three in *EIIW*, due Tuesday,

**Draft of WA1 due, Tuesday, February 12; final draft of WA1 due, Thursday, February 14**

**Week 6:** : *FW* Chapter 68-109

“The Belmont Report” in *EIIW*, due Tuesday, February 19

**WA 2 draft due Thursday, February 21**

**Week 7:** “Seduction and Betrayal” by Thomas Newkirk in *EIIW*

“Ethnographic Research Ethics and Amish Values” by Tabettha Adkins in *EIIW*; both readings due Tuesday, February, 26

**WA 3 draft due, Thursday, February 28**

**Week 8: Midterm Conferences; second fieldsite observation notes due day of conference**

### **Spring Break**

**Week 9:** “Introduction to Chapter four of *EIIW*

“Reading Rites and Sports” by Jabari Mahiri in *EIIW*

*FW* 176-217, due Tuesday, March 19

**WA4 draft due Tuesday, March 19**

**Week 10:**

**Third fieldsite observation notes due Thursday, March 28**

"Blinded By the Letter" by Wysocki & Johnson-Eiola in *EIIW* "Introduction" by Bronwyn T. Williams; both due Thursday, March 26

**Week 11:** *FW* 127-154, due Thursday, April 4

**3 annotations for bibliography; due Thursday, April 4**

**Fourth fieldsite notes due Thursday, April 4**

**Week 12:** *FW* Chapter 8

**Annotated Bibliography due Tuesday, April 9**

**Week 13: One-on-one conferences Week 13: draft of final Ethnographic Essay due on conference date; fifth fieldsite observation notes due day of conference;** Read over students examples, Chapter 5 in *EIIW*

**Week 14:** "Becoming Literate" by Andrea R. Fishman in *EIIW*; due on Tuesday, April 23; **Final copy of Ethnographic Essay Due Thursday, April 25**

**Week 15: Sixth fieldsite observation notes due Thursday, April 30; Research Portfolio for Presentation (Celebration of Student Writing) due Thursday, April 30**

**Celebration of Student Writing: Friday, May 3 from 2-4 PM in the Field House**