

ENGL 5306: The Mairybus



Instructor: Dr. Marcos J. Del Hierro
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Meeting Date and Time: TBA

Meeting Place: Classroom Hall 314C

Semester: Fall 2025

Office Location: Classroom Hall 314C

Office Hours:

- Mondays: 1-3 pm

Course Description

The master's thesis is an extensive project requiring a graduate student to demonstrate their knowledge and skills as a producer of knowledge in their field. Typically produced in the final two semesters of a graduate student's journey, the master's thesis often coincides with transitioning into the next step of a graduate student's scholarly and/or professional career. This class will help a brilliant graduate student complete all the work required to successfully finish and defend their thesis, graduate with their master's degree, and apply for PhD programs.

Learning outcomes:

- Draft, revise, and proofread a master's thesis proposal.
- Draft, revise, and proofread a master's thesis.
- Conduct academic research for a thesis project.
- Establish a sustainable daily writing habit.
- Network across related academic disciplines.
- Build and maintain rapport with your thesis committee.
- Plan and map out a large research project.
- Share your project early and often to practice writing as a social activity.
- Develop a scholarly trajectory.
- Leverage academic relationships to apply for PhD, MFA programs, fellowships, and conferences.

Required Books and Supplies

- You will need writing supplies and access to your TAMUSA digital resources (email, Outlook calendar, Blackboard, TAMUSA Library).

- TAMUSA Thesis Resources <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/college-of-graduate-studies/thesis.html>
- Zotero <https://www.zotero.org/>

Course Assignments

Daily Writing:

Daily writing is the foundational practice for starting and completing scholarly work. It is defined as any activity that propels your project toward completion, including conventional writing processes (prewriting, outlining, drafting, revision, and proofreading); art making (drawing, painting, coloring, etc.); and communications that facilitate the writing process, such as emails and responses to feedback.

- Your daily writing expectation is to dedicate fifteen minutes per day, Monday through Friday, totaling five fifteen-minute sessions each week. This is a minimum commitment; you are encouraged to write for longer if you wish.
- You will log your writing days and time onto a shared spreadsheet.
- You are allowed to miss one writing session. Missing more than one session will prompt a fifteen-minute phone conversation to devise how to avoid missing more days. This is not a punishment; it is a conversation meant to help you stay on track.
- Your daily writing commitments will be outlined in an agreement letter that will be signed by both the student and the chair. (I'm the chair, and you are the student.)

Strategic Plan:

You will draft and submit a strategic plan that will guide you throughout the semester.

Weekly Planning Meeting:

Every week, you will block out time related to your thesis. The minimum is your fifteen-minute daily writing session. For this assignment, we will share an Outlook calendar.

Thesis Proposal:

We will follow guidelines as established by the College of Graduate Studies.

Networking Assignment:

You will contact three scholars doing related work to your thesis. You will report who you contacted and a summary of their responses in a memorandum addressed to me.

Maintaining Rapport with Your Committee Assignment:

You will meet with committee members at least once during the semester to keep them updated on the progress of your project. You will summarize each meeting and submit memorandums to me.

Sharing Early and Often Assignment:

Writing is a social activity. You will share your work early and often with peers by discussing your work with them. I will provide you with more specific details. You will do this at least three times during the semester.

Applying to PhD Programs Checklist:

You will create a checklist for applying to PhD programs and fellowships.

