

ENGL 4393: Teaching Literature and Writing

Instructor: James Finley

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Student Hours: by appointment

Course Description

ENGL 4393 helps prepare advanced undergraduate students for careers in teaching English and Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) by focusing on both literature and writing-studies content-knowledge and developing one's approaches to teaching relevant disciplinary knowledge and skills. This class also provides an opportunity to bring together your experience in English and Education classes in a manner that is personally and professionally resonant. I encourage you, therefore, to approach this course as a *practicum*: a course designed for practical application and not just oriented around a prescribed curriculum and content. Rather than prescribing a one-size-fits all model for teaching English, Language Arts, and Reading (ELAR), I will help you identify what sort of ELAR teacher you wish to be and my expectation is that you will work with me and your classmates to best achieve that. My assessment will focus on your effort, creativity, and self-reflection. To that end, and since I believe that there is no single right way to teach ELAR, much of the work we do in this class will be reflective and meta-cognitive, providing you with opportunities to develop and articulate (to yourself and with the goal of later articulating to others) your own methods and philosophy for teaching literature and writing.

4393 is a Writing-Intentional class, which means that we focus on writing throughout the semester and that we treat writing not as a talent (that some have and others don't) but instead as a *practice*, something that you develop constantly and use in multiple forms. The semester will conclude with the development of a digital portfolio of your work that you can take with you. Ultimately, I believe that learning how to teach English is a career-long process. I am still learning how to teach and am still thinking about what sort of teacher I wish to be, despite over a decade-and-a-half since starting my teacher-training program. This class is, thus, designed to help you to start your career *and* thrive within that career for decades to come.

Please contact me at any point with questions, if you have any concerns, or if there's something related to class or your professional development that you'd like to discuss. The best way to contact me is through email.

Learning Objectives. At the end of the course, students will have:

1. Further developed their pedagogical persona;
2. Deepened their knowledge of best-practices for teaching writing
3. Gained expertise about literary forms and effective strategies for teaching them
4. Worked on professionalization and preparing for the job market.

Course Assignments and Grading

Annotations (25% of final grade) - For each reading assignment, there will be a document on Blackboard where we will collect responses, ideas, and reactions. By the end of the day on **Thursdays**, please post at least a sentence about each of the week's assigned readings. You are

welcome to point out something from the reading that you liked or found interesting as well as a question you have. So long as your contribution reflects your personal engagement with the material, you will get full credit, which is 1 point per annotation. Please be sure to add your initials to your annotation and that you include page numbers (if applicable)

Discussion board (25% of final grade) - There will be a discussion board for each week, where I will post prompts and topics, though you are welcome to write about something else related to our week's topic if you like. I ask that you post a paragraph (at least four sentences) by the end of the day on **Fridays**. This is both a space to work out ideas about how you might teach the material we're covering this week and an opportunity to pick up suggestions, examples, and approaches from your peers. In your post, I ask that you please include specific references to at least something from the week's video(s), and you are welcome to develop what you wrote about in the annotations of the week's readings. You are encouraged to mention original ideas, of course, and examples from your experience as well as questions are certainly welcome. Full credit for discussion board posts is 3 points. If your post lacks specific references to the videos and detailed description of how you might teach the material, it will be graded 2 or 1 points.

Reflections (35% of final grade) - At the end of each week, please write a 1-2 page reflection where you synthesize what was covered in the readings, videos, and discussion board and seek to articulate either your position relative to the topic(s) or how you might teach an element of what was covered. Reflections are due by **Monday of the following week**. Fuller description of this assignment, including prompts, can be found [here](#).

Portfolio (15% of final grade) - Our final assignment is a portfolio that collects writings about topics we've covered and that looks towards how you might teach these topics. The materials in the portfolio will be based on the writings and work you've done this semester revised for this new context. A fuller description of this assignment is forthcoming.

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1 - The Discipline and How to Teach It (January 21 -)	
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jim Burke, "What We Teach: (Re)Defining English as a Discipline," <i>The English Teacher's Companion</i>, fourth edition, Heineman, 2013, pp. 1-20. ● Amber Funderburgh, "Humanizing English Language Arts through Student-Centered Learning," <i>English Journal</i> 113, no. 5 (2024): 27-32. ● Jim Burke, "Organizing Yourself to Teach English and Have a Life," <i>English Teacher's Companion</i>, third edition, Heineman, 2008, pp. 460-473.
Videos	1.1 - Introduction to the class 1.2 - Discipline and Organization
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (01/23) ● Introductions - discussion board (01/24) ● Discussion board 1 (01/24) ● Reflection 1 (01/27)

Week 2 - Teaching and Writing about Literature (January 27 -)

Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mary Styslinger, "Why and How to Workshop," chapter 1 of <i>Workshopping the Canon</i>, pp. 12-19. ● Marily Pryle and Sharon Ratliff, "Here's How To Get Kids Talking about Literature," <i>NCTE Blog</i>, August 30, 2023. ● Stacy Bailey, "Experience to Analysis: Activating the Personal to Foster Literary Analysis," <i>English Journal</i> 113, no. 4 (2024): 44-52.
Videos	<p>2.1 - Literary terms</p> <p>2.2 - Writing about literature</p> <p>2.3 - Discussion of the literature-focused TEKS</p>
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (01/30) ● Discussion board 2 (01/31) ● Reflection 2 (02/03)

Week 3 - Banned and Challenged Books, Working with Primary Sources (February 3 -)	
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emily Knox, "Banned Books are Often Diverse Books. Check the Stats," <i>School Library Journal</i>, September 29, 2106. ● Paula Greathouse, Annamary Consalvo, et al., "When Inclusion Meets Resistance: Resources for Facing a Challenge," <i>English Journal</i> vol. 110, no. 1 (2020): 80-86. ● Sean P. Connors and Roberta Seelinger Trites, "What Happens to Knowledge Deferred? Defending Books from Conservative, White Censors," <i>English Journal</i> vol. 111, no. 5 (2022): 64-70. ● Katherine R. Morgan, "Using Primary Sources to Build a Community of Thinkers," <i>English Journal</i> 91, vol. 4 (2002): 69-74.
Videos	<p>3.1 - Banned and Challenged Books</p> <p>3.2 - Working with Primary Sources</p>
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (02/06) ● Discussion board 3 (02/07) ● Reflection 3 (02/10)

Week 4 - Frederick Douglass (February 10 -)	
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Narrative of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave</i>
Videos	<p>4.1 - Background and Contexts</p> <p>4.2 - Teaching the <i>Narrative</i></p>

Special Event	Douglass Day
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (02/13) ● Discussion board 4 (02/14) ● Reflection 4 (02/17) ● Extra-credit reflection (02/17)

Week 5 - Teaching Writing as a Process (February 17 -)	
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jim Burke, "The Process of Teaching Writing," in <i>The English Teacher's Companion</i>, fourth edition (Heineman, 2014), 76-78. ● NCTE, "Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing" ● Linda Shalaway, "Keep a Teaching Journal," <i>Scholastic</i>, 15 January 2018. [optional] ● Julie Platt, "Keeping a Teaching Journal," <i>Gradhacker</i>, 15 June 2011. [optional]
Videos	5.1 - Teaching Writing as a Process 5.2 - Writing-Focused TEKS
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (02/20) ● Discussion board 5 (02/21) ● Reflection 5 (02/24)

Week 6 - Writing Assignments and Feedback (February 24 -)	
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peter Elbow, "High Stakes and Low Stakes in Assigning and Responding to Writing," <i>New Directions for Teaching and Learning</i>, no. 69, 1997, pp. 5-13. ● Amber Jensen and Morgan Shaughnessy, "'Experimenting Fearlessly' in Twenty-First Century Writing and Teaching," <i>English Journal</i> 100, no. 4 (2021): 83-91. ● Seth Czarnecki, "Labor-Based Grading: A New Ethic for Writing Feedback," <i>English Journal</i> 112, no. 6 (2023): 56-62.
Videos	6.1 - Low- and High-Stakes Assignments 6.2 - Feedback and Assessment
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (02/27) ● Discussion board 6 (02/28) ● Reflection 6 (03/03)
Phone or Zoom conferences	

Week 7 - Teaching Revision, Peer Review, and AI (March 3 -)	
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lulu C. H. Sun, "Research in the Classroom: Re-viewing and Teaching Revision," <i>English Journal</i>, vol. 78, no. 3, 1989, pp. 87-88.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shelly D. Smede, "Interior Design: Revision as Focus," <i>English Journal</i>, vol. 90, no. 1, 2000, pp. 117-121. ● Matthew Berry, "The Hershey's Kisses: Writing and Conferencing with Our Students," <i>English Journal</i>, 109, no. 4 (2020): 24-30. ● James H. Oldham, "ChatGPT: The Co-teacher We Need?" <i>English Journal</i> 113, no. 4 (2024): 53-60.
Videos	<p>7.1 - Teaching Revision</p> <p>7.2 - Peer Review and Writing Workshops</p> <p>7.3 - Writing and AI</p>
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (03/06) ● Discussion Board (03/07) ● Reflection 7 (03/10)

Week 8 - Shakespeare I (March 17 -)	
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● William Shakespeare, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Videos	<p>8.1 - Shakespeare's Contexts</p> <p>8.2 - Teaching Drama</p> <p>8.3 - <i>Romeo and Juliet</i></p>
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (03/20) ● Discussion Board 8 (03/21) ● Reflection 8 (03/24)

Week 9 - Shakespeare II (March 24 -)	
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Susan C. Biondo-Hench, "Romeo and Juliet." <i>Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching A Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet, and Macbeth</i>, Simon and Shuster, 1993, pp. 117-98. ● Adam Tramantano, "Reading <i>Julius Caesar</i> for Performance as an Interpretive Approach," <i>English Journal</i> 110, no. 2 (2020): 107-9.
Videos	9.1 Shakespeare and Performance
Assignments	<p>Annotations (03/27)</p> <p>Discussion Board 9 (03/28)</p> <p>Reflection 9 (03/31)</p>

Week 10 - Poetry I (March 31 -)	
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Katy Alexander, "Sin Fronteras: Writing Poetry About Borderlands to Bring Down Walls and Build Connections," <i>Rethinking Schools</i> 36, no. 1 (2021): 39-45. ● Kyle O'Daniel, "Poem-a-Day: Remediating Students' Aversion to Verse," <i>English Journal</i> 110, no. 5 (2021): 51-57. ● John S. Connor, "Waking Up with <i>The Slowdown</i>: Daily Poetry in the Classroom," <i>English Journal</i> 110, no. 5 (2021): 20-26.
Videos	10.1 - Approaches to Teaching Poetry

	10.2 - Poetic Terms
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (04/03) ● Discussion Board 10 (04/04) ● Reflection 10 (04/07)

Week 11 - Poetry II (April 7 -)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Melissa Alter Smith, "My #TeachLivingPoets Journey," <i>Council Chronicle</i> vol. 29, no. 3, 2020, pp. 23-25. ● April Vázquez, "Coming Home: A Reflection on the Gift of Poetry," <i>English Journal</i> 112, no. 4 (2023): 51-57. ● Alexa Garvoille, "Break the Rules, Already! Opening Up Closed Form Poetry," <i>English Journal</i> 110, no. 5 (2021): 27-35.
Videos	11.3 - Poetry Activities 11.4 - Writing Poetry
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annotations (04/10) ● Discussion Board 11 (04/11) ● Reflection 11 (04/14)

Week 12 - Literary History (April 14 -)	
Videos	12.1 - World Literary History 12.2 - British Literary History 12.3 - American Literary History
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TExES practice exams - more info to come

Week 13 - TExES prep (April 21 -)	
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TExES practice exams - more info to come
Phone or Zoom conferences	

Week 14 - Portfolio Drafting and Revision (April 28 -)	
Videos	14.1 Portfolio description 14.2 Peer review instructions

Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Portfolio draft (May 1) ● Peer review comments (May 5)
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Finals week (May 5 -)	
Discussion	tbd
Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final portfolio (May 13)

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Support Services in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210, or at (210) 784-1335 or visit <https://www.tamusa.edu/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services.

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').

For more information and self-help resources, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found [here](#) and [here](#). Download the SafeZone App for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV

funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as e-portfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://bit.ly/WLDCenter>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, and special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots' Casa in-person room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law

and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant students that would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition and that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an

individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, University Catalog and to comply with them, as well as federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide an environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notification.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

