

ENGL 4393: Teaching Literature and Writing

Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30 - 1:45 pm

Classroom Hall 321

Instructor: James Finley

james.finley@tamusa.edu

Student Hours: M/W 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

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. The course will help you to develop your own 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 one oriented around a prescribed curriculum and content. I will therefore help you identify what sort of ELAR teacher you wish to be and support you along that journey. 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. 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.

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.

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.

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 literature and effective strategies for teaching it
4. Worked on professionalization and preparing for the job market.

Required Texts

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (Penguin, 2014), 9780143107309

Romeo and Juliet, by William Shakespeare (Folger, 2004), 9780743477116

Course Expectations, Assignments, and Grading

Participation (25% of final grade) - We will do a lot of our work in class, through discussion, low-stakes writing, and activities. To account for this, I will keep attendance and assign a participation grade at mid-term and the end of the semester. If you have to miss class, please check the syllabus for what was covered, please follow up with a classmate for notes and updates, and within a week please submit to Blackboard a brief reflection on that day's assigned readings and topics covered.

Readings - All assigned readings come from the two required books or will be linked in the syllabus. Please read and annotate these assignments prior to class, both so that you can post to the discussion board and so that you can fully engage in the discussions and activities in class. I encourage you, as well, to save these materials (readings, notes, etc.) and organize them in a manner that will make them accessible to you in the future when you are teaching related topics.

Discussion board (25% of final grade) - By 12:00 pm before classes that have readings assigned, please post to the discussion board about something from the readings that you found interesting. I ask that you share a paragraph that (1) begins *I want to talk about* . . . , (2) that includes a quotation from at least one of the assigned readings – with citations, and (3) that explains in some depth what sort of ideas, questions, connections, conclusions, etc., come from reflecting on the quotation and the topic you've identified. Writing this paragraph will help you to prepare for class and have something to contribute while also giving you many (small) rough drafts for longer writing in the future. I will read these before we meet and will build my plans around them. Posts will be graded out of 2 points and will receive full credit if there is an example from the reading and some engagement with the content you have identified.

Reflections (30% of final grade) - At the end of each unit, please write a roughly two-page-long reflection where you (1) identify what is your main take-away from the readings, discussions, and activities we covered, and explain how you might use this in your teaching. Please be specific and detailed about what this might look like in your classroom, what your goals will be, etc. Please also (2) reflect on what other teaching-related thinking and work you did since the last reflection. What was covered in other courses that you found valuable? What did you do in your clinical teaching or to prep for your content exams? Were there any thoughts you had about your teaching career? A fuller description of this assignment, including particular prompts, will be posted to Blackboard.

Portfolio (20% of final grade) - Our final assignment is a digital 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 and will serve to prepare you for the job market and the start of your teaching career. A fuller description of this assignment, including components and deadlines, will be posted to Blackboard.

Please note - I ask that you not use generative AI to either read or write in this class. For reasons that I will detail in class, such tools undermine the skill building and knowledge production that we're doing this semester. If you ever find yourself struggling with the material, assignments, or deadlines, please email or talk with me.

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Readings and Assignments
Week 1 M 01/19	No class
W 01/21	No reading due - discussion of the class • Introductory survey

Week 2 M 01/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber Funderburgh, "Humanizing English Language Arts through Student-Centered Learning," <i>English Journal</i> 113, no. 5 (2024): 27-32. • Marily Pyle and Sharon Ratliff, "Here's How To Get Kids Talking about Literature," <i>NCTE Blog</i>, August 30, 2023.
W 01/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>, preface, letter from Wendell Phillips, and chapter 1.
Week 3 M 02/02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>, chapters 2 – 10.
W 02/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>, chapter 11 and appendix.
Week 4 M 02/09	No reading due - discussion of literary terms
W 02/11	<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, Annamarie 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.
F 02/13	Reflection 1 due
Week 5 M 02/16	No reading due - discussion of reflection 1
W 02/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCTE, "Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing" • 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.
Week 6 M 02/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seth Czarnecki, "Labor-Based Grading: A New Ethic for Writing Feedback," <i>English Journal</i> 112, no. 6 (2023): 56-62.
W 02/25	No reading due - discussion of writing activities and assessment
Week 7 M 03/02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber Jensen and Morgan Shaughnessy, "'Experimenting Fearlessly' in Twenty-First Century Writing and Teaching," <i>English Journal</i> 100, no. 4 (2021): 83-91.
W 03/04	No reading due - discussion of writing activities and assessment
F 03/06	Reflection 2 due
Week 8 M 03/16	No reading due - discussion of Reflection 2
W 03/18	No reading due - discussion of poetic terms
Week 9 M 03/23	<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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyle O'Daniel, "Poem-a-Day: Remedyng Students' Aversion to Verse," <i>English Journal</i> 110, no. 5 (2021): 51-57. • John S. O'Connor, "Waking Up with <i>The Slowdown</i>: Daily Poetry in the Classroom," <i>English Journal</i> 110, no. 5 (2021): 20-26.
W 03/25	No reading due - discussion of poetic terms
Week 10 M 03/30	<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.
W 04/01	No reading due - discussion of teaching creative writing
F 04/03	Reflection 3 due
Week 11 M 04/06	No reading due - discussion of Reflection 3
W 04/08	No reading due - discussion of dramatic terms
Week 12 M 04/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adam Tramantano, "Reading <i>Julius Caesar</i> for Performance as an Interpretive Approach," <i>English Journal</i> 110, no. 2 (2020): 107-9.
W 04/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, preface and Act I
Week 13 M 04/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, Acts 2 and 3
W 04/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, Acts 4 and 5
F 04/24	Reflection 4 due
Week 14 M 04/27	No reading due - discussion of Reflection 4
W 04/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katherine Gillen and Adrianna M. Santos, "The Power of Borderlands Shakespeare: Seres Jaime Magaña's <i>The Tragic Corrido of Romeo and Lupe</i>," in <i>Shakespeare and Latinidad</i>, ed. Trevor Buffone and Carla Della Gatta (Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 57-74.
Week 15 M 05/04	No reading due - introduction to final project and discussion of portfolios
Exam week W 05/06 10 – 11:50 am	Draft due
S 05/10	Final project due

Important Policies and Resources

Student (Office) Hours

If you would like assistance with an assignment, if you have questions about a reading or something we covered in class, or if you have concerns about anything related to this class, I encourage you to visit my office before class or to schedule another time to meet. These meetings are not only for instances when you are struggling with the class, though I will certainly do my best to help you in those instances. More broadly, I welcome the chance to talk more about something we covered, or to hear about how you are thinking about something from our class connecting to another class, or anything where I may be of assistance.

Late Work

I recognize that circumstances come up, and I'd much rather you submit assignments late than not do them at all. Please email me at least 24 hours in advance of a deadline to request an extension. Without an extension, late reflections and reading notes will lose one point, and other assignments will be docked 10% of the total points. The last day to submit late materials for credit will be April 24.

Course Material, Academic Freedom, and Students' Rights

The materials and activities in this class were developed based on my subject-matter expertise and align with norms and best-practices in the discipline you are learning.

- As the Student Handbook states, “students will be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views in any course of study and to withhold judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.”
- As an instructor, I will respect the rights enumerated in the handbook, including “respect for personal feelings; freedom from indignity of any type, freedom from control by any person except as may be in accord with Texas A&M University-San Antonio, and conditions allowing them to make the best use of their time and talents toward the objectives which brought them to this University.” I ask that you respect the rights of your classmates to learn and have a positive experience in this class.
- I ask that you, further, respect my intellectual property and not share materials from our class with those outside of the university community and that you respect academic freedom, which presumes that “teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject.”
- Should you have a problem with any of the materials in this course, please reach out to me for an explanation of why these materials are disciplinarily legitimate and to discuss strategies for completing the work in a manner that is acceptable to you and that meets course objectives. I ask that you do so before or after class and not disrupt the learning experiences of others if you have any objections.

University Email Policy and Course Communications

All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact

them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

Academic Accommodations for Individuals 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, Disability Support Services is in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us at the [website](#) or email us at dss@tamus.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 academic accommodations with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. 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@tamus.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance.

While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

	Appointments available	Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed
MONDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
TUESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
WEDNESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
THURSDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
FRIDAY	8 am – 5 pm	11 am – 4 pm

Counseling/Mental Health Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and 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, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

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 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.* The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the

moment distress, crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.

Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. 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](#). Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) 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 by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (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.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC)

The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing 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 eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. The Writing Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an "Online Appointment." Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an "eTutoring" appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#). The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing writingcenter@tamusa.edu.

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 submit a [CARE report](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click [here](#) for hours and contact information.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, 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 wide variety 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 course 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, equal 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 on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to 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, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

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 discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, 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, sexual violence, or other related sex-based 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 such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition 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. Young Jaguars can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

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, and pregnancy/parenting 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, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with 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 a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

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, or disability. Conduct that infringes 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](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#)

Important Spring 2026 Dates

Dates	Event
January 13	Tuition & Fee Payments deadline
January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. – No Classes
January 20	First day of class
February 4	Census date
February 23-March 6	Midterm grading period
March 9-March 14	Spring Break
April 3	Study Day – No classes
April 17	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
May 1	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
May 4	Last day of classes
May 5	Study Day – No classes
May 6-May 12	Final exams
May 19	Commencement

The complete [academic calendar](#) is available online