

ENGL 297: GATEWAY TO THE ENGLISH MAJOR SEMINAR

Fall 2014 • M/W/F 12:30-1:20 pm • LOW 116

Instructor: Melanie Hernandez
Email: melanieh@u.washington.edu

Office Location: Padelford B-433
Office Hours: Friday 10:30-12:20 (and by appointment)



Course Overview:

Welcome to English 297, an intensive writing seminar that comprises half of the English Major “Gateway.”

This writing course, paired with English 301, will engage you in some of the most important practices underlying inquiry in English studies. We will focus on close reading, or textual analysis; examining texts in historical and literary critical contexts; and generating coherent arguments about individual texts that contribute to critical discourse. A key goal of this class is to prepare you to “stand on your own two feet” within English Studies.

Over the course of the quarter, you will deploy the knowledge you are acquiring in English 301 through three writing sequences. Each sequence will include exploratory “pre-writing” and culminate in a 5-6 page essay that you have rigorously revised with the help of peer critiques and conferences with me.

Course Materials:

- All texts assigned in English 301

The readings on which we will focus are already included in the reading list for ENGL 301. I may decide to supplement our reading with a small handful of short pieces, but I will provide any additional readings to you as the curriculum develops to suit our needs this quarter.

In addition to the required texts, you may choose to purchase a grammar handbook or style guide like Diana Hacker’s *A Pocket Style Manual*—but this is optional. You may also opt to use free online resources like Purdue University’s online guide—OWL—which is an excellent online source for questions about formatting, style, and grammar: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Expectations:

This course is designed to lead you through the steps of a developed writing process. You are required to complete every step. This includes:

- Actively participating in class discussions, small group work, and conferences;
- Providing timely, thoughtful, and engaged written feedback on peers’ drafts;
- Completing informal writing/pre-writing assignments on time; and
- Submitting all drafts and revisions of the major essays on the date they are due.

On Annotation:

You are expected to grapple with the ideas in lecture and readings, and in your peers' writing and conversation. Don't just skim a text—engage it critically and offer useful responses.

- *What is it?* “Annotating” basically means “Mark up a text as you read—and re-read—it.” Annotation may include underlining words, phrases, or lines that seem important or puzzling, as well as jotting down questions and key ideas in the margin.
- *Why do it?* There are two good reasons to annotate: (1) it helps you read actively rather than passively; and (2) your annotations become a kind of written record of your own thinking about a text, a short-cut that you can use later to jog your memory when you write about the text.
- *What does an annotated text look like?* Here is an example of an annotated poem by the recently deceased Irish poet Seamus Heaney:

Tone: Celebratory
Admiration

Form: Free-form
Broken down resembles Sonnet

Language: technical
Colloquial
Conversational
monosyllables
Pen fat with what?

Digging
Opening - coming to terms with self?
Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; as snug as a gun.

Memory #1
his window - ownership threshold to his heritage
Under my window a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down - remembering / to look down on has negative con. but the poem is positive + celebratory

Memory #2
Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

Transition
By God, the old man could handle a spade,
Just like his old man.

Memory #3
My grandfather could cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, digging down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

Turning Point
The cold smell of potato mold, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Closure - Acceptance
Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

Seamus Heaney
Follows tradition of fathers using the tools available to him.

Speaker: male
patriarchal traditions
reverent attitude

rasping connotes a living thing

Power? violence? protection? A natural extension?

Symbol: peat
living roots
digging
squat pen
Why squat? crouching ownership

Survival
warmth potatoes nourishment

skill, pride, dignity
- bragging rights

worked hard - work ethics
strength - technique

in control, precise

negative images
traditions / livelihoods destroyed
no longer available

an awakening of what?
Follow in what way?

Reminders of home + hearth
rests, snug, nestled

Chomatopoeia
rasping
squelch
slap

2 separate memories:
Father digging potatoes
Grandfather digging turf - peat bogs

The pen is mightier than the sword.

Grade Breakdown:

Below is a breakdown of each assignment sequence’s weight toward your final grade. Each of these sequences will be further broken down to account for the “mini” writing tasks that build towards the major paper, as well as to include participation based on in-class workshops and student-instructor conferences. The grade breakdown listed below is only a tentative score weight. I will assign a grade to each paper, but that does not mean that each major paper is not necessarily weighted equally. I will take a holistic grading approach and reward progress and effort as I deem appropriate. With that said, I will not apply numeric penalties for declining performance; I will simply average the three paper grades.

70% Major papers I, II, and III
30% Participation—includes pre-writing, peer reviews, and conferences

100%

Class Participation:

In a course of this nature—especially one of a small class size—it is absolutely vital that everyone show up to class ready to work. Participation is built into each assignment sequence (see grading criteria section), and will be earned on an assignment-by-assignment basis. This class requires that you provide and accept extensive writing feedback, and this is not possible unless we stick to our schedule. Conferences will also provide an invaluable learning experience in your development through writing. Class will not be held on days when individual conferences are scheduled.

Paper Formatting and Style:

- All work must be typed (Times New Roman 12-pt font), double-spaced, page-numbered, formatted with one-inch margins, and STAPLED.
- Use MLA (Modern Language Association) formatting for all papers requiring source citation.
- No title pages are necessary.

Absences and Late/Missed Work:

Much of the information needed to complete your assignments will be obtained in class. Success in the course relies heavily on coming to class prepared, in-class participation and group work.

1. Late work will be penalized.
2. Participation credit for missed in-class work can not be made up.
3. No credit will be given for assignments that do not meet minimum requirements

If you feel that you have extenuating circumstances, please see me.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else’s ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people’s thoughts and writing—so long as you cite them. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review.

Plagiarism includes:

- a student failing to cite sources of ideas
- a student failing to cite sources of paraphrased material
- a student failing to cite sources of specific language and/or passages
- a student submitting someone else's work as his or her own
- a student submitting his or her own work produced for another class

If you have any doubt about how to cite or acknowledge another's writing, please ask me. It is *much* easier and more pleasant to deal with these issues before you hand in a paper!

Class Etiquette:

- Please turn off all cell phones and any other electronic gadgets that make noise before coming to class. If your cell phone rings during class I will answer it.
- Do not come to class late or leave early. This causes major disruptions and could cause you to miss important information or activities.
- Do not start shuffling papers around and packing up before it is time to go—I will be conscientious about ending class on time. I
- **Above all, you must treat everyone in this class with respect.** We will discuss issues that could generate disagreement among students. While I don't expect all of us to agree, personal attacks and sexist, racist, and homophobic language will not be tolerated.

Accommodations:

Please let me know if you require accommodations for any reason. Instructors will work with UW Disability Resources for Students Office (DRS) to provide what you require. For additional information about DRS services, please visit: <http://www.washington.edu/students/drs/> .

Odegaard Writing and Research Center

The tutors are trained to assist students at all levels of writing, and can help with a variety of issues from formulating complex arguments, to organization strategies, to simple mechanics. Even the best writer can benefit from having their writing reviewed by an additional pair of eyes.

Room 326, Odegaard Undergraduate Library
Sunday-Thursday, 1:30-4:30pm and 6:00-9:00pm
Phone: 206.221.0972 ext. 273 | E-mail: owrc@uw.edu
Reserve appointments online: <http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/> .

Office Hours and Email:

Office hours are not only for the times that you are having a problem. They are a great time to ask questions, and to explore new ideas. If for some reason you cannot attend my scheduled office hours, I am happy to make appointments for other times. Similarly, queries over e-mail are always welcomed.

Note: Please include “ENGL 297” in the subject line of your emails to me. I do not open email messages from accounts I do not recognize.

Evaluation Rubric

Outstanding: 3.7 – 4.0

Outstanding *Pre-writing* demonstrates thoughtful failure and significant progress in close reading, developing lines of inquiry, and generating arguments for each sequence. Outstanding *Peer Reviews* effectively engage drafts by focusing on the big issues: how well the writing responds to the prompt, organization, and argument. Each review highlights perceived strengths and weaknesses of the draft with respect to the prompt, explains reasoning of reviewer, and poses useful questions for purposes of clarification and elaboration. Reviews make explicit recommendations for revision, explain why the writer should revise along those lines, hierarchize revision tasks, and provide specific suggestions for how to broach revisions. Outstanding *Participation* means accomplishing both of the above on time, joining fully in all in-class activities, and making consistently thoughtful contributions to class discussion.

Strong: 3.1 – 3.6

Strong *Pre-writing* shows consistent ability to close read, develop a line of inquiry, generate an argument, and adjust course in thinking when an idea doesn't pan out. Strong *Peer Reviews* grapple thoughtfully with drafts and chiefly address macro-level elements but may occasionally dwell on micro-level elements, correcting specific instances of grammar and word choice, etc. Reviews indicate some perceived strengths and weaknesses but may not always address them with respect to the prompt. Strong reviews consistently provide clear and useful suggestions for revision. Strong *Participation* requires completing strong pre-writing and peer reviews in a timely manner and joining in fully in all in-class activities.

Good: 2.5 – 3.0

Good *Pre-writing* demonstrates consistent, good-faith efforts to close read passages, develop lines of inquiry, and generate arguments. Good *Peer Reviews* point out some perceived strengths and weaknesses of argument and organization but may not always address them with respect to the prompt, and may not explain why the reviewer sees them as strengths or weaknesses. Reviews provide some specific, useful suggestions for revision but may not hierarchize them, explain them thoroughly, or offer any advice for how to undertake the revisions. Good *Participation* requires completing good pre-writing and peer reviews on time and joining in most in-class activities.

Acceptable: 2.0 – 2.4

Acceptable *Pre-writing* demonstrates consistent commitment to a writing process but may not show rich close readings or provide much evidence of how lines of inquiry were developed and arguments generated out of them. Acceptable *Peer Reviews* address major aspects of drafts and provide some useful suggestions for revision, but feedback may be skimpy or vague at times. Acceptable *Participation* requires generally completing pre-writing and peer reviews on time and joining in in-class activities.

Inadequate: 1.0 – 1.9

Inadequate *Pre-writing* means you either haven't completed or have only cursorily completed pre-writing assignments over the course of the quarter. Inadequate *Peer Reviews* do not significantly address a draft's argument, organization, or general appropriateness as a response to the prompt and/or provide minimal feedback and suggestions for revision. Inadequate *Participation* is represented by either of the above or/and a failure to regularly join in in-class activities.

M.I.A.: 0.0 – 0.9

Did you forget to drop the course?