



ENG 615-01E/1SW: Professing English

Fall 2024

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. Ashanka Kumari (she/her/hers)

Office Location: David Talbot Hall 225

Office Hours: 12–2pm Thursdays or make an appointment at tidycal.com/ashanka

Email (preferred communication mode): ashanka.kumari@tamuc.edu

Communication Response Time: 24 business hours

COURSE INFORMATION

English 615 is an introduction to the profession of English—that is, the process by which one becomes a professional. We will focus on issues related to a future career in higher education, but we will include conversations about how you can put your PhD to work in non-academic careers, as well. Some of the topics we address will be the structure and processes in our program, what research looks like in different fields of study, how to plan the stages of your education, how to write a proposal, the development of your CV, and how dissertations are structured—and, even more importantly, what kinds of research questions they address. Along the way, a number of faculty members will meet with us to answer your questions about their areas of study and provide additional guidance and mentoring. Most critically, this class is intended to serve you and address your needs—your questions and your concerns. There is no question that is “too stupid” or too insignificant, and this is the place to ask!

Primarily for English doctoral students, English 615 is an introduction to the profession of English—that is, the process by which one becomes a professional. Issues covered will include the curriculum vita, abstracts, dissertation proposals, dissertations, the job search, the research process beyond graduate school. The course will also include history of English as a part of the college curriculum. This course is required of all doctoral students. Graded on a satisfactory (S) and unsatisfactory (U) basis.

Materials—Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

- Calarco, Jessica McCrory. (2020). *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum*. Paperback edition. ISBN: 978-0-691-20109-2
- Additional course readings available via our D2L course shell
- Adobe Creative Cloud (free for TAMUC students)
- A valid, working leomail email address that you check often (everyday)
- At least two storage methods such as cloud storage, flash drive, folder, etc.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Through a mixture of reading, writing, and discussion throughout the semester, you will:

2. Demonstrate substantive knowledge of their chosen field in English Studies by illustrating they understand the necessary steps and timeline to earn a degree in that field through a calendar and completion plan.
3. Generate meaningful, substantive, and productive contributions to the scholarly conversation in their chosen field by generating a viable dissertation pre-proposal, which could serve as a starting point for beginning work with their chosen dissertation advisor.
4. Consider, design, and organize your professional goals by generating a career plan that takes into deep consideration a relationship to proposed path through doctoral plan and professional pursuits.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

General Overview of Required Work

As a student in this class, expect to write weekly on an informal level, drafting short pieces that you might (or might not) share with your classmates and me, with the goal of using these to help plan your doctoral study and career to come. Both informal and formal writing assignments will be centered on learning about doctoral study in English and related careers.

This course will make use of a variety of texts to provide a quick immersion in issues facing higher education, the job market, how insiders describe what they do, and how you might map out your own career plan. The course objectives are that you:
 become acquainted with some of the contemporary issues facing higher education;
 understand the steps toward completion of your degree;
 have a career plan that will serve you when you enter the job market.

About Our Doctoral Program

The PhD in English is designed for students who wish to teach on the college level. The degree combines class work focused on either Literature, Composition and Rhetoric, and Applied Linguistics with extensive practical and theoretical work in teaching. With experience in tutoring, classroom teaching, and computer-assisted instruction (including digital media), our students receive an extensive preparation for the profession so they are ready to take their places as both teachers and scholars once they've completed their doctorate. At A&M-Commerce, doctoral students take classes with enrollments of no more than 18, including 21 hours of courses that train them to teach on the college level. Upon completion of the degree they will be able to speak about teaching with sophistication that arises from a powerful combination of theory and practice.

In addition, doctoral students plan, arrange, and participate in conferences held on campus; tutor in one of the best writing centers in the region; work on international, peer-reviewed journals; and are mentored and encouraged to publish original scholarship as well as present at regional and national conferences.

Weekly Deadlines and Expectations

In brief, you'll work through the following each week (details in Course Schedule):

Lecture & Discuss	Thursdays from 4:30-7:10 pm in Talbot Hall (or via Zoom). During this time, we will engage in discussions about assigned texts and relevant ideas surrounding doctoral study and PhD life.
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Read, Plan, & Compose	Each week you will have a set of assigned readings and activities (see course schedule). Please complete assigned readings and assignments by class time. For example, whatever is listed in the Week 2 column should be completed by class time on Week 2.
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While I hope this structure assists with building routines as you acclimate to college life, I know life happens. On top of the typical challenges, I recognize that many of you might be dealing with technical issues, grief, uncertain childcare, serious viruses and their variants, classes in different formats, financial precarity—and so am I.

So this is what I promise you: I will strive to make each week interactive and useful for you. I expect you to log on regularly, and your participation will be self-assessed in reflection moments throughout the semester. I understand that participation and contribution can look and mean something different to each of us, but ultimately, to do well in this course, you should contribute to discussions, raise questions, respond to classmates, and share insights in ways that keep conversations moving forward in meaningful, generative, and generous ways.

Assessments*

- Discussion Board Posts
- Learning Histories & Goals Essay
- Backwards Calendar & Plan
- Reverse Engineering Article
- Reverse Engineering Dissertation
- Dissertation Pre-Proposal
- In-Class Writing & Group Work
- Course Reflection Project

Grading

English 615 is a pass/fail course (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory). To pass (earn an “S” or “Satisfactory”) you must submit all assignments on time and be an active participant in all class discussions with contributions clearly informed by all assigned readings and related materials and activities.

ACCESS, NAVIGATION, & RESOURCES

I recognize that our classroom is made up of an array of learners and am happy to make any reasonable accommodations to make sure every student has an equal experience in my class. For example, you may prefer to process information by speaking and listening; or you might feel more capable of participating via individual assignments rather than discussion threads online.

Please talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them. If you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services including the Counseling Center are available to all students. I recognize that disabilities can be visible and invisible, and I am dedicated to ensuring that all students succeed in my courses.

Students with Disabilities—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

Velma K. Waters Library Rm. 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

Learning Management System (LMS)

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements:

- [LMS Requirements](#)
- [LMS Browser Support](#)
- [Zoom Video Conferencing Tool](#)

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903-468-6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace (D2L), please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: [Brightspace Support](#).

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. You should have *at least* two storage methods such as a flash drive, cloud storage, folder, etc. to back up all your class materials. You should also have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems such as the local library, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

A Note on Learning

As we pursue learning together, I strive to keep the following guiding principles (inspired by the Chronicle of Higher Education):

- Put people first. As we learn human-centered philosophies and methodologies in this course, I hope we practice empathy and be cognizant of how our own realities (day-to-day lives) can be imposed upon others whose lives may differ drastically from ours.
- Stay informed. We will keep ourselves educated about any public health and safety situations and make informed decisions about our personal, social, and professional lives.

- Communicate early and often. Even when we are physically and socially apart, we can remain connected through various communication platforms. Always reach out if you need anything necessary to support your learning and your own well-being.
- Celebrate accomplishments. Any achievements, major or minor, during this time are a testament to your dedication and perseverance. We will enable a culture of celebration in this class. So, feel free to share with me your successes (and failures when you attempt something), and I will acknowledge them however you prefer.
- Take care of yourself. Get enough rest, food, movement, and anything you need to keep you in a positive mood and good health. If you don't feel well, do not force yourself through the coursework. Let me know so we can work out alternatives together.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding the Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Communication

Communication is a key part of success in this course. I am available via email (ashanka.kumari@tamuc.edu) from 9am-4pm weekdays or by appointment (email me to set up a time) to discuss assignments and other course-related concerns. I also have walk-in office hours on Thursdays from 12-2pm in Talbot Hall Room 225. Please note that I may not respond to emails between 8pm and 7am. Please include a proper opening, clear message and subject line, and closing salutation in emails. Here's an example:

To: Professor (English.Instructor@tamuc.edu)

From: Jane Student (jstudent13@leomail.tamuc.edu)

Subject: Jane Student. CID 2301-01W. Office Hours Question.

Good morning Professor [Last Name],

I would like to meet with you to discuss my thesis statement for the rhetorical analysis essay. I cannot make your office hours. Can I set up an appointment? I am available to meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday after 3:00 p.m.

Thank you,

Jane Smith

Accountabilibuddy: Write down the contact information for one or two other classmates below. If you are absent, contact one of these classmates to ask about what you might have missed, provide one another support—we're all in this together! These classmates might be the first ones you turn to when you are confused, have a question about what's due/when it's due, or are running late to class.

Name	Email Address	Phone Number

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress or weather, may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced immediately.

Grievances

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another medium, should then schedule an appointment with Dr. Sharon Kowalsky, by emailing her (Sharon.Kowalsky@tamuc.edu). Before an appointment is scheduled, the student must provide clearly documented and explained issues as to why the meeting is being requested. The student must also state when they discussed the issue in person or via phone (not email) with the instructor already. Where applicable, students should also consult [University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 \("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation"\)](#).

Respect & Student Conduct

Each class is made up of diverse individuals with a variety of backgrounds and beliefs, so we won't always agree with one another on every issue. You will probably feel uneasy, uncomfortable, or challenged at some point in this class. In fact, those moments can often lead to greater insight and understanding. However, rudeness and insults will not be tolerated. Our classroom should be a respectful space where we all feel comfortable and safe sharing our thoughts, and professionalism and boundaries are very important to me as a professor.

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Inclusion Policy & Nondiscrimination Notice

Your value as a member of this course and university community at large is vital to me, regardless of social identity factors. While at times, the topic of class discussions, readings, and other activities may take you out of your comfort zone, or even go against your individual perception of the world, you are expected to keep an open mind and evaluate claims based on fact and knowledge, rather than preconceived notions alone. For questions, concerns, and problems related to discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, nationality, gender identity, sexuality, religion, veteran status, or other social or personal identity factors, please come talk to me.

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race,

color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In order to measure the level of compliance with the university's Institutional Effectiveness guidelines, throughout the semester, I will collect some of the ungraded texts you produce. The texts will be part of a portfolio created on your behalf and will be measured to ensure that our program "promotes practices that result in higher student academic achievement; an enhanced student experience; aligned and transparent decisions; and readily available information for improvement, accountability, and accreditation." This is solely an assessment of program effectiveness and in no way affects students' course grades or GPA.

Writing Center

The Writing Center offers writers free, one-on-one assistance. We currently offer 45min, face-to-face or online sessions that writers can book from our website:

www.tamuc.edu/writing-center

We welcome all writers, majors, and disciplines—undergraduate and graduate students alike (faculty and staff too!). Research shows that all workers benefit from sharing their work with a focused reader. The Writing Center staff is trained to support writers in any stage of the writing process (from the blank page to polishing sentences), and we work with writers to verbalize writing goals and to stay on track with larger writing projects. We work with any form of writing (academic and nonacademic). The writers with whom we work usually bring projects like important emails, weekly writing assignments, midterm and final essays, and theses and dissertations. Contact us with any questions here: writingcenter@tamuc.edu.

Library

The Velma Waters Library supports the research, learning and teaching interests of students, faculty and staff. Connect with a librarian, explore our research and course guides, and attend workshops.

- Chat with a Librarian! Get immediate assistance with our [chat service](#) on the main Library page: <https://www.tamuc.edu/library/>
- Email ask@tamuc.libanswers.com. We will respond to your email within 24 hours, often much sooner.
- Text your question to 903.225.2862.
- Call the Waters Library at 903.886.5718 or contact the librarian for your college/department to discuss your research needs.
- Meet With Us! Don't stay up all night searching Google. Schedule a one-on-one consultation held in-person or via Zoom with the librarian for your college/academic department.
- Visit Us! We'd love to meet you in-person!
 - Waters Library Research Office: Second Floor, Room 213
 - Waters Library University Archives: 4th Floor, Room 406A
 - A&M-Commerce at Mesquite Metroplex Center: Second Floor, Study Room

Academic Integrity & Honesty

Here is the official word on plagiarism and academic integrity from TAMUC:

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

Basically, plagiarism is any attempt to pass off someone else's words or ideas as your own, but also not giving credit where credit is due. As your instructor, I want to know YOUR thoughts, YOUR ideas, and what YOU have to say—and it doesn't have to be perfect the first time. If you are struggling with an assignment, please come talk to me, and I will help you in any way that I can. Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

TurnItIn

I promise to never use turnitin.com or other proprietary tools like it because these programs make money off your work without compensating you. Here's how it works: A university pays turinit.com for its services (with your tuition dollars). Teachers place student papers in the program's "bank," and the program compares that paper with other papers existing in the bank. At that point, the student's paper becomes part of the bank. Therefore, turnitin.com and other tools are making money from this bank full of papers written by uncompensated students. For more information on this issue, see this article from the journal *Hybrid Pedagogy*: <https://hybridpedagogy.org/resisting-edtech/>.

AI use in course

I anticipate that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be a topic of conversation this semester, and you may even choose to research it or use it to enhance your own writing process. I highly suggest that you carefully consider the ethical and privacy implications of employing any kind of composing or AI-generative technology. You should *absolutely never* input the intellectual property of others into any AI system without expressed permission; that is, do not input course readings or other materials into AI. I'm happy to discuss further if needed.

Here's the University's policy (as of August 2023) regarding AI:

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructor's guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Civil Rights Protections and Compliance

[The recent law](#) that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.