

LIBS 400: Liberal Studies Senior Seminar
Dr. Emily L. Newman
East Texas A&M University

Web-Based Class, Spring 2026

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For Office Hours, email to schedule an appointment (F2F or Zoom)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTCOMES

This course provides each student in the Liberal Studies Program with opportunities for making connections among their concentration, support fields, other educational experiences, and possible careers. By developing a professional biography, a sophisticated resume, and a useful website, the students will begin to envision their post-undergraduate careers and pursuits. Working to refine their research skills, analytical frameworks, and critical evaluations, the students will produce an exemplary research paper incorporating the methods and tools that we have investigated over the semester. Should be taken in final semester. *This class is entirely online.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- enhance critical thinking skills (discussion posts/research paper)
- apply interdisciplinary scholarship and its theoretical underpinnings through designing and carrying out an independent research project.
- develop the skills to thoroughly research multiple disciplinary fields for our research project
- generate and effectively communicate scholarly material in discussion posts and research project
to communally engage in the process of assessment, critique, and refinement as applied to the work of not only the student but of their classmates as well (peer review assignments)
- create an effective biography, resume, and website to communicate professional skills, developments, and experiences
- ability to work both independently and productively, while developing effective time management skills.

ASSESSMENT:

Students' ability to meet the course objectives and learning outcomes will be evaluated through written assignments, discussion posts, worksheets, and a research project. This course cannot be passed without students turning in and participating in each step of peer review for the research project and website. Failure to turn in any of these assignments or participate in peer review will result in the failure of the course.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th edition, 2018 ISBN: 022643057X.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: *

Engagement: Each person is expected to participate fully in class, by following the guidelines listed below.

- **Preparation:** reviewing readings and material before class
- **Focus:** avoiding distractions during in-person and online activities
- **Presence:** engaged and responsive during all activities
- **Asking Questions:** in class, out of class, online, offline
- **Listening:** hearing what others say, and also what they are not saying
- **Specificity:** referring to specific ideas from reading and discussions
- **Synthesizing:** making connections between reading and discussions

Discussion: Each student will write numerous times to the discussion page for the class. There will be clear class prompts, with word counts for you to follow.

Biography: Each student will write a professional biography of 150-200 words.

Resume: Each student will create a professional style biography, and work with the career development center to review it and make it as best as it possibly can be.

Website: Each student will create a professional website, showing off their accomplishments, future aspirations, and relevant information.

Peer Review: Throughout the course, numerous instances of peer review will take place. Students will be responsible for thoughtfully and critically reviewing their classmates work, providing edits directly on the written assignment as well as completing a worksheet. A student will not pass this course if they do not complete the peer review assignments.

Research Project: Throughout the course, you complete a major research project. Information will be given on this separately.

Assignments will NOT be accepted over one week late. For each class day late, the grade will be reduced. Further, the final project will not be able to be accepted late.

Grade Breakdown:

Discussion: 10%
Biography: 5%
Resume: 10%
Website: 15%
Peer Review: 15%
Research Project: 40%
Reflection Paper: 5%

Grade Scale:

A = 90%-100% (exceptional)
B = 80%-89% (good)
C = 70%-79% (average)
D = 60%-69% (minimally sufficient)
F = 50%-59% (failure)

*subject to change

Note: Personal computer problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the school or local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, or a bookstore, such as Barnes & Noble, etc.

DISCUSSION:

Each person will bring their own experiences to this class and should feel comfortable expressing their opinions and vulnerabilities. The classroom is a safe environment, and each student should behave with integrity and treat their peers with respect.

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Each assignment must be uploaded on time. Discussion posts will not be accepted after their due date. For other assignments, for each class day late, the grade will be deducted. **Assignments will NOT be accepted over ONE week late.**

*** THERE WILL BE NO EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS***

WORKLOAD:

The rule of thumb for time required for course study and preparation each week for a face-to-face class or an online course during the spring and fall semesters is three times the number of credit hours (or 9 hours per week) for the course. You need to plan accordingly. If you find yourself unable to complete course requirements in a timely manner, refer to the University's withdrawal policy and the appropriate dates. Incomplete grades are only granted for extreme emergencies. Being "overloaded" either from other class assignments or job commitments are not considered to be emergency situations. For this class, you should expect an hour to an hour and a half of work each day. If you desire, you can work ahead and start the projects early and take the class at your own pace, just remember to follow due dates and engage in conversation in discussion posts!

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

East Texas A&M University 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.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Statement on Student Behavior:

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenet of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

All students must show respect toward the instructor and the instructor's syllabus, presentations, assignments, and point of view. Students should respect each others' differences. If the instructor determines that a student is not being respectful towards other students or the instructor, it is the instructor's prerogative to ask the student to leave, to refer the student to the department head, and to consider referring the student to the Dean of Students who may consider requiring the student to drop the course. Please refer to pages 42 – 46 of the East Texas A&M University Student guidebook's Codes of Conduct for details.

Academic Dishonesty: Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. There is **no tolerance** for any kind of academic dishonesty in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, theft of instructional material or exams, representing the work of someone else as one's own, and misrepresenting absences. Academic dishonesty is a severe transgression and may result in referral to the Dean of Students, expulsion from class and/or the University, and a failing grade.

It is the student's responsibility to:

1. research and write their own papers
2. give proper credit through documentation when using words or ideas of others
3. rely on their own knowledge when taking tests
4. refuse to give another student the opportunity to be dishonest

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Artificial Intelligence (AI): The use of ChatGPT, Copilot, or any other AI platform or tool to generate ideas, write content, or produce any material is strictly prohibited in this course.

This class is designed to develop your writing skills, and if you are using AI, you are not writing or learning. This is because the use of AI diminishes opportunities to learn from our experiences and from each other, to play with our creative freedoms, to problem-solve, and to contribute our ideas in authentic ways. In a nutshell, college is a place for learning, and this AI simply cannot do that learning for us.

Any work written, developed, created, or inspired by generative artificial intelligence does not lend itself to our learning goals and is a breach of ethical engagement and our academic integrity policy. Using AI opens up academic honesty issues, both because it raises the question if the work is "your" work, and also because tools like ChatGPT rely on taking material from uncredited scholars and writers. **If discovered that you have used any type of AI for your work, you will face negative consequences, which will include failing the assignment and potentially failing the course and facing discipline from the university.**

Please be cautious using tools like Grammarly, which can be very helpful with spell check and grammar help but should be avoided when they generate content.

TURNITIN

East Texas A&M University uses Turnitin software to help students avoid plagiarism and cheating. Turnitin is a 'text-matching' software which is designed to educate students regarding appropriate citation and referencing techniques. Turnitin is also used to provide East Texas A&M University with confidence in the academic integrity of students work. Turnitin does this by comparing a student submission against an archive of Internet documents, Internet data, a repository of previously submitted papers, and subscription repository of periodicals, journals, and publications. Turnitin then creates an 'Originality Report' which can be viewed by both lecturers and students, which identifies where the text within a student submission has matched another source.

EAST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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 Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ADA ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

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

East Texas A&M University, Waters Library, Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150, Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@etamu.edu

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

After contacting the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of what accommodations are needed **IN ADVANCE** of when they are needed (for example, if testing accommodations are necessary, please inform the instructor with appropriate documentation at LEAST one week before the test date).

EMAIL POLICY:

Email is the preferred form of communication, with a general response time of 24 hours during the week (do not expect replies over the weekend). For all emails sent, please **include full name, student ID, and the class** that you are attending. Do not send emails to myself and other professors at once, as each professor has different issues to address. You are allotted three absences for this course; plan accordingly and there is no need to contact me about unexcused absences that are incorporated into this allowance. For excused absences, you need to bring in a hard copy of appropriate documentation of your absence.

GRADE POLICY:

If you have concerns regarding a grade, email me **within one week of receiving the assignment back** clearly explaining why you think the assignment was addressed incorrectly. After the email is received, we will then set up an appointment to discuss the concern.

CAMPUS CONCEALED CARRY

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to

((<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer).

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

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

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

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

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@etamu.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

MINIMAL TECHNICAL SKILLS AND PROGRAMS NEEDED

At a minimum, you must have access to and be able to use Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, the university provides access here:

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/facultystaffservices/academictechnology/documents/Office-365-Students.pdf>

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

Basic Schedule Information

*(full information, with detailed reading information can be found on D2L)

1/16 Video Introduction Post

Research Project

1/21 – Discussion Post on Research (Turabian Reading)

1/21 – Discussion Post on Citations (Turabian Reading)

1/28 – Proposal Due for Peer Review

2/2 – Proposal Peer Review Due

2/4 – Discussion Post on Bibliography (Turabian Reading)

2/11 – Proposal Due

2/18 – Library Contact Due

2/25 – Bibliography Due

2/25 – Discussion Post on Using Sources (Turabian Reading)

3/4 – Annotated Bibliography

3/18 – Final Paper Draft Due

3/25 – Final Paper Peer Review Due

4/1 – Final Paper Due

Creating a Professional Identity

4/8 – Biography Due in Discussion Post (150-200 words)

4/10 - Comments due on Biography Posts

4/15 - Revised Biography Due

4/15 – Resume Outreach

4/22 – Resume Due

4/29 - Website Due for Peer Review in Discussion Post

5/1 – Peer Review for Website Due in Discussion Post

5/4 – Website Due

5/4 - Reflection Paper Due