



ENG 697, 01W, 30318, Humor and the Internet

COURSE SYLLABUS: May mini 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

I Instructor: Salvatore Attardo
Office Location: Talbot Hall of Languages 306
Office Hours: T 3:00-4:30 pm CST and by appointment (online)
Office Phone (Department): 903-886-5260
Office Fax: 903-886-5980
University Email Address: salvatore.attardo@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: email
Communication Response Time: 24hr
Zoom link: <https://tamuc.zoom.us/j/6458619518>

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required: Gretchen McCulloch. (2019). *Because Internet. Understanding the New Rules of Language*. Penguin. [available as e-book or hard copy]

ISBN-10 : 0735210942

ISBN-13 : 978-0735210943

Software Required: none

Optional Texts and/or Materials:

Salvatore Attardo. (2023). *Humor 2.0: How the Internet Changed Humor*. Anthem Press.

ISBN-10 : 1839993626

ISBN-13 : 978-1839993626

Adam Aleksic. (2025). *Algospeak: How Social Media Is Transforming the Future of Language*. Knopf.

ISBN-10 : 0593804074

ISBN-13 : 978-0593804070

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Course Description

Student Learning Outcomes (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs)

1. Demonstrate familiarity with linguistic concepts related to internet humor (such as memetic drift, semantic bleaching, etc.)
2. Create at least one meme
3. Research and document memes and other internet humor phenomena
4. Write and present a research project on a topic relevant to the course.
5. Create a slide deck for the presentation

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Access to D2L, word processing, saving files ad pdf, accessing the internet, internet searches.

Instructional Methods

This is an online synchronous/asynchronous class. There will be one or more live sessions (time and date TBA). You MUST do at least one of the following:

- a) attend remotely: log in via Zoom (Meeting ID: <https://tamuc.zoom.us/j/6458619518>; or
- c) watch the video of the lecture on the LMS (usually uploaded during the night).

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

You must have read the relevant chapters in the book (see calendar). You must post at least one contributions to the Q&A per day. You may post questions about the lecture/contents of the book or answer other students questions. If you attend the live lecture you are exempted from having to post one question. Obviously you may post more than one Q&A per day, if you want. Projects are due by 11:30 pm on the day indicated in the calendar.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 90-100 Points

B = 80-89 Points

C = 70-79 Points

D = 60-69 Points

F = 60 & > Points

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Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.

Example:

Assignments 15%

Discussions 20%

Slides, paper, other materials for the final project: 10%

Final Oral Exam (viva voce) 50%

Intro & Participation: 5%

TOTAL 100%

Assessments

Assignments (3x) 5 points

Q&A: 20 points

Final project materials: (1x) 10 points

Introductions: (1x) 1 point

Participation: (1x) 4 points

Viva voce exam: (1x) 50 points

Course Outline/Calendar

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

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.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection 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

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work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

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

Technical Support

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>

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

CWID and Password

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.

Technology-Related Issues

Personal computer and internet connection 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 local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office.

Learning Management System (LMS) – D2L

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 the technical requirements:

- View the [Learning Management System Requirements Webpage](#).
- Learn more on the [LMS Browser Support Webpage](#).

Technical Support

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 on the [Brightspace Support Webpage](#).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor. Correspondence will always be through university email (your “myLeo” mail) and

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announcements in myLeo online (D2L). You will not RECEIVE email through D2L, so be sure to check your ETAMU email for communication. Students are encouraged to check university email daily.

Include the Following in Emails with Instructor:

- Course name and subject in the subject line
- Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr. Jackson)
- Proper email etiquette (no “text” emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)
- Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

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.

Student Conduct

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 online in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette Webpage](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the [Class Attendance Policy](#)

Academic Integrity

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

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

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

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

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

Use of Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University 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 instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

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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

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

East Texas A&M University
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu
Website: [Office of Student Disability Services](#)

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.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

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 ETAMU 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 East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services

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

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service

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available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



Mini projects

These are small assignments that will require a couple of days of work, at the most.

1) Create your meme project:

Either using a meme template or “freehanding” create your own meme. Any topic is acceptable, but it needs to be an image macro type meme.

2) Algospeak example:

Identify an example of algospeak, in the sense of Aleksic, and document it.

3) Memetic drift project:

Select a meme that has undergone some degree of memetic drift; document it and analyze it along the lines of the discussion of memetic drift in the Attardo book

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

May 11 Introductions — McCulloch Ch 1 “Informal Writing”

May 12 McCulloch Ch 2 “Language and Society”

May 13 McCulloch Ch 3 “Internet People”

May 14 Watch humor theories lecture (first 33 minutes) <https://youtu.be/gPKEn6y50gk> and watch humor theories lecture 2 <https://youtu.be/fr7KsYePJcg>

May 15 McCulloch Ch 4 “Typographical Tone of Voice” — Project 1 due (Create your meme)

May 16- 17 weekend Watch Algospeak lecture <https://youtu.be/iREALraNbTc>

May 18 McCulloch Ch 5 “Emojis and other internet gestures”

May 19 McCulloch Ch 6 “How conversations change”

May 20 McCulloch Ch 7-8 “Memes and Internet culture & a new metaphor” — Project 2 due (Algospeak)

May 21 Attardo on memetic drift (article)

May 22 Live session (time TBA)

May 23-24 weekend

May 25 Project 3 due (Memetic drift)

May 26 Viva voce exams

May 27 Viva voce exams

May 28 Semester ends

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