



ENG 615-01E, 01W, CRW
Doctoral Studies in English
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Rebecca Rowe | Office Location: DTH 314
In-Person Student Hours: MTh, 3:30-4:30pm | Virtual Student Hours: W, 10am-12pm | by appt.
Email Address: Rebecca.Rowe@etamu.edu (preferred form of communication)
Communication Response Time: Within 24 hours (M-F, 8am-5pm)

COURSE INFORMATION

Time: M 5:00-7:40 PM | **Location:** DTH 314 or Zoom

Textbooks

All materials are available on D2L and/or on the course schedule

Helpful websites

- [Purdue OWL MLA](#) is a great resource for citation information.
- ETAMU's [university library website](#) should be your go-to place for research.

Course Description

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. This is an approved doctoral research tools course.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to...	SLO Aligns with ETAMU English Graduate Program Outcomes (Paraphrased)	SLO Aligns with NACE Career Preparedness Competencies
apply doctoral-level research and writing strategies to produce scholarly documents, including research outlines and abstracts, that meet the conventions of the field.	• articulate their knowledge of a particular area of scholarly inquiry, using primary and secondary texts.	Communication; Critical Thinking

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contextualize their own research work within chosen subfield of English Studies.	- understand fundamental theoretical concepts and critical terminology. - articulate their knowledge of a particular area of scholarly inquiry, using primary and secondary texts.	Communication; Critical Thinking
develop and organize long-term professional development goals that bridge the transition from graduate researcher to early-career scholar.	employ conventions associated with a variety of the most commonly used scholarly genres.	Communication; Critical Thinking; Career & Self-Development; Professionalism

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Software Required

- We will be using D2L for all assignment submissions and course materials.
- You will need to read pdfs throughout the semester. You are not required to print them, but you are required to be able to look at them during class.

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

The most important technical skill you need is the ability to use a word processor, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs. Unless otherwise noted in the assignment prompt, **all projects and essays must be submitted as a Word Doc, a Google Doc, or a pdf**. You will also need to be familiar with D2L and websites such as *YouTube*.

Instructional Methods

This is a dual-modality course, which means that some of you will be meeting in person with me every week while some of you will be joining us at the same time over Zoom. Much of our work will take place while we are together in that time period, however you are joining us. Each day will consist of a lecture and some kind of class conversation or activity. I will also offer feedback on everything you submit. If you ever want more feedback, please let me know.

Student Responsibilities

You will need to complete readings (or viewings) for every class, including a mixture of primary and secondary sources, in order to engage fully in the conversations we will have each week. This is a graduate course, so I expect each of you to come to class with thoughts, ideas, and questions about our readings. I will lead questions and activities, but part of the work of this course is to develop your own way for approaching the weekly texts, both on your own and in collaboration with your classmates. There will also be assignments throughout the course intended to help you apply the skills and knowledge we discuss.

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GRADING

The structural presentation and badge formatting of this grading policy were polished with the assistance of Gemini (Google AI).

Welcome to a different kind of learning experience! This course is built on the principles of [Gameful or Gamified learning](#). Instead of fighting against a traditional grading system where you start with a perfect score and lose points for every mistake, you start here at the beginning of your journey and build your grade from the ground up by choosing your own adventure.

You are in control of your journey. You decide which quests (assignments) to pursue based on your interests, goals, and the skills you want to develop.

Experiencing Grades

Your grade in this course is determined solely by the total **Experience Points (XP)** you accumulate. Your grade is based on *engagement, labor, and completion*—not on a running average or grading curves.

Because of this, my grading and my feedback serve two entirely different purposes:

- **XP** is your reward for doing the labor and engaging with the material. If you complete an assignment fully and in the spirit it was assigned, you receive **all of the XP** that assignment is worth.
- **Feedback** is where we discuss quality. I will use my comments and rubrics to push your writing, challenge your ideas, and help you grow as a scholar. **My critique will never lower your XP.**

This table shows what falls under XP and what falls under feedback:

Element	How It Affects XP	How It Affects Feedback
Your Ideas & Writing	No effect on XP. If you put in intellectual labor, you get full points.	Primary Focus. This is where I will push you to refine, challenge, and strengthen your analytical voice.
Deadlines & Late Work	-1 XP per calendar day late. Work is due Sundays at 11:59 PM (that's a soft deadline; you're safe until I start grading the next morning). Up to a one-week extension should be requested <i>before</i> the deadline via the Extension Request Form unless extenuating circumstances prevent you from doing so.	I will add a brief note to your grade log to track any late-work penalties.
Short Submissions	Pro-rated XP reduction. If you write 500 words of an assigned 1,000-word prompt, you can only earn up to half the XP because you only did half the work. <i>Wiggle room: plus or minus 50 words</i>	I will explain where your work fell short and what critical depth was lost due to length.

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Element	How It Affects XP	How It Affects Feedback
	<i>for short assignments, plus or minus 100 words for long ones.</i>	
Missing the Point	Up to half of the XP is deducted. If you submit an essay when a podcast was required, or skip the research element of a research project, you have not engaged with the core format. The project is incomplete and receives no more than half of the possible XP.	I will provide clear guidance on what was missed and how it impacts the project's overall goal.
Grammar & Formatting	No effect on XP <i>unless</i> the formatting directly violates the prompt (e.g., submitting a slideshow instead of an assigned flyer).	I only comment on grammar if it directly impedes the piece's readability, or if formatting compromises accessibility.
Citations	No effect on XP <i>unless</i> you: (1) plagiarize, (2) omit required sources entirely, (3) forget a Works Cited page, or (4) submit a list of raw URLs instead of a Works Cited page.	I am not a formatting stickler. As long as your sources are clear, honest, and retrievable, you will not receive citation critiques.

At the end of the semester, your total XP converts directly to your final grade, which is based on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory premise:

- **Satisfactory: 80 XP**
- **Unsatisfactory: <79 XP**

Assessing Outcomes

While your total XP determines your final grade, you must also demonstrate balanced growth across our three **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)** to pass the course. Think of these as your academic **Skill Paths**. Just as in a game where you choose specific pathways or skills to master, these paths represent the key focus areas where you will grow this semester.

To clearly tie assessments to those outcomes, every assignment in this course is mapped to a specific Skill Path based on one of our SLOs: **apply strategies, contextualize, develop goals**. Most assignments require you to draw on more than one SLO, so I have associated each assignment with the SLO it most prominently engages with. In the D2L gradebook, assignments are sorted into those three categories, and you can see the total XP you have in a category at the end of each category. **You are required to get 20 XP in each of the three Skill Paths in order to pass the course**, a feat you will automatically achieve if you complete all the required assignments (bolded in the table below). Together, the required assignments are worth **60 XP**. You have complete freedom to earn the remaining 20 XP to reach the Satisfactory grade in whichever Skill Paths you prefer:

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Assignment	Description	XP	Skill Path
Student Hours	Meet with me to discuss course concepts or goals.	3 XP per visit (up to 5 times)	Contextualize
Class Notes	Email me the notes you take during class for me to share with your peers.	3 XP per week (up to 5 times)	Contextualize
Exploratory Interview	Collaboratively interview a university employee who has helpful information.	10 XP	Contextualize
Who Are You? Discussion Board	Get acquainted with each other.	5 XP	Contextualize
Peer Pods	Working in assigned groups, check in with each other fortnightly.	1 XP per check in	Contextualize
Designing Research Discussion Board	Discuss your own methods and approaches to research.	10 XP	Apply Strategies
Responding to Scholars	Chart how you would respond to an article by one of our faculty members.	5 XP	Apply Strategies
Reverse Engineered Article	Create a reverse outline of an article by one of our faculty members and reflect on their processes.	10 XP	Apply Strategies
Restructuring Your Writing	Revise an introduction, conclusion, or essay outline to be more argument-based.	5 XP	Apply Strategies
Practicing Abstracting	Generate a conference abstract of a piece you wrote before.	5 XP	Apply Strategies
Comparing Journals	Reflect on how a piece you wrote before would need to be revised for 2 different journals.	5 XP	Apply Strategies
Coursework Discussion Board	Design a plan for your coursework in the coming years.	5 XP	Develop goals
Exams and Advising Discussion Board	Begin compiling sources for your comprehensive exams and reflect on who you want for an advisor.	5 XP	Develop goals
Dissertation Brainstorming	Begin brainstorming possible directions for your dissertation.	10 XP	Develop goals
CV Draft	Submit a CV that can be your base for the next few years.	5 XP	Develop goals

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Assignment	Description	XP	Skill Path
Imagine PhD Discussion Board	Reflect on alt-ac and non-ac careers you may be interested in and how you will achieve them.	5 XP	Develop goals
wAyfinder Test	End-of-module test that mixes reflection and application.	5 XP; cannot be repeated for credit	Contextualize
Planning Backwards	Develop a plan to successfully complete your PhD and professionalize during the process.	10 XP	Develop goals
Event Review	Review any event on campus that is in some way related to your research.	5 XP	Contextualize

Figuring out Where You Are and Where You're Going

The examples in this section were inspired by a similar concept in Emily Littlejohn's syllabi.

To help you visualize how this works, here is an example of a student's mid-semester tracking sheet:

- **Exploratory Interview:** 10 XP in *Contextualize*
- **Who Are You? Discussion Board:** 5 XP in *Contextualize*
- **Designing Research Discussion Board:** 10 XP in *Apply Strategies*
- **Reverse Engineered Article:** 10 XP in *Apply Strategies*
- **Restructuring Your Writing:** 5 XP in *Apply Strategies*
- **Comparing Journals:** 5 XP in *Apply Strategies*
- **Current Total: 45 XP** (15 *Contextualize*, 30 *Apply Strategies*)

This student plans to complete the following:

- **Peer Pods:** 7 XP in *Contextualize*
- **Exams and Advising Discussion Board:** 5 XP in *Develop Goals*
- **Dissertation Brainstorming:** 10 XP in *Develop Goals*
- **CV Draft:** 5 XP in *Develop Goals*
- **Planning Backwards:** 10 XP in *Develop Goals*
- **Expected Remaining: 35 XP** (5 *Contextualize*, 30 *Develop Goals*)

With this information, they can project their final XP:

Current XP (45) + Expected XP (35) = Total Projected XP (80).

They can also make sure they're making the appropriate progress on their skill paths:

- **Apply Strategies:** 30 (Current) + 0 (Expected) = 30 XP (20 XP target passed!)
- **Contextualize:** 15 (Current) + 5 (Expected) = 20 XP (20 XP target passed!)

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- **Develop Goals:** 0 (Current) + 30 (Expected) = 30 XP (20 XP target passed!)

Because this student met the 20 XP threshold on all three Skill Paths and reached 80 total XP, they would receive a Satisfactory grade for the course.

Badges

Because this course's assessment style is so unconventional, you can track your overall progression using three types of **Badges** in D2L.

XP Milestone Badge: Earn the Doctoral Skills: Equipped badge when you hit 80 XP to let you know that you've hit the required XP to satisfy course requirements.

Skill Path Badges: Once you have earned 20 XP in a single Skill Path, you will earn a badge letting you know you have hit the threshold: [name of SLO] Stat: Leveled Up (e.g., Strategy Stat: Leveled Up). Earning one of these badges means you have mastered the core fundamentals on this Skill Path. You need all three of these badges to pass the course.

To give you an idea of how these badges would work, in the above student example, the student would have earned the Strategy Stat: Leveled Up badge by midterm. They would then earn the Doctoral Skills: Equipped, Context Stat: Leveled Up, and Planning Stat: Leveled Up badges by the end of the semester for a total of 4 badges.

Activity Badges: There are a few other badges that do not directly relate to your grade but acknowledge when you've completed an activity a certain number of times. When you've earned these badges, you can no longer earn XP through the assignments tied to that badge:

- **Side Quest: Professor Parley** (*Quest Unlocked*. You consulted the guild master outside of regular raid hours. You gained invaluable insights—and this specific side quest can be repeated **4 more times** for bonus XP.)
- **Lore Master** (*XP Node Depleted*. You have officially documented the history of the realm 5 times. Your archival skills are fully leveled up; further notes will not yield XP.)
- **wAyfinder** (*Map Fully Explored*. You have navigated every objective within the module. This achievement is hard-coded as a one-time progression boost and cannot be repeated.)

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Policy on Humanity

My courses and teaching are designed around two core concepts: adaptability and empathy:

- I recognize that you have considerable knowledge about many things coming into this class. I start by exploring what you already know so that I can help you take your skills and refine and strengthen them. I also want you to be able to take what you learn in my class forward with you. So, I design my courses around skills that I can teach you that you can then apply elsewhere as you move through your education and life.

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- I know that you do not begin and end with this class, and I approach each student first and foremost as a human being who, if we're being honest, may have more important things going on in their lives than this class. **Your health—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial—is more important than anything we will do or discuss, and I want you to prioritize them.** That means a few things:
 - If you need help, accommodation, an extension, or anything else to perform as well as you can while also maintaining your health, please let me know. That also means that you can eat and drink in class if you need to, that you can use technology as it best serves you, and that if you need to leave the room at any point for your health (including mental and emotional), please do so.
 - This class will be full of human bodies, so please be considerate. If you are sick, stay home. There are plenty of ways to make up any day of class.
 - As a fellow human being, I respect you. By respect, I mean that I will always do my best to see you as a whole human being whose life experiences have created a person who acts in certain ways and who deserves to be treated like a human being. All I ask is that just as I respect you as a human being, you treat me and your peers with that kind of respect. We may at times cover new or difficult material and we all may have different opinions about it. I ask that you keep an open mind and be respectful with me, your classmates, and our material.

Ultimately, my goal is to discover where you are on your personal learning journey and help you move along that journey in whatever way I can. Most importantly, **I am here to help you, not harm you.** If there is ever anything I can do to help you with that, please let me know!

Attendance Policy

While your presence in the course will help both you and your classmates learn and process the material, life often finds a way to get in the way. So, **every student is allowed 3 missed days within the semester without a penalty.** You do not have to tell me why you're absent; you may be sick or need to work an extra shift or look after a child or simply need a mental health day to be the best you that you can be. You do not owe me an explanation for organizing your time as well as you can. Moreover, if you are significantly late or leave significantly early, you will only earn half credit for that day. Two days of that will equal one absence. After missing 3 days (or the equivalent number of days of partial days), **you will lose 5 XP for every subsequent day you miss.**

If you are absent for any reason at any point in the course, you can complete a **make-up** activity by contacting me to receive the specific activity for that day. Completing this makeup activity will count as your attendance for the day and will allow you to complete whatever educational objective you missed for the day you are gone. Because I provide makeup work, your three free absences include any of ETAMU's excused absences, such as religious holidays or university competitions. Even if you miss class for an excused reason, you will need to engage with the content of the course when you can.

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Interaction with Instructor Statement

As an instructor, communication is key with me. I am happy to be flexible with most things in this course if it will help you succeed, but I'm not a mind reader. You have to tell me what you need so that I can help you. If you need to contact me, send me an **email**. Generally, I will respond to emails sent between 8am and 5pm, Monday-Friday, within 24 hours of receiving them. If you have an urgent question about an assignment that's due on Sunday, you might want to start working on it by Friday so you have a chance to ask me before the weekend. If you forget and get started late, just let me know you need more time in the Extension Request Form. If I plan to be away from my computer for more than a couple of days, I will let you know in advance. I will also update the online grades as quickly as I can. I aim for no more than a week, but it may take me longer, especially with longer projects. You will receive written feedback for every project, so make sure you check for it. I often use rubrics, so if it looks like I didn't leave any comments, look for the rubric.

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 an educator, I also acknowledge that college should be a space to learn technology like AI before you need to use it in your professional or personal life. However, AI can also obscure or hamper learning, especially in a class like this one, which focuses on teaching you how to generate your own content. To access the benefits of teaching you how to use AI ethically while mitigating the ethical concerns thereof, I have created a wAyfinder module and badge. The module will teach you how to use AI ethically, and you will earn the badge when you have completed the final assignment in the module. **Once you have earned the badge, you may use AI only where and how it is indicated in assignment prompts.** You will not be allowed to use AI on all assignments, and you will not be able to use AI in the same way on all assignments, so make sure to read the assignment prompt carefully. **If you do not earn the badge, you are not allowed to use generative AI tools for any assignment in this course,** and any such use of AI will be treated as an academic integrity issue.

The only exception to this rule is the Artificial Student Helper (ASH) that I have created through NotebookLM and which you can find linked in our D2L page. ASH has information specifically pertaining to our course and can be used if you have questions or want clarification (or you can always talk to me!). The wAyfinder badge is not required for this tool because I was the one who developed it, using the ethical guidelines in the wAyfinder module, meaning that it is relatively safe to use. For more information on ASH (what it is and how to use it) see D2L.

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.

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CLASS SCHEDULE

COURSE TECHNOLOGY

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

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.

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 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.

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>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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.

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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](#)

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](#)

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.etamu.edu/counseling-center/

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 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.

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,

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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.