

English 306: Research and Research Writing

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Office Hours: M W 11:00-12:30 p.m.
 R 1:00-1:50 p.m.
Class Meeting Times: M W F 10:00-10:50 a.m. Briggs 27

Required Texts:

- 1) Chaos: The Making of a New Science. James Gleick
- 2) Tristram Shandy. Laurence Sterne.
- 3) Katherine N. Hayles. Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature.
- 4) Roger Lewin. Complexity: Life at the Edge of Chaos.

Course Goals:

This course focuses on the rationale and practice of research and research techniques. As research often involves moving into new areas, where the rules of analysis are still being worked out and the shift from an old and reassuring paradigm is towards a new and unsettling one, this class will look at a relatively new phenomenon: complexity theory. Complexity theory has served as a model for examining seemingly random, non-linear, and indeterministic systems such as climate, the stock market, and evolution. Complexity theorists purport to be able to make sense of these systems by abandoning the linear thinking and patterns of Newtonian physics and examining these systems through their own patterns of self-generating order. In this course, students will first familiarize themselves with the latest thinking on complexity theory, gaining a working knowledge of its assumptions and principles. We will use a literary text, Tristram Shandy, to explore how a seemingly random novel generates its own sense of order. In consultation with me, students will then identify their own research interests in order to write a research paper that will apply the concepts and principles to a topic of their own choosing.

Writing Requirements:

- 1) In-class work, study questions, quizzes (20%)
- 2) Panel discussions (10%)
- 3) Midterm exam (10%). Failed exams=no credit.

- 4) One essay on Tristram Shandy (20%)
- 5) One research essay (30%)
- 5) Final exam (10%). Failed exams=no credit.

Attendance Policy

This class demands your most careful participation and diligence. In-class work and quizzes cannot be turned in late nor will out-of-class assignments be accepted after they are due. Quizzes, announced and unannounced, are often based on the lecture for the preceding class. You should come to class having prepared that day's reading. Out of respect for your classmates and instructor, students should come to class on time and remain for the whole period.

Plagiarism Policy

Students should follow the rules for proper attribution of outside sources. All work other than group projects should reflect the student's own efforts. Violations of this standard will result in a failing grade for the assignment. (Consult attached sheet).

With the advent of the Internet and the easy electronic access to materials, it is tempting to simply cut material from a source and paste it into one's own work. Even if one gives proper attribution to that source, presenting another's work as one's own is plagiarism. When dealing with outside sources, take the time to outline and summarize what is in that source, using quotation sparingly. The virtue of this process is that one is able to integrate outside information into one's own original work.

Support Services

Apart from visiting me during my office hours or arranging an appointment at your convenience, students should know that the University offers help in terms of grammar review or composing and rearranging the elements of the essay. To these ends, students can sign up for individual tutoring sessions in the Writing Center (Briggs 225) or the Learning Center (basement of the Student Center).