ENGL 5398-110: Thesis  
Texas A&M University–Central Texas, Summer 2020

**Course Information**  
Dates: Jun 1–Jul 24, 2020  
Type: Online via Canvas

**Instructor and Contact Information**  
Instructor: Dr. Stephanie Tavera  
Email: stavera@tamuct.edu  
Office Phone: (254) 519-5773  
Office: Heritage Hall 204M  
Hours: By Appt or WebEx Only

**Course Overview and Description.** Scheduled when student is ready to begin thesis. No credit until thesis is accepted. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 5374, 24 hours of graduate credit and permission of department chair. The thesis project is a rigorous, extended, and sustained piece of original scholarship that offers an in-depth analysis, examination, or argument of one topic. Students pursuing this option will enroll in six credit hours of ENGL 5398 (Thesis) with approval from the Graduate Coordinator for the MA in English. These credit hours can be taken in a student’s final semester or be spread over the final two semesters. However, once the student begins enrollment in thesis hours, the student must maintain continuous enrollment of at least one credit hour of thesis per semester until the student graduates. Please note that only six credit hours of ENGL 5398 can be counted toward graduation.

The thesis shall be prepared in accordance with the procedures specified by the Graduate School. Upon completion of the thesis, the student shall sit for an oral defense before their thesis committee.

**Committee Formation:** Students should arrange to meet with the Graduate Coordinator for the MA in English to present a topic or area to consider for a thesis. The Graduate Coordinator for the MA in English and student will decide together whom to name the chair of the thesis project. Only graduate faculty can chair a thesis project. Should the designated faculty member agree to chair the thesis student, this person will, then, become that student’s thesis advisor, and the contact person for the student throughout the thesis project. The thesis topic must be approved by the Graduate School by filing the Thesis Proposal Approval Form available from the Graduate School. Deadlines related to the thesis are also available from that office, including deadlines related to submitting the topic approval form, the defense deadline, and filing an electronic copy of the thesis.

The specifics of the thesis—that is, number of chapters, expectations for content, and deadlines—will be determined by the chair of the committee. The chair of the thesis committee will recommend at least one additional reader for the thesis project. More normally, the thesis will have two additional readers so that the thesis committee will consist of three full-time faculty members who are also members of the Graduate Faculty. In some cases, one reader may be from outside the English department. Only the Graduate Coordinator for the MA in English can approve the formation of a committee. The thesis advisor will need to secure this approval before the student begins work on the thesis project.

It is incumbent on the student to remain in steady communication with the thesis advisor at every stage of the thesis. The thesis advisor will set deadlines for progress. Only those who meet these deadlines, meet them at the level the advisor sets, and who remain in contact with the advisor should expect to receive a passing grade for thesis hours, or to remain on track to complete the thesis in a timely manner.

**Requirements of Thesis:** While many of the requirements of the thesis will be determined between the chair and the student, there are some basic requirements every thesis project must meet.
• There is 60-page minimum, not including works cited, images, or appendices.
• The thesis will make an original contribution to some area within English studies.
• Students must successfully defend their thesis in an oral defense (see below).

As already stated, the structure of the thesis can vary. One possible structure for the thesis is:

• Introduction: State the scope, central research question(s), and thesis. Also, describe the structure of the manuscript that follows, including the purpose of each chapter. The Introduction is often written last because you will not know what you are introducing until you write the rest of your thesis.
• Chapter 1: Review the relevant scholarship. Demonstrate to your reader that you are a master of the field. You do not need to include every publication, but you should not miss anything important. Show the various schools of thought, and where scholars agree or disagree. Conclude by showing where the gaps and unanswered questions are – that is where your thesis fits in. The literature review may also appear in the Introduction if it is relevant to place it there.
• Chapter 2-X [or 1-X]: Subsequent chapters explore how your work in primary and secondary sources fills the gaps in how one understands your topic or question. Each chapter should link back to your central research question(s). The required number of chapters, as well as the overall length of your thesis, will vary based on your topic. If you have questions about this, please direct them to your thesis chair.
• Conclusion: Explain what we now know about this subject as a result of your work, and how your work has changed our understanding of the topic.

Again, this is only one possible structure. Only the thesis advisor can approve the structure for each thesis project. Issues that may arise between the student and the thesis advisor should be directed to the Graduate Coordinator for the MA in English, or, to the department chair for Humanities if the Graduate Coordinator is also the thesis advisor for a project. The chair is the final arbitrator for issues related to the thesis.

Thesis Proposal: After forming a committee, but before writing the thesis proper, each student must write a thesis prospectus, or proposal. The proposal must be approved by the committee. While writing the prospectus, the student should work closely with the committee chair, who is responsible for keeping other committee members informed of the student’s progress and deciding when to distribute copies of the prospectus (and later the thesis proper) to them. Because this process involves the participation of many people, the student would be wise to begin as soon as possible.

The format of the prospectus should be as follows:

• Statement of Problem: Specify the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated. Make a case for the importance of your project, explaining what it contributes and why scholars should find it valuable work.
• Preliminary Review of Scholarship (or Literature Review): Summarize, in no more than four pages, the relevant scholarship on your thesis subject, and demonstrate your project’s distinctiveness from previous research.
• Methodology: In no more than three pages, identify and defend your critical methodology. That is, indicate how you will investigate the subject of your thesis and why your method is appropriate for the subject.
• Tentative Organization: Briefly outline the structure of your thesis, indicating chapters or sections and summarizing the main argument or claims for each chapter/section.
• Preliminary Bibliography: List sources relevant to your project in an appropriate documentation style, taking into account that what constitutes an acceptable minimum and maximum number

Tavera–ENGL 5374–Fall 2020 p. 2
of sources cannot be determined in advance but will depend entirely upon the subject matter of the thesis.

**Thesis Defense:** Following the completion of a thesis, the student will provide a professional presentation of the most central elements of the thesis and defend those elements and others related to the thesis. While the specific expectations for a student’s defense will be determined by the thesis chair, every defense will include an oral presentation equivalent to a professional presentation for an academic organization, will require the candidate to field impromptu questions from the thesis committee regarding the presentation and the thesis itself, and will be made open to the public, although guests are not allowed to participate (e.g. ask questions, make interjections, offer their own ideas etc.).

A defense can result in three outcomes:
- Pass with no thesis revisions
- Conditional pass based on thesis revisions
- No pass An outcome of “no pass” requires the student to work with the thesis advisor to address issues raised by the committee, and to sit for another oral defense.

A student can only sit for one defense per semester, which means that an outcome of “no pass” will delay graduation at least one semester. Two unsuccessful defenses will result in the student being converted to the non-thesis track.

An outcome of “conditional pass based on revisions” can only convert to a pass if the student submits all revisions ahead of the deadlines established by the Office of Graduate Studies. Following a successful defense, but before submitting the thesis to the Office of Graduate Studies, the student must make certain that the thesis is free of typographical, spelling, and grammatical errors. The Office of Graduate Studies will return theses if they contain such errors or do not conform to its prescribed format. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in an outcome of “no pass,” and all the conditions of a no pass will become applicable.

Following approval by the Office of Graduate Studies, the thesis will be published and made available through ProQuest. Questions about thesis publication should be addressed to the Office of Graduate Studies.

**UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

**Drop Policy.** If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a Drop Request Form: [https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf].

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar’s Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar’s Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar’s Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits. Please note: Oftentimes, students feel the need to drop a course because they are overwhelmed by personal or professional responsibilities. As your instructor, I humbly request that you make an appointment or drop by during office hours to speak with me about your concerns before dropping my course.

**Academic Integrity.** Texas A&M University-Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly
conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student’s academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student’s work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university’s Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university’s standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

For more information regarding the Student Conduct process, [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html]. If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may submit a report, [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0].

**Academic Accommodations.** At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Office of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university’s programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our Access & Inclusion Canvas page (log-in required) [https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717]

**UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

**Tutoring.** Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. Subjects tutored on campus include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111. Tutor.com tutoring will not offer writing support beginning August 1, 2019, but will continue to offer other tutoring support. If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or have any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at (254) 519-5796, or by emailing Dr. DeEadra Albert-Green at deeadra.albertgreen@tamuct.edu.

**University Writing Center.** Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas (TAMUCT) is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. All appointments for this semester will be online only. Students can visit the Canvas page for the Writing Center which contains a video tutorial on how to make online appointments. Students may also email Dr. Bowles at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu with any questions.

Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students’ texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the UWC is here to help!
Students may arrange a one-to-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by making an appointment via WCOnline [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC and/or need any assistance with scheduling.

**University Library.** The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 85,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available 24 hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our Library website [http://tamuct.libguides.com/index].

**Copyright Notice.** Students should assume that all course material is copyrighted by the respective author(s). Reproduction of course material is prohibited without consent by the author and/or course instructor. Violation of copyright is against the law and Texas A&M University-Central Texas’ Code of Academic Honesty. All alleged violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

Copyright. 2020 by Stephanie Peebles Tavera, PhD at Texas A&M University-Central Texas, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Humanities; 1001 Leadership Place, Killeen, TX 76549; 254-519-5773; stavera@tamuct.edu.