**Research for Students of Literature**

**Class Time: Friday, 10:00-12:00**

**Instructor: Ghaderi, A. Ph. D.**

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**Course’s Description:**

At the heart of the field of English literature lay literary studies and textual analysis. Both of them rely on close reading to scrutinize texts written throughout many literary periods to erect arguments possessing literary and philosophical vehemence. This class of writings can be called scholarly writings or critical essays. We read texts, raise questions, search for answers and materials, argue, and report. The argument and the resultant report must be clear, logical, and easy to comprehend. The early modern/Renaissance, Victorian era, Modernism, Postmodernism, and many other periods and sections of the history of literature will be our reservoirs of texts. Furthermore, the questions and ideas encompass a variety of connected concepts and themes such as colonialism, post-colonialism, race, gender, identity, and culture.

We research the field of literary studies to discover new meanings and insights; making more connections in the gigantic network of cultural, political, and philosophical signification and intertextuality. Thus, a literary scholar aims to deepen and broaden our understanding of literary texts and “the many dimensions to the human experience that these texts work to illuminate.” Scholars may also take pleasure in the puzzle-solving dimensions; after all, pleasure would be the finest of human goals. Evaluation of our findings and then reporting them are two pillars of literary researches. Precision, brevity, and clarity are the definitive criteria we have to uphold. The strategies and methods we employ to find facts and construct sound arguments based on reason and not prejudice will be our Virgil in the age of misinformation we live in. The path ahead is crooked, ever-changing, like Hogwarts’ staircases, and rarely predetermined. We are going to explore this exciting and “perilous realm”; for it is after all our duty to read, think, analyze, search, plan and draw drafts to illuminate hidden chambers of Literature’s Labyrinth.

The kinds of course and study categories we have explored are limitless: “early modern identity and the impact of print culture through Renaissance literature, comparative authorial studies, race and ethnicity in contemporary American literature (or historically), exploring the birth of science and ‘modernity ‘or feminism through literature, the literature of colonial encounter, the goals and impact of a particular literary movement (the Harlem Renaissance or cyber-punk/sci-fi literature, for instance).” Therefore, the possibilities for reading are hard to be generalized and. By the end of this course, we will have been able to navigate our skills and interest among this colossal body of strains and write critically on literary subject matters.

**Objectives:**

* Learning how to conduct close-readings through practicing and analyzing a few instances in the class.
* Learning how to use databases to find needed and essential sources (critical essays, books, etc.).
* Finding proper strategies to raise research questions.
* Preparing notes and analyses to organize and prioritize textual materials.
* Finding appropriate responses to the various demands of the texts and critical concepts.
* Reading papers and analyzing their structure (formal and theoretical).
* Getting to know our readers and ways to find answers to the questions we raise.
* Preparing drafts and evaluating critical writings.
  + The list can go on; these are just the basics.

**Classroom Rules:**

* This is a voluntary course; so there are no rules but mine; which is, let us have a lot of fun and learn even more together.
* The following set is just for the sake of formality:
* All electronic gadgets must be off or set to silent mode. If you use them for reading PDFs and other class related files, make sure they will not distract you or others so as to prevent the class from digressions.
* Punctuality is a non-negotiable must.
* Should the students have any questions, concerns, or requests for meetings and materials, they will contact me ***immediately***.

**Schedule:**

| **Class** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | General Outlook; using data bases, *The Craft of Research* 1-15 |
| 2 | Time management; searching online sources, 16-28 |
| 3 | Knowing and prioritizing activities; 29-39 |
| 4 | Preparing your tools; 39-49 |
| 5 | Searching for the scholarly journals; 51-66 |
| 6 | Find the proper argument; 68-76 |
| 7 | Preparing a conference proposal; 77-83 |
| 8 | Raise questions and finding answers; |
| 9 | Engaging sources and mastering topics; 84-101 |
| 10 | Preparing a presentation: making arguments; 103-114 |
| 11 | Scholarly sources, finding aid, bibliographical description, metadata, provenance; 115-119 |
| 12 | Citation systems; 120-130 |
| 13 | Reasons and evidence; 131-150 |
| 14 | Sharing your findings; 152-169 |
| 15 | Preparing a comprehensive, annotated, enumerative bibliography; 171-188 |

**Sources:**

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 4th ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2016. (***Required***)

Williams, William Proctor, and Craig S. Abbott. *An Introduction to Bibliographical and Textual Studies*. 4th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009.

Kelsky, Karen. *The Professor is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your PhD into a Job*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2015. Print.

Greetham, D. C., ed. *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. New York: Modern Language Association, 2015. Print.

**Proposed Assignments:**

• **Writing assignments, short speeches and presentations**: students can prepare short speeches or presentations on the subjects listed in the syllabus. Each presentation must cover the basics of the subject and the necessary details. Use of related and proper photos, charts, paintings, etc. will be appreciated. You can give the presentations individually or in groups of two. In the case of short lectures, you will prepare a 7-10 minute speech on a certain subject matter (a critical essay preferably). The speech should cover a brief introduction of the work and the status of its current scholarship. All students will be given composition assignments during the course. These assignments are all integral to the course. I will read them all and give you detailed feedback.