



ENG 2820: What Is the English Major?

Section: 1RM1 (21945)

MWF Period 8

Turlington Hall 2306

Instructor: Roger Maioli

Office Hours:

W 10 AM–12 PM, at TUR 4330

Course description

What can you do as an English major, and what kinds of career paths are open to students who major in English? What are the practical and civic values of studying the discipline we call English? This course addresses questions like these by introducing the many areas of study collectively known as English and surveying the variety of academic and nonacademic careers actually pursued by English majors.

Taught by English Department faculty, the course will feature guest speakers ranging from other English professors and UF English alumni to UF librarians and on-campus undergraduate advisors. You will learn about various subfields in English, such as creative writing, film and media studies, British and American literature, African American literature, environmental fiction, and writing studies; speakers will share experiences about the job market as well as advice on career preparation; and advisors will introduce you to a variety of on-campus resources that help English majors pursue opportunities such as internships, research, and study abroad.

Besides considering the practical aspects of the major, we will also discuss the importance of English as a major subdivision of the humanities. What is English for in addition to serving as preparation for a range of careers? What role does an English education play for life in democratic societies?

This course counts towards the requirements for the English major.

Before anything else...

Before you read any further, here's something I'll ask you to do **right away**: Go to Canvas > Account > Notifications > Announcements, and set it to "Notify Immediately." A lot of our communication for this course will happen through Canvas Announcements, and unless you activate this option you may miss important updates, assignments, and deadlines.



Do this today!

Did you take care of that? Then welcome to ENG 2820! My name is **Roger Maioli** (pronounced "my olly") and I will be your instructor this semester. If we already know each other from previous courses, nice to see you again; otherwise, pleased to meet you. I am an Associate Professor of English, and I currently serve as the department's Associate Chair. I was born and raised in Brazil, I hold a PhD in English from Johns Hopkins University, and since 2016 I have been at UF teaching courses on eighteenth-century British literature. You can learn more about me and my interests by checking my [UF page](#) and my [personal website](#).

In communicating with me, please write to rogermaioli@gmail.com for a faster response. Avoid contacting me through the Canvas messaging feature, as I may take several days to see it. You can also use my UF email (rmaiolidossantos@ufl.edu), but I may also take longer to respond. The rule of thumb is: If it's urgent, Gmail.

Course Objectives

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Identify and describe the major areas of the English major, discussing key issues, content areas, and activities
- Practice, reflect on, and improve their own reading and writing through course exercises
- Research, propose, and plan for professional opportunities related to or appropriate for the major
- Identify and describe career tracks for which the English major provides preparation
- Reflect on and discuss the role of English and the Humanities in civic life

Course schedule

	M	W	F
WEEK 1 Introduction	Jan 12 Introduction: English at UF	Jan 14 Readings: - "The Norton Survey of English Majors" - Felicia Jean Steele, "Reading Beyond the Text"	Jan 16 Readings: - Robert Irvine, "English Literary Studies, Origins and Nature" - E.B. White's <i>Charlotte's Web</i> , 1–41
WEEK 2 Children's literature	Jan 19 MLK Day: no class meeting	Jan 21 - Today in class: Introduction to weekly responses - Readings: E.B. White's <i>Charlotte's Web</i> , 42–184	Jan 23 Library visit with Fiona Hartley-Kroeger (Smathers 100)
WEEK 3 Children's literature/Animal studies	Jan 26 Guest lecture by Prof. Kenneth Kidd	Jan 28 - Alice Walker, "Am I Blue?" - Michael Gilmour, "Eating Meat, Eating Misery" - Jonathan Safran Foer, excerpts from <i>Eating Animals</i>	Jan 30 - Group 1: response 1 due by 9:00 AM - Guest speaker: Cheyenne Lukander, from Gainesville Animal Defenders
WEEK 4 Film studies	Feb 2 - Today in class: introduction to primary source analysis - Watch David Lynch's <i>Mulholland Drive</i> - Reading: TBD	Feb 4 - Guest lecture by Prof. Pietro Bianchi	Feb 6 Group 2: response 1 due by 9:00 AM Discussion
WEEK 5 African-American literature	Feb 9 Library visit with Flo Turcotte and Jeanne Ewert (Smathers 100)	Feb 11 Reading: Nella Larsen, <i>Passing</i> Guest lecture by Prof. Catherine Saunders	Feb 13 Group 1: response 2 due by 9:00 AM Discussion

	M	W	F
WEEK 6 Environmental humanities	Feb 16 - Reading: TBD	Feb 18 Guest lecture by Prof. Terry Harpold	Feb 20 Group 2: response 2 due by 9:00 AM Discussion
WEEK 7 American literature	Feb 23 - Reading: TBD	Feb 25 Please read the following webpages: By the People , The American Revolution , Transcription rules , and Transcription mistakes . Guest lecture by Prof. Jodi Schorb	Feb 27 Group 1: response 3 due by 9:00 AM Discussion
WEEK 8 Creative writing	Mar 2 Reading: Forester McClatchey, <i>Killing Orpheus</i> Guest lecture by the poet Forester McClatchey	Mar 4 Reading: selections by Uwem Akpan Guest lecture by Prof. Uwem Akpan	Mar 6 Reading: Paul Munden, “How Creative Writing Courses Prepare for Life-Long Careers.” Group 2: response 3 due by 9:00 AM Discussion
WEEK 9 Rhetoric and composition	Mar 9 - Reading: TBD Guest lecture by Prof. Victor Del Hierro	Mar 11 Reading: LuMing Mao, “Redefining Comparative Rhetoric” Guest lecture by Prof. Raúl Sánchez	Mar 13 Group 1: response 4 due by 9:00 AM Discussion
Spring break			
WEEK 11 British literature/Victorian studies	Mar 23 Readings: Robert Browning's “ Porphyria's Lover ” and “ My Last Duchess ,” together with the poem guide on the latter	Mar 25 Reading: Charles Dickens, “Nurse's Stories” Guest lecture by Prof. Sean Grass	Mar 27 Group 2: response 4 due by 9:00 AM Discussion

	M	W	F
WEEK 12 Professionalization	Mar 30 Primary Source Analysis due by 11:59 Readings: - Robert Matz, "The Myth of the English Major Barista" - ADE Report on English Majors (pages 1-15)	 Apr 1 - Today in class: Introduction to Professionalization piece - Read NACE update - Professionalization workshop	 Apr 3 Guest lecture by Edwina Hurst, from the Career Connections Center.
WEEK 13 Professionalization	 Apr 6 Alumni panel, with Serenity Greenfield, Jennifer Adipietro, and Mirjam Frosth	 Apr 8 Guest lecture by Dr. Brittany Grubbs-Hodges, from Beyond120	 Apr 10 Writing day: no class meeting Professionalization piece due by 11:59
WEEK 14 English and the humanities	 Apr 13 Today in class: Introduction to the Reflective Essay - Readings: Martha Nussbaum, selections from <i>Not for Profit</i> - Danielle Allen, "The Future of Democracy"	 Apr 15 Readings: Sarah Dillon, "English and the Public Good"; Stefan Collini, selections from <i>What Are Universities For?</i>	 Apr 17 Reading: Fareed Zakaria, excerpts from <i>In Defense of a Liberal Education</i> Discussion
WEEK 15 English and the humanities	 Apr 20 Readings: - Jane Beal, "The Value of the English Major Today." - Marion Thain, "A View from the United States" - "The State of the Discipline (English Studies)"	 Apr 22 Conclusion	
	 April 27 Reflective essay due by 11:59		

Readings:

Almost all readings for this course will be made available to you through Canvas or online sources. The only exceptions are the three titles below, which I ask you to please order in these particular editions. The best way to find them is to Google the International Standard Book Number (ISBN):

- E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (Harper Collins, 1974), **ISBN** 978-0064400558.
- Nella Larsen, *Passing*, ed. Thadious M. Davis (Penguin, 2003), **ISBN** 978-0142437278.
- Forester McClatchey, *Killing Orpheus* (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2026), **ISBN** 978-0887487255.

Grading policy

This course includes five graded components, weighted as follows:

Attendance and participation:	20%
Responses:	20%
Primary source analysis:	20%
Professional essay:	20%
Reflection piece:	20%

Final grades, in turn, will be based on the following scale:

		A	93–100	A-	90–92.9
B+	87–89.9	B	83–86.9	B-	80–82.9
C+	77–79.9	C	73–76.9	C-	70–72.9
D+	67–69.9	D	63–66.9	D-	60–62.9
E	0–59.9				

Here are more details about the graded components of the course as well as their associated deadlines:

1. Attendance and participation

I will be taking attendance and keeping track of your participation in class. You begin the semester with 85 points (the equivalent of a B). You then get extra points for participating and you lose points for disruptive behavior or anything beyond **two unexcused absences**. Each additional unexcused absence will reduce your A&P score by a third of a letter — for instance, from 88 (B+) to 85 (B). You are allowed to have at most **six unexcused absences** without failing the course.

2. Responses

Over the course of the semester you will write four short responses to the readings (150-200 words). I will organize the class into two groups, and members of each group will post their individual responses to Canvas following the Course Schedule above, which indicates all dates when responses are due (Friday by 9:00 AM). You will learn more about how to write and post responses on January 21.

3. Primary source analysis

You will write a short analytical essay on one of the texts or sources covered in class. I will say more on the requirements on February 2, and you will receive detailed instructions about the assignment on Week 8 (beginning of March). The essay will be due **March 30 at 11:59 PM**. Late projects will lose a third of a letter grade per day that they are late.

4. Professionalization piece

By using UF resources such as Beyond120 and the Career Connections Center, you will identify a professionalization opportunity (a job, internship, or research-related scholarship) and produce (1) a description of the opportunity and its requirements and (2) the documents associated with the opportunity. You will receive further instructions in Week 12. The piece will be due **April 10 at 11:59 PM**.

5. Reflective essay

Your final assignment will be a reflective essay on the English major, written from your personal standpoint. You will discuss what you've learned in class as well as your vision of the major as professional training and as preparation for social life. You will receive detailed instructions on

this essay on April 13. The essay will be due on **Monday, April 27, by 11:59 PM**. Late essays will lose a third of a letter grade per day that they are late.

AI policy

All work you submit for this course must be written by you without any assistance from artificial intelligence. You are not allowed to use chatbots or proofreading tools like Grammarly. Please be aware that according to UF's [Student Honor Code](#), "using any materials or resources, through any medium, which the Faculty has not given express permission to use" constitutes cheating and is liable to be reported as such.

General course policy

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [the university's policy page](#).

Course evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.