

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

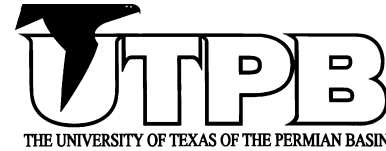
UTPB Syllabus ENGL 3371

T/Th 11-12:15

Dr. Kenneth Sherwood

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www.utpb.edu/courses/sherwood/engl3371F02



Survey of topics in contemporary language theory as they pertain to literature, culture, and the English language. Introduces concepts in linguistics; includes study of the history and politics of English language change. Emphasis given to the advent of semiotics and how the attendant concepts of structure and agency are informed by the intersection of language with gender, class, and identity.

Required Texts

- Mother Tongue: English and How it Got That Way, Bill Bryson.
- The Routledge Language and Cultural Theory Reader, Lucy Burke et al, eds.
- Borderlands / La Frontera, Gloria Anzaldúa.

Other Resources

- ENGL 3371 Class Web Page
<http://www.utpb.edu/courses/sherwood/engl3371F02/>

[*Internet access will be necessary in this course; insure that your schedule allows access, either at home or on campus. Some UTPB databases may require you to access on campus (or via proxy); email me if you have difficulty.]

A Few Words About This Course

In teaching The English Language, I will be drawing on readings in language theory that first captured my interest while I was myself an undergraduate. I find this area fascinating and hope many of you will find it useful, provocative, and challenging. While we will engage with the history of the language and linguistics, the core of the course will be the intersection of language with society, culture, and politics. These issues are relevant to all language students, especially for those of you planning to enter the classroom as teachers. Three years as a high school teacher has convinced me that it is crucial for prospective teachers to deal with these issues; I want my child's future teachers to have a sophisticated appreciation for how the language works. As we unravel the complex issues surrounding language, I will invite you to consider the practical implications of the ideas we entertain for how we read, speak, write, and teach.

Expectations, Workload, and Help

Each semester credit hour at UT Permian Basin represents a commitment on an average of three hours of 'out of class' preparation and one hour of class attendance (or its equivalent) per week. For example, enrolling in a three semester credit hour class commits the student to a total of twelve hours of work per week. Students who are employed or who have family responsibilities are especially encouraged to bear this commitment in mind and to seek guidance from their academic advisors in determining a suitable academic schedule

(UTPB Undergraduate Catalog 2001-2003; 57).

This will be a challenging, junior-level college course. We will discuss all the essays during class, but I expect that you will have closely read and reflected on them in advance. As in most English courses, you must make the effort to draw your own inferences about the texts you read and be prepared to learn how to articulate and justify your interpretations. Make sure you schedule time for reflective reading; falling behind in the reading diminishes what you can gain from each class.

ENGL 1302 is a prerequisite ; it is assumed that you are familiar with the basics of composition. If you have not satisfied your general education requirements in writing, you must postpone enrolling in this class until you have done so.

I encourage you to meet with me for extra help or to discuss ways to enhance your learning. Please keep track of your grades. I prefer substantive discussions about the course content or your growth (strengths and weaknesses) to talk of your GPA and the generation of 'progress reports.'

Office Hours	Tuesday		Thursday
9:00-9:30	<i>Office</i>	9:00-9:30	<i>Office</i>
9:30-10:45	Ethnic Lit	9:30-10:45	Ethnic Lit
11:00-12:15	English Lang	11:00-12:15	English Lang
12:30-2:30	<i>Office</i>	12:30-1:30	<i>Office</i>
6:30-7:00	<i>Office</i>		
7:05-9:45	Modernist Poetry		
9:45-10:15	<i>Office (classroom)</i>		

Grade Distribution and Deadlines

20% - Participation Includes weekly web-posts.	Reflective reading (marginal notation), verbal questions and comments during class, group work, and any necessary pop-quizzes or other minor assignments. Informed participation is expected of all students. This admittedly subjective area is intended to credit effort and commitment to this course. Students should post one thoughtful contribution to the web board each week (100% completion of Web posts guarantees at least a B for this component).
30% - Research Essay Bibl. & Abstracts 11/5 Rough Draft 11/19 Final Revision 12/3	A 7-10 page discussion of a theoretical issue raised by a critical text—you will make an argument about how the concept applies to, supports, or is refuted by a found or literary example.
50% - Exams Mid-term 10/17 Final 12/10 (10:15am)	The exams will ask you to write several short essays that synthesize key issues relevant to several studied texts.
Attendance	Attendance is assumed. Beyond two absences, the student's final average will be reduced 2% points per absence, including the first two. A student who misses more than five classes, will receive no higher than a "C" for the semester; a student who misses more than eight classes will automatically fail the course.

□ **About: Active Participation, Preparation, and Marginal Notation**

Your readiness to participate in class (attentive listening, informed and thoughtful contribution to class and group discussions, raising of questions) is assumed. Quizzes take up valuable class time, which is one reason I avoid them. If I perceive that many students are coming to class under-prepared, I may give **pop quizzes** or other forms of classwork and homework. I insist that students work their way through the reading assignment prior to attending class. If I sense that students are not reading (or merely skimming) I may also administer a marginal notation quiz where I ask to see what you have written on page 242, for example, of your book. And if you have written nothing, I will assume you did not read. Students sometimes tell me that they prefer not to write in their books because they want to resell them. My first response is, don't! Keep ahold of it and you may decide to read it again some day. If you can't resist getting \$10 for a \$50 text, then read with an erasable pencil (hi-lighting is useless anyway) or keep post-it notes handy and write on them. Yes, I'm serious about this!

□ **About: the Web Board**

Our class has an online discussion area accessible from my web page (www.utpb.edu/courses/sherwood/engl3371F02), which will also feature links to relevant resources. You should offer at least one, 150-word post of thoughtful writing each week. Address the texts themselves, points raised in class discussion/lecture, or the ongoing web conversation. You may make an argumentative claim or raise a thoughtful question. Consider it an electronic twin to our classroom discussion, with the advantage that you can work out your thoughts before "sending". Work with your classmates, reading their posts and responding, and you may gain further: picking up ideas for your paper or clarifying your knowledge of a text. I will browse your postings and occasionally participate in the discussion, but I will not grade each individual post. Participate weekly; you should not expect to make up for missed postings in the final week of class.

□ **About: the Essay**

As the culminating assignment for the semester, your essay should demonstrate knowledge of at least two related critical readings (preferably within the same section of the Routledge). You may choose to explore the application of key concepts to one of the literary texts studied in this course or another example of language use (we will discuss how to find potential source texts). This is **not** an occasion for you to simply reiterate what you have learned in class about a particular text; you should brainstorm and develop a unique and persuasive essay reflecting your personal insights into the text(s). Regurgitated class notes and content summaries make equally unrewarding reading for the professor who must grade them.

Essays must be submitted on time, at the start of class; late essays will be accepted but with a letter-grade penalty per day. Students who have completed the assignment but cannot submit it in person should send it through a 'trustworthy emissary' or email it (and then also bring a hard copy to the next class). I will not accept an essay without both a rough draft and at least one revision. We will spend some class-time doing peer revision. I encourage you to seek me out during office hours, solicit a classmate's feedback, and make an appointment at the Writing Center. You must labor to produce improvements in your first draft, even if you believe it is nearly perfect. The four-part grading rubric means that Content, Organization, Mechanics, and Revision are each worth 25%—so a brilliant, well-organized, mechanically perfect essay with no revision earns a C.

What should my bibliography look like? I ask that you credit all sources (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized material) using **MLA Parenthetical Citation**. This means the author and page will be noted in the body of your essay (Author 1). And full publication information will appear at the paper's end. Information on this method is available in the library (see MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers), in most

composition text books, and at www.mla.org. You may also seek guidance from the UTPB Writing Center.

What is an abstract? An abstract summarizes the argument of a book or essay. It does not extend, criticize or enter into argument with its subject but represents it in highly compressed but accurate form. In practice, research often involves the consultation of bibliographies that contain abstracts (e.g. Dissertation Abstracts); by reading the abstract, one can determine whether a particular book or essay pertains to one's research—a compromise between guessing on the basis of its title and actually reading the whole essay. In developing your term essay, you will identify relevant sources and write abstracts of them in concise paragraphs of about 150-250 words.

❑ **About: The Exams**

The Mid-term exam will be take-home; you will have one week to write and type responses to a series of essay questions. You will be able to bring your books to the final; and I will give you a detailed indication of the questions prior to the exam. My aim will be to produce an exam that rewards students who complete the readings, attend and participate in class, and have put at least moderate thought into the issues raised over the semester.

Miscellaneous Policies

❑ **Make-up work**

Successful mastery of course material requires students to complete assignments in a timely fashion. Make-up work does not serve the learning process and so will not be permitted, except for tests missed because of family emergency or severe illness. Writing assignments should be handed in at the beginning of class on the day due; the grade of a late paper will be reduced by a letter-grade for each day or portion of a day it is late; after four days, a grade of F will pertain, though the student should still submit a paper in order to avoid getting a zero. Should you unavoidably miss a class, be sure to convey any assignment to me: leave it in my HFA-office mailbox; use a classmate as courier; email it (sherwood_k@utpb.edu); or fax 552-3280.

❑ **Computer breakdown and other exigencies**

Make paper and back-up copies of work done on computers. Begin work in advance of deadlines, so that you have time to troubleshoot disk errors, virus alerts, printer problems, etc. I know intimately how unreliable technology can be, but you are responsible for submitting work despite the gremlins and Murphy's Law.

❑ **Cheating, Plagiarism, and Collusion (See UTPB Policy below)**

Scholastic Dishonesty is a serious matter. I am savvy and vigilant in detecting students who use unattributed web sources, "collaborate" with fellows students, or utilize other "clever" methods to enhance their grades. Take the grade you honestly earn on an

assignment. Should a classmate attempt to use your work, refuse; I make no distinction between cheaters and those who aid them.

UTPB Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

Students are expected to be above reproach in all scholastic activities. Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the university. 'Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.' Regents' Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22. *Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the university, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced-* Student Discipline for Scholastic Dishonesty: A Guide for Administrators, Faculty, and Hearing Officers (28).

See also: www.utpb.edu/UTPB_Student/Students/StudentLife/StudentService_Other/StudentGuide/main_student_guide.htm

❑ Cell Phones

Please silence cell phones and beepers during class time.

❑ Everything else you wanted to know* but were afraid to ask (*about this course)

Are we really expected to understand these readings?

None of what you will read this semester was written specifically for an undergraduate audience. You will find it challenging because the authors are "hard-core" thinkers and have not simplified the issues for you. Indeed, when I first read Saussure, Freud, Cixous, and Foucault as an undergraduate, I had moments of intense frustration and confusion. I do not expect you to easily master these materials, especially not on the first reading! But I do hope you will move through points of difficulty and, with each reading, work out the best understanding you can at that time. This intellectual labor will pay off in the long run.

Does this course have practical relevance in the classroom?

Neither dictionaries nor grammar books contain the English language. It exists in the mouths of its speakers and on the fingertips of its writers. Teachers of English exert a profound influence on the language itself; and their ideas about language have real effects on the lives of their students. What happens to a student when you draw a red line through *y'all* on her paper? In what sense is it "wrong" to split an infinitive? How ought a student who writes a deep, powerful essay in Spanglish be graded in his English class? While few of these essays could be considered "applied" theory, I would argue that all raise issues such as these that every teacher ought to consider.

Weekly Readings - The English Language

Week 1 (T) 8/22	Introduction
Week 2 (T/Th) 8/27	Bryson, <u>Mother Tongue</u> . Chapters: 2,3,4,7
Week 3 (T/Th) 9/3	Bryson, <u>Mother Tongue</u> . Chapters: 9,10,11,12
Week 4 (T/Th) 9/10	Theorizing the Sign: Saussure 1, Voloshinov 3* [Essays below are drawn from the <u>Routledge Language and Cultural Theory Reader</u> ; references are to author and chapter number.]
Week 5 (T/Th) 9/17	Language in History: Spitzer 5, Schulz 7, Cameron 8
Week 6 (T/Th) 9/24	L... & Subjectivity: Whorf 10, Freud 12, Lacan 13
Week 7 (T/Th) 10/1	L... & Gender: Spender 14, Lakoff 15, Cixous 16
Week 8 (T/Th) 10/8	L... & Sexuality: Irigary 19, White 21; Begin Anzaldúa, <u>Borderlands</u> (pp. 18-113).
Week 9 (T/Th) 10/15	Gloria Anzaldúa, <u>Borderlands la Frontera</u> (cont.)
Week 10 (T/Th) 10/22	L... & Community: Vossler 26, Bloomfield 27, Bakhtin 28
Week 11 (T/Th) 10/29	Englishes: Dabydeen 32, Brathwaite 33, Kachru 34
Week 12 (T/Th) 11/5	L... & Creativity: Jakobson 35, Ricouer 36, Kristeva 37
Week 13 (T/Th) 11/12	L... & Culture: Boas 39, Malinowski 40, Barthes 43
Week 14 (T/Th) 11/19	L... & Colonialism: Fanon 44, Achebe 45, Thiong'o 46
Week 15 (T/Th) 11/26	L..., Class, & Education: Bernstein 47, Labov 48, Cox 50
Week 16 (T/Th) 12/3	Review
Exam	Dec 10th, 10:15 AM