



Wayland Baptist University Mission:

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused, and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

Course Name:

ENGL 5308.VC01 — Advanced Research in English Studies

Class Meeting Time and Location:

Class should be available any time, day or night, through Blackboard (BB) online.

Term and Year:

Fall 1, 2026 (8-week session), August 10–October 3, 2026

Instructor and email:

Dr. Karen Beth Strovask, Dean of the School of Humanities and Leadership: Email me any time at strovask@wbu.edu. I will get back to you as soon as possible, nearly always during office hours or within 24–48 hours.

Office Location and Phone Number:

Plainview, TX campus, Gates Hall 200, 806-291-1114 (office). For fast communication, you may call or text my **cell (806) 292-3543**.

Catalog Description:

A course focused on locating and interacting with source material for advanced research projects in English studies. Note: Required of all MA in English students.

Required Textbook and Resources:

- *Included in ebook form through inclusive access inside your course*—Booth, Colomb, Williams, Bizup, and Fitzgerald. *The Craft of Research*. 5th Edition. Chicago: Chicago UP, 2024. ISBN-13: 978-0226826677 (paperback) [ISBN-13: 978-0226826660 e-book option]
- *Included in ebook form through inclusive access inside your course*—Hayot, Eric. *The Elements of Academic Style: Writing for the Humanities*. Columbia UP, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0231168014 (paperback) [ISBN-13: 978-0231537414 Kindle e-book option]
- Modern Language Association of America [free online through our Mabee Library subscription [MLA Handbook | Books Gateway | Modern Language Association \(oclc.org\)](#)]
- You need a reliable and secure internet connection, as well as access to software for writing papers (such as Microsoft Word) and software capable of reading documents .doc, .ppt, or .pdf formats; also, have access to backup media such as a USB flash drive or Dropbox, etc., to protect your work from accidental erasure or system crashes.
- Regular access and known passwords to WBU Blackboard and WBU email account. Your WBU email is likely the only way that I will contact you.

Course Outcome Competencies:

At the end of the course, students actively engaged in learning will be able to:

1. express understanding of the traditional principles and procedures of bibliographic research
2. demonstrate research methods and skills in English studies by working with various databases and library resources to access, assess, and synthesize significant primary and secondary sources
3. formulate workable English-related research questions to create and sustain arguments based on readings and research
4. prepare graduate-level research projects which employ scholarly or academic research and demonstrate a mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity
5. understand and correctly use MLA Style in composed materials, and demonstrate awareness of other bibliographic styles, standards, and guidelines common to the Humanities.

The more the student puts into the course, the better his or her outcome competencies will be.

Attendance Requirements:

This WBU Online course is set up on a weekly "module" basis. This means assignments, readings, discussions, papers, etc. will generally be presented and due each week (Monday-Sunday). Therefore, a *minimum* "attendance" of accessing the Blackboard (BB) class at least twice a week is required in order to complete the course successfully. Participation and attendance will be determined through discussion board or blog posts and/or submission of assignments. With that in mind, failure to submit two or more required assignments (including Discussion Board posts) is grounds for receiving an F in the course, regardless of final grade average. Makeup work will be offered at the instructor's discretion and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any authorized makeups must be completed within the time limit set by the instructor; otherwise, the makeup grade will be zero. Finally, recall that WBU's catalog stipulates students who miss 25% or more of class time will automatically fail the course. 25% of 8 weeks is 2 weeks.

Disability Statement:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Disability Services Coordinator and Academic Coach serves as the coordinator of students with disabilities and must be contacted concerning accommodation requests (office (806) 291-1057. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations. Note: If you would like me to accommodate a disability, please provide documentation within the first week of class or as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty:

No form of cheating or plagiarism will be tolerated. In the very least, plagiarism or related forms of cheating will result in an F on the work in question, with the possibility of an F in the class. Some examples of cheating/dishonesty involve submitting writing completed by another person or generative AI as your own writing. An official report will be filed with the Vice President of Academics. [Link to WBU's Statement on Academic Integrity](#)

- a. No use of any generative AI tools permitted.
 - i. Students are required to create and produce all work themselves or with assigned group members. Any work submitted that has used an AI generative tool like ChatGPT will be in immediate violation of the academic integrity policies for the course and WBU.
 - ii. All assignments must be fully created, designed, and prepared by the student(s).
 - iii. Any work that uses generative AI will be treated as plagiarism.

Class Communication, Announcements, and Updates:

Official announcements not made in class will be sent to our Blackboard class online, and Blackboard automatically forwards these announcements to your WBU email, as well. It is your responsibility to set up your Wayland email account and check it daily. If you need assistance with your **Wayland email, call IT @ (806)291-3540, OR [access assistance online from IT regarding your email account.](#)**

Technical Aspects of the course:

If you encounter technical problems, find some assistance at [WBU Online](#).

- You are encouraged to visit the [WBUonline Blackboard login page](#) as soon as possible and work through the [Learn Module tutorials](#) if are not familiar with how the service works. If you have problems with Blackboard or your WBU email, please use the WBU Support contact info above.
- Note: It's been my experience that Blackboard no longer works with Microsoft Internet Explorer. Microsoft Edge is usually fine, but BB works better with Google Chrome than with Edge. Try different browsers when you are having a hard time loading videos. You may want to download a Chrome browser to use for class if you don't already have one.

Class Expectations and Respect for Others:

Students are expected to treat one another and their instructor with respect in all communication, whether that is through email or Blackboard Discussion Boards. Please choose your words well.

*Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Executive Vice President/Provost to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

*Required by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Grading Chart

- Active participation in Discussion Boards	30%
- Working Annotated Bibliography + "Constructing the Conversation"	20%
- Critical Analysis of a Scholarly Article	15%
- Conference Paper Proposal	10%
- Scholarly Journal Report	10%
- Major research proposal	15%

Assignment Descriptions**Discussion Boards—**

ENGL 5308 will use DBs in two ways: first, to respond to reading assignments and working out individual research topics and skills, and second, to work through debate-worthy or conversation-driven topics from the readings. Check your list of assignments each week to see what is required. You will typically have two DBs due each week.

In general, if you follow directions, turn in your DBs on time, answer my prompt fully and thoughtfully, and participate helpfully in discussion or adding ideas to the classroom, you

will receive between 90–100%. I will automatically deduct 10 points at each 24-hour mark late. I will deduct 10–20 points if you choose not to reply in the DBs. Each post will be assessed on a case-by-case basis for quality and completion.

Working Bibliography (NOT FOR SUBMISSION; NOT FOR A GRADE)

Compile a list of 40–50 sources that have some bearing on your research topic. The sources should be published academic discussions (avoid study aids, enthusiast websites, unpublished conference papers, dissertations and theses, etc.). There is no limit to how many books vs. how many articles you need. Simply create a list of the best material for your project. You do not necessarily have to read the full sources to include them a working bibliography, but you should exercise good judgment about what the titles and abstracts tell you, who publishes the articles or books, how long they might take to acquire, how balanced they are in terms of currentness, and whether you think you will understand their theoretical contexts and methodologies. This Working Bibliography will be the foundation of your Annotated Bibliography.

A good strategy is to treat the Working Bibliography as a preliminary Works Cited sheet for a paper, so be sure that your MLA documentation style is authoritative and accurate by using the *MLA Handbook* (linked on pg. 1 of the syllabus). You will almost certainly need to look beyond electronic databases for this assignment, so be creative in exploring print or e-book materials, video documentaries, or piggy-backing on good articles' footnotes and reference lists. The online *MLA Research Guide* and LRC librarians can be of assistance here. If you happen to live near Plainview, come visit the Mabee LRC! If you live near a larger university library, you may wish to request permission to stop by to investigate their stacks for a wider variety of print holdings, but you are not required to do so.

Working Annotated Bibliography

This assignment will draw from your working bibliography. Choose at least 20 of the most relevant sources from your working bibliography. For each source, write a 5–6 sentence or 5–6 bullet-point summary that reports each author's primary argument/purpose, main points of discussion with citations, and most interesting or compelling evidence. Key quotations with page numbers cited are also useful to assist you with future writing. Each summary should be headed by an MLA Works Cited entry (use your MLA handbook to be precise in formatting), and the list should be alphabetized by source authors' last names.

Constructing the Conversation

The Working Annotated Bibliography (described above) should be preceded by a 2–3 page introduction defining the scope of the research topic, any selectivity methods you used (e.g., limited by date, etc.), any interesting topic commonalities among the sources (e.g., where they agree, disagree, how they are in conversation with one another, who builds on whose work), and a justification or rationale for the bibliography as an academic resource (e.g., in what way(s) is this list useful or insightful for scholars of your topic? how does it contribute to the body of knowledge?). Contact Dr. Strovas early on if you have questions.

Critical Analysis of a Scholarly Article

The objective of this assignment is to analyze and critique a scholarly article (relevant to your research topic) based on your understanding of thesis, organization, and the generic conventions of published scholarly writing. It is my hope that, not only will this exercise improve your academic writing skills, but also—and primarily—it will improve your understanding of the scholarly essay genre, its patterns of organization, its rhetorical "tricks of the trade," so to speak, its integration of primary source evidence and secondary support, and your ability to emulate and potentially publish one of your own academic essays in the future. Your ability to read scholarly work effectively and efficiently is a major indicator in your ability to succeed in research writing at the master's and doctoral level;

thus, this is a skill you should practice regularly. Your critique should answer the questions and points posed below, though organized cohesively in essay form:

1. Discuss the author's general argument, including pinpointing the location of his or her thesis statement and whether you believed the author achieved an effective introduction and thesis section.
2. Identify the large-scale sections of the article and how each of these large "chunks" relates to the overall thesis. Provide examples of notable evidence or support (or favorite examples, memorable discussions, etc.) for these sections. Please cite page numbers (or paragraph numbers if the article is not paginated) when discussing sections to aid your reading audience.
3. What does the author claim to be doing in relation to or in conversation with previous research? Is he or she reversing or countering another author's claim, or filling a hole that other scholars have ignored or neglected? Or possibly combining old research with new ideas, or putting old theories to a new use? Consider card 1 of Michael Michalko's *ThinkPak* before finalizing this section.
4. What historical, political, social, or literary significance do you think this article will have, if any? Will it have lasting relevance?
5. Does its overall impact on you (as a reader, student, teacher, scholar, or professional in the field, etc.) challenge or enhance the text as you know it and understand it? Was the author fully convincing, or do you detect any research holes or logical fallacies? In what ways might this article be useful to you?

Conference Paper Proposal

Write a proposal (often called an "abstract") for a conference paper on a very-narrowed-down aspect of your research topic following the form set out in the handout and/or Blackboard samples. You are not required to write the actual paper for ENGL 5308, only the proposal for one. However, I encourage you to look for upcoming conferences in journals, listservs, English department web pages, [Calls for Papers from UPenn](#) & [h-net \(Humanities Networks\)](#), and the [literature area of Conference Alerts](#) so that you'll have a real conference in mind while writing. Googling certain topics and "conference," such as "Victorian conference" will also yield results. (Note: most conference papers are 15–20 minutes maximum, which is 7–8 pages read aloud. Your proposal should be quite narrow to adhere to these confines! Think of it as just a small slice of what would be argued in your major research proposal.)

Scholarly Journal Report

Locate as many academic journals in your research field as you can (keep track of them in your personal notes) and then choose a favorite. Familiarize yourself with your chosen journal. Then type a two- to four-page double-spaced report on the journal. Write an essay whose body paragraphs encompass the answers to these questions.

1. Who publishes the journal?
2. Who are the editor and/or managing editor? Do they have any special qualifications?
3. How long has the journal existed?
4. How frequently is the journal published?
5. Where is the journal indexed? (i.e., in what databases do its contents appear?)
6. Is the journal open-access or by subscription only?
7. About how many articles does the journal publish per volume? How many reviews? Any other inclusions (such as "in brief" or creative works)?
8. What special interests characterize the journal? Does it emphasize a particular period or genre?
9. Does it favor a certain critical or theoretical approach? That is, does it emphasize interpretive close readings? feminist analyses? economic or cultural studies?

10. Does it provide biographical information on authors? If so, what do you observe about the authors, either collectively or generally?
11. Does it contain bibliographical aids, e.g., lists of recent publications, annual bibliographies, etc.? How might these aids be useful to a graduate student or professional scholar?
12. What are the general submission requirements for an author seeking to publish in the journal?

Major Research Proposal

Write a proposal for a major project, such as a master's thesis (typically two body chapters, minimum, plus intro/conclusion sections) or a 25–30-page scholarly article. [**Note: You are not required to complete the actual project for ENGL 5308, only the proposal for one.**] See posted instructions and examples.

Advanced Research in English Studies: Course Schedule/Outline

Page numbers refer to the editions of the course texts listed in the syllabus. *This schedule is subject to revision, although changes are unlikely. Students will be notified in advance of any changes.*

Week 1 August 10–August 16:

1. Read "Welcome to ENGL 5308_sp1.2025" on Blackboard (BB) in the main weekly course content folder.
2. Complete the first required assignment (academic integrity survey) embedded inside BB for census count.
3. Read Lecture 1 ("Entering the Scholarly Conversation") and view the video lecture (Lecture 1b) re: using the library catalog.
4. Read *The Craft of Research* (skim Intro. pgs. 1–13 and skim Part I Prologue pgs. 17–20; read chs. 1 and 2, pgs. 21–48); *The Elements of Academic Style* (ch. 2, pgs. 7–16).
5. Complete Week 1 Discussion Boards.
6. Brainstorm topics. Start working through the library catalogs and databases for articles or books to request through inter-library loan.

Week 2 August 17–August 23:

1. Read *The Elements of Academic Style* (ch. 3, pages 17–35); *The Craft of Research* (skim ch. 3, pgs. 53–73 for useful information about sources and source evaluation); *MLA Online Handbook* (find link on page 1 of syllabus; skim Parts 4–5. While you won't need to read every word in the *MLA*, get familiar with where/how to find the answers to various citation-style questions).
2. View Lectures 2a (on the reading) and 2b (re: searching library databases)
3. Complete Week 2 Discussion Boards.
4. Brainstorm topics. Keep working through the library catalogs and databases for articles or books to request through inter-library loan.
5. Start compiling your Working Bibliography (in preparation for your Working *Annotated Bibliography*). Add as many relevant sources as you can.

Week 3 August 24–August 30:

1. Read *The Craft of Research* (chs. 4–6, pgs. 74–136); *MLA Handbook* (chapter 6, pages 227–286; same *MLA* skimming instructions as week 2).
2. View Lecture 3a and Lecture 3b "Scholarly Journal Report"
3. Complete Week 3 Discussion Boards.

4. Continue compiling your working bibliography—a list of about 40 sources that have some bearing on your topic of interest.
5. Make significant progress on prewriting for the Critical Analysis of a Scholarly Article. At minimum, choose an article and read and take notes on the full article this week.
6. **The Scholarly Journal Report is due uploaded to Blackboard as an essay assignment by Saturday, August 29, midnight (CST).** Any late reports will be counted off 10 points per 24 hours with the first deduction occurring at the 24-hour mark. See assignment description in syllabus for full details.

Week 4 August 31–September 6:

1. Read *The Craft of Research* (chs. 7–9 & 12, pgs. 124–167 & 201–216); *MLA online Handbook* (skim through any sections you haven't gotten to yet from portions listed in syllabus weeks 2-3; get acquainted with where to find online answers to particular citation questions).
2. Read Lecture 4
3. **Critical Analysis of a Scholarly Article due uploaded to Blackboard Discussion Boards by SATURDAY, September 5, midnight (CST), as well as submitted as an essay assignment.** Any late analyses will be counted off 10 points per 24 hours with the first deduction occurring at the 24-hour mark. Posting the essay + adding two useful peer responses will count for one full 100% DB grade.

Week 5 September 7–September 13:

1. Read *Elements of Acad....* (chs. 8–10, pgs. 59–88; chs. 11–14, pgs. 89–115).
2. Read Announcements PowerPoint (these are more like reminders than announcements)
3. View Lectures 5a (re: chs. 8–10)—split into parts 1-2
4. Read lecture 5b (re: chs. 11–14).
5. Complete Week 5 Discussion Boards.
6. **Make significant progress on the anno. bib. due next Thurs.**
7. I usually eat some chocolate at this point. Pat yourself on the back. You're past halfway! ☺

Week 6 September 14–September 20:

1. Read *The Craft of Research* (chs. 10–11 and 14, pgs. 175–200 and 235–251); *The Elements of Academic Style* (chs. 20, pgs. 164–166).
2. Read Lecture 6a (on COR 10, 11, & 14)
3. View video "Conferences and Conference Papers" lecture 6b
4. Complete Week 6 Discussion Boards.
5. **"Constructing the Conversation" intro + Working Annotated Bibliography due uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday, September 17, midnight (CST).** Any late bibliographies will be counted off 10 points per 24 hours with the first deduction occurring at the 24-hour mark.

Week 7 September 21–September 27:

1. **Email me** (strovask@wbu.edu) some prewriting for the upcoming conference proposal: (1) **identify** the topic/focus of your proposed paper—the issue/question/problem it raises; (2) **locate** the topic/focus in terms of a field of scholarship—who/what provides the intellectual context for the issue/problem/question the paper raises; and (3) **emphasize** your position—your central idea regarding the issue/question/problem. **Do this as soon as you solidify your topic—preferably by Monday, September 21. If you can't send me the above by Monday, write me an email anyway with preliminary ideas. Or write just to say hi.** ☺
2. Read *The Craft of Research* (ch. 15, pgs. 252–271); *The Elements of Academic Style* (chs. 32–34, pgs. 213–220)

3. Read Lecture 7
4. Complete Week 7 Discussion Boards.
5. Try to devote at least 1 hour per day this week to researching and writing. Feel free to email me if you need to talk out some ideas.
6. **Conference Paper Proposal due uploaded to Blackboard by SATURDAY, September 26, midnight (CST).** Any late proposals will be counted off 10 points per 24 hours with the first deduction occurring at the 24-hour mark. See assignment sheet for full details.

Week 8 September 28–October 3:

1. Read *The Elements of Academic Style* (chs. 26–29, pgs. 184–202).
2. Try to devote at least 1 hour per day this week to researching and writing. Feel free to email me at any point if you need some accountability or to toss ideas back and forth.
3. **Major Research Proposal due uploaded to Blackboard by Saturday, October 3, 11:59 (CST).** Submission portal closes at midnight.
4. Take a deep breath—what a week! You're done! 😊

SUGGESTED RESEARCH TOOLS

(subject to 2026 database availability or title/access changes)

- *MLA International Bibliography* (available online through the [LRC website](#); a fast way to find worthwhile scholarly studies)
- *Gale Literature Resource Center* and *JSTOR*; *PioneerSearch* is also useful in general searches.
- *Films on Demand: English & Language Arts Video Collection*, *Medici.tv*, and *Academic Video Online* (these are useful databases of academic documentaries, author/performer interviews, and performances of drama, music, or other arts)
- *Essay and General Literature Index Retrospective* (excellent source for studies included in edited collections; in volume form in Mabee LRC reference room)
- *The Year's Work in English Studies* (a valuable annual review of criticism; summarizes important scholarly studies on an author and/or work and helps you to see context of recent debates and topics of interest; in volume form in Mabee LRC.)
- The Mabee LRC reference room may have reference guides and/or annotated bibliographies on individual authors and literary topics, upon request; you can also find published bibliographies on the 2nd floor stacks by and about the authors (use catalog and ILL if off campus).
- Despite being very dated and having some broken links, one useful website for mainstream literary research is [Literary Resources on the Net](#), compiled by Jack Lynch, former Rutgers University professor.
- Needing more assistance? Email me! strovask@wbu.edu