English 697: Comprehensive Exam and Portfolio Syllabus

Semester: ___________________________  Section Number: 697._______________
(To be completed by Director of MAE)

Course Catalogue Description

All MAE students will take a comprehensive exam and choose to research and write a thesis or prepare a professional portfolio. The exam will consist of three essay questions tailored to each individual student’s chosen areas of interest in English Studies. Students who select the portfolio option (ENG 697) will revise previously written work, presenting it in a carefully organized manner that illuminates the relationship between their work and the published work of others in their own specific area of specialization. The portfolio is intended to provide a representative sample rather than an exhaustive collection of student work. Furthermore, students will write a reflective essay that will look back on their work and explain what they have learned through the recursive process of researching, drafting, reviewing, and revising their writing. Through the process of reflection, students must demonstrate their understanding of the significance that these representative works played in the development of their critical thinking and writing skills, as well as the ways in which these experiences have shaped their preparation for future work. (3 credits)

Application and Signatures

Students must apply for permission to enroll in ENG 697 prior to the semester in which they intend to register for the course. This syllabus also serves as an application for enrollment in ENG 697 as well as a contract indicating meeting times, locations, and due dates for the exam and the portfolio.

In order to apply for permission to enroll in ENG 697, students must first identify a member of the Graduate Faculty in the English Department who will serve as the Director of the student’s work, including the comprehensive exam and the preparation of the portfolio. Students should select a Director who best suits their academic areas of interest. Additionally, Directors must be current members of the MAE Graduate Faculty at USI, and students must have been enrolled in at least one graduate course at USI taught by that faculty member. Students should meet with the Director of their project throughout the semester on a regular basis—typically, at least one hour per week.

In consultation with the Director of their project, students will then need to identify two other committee members who will serve as Readers of the exam and the portfolio. Readers must also be members of the MAE Graduate Faculty at USI. If the Director of the student’s project and the Director of the MAE Program approve, students may select one Reader who is a Graduate Faculty member of another program at USI, provided that the student has taken a graduate course
at USI taught by that faculty member. Likewise, former MAE faculty members, including Emeritus and Emerita faculty, may serve as Readers, provided that the student has enrolled in at least one MAE graduate course with that former faculty member. At least one Reader, however, must be a current member of the MAE Graduate Faculty.

A signed copy of this document must be submitted to the Director of the MAE Program before the student will be allowed to register for ENG 697.

__________________________________________
(Print: Student Name) 

__________________________________________
(Signature)

__________________________________________
(Student ID No.)

__________________________________________
(Date)

Identify the faculty members who will serve on the committee for the culminating project:

__________________________________________
(Print: Director of Culminating Project) 

__________________________________________
(Signature)

__________________________________________
(Date)

__________________________________________
(Print: Reader) 

__________________________________________
(Signature)

__________________________________________
(Date)

__________________________________________
(Print: Reader) 

__________________________________________
(Signature)

__________________________________________
(Date)

Indicate the day, time, and location of regular semester meetings.

Meeting Day and Time: __________________________

Meeting Location: __________________________
Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam will consist of three essay questions designed by the student's committee. The exam will emphasize the areas that the committee considers the most relevant for the student given his or her coursework and chosen areas of interest in English Studies. Furthermore, the exam will be designed in anticipation of the preparation of the student’s professional portfolio.

The exam will be completed approximately one-third of the way through the 15-week fall, spring, or summer semester in which the student is enrolled in ENG 697. Exam dates for the 2015-2016 through 2019-2020 academic years are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2015: Sat. 09/26</th>
<th>Spring 2016: Sat. 02/13</th>
<th>Summer 2016: Sat. 06/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016: Sat. 09/24</td>
<td>Spring 2017: Sat. 02/11</td>
<td>Summer 2017: Sat. 06/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017: Sat. 09/23</td>
<td>Spring 2018: Sat. 02/10</td>
<td>Summer 2018: Sat. 06/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018: Sat. 09/22</td>
<td>Spring 2019: Sat. 02/09</td>
<td>Summer 2019: Sat. 06/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019: Sat. 09/21</td>
<td>Spring 2020: Sat. 02/15</td>
<td>Summer 2020: Sat. 06/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date and Semester of the Comprehensive Exam: _______________________

Signature of Student: ___________________________

Signature of Director of Culminating Project: ___________________________

The exam will be graded by the three committee members (the Director and the two Readers) of the student's project. If the student passes the exam, he or she will be given approval to begin work on the portfolio.

If a student does not pass the exam, he or she will meet with the Director and the two Readers of his or her committee, and set a date for the student to take a second comprehensive exam. This date should be approximately five weeks after the date of the first exam, but if the Director of the MAE Program, the Director and Readers of the culminating project, and the student agree, a different date can be set. However, if the student does not take the second exam by the end of the semester in which he or she is enrolled in ENG 697, then a grade of “IP” or “In Progress” will be recorded and the student will need to re-enroll for one additional semester in ENG 697. Regardless of the date of the second exam, when the student passes it, he or she will then be given approval to begin work on the portfolio.

If the student does not pass or for any reason does not take the second comprehensive exam, a grade of “F” will be recorded for ENG 697, and the student will be dismissed from the MAE program.
Portfolio

The portfolio will consist of 60-90 pages (15,000-22,500 words) of revised and polished prose, excluding bibliography and footnotes. The portfolio will also include a 20-25 page (5,000-6,250 words) reflective essay demonstrating their understanding of the significance that their essays played in the development of their critical thinking and writing skills, especially in terms of how these writing projects have helped prepare them for future work.

The portfolio should represent the diverse work and abilities that students have developed during their graduate program. It should be carefully crafted to demonstrate not only what they have learned during their time in the MAE program, but also their ability to situate their work in recent critical and theoretical arguments from their chosen area of interest.

In the reflective essay, students should articulate what they have learned through the process of revising previous essays and organizing them in the portfolio. The essay should indicate the students’ understanding of the role each individual essay played in their development as a writer and scholar in the discipline in general and in their chosen area of interest more specifically. The essay should also indicate how the selected writing projects helped prepare students for future work.

Portfolios will be reviewed and judged by the committee according to standards that are appropriate to a publishable piece of scholarly work in English. Each paper in the portfolio should therefore respond in a critically, theoretically, and historically informed manner, as appropriate, to a question or problem relevant to the paper’s topic.

Each portfolio will be generated by the student. The Director of the student’s project and the two Readers are responsible for guiding the student throughout the project, but it is not the responsibility of the Director or the Readers to produce revisions of seminar papers or engage in any of the writing of the reflective essay.

The completed portfolio must be circulated in digital format and submitted to the Director of the student’s project at least ten working days prior to the Defense.

Indicate the due date of the final draft of the portfolio:

Portfolio Due Date: __________________________

Oral Defense

In order to receive credit for ENG 697, students must successfully complete their exams and defend their portfolio. The oral defense will be evaluated by the Director and the two Readers of the culminating project. The defense will take place in the Graduate Studies office, and the Director of Graduate Studies will be invited to attend the student’s defense of his or her portfolio.
After defending the portfolio, students may be (1) granted the hours for ENG 697 based on a successful defense, (2) asked by the committee to provide minor written revisions to the project prior to being granted credit, or (3) asked to conduct major revisions requiring a second oral defense before receiving credit.

Indicate the day and time of the portfolio defense:

Portfolio Defense Day and Time: __________________________

**Grading**

ENG 697 is graded on a pass/fail (P/F) basis. Occasionally, students will find that they need additional time to complete a graduate portfolio. If, after the end of the semester in which the student is enrolled in ENG 697, the Director of the culminating project concludes that the student has made adequate progress on, but has not finished his or her portfolio, then with the permission of the Director of the MAE program, the student may take an “IP” or “In Progress” grade in ENG 697 and re-enroll for one additional semester in ENG 697. On such occasions, once the student has completed his or her portfolio and successfully defended it, the grade of “In Progress” for ENG 697 will be changed to a “Pass” grade.

In rare circumstances, and with the approval of the Director of the MAE, a student may take a second “IP” grade and enroll in ENG 697 for a third semester. When the student has completed his or her portfolio and successfully defended it, the grade of “IP” for ENG 697 will be changed to a “Pass” grade.

If a student does not complete and successfully defend his or her portfolio within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which the student initially enrolled in ENG 697, a grade of “F” will be recorded for ENG 697, and the student will be dismissed from the MAE program.