Sample Scaffold of Undergraduate Research in a Department of English Curriculum

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200-Level Writing Course
- Write 5-6 essays that use a variety of rhetorical strategies to address a variety of audiences and purposes. (Assignments might include two 2-3-page, two 4-5-page, and two 5-7-page required essays.)
- Articulate “risk-taking” thesis statements and develop them with research evidence and well-organized, logical reasoning.
- Conduct a research and writing process with each essay that includes locating secondary sources with the assistance of the instructor and/or a reference librarian, taking research notes, prewriting, drafting, seeking peer review, revising, editing, and proofreading.

200-Level Literature Course (gateway-to-major course)
- Facilitate, in a small group, several class meetings on a particular literary work, providing (in successive class meetings) the author’s biography and information about the critical conversation surrounding the text, including identifying one pertinent critical article.
- Summarize a critical article (assigned by the instructor) in 2-3 pages.
- In consultation with the instructor, locate at least two secondary sources relevant to student-selected essay topic (utilizing disciplinary databases, interlibrary loan, and/or library print sources).
- Write a 5-7-page critical analysis that employs the secondary source material as support for the argument.

300-Level Writing Courses
- Conduct primary/field research in the form of an interview.
- Write a 6-10-page creative nonfiction essay about the interview subject.
- Locate and utilize film reviews and/or other critical analyses of a film that has had a significant cultural impact in some part of the world.
- Write a 6-8-page critical analysis of the film that utilizes reviews and secondary analyses.

300-Level Literature Courses
- Locate 3-5 secondary sources relevant to a student-selected essay topic (utilizing disciplinary databases, interlibrary loan, and/or library print sources).
- Write a 6-8-page critical analysis that employs the secondary source material as support for the argument, as well as context and/or explanation of a counter argument.
- Demonstrate in the essay understanding of how the literary work fits into a larger literary and/or critical context.

400-Level Literature Seminars
- Write a proposal for a research essay based on literary analysis of one of the course readings.
- Locate several secondary sources relevant to the essay topic and its broader context.
- Create an annotated bibliography.
- Write a 10-12-page literary analysis that employs the secondary source material as support for the argument, as well as demonstration of alternate readings (counter arguments).
Demonstrate in the essay understanding of how not only the literary work itself, but also the analysis of the work, fits into a larger literary and/or critical context.

Integrate in the essay the skills of research, incorporation of secondary source material, awareness of engagement in a critical conversation, articulation of an argument of appropriate scope and depth, and use of sophisticated critical rhetoric.

Demonstrate creativity/imagination and risk-taking by moving beyond the obvious, pursuing insights independent of material gleaned from class notes or standard reference works, and/or integrating insights in an independent way.

**400-Level Criticism/Theory Course**

- Write a critical history of one of the class readings. (This critical history may form the basis for the literary research essay later in the semester.)
- Write a proposal for a literary research essay that engages a theoretical notion or approach in some direct way (e.g., the body as a site for colonization, narrative agency, gender, etc.).
- Locate several secondary sources relevant to the essay topic and its broader context.
- Create an annotated bibliography.
- Write an 8-12-page critical history essay that extensively employs the secondary source material as the main grounding for the argument.
- Integrate in the essay the skills of research, incorporation of secondary source material, awareness of engagement in a critical conversation, articulation of an argument of appropriate scope and depth, and use of sophisticated critical rhetoric.
- Demonstrate creativity/imagination and risk-taking by moving beyond the obvious, pursuing insights independent of material gleaned from class notes or standard reference works, and/or integrating insights in an independent way.
- Create an abstract of the essay.
- Participate in an essay “defense” with the instructor and classmates.

**400-Level Senior Thesis Course**

- Meet the assignment goals of the 400-level seminars and criticism/theory course, including creating a proposal and annotated bibliography, at a higher level of mastery and for an independently chosen topic. (The thesis can be an expansion of an earlier class paper or it can tackle a work not assigned in any class.)
- Conduct a semester-long, independent research process, mentored by the senior-thesis instructor, leading to a 20-25-page thesis.
- Write a senior thesis that integrates both literary analysis based on close reading and critical history that demonstrates command of the literary work’s historical and analytical context.
- Participate in a thesis defense with the English department faculty.