

Institutional Effectiveness
2024-2025

Program: English BA

College and Department: College of Arts & Sciences, English

Contact: Linda Null

Mission:

The English BA curriculum is designed to improve students' skills in writing, critical reading, and thinking; to enrich their cultural experience; and to prepare them for all professions requiring a high level of expression, imagination, and intellectual activity, including creative writing, editing, teaching, law, politics, and management.

Attach Curriculum Map (Educational Programs Only):

Attached Files: See Appendix 1

SLO 1: Capacity to Write Clearly

Define Outcome:

Students graduating with a degree in English will employ their capacity to write clearly with 80% of students scoring "Very Good" or above in each relevant rubric category of the ENGL 4995 Senior Colloquium research paper.

Assessment Methods:

Relevant rubric categories:

- The document presented a clear thesis statement.
- The document was well organized with main points related to the thesis.
- The writer developed the main points using effective rhetorical strategies.
- The topic was appropriate for the designated audience, and specific terms were explained.
- Sources used were appropriate to the purpose of the writing and were managed well.
- Format features appropriately addressed the prompt.
- The writing demonstrated correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.
- Tone and style were appropriate for the audience.

The data are collected in ENGL 4995, the capstone course for ENGL majors. This course is offered in the spring only. Usually, the spring semester is the final semester for these students.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

ENGL 4995 Senior Colloquium Rubric:

80% of students will score "Very Good" or above in each relevant rubric category. A score of 80% or above indicates a strong "above average" for attainment of this SLO.

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.E Stackable Credentials

Results and Analysis:

Students enrolled in the capstone course (ENGL 4995) scored an average of 4.73 of 5 on the writing rubric. We met the goal of 80% of the students scoring "Very Good" or "Excellent" on the writing rubric.

On the exit survey, we ask students whether they feel the BA curriculum helped them to improve their writing. Ten of ten graduating seniors filled out the survey in Spring 2025. Four of four graduating seniors filled out the survey in Fall 2024. All of the students both semesters felt

that their writing had improved. One student wrote: "I've written A LOT of essays during my time here, and I think I improve more and more with each one."

Attached Files: See Appendices 2, 3, and 4

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

Students perform well on the writing assignment in ENGL 4995. To help them improve their writing further, we might schedule feedback and multiple draft check points during the project, including project proposals, conferences with instructor, multiple drafts with peer feedback, and revising and proofreading workshops. We could also include explicit instruction on organization and outlining, as well as research methodology.

We might improve scores by focusing on the rubric during the drafting stage. Also, we could increase the possibility of recognition for outstanding writing if we scheduled the writing project so that students could read their work on Research Day.

SLO 2: Capacity to Speak Clearly

Define Outcome:

Students graduating with a degree in English will employ their capacity to speak clearly with an average score of 4.50 out of 5.00 per trait assessed. Students' speaking ability is assessed in ENGL 4995, the capstone ENGL course that students usually take their last semester as undergraduates. Eighty percent of the students in ENGL 4995 will score "Very Good" or "Excellent."

Assessment Methods:

Data are collected in ENGL 4995, the capstone course for ENGL majors. The course is offered in spring semesters only. Usually, this semester is the last semester the student will be enrolled at TTU as an undergraduate.

Attached Files: See Appendix 5

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

Members of the BA Curriculum Committee, based on their knowledge and expertise, determined that a 4.50 average per trait was a reasonable expectation and benchmark of students' proficiency in oral communication. Eighty percent of the students enrolled in ENGL 4995 will score "Very Good" or "Excellent."

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.E Stackable Credentials

Results and Analysis:

We met the goal that at least eighty percent of students who made oral presentations in ENGL 4995 scored "Very Good" or "Excellent." The mean score was 4.64 of 5.

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

Students perform well on the oral presentation rubric, and they have for many years. Undergraduate students are required to take a course in oral communication. Further, most of the undergraduate courses require some sort of oral presentation, as confirmed by this comment from an exit survey: "I'm a pretty awkward person by nature, and I never did well in front of crowds. Now, I feel a lot more confident giving presentations due to how many I've had to give in my classes." We should continue to suggest that faculty include oral presentations in their undergraduate courses.

SLO 3: Read Widely and Perceptively

Define Outcome:

Students graduating with a degree in English will read widely and perceptively, as demonstrated by 80% of students scoring at 90% of the ratio for the Tennessee Tech average score/national comparison average on the ETS English Major Field Test.

Assessment Methods:

English Major Field Test taken during students' last semester in the English BA program.

The test asks questions based on American, British, and world authors from all time periods.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

The ETS English Major Field Test: 90% of the ratio for the Tennessee Tech average score/national comparison average on the ETS Major Field Test

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.E Stackable Credentials, 2.B Research, Scholar, Intellect, and Creativity

Results and Analysis:

Students' scores on the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 ETS Field Test in Literature averaged 152.6. The average in 23-24 was 139.

I am not sure exactly why the scores were higher in 2024-25 than the academic year before. The department discussed the ETS scores, especially in the section on Literary Theory and Identification of terms. Those two areas are still, even in 2024-25, the areas where our students have their lowest scores.

Attached Files: See Appendix 6

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

We will continue to provide copies of *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* to incoming freshmen. (Fall 2025 will be the second year we have done that.) In one British literature course (ENGL 3810) the instructor provides a list of literary terms for students in iLearn and goes over that list numerous times during the semester. Also in Fall 2025, the department plans to offer ENGL 4630 Literary Criticism and Theory for the first time in several years.

SLO 4: Critical Thinking Skills

Define Outcome:

Students graduating with a degree in English will apply their ability to think critically as shown at or above both the national mean and the Tennessee Tech mean on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST). Students take the CCTST their senior year.

Assessment Methods:

The California Critical Thinking Skills Test assesses critical thinking skills, including analysis and interpretation sub-scores, which relate to the English major student learning outcomes. The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences helps to make students aware of this requirement and when to take the test.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

English majors will perform at or above the national mean and the Tennessee Tech mean on the CCTST.

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.E Stackable Credentials

Results and Analysis:

English majors (17 in 2024) scored above both the TTU mean (74.8) and the national mean (72.8) on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. English majors continue to score above both the institutional and the national mean, indicating their skills as critical thinkers.

Attached Files: See Appendix 7

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

We do not see a reason to change our current approach to teaching critical thinking skills due to the results of the CCST.

SLO 5: Intercultural Knowledge

Define Outcome:

Students graduating with a degree in English will be able to articulate how intercultural factors shape the creation of texts with 80% of students scoring "Very Good" or above in the "Intercultural Knowledge" categories for the ENGL 4995 Senior Colloquium Research.

A score of 80% or above indicates a strong "above average" attainment of this SLO.

Assessment Methods:

From the ENGL 4995 Writing Rubric:

- The writing articulates how intercultural rules and biases shape the creation of texts.
- From the ENGL 4995 Oral Presentation Rubric:
- Student demonstrates knowledge of intercultural factors and ways they shape the creation of texts.

This outcome is measured in ENGL 4995, the capstone course for English majors. The course is offered in spring semesters only, so students usually take the course the last semester at Tennessee Tech. The intent is to determine to what degree students understand the relationship between intercultural factors (experiences, viewpoints, influences) and the creation of texts. The rubric scores this knowledge on a five point scale excellent to poor.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

80% of students will score "Very Good" or above in the relevant rubric category.

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.A Experiential Learning, 1.C Diversity

Results and Analysis:

SLO 5 is the newest of the BA SLOs. We are still developing an effective way to assess this SLO. In Fall 2024, we offered Native American Literature and ENGL 4983 Topics: Disability Studies. In Spring 2025, we offered ENGL 4712 African American Literature. Students are being given opportunities to experience a range of cultures. On the exit survey students mentioned that courses like history of the English language and British and American literature helped them to discover how intercultural factors shape texts,

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

Include the heading we developed to assess this SLO on the rubric used in ENGL 4995 writing and oral presentation assignments.

Summative Evaluation:

Due to our students' performance above both the institutional and the national mean, we do not see a reason to change our current efforts in fostering critical thinking skills among English majors.

We should continue to provide opportunities for students to practice their use of literary terms and critical theory. We plan to add the topic of Intercultural Factors as a force that shapes the creation and interpretation of literary texts, as well as oral presentations.

Assessment Plan Changes:

Revise the ENGL 4995 assessment rubrics to include intercultural factors. See above.

Consider revising the timeline of when written assignments are due so they can be included in Research Day.

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Appendix 1: English BA Curriculum Map

Learning Outcomes		Required Courses					
	3000 Introduction to English Methods & Research	3810 British Literature I	3820 British Literature II	3910 American Literature I	3920 American Literature II	4121 Shakespeare	4995 Senior Colloquium
Demonstrate the capacity to write clearly	I	R	R	R	R	R	M, A
Demonstrate the ability to speak clearly	I	R	R	R	R	R	<u>M, A</u>
Demonstrate the ability to think critically	I	R	R	R	R	R	M
Read widely and perceptively.	I	R	R	R	R	R	M, A
Demonstrate how intercultural factors shape the creation of texts.	I	R	R	R	R	R	M, A

Key:

"I" Students are introduced to the outcome.

"R" The outcome is reinforced and students are afforded opportunities to practice.

"M" Students have had sufficient practice and can now demonstrate mastery.

"A" Evidence might be collected and evaluated for program-level assessment.

Appendix 2: English 4995 Oral and Written Senior Colloquium Data

ENGL 4995: Senior Colloquium								
Spring 2025: Why Read? Why Write?								
Professor: Tony Baker								
Assessment of Students' Oral Presentations in Capstone Course								ORAL
<i>(5) excellent; (4) very good; (3) good; (2) fair; (1) poor</i>								
RESULTS		ORAL						
spring 2025	n=16							
Trait	Mean score	5) excellent	4) very good	3) good	2) fair	1) poor	0) fail	n = 16
1. clear thesis statement	4.56	13		2	1			16
2. well-organized main points	4.44	10	3	3				16
3. effective rhetorical strategies	4.50	13	2	1				16
4. sources appropriate	4.88	15		1				16
5. terms explained; topic appropriate	4.63	12	2	2				16
6. visible, easily readable visual aid	5.00	16						16
7. correct diction, syntax, usage, etc.	4.81	13	3					16
8. few fillers; extemporaneous style	4.38	9	4	3				16
9. dynamics, eye contact	4.44	11	2	2	1			16
10. welcoming	4.75	14		2				16
avg. per trait	4.64							

Appendix 2: English 4995 Oral and Written Senior Colloquium Data, cont.

Assessment of Students' Written Presentations in Capstone Course								WRITTEN
(5) excellent; (4) very good; (3) good; (2) fair; (1) poor								
RESULTS		WRITTEN						
spring 2025	n=16							
Trait	Mean score	5) excellent	4) very good	3) good	2) fair	1) poor	0) fail	n = 16
1. clear thesis statement	4.75	13	2	1				16
2. well-organized main points	4.63	11	4	1				16
3. effective rhetorical strategies	4.50	11	3	1	1			16
4. sources appropriate	4.63	12	2	2				16
5. terms explained; topic appropriate	4.63	11	4	1				16
6. formal/format features appropriate for	5.00	16						16
7. correct diction, syntax, usage, etc.	4.81	14	1	1				16
8. tone and style appropriate	4.88	15		1				16
avg. per trait	4.73							

Appendix 3: English 4995 Written Senior Colloquium Results

Assessment of Written Communication

The members of the BA Curriculum Committee, based on their knowledge and expertise, determined that a 4.50 average per trait was a reasonable expectation and benchmark of students' proficiency in writing. Spring 2025 is the first semester the writing rubric has been used in ENGL 4995.

Results

Year	Number of Students	Average per trait
2025	16	4.73

The average number of students scoring Excellent or Very Good is above the goal of 80%.

Appendix 4: English 4995 Rubric for Assessing Students' Writing

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
The writing presented a clear thesis statement.					
The writing was well organized with main points related to the thesis.					
The writing developed the main points using effective rhetorical strategies.					
Sources used were appropriate to the purpose of the writing and were managed well.					
Technical/audience specific terms were explained; the topic was appropriate for the designated audience.					
Formal/format features appropriately addressed the prompt.					
The writing articulates how intersectional cultural rules and biases shape the creation of texts.					
The writing used correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics					
The tone and style were appropriate for the audience.					

Appendix 5: English 4995 Oral Senior Colloquium Results

Assessment of Oral Communication

The members of the BA Curriculum Committee, based on their knowledge and expertise, determined that a 4.50 average per trait was a reasonable expectation and benchmark of students' proficiency in oral communication.

Results

Year	Number of Students	Average per trait
2021	12	4.55
2022	16	4.94
2023	12	4.0

The lower score in 2023 was influenced by the fact that one student in the class did not make an oral presentation at all and received a 0 in all categories.

Appendix 6: ETS Literature in English

ETS Literature in English

DATE	Number of TTU Students	TTU Average
F 2021	3	151
SP 2022	10	148
F 2022	2	149.5
SP 2023	5	152.8
F 2023	1	131
SP 2024	6	147
F 2024	3	153
SP 2025	9	152.3

2021-22

2022-23

2023-24

2024-25

TTU	149	152	139	152.6
National	153	153	151.2	151.2
TTU/National	97%	100%	90%	100%

The university set a threshold of acceptability of 90%. English majors met that threshold. The average score in 2024-25 was 12.6 higher than in 2023-24.

Appendix 7: ENGL California Critical Thinking Skills Test Results

California Critical Thinking Skills Test

2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	
N=18	N=10	N=14	N=17	
ENGL major Mean 74.3	ENGL major mean 78.0	ENGL major mean 75.9	ENGL major mean 78.2	
TTU Mean 75.2	TTU Mean 74.3	TTU Mean 74.4	TTU mean 74.8	
National Mean 73.3	National Mean 73.3	National Mean 72.8	National Mean 72.8	