

Helpful Hints/Recommendations from the English TAG Panel

The current English TAG outcomes identify four literature survey classes. These four classes--earlier British Literature, later British Literature, earlier American Literature, and later American Literature--are found in nearly every English department curriculum in the United States. Here are the definitions and outcomes:

OAH053 American Literature I

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and/or be able to apply:

1. The historical and cultural context which produces American literature*
2. Techniques used to analyze a text*
3. Accurate critical reading, writing, and discussion of American authors and movements*
4. Coverage of a substantial portion of the earlier period of American literature up to the mid- to late-nineteenth century*

OAH054 American Literature II

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and/or be able to apply:

1. The historical and cultural context which produces American literature*
2. Techniques used to analyze a text*
3. Accurate critical reading, writing, and discussion of American authors and movements*
4. Coverage of a substantial portion of the later period of American literature from the mid- to late-nineteenth century to the present*

OAH055 British Literature I

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and/or be able to apply:

1. The historical and cultural context which produces British literature*
2. Techniques used to analyze a text*
3. Accurate critical reading, writing, and discussion of British authors and movements*
4. Coverage of a substantial portion of the earlier period of British literature up to the early modern period*

OAH056 British Literature II

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and/or be able to apply:

1. The historical and cultural context which produces British literature*
2. Techniques used to analyze a text*
3. Accurate critical reading, writing, and discussion of British authors and movements*
4. Coverage of a substantial portion of the later period of British literature from the onset of industrialism to the present*

Successful proposals for this TAG have done the following:

1. Convincingly demonstrate a professional level of coverage of the literature in the proposed field. A detailed syllabus with either a standard college-level anthology or alternative assemblage of texts, together with dates, page numbers, and clear indications of works read in full or excerpted will be the best way to demonstrate this coverage.

2. Address clearly the ways in which class lecture and/or discussion will provide students with the historical and cultural context for literature and will prepare students to analyze literary texts in the relevant period.

3. Clarify writing assignments and expectations.

Some unsuccessful proposals have done the following:

1. Propose a one-quarter or one-semester survey of British or American literature. The current TAG requires (at a minimum) an “earlier” and “later” survey of each national literature.

2. Indicate coverage by listing names of representative authors. The committee can evaluate a survey class insightfully if a detailed schedule of readings, including authors, works, pages, dates, is provided.

3. Alternatively, simply copy and paste the complete contents of a survey anthology into a syllabus. Where an anthology is used, the committee appreciates seeing a realistic course put together by intelligently selecting a manageable set of readings from it.

4. Ignore the expectations for discussion of historical and cultural context, techniques of literary analysis, and critical writing.

An important variable:

For both sets of surveys, but for British Literature in particular, the committee deliberately defined the “earlier” and “later” periods with some flexibility, since it is aware that some colleges and universities have two British Literature surveys while others have three. Where universities have three British literature surveys (for example, [a] 800-1660, [b] 1660-1832, and [c] 1832-present), the second survey may be counted in OAH 055 or 056, depending on its emphasis. In general, for all the TAG courses, the exact point at which the survey begins and ends is less important than the issues discussed above, like coverage, literary analysis, and critical reading and writing.