

Melissa Nivens, PhD

EDUCATION

- May 2015** **Ph.D. English, Texas A&M University-Commerce**
Dissertation Title: *Domestic Literacy: Situating Composition within the Discipline of Home Economics*
- May 2009** **M.A. English, Texas A&M University-Commerce**
Final Project Title: *How Society's Attitudes Influence Student Writing: Plagiarism Today*
- Dec. 1998** **B.A. English, Texas A&M University-Commerce**
Texas Secondary English Teacher Lifetime Certification

PROFESSIONAL & ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2013 – Present** **Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX**
- Associate VP for Academic Innovation and Success (June 2026 – present)
 - QEP Faculty Director, First-year Mustangs Adventure (Aug. 2022 – May 2026)
 - Associate Professor of English (Aug. 2020 – present)
 - Writing Program Administrator (Aug. 2017 – Aug. 2022)
 - Assistant Professor of English (Aug. 2016 – May 2020)
 - Instructor/Lecturer of English (Aug 2013 – May 2016)
- 2009 – 2013** **Weatherford College, Wise County Campus, Bridgeport, TX**
- Adjunct & Dual Credit Instructor of English, Weatherford College Wise County
- 2000 – 2013** **Alvord ISD, Alvord, TX**
- Middle School & High School English Teacher
- Summers 2010 & 2011** **Education Service Center Region XI, Fort Worth, TX**
- Curriculum Training Consultant
- 1999 - 2000** **Kappa Delta Sorority, Memphis, TX**
- Chapter Development Consultant
- Spring 1999** **Texas A&M University – Commerce, Commerce, TX**
- Graduate Assistant TRIO Programs and Department of Literature and Languages

COURSES TAUGHT SINCE TENURE IN 2020

ENGL 0043 Integrated Reading and Writing (as co-requisite)

ENGL 1143 Intro to Critical Reading and Academic Writing [formerly Academic Research & Writing] (face-to-face, online, and as a Learning Community)

ENGL 1153 Intro to Reading & Writing about Culture [formerly Literature]

ENGL 2013 Intro to English Studies

ENGL 2113 Intermediate Composition & Grammar (online)

ENGL 3023 [Elementary] Composition Pedagogy & Practice

ENGL 3523 Special Topics in Rhetoric: Rhetoric of Domesticity

ENGL 4013 Introduction to Composition Studies

English 4553 Rhetorical Criticism and Theory (Independent Study)

ENGL 5023 Teaching College Writing (online)

WGST 2503 Intro to Women's & Gender Studies Honors

MWSU 1230 First-year Mustangs Adventure

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

2026-2027

With Dittika Gupta, Mia Medina, and Desi Holguin. "Evaluating the Impact of the First-year Mustangs Adventure Program. Accepted for EURECA 2026-27.

With Elizabeth Sharp et al. "Tradwives Go Viral but Domestic Labor Remains Devalued: Applying Femme Theory and Feminist Rhetorical Theory to the Contradictions of Tradwives." 2026 Theory Construction and Research Methodology Workshop. National Council on Family Relations Conference. November 2026.

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

2026-2027

With Suzanne Lindt and Jennifer Amox. "Beyond Instruction: Faculty Practices that Shape the Student Experience." *Faculty Focus*. 2026.

2025-2026

"A Recipe for Research: Exploring the Rhetoric of Domesticity." *Conference of College English Teachers Journal*. vol. XCI. 2026.

2024-2025

"Barbie Land: Reflections on the Intersections of Woman and Mother." *Journal of American Studies Association of Texas*. 2025.

2016-2017

"Pioneer Woman: Recovering a Red River Life Narrative." *Scholarship and Creativity Journal*. Texas College English Association. 2017. 1-12 <https://sites.google.com/site/texascea/home/scholarship-and-creativity-journal/journal-archives/2017-publications>

"Farm to Table: Home Management Houses as Rhetorical Space for Women." *Peitho Online Journal*, vol. 19, no. 2, Spring 2017. 282-300. <http://peitho.cwshrc.org/farm-to-table-the-home-management-house-as-rhetorical-space-for-rural-women/>

BOOK REVIEWS

2024-2025

Review of *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*, by Jonathan Haidt. *1922 Review* vol. 1, no. 1, 11 Nov. 2024.

2016-2017

Review of *Worth Writing About: Exploring Memoir with Adolescents*, by Jake Wizner. *Journal of Teaching Writing*. vol. 32, no. 1, Spring 2017. 93-99.

Review of *Claiming the Bicycle: Women, Rhetoric, and Technology in Nineteenth-Century America*, by Sarah Hallenbeck. *Composition Forum* vol. 35. Spring 2017. <http://compositionforum.com/issue/35/nivens-hallenbeck-review.php>

AUTHORED GRANTS

2026-2027

With Jeremy Duff. "Mustang Learning Partners: An Embedded Tutor Program and Course Redesign for Developmental Math and English." Student Success Acceleration Program Grant. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Summer 2026. \$300,000.

PRESENTATIONS

2025-2026

"A Recipe for Research: Exploring the Rhetoric of Domesticity." Conference of College English Teachers. Waco, TX. February 2026.

With Suzanne Lindt and Jennifer Amox. "The Relationship-Rich Advantage: How Faculty Can Transform Student Experiences." Faculty Forum. Midwestern State University. February 2026.

"Performing Motherhood: Reconciling Conservative Femininity with Ambitious Professionalism." American Studies Association of Texas. Waco, TX. November 2025.

2024-2025

Poster with Jennifer Amox, Suzanne Lindt, & Beverly Stiles. "Beyond the Syllabus: Incorporating Core Values for Student Success." Coalition for Transformational Education Conference. Miami, FL. March 2025.

"Considering the Kitchen: A Pedagogical Approach to Exploring the Rhetoric of Domesticity." Women's & Gender Studies. Lubbock, TX. March 2025.

"Mommy Wars Have Moved to TikTok: Exploring Competing Versions of Motherhood." American Studies Association of Texas. Wichita Falls, TX. November 2024.

2023-2024

"Mothers, Daughters, and *Barbie The Movie*: Contradictions of Being a Woman." Celebration of Scholarship. Wichita Falls, TX. April 2024.

"Mothers, Daughters, & Barbie: Standing Still or Passing the Torch?" Women's & Gender Studies. Lubbock, TX. April 2024

"Building Community through First-year Composition." Conference of College Teachers of English. Denton, TX. March 2024.

"'That's Texas': Defining Texas through Country Music." Texas College English Association. Denton, TX. March 2024.

2022-2023

"All Too Well: The Discourse of Wellness on College Campuses." Celebration of Scholarship. Wichita Falls, TX. April 2023.

"All Too Well: The Discourse of Wellness on College Campuses." Conference of College Teachers of English. Wichita Falls, TX. March 2023.

2021-2022

"Using Writing Intensive Courses to Re-define Writing Proficiency." Conference of College Teachers of English. Virtual. 4 March 2022.

"Exclusive Pasts, Inclusive Futures: Exploring Sorority Rhetoric of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion." American Studies Association of Texas. Wichita Falls, TX. 12 November 2021.

2019-2020

"Country Music: An Unlikely Source of Feminist Activism." Conference of College Teachers of English. McKinney, TX. 6 March 2020.

"Wichita Woman: Using a Grassroots Newspaper to Change the Public Discourse." Feminisms and Rhetorics 2019. Harrisonburg, VA. November 2019.

2018-2019

"Borders and Bridges: Exploring Conceptual, Linguistic, and Cultural Borders in the FYC Classroom." Conference of College Teachers of English. Kingsville, TX. 1 March 2019.

With Greg Giddings. "Gender and Politics in Bruce Springsteen's *Darkness on the Edge of Town*." Faculty Forum. Midwestern State University. 4 February 2019.

2017-2018

"What if the State Changes the Law?: Implementing a Co-Requisite Model for Developmental Reading and Writing." Council of Writing Program Administrator Conference. Sacramento, CA. July 2018. (did not attend)

"Building Future Scholars through Recovering the Past: University Archives as an Invention Site for Undergraduate Research." Rhetoric Society of America. Minneapolis, MN. 31 May 2018.

With Greg Giddings. "The Politics of Gender in Bruce Springsteen's *Darkness on the Edge of Town*." Celebration of Scholarship. Midwestern State University. Wichita Falls, TX. 25 April 2018.

With Greg Giddings. "*Darkness on the Edge of Town* and Conservative Gender Roles." Bruce Springsteen's *Darkness on the Edge of Town* International Symposium. Monmouth, NJ. 14 April 2018

"Student-Athletes and Performance in the Composition Classroom." Research Network Forum. Conference of College Composition and Communication. Kansas City, MO. 14 March 2018

"Co-requisite Developmental Integrated Reading and Writing: A Paired Course Pilot Program." Conference of College Teachers of English. Stephenville, TX. 2 March 2018.

2016-2017

"Pioneer Woman: Recovering a Red River Life Narrative." Celebration of Scholarship. Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX. April 2017.

"A Granddaughter's Inheritance: A Literacy Narrative Legacy." Texas College English Association Conference. Hurst, TX. March 2017.

"Composing Politics in the Digital Age: Pairing First-Year Composition and American Government." National Learning Communities Conference. Atlanta, GA. November 2016.

2015-2016

"A Literacy Legacy: The Literacy Narrative of my Grandmother." Digital Exhibit. Feminisms and Rhetorics 2015. Tempe, AZ. October 2015. <https://youtu.be/kTVb66xqsao>

"Farm to Table: Home Management Houses as Rhetorical Space for Women." East Texas Historical Association Fall Meeting. Nacogdoches, TX. October 2015.

2014-2015

"Playing House: Home Management Houses as Rhetorical Space for Women." COPLAC Meeting, Willimantic, CT. June 2015. (did not attend)

"Playing House: Home Management Houses as Rhetorical Space for Women." Celebration of Scholarship. Wichita Falls, TX. April 2015.

2013-2014

"Domestic Literacy: Open Reflections from the Home Management House." The Persistence of Memory: Remapping the Future of Composition Studies by Charting Writing Histories at One Rural Texas University Panel. Conference on College Composition and Communication. Indianapolis, IN. March 2014.

PRIOR TO 2013

"Domestic Literacy: Exploring Home Economics and Higher Education by Compositing with New Media." Women and Rhetoric: Influence, Inspiration, Inclusion. Federation Rhetoric Symposium. Denton, TX. April 2012.

"Dual Credit: A Legitimate Path to Higher Education." EGAD Agora Graduate Student Conference. Commerce, TX. March 2012.

"This Ain't Your Grandmother's Book Report." Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading Conference. Denton, TX. September 2011.

"Multimedia? I Could Never Do That at My School." Texas Computer Education Association Conference. Austin, TX. February 2003.

GUEST & INVITED TALKS

Guest Speaker. "A Recipe for Research: Exploring the Rhetoric of Domesticity." REDTalk. Redwine Honors Program. Mar. 2026.

Guest Speaker. "Considering the Kitchen: Exploring the Rhetoric of Domesticity." Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society. Oct. 2025.

Presenter. "Navigating College Life." New Student Orientation. Summer 2025.

Podcast Guest. "Episode 47: I Made It to Campus; What Now?" Club Moffett Talks. March 2025.

Guest Lecturer. "Thinking about Teaching?" Intro to English Studies. November 2024.

Guest Lecturer. "Mothers, Daughters, and the Contradictions of Being a Woman." Feminist Philosophy. October 2024.

Guest Speaker. "Domestic Literacy: Home Economics at East Texas State." Bridgeport Historical Society, Bridgeport, TX. July 2024.

Panelist. "Exploring Alternatives to Traditional Textbooks." TLRC. March 2024.

Presenter. "First-year Survival Guide." New Faculty Orientation. 2023, 2024.

Guest Speaker. "First-year Experience: Midwestern State University." Rotary Club. July 2023.

Presenter. "Quality Enhancement Plan." SACSCOC Site Visit. March 2023.

Presenter. "Learn about the QEP." TLRC. Feb. 2023. (Repeated for Student Affairs Retreat, SGA, & Admissions Retreat)

Guest Lecturer. "Using Archival Research in Rhetorical Studies." Intro to Graduate English Studies. Nov. 2022, Nov. 2023, Nov. 2025.

Guest Lecturer. "Country Music: Where are the Women?" Honors Seminar. Midwestern State University. October 2022.

Panelist. "Researching Texts for, by, or about Women." MOSAIC Women's History Month 2022. Midwestern State University. 31 Mar. 2022.

Guest Speaker. "*The Wichita Woman: A Space for Community Activism.*" League of Women Voters. 7 April 2021.

Guest Lecturer. "Country Music: An Unlikely Source of Feminist Activism." Honors Seminar. Midwestern State University. Oct. 2020 and Oct. 2021.

Guest Lecturer. "Recovering MSU's Past: Library Archives as an Invention Site for Feminist Rhetorical Research." Honors Seminar. Midwestern State University. Nov. 2019.

Guest Lecturer. "Recovering MSU's Past: Library Archives as an Invention Site for Feminist Rhetorical Research." Introduction to English Studies. Midwestern State University. 18 Sep. 2019.

"Aunt Pliny." Red River Reading Series. Midwestern State University. 1 Dec. 2017.

"Unruly Women: Activism Then and Now." Honors Seminar Presentation. Midwestern State University. 13 Oct. 2017.

With Hillary Coenen. "Unruly Women: Activism Then and Now." Wichita Falls Public Library. March 2017.

Guest Lecturer. "Playing House: Home Management Houses as Rhetorical Space for Women." Rhetorical Theory and Criticism. Midwestern State University. March 2016.

Panelist. "First-Year Experience at MSU – Where are we going?" Teaching and Learning Resource Center. Midwestern State University. December 2015.

WORKSHOPS

"Navigate Refresh." Midwestern State University. 2023, 2024.

With University Writing Council. "Defining Writing Intensive: A High Impact Practice." University Writing Council. Midwestern State University. Feb. 2022.

"Navigate PY Faculty Training." Midwestern State University. Sept. 2021.

"Public Service Announcement Group Project." NOYCE LC Workshop. Midwestern State University. Apr. 2018.

With Betty Carroll. "ELAR College Prep Course." Region IX Education Service Center. Wichita Falls, TX. July 2016.

"Grab Some Grammar and Go." W4Tx: Keep Calm and Write On. Region IX Education Service Center. Wichita Falls, TX. July 2016.

With Betty Carroll. "ELAR College Prep Course." Region IX Education Service Center. Wichita Falls, TX. August 2015.

With Ashley Campana. "Grab Some Grammar and Go." Academic Vertical Alignment Training and Renewal Symposium. Wichita Falls, TX. February 2014.

SERVICE TO ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Instructor Search Committee (2026)

Textbook Committee (2025 - 2026)

English UG Program Assessment Committee (2024 - 2026)

English Website Committee (2024)

Lecturer Search Committee (2024)

Department Scholarship and Awards Committee (2024-2026)
Department Secretary Search Committee (2022)
Composition/Rhetoric Asst Professor Search Committee Chair (2019-2020)
Department Chair Search Committee (2018-2019)
Academic Advisor (2017 – 2026)
Graduate Advising Committee Member (and Thesis Chair) (2017 – 2026)
Composition Grading Workshop (2017 – 2021)
Business Writing Asst Professor Search Committee (2017)
Professional Writing Asst Professor Search Committee (2016)
Composition Committee (2014-2023), Co-Chair (2016-2020), Chair (2020-2021), (Co-Chair (2021-2022)
Graduate Studies Committee (2014-2026)

SERVICE TO PY COLLEGE

Remodel/Furniture Selection Committee (2022-2023)
EAB Navigate Faculty Champion for PY (2020-2026)
College Research Committee (2016-2018)

SERVICE TO UNIVERSITY

Leadership Development Council (2026)
Rising Sophomore Summit Planning Committee (2024 - present)
Student Success Council (2024 - present), (Co-chair, 2026-27)
Extended Orientation Committee (2023 - 2024)
New Student Orientation Presenter

- Writing Proficiency Exam (2018 – 2020)
- First-year Survival Guide/Navigating College (2023-2025)
- Student Success Setting the Tone for MSU (2026)

Title IX Case Investigator (2023 - present)
QEP Advisory Committee Chair (2023 - 2026)
University Tenure and Promotion Committee (2022 - 2026), Chair (2023, 2024, 2025)
First-year Council (2022-2024)
QEP Planning & Implementation Committee (2021-2022)
Women's History Month Planning Committee (2021)
Mustangs Round Up Facilitator (2019)
University Writing Council Chair (2019-2022)

- Initiated Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) initiative
- Developed Writing Intensive (WI) Course policy
- Developed professional development for WI instructors

Financial Aid Advisory Appeals Committee (2017-2021) Chair (2019-2021)
Core Curriculum Committee (2016-2022)
MSU Texas Mustangs Ignite Summer Bridge Program Task Force (2017-2018)
Writing Proficiency Exam Proctor and Evaluator (2016-2022)
English Department Grammar Fair (2014-2020)
Teacher Education Program
MSU Texas EURECA Project

- Faculty Co-Mentor (2026-2027)
 - "Evaluating the Impact of the First-year Mustangs Adventure Program"
- Faculty Mentor (Fall 2018)
 - "Midwestern's *O-Wa-Ki-Ya* and the Feminist Rhetorical Perspective"
- Submission Evaluator
- Forum Presentation Evaluator

- Forum Session Moderator

SERVICE TO PROFESSION

SACSCOC On Site Re-Affirmation Committee, Coker University

- QEP Lead Evaluator

National Resource for the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition

- Conference Proposal Reviewer (2023)

Conference of College Teachers of English

- Executive Board
 - Creative Writing Counselor (2026)
 - Composition and Rhetoric Counselor (2024 – 2025)
 - Past-Past President (2024 – 2025)
 - Past President (2023 – 2024)
 - President & Conference Co-Chair (2022-2023)
 - President Elect (2020-2021 and 2021-2022 because of COVID)

Texas College English Association

- Panel Chair
- President (2019-2020)
- Vice President (2018-19)
- Secretary/treasurer (2017-18)

National Council of Teachers of English

Conference on College Composition and Communication

- Table Lead (2018)
- Panel Chair (2016)

Council of Writing Program Administrators

- Conference Siting Committee (2019)

SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

Children's Book Week Reader (2024)

Career Services Clothes Closet (2023 – present)

Sober Living, Inc., Wichita Falls, TX

- Donated coats and winter clothes to women residents (2025)
- Donated writing supplies to women residents (2024)
- Donated bedding supplies for new Sober Living house (2023)

First United Methodist Church, Alvord, TX

- Lay Leader (2021-2023)
 - Presided over Leadership Team meetings
 - Consulted with Pastor on church business
- Vacation Bible School Director (2009-2021)
 - Planned all aspects of event
 - Purchased curriculum and supplies
 - Recruited volunteers
- Administrative Council Chair (2016, 2017)
 - Conducted Council meetings
 - Worked closely with pastor
- Staff Parish Relations Committee Member and Chair (2013-2015 & 2018-2019)
 - Conducted SPRC meetings
 - Facilitated and completed annual "Marks of Fruitfulness" evaluation of pastor and other reports
 - Hired church staff

- San Antonio Mission Trip Chaperone (Summer 2016)
 - Conducted VBS at SAMMinistries
 - Volunteered at downtown mission
 - Painted bridge
- Lector
 - Read scripture during worship service
- Technology Team
 - Ran sound and slides during worship service
- Ministry Safe Coordinator
 - Maintained sexual abuse prevention training records

Kappa Delta Sorority

- Bias Response and Intervention Team (2021-Present)
 - National Leadership Team member
 - Reviewed reported incidents of bias
 - Facilitated restorative justice measures
 - Attended national convention
 - Wrote quarterly reports
- Chapter Advisory Board Specialist (2019-2021)
 - National Leadership Team member
 - Assisted local advisors with sorority operations
 - Attended national convention
 - Participated in team calls
 - Developed training materials
- Fort Worth Alumnae Chapter (2014-2020)
- Alumnae Engagement Task Force (2018)
- Chapter Advisory Board for Gamma Beta Chapter – University of North Texas (2009-2014, 2019-present)
 - Vice President of Inclusion Advisor (2024-present)
 - Director of Member Retention Advisor (2022)
 - Vice President Advisor (2022)
 - Director of Scholarship Advisor (2019-2021) (2022-2024)

Alvord ISD District Educational Improvement Committee (2017-2022)

- Parent representative

UIL District Meet Ready Writing Judge (2016-2019, 2021, 2025)

4H District Fashion Show Judge (2016, 2017)

Alvord ISD Athletic Booster Club (2000-2022)

- Secretary (2021-2022)

Food Bank Volunteer

- Wichita Falls, Texas (2022)
- Fort Worth, Texas (2016)

Wise County Live Thankfully Volunteer (2018 & 2019)

- Sort canned food
- Package food donations for families

AWARDS & HONORS

Randall Popken Rhetoric/Composition Outstanding Paper Award, CCTE 2026

Ten Year Service Pin, MSU 2023

Visionary Values Award, TLRC, 2023, 2025

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences Teaching Award, 2022

Five Year Service Pin, MSU, 2018

Bridgeport High School Wall of Honor Award, 2018

Intramural Research and Creative Endeavors Award, 2017
Lamar Award of Excellence, Bridgeport Masonic Lodge, 2013
Jack Harvey Fellowship Award, Weatherford College, 2013

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Garner Institute Sensemaking, MSU
Dean's Institute, ACAD
Leadership Academy, MSU/TTU
AI TLRC, MSU
Red Raider Coach Academy, TTU
Writing Across the Curriculum, TLRC, MSU
Promoting Well-being Through Learner Centered Education, Faculty Learning Community, U of Florida
Textbooks, TLRC, MSU
Building Community TLRC, MSU
AI TLRC, MSU
AI and Digital Pedagogy, CCTE
Title IX Case Investigator Training, MSU
What AI Means for Teaching, MLA
Mental Health First Aid Certification, MSU
Critical Conversations: Engaging Gen Z, MSU
Title IX Designated Reporter, MSU
Confident Conversations, Kappa Delta Sorority
Critical Conversations: How to be an Anti-Racist, MSU
"Strategies in Antiracist Writing Instruction," TWU
CAMPUSPEAK Dr. Wharton DEI Training, Kappa Delta Sorority
Achieve Training, McMillian/Bedford
"Rhetorical Listening with Dr. Krista Radcliff," NCTC Denton
ProctorU Training, MSU
Developing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Faculty Training, MSU
Eli Review Summer Demo Workshop, online
Learning Communities Workshops, MSU
Banner Training, MSU
Time Clock Training, MSU
Computer Security Awareness and Ransomware, MSU
Sexual Harassment, MSU
ADA Compliance for Online Courses, MSU
DegreeWorks, MSU
QPR for Suicide Prevention, MSU
Co-requisite Conferences, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Fort Worth & Austin