ENGL 109: Intro. To Academic Writing

Prof. Elise Vist
PAS 1238
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 5:30–6:15
Class: Tuesday and Thursday, 6:30-7:50 EV 3408
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Course description:

The course will explore a variety of issues in academic writing such as style, argument, and the presentation of information. We are going to be writing a lot. Sometimes that writing will be graded, sometimes it will be preparation for something that will be graded, and sometimes it will be writing to get you and keep you in the habit of writing. You'll get feedback – from yourself, from your peers, or from me – on all your writing.

This course is focused around the themes of truth, facts, evidence, argument, point of view, and persuasion. We’re going to read about, think about, talk about, and write about what makes ideas into knowledge, how we communicate facts and evidence, and how the way we choose to communicate them shapes those facts for our readers and audiences.

Course learning outcomes:

The design of the content and schedule of the course is determined by our goals of considering how writing creates or obscures “truth,” and of becoming stronger academic writers in a university setting. More formally, the course aims:

▪ To help you to think critically and communicate effectively
▪ To learn and practice a variety of strategies for inventing, drafting, and editing texts
▪ To learn and practice writing in a variety of academic genres
▪ To learn to read critically
▪ To learn to write persuasively by effectively employing elements of formal argumentation
▪ To help you give and receive useful feedback on writing for the purposes of revision
▪ To learn and practice communicating to a variety of academic audiences

This course is reading intensive, writing intensive, and participation intensive: I expect you to do the readings, show up, and take part.

Course meeting times
The course meets twice weekly, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30-7:50, in Environment 3408

Please feel free to contact me with any concerns or questions you have about the class, the readings, or the assignments. I will be in my office during the hours noted, and I’m always very happy to have you drop by during these times, or by appointment at other times. Beyond office hours, contact is probably best initiated via email.

**Note for Students with Disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services office (AS), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

**Technology Policies**

**Email policy:** I will read your emails within 1 business day, and I will respond within 2 business days. Sometimes, my answer will be “It’s in the syllabus,” so please read through this document before asking questions about dates, readings, or assignments. I can answer questions like “Can I have an extension on this assignment” (“It depends”) but cannot answer questions like “Why, in detail, with citations, did I not receive 100% on this assignment?” For questions like that, I suggest you make an appointment or come to see me in my office hours, where I will be happy to go over my feedback in person.

**Email policy, part 2:** Email is a professional communication medium. *Be professional in your communications:* use your university email. I do. Make sure your address includes your name, otherwise I’ll have no idea who you are. Write respectfully. Say hi, at least in the first e-mail! I’m a person and not an answer bot.

**Device policy:** Bring your laptop: we write online, alone and in groups, and sometimes collectively. We have lids-up time (use the computer), but also lids-down time (no computer). The laptop is a tool, however – we will use it to help us work and learn, not to goof off on the interwebs. Phones for emergencies only.
Required and Recommended texts

The following text is required for the course. Bring it to class. It is (soon) available for purchase at the University Bookstore in South Campus Hall.


We have a course website: it is available through Learn. You must access this site regularly: this is where links to readings not in the textbooks are located, as well as copies of all the handouts. Group work will go here. Grades live here.

Assignments and Mark Distribution

The following are the graded components of the course:

- Participation 20% (ongoing)
- Internet Narrative 15% January 30
- Fact-Check Report 20% February 15
- Evidence-Based Argument 20% March 15
- Self-Evaluation 25% April 3

Detailed handouts describe what is expected of you from each assignment; please read these carefully (they’re also online!) and refer to them as you complete the assignments.

Each assignment has a series of due dates associated with it: writing doesn’t happen in one coffee/sugar/energy-drink-fuelled session, and part of my goal is to give you the tools to write and revise your work over a period of time.

Participation, Absence, and Late Policy

Attendance is vital to your success in this course. If you choose not to attend, you will be missing in-class exercises upon which some of your grades will depend. Participation is 20% of your course grade! It’s not hard to do well, but it’s also pretty easy to screw up. If you don’t attend class you cannot get participation marks.

Participation grades are assessed according to the following criteria: attends; completes surprise reading quizzes; stays awake during class; doesn’t work on other stuff (even other homework, yes I know you’re busy, so am I); doesn’t make memes/post on facebook/twitter/snapchat/whatever you kids are into (unless that’s the course activity), participates fully and generously in group and class discussion; collaborates meaningfully in the production of shared documents and resources for class; shows evidence of having read assigned material; listens and
speaks respectfully to others; shows evidence of caring just a little bit, please, I’m not doing this for me.

Assignments are due as noted on the assignment sheets and on the Learn calendar; **unless prior arrangements are made** late assignments will lose 10% per day late, counting weekends. Assignments more than three days late will not be accepted without documentation or explanation. If you come talk to me or email me at least five days before the assignment is due, I will probably grant you an extension unless this isn’t the first time you’ve asked, in which case we’ll have to meet to talk about what’s going on. If you ask for an extension within five days of the deadline, it gets trickier, but I’m a generous person when you’ve shown yourself to be a) aware of deadlines, b) honest about your struggle, and c) conscientious of my time. I will not grant extensions the night before/day of a deadline, because that means you were not thinking about your schedule and the deadlines that have been available to you this entire semester.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

Every member of this class—instructor as well as students—has rights and responsibilities to ensure a pleasant and productive experience for all. Here are some more specific expectations for this course:

**You will:**
- know the university policies that govern your behaviour
- attend all scheduled classes
- arrive prepared: with assigned reading and writing completed, and with appropriate materials in hand
- participate actively in your own learning, while respecting the rights of others to learn as well: this means active listening as well as active speaking
- give thoughtful consideration to instructor feedback on written and oral work

**I will:**
- adhere to the university policies that govern my behaviour
- attend all scheduled classes
- make myself available for consultation in person and over email
- return assignments within 2 weeks
- provide helpful and respectful feedback on your work

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*On academic dishonesty:* Plagiarism, the use of someone else’s work as though it were your own, is *not allowed*. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism in specific cases, come see me or ask about it in class.
**Academic Integrity**

- In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the UWaterloo Academic Integrity Webpage (https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) and the Arts Academic Integrity Office Webpage (http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility) for more information.

**Grievance**

- A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Discipline**

- A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing academic offenses and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

**Appeals**

- A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm).
Schedule

Note: Listed below are the textbook readings and all the assignment due dates. There will be readings, also, that are only available on LEARN. I will try to find timely examples/issues, so I cannot plan these ahead of time; therefore, you should Check LEARN regularly.

Note also, that sometimes there will be reading quizzes that will only be accessible during course hours. These will happen at unannounced moments and will go towards your participation grade. If you don’t want to miss a quiz, but know you will miss a class – e-mail me.

4 January:
- **Freewriting:** What stops me from writing?
- **Discussion:** Things I need to improve (for Quick Lecture topics)
- **Homework:** Read the syllabus and send me a funny picture/shitpost/imagemacro/meme about the transcendent experience of reading this syllabus by email before Monday January 8 at 11:59pm. Introduce yourself.
- **Read:** “Emails” (on LEARN in case the textbook is not available yet)

9 January:
- **Read:** Ch 1, pp 4-12;
- **Freewriting:** What I read online, and how it makes me who I am
- **Quick Lecture 1 (Topic based on class discussion)**

11 January:
- **Read:** Ch 1, pp 13-20
- **Quick Lecture 2
- **Probably a quiz today, tbh**

16 January:
- **Read:** Ch 35: Revising your own work
- **Due:** One page of Internet Literacy Narrative, for *discussion*
- **Quick Lecture 3**

18 January:
- **Read:** Ch 32: High, Middle, and Low Style; Ch 33: Vigorous, Clear, Economical Prose
- **Quick Lecture 4, and so on.**

23 January:
- **Read:** Ch 36: Peer Editing
• **Due:** Full draft of Internet Literacy Narrative, for *workshopping*

25 January:
• **Read:** Ch 33 Inclusive Style

30 January:
• **Read:** Ch 37 Beginning Your Research; Ch 38 Finding Print and Online Resources
• **Due:** Final copy of Internet Literacy Narrative, to *hand in*

1 February:
• **Read:** Ch 2, pp 37-49
• **Process writing:** Choose an issue for Fact-Check Report

6 February:
• **Read:** Ch 2, pp 49-52; Ch 11: Annotated Bibliographies
• **Due:** Annotated list of 8 sources for Fact-Check Report

8 February:
• **Read:** Ch 44: Incorporating Sources; Ch 2, pp 52-57
• **Process work:** Interview classmates about your topic

13 February:
• **Read:** Ch 45: Documenting Sources; Ch 2, pp 57-59
• **Due:** Full draft of Fact-Check Report, *for workshopping*

15 February:
• **Read:** Ch 3, pp 67-78
• **Due:** Final copy of Fact-Check Report, *to hand in*

*February 19-23 Reading Week*

27 February:
• **Read:** Ch 3, pp 80-85

1 March:
• **Read:** (online material only)
• **Process writing:** Topic for and response to argument that needs evidence

6 March:
• **Read:** Ch 64, selections

8 March:
• **Read:** Ch 24: Thesis; Ch 25: Strategies; Ch 26: Organizing
• **Due:** Annotated list of 8 sources for Evidence-Based Argument, *for workshopping*
13 March:
- **Read**: Ch 28: Paragraphs; Ch 39: Transitions
- **Due**: Full draft of Evidence-Based Argument, *for workshopping*

15 March:
- **Read**: Ch 30: Introductions and Conclusions; Ch 31: Titles
- **Due**: Final copy of Evidence-Based Argument, *to hand in*

20 March:
- **Read**: Ch 65, selections

22 March:
- **Read**: Ch 4, pp 100-109
- **Process writing**: Brainstorm for Self-Evaluation

27 March:
- **Read**: Ch 4, pp 109-118
- **Due**: Draft of introduction to Self-Evaluation, *for workshopping*

29 March:
- **Process writing**: work period on Self-Evaluation

April 3:
- **Due**: Full draft of Self-Evaluation, *for feedback and discussion*