English 109: Introduction to Academic Writing

Section 005
MW 10-11:20; PAS 1241
Fall 2015
Prof. Ken Graham
HH 246; ex.32124
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30-12 and 2:30-3:30, or by appointment
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William Shakespeare, Othello, ed. Honigmann (Arden)

Course Description
This course will introduce you to academic writing in three main ways. First, we will discuss the principles of good writing, which is neither the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings nor the mechanical arrangement of facts. Instead, good writing is a social act and is governed by conventions and expectations that are specific to particular genres, circumstances, and audiences. Second, we will read examples of good writing and analyze their forms and techniques. Finally, the class will operate as a workshop in which we will practice and discuss the process of writing. Since writing is a fundamentally social and collaborative act, feedback and revision greatly enrich this process, so we will spend a good deal of class time discussing our writing with others.

Aims of the Course
• 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.

Assignments and Grading
Until you turn in your final portfolio, all grades in this class are provisional. You may revise any essay as often as you wish with the possibility of improving your grade. Graded work comprises:

1) Class participation. Because this class will operate as a workshop, participation is unusually important. I will expect you to attend conscientiously and to participate in an informed and productive manner. You will need to be prepared for class—to complete all reading and writing assignments on time and to bring the class textbook with you every day. You will need to complete the draft response assignment on time and to contribute to the success of your writing group. I am as interested in the courtesy and respect with which you listen and respond to what others say as in the sharpness of your own perceptions. Attendance and punctuality count. It is your responsibility to inform me promptly of the reasons for an absence if you wish it to be excused. If you miss more than two classes without good reasons, you will receive a failing participation grade. Weight = 20%

2) Four assigned essays (see pages 4-6 for details). Weight = 15%, 20%, 20%, and 25%
## Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Introduction to the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Read Chap. 1, pp. 4-6, Grossman, “O.K., You’re Not Shakespeare” (7-9), and Chap. 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Read Chap. 1, pp. 10-15, Chap. 19, and Nye, “Mint Snowball” (621-22)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Read Chap. 1, pp. 16-20, and Chaps. 32-34. One-page draft of literacy narrative due (see Assignment #1, page 4 below)</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Draft of assignment #1 due</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Draft Discussion Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Assignment #1 due, 10 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Read Chap. 2, pp. 36-38, 47-51</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday – No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Read Chaps. 26-27 and Silberman, “Neurodiversity” (659-60)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Draft of assignment #2 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Draft Discussion Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Assignment #2 due, 10 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Read Othello, Acts 2 and 3</td>
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<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Read Othello, Acts 4 and 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Read Chap. 3, pp. 77-91; continued discussion of Othello</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Draft of assignment #3 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Draft Discussion Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Assignment #3 due, 10 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Read Schwarzbaum, “Hunger Games” (103-105)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Make-up Day for Thanksgiving Day – Study Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Read Chap. 4, pp. 106-17, and Brown, “A Word from My Anti-Phone Soapbox” (118-122)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Draft of introduction due (see Assignment #4, page 6 below)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Draft of assignment #4 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Draft Discussion Day</td>
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Class and University Policies

Although in rare cases an electronic submission may show that an assignment has been completed (e.g. a late essay completed on a Saturday), you must turn in a paper copy of all written assignments to receive credit. Late essays will be accepted without penalty only if prior permission has been granted; otherwise, the penalty will be 5% per day, including weekends. Late assignments should be turned in either directly to me or to the English Department’s drop box on the second floor of Hagey Hall.

I will normally reply to email messages within 24 hours, weekends excepted. In the case of emails requiring lengthy replies, I may indicate to you that you should see me in person. Laptop computers, smartphones, and other portable electronic devices may become distractions both to the user and to others and so may not be used in class unless you require an accommodation.

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension, 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.

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.

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. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline, https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71.

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-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72.

Academic Integrity website: https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behaviour
Academic Integrity Office (UW): https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

All sources of information that you use in your written work in this class must be cited fully and scrupulously. If I suspect that you have committed an academic offense, including plagiarism, I will report it to the Associate Dean; if the offense is confirmed, the normal result is a failing grade on the assignment and a further five marks off the course grade.
Writing Assignments

General Instructions
All full drafts and finished assignments must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced. Pages must have one-inch margins. Your name, class and section number, and the date must appear at the top of the first page; all subsequent pages should have page numbers. If you use sources, document them according to MLA conventions (see Chapter 46). All written assignments are due at the start of class.

When full drafts are due, you will need to bring a hard copy for each member of your writing group and one copy to hand in to me. Failure to bring a draft with copies on the due date will result in a permanent 10% penalty on the assignment. Failure to bring satisfactory written responses to your writing group’s drafts on Draft Discussion Day will result in a separate (and also permanent) 10% penalty on the assignment. Late essays will be accepted only with prior permission. Otherwise, the penalty will be 5% per day, including weekends.

You may revise and resubmit your essays any number of times (subject to the practical limitations of time) for a new grade. No revisions may be submitted between November 23rd and December 9th.

Assignment #1: Literacy Narrative (15%)
The Product:
Write a 900-word narrative about the experiences that made you the reader and writer that you are today.

The Purpose:
To a degree, we are all the sum of our experiences. But these experiences can be understood – and told – in many different ways. A literacy narrative attempts to tell a story about the experiences with reading and writing that have shaped us as readers and writers, affecting our attitudes towards literacy and developing our skills as literate people. What incidents we choose to narrate – and how we choose to recount them – determines the understanding that an audience will draw from our narrative. This assignment will give you practice representing yourself in writing, while providing an opportunity to think about how narrative conveys meaning.

The Process:
September 21st – In class writing: what is your attitude towards literacy and where did it come from?
September 23rd – Bring to class a one-page freewritten draft of your literacy narrative.
September 28th – Full drafts due.
October 5th – After Draft Discussion Day, revise and submit a polished narrative of at least 900 words.

Assignment #2: Election Issue Report (20%)
The Product:
Write a 1200-word report about the positions taken by Canada’s four major national political parties on a significant issue in the current election campaign.

The Purpose:
Reporting sounds easy, but usually raises difficult questions about the reliability of different sources of information. It can be especially challenging to find accurate, unbiased, and complete information during an election campaign. This assignment will give you practice searching for good information and arranging it in a way that produces a coherent, informative report.

The Process:
October 7th – Choose an issue to report on and consult the official web pages of Canada’s four main national political parties. Bring to class a one-page, point-form summary of the parties’ positions on your issue.
October 14th – Find three more sources of information on your issue. Bring to class an outline showing the sources of information you have found for each party and the main facts that each of these sources states.
October 19th – Full drafts due.
October 26th – After Draft Discussion Day, revise and submit a polished report of at least 1200 words.

Assignment #3: Othello Argument (20%)
The Product:
Write a 1200-word argumentative essay on some aspect of Othello.

The Purpose:
Argument is needed when alternative ways of understanding something are possible, and we wish to persuade someone else that our understanding is better than the alternatives. Othello is partly about argument and persuasion, so it provides a good opportunity to think about argumentation while practicing the skills of critical interpretation that underlie many arguments. This assignment will give you practice selecting argumentative strategies, arranging evidence, and developing a persuasive style.

The Process:
October 28th – After reading the first three Acts of Othello, write a response of between 300 and 500 words to an aspect of the play that interests you so far. Focus your response on an interpretive question about a character, an important action, or a theme on which reasonable people might disagree. Bring this to class.
November 4th – Bring to class a possible thesis and three supporting points.
November 9\textsuperscript{th} – Full drafts due.
November 16\textsuperscript{th} – After Draft Discussion Day, revise and submit a polished argument of at least 1200 words.

**Assignment #4: Self-Evaluation (25\%)**
The Product:
Write a 1500-word evaluative essay assessing your first three assignments.

The Purpose:
This assignment will present your retrospective assessment of your writing in this class. It resembles your literacy narrative, but must make an evaluative argument. This assignment will give you practice making arguments about quality, while providing a final opportunity to reflect upon the writing you have done and what you have learned in the class.

The Process:
November 18\textsuperscript{th} – Bring to class the three assessments you wrote when you handed in your essays. In class, review these assessments and brainstorm about them. Can you see any repeated concerns in them? Do they suggest a narrative development? How would you organize the information they contain in a report? What argument might you make about this information?
November 23\textsuperscript{rd} – Bring to class the rough draft of an introduction to your essay.
November 30\textsuperscript{th} – Full drafts due.
December 9\textsuperscript{th} (Wednesday) – After Draft Discussion Day, revise and submit a polished evaluation of at least 1500 words. Along with it, resubmit your first three assignments and any revisions of them that you have completed.