According to the University of Waterloo Undergraduate Calendar, ENGL 109 “will explore a variety of issues in academic writing such as style, argument, and the presentation of information. Frequent written exercises will be required.”

This course is a workshop that is designed to increase your comfort with, and ability in, academic writing. You will use intensive practice to boost your university-level academic writing abilities, while at the same time you will learn some key concepts about how written communication works.

The ability to communicate effectively is a necessary prerequisite not only for success at university, but for success in almost every profession and in almost every walk of life. It is not just in a court room or on Madison Avenue that communication must be persuasive; that is true in every communication context, including academic ones. Effective writing is not simply putting ideas onto paper. Rather, it is writing persuasively, taking into account your audience, the context in which you are writing, the genre in which you are writing, and even the version of yourself that you will present to your audience. In short, good writing is rhetorically-informed writing, and part of what you will learn in this course is what that means in practice.

Effective writing almost never arises in a vacuum or by way of a lightning flash of romantic inspiration. Rather, good writing takes shape within specific contexts defined by audience, genre, and social convention. It is part of a conversation with yourself, with others, and with the past (that is, with other writers and pre-existing genres). As a fundamentally collaborative act, then, feedback and revision are essential to the process of academic composition and, in this course, much of your work will
involve different types of collaboration with your peers. You will also receive feedback at multiple stages of the writing process and will have many opportunities to revise your work. By the end of term you will collect your writing, from the earliest drafts to the most polished revisions, into a portfolio for final evaluation.

**Course Objectives**

- 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

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**Required Texts**

Gross, John, ed. The Oxford Book of Essays (Oxford)

Strunk, William, and E.B. White. The Elements of Style (Pearson)

**Assignments**

Assignments for this course will be worth a total of 200 points; the total points you earn will be divided by two to make your final percentage grade for the course. Note that larger assignments will involve preliminary exercises, drafts, and peer review.

Attendance and active preparation for and participation in class discussions, exercises, and peer-reviewing activities (20 points); your best two out of three in-class short writing assignments (5 points each; 10 points total); research report (30 points); argument to advance a thesis (40 points); annotated bibliography (10 points); literary analysis (40 points); final portfolio (50 points).*

*Note: full descriptions of all assignments and a syllabus of readings, activities, and due dates will be provided in the second week of classes. All work will be completed and submitted by the last class meeting.
Course Expectations

Participation and Attendance:

Participation and attendance in this course are required and non-negotiable. To receive full marks for attendance you will need to come to every class. If you must miss a class for illness or for a family emergency, you will need to provide documentation such as that provided via Health Services. Every unexcused absence will result in a five-point deduction from your participation score. If you miss more than four classes, you will continue to lose five points per absence from your final grade.

To receive full marks for participation, you will need to engage actively in both large and small group discussions and in peer review assignments. Keep in mind that in most workplaces, as well as in academic contexts, it is commonplace to work on teams to craft communications or to speak to large or small groups on various matters--so these academic activities in class are also thoroughly applied and practical for your future working life or indeed your success on co-op terms. Nevertheless, if you feel anxiety about formal or informal public speaking, please meet with your instructor in the first week of class to discuss accommodations. Generally speaking, such accommodations may include weekly goals for increasing participation over the course of the term and alternative forms of participation. Failure to participate without having arranged for accommodations or without meeting the requirements of your arranged accommodation will result in deductions to your grade.

Electronic Devices

Use of electronic devices is not permitted at our meetings in this course; phones must be turned off and stowed, and laptops must remain closed. All assignments done at home will be printed out in advance of class and brought in as a hard copy, both drafts for revision and final versions. In-class writing activities will be done with pen on regular size (8.5”x11”) paper. Any accommodations for the use of electronic devices in class for this course must be requested in the first week of classes.

Late Policy

Barring a serious documented medical reason, all late assignments will be penalized 5 points for the first day, and 2 points for every day thereafter, including weekend days and holidays.

Paper Format

Papers must be typed, double-spaced, printed out on one side of the page, and fastened with a staple (DO NOT use plastic report folders or other fasteners or covers); please do not use right justification. Papers must follow the format for paper presentation, quotations, and references set out in the MLA Handbook, 7th ed. as laid out
in Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL). Except when there is a serious documented medical reason, uncompleted or missed assignments will be graded 0 points.

Note: Please keep a copy of any assignment you submit to me, and NEVER hand a paper or any other assignment in by sliding it under (or sticking it to) my office door.

Plagiarism

Students must follow at all times both university and departmental regulations on plagiarism (in particular, all work apart from group assignments and peer review edits and guidance must be your own, and the words and ideas of others must appear within your work inside quotation marks and with complete references in foot- or end-notes). See below for more information on academic integrity.

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Academic Integrity

**Academic Integrity**: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo 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 offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (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. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline.

**Other sources of information for students**

Academic integrity (Arts) Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo)

**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.

**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.
Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

*Note for students with disabilities:* The AccessAbility Services office, located in Needles Hall Room 1132, 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.