Introduction to Academic Writing

Time: M and W 13:00-14:30h
Location: RCH 106

Instructor Information

Instructor: Philip Miletic
Office: 1061 PAS
Office Hours: M 11:00-12:30h
Email: pmiletic@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description

The purpose of English 109 is to get you comfortable writing in an academic context, and to develop your skills as a writer. This course will help you to think critically and creatively, and to communicate your ideas effectively. You will learn and practice the various strategies for inventing, drafting, and editing texts in different genres for different audiences. More importantly, the course’s smaller and larger assignments will help you find your “voice” within each of these genres of writing; that is, learning to write academically is not learning how to write like everybody else, but rather how to craft a professional yet personally distinct style within the conventions of academic genres.

To develop as a writer, you must share and edit your work. Writers do not develop their skills alone, but learn from other writers. Sharing your work is scary, but it is a necessary step in developing writing skills. For this reason, the course is designed to encourage collaboration with your peers in brainstorming, drafting, and editing your work, as well as to get you comfortable with sharing your work with others. You will learn to give critical and structural feedback to your peers, as well as to receive feedback and use it in the revision of your work.

Also, great writing is never accomplished immediately, but is developed and refined over time. The structure and assignments for this course are designed to develop your writing through stages of editing and drafting. You will receive extensive feedback both from your peers and me, and you will be given many opportunities to revise your work.

Required Texts

Faber, Michel. *Under The Skin*.

Additional readings will be provided through Learn.
English 109 is designed to do the following:

- To help you to think critically and communicate effectively
- To give you the chance to learn and practice a variety of strategies for inventing, drafting, and editing texts
- To give you the opportunity to learn and practice writing in an academic context
- To help you learn to read critically
- To help you 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 help you learn and practice communicating to an academic audience

Course Requirements and Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Weekly Activities</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quotation Activity</td>
<td>October 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Activity</td>
<td>November 25</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 1 Essay</td>
<td>November 2</td>
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<td>Unit 2 Essay</td>
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<td>Blog Posts</td>
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<td>Reflections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netflix/Video store Assignment</td>
<td>November 18th</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Course Schedule

Section 1: Literary analysis
Week 1:
   Monday September 14: Introduction to the course
   Wednesday September 16: Sonnets: Shakespeare, Sonnet 130: “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”; Pertrach, “Sonnet 90”

Week 2:
   Wednesday September 23: Discussion; Responding to/Plundering sonnets

Week 3: Black American Poetry and Song
   Monday September 28: Langston Hughes, “The Weary Blues”; Amiri Baraka, “Wailers” (lyrics) (video); “Sing about me, I’m dyin’ of thirst” by Kendrick Lamar
   Wednesday September 30: Discussion; Song analysis write up activity

Week 4: Fiction
   Monday October 5: “Incarnations of Burned Children” by David Foster Wallace (PDF)
   Wednesday October 7: “In a House Besieged” by Lydia Davis; Discussion

Week 5: Fiction
   Monday October 12: NO CLASS: Happy Thanksgiving
   Wednesday October 14: “Semplica-Girl Diaries” by George Saunders

Week 6: Fiction
   Monday October 19: “Recitatif” by Toni Morrison (pdf)
   Wednesday October 21: Brainstorming/Freewriting Essay Ideas

Week 7: Fiction
   Monday October 26: First Peer editing session for Essay #1
   Wednesday October 28: Second Peer editing session for Essay #1

Section 2: Digital Rhetoric
   Throughout this unit we will be reading Michel Faber’s Under the Skin together and blogging about it weekly (Fridays) on the class Wordpress. The previous unit has prepared you to discuss texts analytically; however, discussion on the blog is not limited to textual analysis. You can also write about your feels towards the novel: parts of the novel you love (sentences, phrases, a passage, a word), that frustrated you, that confused you, that related to you personally, etc. You can include details such as how you’re reading (e.g., are you constantly flipping back to past events in the novel? Why?) or where you read that week (ex: “Despite the coffee shop being incredibly loud, I was totally absorbed in this week’s chapter”) or what the novel reminded you of. To put it simply, you don’t have to write only about the novel; write about your experience of reading the novel as well. You are also required to reply
to your peers’ posts! At the end of this unit, you have the option of writing about this online reading group experience for your final essay.

Week 8: *Under the Skin*, ch. 1-3. Blog Post due November 6-8
- Monday November 2: Facebook: Constructing online identities
- Wednesday November 4: Discussion

Week 9: *Under the Skin*, ch. 4-6. Blog Post due November 13-15
- Monday November 9: Snapchat and Instagram; the “selfie” and the photo-autobiography
- Wednesday November 11: Take a selfie (or select a past one) and discuss/write what it means to you; How to do research

Week 10: *Under the Skin* ch. 7-9. Blog Post due 20-22
- Monday November 16: Netflix; Streaming and binging film and TV
- Wednesday November 18: Discussion/write up: Video store experience vs. Netflix experience

Week 11: *Under the Skin* ch. 10-13 (finished!). Blog post due 27-29
- Monday November 23: Reddit; Internet “democracy”…and its discontents
- Wednesday November 25: Brainstorming and Research Activity Due

Week 12: Online Reading Groups
- Monday November 30: A small history of Reading groups and our reading group
- Wednesday December 2: Peer editing session for Essay #2

Assignment Descriptions

Weekly Activities (20%)
Each Week you will participate in learning activities. These activities will be graded for completion. These activities cannot be “made-up” if you miss a class.

Quotation Activity (10%) - due October 23 at 11:30pm via Learn dropbox
- Choose either Junot Díaz’s “MFA vs. POC” or Zadie Smith’s “Dead Man Laughing.” Read the text you have chosen.
- Create a document that first summarizes the reading. Then, in this same document, paraphrase one key point from the reading. Then use one key quote from the reading and integrate that quote into a sentence of your own. Label each part of the document appropriately, as “Summary,” “Paraphrase,” and “Quotation”

Research Activity (for unit 2 essay; 10%) - due November 25 at 11:30pm via Learn dropbox
Step One:
- Develop a topic idea for your research literary analysis essay, and narrow the topic down until you have a few specific search terms
Conduct your own search using the Waterloo Library site. Add more specific search terms if you are retrieving too many articles, or articles that aren’t useful to you.

Once you have perfected your search, and you are retrieving scholarly articles that interest you and apply to your topic, choose at least three of these articles, download or print them, and use them to kick-start your research.

Step Two:

Create a document and begin by writing out the citation information for three of your articles in proper MLA Style.

Then, in addition to these three sources, write a thesis statement for your argument essay below the citations.

Next, find one quote from each of your scholarly articles—a quote that you’d like to use to support or to explore your thesis statement.

Take these three quotes and use them in sentences, just as you plan to use them in your essay. Write these sentences out below your thesis statement in your document. Look back at the section on quotation in HTWA2e if you want a reminder of how this is done. Use MLA style for in-text citation for these quotes.

Submit your assignment to the Learn dropbox by 11:30pm on the due date.

Netflix vs. the Video Store Assignment (10%) - due November 18 via Learn dropbox

This assignment requires you to go to a video store (Far Out Flicks in Kitchener), browse for and rent a movie (or TV show). Once you have done so, write a two-page response analysis about your experience and compare it to browsing, selecting, and watching film and TV on Netflix. Your analysis, like previous writing assignments, does not have to focus on everything. Rather, pick one or two parts of your experience, such as the process of selecting a movie or the practice of renting a movie, so that your analysis is focused. Below are just a few other areas your analysis can focus on:

- Binging
- Interacting with the video store clerk vs. interacting with the Netflix interface
- Video store selection vs. Netflix selection
- Presentation of films and TV shows (such as “Top Picks” or “Favourites”) in both Netflix and the video store
- Physically going to the video store vs. streaming

Make sure that your analysis contains an argument, stating a position on a particular topic. For instance, your assignment should not be detailing everything that happened during your trip to the video store; rather, your assignment should focus on the significance of your experiences.

You have the opportunity to expand this assignment into your final essay.

Unit Essays (35%)

General Formatting Guidelines:

- write 4-5 pages in length. They cannot be any shorter.
Use MLA format for all written work: Times New Roman, 12pt. font, 1-inch margins, numbered pages, and so on.

- Keep copies of all your work, as hard copy and electronic.
- Save multiple versions of all work. If you make changes to an essay, save the file under a new name. This will allow you to view the development of your work between drafts, to show this development to me, and to reflect on it.
- Save everything. Save peer review comments, pre-writing, and every draft of your essays with my comments.
- Submit your assignment to Learn dropbox by 11:30pm on the due date

Unit 1 Essay: Literary Analysis (Due November 2)
For this unit’s essay, you will be allowed to choose to write on poetry or short fiction. Essay questions will be provided in October.

Unit 2 Essay: Digital Rhetoric
You will be allowed to make an argument about any of the online media we discussed (or, by my approval, an online medium of the student’s choice). Research is required. No questions will be provided.

Reflections
For each essay, you must provide a reflection about your writing and editing process. Your reflection should address the brainstorming stage, the comments you received at the peer editing sessions, and how you responded to those editorial comments (did you take their advice? Why or why not?)

Late Work
Late work will be penalized 5% per day. Work more than one week late will not be accepted. Exceptions will only be made for illness or emergencies.

Academic Integrity
In order 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.
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.

Other sources of information for students
Academic integrity (Arts) Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo)

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.