COURSE OUTLINE

University of Waterloo

Term and Year of Offering: Winter 2010
Course Number and Title: ENGL 109 DE: Intro to Academic Writing
University of Waterloo
Distance Education

English 109
Introduction to Academic Writing
Winter 2010

Instructor: S. Bennett
Course Authors: A. McMurry, N. Randall, and M. McArthur

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Course Outline
English 109: Introduction to Academic Writing

Course Authors: Andrew McMurry, Neil Randall, and Murray McArthur

Welcome to English 109! This course is designed to help you read and interpret academic prose, and to help you sharpen the writing, research, and analytical skills you’ll use in your university career and beyond. The lectures will introduce you to key ideas and issues in academic discourse; the essays you’ll write are where you’ll put these ideas into practice. To be successful in 109, you must listen well, read carefully, interpret course materials effectively, and pay close attention to the details of grammar and organization that underpin all lucid and interesting writing.

Textbooks


How to “Take” this Course

The course is divided into three units: Genre, Rhetoric, and Grammar. The three units look at writing from different perspectives, but they are designed to be mutually reinforcing. To assist you in following the lectures, a series of —slides are included in this course package: they are samples of some of the slides used by the professors when they teach the course on campus. You may listen to the units in any order, but listen to the audio files within the unit in their given lecture order.

In addition to the three main units, there are two Introductory lectures that consist of a dialogue between Professors McMurry and Randall. These lectures may be listened to first; in them you will hear the professors discuss some of the broad concerns you might be having about the course, writing issues in general, and what your instructors look for when they grade your essays. As well, the professors critique the Sample Student Essay included in your course package.

The Genre unit is meant to provide you with a strong grounding in the specific structures and expectations of the academic context of writing. That is, you will learn why —academic writing is different from other sorts of writing, and why you must understand its conventions to be successful. The lectures build through a series of examples showing the elements of good academic writing. Remember: Everything leads up to the goal of preparing a research essay—the main essay form you will use in most university courses.

The Rhetoric unit takes a somewhat broader approach to writing. —Rhetoric is generally understood as the art of persuasion, and the ideas you’ll discover in this unit will apply to many genres of writing. In this unit you will learn the essential principles and techniques for developing ideas, creating and sustaining arguments, analyzing audiences, and enhancing your own credibility as a writer through argumentative appeals that are appropriate to your topic and audience.

The Grammar unit reviews the basic parts of speech and explains how they are used to create grammatically correct sentences. If you are less than comfortable in your abilities, listen to the audio files as soon as possible and refer to your handbook for additional explanations. Even if you are confident in your abilities, listen to the audio files to better understand how you are making sentences and, in doing so, you will gain greater control over your writing.
Online Resources

A course website has been set-up to provide information from the instructor. In addition, all material included on course CD is also available in UW-ACE. To access the course you need to log into ACE. It is suggested that you login at least once per week.

Logging Into UW-ACE

Since UW-ACE is a web-based system, you will need a Web browser. Although you may have success with other Web browsers, we strongly recommend that you use the following for best access results:

PCs
Windows OS: Internet Explorer 7.0 or higher and Firefox

Macintoshes
Mac OS X: Firefox

Announcements regarding UW-ACE (service outages, etc.) are posted beside the Log On portion of the screen. It is a good idea to check these regularly.

Please note that UW-ACE is unavailable on Thursdays between 8:30 AM and 9:30 AM (Eastern Time) due to system maintenance.

Additional computer requirements can be found at:
http://de.uwaterloo.ca/comp_req.html

Once you have started up your Web browser, type in the following URL: http://uwace.uwaterloo.ca.
Provide your Quest/UWdir userid and password. Once you have logged in, you should see a list of your UW-ACE courses under the Courses header bar. Clicking on the course name will take you to that course.

Checking Your Userid and Password

Your password can be checked by going to: https://ego.uwaterloo.ca/~uwdir/Passwd.html. If your password check fails, you can unlock your password and receive a new one.

Only students with courses using UW-ACE will have access to the site.

The course will be available by the first day of the term until the last day of the term.

Technical Support

To contact Technical Support, please send an email to web@admmail.uwaterloo.ca (email queries are answered in chronological order) or call +1 519-888-4567, ext. 35348.

UW Statement on the Use of Computing and Network Resources
Given that online components of this course are hosted on a UW server, there is a

Statement on the Use of Computing and Network Resources that you should be aware of at
http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocist/use98.htm
Guide to the Audio Files

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Contact with the University

If you have a question concerning English 109, telephone the marking coordinator. If you wish to talk to your marker, the coordinator can set up a telephone meeting. Many questions, of course, can be answered by the Distance Education Office. Please refer to the Contact Us page on the Distance Education website at http://de.uwaterloo.ca/contact_us.html for the appropriate telephone number.

About The Coordinator

Stephen Bennett

Phone: (519) 888-4567 x32625 (Office hours posted on voicemail message) Email: sr2benne@uwaterloo.ca

Your marks coordinator is your — live contact in the English Department at the University of Waterloo. The marks coordinator oversees the forwarding of your papers to your marker, helps maintain communication channels between you and your marker, records and tracks your grades and talks to distance education on your behalf. You should call distance education with any questions regarding the actual shipping of your papers and for exam scheduling information. Furthermore, you are encouraged to include notes addressed to your marker (the person most familiar with your work) with specific writing questions drawn from your papers. However, the coordinator is here to help you with questions that require faster attention both concerning your writing and the administration of the course. Please call the coordinator with any questions you might have regarding the course, your assignments, the grading of your assignments, deadlines, and otherwise.

To make the most of your experience in English 109, you’ll need to familiarize yourself with the course expectations and requirements. Please refer to the Distance Education website at http://de.uwaterloo.ca as it explains the workings of DE courses. Be sure to read the entire Course Outline and all the Assignment sheets to gain a full understanding of the task ahead. Note the Weeks during which papers are due (2, 7, and 12). Essays submitted to DE more than one week late and without the benefit of an extension (granted in advance by the Course Coordinator) will receive a grade but no written comments. Note that there is a Final Exam in this version of English 109. Please find time to carefully review the — Sample Student Essay included in the introductory course materials; the sample essay is helpful because it illustrates the effective use of many key writing conventions that you too will be expected to apply in your papers. Be sure to listen to the audio files.

Pay continued attention throughout the term to The Brodview Reader and The Little, Brown Handbook. These two required texts provide you the topics/content for your assignments and outline the — rules for composing and arranging sentences, paragraphs and essays for an academic audience. The written comments you find on your returned essays and evaluation forms relate directly to the two course texts. The exam will test your knowledge of these texts.
As early as possible, acquaint yourself with MLA Style (see LBCH) because it is the expected style for all assignments in the course. Also read as much as you can in LBCH about paragraphs, sentences and punctuation. Readings in LBCH elaborate on the material in your course booklet. LBCH might seem uninviting and/or time-consuming, but the more you know about the expectations of the genre of Academic Writing, the more you can meet those expectations and succeed in the course. Pay particular mind to some of the more common 'surface' errors discussed in LBCH: sentence fragments, comma splices, fused sentences, vague pronoun references, and subject/verb agreement. As well, be aware of how to use commas, colons, and semi-colons.

I wish you the best of luck with the course.

Policy on Late Assignments

All English 109 students are expected to submit all assignments on the due dates established in your course materials. If you encounter a problem submitting an assignment on the due date, some flexibility is available to you. Please familiarize yourself with the following course policies for late papers:

1. If your assignment is late by one week or less, and with coordinator permission, you can submit the assignment and receive marker comments.

2. If your assignment is late by more than one week, and with coordinator permission, you can submit the assignment but receive no marker comments.

3. If your assignment is late by more than two weeks, it will not be accepted without appropriate documentation.

4. Only under extraordinary circumstances and with appropriate documentation will an assignment be accepted after the next assignment's due date, and no assignments will be accepted after the date of the exam.
Assignments and Evaluations

The 109 coordinator will give you more information about the due dates for the essays. Detailed assignment sheets follow these brief descriptions.

Note: All essays should be typed, double-spaced, in a standard typeface and size (e.g., Times New Roman, 12 point). Your work should include your name on ALL pages, and your instructor’s name and the course number in the top left corner of the first page. Titles should be centered. Use standard, 1 margins top and bottom, and 1.25 side margins on your page. All papers should meet the requirements of MLA style (see required handbook for additional information).

Assignment 1: Summary of an Article – 10%

The summary is a balanced overview of the contents of a longer text. Depending on the length requirements, the summary can be rather long or quite short. Summaries can also be —critical in nature (and this is more often the case when you are adapting secondary materials for use in your own essays).

Assignment 2: Argumentative Essay – 20%

This is an essay that provides a clear thesis, and then sets about proving it through a series of proofs. You might argue —for something or —against it, but either way you must anticipate objections to your position and defeat them in advance. Your arguments may be based on empirical evidence, precedent, logic, emotion, or testimonial, but you must be careful to justify your grounds no matter where they derive. Everybody has an opinion, but without sufficient and appropriate justification to back it up, an opinion is nothing more than hot air.

Assignment 3: Research Essay on a Contemporary Issue – 30%

Research essays draw on summary, argumentation, and synthesis skills in a variety of ways to report on or contribute to knowledge. There are a wide variety of forms, and different disciplines require different formal organizations, research methods, and documentation formats. English 109 requires MLA format. The research essay, above all, demonstrates the writer’s strong grasp of the topic and a carefully organized presentation.

Final Examination – 40%

The exam will cover all aspects of the course and will draw upon material in both required texts.
Sample Student Essay

The Debate Over Cloning

by XXXX XXXXX

In February of 1997, at the Roslin Institute in Scotland, Dolly the sheep was cloned through an innovative procedure known as —nuclear transfer (Wilmut 58).

Nuclear transfer, explains Wilmut, involves the replacing of the nucleus of one egg with the nucleus of another from an adult cell (58). This remarkable scientific breakthrough made the impossible a reality; with the successful birth of Dolly, the prospect of human cloning now looms large (Klug and Cummins 598). Thus, recent advancements in the field of genetic engineering have sparked great debate among researchers and ethicists alike. Two schools of thought exist concerning the nature and value of cloning. While many argue that cloning will —revolutionize medicine and agriculture (Nowak 27), others fear such genetic advances will lead to the fragmentation of society and an inevitable questioning of what it is to be human (Klug and Cummins 599).

Because cloning has recently come under public scrutiny and remains a highly controversial topic, it is important to examine both advantages and disadvantages before developing a particular view on the subject. Benefits of cloning include the following: greater access to organ transplants, more effective drug production, and preservation of endangered species (Klug and Cummins 598-599). Moreover, at the level of human cloning, genetic advancements will enable infertile couples to have children of their own; individuals at risk of producing a child with a genetic defect will obtain opportunities to give birth to healthy offspring (Cohen 30). Those against cloning claim the benefits are easily outweighed by both technical and moral concerns to be examined in each case.

The concept of cloning animals to produce viable organs for human transplantation has evoked heated debate. Although —xenotransplantation — the process of transplanting organs and cells from animals into human patients — has not yet been perfected, researchers claim that transgressing such animal-human barriers will provide great relief to the long list of patients awaiting heart, lung, pancreas, kidney and liver donations (Chick, Cooper, and Lanza 54). Despite the obvious advantages to having readily available tissue donations, there exists substantial concern over the possibility that animal organs may promote the spread of animal disease to humans. That is, pathogens, like the Ebola virus or —mad cow disease, may spread from organ recipient to the general public, affecting human health on a broad scale (Chick, Cooper, and Lanza 59). From a different perspective, the use of animals for donor purposes may elicit objections from Animal Rights activists.

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Scientists focusing on pigs as donors, respond that — few voice ethical concerns about killing an animal people routinely slaughter for food (Chick, Cooper, Lanza 59).

Researchers, having observed functioning pig hearts and kidneys in primate hosts, remain optimistic about the future of xenotransplantation (Chick, Cooper, Lanza 59). However, the complexities and implications of such revolutionary technology remain daunting. Scientists must overcome boundaries between species; at present, researchers have yet to determine whether or not pig organs will function adequately in their human recipients (Chick, Cooper, Lanza 59).

In addition to the possibility of cloning animals for transplantation purposes, scientists have already created — transgenic sheep and cows, animals that have had human genes put into their DNA through recombinant DNA technology (Drohan, Lubon, and Velander 70). These genetically engineered creatures can produce required human proteins in their milk, functioning as — natural bioreactors (Drohan, Lubon, and Velander 70). Thus, from a medical perspective, transgenic animals are valuable entities, providing humans with otherwise difficult to obtain therapeutic products such as insulin and blood-clotting factors (Drohan, Lubon, and Velander 70). Engineering these animals is a painstaking task; cloning successfully created transgenic livestock would, therefore, eliminate a difficult and often inefficient process (Wilmot 60). However, as with xenotransplantation, the use of transgenic animals carries with it the risk of transmitting pathogens to humans (Drohan, Lubon, and Velander 73). Moreover, pharmaceutical products manufactured by such animals would require extensive testing in order to ensure quality and safety before being approved for public use (Drohan, Lubon, and Velander 73).

While animal cloning for human purposes such as organ transplantation and drug production has been examined at length, researchers also posit the benefits of cloning animals for ecological gain. That is, through cloning, scientists could enable the preservation of endangered species (Klug and Cummings 599). The first attempt to clone a rare species took place when researchers implanted the dead cells of a rare ox, known as a guar, in a domestic cow (Durnan 1). While the guar did not survive long after birth, scientists maintain the experiment was successful (Durnan 1). Conservationists, however, warn that cloning may not be the answer to perpetuating a species. If the primary reasons for extinction such as habitat loss or degradation, are not first examined, the cloned animals will likely die off just as quickly as the endangered or extinct species. Director of Iowa State University's Bioethics Program, Gary Comstock points out that — just preserving the species is too narrow a vision (Durnan 2).
Beyond animal genetics, lies the controversial realm of human cloning. In an article titled "Beyond Dolly: The Cloning of Humans," researchers explain that one day in the not so distant future, it may be possible to clone humans using nuclear transfer, the same method used to produce Dolly (Klug and Cummings 598). Some scientists defend the notion of human cloning, arguing that it holds great promise for infertile or homosexual couples, and individuals afflicted with genetic abnormalities: —infertile couples or those who suffer from genetic disease on one side of the family, could choose to clone one of the partners in order to raise a child who is biologically related (Klug and Cummings 599). Moreover, human cells cloned in vitro could become a valuable resource for treating serious disease (Klug and Cummings 599). Despite the possibility of these medical miracles, moralists and religious proponents insist that to clone a human being would be to tamper with genetic diversity and violate the natural order of things (Klug and Cummings 599). In "We Ask They Answer," psychologist Ricardo Ainslie points out that cloning might lead to identity conflicts where a cloned child —could feel like nothing but an extension of the parent's needs (30). At the extreme end, some even argue that should human cloning become an everyday reality, men could be viewed as unnecessary to society: —women will no longer need men to reproduce (Cohen and Nowak 37). Clearly, the debate is ongoing concerning the future of human cloning.

In conclusion, cloning has risen to the forefront of bioethics. What once belonged to the realm of science fiction is becoming reality. Whether one finds this reality frightening or exciting depends upon the stance taken —whether one is for or against cloning. Clearly, genetic engineering provides many benefits in the areas of medicine and agriculture. Xenotransplantation and drug production through the use of cloned animals could aid humans greatly. From an ecological perspective, cloning may prove valuable in preserving endangered species. Furthermore, at the level of human cloning, it could soon be possible to provide infertile couples with the means of reproducing. Despite these advantages, however, cloning carries with it many implications. Transplantation from animals to humans and drug production through transgenic animals involves the risk of transmitting pathogens to the general population. Cloning endangered species will prove pointless if the reasons for extinction are not first addressed. Finally, human cloning raises perhaps the greatest ethical questions of all: Is it morally right to tamper with life? What does it mean to be human? What regulations should be imposed on cloning technologies? Ultimately, only one thing remains certain – the debate is not yet over.
Works Cited


Durnan, Kimberly. —Cloned Ox, from Rare Species, Dies. 12 Jan. 2001. Online at  
http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2001/01/12/tech/main263745.shtml OR  
http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn323


* Available online through the University of Waterloo library. The articles can be accessed by logging into  
http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/proxy/ and following the instructions. Once connected, choose "Resources for Research", E-Journal titles, and follow the links to the articles.