Instructor Information

Instructor: Michael Lesiuk  
Office: PAS 1284  
Office Hours: Mon/Wed 11:30 am–12:30 pm (and by appointment)  
Email: mlesiuk@uwaterloo.ca

Textbook

None! All readings should be on LEARN or available as links.

Summary

In this workshop-based course you will develop your abilities as a writer. To do this, you will practice writing in a variety of genres, and you will use a variety of strategies designed to help you discover ideas, organize and arrange those ideas, and then communicate them effectively and persuasively.

Although our focus will technically be on academic communication, you will discover that “academic communication” does not have to be dry and boring. It can be simple and riveting. Sometimes it can use stories, anecdotes, or metaphors. As we’ll learn, the rhetorical effectiveness of these things depends on genre and audience. Indeed, you will learn to adapt your writing to a variety of different situations and different audiences, because this is a useful, marketable and powerful skill to have.

The official learning outcomes for this course are as follows:

- 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.

In less official terms, and to give you an idea of what to expect, here are some of the things you can learn in ENGL109:

- You will learn strategies to persuade teachers to give you better marks (!).
- You will learn how to produce shitty first drafts, experiment, and try new things.
- You will learn ancient writing structures that you are free to use, borrow, or discard.
• You will learn some of the weird writing habits of famous writers, living and dead.
• You will learn the persuasive strategies of ancient Greek rhetoricians and sleazy Internet marketers.
• You will learn how writers produce 4,000 words in a single hour (hint: these are only for first drafts).
• You will learn some research strategies that work across genres and disciplines (and some that don't).
• You will learn to read like a writer.
• You will learn to give feedback that is helpful and critical, yet makes the writer feel awesome. Likewise, you will learn strategies to prevent untactful critical feedback ruining your day.

Standards of Written Work

This is a university-level writing course, so the university expects you to be comfortable with the basic mechanics of writing. You should be able to understand and use proper grammar, punctuation and syntax. Keep in mind this does not mean you need to be able to cite or talk about obscure grammar or usage rules; this just means that you are comfortable putting together sentences using English. If you need extra help with these mechanics, it is your responsibility to come to office hours, or to make an appointment with me, or to visit the university's writing centre.

Accommodations

Every student with a permanent or temporary disability has the right to UW's AccessAbility Services, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401). This is true for every class you take at this university. The AccessAbility office collaborates with all departments to arrange accommodations, but you must register for these services to take advantage of them. Please visit https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services for more information on how to do this.

If you feel anxiety about participation or speaking in public, please speak with me and we can discuss accommodations that work well. (You're not alone.) These usually involve alternative forms of participation, and/or weekly goals to increase your participation. It is your responsibility to do this before Thursday, September 13.

Mental Health

Human beings need support systems. I, and the rest of the faculty and staff in Arts, encourage you to seek out mental health support if you need it. The university has a variety of on-campus services and support systems you can use, and there are also off-campus options. The faculty of arts has a page with links, phone numbers, and a bunch more information right here: https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/get-mental-health-support-when-you-need-it.

Classroom Etiquette

Civility: No student should ever be teased, or made to feel small, embarrassed, self-conscious, or unsafe. Since workshopping, discussion and feedback are such important elements of the class, we will discuss how to give critical feedback in a way that's productive and helpful. We'll also discuss how
to receive critical feedback because sometimes very helpful, very useful feedback is hard to accept, even though doing so will make you a better writer and help you grow.

**Technology:** No cell phones. Turn them completely off, please, as one of the first things you do when you step into class. This doesn’t mean “turn on vibrate.” It means turn the phone off. Having a phone on or texting in class puts you in danger of losing a lot of participation marks. It’s also embarrassing and awkward when I need to say something. I will allow laptops, but here, too, you can lose participation marks if you’re not using yours for work.

**Please Bring With You...**

**Hard Copies of Rough Drafts:** When I ask you to bring rough copies of your work to class, I mean print off hard copies and bring them with you. Several times this term you’ll need to both upload rough drafts to LEARN and print off four hard copies for in-class workshopping.

**Cheap Notebook:** Bring a cheap notebook with you. Loose-leaf paper is fine, if that’s your thing.

**Pens and Pencils:** Bring pens and pencils with you.

**Note:** *You must bring pens and paper with you to every class.* Although I’m allowing you to bring your laptops, you will also be doing some writing with old-fashioned pens and paper. Depending on the situation, there are cognitive benefits to doing so, and you’ll learn about them.

### Major Assignments & Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Writing Portfolio</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Grade Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Literacy Narrative</em></td>
<td>1,200 – 1,800 words</td>
<td>January 30th</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Close Analysis Essay</em></td>
<td>1,200 – 1,800 words</td>
<td>February 27th</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Research-Based Argument Essay</em></td>
<td>1,500 – 2,200 words</td>
<td>April 5th (Friday at 11:59 pm)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>4 annotated sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Short Retrospective</em></td>
<td>&gt;500 words</td>
<td>April 5th (Friday at 11:59 pm)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Optional Revisions</td>
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| Participation & Workshopping   |                          |                    | 30%         |
| *Mini Homework Assignments (x5)* |                          |                    | 15%         |
| *Rough Drafts & Constructive Peer Feedback (x4)* | | | 10%         |
| *Attendance*                  |                          |                    | 5%          |
Your Writing Portfolio

Let me briefly go over how the term will play out.

In January, for Unit 1, we'll work on the Literacy Narrative. You'll produce a rough draft and get feedback on the draft from your peers (just as you'll give feedback to them), and then a week later you'll hand in a revised version. It will receive a “final-for-now” grade, with instructor comments and feedback to help you with revision. At the end of the term you'll have a chance to hand in a revised copy.

In Unit 2 we'll then turn to the Close Analysis Essay, and this will take up a good chunk of February. As before, you'll bring in a rough draft to workshop in class, then you'll hand in the final-for-now version after you've had a chance to work on it. Your Close Analysis Essay will also receive a temporary “final-for-now” grade, with comments and feedback. At the end of the term you'll have a chance to hand in a revised copy.

In Unit 3, we'll work on the Annotated Bibliography, and that will bridge us into the Research-Based Argument Essay. These two assignments work together. You'll bring in your sources, your annotated bibliography, drafts of your essay, and then towards the end of term you'll hand in your argument essay with your annotated bibliography attached to it.

Revisions and Final Portfolio

At the end of the term, you'll hand in a Short Retrospective (minimum 500 words), plus any revisions you want to hand in for your Literacy Narrative or Close Analysis.

For the end-of-term revisions, the new grade replaces the old grade. Also, since I want to encourage you to take risks and experiment in your writing, I will also say this: if you take a risk and somehow you make an assignment worse, your grade cannot go down. You have nothing to lose by submitting a revised version, and you also have nothing to lose by taking risks. I will give tips and suggestions for revision when I look at the final-for-now versions, but the final editing decisions will be up to you. You're the writer.

Now, the only caveat to handing in revised versions of your Literacy Narrative and your Close Analysis is that you must include a short explanation (minimum 250 words for each) of what you're hoping to accomplish with the revision. You can just put this explanation in the comments box on LEARN. You won't be graded on this explanation, but I won't accept the revision if it's not included. I'm asking you to include it because, first of all, it forces you to pause, and to take a step back from your writing and actually think about what you're hoping to accomplish, and second, it helps me give you more useful feedback that's tailored to the things you care about.

Late Penalties for the Major Assignments

Please note that there is a 5% per day late penalty for missing any of the major assignment deadlines. This will be firm, because organization and productivity are a part of this course (and writing more generally). Yes, this late penalty will apply to the “final-for-now” due dates for the assignments.
Participation and Workshopping

Mini Homework Assignments (15%)

Five times throughout the term you’ll have a mini homework assignment to complete. There are five of them, and each one is worth 3 points. If you come to class, these mini assignments will be easy. If you get them in on time and you basically follow the guidelines of the assignment, you’ll get an “A” on them. These assignments are designed to get you working proactively on your major writing assignments. This means that the work you do on the mini homework assignments will have carryover benefits for your writing portfolio.

Here are the due dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini Homework Assignment 1. “Introduce Yourself”</td>
<td>Friday, Jan 11th, 11:59 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini Homework Assignment 2. “What _____ Is Arguing”</td>
<td>Friday, Feb 8th, 11:59 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini Homework Assignment 3. “How’s the Term Going?”</td>
<td>Monday, Mar 4th, 10:00 a.m. (before class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini Homework Assignment 4. “Finding Sources”</td>
<td>Monday, Mar 11th, 10:00 a.m. (before class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini Homework Assignment 5. “Elevator Pitch”</td>
<td>Wednesday, Mar 13th, 10:00 a.m. (during class)</td>
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Rough Drafts and Constructive Peer Feedback (10%)

Four times throughout the term you need to upload to LEARN a rough draft of the major assignment you’re working on, and then print off four copies of that rough draft to bring into class. You’ll be graded on whether you upload a “complete” rough draft or not, as well as on how helpful you are during the peer feedback sessions and any of the workshops we do.

To clarify, by a “complete” rough draft I do not mean “polished.” I mean that uploading a draft containing 1,500 words of awful, terrible, no-good chicken scratches is perfect. That’s exactly what I want, and it will get you perfect marks. I am not kidding. (Keep in mind our first reading is called “Shitty First Drafts.”) By contrast, uploading a document with only 700 words—even if they’re a really polished 700 words—will cause you to lose marks. In this case, “complete-even-if-it’s-terrible” actually wins out over “incomplete-but-what’s-there-is-totally-amazing.” I’ve set it up this way because there is value in getting to the end of a draft, especially in terms of getting an idea of your overall structure and what you really want to say. (Several of our readings this semester will talk about this idea.)

Here are the dates for our peer review sessions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Narrative</td>
<td>Wednesday, Jan 23rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Analysis</td>
<td>Wednesday, Feb 13th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Wednesday, March 20th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-Based Argument Essay</td>
<td>Wednesday, March 27th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance (5%)

I will take attendance. We meet 24 times. I’ll just convert [number of classes attended] / 24 to a grade out of 5. I’m flexible and allow a few gimmes if you email me courteously and professionally (e.g., you are sick, a family member is ill). I take attendance because this is a workshop-based course. In other words, to make this course work, I need you here to help your peers (and vice versa).
## Unit 1. Literacy Narrative

### Week 1

**Monday, Jan 7**

*Welcome and Course Introduction*

Introduce ourselves! Go over the syllabus and our expectations.

**For next class:**
- Read Lamott, “Shitty First Drafts.”
- Read King, *On Writing* excerpt.

**Wednesday, Jan 9**

Discuss Lamott and King. Learn about your Literacy Narrative assignment and “narratives” more generally.

**For next class:**
- Read Pequeno, “Check. Mate?”
- Read Sedaris, “Me Talk Pretty One Day”
- ★ Complete Mini Homework Assignment 1 (“Introduce Yourself”) by FRIDAY, Jan 11th, at 11:59 p.m.

### Week 2

**Monday, Jan 14**

Reverse-engineer Pequeno and Sedaris as sample personal narratives. How do they structure things? How do they make things feel unified? What are these narratives about?

**For next class:**
- Read Macrorie “The Poison Fish” excerpt.
- Read Fairclough *Discourse and Power* excerpt.

**Wednesday, Jan 16**

Discuss Macrorie and Fairclough and think very self-reflexively about our own relationships to discourse, power and literacy.

**For next class:**
- Read Sommer “Responding to Student Writing” excerpt.

### Week 3

**Monday, Jan 21**

Discuss Sommer and how to give effective feedback. Discuss revising, editing, and writing with the door open.

**For next class:**
- No readings. Print out four copies of your literacy narrative Rough Draft and place them in the appropriate LEARN dropbox before class!

**Wednesday, Jan 23**

*Peer Review Workshop – Literacy Narrative*

( bring FOUR hard copies + put a copy in LEARN Dropbox)

**For next class:**
- Read Elbow, “Cut-and-Paste Revising and the Collage” excerpt.
- Bring your hard copies to class again!

### Week 4

**Monday, Jan 28**

Discuss Elbow and practice cut-and-paste revising. Cut-and-paste our narratives. Think about openings (and what makes a good opening).

**For next class:**
- Print out four copies of your Close Analysis Rough Draft and place a .docx version in the appropriate LEARN dropbox before class on Wednesday!
- Look at the Sellnow, “Expanding the Rhetorical Tradition.” (Pssst... all you need to really know are the five canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery.)

**Wednesday, Jan 30**

*Literacy Narrative “final-for-now” DUE today*

(put final-for-now version in LEARN Dropbox)

Transition to close analysis and trying our hands at an in-class rhetorical analysis.

**For next class:**
- Read Lunsford, *Everything Is An Argument* excerpts
# Unit 2. Close Analysis

## Week 5

**Monday, Feb 4**
Discuss Lunsford. (Is everything really an argument?)

*For next class:*
- Read Tolentino, “The Repressive, Authoritarian Soul of Thomas the Tank Engine.”

**Wednesday, Feb 6**
Discuss Tolentino. Is her close analysis effective? How does she structure it?

*For next class:*
- No readings, but...

★ Complete Mini Homework Assignment 2 (“What _____ Is Arguing”) before FRIDAY, Feb 8th, at 11:59 p.m.

## Week 6

**Monday, Feb 11**
- No readings, but print out four copies of your Close Analysis Rough Draft and place a .docx version in the appropriate LEARN dropbox before class on Wednesday!

**Wednesday, Feb 13**
Peer Review Workshop – Close Analysis
(bring FOUR hard copies + put a copy in LEARN Dropbox)

## Week 7
Reading Week. No classes! Hurray! Be Safe!

## Week 8

**Monday, Feb 25**
Polishing and doing the whole “MLA” thing in a way that actually makes sense.

*For next class:*
- Finish your Close Analysis!

**Wednesday, Feb 27**
Close Analysis “final-for-now” DUE today
(put final-for-now version in LEARN Dropbox)

*For next class:*
- Read Levey, “Lament for the iGeneration”
- Read Wilson, “In Defense of the iGeneration”

★ Complete Mini Homework Assignment 3 (“How’s the Term Going?”) before next class.

## Unit 3. Research-Based Argument

## Week 9

**Monday, March 4**
What makes a good argument? Discussion of topics and what makes a good source for an argument.

*For next class:*
- Read Woodworth, “The Rhetorical Précis”

**Wednesday, March 6**
Researching, analyzing and summarizing sources effectively for an annotated bibliography.

*For next class:*
- Read Research and Positioning handout. We’ll come back to it.

★ Complete Mini Homework Assignment 4 (“Finding Sources”) before next class.
### Week 10

**Monday, March 11**
Annotating and summarizing our research in real-time.

**For next class:**
- Read Smith, “Sell With a Story” excerpt. (It’ll help with your pitch.)
- Prep your 30-second elevator pitch (because it is the fifth homework assignment!)

**Wednesday, March 13**
Informal Oral Presentations: “The Elevator Pitch”

**For next class:**
- Read Heath & Heath Made to Stick excerpt.

### Week 11

**Monday, March 18**
You’ve got sources... now what? How do you organize them? What if you need more?

**For next class:**
- Put your Annotated Bibliography Rough Draft in the LEARN Dropbox before class on Thursday, and then come to class with four hard copies.

**Wednesday, March 20**
Peer Review Workshop – Annotated Bibliography
(bring FOUR hard copies + put a copy in LEARN Dropbox)

### Week 12

**Monday, March 25**
No class – Writing Conferences
Check the sign-up page, to be posted on LEARN!

**Wednesday, March 27**
Peer Review Workshop – Argument Essay
(bring FOUR hard copies + put a copy in LEARN Dropbox)

**For next class:**
- Read Carroll, “Jabberwocky”

### Week 13

**Monday, April 1**
More on revisions, and discussion of final portfolios.

**Wednesday, April 3**
Celebrate!
(...plus any final questions you want to address.)

*Argument Essay + Annotated Bibliography
Due FRIDAY April 5th at 11:59 p.m.*
(Use LEARN Dropbox)

*Short Retrospective + Optional Revisions
Due FRIDAY April 5th at 11:59 p.m.*
(Use LEARN Dropbox)

### Academic Integrity

**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. See the UWWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage and the Arts Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

**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. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.
**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.

**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. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Territorial Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.