About This Course:

In this course, we will endeavour to improve our academic writing skills and strengthen our abilities to write clearly, concisely and persuasively. In order to do this, we will focus on crucial elements of the academic essay such as thesis statements, body paragraphs, transition sentences, and formal stylistic writing. We will examine the ways that we can go about developing a critical analysis of a topic. Furthermore, we will emphasize the importance of personal revision along with the importance of peer support and consider the ways that others can help us in our writing process. This course also aims to improve research skills and will discuss how to properly include secondary sources into our academic writing. Most importantly, I want to emphasize that this course stresses that academic writing can be an enjoyable experience and that the abilities to think and write critically as well as being able to form opinions on cultural objects are valuable skills that can help us well beyond the academic sphere.

Expectations:

We will be discussing the material in significant detail. My central expectation is that you come to class fully prepared. Being fully prepared means that you have read the required texts, you have given them some thought, and you have arrived in class with something relevant to say about them, or about the class topic that day. You can also come to class with a question in mind. Please be on time, and plan to attend every class.

You are expected to show respect and consideration towards your instructor and fellow classmates. Respect and consideration involves not talking while others are addressing the class, actively listening, and not using any electronic devices (excluding laptops for note-taking) during class time. This means that all cell phones are turned off, no text messaging, no internet browsing, and no social networking.

Course Goals

• Improving skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking
• Learning various strategies to approach the academic essay
• Improving research skills
• Improving skills in style and grammar
• Learning to write persuasively and formally
• Helping you give and receive useful feedback on writing for the purposes of revision
Required Texts:
Course Kit

Assignments and Evaluation:
Participation & Attendance: 20%
Evaluation Paper (Due September 27): 15%
Summary, Paraphrase, Quote Assignment (Due October 18): 5%
Works Cited Assignment (Due October 23): 3%
Math Essay (Due October 30): 20%
Feedback 1 (Due October 30): 2.5%
Short Story Write-Ups (Due November 1 – November 20): 12%
Literary Analysis (Due November 29): 20%
Feedback 2 (Due November 29): 2.5%

Participation & Attendance (20%): Participation means that you come to class ready to express your own ideas and exchange them with your other classmates and myself. Attendance is crucial for your participation mark but attendance alone does not count for full participation.

Evaluation Paper (15%): This assignment requires you to compose an 800-1000 word paper in which you take a position on whether you consider an introductory writing course to be useful for mathematics majors. You want to take a position in your essay and your position can range from arguing that such a course is extremely useful to arguing that it is entirely not useful and anything in between. Please do not hesitate to make an appointment to discuss the essay. Papers should be typed and double-spaced using 12 pt Times New Roman font. The essay should be argumentative and thesis-driven. Use proper MLA citation methods. Due September 27

Summary, Paraphrase, Quote Assignment (5%): For this assignment, I will put up a short article on Learn. You will write a 100-250 word paragraph wherein you summarize, paraphrase, and quote from the article as discussed in class. Due October 18

Works Cited Assignment (3%): This assignment requires you to hand in an early draft of what will become your Works Cited for your math paper. We will go over Works Cited formatting in class but for extra help, please consider visiting the Owl at Purdue website. The Works Cited should be in MLA format. Due October 23

Feedback (2.5% each, 5% total): You will be asked to write a 100-150 word peer review of another student’s math paper and literature paper. We will have two classes specifically for peer review. This review should focus on the kinds of information we will discuss during the “Providing Feedback” lesson on October 18th. You will be evaluated on the helpfulness and care given towards your fellow student’s work. While giving your peer the review, please also attach a copy of your review to your own math paper and literature paper. Due October 30 and November 29
Math Essay (20%): Write a 1200-1400 word essay in which you take a position on the issue on the everyday uses/value of university-level mathematics and/or the value of particular mathematic concepts (algebra, trigonometry, quadratic equations, etc.) for everyday life. Keep your intended audience in mind as you build your case. Remember that this is a position paper so you could even be arguing that there is no everyday use or value (but you are certainly not required to!). This essay will require you to do some research and incorporate at least two peer-reviewed secondary sources into your essay. Please do not hesitate to make an appointment to discuss the essay. Papers should be typed and double-spaced using 12 pt Times New Roman font. The essay should be argumentative and thesis-driven. Use proper MLA citation methods. Due October 30

Write Ups (2% each, 12% total): These write-ups require you to write five to six sentences on the final six texts that we are reading in class. The write-up is due before we read the text in class or it will not receive a mark (see schedule for reading dates). The assignments will be graded either a 0, a 1, or a 2 out of 2. Zeroes are for write-ups not handed in before we read them in class. Ones are for assignments that are entirely or overwhelmingly plot summary, or do not notably convey that that the text has been read. Twos engage with the text in a critical way. You can explain why you liked or didn’t like the text, or make a claim about what you think the author was attempting to achieve with this text, or discuss something that you felt didn’t make sense. If you wish to include a question for class discussion as part of your five to six sentences, you may do so as well. These assignments are small and only worth 2% but they do add up and their purpose is to both ensure that you are reading the texts in advance and thinking about them critically as a way to prepare you for your literary analysis essay.

Literature Paper (20%): Write a 1200-1400 word essay in which you undertake a literary analysis that focuses on one of the course short stories. I will post essay questions on LEARN later in the term. This essay will require you to do some research and incorporate at least one peer-reviewed secondary source into your essay. Please do not hesitate to make an appointment to discuss the essay. Papers should be typed and double-spaced using 12 pt Times New Roman font. The essay should be argumentative and thesis-driven. Use proper MLA citation methods. Due November 29

Grading Rubric

A - The paper contains a clear, original, thought provoking, and argumentative thesis statement. The argument is persuasive and argued with coherency. Use of primary and secondary sources is exemplary. Quotations are well chosen and are smoothly integrated into the essay and sharply analyzed. There is a strong flow from paragraph to paragraph as well as from sentence to sentence. “A” papers are structured well, with solid introductions, body paragraphs, topic sentences, and conclusions. The essay remains on-topic throughout. The writing style is formal and professional. The words chosen are appropriate for the context and the writing is free from grammatical errors. Formatting details are free of errors.
B - The paper contains a clear and argumentative thesis statement which is argued with coherency and consistency throughout the paper. Good analysis of primary and secondary sources. Quotations are well chosen and are usually well integrated into the essay but they may occasionally be summarized rather than analyzed. There is a flow from paragraph to paragraph as well as from sentence to sentence. “B” papers are structured well, with solid introductions, body paragraphs, topic sentences, and conclusions. The essay remains on-topic for the most part but contains some tangents. The writing in the essay is clear though there are some awkward word choices and some grammatical errors throughout. The body paragraphs make good points but are occasionally too long or too short. Formatting details are mostly free of errors.

C – The paper contains a thesis but it is somewhat descriptive or speculative or, perhaps, somewhat unclear or awkwardly worded. There is a discussion of the primary and secondary texts but it does not always serve to reinforce an argument. The essay will occasionally veer off-topic, being about something other than the primary text. In a paper that requires research, the secondary source may be used a bit awkwardly or superficially. There is a structure at work in the paper but the essay occasionally becomes unstructured. There may be an imbalance of focus on one text over another. Paragraphs might be of good length or they might be all too long or too short. The writing style has multiple stylistic and grammatical errors leading to an occasional lack in clarity. Formatting is good but contains some errors.

D – The paper lacks a clear and coherent thesis statement. The discussion of the primary and secondary sources is superficial or entirely descriptive. The vast majority of the paper is off-topic, being about something other than the primary text. The secondary source is used without clear understanding of the text and the context from which the quotation comes. There are frequent structural problems throughout. There is little flow in the paper as it contains mostly awkward transitions. Grammatical and stylistic errors contribute to a lack in clarity. The formatting contains multiple errors.

F – The paper lacks a thesis statement. The discussion of the primary and secondary sources is superficial or entirely descriptive. The vast majority of the paper is off-topic, being about something other than the primary text. It is possible that neither the primary nor the secondary text is quoted. There is a lack of structure to the paper and grammatical and stylistic errors render the paper largely unclear. The writing style may be unprofessional. The formatting either contains multiple errors or is absent entirely.

Participation Rubric

A – Your comments in class display an engagement with both the material as well as your other classmates. The comments are insightful and thought provoking. Attendance is excellent.

B – Your comments display an engagement with the material and with the course’s overall themes. While your comments are very good they are not necessarily always contributing to an overall conversation. Attendance is strong.
C – Your level of participation varies from class to class. Here, you might have an excellent attendance record without participating in the conversation. Conversely, you might participate here and there and have several absences.

D – You might have a good attendance record (marked with several absences) without participating in the conversation. You might make rare occasional comments but have missed a good number of classes.

F – You have missed a great number of classes and/or your participation in class is disruptive and/or inappropriate.

Course policies:

Missed classes and assignments
All assignments are to be handed in on LEARN by 11:59pm on the day the assignment is due. Microsoft Word documents are preferred over PDF and Pages. Marks will be returned on Learn. The penalty for a late assignment is 2% per day, including weekend days. This will be incurred in all cases except certified emergencies. Papers more than ten days late will not be accepted, and a mark of zero will be given for the assignments.

A doctor’s note is required to avoid a late penalty, and it should document serious illness on and for the period directly preceding the due date for assignments, or on the scheduled dates of exams.

In cases of personal matters such as mental health concerns, I am very sympathetic but I am also unable to properly evaluate these cases. If you need an extension on work for such issues, it is crucial to go to AccessAbility and have them evaluate your case. They can then contact me if they believe you require alternate accommodations for assignments. At that point, I am always happy to help the student in any way that I can. Please see more information below for AccessAbility as well as for counselling services.

If you miss a class for unavoidable circumstances, please connect with a classmate to discuss the material that was covered during your absence.

Appointments and email:

I am always happy to meet with students to discuss course matters, including difficulties with the material or upcoming assignments. Please feel free to make an appointment to meet with me, or send me an email.

If you send me an email, please wait 24 hours before sending me a reminder. I may not be able to respond right away, or I may be looking into the matter on your behalf, but I will get back to you as soon as possible. If you have not received a response after 24 hours, or 48 hours on a weekend, please email me again. Please note that mail from some
external email servers, such as Hotmail or Yahoo, may be bounced by the university server.

Email should be reserved for relatively simple communication matters, such as brief questions or to make an appointment. If your query will require a longer conversation as in, for example, the discussion of a grade or an assignment, please make an appointment to meet with me in person. In general, I will not give out marks over email.

Academic Integrity and Discipline

*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 [Office of 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. Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information. 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](#).

Grievances and 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.

*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](#).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

*Note for students with disabilities:* The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.
On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext 32655
- **MATES**: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7

- **Good2Talk**: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- **Here 24/7**: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- **OK2BME**: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS website
Download UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF)
Download the WatSafe app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

**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 10 kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

**Academic freedom at the University of Waterloo**

Policy 33, Ethical Behaviour states, as one of its general principles (Section 1), “The University supports academic freedom for all members of the University community. Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base teaching and research on an honest and ethical quest for knowledge. In the context of this policy, 'academic freedom' refers to academic activities, including teaching and scholarship, as is articulated in the principles set out in the Memorandum of Agreement between the FAUW and the University of Waterloo, 1998 (Article 6). The academic environment which fosters free debate may from time to time include the presentation or discussion of unpopular opinions or controversial material. Such material shall be dealt with as openly, respectfully and sensitively as possible.” This definition is repeated in Policies 70 and 71, and in the Memorandum of Agreement, Section 6.

**Schedule:**

**September 6**: Introduction
**September 11**: Perspectives on Academia
**September 13**: Brainstorming, Strategies, Organization, Outlines, Style, Audience
September 18: Thesis Statements
September 20: Paragraphs, Transitions, Introductions and Conclusions
September 25: Common Errors
September 27: Smart Reading, Critical Thinking, Evaluation Assignment Due (15%)
October 2: Discussion of Position Papers, and positions on mathematics
October 4: Workshop on Academic Research in DC 1568
October 11: Plagiarism
October 16: Formatting, Incorporating Quotations, Works Cited, MLA
October 18: Grades, Stretching Points, Providing Feedback, Summary, Paraphrase, Quote Assignment (5%)
October 23: Literary Analysis, Works Cited Due (3%)
October 25: Peer Review Day
October 30: “A Modest Proposal,” Jonathan Swift, Math Essay/Feedback Due (20%/2.5%)
November 1: “I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud,” William Wordsworth, Reading Response Due
November 6: “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Reading Response Due
November 8: “Munitions!,” J.G. Sime, Reading Response Due
November 13: “Chronopolis,” J.G. Ballard, Reading Response Due
November 15: “Borders,” Thomas King, Reading Response Due
November 22: Analyzing Quotations
November 27: Peer Review Day
November 29: Course Wrap-Up, Literary Analysis Due/Feedback (20%/2.5%)