INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMIC WRITING (ENGLISH 109)

Fall 2018

TU-TH (11:30–12:50) EV3 (3408)

INSTRUCTOR: DHRUBA NEUPANE

Office hours: Tuesdays (10:00–11:00 am & 1:00–2:00 pm; or by appointment)

PAS 1285

READINGS:

- Ramage, Bean, Johnson, Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings. (Suggested)
- Other readings on Desire2Learn (Required)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of English 109 is to help you develop your abilities as a writer, critical thinker and effective communicator. Through this course, you will gain the rhetorical awareness necessary to analyze and design texts in different genres. Writing tasks range from rhetorical analysis, response paper to research essay.

Academic writing is too broad a field to cover in a course, but together we will do our best to touch base on some general principles, features and types (genres) of writing and get exposed to texts in a variety of rhetorical situations through reading, writing, and researching.

Recognizing that successful writing is more often a result of multiple careful revisions than of a sudden epiphany or sheer inspiration, an important emphasis in this course is on valuing writing as essentially rewriting. You will be encouraged to revise any essay as often as you practically can, with the possibility of improving your grade. Success in this course lies essentially in being able to develop a good revising self or sense in you.¹

ENGLISH 109 GOALS

- To help you to think critically and communicate effectively
- 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

ACCOMMODATIONS

We will all need some accommodations in this class, because we all learn differently. If you need specific accommodations, let me know. We will make an effort to ensure that all students have

¹ Note that re- vision, the act of re-seeing, involves more than ‘fixing’ surface ‘errors’ or only responding to instructor comments. Re- vision is looking at the same thing from fresh critical angle, reconsidering the persuasive quality of your arguments, refining your purpose, and reorganizing.
multiple means of accessing class information, multiple ways to take part in class activities, and multiple avenues for being assessed on class work. The University of Waterloo has a long-standing commitment to support the participation and access to university programs, services, and facilities by persons with all types of disabilities. All students who have a permanent disability as well as those with temporary disabilities have the right to what UW calls “AccessAbility Services.” To register for these services, you must provide documentation from a qualified professional to verify your disability. Please contact them at 519-888-4567 ext. 35082 or drop into Needles Hall 1132 to book an appointment to meet with an advisor to discuss their services and supports.

Assignments and Grading

1) PARTICIPATION (10%)

Participation is unusually important given the collaborative nature of this course. I will expect you to attend responsibly and to participate in an informed and productive manner. You will need to be prepared for class and complete all reading and writing assignments on time. You will need to contribute to the success of your peers. Attendance and punctuality count. It is your responsibility to inform me promptly of the reasons for an absence if you wish it to be excused. [I allow a maximum of two days absence, with information. After that you will miss 2% participation grade for each additional day of absence. If you’re unable to attend class due to illness, family emergency or a university sanctioned event, please provide me with documentation so that your grade is not affected.]

Participation is assessed based not only on attendance, but also on your investment in class activities and discussion, and your ability to respect and work well with others. You are expected to write in class, and to engage in group-work and discussions.

2. READING RESPONSE (IN-CLASS+ ONLINE) & REFLECTION (15%)

A response is based on a particular week’s reading and/or discussion. In a response, you should aim to do more than summarize a particular reading and/or discussions. You should be able to interact with texts and other texts outside class, contextualize the perspective presented, pose question and challenge ideas applying your ability as a critical reader. The typical length of response paper is ~ 500 words.

Each major assignment has a reflective writing. The typical length is two double-spaced pages. Begin to familiarize yourselves with this genre by visiting http://writeonline.ca/reflective-essay.php?content=intro

3. FOUR ASSIGNMENTS (75%)

1: LITERACY NARRATIVE (15%)

A literacy narrative in a narrative essay in which you will be able to tell your readers where, when and how your literacy journey started, what and who was/were involved and how these factors have/may have affected who you are and where you stand in a community and culture today. Your purpose is to explore and reflect on one or two specific moments in your life. While you will learn narrative techniques, you are encouraged to try new things out, in terms of style, language use and use of any sings, images, audios and visuals. You have the options to present this assignment in traditional print form, as an audio, audiovisual (e.g., YouTube video), illustrations, old pictures or any relevant
archive.

**Goals**

- Explore your thinking about your own experiences and beliefs, and about the cultures and communities you are a part of.
- Use narrative conventions to show rather than tell your story.
- Revise your narrative so that it is clear, compelling, and polished.
- Understand how composing is a process, and that one piece of composition might take several revisions and reflective processes before it is fully developed. Develop knowledge about what processes work best for you as a writer.

**2: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS (15%)**

Rhetorical analysis involves identifying and analyzing persuasive elements and strategies used in a text, text broadly conceived.

**Goals**

- Read rhetorically, paying attention to strategies of persuasion, the purposes of an author, and the effect of a text on an audience.
- Analyze texts in order to better compose your own.
- Engage both in the process of analyzing texts in conversation with others, and in developing analytical writing with the input of others.
- Be able to give others useful feedback about their writing and their ideas.

**3: WRITING WITH MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES OR SUBCULTURES (20%)**

Your job in this assignment is to develop and demonstrate an awareness or attentiveness to the phenomenon of marginalization and alternative life style, knowledge and culture expressions. Understanding a subculture entails looking closely at how people communicate, under what ideas and ideals with what expected habits and practices. Subcultures and marginalized communities share the feeling that their voices have been undermined and that they have been excluded from equal participation in all spheres social and institutional life and decision-making. They have their stories, ideas, and agenda and activities that the State and dominant social order should address rather than dismiss. Your job here is one of a motivated explorer who is interested in these particulars. You will learn basic interviewing and observation skills as a part of this project. Some of the topics under subculture, lifestyle expressions and identity performance include cybergoth, haul people, drag queens, and under marginalized communities include homeless people, Indigenous communities, immigrants and minority groups. Several other social activism and awareness campaigns awareness projects include breastfeeding, Idle No More. This assignment is submitted as a blog post. So if you have not already, familiarize yourself with how it will best work for you.

**4: ARGUMENT ESSAY (25%)**

In this assignment, you will begin by choosing a current problem that you are interested in, ideally building on the previous assignment. Then, you will do some research to learn more about the
problem and about various viewpoints and stakeholders. Eventually, you will form a unique thesis about this issue, and use research to support a series of claims. Your thesis and claims must be oriented around convincing your audience to take some real form of action. Your report will need to be both persuasive and practical. That is, you should try to provide a modest answer to the problem you identify.

**Goals**

- Apply yourself to a problem and seek relevant, reasonable, and attractive solutions
- Understand how to make choices about the content and subject of your writing as well as choices about the format (the layout, arrangement, organization, and so on) that fit the purpose of your proposal
- Develop flexibility in your writing process by drafting, revising and editing in new genres or mediums
- Present your ideas to others professionally and persuasively

**Guides and processes**

- Identifying a problem
- Finding arguments for and against a problem
- Positioning your views with respect to available arguments
- Quoting, paraphrasing and synthesizing
- Offering a creative and workable solution

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

**Units**

1. W1–W3: Writing Literacy, Writing Narrative
2. W4–W5: Writing Rhetoric
3. W6–W8: Writing Culture, Writing Community
4. W9–W12: Writing Arguments

*Note that this is a tentative schedule, subject to necessary revisions and readjustments based on consensus and timeliness of communication.*

**W1–W3**

**Writing Literacy, Writing Narrative**

**W1**

- **Sept 11**
  Syllabus, introducing academic writing

- **Sept 13**
  Narratives
  Reading and Discussion (R&D): “Mother Tongue”, “Mint Snowball”
Homework: Write about your own experiences learning another language.

W2

Sep 18
R&D: Fisher, “The Narrative Paradigm”

Sep 20
R&D: Writing concretely and actively; “showing instead of telling”; metaphors and lively sentences; sentence structure variation 1. Watch
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMpZ0TGjbWE
Online due: Response #1, on Fisher’s essay

W3

Sep 25
Good vs. bad thesis; good vs. bad topic sentence; reflective paper details

Sep 27
Peer review specifics; Narrative essay draft peer review

W4–W5
Writing Rhetoric

W4

Oct 2
In-class writing: research 3 definitions of rhetoric and compare them
R & D: Rhetoric and Rhetorical Triangle
Due: Assignment #1 & reflection (Literacy Narrative)

Oct 4
In-class writing: Reflect on a past experience of receiving poor evaluation on an assignment. What were the comments, and how did you feel about those comments?
R & D: Booth’s “The Rhetorical Stance” (on Learn)

W5

Oct 16
R&D: “The Other Car”, “Dudes Come Clean”; brainstorming Rhetorical Analysis Essay
Online due: Response #2 on Booth’s “The Rhetorical Stance”.

Oct 18
Rhetorical analysis peer review; Sign up for one-on-one conference
W6

Oct 23
In-class: In small groups, identify your culture or co-culture. Discuss with other members of your class the types of communication problems that have occurred when you have interacted with people from cultures different from your own.
R&D: “Communication and Culture: The Challenge of the Future” (first 20 pages)
Due: Assignment # 2 & reflection (Rhetorical analysis)

Oct 25
R&D: “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”
Online post due: Identify a subculture that you are not familiar with and make a list of the things that make it a subculture (e.g., language).

W7

Oct 30
R&D: Devdut Pattanaik’s East vs. West https://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt_pattanaik
Robert Kaplan’s “Cultural Patterns”

Nov 1
R&D: individualism vs. collectivism: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bO9TviAj7BM
high vs. low context cultures: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tIUilYX56E
Online due: Response #3 on Kaplan’s hypothesis

W8

Nov 6
R&D: Subcultures; interview guidelines

Nov 8
Ethnographic project peer review

W9–W11
Writing Arguments

W9

Nov 13
R&D: Argument types
Due: Assignment #3 (Ethnographic project) & reflection
Sign up for one-on-one conference

Nov 15
Causal argument R&D: Argumentative moves, rhetorical, and generic cues;
Wolfe’s “Why Do Women Feel Ignored?”

W10

Nov 20

Nov 22
R&D: Burke’s PENTAD
(1) “Why Johnny Can’t Write”
(2) Why Donald Trump’s Language Works for Him?

W11

Nov 27
R&D: Definitional and Ethical arguments (Euthanasia, legalization of marijuana) Ethics (Virtue Ethics, Deontological Ethics, Consequentialist Ethics)

Nov 29
Assignment 4 (argument essay) peer review

W12
One-on-one conferences

Final assignment and all revisions due date December 6, 2018

Rights and Responsibilities
Every member of this class— instructor as well as students— has rights and responsibilities to ensure a pleasant and productive experience for all. We are all answerable to University policies governing ethical behavior (Policy 33) and academic integrity (Policy 71), as well as to those outlining grievance or dispute procedures (Policy 70). Here are some more specific expectations for this course:

• be familiar with the university policies that govern their behaviour
• attend all scheduled classes and arrive prepared: with assigned reading and writing completed
• be active participants in their own learning, and respect the rights of others to learn
• give thoughtful consideration to instructor feedback on written and oral work

I am available for consultation in person and over email during the weekdays. I will return short assignments within one week, and longer assignments within 2 weeks.

Your final grade will be based on the following criteria:
A Superior writing will demonstrate originality and rhetorical sophistication that go beyond the requirements. The writing consistently shows a clear, connected sense of audience, purpose, and development. The writer is able to analyze his or her own writing, reflect on it, and revise/rewrite accordingly. The student understands what their strengths and weaknesses are, and what challenges lie ahead in their academic writing career. The writing takes risks that work.

B In strong writing, the writing succeeds in meeting its rhetorical goals in terms of audience, purpose, and genre conventions without need for further major revisions of purpose, development, audience, or writing style/mechanics. The writer is able to reflect on his or her own writing and make some choices about revision. The student understands what their strengths and weaknesses are, and what challenges lie ahead in their academic writing career. The writer takes risks, although they may not all be successful.

C Satisfactory writing meets the basic requirements, yet the writing would benefit from further revisions of purpose, development, audience, or writing style/mechanics (or some combination) and a stronger understanding of rhetorical decision-making. The writer composes across tasks at varying levels of success with some superficial revision. The student shows some understanding of academic writing. The writer has taken some risks in writing and exhibits style.

D Weak writing do not fully meet the basic evaluative standards. Most texts are brief and underdeveloped. These texts show a composing process that is not yet elaborated or reflective of rhetorical understanding. Texts generally require extensive revisions to address problems with purpose, development, audience, and/or writing style and mechanics. The student is not prepared to succeed as a University-level writer.

F Unacceptable writing exhibit pervasive problems with purpose, development, audience, or writing style/mechanics that interfere with meaning and readers’ understanding. Unacceptable writing is often incomplete. A writing will also earn an F if it does not represent the writer’s own original work. Any student who fails to submit one of the major assignments will fail.

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*Your participation grade will be based on the following criteria:*

A Superior participation shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions and workshops through his/her verbal, electronic, and written contributions. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, thorough, specific, and often provide other student writers with a new perspective or insight.

B Strong participation demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to the discussion at hand. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, specific, and helpful.

C Satisfactory participation demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned readings and writings, and contributes to small group workshops and large class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful and prompt, but could benefit from more attentive reading and/or specific detail when giving comments.

D Weak participation demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared for class, and may contribute infrequently or unproductively to classroom discussions or small group workshops. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, suggestions to group members may be missing, disrespectful, or far too brief and general to be of help.
Unacceptable participation shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late, regularly unprepared, and not able to contribute to classroom discussions or small group workshops. This student may be disruptive. Students who miss more than 3 classes (lectures or workshops) are in danger of failing participation.

There will be no final and mid-term exams in this class.

Course Concerns
If you are experiencing problems with the course or with the marking, you should first discuss your difficulties with your instructor, Dhruba Neupane. Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly treated or penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance: http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.html.

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 aground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm.

Academic Honesty
All students registered in courses in the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (on the Web at http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infofocal/UW/policy_71.html).

If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean. Students seeking guidance on academic honesty are urged consult the following page of the Arts Faculty Web site, “How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors” (http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~sager/plagiarism.html). Plagiarism or copying other people’s style or ideas and claiming them as your own is a serious academic offense. Any incident of plagiarism will automatically cause a paper to fail, could cause you to fail the course, and will be reported to the Dean’s office. For each major assignment you submit, you will also sign and submit an “Academic Honesty Contract” (see page 12-13).

General Instructions
All written assignments are due at the start of class; all assignments must follow specified style guides and conventions. When full drafts are due, you will need to bring a hard copy for each member of your writing group and one copy to hand in to me. Failure to bring a draft with copies on the due date will result in a permanent 5% penalty on the assignment. Late essays will be accepted only with prior permission. Otherwise, the penalty of 5% per day the first day and then 2% each late day, including weekends, will apply. You may revise and resubmit your essays any number of times (subject to practical limitations of time) for a possibility of revised grade.

Use of devices in class
We want the classroom environment to be a positive one for everyone. Together we will create a
space that promotes mutual respect, positive discussions, the free exchange of ideas, and the productive use of time. No cell phones in class – if you have it with you, turn it off and put it away. Laptops are allowed but only for instructional and research purposes. If an assignment is due in class, you must both bring a hard copy of it and post it to the right file online in .docx format (not in .pdf).

The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre works across all faculties to help students clarify their ideas, develop their voices, and write in the style appropriate to their disciplines. Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre. Please note that writing specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not proof-read or edit for you. Please bring hard copies of your assignment instructions and any notes or drafts to your appointment.
Academic Honesty Contract For English 109

Please copy this form, complete it, and submit it with drafts of all major assignments.

I have directly acknowledged all outside sources used in the creation of this writing. These sources include not just the direct quotations that I have used, but also other influences and inspirations.

These other cited sources can influence me and inspire me, but I have created my own essays and they express something important about me. This work represents my unique ideas, strategies and viewpoints in writing.

I value creativity and uniqueness. When I use outside sources, I synthesize and critically reinterpret the ideas of others, I don’t just drop them into my text or cut and paste them. I know that if I don’t synthesize and critically reinterpret the ideas of others, and acknowledge them fully by citing them, then I am plagiarizing.

I know that even if I don’t quote directly from a source, I need to be sure to always give credit—even when paraphrasing or summarizing. I know that properly attributing ideas to their owners can also strengthen my own ethos as a researcher.

I know that good research means more than just avoiding plagiarism. Good researchers take multiple ideas, analyze them, contrast them, synthesize them, and then use them to say something unique, while carefully documenting where each idea came from.

I used the writing and revision process to practice giving credit to others correctly, using MLA citation style, with in-text citations and a full list of works cited. When I was in doubt, I asked my peers and my teacher (and perhaps Writing Center tutors) for help. So, now that I am ready to hand in my writing, I know that I have followed all of the rules for correct citation.

I know that “I didn’t know I was plagiarizing” is not an acceptable excuse. If in doubt, I know I can ask my teacher.

If I am unsure whether information is “common knowledge” or not, my readers may be too. If in doubt, I cite it. It is better to give too much credit to others than to assume that I don’t need to cite something.

I did receive help in my writing—from peers in my class, from my teacher, and perhaps from others. But I had clear boundaries when asking for help. Nobody wrote or rewrote my paper for me. I welcomed suggestions and comments from others, reflected upon them, and then made rhetorical choices as I revised. I didn’t steal or borrow ideas from others without acknowledging them. I received guidance and support from others, but I can confidently state that this writing is mine.

By typing my name on a paper, I am signing a contract with my professor and with the University of Waterloo that states that the ideas contained in this paper are my own, and that all ideas that are not my own have been correctly attributed to their owners.

Assignment Title:

Print Full Name:

Signature:

Date:

Prepared by Prof. Jay Dolmage: https://uwaterloo.ca/english/people-profiles/jay-dolmage