Instructor information

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Whyte
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The best way to reach me is by email or through the course LEARN site. I do not regularly use an on-campus phone.

Course description

In this course, we will learn and practise strategies for reading and writing effectively—that is, in ways that are curious, rigorous, persuasive, and responsible. We will focus primarily upon writing within academic contexts, where central goals include developing, sharing, critiquing, and applying knowledge. However, the foundational skills that you acquire can also be applied to forms of communication that extend beyond writing and beyond academic audiences (i.e., to public, professional, and personal contexts). While honing our skills as individual writers, we will also work together to consider what academic writing does, how it works, and why it matters.

Some of the best ways to develop your skills as a writer are to practise, to reflect upon your choices, to seek feedback, to engage with the work of others, and to read and study examples. Even for the strongest writers, writing well is hard work that requires time. You will, therefore, complete small assignments that build toward larger ones, and you will have many opportunities to revise your work. You will help one another, and receive help from me, in bringing out the best of your writing before it is graded. In order to succeed in this course, you should work steadily over the course of the term, provide thoughtful feedback to your peers, show a commitment to improving your work, and participate actively in the life of the class.
Course objectives

All sections of English 109 share the same core learning objectives. This course is designed to help you:

• think critically and communicate effectively
• learn and practice a variety of strategies for inventing, drafting, and editing texts
• learn and practice writing in a variety of academic genres
• learn to read critically
• learn to write persuasively by employing elements of formal argumentation
• learn to give and receive useful feedback on writing for the purposes of revision
• learn and practice communicating to a variety of academic audiences.

Each assignment is associated with specific learning outcomes designed to support these general objectives.

Required text


Note: There are several ways to access this text:

1. You can purchase a new book from the University Bookstore.
2. You can purchase a used copy of the book.
3. You can purchase access to the e-text hosted on LaunchPad, an online learning resource. Access codes are available through the Bookstore. Note: We will not be using the extra features (e.g., assignments and exercises) offered on this platform, though you may use them to support your learning if you choose.
4. You can purchase or rent a copy of the book (e-text or paperback) through the student store on the publisher’s website.

Please let me know if you run into any trouble accessing or navigating the course text.

Additional readings


Additional readings (some required and some optional) may be posted to the LEARN website over the course of the term. You can expect to read 2–3 additional articles or excerpts. We will also use LEARN to assign specific readings within How to Write Anything.
Overview of course requirements

This course will be divided into three major units, each lasting one month. At the end of each unit, you will submit one major assignment. These assignments will receive provisional grades and formative feedback, which you can then use to revise and improve your work. At the end of the term, you will assemble your revised work into a portfolio.

In most weeks of this course, you will also complete a short written assignment (10 in total). These exercises will serve as stepping stones toward the major assignments. They will also provide a foundation for class discussion and peer feedback. These exercises are graded only for completion. When you submit the assignment on time, you will earn 1%.

Evaluation

Portfolio
- Narrative 15%
- Annotated bibliography 20%
- Argument analysis 20%
- Author’s statements 15%
Weekly assignments 10%
Participation 20%

Description of course units and assignments

Unit 1–Narrative writing

Class dates: September 6–27, 2018

Major assignment due date: September 28, 2018

Purpose: We will start with narrative writing because this mode of writing usually feels most familiar. Narratives also offer a helpful way for us to get to know one another. Most importantly, narrative writing will help you to establish your own voice and cultivate a habit of reflection—skills that will benefit your writing across many genres. The goal of this unit is to help you describe and reflect upon your experiences, especially as they relate to gaining new understanding, knowledge, or perspective. In addition to exploring your own experiences, we will consider some of the roles that narratives play within academic writing addressed to multiple audiences.

Assignment description: Write a personal narrative about a time when you learned something new, gained a new form of literacy, and/or changed your point of view. Your narrative should focus on describing a specific event (or short sequence of events) that you have experienced or witnessed. Choose an event that produced some consequence, insight, or question. For example, you could describe an event that...
sparked your interest in your field of study. Maybe an encounter revealed a bias that you or others were holding. Maybe you changed your mind on an important issue. Maybe you witnessed something unusual or unexpected. Maybe you learned a new language or skill—or felt confused and frustrated by language that you encountered in an unfamiliar setting. Your story does not need to describe a positive or dramatic experience. It does need to hold meaning and produce understanding both for you and for a reader (me). You should choose an experience that you feel comfortable sharing with your classmates. If you have an experience that feels significant, but you’re not sure what larger insights it holds, that is likely a good place to start. Take a chance by writing and reflecting upon the story.

**Specifications:** 1000 words, 12 point font, 1.5 spacing, 1 inch margins

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**Unit 2—Summary and description**

**Class dates:** October 2–October 30, 2018

**Major assignment due date:** November 2, 2018

**Purpose:** This unit will have two central purposes. First, it will enable us to practise some of the most foundational skills of academic writing: finding, summarizing, evaluating, and citing sources. Second, it will enable us to consider how the same topic is addressed in texts of different kinds. We will learn techniques for interpreting and accurately representing the sources that we find. While we will gather multiple sources related to a topic, our writing and analysis will be focused on attending to one source at a time.

**Assignment description:** The final assignment in this unit will be an annotated bibliography. You will choose a topic that (a) interests, troubles, or confuses you (i.e., something that you would like to know more about) and (b) is relevant to events being portrayed in the news and popular media. Gather at least 5 sources that relate to your topic. Three must come from peer reviewed academic periodicals. Two can come from magazines, newspapers, blogs, or other popular genres.

Begin by writing an paragraph that introduces your topic, presenting an aim or question that you would like to address. You will then write an annotation for each of your sources. Begin each annotation with a full citation of the reference formatted in APA style. Then write 1–2 paragraphs summarizing the content of the source, describing its form and apparent purpose, and assessing whether and how the text is relevant to your aim or question.

**Specifications:** 1000–1250 words, 12 point font, 1.5 spacing, 1 inch margins
Unit 3—Argument analysis

Class dates: November 1–November 29, 2018

Major assignment due date: November 30, 2018

Purpose: In this unit, we will practise strategies for analyzing arguments and evaluating their strength. We will also practice drawing different perspectives into conversation with one another.

Assignment description: Your final paper will look more closely at two of the sources included in your annotated bibliography. Choose two sources that represent different perspectives or genres. Using techniques of rhetorical analysis introduced in class, analyze the position taken in each source and assess the strength of each argument. Consider the how the source presents claims and supporting evidence, how it establishes credibility, and how it addresses the values and interests of an audience. After you analyze the sources, draw a significant connection between them: describe how these two texts conflict, complement one another, or work together to suggest an interesting insight or question. Finally, craft a concise sentence (~ the length of a tweet) that either takes a position on this issue or formulates an interesting research question.

Specifications: ~1500 words, 12 point font, 1.5 spacing, 1 inch margins

Final portfolio

At the end of the term, you will collect your best work into a final portfolio. This will include your three polished assignments along with an author’s statement for each one describing the improvements that you made or the insights that you gained in the process. The author’s statements should be one half to one page long. To support these reflections, please keep all of your work over the course of the term, including reflections, brainstorming, rough work, and drafts.

Portfolio due date: December 14, 2018

Weekly “writing-to-learn” assignments

You will also complete 10 short writing assignments. The assignments will be posted to LEARN by Friday at 5 p.m. beginning on September 14. They will be due to the LEARN drop box the following Friday at 5 p.m. In general, they shouldn't take more than an hour to complete. The purpose of these assignments is to help you prepare for class, practise skills introduced in class, and build toward your major assignments. There will be 10 assignments in total. Completing each one will earn 1% toward your grade.

Small assignment due dates: September 21, September 28, October 5, October 19, October 26, November 2, November 9, November 16, November 23, November 30.
Course policies

What to bring
We will often do some form of writing in class. Please come prepared with a pen and paper or, if you choose, with a laptop or tablet for written exercises. I trust and expect that you will use electronic devices only for the purpose of participating in the class.

Submitting assignments
You will submit all of your assignments electronically, through drop boxes that will be set up in the course LEARN site. LEARN will also be used to return your assignments.

Due dates and late work
Major assignments should be submitted by 5 p.m. on designated due dates. Late assignments will reduce your final portfolio grade by 1% per day. All major assignments and your portfolio must be submitted to pass the course.

Short assignments should be submitted by 5 p.m. on the designated due dates. Late assignments will not earn the 1% credit for completion. Incomplete assignments will further affect your participation grade because they will limit your ability to participate fully in online and in-class discussions.

Attendance
You are expected to attend all meetings of the class. If you must miss a class meeting, you should have a compelling reason, and you should communicate that reason to me by email. Multiple unexplained absences will influence your participation grade.

Communication
I welcome you to talk to me in person or by email about your work or any questions you have about the course. If you have questions, concerns, ideas, or feedback, I hope that you will bring them to my attention. Where possible, I will endeavour to make our classes responsive to your suggestions and feedback.

Communication in this course should be both challenging and respectful. In keeping with the values of good academic writing, all communication should reflect an openness to other perspectives—coupled with a willingness to think critically about, and substantiate, our own perspectives and observations.

Accommodations
We will all need some accommodations in this class because we all learn differently. If you need specific accommodations, let me know. I will work with you to ensure that you have means of accessing class information, ways to take part in class activities, and avenues for fair assessment of your coursework. 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. Students who have a permanent disability as well as those with temporary disabilities have the right to what
the University of Waterloo calls “AccessAbility Services.” To register for these services, you must provide documentation from a qualified professional to verify your disability. Anyone, however, can book an appointment to meet with an advisor and discuss the available services. Please contact them at 519-888-4567 ext. 35082 or drop into their office to make an appointment.

University policies

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 their 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 their 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 they have 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.

For more information about the purpose of territorial acknowledgements, please see the CAUT Guide to Acknowledging Traditional Territory (PDF).