INTRODUCTION to ACADEMIC WRITING

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 5:30 – 6:30 pm

Course Description: Much of your success in academic life depends on your ability to identify tasks and select strategies, to seek and process information, to discover and present knowledge. This course is designed to help you perfect these abilities by introducing you to some issues in academic writing and research such as argumentation, text organization, and style. You will get insight into, and practice in, basic techniques and conventions shared by writers across disciplines.

Required texts:

ASSIGNMENTS and ASSESSMENT

1. Response essay (15%): A brief essay in response to (a) course reading(s), based on your insights into the interactions between humans and technologies.

2. Analysis paper (25%): In this work you will use an analytical concept, method, or framework from the readings to examine a sample of humour: a joke or small corpus of jokes of your choice.

3. Research paper: (25%) This work will result from your collaborative research project aimed at interpretation or evaluation of a sample of visual advertising in its social context. The grade will be equally split between the paper as a whole and individual contributions. Each member of the research group will write an identifiable section of the body based on at least one type of research: literature review, environmental scan, and/or analysis.

4. Activity file (15%): The grade will be derived from your weekly activities designed to help you prepare you for the major assignments (points 1 - 3 above). Timely completion of these tasks will automatically earn you 75% of the grade; up to another 25% will be awarded for above-average quality, yet up to 15% may be deducted from the grade for incomplete activities and up to 25% for late submissions (refer to the course policies below).

5. Research proposal (5%): This task will provide the research groups with a chance to articulate and review their research projects and preliminary results (point 3 above) as well as receive class and instructor feedback.

6. Peer editing (5%): This grade will depend on the quality of your critiques of two classmates’ draft analysis papers.

7. Two style quizzes (10%) will test your ability to revise paragraphs and edit sentences based on the conventions of academic style.

8. Participation bonus (up to 5%): Consistent, comprehensive, and insightful contributions to the class discussions of research and academic news will be rewarded with up to five points added to the course grade.
COURSE POLICIES

- Your attendance and participation are essential for your own and your peers’ success in this course. You are expected to attend all classes, complete all written activities and exercises, and productively participate in group work and class discussions.

- Submissions:
  - You must submit your homework in class or, if you miss the class, email it to me on the due date. Late activity submissions will be penalized 5% per day late, starting immediately after the class, up to a total of 25%. No activities will be accepted after the due dates for the first drafts of their respective assignments.
  - Late response essay and analysis paper submissions will be penalized 2% per day late. Late research papers will not be accepted.
  - You may request a week’s extension on an activity or assignment (except the research paper), provided that you email me before the due date. Your email should be a formal request clearly stating legitimate reasons for the extension.
  - Late analysis paper drafts will be penalized up to 10% of the grade for the paper.

- Drafts:
  Before the final submission of the analysis paper, you will get peer editors’ and my feedback on your first draft; the individual sections of the research paper will be peer edited in the research groups. Peer-editing and multiple revisions will improve the quality of your writing and polish your critical thinking skills. It is therefore in your best interest to prepare as good first drafts as you can. However, you shouldn’t expect your peer editors to correct or even point out all your oversights. Rather, your final drafts will result from your own revisions made in response to your reviewers’ and co-authors’ feedback.

- Out-of-class consultations:
  Talk to me during my office hours or email me about any questions or problems with your research or writing.

- Academic integrity & fairness:
  To reinforce the usability and credibility of your work and to avoid unintended plagiarism, indicate all your sources. Papers without appropriate references will not be graded. Plagiarism and/or other forms of academic offences will automatically cause a paper to fail and will be reported to the Associate Dean of Arts. For more information please check the Arts Faculty web page “Avoiding Academic Offences” (http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html).

  - Note on avoidance of academic offences:

    All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their 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 (section 1; on the Web at wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). If you need help in learning what constitutes an academic offence; how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission; how to follow appropriate rules with respect to “group work” and collaboration; or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA and/or your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

  - Grievances:

    Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.