English 109 E, Fall 2000
Introduction to Academic Writing
Instructor: Erin E. MacDonald, M.A., B.Ed.
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Class Time: Monday, 6-9 p.m. Room: ML 246

course description
This particular version of English 109 will focus on reading and writing about popular culture. With diverse academic and non-academic readings on pop culture and various media examples from television, film, music, and journalism as the content for analysis, students will be taught both the rhetorical and mechanical tools of academic writing. This course is based on the premise that critical reading, thought, and writing cannot be taught separately. Considering language and cultural knowledge as socially constructed, we will interrogate the rhetorical strategies and implications of these texts through both whole class and group discussions. Students will gain confidence with a variety of types of writing, from electronic journals to academic research essays.

required texts
Media Journal - Joseph Harris and Jay Rosen
Academic Writing - Janet Giltrow (2nd edition)
Coursebook of extra readings (available in UW Bookstore)

Recommended Text
MLA Handbook, most recent edition

Assignment Weighting
Online Journal 25%
Critical Writing Paper
  First Draft 5%
  Final Draft 15%
Collaborative Writing Project
  Peer Assessment 5%
  Final Project 20%
Final Paper/Project
  Plan 5%
  Final Paper 25%
Media Journal
This journal will diverge somewhat from Harris and Rosen’s idea, particularly because it will be an online, electronic journal in which all class members will participate at once. In this way, students will have the opportunity to not only publish their written work and to have the benefit of peer suggestions, but to work directly with new computer technologies and to thus become computer literate as well.

Students must submit one piece of writing per week, as well as at least one response to another student’s work. These writings will be 1-2 “page” summaries and critical analyses of one or more of the readings assigned from Harris and Rosen’s text and will be marked for both formal quality and use of rhetorical strategies learned in class.

Note: Students are not required to own their own computers for this class. The university’s computer labs are available for any student without off-campus access to the internet, and class members are only expected to log on with their assignments once a week. This e-journal will count for 25% of the final mark.

Critical Writing Paper - Draft Due Oct. 2, Final Due Oct. 23
This assignment could be called a short essay utilizing the techniques of analysis and synthesis. It must be 4-5 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font. Suggestions for particular topics will be given out in class. A first draft of this paper, worth 5%, must be handed in to be reviewed by both the instructor and one or more peers, in order for the final draft, worth 15%, to be accepted.

Collaborative Writing Project - Due Nov. 13
For this assignment, students will form small groups to complete a writing task collaboratively. Group members will evaluate each other’s participation to ensure a balance of workloads within each group. Suggestions for topics and details of the project will be discussed in class, but will result in one final paper to be presented informally to the class. 5% of the mark for this assignment will be derived from an evaluation of each student’s performance within the group and the paper will be worth 20%.

Final Project/Paper - Plan Due Nov. 22, Final Project Due Dec. 8
Details on this assignment will also be covered in class. Basically, part way through the term, students must confer with the instructor on a plan, the written part of which will be worth 5%. The actual final paper will be worth 25%. This final paper is referred to as a “project” because it must incorporate critical and rhetorical strategies learned throughout the course and because it may include a variety of media, such as graphics, video clips, or artwork, in addition to a written 6-9 page analysis. Varieties on the traditional “research paper” will be explained and offered for those who prefer to do something a little different and requirements will therefore also vary according to each individual project.

There is NO EXAM in this course.