

WRT 105: Practices of Academic Writing

Fall 2009

Days: T/TH - Time: 8:00-9:20 - Class Location: Bowne 108

Section # M 203(22093)

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Course Description and Rationale

WRT 105 is an introduction to academic writing that focuses on the practices of analysis and argument, practices that carry across disciplinary lines and into professional and civic writing. These interdependent practices of critical inquiry are fundamental to the work you will do at Syracuse University and later in your careers and civic engagements.

Critical inquiry is not a staid and dull endeavor. It takes imagination to understand more fully the things that surround us. This “imagination” is not the imagination of Walt Disney, or the imagination needed to create the world of Harry Potter; it is the ability to acknowledge and make meaning out of difference, to grasp the complexity of issues and experiences, and to avoid the impulse to reject the unfamiliar. We develop such an imagination by being willing to look closely and critically at the world around us, and to ask questions of what we see, experience, and assume.

Analysis, as Rosenwasser and Stephen claim in *Writing Analytically* 5th edition, “is a form of detective work that typically pursues something puzzling, something you are seeking to understand rather than something you are already sure you have the answers to. Analysis finds questions where there seem not to be any, and it makes connections that might not have been evident at first” (4). You analyze when you think carefully enough to recommend a course to a friend, or explore why a particular college sports team is so dominant, or decide who you will vote for in the local election, or come to understand better the geopolitical situation produced by the US presence in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Argument involves analysis – and moves into making claims to a specific audience about how the world is or should be. Argument here goes beyond pro/con debates on abortion or gun control and extends into situated social practices such as when you are working together as a sorority to plan the next event, or persuading your parents that body piercing makes social statements, or taking a stand in an education class on the value of anti-racist pedagogy, or making the case that “don’t ask, don’t tell” is a suitable policy for the US military. Evidence for your arguments comes from analysis, from discussion with others, from your personal experience, and from research in the library and on the web.

Course Goals for WRT 105

- Students will compose a variety of texts as a process (inventing, drafting, revising, editing) that takes place over time, that requires thinking and rethinking ideas, and that addresses diverse audiences and rhetorical contexts.
- Students will develop a working knowledge of strategies and genres of critical analysis and argument.
- Students will learn critical techniques of reading through engagement with texts that raise issues of diversity and community and encourage students to make connections across difference.
- Students will include critical research in their composing processes.

Work of the Course

You will devote time, thought, and energy to a variety of informal and formal reading and writing practices. During the course you might be asked to annotate readings, keep a record of ideas and responses, jot down observations, take notes on class discussions, experiment with different styles and organizational choices, and engage in a variety of drafting and revision activities. All these activities are important and will have an impact on your development and success as academic writers (and your final grade).

Writing well depends upon reading well. The course texts will provide you with ideas and arguments, facts and statistics. They will prompt thought as you agree or disagree or qualify those ideas. They enlarge the context for our class discussion. And they illustrate choices other writers have made as they composed. Writing and reading are interdependent practices, and you will move between the two regularly throughout the course.

Course Texts and Materials

(available at both the University Bookstore and Follett's Orange Bookstore)

Blakesly, David & Jeffrey Hoogveen. *Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age*

Himley, Margaret & Anne Fitzsimmons. *Critical Encounters with Texts: Finding a Place to Stand*, 5th ed.

Rosenwasser, David and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*, 5th ed.

A collection of student writing - *Intertext*

You should also be prepared to provide copies of your work for everyone in the class (or in your peer response group) at various times during the semester. These can be xerox copies (CNY Printing and Copy Services in Marshall Square Mall, A Iteracts, and the library offer low cost, self-service copying) or additional copies printed out from your computer. Plan on spending as much as \$10 over the course of the semester.

Feedback

You will receive many different kinds of feedback during this course. Some will come from fellow students and some will come from me. Both are important; they tell you in various ways how your readers are responding to your writing. This feedback will also help you learn how to assess your own work.

Grading

The breakdown is as follows:

Unit 1: jumpstart essay	10%
Unit 2: analysis essay	30%
Unit 3: argument essay	30%
Course invention work	30%

Attendance and Participation

Writing studios are courses in language learning, and language is learned in communities; therefore, it is essential that you attend class and participate. Absences and lack of preparation for class will affect your classmates' work as well as your own. The work you do in class, the work you do to prepare for each class, is as important as any polished assignment you turn in for a grade. In addition, our syllabus is only a projection and may be subject to occasional changes and revisions as it seems appropriate, necessary, or just interesting. That is another reason why your attendance is vital.

If you must miss a class, you are responsible for work assigned. Please realize, however, that class time cannot be reconstructed or made up, and that your performance, your work, and your final course grade will be affected by absences. If you miss the equivalent of three weeks of classes or more without any official documented excuse it is unlikely you will pass the course. I don't anticipate any of you will be in that position, however, so let's all agree to do the work, come to class, learn a lot, and make the course a meaningful experience.

SU Email

To enhance student services, the University will use your Syracuse email address for communications. I will do so also. Please check your SU email on a regular basis. If you have problems accessing your email account, contact the Help Desk at ITS at <http://its.syr.edu/>.

Blackboard

Our course is loaded on blackboard, a University on-line teaching support system. I will teach you how to access our section of WRT 105 on blackboard, and will then expect you to be able to locate, download, and link to a range of course materials with some regularity throughout the semester. I will also contact you regularly via the blackboard course listserv, which has already been created using each student's "syr" email address. Please check your syr account at least once daily throughout the fall.

The url for blackboard is

<http://blackboard.syr.edu>

Once you access the main page you will be asked for your user ID and password. The following is from the student help page of blackboard:

Once a student registers for a course that is using Blackboard, a student account is set up for them and they are automatically enrolled in the appropriate course(s). Users login to Blackboard using their NetID and password. Your NetID is the portion of your SU email that appears before the @syr.edu. Your NetID password is also your Blackboard password. If you do not know what your NetID and password are, visit the ITS website at <http://its.syr.edu/netid/> to obtain this information. You can also obtain this information by calling 443-2677, or by going to the Student Computing Support Center in your dormitory.

Use of Student Writing

It is understood that registration for and continued enrollment in this course constitutes permission by the student for the instructor to use any student work constructed as a result of said enrollment in the course.

Computer Use

Most of the work you do for this class will be handed in word processed. Use an easily readable font, size 12 point. Include one inch margins and follow the page layout used by the MLA format described in your handbook.

We will also be using email for contact outside class. Use email to contact me about your coursework, to set up an appointment to meet with me outside class, or to ask a question.

Finally, we will be looking at a variety of sites on the Internet at times during the course. Please let me know if you have not had any experience using a browser such as Netscape or Explorer.

While computers save us great amounts of time over typewriters and make corrections much simpler, they are also susceptible to crashing and freezing. Save your work frequently, always make backup copies, and plan your projects with extra time allowed for those inevitable glitches.

Where to Find Help: The Writing Center

Experienced writing consultants at the Writing Center (101 HBCourse Hall, on the Quad) can teach you how to succeed on individual assignments and ultimately become a better writer. They're prepared to work one-on-one with you at *any* stage of your process and with *any* kind of writing you're attempting while attending SU. Whether you need help understanding an assignment, brainstorming ideas, revising subsequent drafts, or developing editing strategies, face-to-face and online appointments are available for 25- or 50-minute sessions throughout the semester and can be reserved up to seven days in advance via their online scheduling program, WCOnline. In addition, drop-in appointments are welcome Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and brief concerns or questions can be emailed to consultants via the eWC. For more information on hours, location and services, please visit <http://wc.syr.edu>. This is a *free* resource to all students and highly recommended for every assignment you work on in this class.

Academic Integrity

All writing submitted for this course is understood to be your original work. In cases where academic dishonesty is detected (the fraudulent submission of another's work, in whole or part, as your own), you may be subject to a failing grade for the

project or the course, and in the worst case, to academic probation or expulsion. For a more detailed description of the guidelines for adhering to academic integrity in the College of Arts and Sciences, go to:

<http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

Private is Public Statement

Part of becoming a good writer is learning to appreciate the ideas and criticisms of others, and in this course our purpose is to come together as a community of writers. Remember that you will often be expected to share your scrutiny or what you feel strongly about with others. Unless otherwise noted, all of your work in this class can, and often will, be discussed in class in front of your peers. Please refrain from writing anything you do not wish to become public knowledge in your essays or any other public assignments.

Respect Statement

As we may confront several inflammatory issues during the term, it is essential that we behave as a community in the classroom. While you may not agree with someone else's viewpoint, you also cannot legislate their truth. This means that it is not OK to demean someone's position based on sexual preference, race, ethnicity or gender (or anything else for that matter). Please be respectful and tactful with all members of the class at all times. This does not mean that you are not entitled to an opinion but that you adopt positions responsibly, contemplating the possible effects of your statements on others.

Contacting Me

If you are unable to meet with me during office hours, please see me before or after class or send me an email so that we can arrange an appointment. I expect you to accept a responsible role as a communicator in this class and to keep me informed about your work, your progress, your questions, and your problems. Please do not hesitate to meet with me to talk about your work several times during the semester, preferably BEFORE your grade is the central concern. My office phone is 443-8691; additionally, my email address is jlewis04@syr.edu. I will try to respond to your emails in a timely fashion. During the week (Monday-Friday) I will do my very best to respond within 24 hours of your initial email. On the weekends, I will respond within 48 hours.

Special Needs and Situations

If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or special accommodation in this class or any other class, please call the Office of Disability Services at 315.443.4498 or email at odssched@syr.edu. Students who need special consideration because for any other situation should make an appointment to see me right away.