

The University

ENWR 1510, Section 16
Bryan Hall 312
TR 5:00PM – 6:15PM

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Office hours: TBD

Course Description

ENWR 1510 is a course on academic writing. It is intended to develop students' abilities to write in the academic contexts they are likely to encounter in college. While different departments and disciplines obviously require students to write in different ways, writers in all fields must make critical inquiries into what they study. They research, observe, argue, revise and present – and writing is crucial to every step of this process. Persuasive, articulate, and vivid writing is a technical skill for life. In this course we will learn to better articulate and justify arguments in our own writing, as well as how gainfully revise these arguments after drafting them. We will also learn to examine and respond to the writing of others. By the end of this course, each student will have produced around 20 pages of thoroughly revised pages.

Topic: Writing (and Reading) about Travel

This section of ENWR 1510 will focus on writing concerned with the university. We will read classic texts that have left their mark on discussions of the university, newer texts concerned with more topical issues, as well as representations of the university in the arts. These writings will come in a variety of genres and be intended for a variety of audiences, from academic articles and newspaper op-eds to postmodern novels and contemporary cinema. These readings are not “experts” you will be asked to agree with and emulate, but rather resources to help us think about the problems we will address in this course *as well* as how to write about them. If you feel like being critical of something I have assigned, I encourage you to do so.

I have divided this class into three units. Each has its own sets of questions and a specific genre in which the student will be asked to write their end-of-unit assignment. They are as follows:

- **The College Classroom:** What do we expect from a college seminar? Or from a course on compositional writing? What should the relationship be between students and what they study? What should the relationship be between teachers and students? What problems are there in the American college classroom today?
- **The Big Picture:** What are some of the bigger problems higher education faces today? What expectations does the larger public have for universities? What do we think the “purpose” of the university is, and how is this reflected in how we discuss the various problems they face?
- **The College Campus:** What are specific issues or problems that students, faculty, and staff face on college campuses today? How does writing operate as a means of engaging with these issues?

Course Requirements

Essays: You will be required to write three essays over the course of the term. All three essays will be 4-6 pages in length. All papers must have 1-inch margins, be 12-point Times New Roman, and double-spaced. All citations should conform to MLA format.

Revisions: Revision is an integral step in the writing process, and that is reflected in the assignments as well as grade breakdown of this course. Every essay you write will be revised and re-submitted. Revision does not mean turning a draft into a final product. It means re-writing and re-structuring significant portions of what is already a complete first version of a piece of writing: fixing a comma splice and getting rid of some passive voice is not enough. Those are corrections to be made before turning any assignments in. These revisions should incorporate in-class workshops as well as my own comments.

Workshops: At the end of each unit we will workshop each other's writing in class. In these workshops you will be expected to give ample feedback to the work of your classmates. More information will be given as to the kind of feedback expected as the first workshop approaches.

Final Portfolio: At the end of your semester, all the writing you have submitted will constitute a final portfolio. I will also require a self-assessment letter to be submitted with every rewrite detailing the areas in which your writing has developed and where it needs to develop further with regards to the practices we will work on in class. See the "Evaluations" section to understand how your final portfolio will bear on your final grade.

Participating in a Seminar: This class will be a relatively small seminar. Unlike a lecture, it allows me to give close attention to your work and that of your classmates. However, unlike a lecture, it also means you are required to be not only present in class, but also prepared with readings and assignments. You are required to participate. I am not a lecturer. I will be guiding discussion. This means that what we gain from class every day will be greatly informed by the ideas that you and your classmates bring to discussion.

Assignments:

Readings: The readings in this class will all be available in .pdf format on Collab. This is a class on writing, not reading, so readings have been kept thin but protein-rich. There will usually be no more than ~50 pages of reading per week in this class. However, these readings will form the basis for all writing assignments and in-class discussions. Please print them out beforehand and bring them to class.

Written Assignments: Before every class you are required to submit a written response to the assigned reading for the day. These will either be exercises, which I will detail and must be emailed to me, or forum posts, which must be posted to Collab. Both kinds of assignments must be submitted by 8pm the night before class, as I will use them to structure our workshops. They are designed to get us thinking about formal writing skills as well as topics about which you will write your papers. These responses will count towards your participation grade as they are necessary for the work we will do in class, but also help me to evaluate how you satisfy the three criteria on which you will be graded. See the "Evaluations" section for more details on this.

Film Viewings: We will watch two films throughout the term. The films will be on reserve at Clemons Library. You are required to watch them in their entirety, and there will be a short quiz at the beginning of the class in which we discuss the film (see schedule). We will schedule a

viewing for the class, but if you cannot make this viewing, you will be required to view these films on your own time outside of class.

Course Policies

Attendance: All students are allowed two unexcused absences for this class. If a student misses a third class without a documented excuse, their final letter grade (NOT their participation grade) will be reduced by one third (from “A” to “A-“ for example). If a student misses a fourth class without documented excuse (that is two weeks’ worth of class), I will request that they drop the course or will give them a failing grade for the semester.

Late Work: All essays are due by midnight of the assigned day. For every 24 hours that a paper is late, it is docked a third of a letter grade. Under exceptional circumstances extensions can be given, but they must be requested 24 hours in advance. All written responses to readings are due on Collab at 8pm the night before class. Throughout the term, you will have the opportunity to turn in two smaller writing assignments (exercises, forum posts and the like) up to one week late without penalty.

Tardiness: If you are more than 10 minutes late to class it will count as one half of an absence. This means that if you are late twice, and have already used both unexcused absences, your final letter grade (NOT your participation grade) will be reduced by one third of a letter.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: This is a class about your writing, and all writing you submit should be yours. If you quote or paraphrase someone else’s writing he or she must be cited accordingly. Plagiarism is a serious offence – it will result in a failing grade for the assignment, potentially for the course, and perhaps even dismissal from the university. If you are unsure of how to cite sources, or have any questions regarding what is meant by academic integrity, please ask me – I’m here to help. If you are unsure what counts as plagiarism, or would like a link to the University’s policies on it, I direct you to these pages:

<http://www.virginia.edu/honor/what-is-academic-fraud-2/> and

<http://www.virginia.edu/honor/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/PlagiarismSupplement2011.pdf>

Laptops: I find laptops to be uncondusive to a seminar setting, so I ask that you do not use them in class. This means that you should print out the assigned readings everyday so that you can refer to them during class. Note-taking is always a good idea and a skill that requires practice, but I ask that you do so with pen and paper in this class. If you have your laptop out I will ask you to put it away.

Phones, tablets: If you are using your phone, tablet, or other such device in class, I will not ask that you put it away but will reduce your participation grade.

Evaluation

I will give comments and feedback on assignments, but will not give them individual grades. This includes the three essays and their respective revisions. A student’s final grade will be determined by the content of the final portfolio they will have assembled by the end of the semester. This portfolio will consist of each essay as well as the second version (revision) of each essay. NOTE: The first version of each essay you turn is expected to be a complete

college-level composition of your best writing: *it is not a draft*. If you turn in a draft, your final portfolio will have a draft where it should have a complete essay in its own right, and your grade will reflect accordingly. The second version of each essay *does not replace* the first version.

To receive an A in this course, a student will need to have done three things: produced college-level writing consistently, demonstrably improved their writing, and participated in making our class a collegial learning space. At the end of the course, I will review your full portfolio of work, including all writing assignments and notes on your classroom participation to determine your grade according to the above three criteria. During individual midterm meetings, I can provide a provisional grade to give you a sense of where you stand based on your work so far.

Writing Center

The Writing Center is a great resource and I strongly suggest you use it. Located at 314 Bryan Hall, it offers assistance in essay writing by trained graduate students, free of cost. Check their website out to learn more and sign up for an appointment:

<http://www.engl.virginia.edu/undergraduate/writing/center>.

Thanks and Acknowledgments

I want to take a moment to thank and acknowledge the many people who have helped me, in various ways, to produce this syllabus: Professor Jim Seitz (UVa), Adriana Streifer (UVa), Brandon Walsh (UVa), Annie Swafford (SUNY New Paltz). DeVan Ard (UVa), and my colleagues in 14F ENPG 8800.

Texts

Recommended:

They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, by Gerald Graff

SCHEDULE

Unit One: The Classroom

What do we expect from a college seminar? Or from a course on compositional writing? What should the relationship be between students and what they study? What should the relationship between teachers and students be?

How can we write critically about the claims that a given text makes? What is important to us in these claims in terms of their effectiveness? What problems do we find in them? How do we position ourselves and our own opinions with regards to these claims as we write about them?

Tues, Jan 13 –Introduction to the course

Thur, Jan 15 – Read Graff, from *Clueless in Academe*

Exercise 1: What is Graff's argument? Summarize it in your own words. What might other people think about his argument? What do you think about his argument and why? Print this out and bring it to class as well.

Tues, Jan 20 – Read Bartholomae, “Inventing the University”
Read Boyd, “Imitate Me; Don’t Imitate Me”

Forum response 1 on Bartholomae and Boyd. Think about how Boyd is critical of Bartholomae. Pick one example from Boyd’s text and discuss the way in which Boyd goes about critiquing Bartholomae’s article (both at the level of ideas as well as formal rhetoric). Be specific and quote the passage to which you are referring.

Thurs, Jan 22– Read Newman, “The Contemplative Classroom, or Learning by Heart in the Age of Google”

Exercise 2: As with Graff, summarize Newman’s argument in your own words. Pick two of her claims and analyze them closely – what is she saying, and what evidence does she use? Does she do this well, or poorly? Is she overlooking anything important?

Tues, Jan 27 – Watch the following YouTube clips:

From *A Beautiful Mind*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYdjNeFh6zw>

From *Good Will Hunting*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7b0cLn-wHU>

From *Legally Blonde*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqsmfFjkAu0>

From *Higher Learning*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GLPCGYTIMk>

Forum Response 2 on film. What powers does art have that argumentative essays do not? What kinds of arguments can films, novels, or poems make? How do we write about them? How do we see this in the filmic representations of the university classroom in these movie scenes? Use examples. Be sure to be engaging in conversation with what other students have posted.

Thur, Jan 29– Read Edmundson, from *Why Teach?*

Send me: a few potential topics for your upcoming writing project

DUE February 2nd: **Writing Project 1** (See handout)

Submit to me before midnight; bring four copies to class.

Tues, Feb 3 – Discussion of samples of Writing Project 1

Thur, Feb 5– Discussion of samples of Writing Project 1

Unit Two: The Big Picture

What are some of the bigger problems higher education faces today? What expectations does the larger public have for universities? What do we think the “purpose” of the university is, and how is this reflected in how we discuss the various problems they face?

What is an “academic conversation”? How do writers converse with each other through writing? How do writers make clear what is at stake in their critical conversation? How might we identify and then enter these conversations? How do such skills help us to write more thoughtfully about issues that are important to us?

Tues, Feb 10 – Read Paxson, “The Economic Case for Saving the Humanities”
Read Siegel, “Who Ruined the Humanities?”
Forum Response 3

Thur, Feb 12 – Read Weissman, “How Washington could Make College Tuition Free”
Exercise 3

DUE February 16th: revision of Writing Project 1.

Tues, Feb 17 – Read Taibbi, “The College-Loan Scandal”
Forum Response 4

Thur, Feb 19– Read DeLillo, from *White Noise*
Read Williams, from *Stoner*
Exercise 4

Tues, Feb 24 – Film: Watch *Ivory Tower*
Quiz on the film
Forum response 5

Thur, Feb 26 – Read Nussbaum, from *Not For Profit*
Read Muñoz, “A Dream Deferred”
Send me: a few potential topics for your upcoming writing project

Tues, Mar 3 – Discussion of samples of Writing Project 2

DUE March 4th: **Writing Project 2**
Submit to me before midnight; bring four copies to class.

Thur, Mar 5 – Discussion of samples of Writing Project 2

Sat, Mar 7 – Sun, Mar 15 – Spring break

Tues Mar 17 and Thurs Mar 19 – **Individual conferences** to discuss progress

Unit Three: The College Campus

What are specific issues or problems that students, faculty, and staff face on college campuses today? How does writing operate as a means of engaging with these issues?

How do we go about developing arguments that further a given academic conversation with our own research? How do we investigate the larger context surrounding an issue and how does this play into our understanding of it as well as our ability to write thoughtfully and critically about it?

DUE March 23rd: Revision of Writing Project 2

Tues, Mar 24– Read Armstrong and Hamilton, from *Paying for the Party*
Exercise 5

Thur, Mar 26 – Read Rubenfield, “Mishandling Rape”
Read Yale law students, “Statement re: Mishandling Rape”
Forum Response 6

Tues, Mar 31 – Read Delbanco, “MOOCs of Hazard”
Exercise 6

Thur, Apr 2– Read Salih, from *Season of Migration to the North*
Read , from *Stoner*
Forum response 7

Tues, Apr 7 –Film: watch *Dear White People / Higher Learning* (which one we watch is TBD)
Quiz on the film
Send me: a few potential topics for your upcoming writing project

Thur, Apr 9 – TBA: Library class on research

Tues, Apr 14 – Discussions of Writing Project 3

Thur, Apr 16– Student presentations

Tues, Apr 21 – Student presentations

DUE April 22nd: **Writing Project #3**
Submit to me before midnight; bring four copies to class

Thurs, Apr 23 – Student discussions of Writing Project 3

Tues, Apr 28 – Student discussions of Writing Project 3 and Course Evaluation

DUE May 6th: Revision of Writing Project 3