

HONOR 2211: Writing in Honors
Critical Thinking and Constructing Arguments
Policy Statement and Syllabus
Spring Semester, 2021

Instructor: Dr. Paul Ketzle

Online: <http://utah.instructure.com>

Office: MHC 1201

Office Hours Wed 3:00-4:00 p.m.

(By appointment)

TEXTS

They Say, I Say 3rd Edition. Graff & Berkenstein, eds.

The Warmth of Other Suns. Isabel Wilkerson

Plus various articles, books, and videos available online.

COURSE FOCUS

Throughout our lives, we are exposed to a variety of writing styles and genres. We use it for communication, for entertainment, for personal expression and distraction. Within an academic environment, formal writing serves particular purposes, primarily making arguments. Anyone can have an opinion. Anyone can argue. But the purpose of academic arguments is not to affirm conclusions we've already drawn but rather to determine what we know, what we don't know, and try to plot a course for how to know better. Academic writing, a principle focus on writing in the Honors College, is at its core about making arguments that do more than state a position: they advance our understanding of the world.

This semester, we are going to focus on trying to do just that. In this country, there are few issues that are more difficult to discuss in public than race and equality and the reasons for this are myriad. The death of George Floyd sparked nationwide demonstrations, but incidents like this have been ubiquitous for years. A divide still exists in the country, as some resent being told to "check their privilege". Non-white populations resent the stereotypes they are required to disprove and the institutional (and individual) obstacles they encounter.

Quality research and discussions will likely make everyone uncomfortable at some point—and that's good. It should. That is how we know our assumptions have been challenged and our serious exploration of a topic can begin. Reaching consensus about seemingly intractable problems like racial inequality, however, should never be confused with unanimity. You will always find clusters of knowledgeable people who continue to disagree and offer skeptical counterarguments. That's also a good thing. Knowledgeable and difficult questions should always be asked and orthodoxies questioned. Research into this topic is especially difficult because the problems we investigate cannot often be measured directly. We will need to be thoughtful and creative about what data might be useful to answer our questions—and those answers will likely span a wide variety of fields, from economics to history to sociology to urban planning and so on. Implications exist for—and contributions are likely needed from—both the humanities and the sciences, and I want to encourage each of you to utilize your own individual expertise and academic focus to move this analysis forward. In truth, there is likely no simple solution or solutions. But that's an important lesson for us as well: success often can only be measured by how well we advance a discussion into a difficult problem. We need to be satisfied at times that we've asked better questions.

Academic knowledge is collective. It's essentially a conversation between people who have studied topics very closely for a very long time—and like any conversation between experts, the subject can often be highly detailed and difficult for others to follow. So, as we progress, we are going to need to learn a good deal about what is already known before we can enter into that conversation with any confidence. To help with this process, we're going to work together to generate a body of knowledge that will serve as the basis for your own researched argument. That research process will not be a competition, but rather a true academic collaboration to obtain the best possible information for the individual arguments we will make based upon it.

We will be working together, arguing with each other, often disagreeing, as we both work to develop our own skills and to learn to construct knowledge. Through our engagement with the material and each other, we have the potential to see how learning is an active verb and discover ways that we can claim our own education and, in the process, help us all obtain a better understanding. This is, after all, the purpose of academic writing in the first place.

BASIC COURSE POLICIES

- 1) We will be using Canvas for this class. If you are unfamiliar with how Canvas works, you can use the **Canvas Getting Started Guide for Students** to learn the basics.
- 2) Active participation in the class is required.
- 3) Follow all assignment and course directions. Failure to do so will result in a loss of credit and lowering of your grade.
- 4) Regular, punctual participation is expected; excessive absence from assigned work or lateness should be expected to result in the lowering of your overall participation grade.
- 5) Come to class meetings prepared. Being unprepared to discuss the assigned reading or materials will have you marked absent.
- 6) Late papers will be marked down two full letter grades for *each day* they are late. Turning in your best work on time is *always* a better option than turning in something more “finished” but late.
- 7) If you find yourself struggling in any way, contact me. Dealing with issues before they become significant problems is always better than after-the-fact.
- 8) **SAVE YOUR WORK FREQUENTLY AND IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS.**

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

- Participation 10%
- Brief Argument (Synthesis) (700-900 words) 10%
- Research Proposal 5%
- Individual Annotated Bibliography (6 sources) 5%
- Collaborative Annotated Bibliography 10%
- Researched Argument (2200-2500 words) 60%

GRADING SCALE

93-100 A (95)	87-89 B+ (88)	77-79 C+ (78)	67-69 D+ (68)	00-59 E (55)
90-92 A- (91)	83-86 B (85)	73-76 C (75)	63-66 D (65)	
	80-82 B- (81)	70-72 C- (71)	60-62 D- (61)	

PARTICIPATION

Zoom Class Meetings

We will be using Zoom to conduct small and large group discussions on Mondays during our scheduled class time, though we will be starting on Wednesday, January 20th. The general class discussions will be recorded for those who are having technical difficulties attending during this time. These sessions will be an opportunity for you all to interact with each other, share and challenge ideas, and generally create the kind of Honors community that is such a valuable part of your educational experience. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are facing any obstacles that will interfere with your ability to fully participate in this portion of the course.

Individual Meetings

Everyone is required to schedule at least one brief individual meeting with me during the first part of the semester. I will be sending out a sign-up sheet and will work to accommodate your schedules to the best of my ability. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss your own goals for the class and your education, as well as any concerns or questions you might have about the material.

Discussions

In addition to our virtual simultaneous Zoom meetings, we will be working extensively through online written group discussions, with responses both to the readings and to each other. This will be another way for you to interact with your peers and, importantly, to articulate your ideas and to have them challenged. These discussions will be evaluated not so much for the *correctness* of your ideas but rather in terms of your demonstration of your comprehension and ability to thoughtfully engage with the ideas and authors. These will be evaluated on a three-point scale, with exceptional work receiving a 3, appropriate work receiving a 2, and insufficient work receiving a 1.

Behavior

What's expected of you is to contribute to the debates, discussion, and analyses that we are doing in this class. I expect you to challenge each other—and so you should expect to be challenged. I expect you to challenge me, as well, and you should never take the fact that I try to explain why I think you are wrong as any kind of insult or lack of respect. (I'll also try to make a point of explaining why I think you are right, too.) Rather than feeling disrespected when people disagree with you, recognize that we seriously argue with those we respect, otherwise we wouldn't waste our time. There's nothing wrong with disagreement, but simple disagreement will not be sufficient in this class and shouldn't be sufficient really anywhere else. Having an opinion is fine, but sharing and arguing one necessitates that you support it with reasons that can persuade a critical audience. And I'd argue that you should never be merely satisfied yourself with conclusions that you cannot defend to others.

Come prepared to discuss that week's readings. Unruly or unprofessional behavior—either in Zoom meeting or in written comments—will negatively affect this grade. Conversely, strong and enthusiastic engagement is either or both will raise it.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Punishment for plagiarism is an automatic *E* in the course. See sections II and V of the Student Code for details and consult your instructor and your textbook for explanations and examples so that you don't run into trouble. Aside from the moral issues involved with cheating, you are only hurting your own development as a writer by not completing the assignments yourself.

OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

General Education

This course meets the Upper Division Communication/Writing (CW) Requirement.

This course addresses the following Essential Learning Outcomes: Critical Thinking, Written Communication and Teamwork.

Critical Thinking: Student writers will use sources to develop a complex understanding of expert viewpoints and then comprehensively analyze or synthesize them; thoroughly analyze own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates relevant contexts; articulate a specific position and demonstrate the contextual necessity of arguing it, its limitations and implications; prioritize information and organize effectively, accurately presenting alternate explanations, even when contrary to your own opinions/conclusions; and draw conclusions based upon the provided evidence that are logical and well-supported.

Written Communication: Student writers will engage in an extensive written academic research project that involves the synthesis of at least 10 scholarly or primary sources. In addition, students will compose a comprehensive annotated bibliography, along with numerous other small papers and responses that are designed to help progress toward completion of the researched argument.

Teamwork: Student writers will use the input of peers via the writing workshop to develop their own critical thinking about issues and problems crucial to being an engaged scholar and citizen. As workshop participants, student writer/researchers will participate as team members in the evaluation, critique and revision strategies of peer work.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

If you test positive for COVID-19, the University requires that students self-report. You can do so at this website: <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/>.

ACCOMMODATION POLICY

No content accommodations will be made for this course. It is the student's obligation to determine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, if the requirements of this course conflict with the student's sincerely-held core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class.

STUDENT SAFETY

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

ADDRESSING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

ADA

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following schedule is subject to change: please be sure to pay attention in class for announcements of additions, deletions, or substitutions

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
Tuesday 1/19	Online Introductions	Share Something About Yourself Post
Wed. 1/20	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Critical Thinking and Argument Writing Skills Privilege	<i>They Say/ I Say</i> (Ch. 1-3) Privilege Essays (Canvas)
Friday 1/21	Writing as Practice Equality and Law	Writing Analysis Due (10 p.m.)

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
Mon 1/25	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Intro to Collaborative Bibliography Intro Synthesis Evaluating Arguments	<i>They Say/ I Say</i> (Ch. 4-7) Animal Research Essays “Affirmative Action Based on Income” (Kahlenberg) “Class Action” (Hannah-Jones)
Thurs 1/28	Synthesis	<i>They Say/ I Say</i> (Ch. 8-11) Synthesis Rough Draft <i>Due, 10pm</i> Peer Responses <i>Due Monday by Noon</i>
Mon 2/1	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Workshop & Collaborative Bibliography Discussion	<i>Be prepared to discuss peers’ drafts</i> Synth Due Tuesday. 2/2 @ 10 pm
Wed 2/3	Synthesis Lecture (3:00-4:20pm)	
Mon 2/8	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> <i>Warmth</i> Introduction Research + Integration w/ Narrative Collaborative Bibliography Introduction Assign Groups <i>(Zoom Breakout Rooms)</i>	<i>Warmth of Other Suns</i> , pp. 1-94 <i>They Say/ I Say</i> (Ch. 17) View Peer Review Tutorials (In Canvas Modules)
Thurs 2/11	<i>Warmth</i> Discussion Intersections with research	<i>Warmth of Other Suns</i> , pp. 95-179 Discussion Post on pp.1-179 <i>due Thurs., 10pm</i> Peer Responses, <i>due Fri., 10pm</i>

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
Mon 2/15	Continue Research	<i>Warmth of Other Suns</i> , pp. 180-259
Wed 2/17	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> <i>Warmth</i> Discussion Peer Review Bibliography Groups (<i>Zoom Breakout Rooms</i>)	<i>Warmth of Other Suns</i> , pp. 261-319 Discussion Post (pp. 180-350) <i>due</i> by class time Peer Responses <i>due Thurs, 10pm</i>
Mon 2/22	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Bibliography Groups Discussions	<i>Warmth of Other Suns</i> , pp. 319-432 Collaborative Bibliography Update
Thurs 2/25	<i>Warmth</i> Discussion Continue Research	<i>Warmth of Other Suns</i> , pp. 433-553 Discussion Post (pp. 351-553) <i>due Thurs. 10pm</i> Peer Responses <i>due Fri, 10pm</i>
Mon 3/1	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Final <i>Warmth</i> Discussion Intro to Researched Argument	<i>They Say/ I Say</i> (Ch. 16) Sample Researched Argument Sample Proposals Collaborative Bibliography Update
Thurs 3/4	Collaborative Bibliography Research	Chinese Exclusion Act (video) Discussion Response Due +2 Peer Responses (<i>by Friday., 10pm</i>)
Mon-Fri 3/8-3/12	RESEARCH & REFLECTION WEEK (No Class)	

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
Mon 3/15	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Bibliography Group Discussion	Collaborative Bibliography Update
Thurs 3/18	Bibliography Moving from Research to Thesis	Finalize Presentations
Mon 3/22	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Bibliography Presentations	Group Annotated Bibliography Due <i>(Submit to Canvas by class time)</i>
Wed 3/24	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Bibliography Presentations	
Thurs 3/25	Research Impressions and Questions	Research Impressions Due Peer Responses <i>Due Sat, 10pm</i>
Mon 3/29	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Introductions Move Structures	Review: <i>They Say/ I Say</i> (Part 4)
Wed 4/1		Proposal Due. 10 p.m. (Continue research and begin drafting)
Wed 4/7	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> Organization/ Outlines MLA and Citation	Transition/Organization Assignment (Continue research and begin drafting)
Fri 4/9		Researched Argument Draft <i>due. 10 p.m.</i> Peer Responses <i>due Monday by Noon.</i>
Mon 4/12	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> RA Draft Discussion Workshop	<i>Be prepared to discuss peers' drafts</i>

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
Fri 4/16	Self-Skepticism Counterarguments Revision	Revised Researched Argument Draft <i>Due Friday., 10pm</i>
Mon 4/19	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> RA Draft Zoom Revision Workshop	Peer Responses <i>due by Noon</i> <i>Be prepared to discuss peers' drafts</i>
Thurs 4/22	Synthesis	Shelby County Opinions Discussion Response <i>due Thurs., 10 p.m.</i> Peer Responses <i>due Fri., 10pm</i>
Mon 4/26	<i>Zoom Meeting (3:00-4:20pm)</i> The American Dream Introduction to Writing Analysis & Research Narrative	"Letter to my Son" (Coates) "50 th Anniversary of Selma" (Obama)
Thurs 4/29		Final Researched Argument <i>Due 10pm</i>
Sat. 5/1		Writing Assessment & Research Narrative Due <i>Assignment Dropbox (10 p.m.)</i>