HONORS WRITING WORKSHOP: 2211
Writing for Academic and Public Discourses
Fall 2017
MW 10:45-11:35, F online. Honors Center 150
Michael Gills, Associate Honors Professor/Lecturer
*Fulfills Lower Division Communication/Writing Requirement

Office–Fort Douglas Honors Center, 114
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Texts.


Description.

This course will introduce you to the discipline of writing researched arguments for academic audiences, and it will focus on argumentation and library research the drafting process as primary methods of operation. Writing 2211/Honors aims to introduce student writers to the strategies, tools and resources necessary to become successful communicators in a range of creative, scholarly and professional contexts. Through inquiry, analysis, critical and creative thinking, you will draft arguments that engage with contemporary and enduring questions. Specifically, student writers will practice creative, explorative and argumentative writing in a number of genres common to both academic and public contexts. Four ideas are fundamental to this work include:

1) Effective communicators must consider their audiences, the contexts in which they write, and the social and political implications of writing (or not writing).

2) Writing engagingly is a discipline, honed through a process that is built upon criticism and revision, as well as a daily writing habit.

3) Genres are forms of writing that have emerged over time to address recurring situations. Each genre has particular features, conventions and structures for organizing and presenting information. You will practice using and (when warranted) breaking such with vigor.

4) Writers *risk.*

Learning Outcomes.

This course addresses the following Essential Learning Outcomes: Inquiry and Analysis, Written Communication and Teamwork.
Inquiry and Analysis: Student writers will understand a broad range of interconnecting issues and concepts that pertain to academic research. Along these lines, student writers will explore writing as a process, analysis, critical thinking, and innovation.

Written Communication: Student writers will engage in an extensive written projects including literary critique and analysis, posting and elucidating a critical issue in your expected field, building a significant body of research on a project resulting in a Researched Argument which broaches thoughts regarding the Honors Thesis.

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.

The outcome of our workshop endeavors include the cultivation of significant confidence in yourself as a writer. Writers will flesh out and fine-tune the requisite skills necessary to move through the entirety of the research process. Expect to engage thoroughly with the personal and social responsibilities of writing, while developing skills for lifelong learning. The completion of the Researched Argument, our capstone project, will reveal the degree of our successes, as well as highlight directives for more advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies.

Evaluation.

For our purposes, this class will function as a workshop, viewing writing as a vigorous ongoing process. Your overall grade for 2211 is dependent on how much your writing progresses between drafts and revision. My way is to mark what I see going on your writing as honestly and thoroughly as possible. Quite often I find that student writers are not used to this sort of engagement though it is key between writers. Such will be absolutely required of you as peer editors for each assignment.

Grades.

E Failure to attend class and do the work.

D Lack of effort, laziness, weak writing. Inadequate, underwritten, careless, sloppy work, riddled with errors easily caught in proofreading. Misunderstood, incomplete, or inaccurately documented sources.

C Minimum effort, yielding average, conventional writing. Assignments are complete and free of errors, but the writing lacks originality, creativity, and spark. Weak reasoning, awkward phrasing, verbosity, and incomplete copyediting and source documentation shows lack of care and commitment. (go back and do another draft!)

B Genuine effort, sound thinking, solid writing, but not striking. Clear, but may still be imprecise or need more polish. Sources incorporated awkwardly. The finished piece of writing lacks that extra dedication to quality that leads to fully developed ideas, elegant structure,
consistent style, compelling voice, and text free of mechanical errors (typos, slips in grammar
and punctuation, misspellings). (go back and do another draft!)

A   Enthusiastic effort and participation, original thinking, stellar writing. Essays present
thoughtful positions clearly and convincingly. Precise language used to capture scenes and
ideas. Creatively-researched sources gracefully integrated into the essay. Impeccable
documentation, mechanics, and copyediting. Distinct voice. (...and you know what? Even an
excellent A-minus essay will improve with one more draft). Exceptional risk taking is a
hallmark of such composition.

Initial evaluation grades are in accord with the University of Utah Registrar: A/Exceptional,
B/Good, C/Average for the class, D/Below Average, E/Failing. As a writer who depends heavily
on the process of revision, I offer you the opportunity to revise all manuscripts and hand them in
near the end of the term for an improved evaluation score, though the important role of such is
that your writing sharpens—along with your self-confidence as a writer. Over the course of the
semester, your demonstrated commitment to learning and support of your peers (ie., your work
as a peer editor) will all play into your evaluation.

Graded Assignments (% of total).

Participation 10%

Literary Critique (600 wds) 10%
   On one of our Best American Essays

Brief Argument I (600-800 wds) 15%
   On a topic arising from Best American Essays

Brief Argument II (600-800 wds) 15%
   On a topic arising from Best American Essays

Analysis Essay (600-800 wds) 15%
   Analysis of a controversy within your field, using academic sources (ie., peer reviewed) to
   construct the conversation. You will not be asked to take a position.

Annotated Bibliography (length will vary) 10%
   A thorough investigation of scholarly sources for your researched argument, as well as
   annotations summarizing and discussing how you might use them in the researched
   argument assignment that follows.

Researched Argument: An Introduction (2000-2400 wds) 25%
   A capstone project, possibly emerging from research conducted on the previous two works,
in which you conduct significant research in Marriott Library within your field of study, and
build a complex argument that frames your topic in terms of major preliminary
observations. You are encouraged to visit Honors Theses within your field.
Standard for Assignments

Paper drafts should be ***computer-printed on 8x11 white paper***, using one inch margins. They should average 250-350 words per page and use no larger than 12-pt. font for main text. To prevent problems involving corrupt or lost files, electronic copies of each assignment for this class should be saved in at least two places.

Computers and Email.

It is assumed that you have a basic knowledge of computers, including how to navigate the Internet. If you do not, then you should attend the free short courses offered at the Marriott Library. You will be expected to have an e-mail account and to log onto the course website by the second week of the course. We’ll have a canvas set-up just in case, though I’ll not lean to heavily on the online system unless such becomes necessary.

Attendance, Punctuality, Manners.

Since group work and active participation are important elements of this class, regular attendance is expected and crucial. After three absences, your grade will be dropped by a letter. As well, you will not receive credit for participation which amounts to 10% of your grade. If you are sick, let me know immediately and I’ll line you up to do work via canvas. There are no special absences, so I don’t need to see notes, etc. If you do miss a class, for whatever reason—including our online Friday workshops—you are responsible for contacting me immediately and making up missed work. Should you encounter extraordinary circumstances, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. I am likely to excuse absences that you let me know about in advance. I am sympathetic to the unexpected. Being excessively late (arriving more than five minutes after class begins...) counts as an absence. In order for class to run effectively and to get the most out of discussion, it is important that you be here on time each day.

All discourse between students, peers, and the professor should be conducted with the respect requisite of the academic discourse community—no exceptions. If you wish to challenge someone in the classroom (including me), please do so out of class...and we will do our best to accommodate your ideas. Regarding cell phones, please note that our class periods are short; we have little room for distractions. Cell phones must be turned off and not visible in this class. Texting? Don’t even think about it. A sense of humor is requisite for a writer’s day-to-day well-being; please practice such, often.

You must do your own original work. Plagiarism is against university standards; it will result in an E on the assignment, notification of appropriate college officials, and failure of the course. (See sections II and V of the Student Code for details.). As writers, we’ll be working through many, many, many drafts and, often, our inability to succeed delineates the moment when learning begins... Don’t be afraid of such.
Students with Disabilities/Nondiscrimination Statement.

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.

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. Please visit the Administration Policy and Procedures Website (http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/index.html) and look under Accommodations Policy for complete details.

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).

Course Schedule.
The following schedule is a road map. Like any worthwhile plan, it allows for spontaneous diversions. Please be sure to pay attention in class for announcements of additions, deletions, or substitutions. Contact me at m.gills@utah.edu or canvas for updates, occasional wit and nuts and bolts advice for your writings. I pledge to be an advocate for your writing.

Week One
Introduction to Course.
Read “The Importance of Writing: A Vehicle On The Road to Truth.” Honors Website/Gills
Informal Writing One: please define the italicized words/phrases in the first paragraph of this syllabus. Present to class for discussion.
Writing talk: pov, structure, language and tone, conflict, characterization.
Reading Assignment from Best American Essays (BAE–to be discussed in roughly this order):

JoAnn Beard, “Werner”
W.S. Di Piero, “Fat Head’s Hard Times
Garret Keizer, “Loaded”  
Molly Peacock, “Passion Flowers in Winter”  
Richard Rodriguez, “Disappointment”  
Roger Scruton, “A Carnivore’s Credo”  
Peter Singer, “What Should a Billionaire Give  
Jerald Walker, “Dragon Slayers”  
Edward Wilson, “Apocalypse Now”  
Read/Discuss your writings.

**Week Two**  
Continue discussion of Essays  
Research: establish context behind one of these essays...  
Writing talk: time, voice, narrative, narrative distance.  
Assign Essay I: Literary Critique  
Online Writing lab/reading partners

**Week Three**  
Rough draft for Peer edit.  
Revision for Peer edit two.  
Online Writing lab/reading partners.

**Week Four**  
Assign Brief Argument I  
Finding a topic/refining/focus workshop.  
Online Writing lab/Rough drafting

**Week Five**  
Assigned Conferences: Honors Center 114/All week  
Ongoing Online Writing lab/Peer edits

**Week Six**  
Brief Argument I Due. Assign Brief Argument II  
Online Topic/refining/Focus workshop

**Week Seven**  
Rough draft due for peer edit.  
Revision/reseeing  
Online Peer Edit Two

**Week Eight**  
Fall Break.
Week Nine
Brief Argument II Portfolio due.
Assign/Begin Analysis Essay.
Online: Research/Drafting.

Week Ten
Rough Draft Analysis Essay for peer edit
Revision/reeeving
Analysis Essay Due.

Week Eleven
Assign Researched Argument/Annotated Bibliography
Formal Proposals
Online: Research/Drafting

Week Twelve
Research and Development/Annotated Bibliography
Library/Research

Week Thirteen
Conferences/All Week
Library/Annotated Bibliography
Online Peer Edit/Annotated Bibliography
Begin Research Project

Week Fourteen
Annotated Bibliography Due
Drafting/Researched Argument
Online Writing Lab/Rough Rough Draft Peer edit

Week Fifteen
Drafting/Researched Argument
Rough Draft for peer edit.
Revisions/Peer Editing
All Revisions due
Formal Readings

Week Sixteen
Final Papers Due.