HONORS WRITING WORKSHOP: 2211  
Writing for Academic and Public Discourses  
Fall 2019  
TTh 2-3:20. Honors Center 150  
Michael Gills, Distinguished Honors Professor/Lecturer  
*Fulfills Lower Division Communication/Writing Requirement

Office–Fort Douglas Honors Center, 114  
Hours: T 12:45-1:45, or by appt.  
801.587.8906  
m.gills@utah.edu

Texts.

Description.
This course will introduce you to the discipline of writing researched arguments for academic audiences. It will focus on close reading, research, collaboration, and the drafting process as practiced in a formal writing workshop setting. This writing workshop 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.

Four ideas fundamental to this workshop 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. It is honed through the process of drafting, criticism and revision--exercised daily. Therefore, student writers will set a daily time/place for writing, and report on such via canvas daily log ins.

3) Writers will compose essays, a genre with form and structure. Mastering the essay necessitates the willingness to fail sometimes. We will embrace 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 will be significant confidence in yourself as a writer, manifest in concrete writing projects that progress from rough to polished.

Evaluation

I do not use Canvas grading. Keeping up with your own performance is crucial in a writing workshop. That said, I’m happy to speak with you about your grade during office time. Your participation credit will be scored daily. Your essay portfolios will receive a letter grade, and you will have one week upon receiving the evaluated portfolio to revise and resubmit for the possibility of an improved grade. My way in initial evaluations is to mark what I see going on in your writing honestly and thoroughly. Student writers are often not used to this sort of engagement with their writing. Such rigor will be required from each of you as peer editors for one another’s ongoing drafts.

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, exceptionally 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).

**Graded Assignments (% of total).**

**Workshop Participation** 25%
Scored Daily. Includes attending and actively participating in each class, daily canvas writings, peer editing, and all engagement related to the workshop. Cannot be made up.

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

**Brief Argument I** (600-800 wds) 10%
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) *Score Included with Researched Argument*
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. This research much be completed before a final proposal for the Researched Argument is approved.

**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. Save your files in multiple places.

**Attendance, Punctuality, Manners.**
Attendance and participation in a workshop is crucial. You will not be awarded participation credit when absent. There are no special absences, so I don’t need to see notes, etc. If you do miss a class, contact me that day. Being late (arriving more than five minutes after class
begins...) is disruptive. 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 should be conducted with the respect—no exceptions. If you wish to challenge someone in the classroom, do so respectfully. Regarding cell phones, turn them off. 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. Tell a joke now in class and receive a reading zinger extra credit.

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 failures mark the moment when learning begins...

**Daily Canvas Log Ins.**

You are required to log into canvas and engage with your fellow workshop members. This might be an original post, or response. As long as you are respectful, you are free to range where you will regarding topics. Such freedom can be terrifying, yet it is the quintessence of being a writer. Holy Not Knowing, we call it, that move from not knowing to action. And, as the man said, “the impediment to action advances action.” This daily participation cannot be made up.

**Daily Writing.**

You are required to set up a daily writing regiment. That means a particular time and place where you daily compose. You will have ongoing writing assignments to work on during this routine, although any writing is fair game. Writers write daily. I ask each of you writers to set up your daily writing time and space today and begin tomorrow. You might comment on your daily grind via Canvas (and so kill two birds with one stone, though I’m quite fond of birds...).

**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).

Preferred Pronouns.

Please note your preferred pronouns in an initial canvas post. This workshop requires a safe and respectful space, and we will work toward creating such from the beginning.

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<https://safeu.utah.edu/>.

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.
Writing talk: pov, structure, language and tone, conflict, characterization.
Free Writing.
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”

Close Read/Discuss/Engage.

**Week Two**
Continue discussion of Essays
Free Writing.
Research: establish context behind one of these essays...
Writing talk: pinball theory, stretch time, voice, narrative, narrative distance.
Assign Essay I: Literary Critique

**Week Three**
Rough draft for Peer edit.
Revision for Peer edit two.

**Week Four**
Essay I due in portfolio form
Continued discussion of essays
Free Writing.
Assign Brief Argument I
Finding a topic/refining/focus workshop.

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

**Week Six**
Brief Argument I Due.
Continued discussion of Essays
Free Writing.
Assign Brief Argument II
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.
Free Writing.
Online: Research/Drafting.

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

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

Week Twelve
Research and Development/Annotated Bibliography
Library/Research

Week Thirteen
Conferences/All Week
Library/Annotated Bibliography
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.

fin.