

English 125: Writing and Academic Inquiry
Section Theme: Rural America
ENGL 125.074
Winter 2020

Course Description:

This class is about writing and academic inquiry. Effective arguments stem from well-formulated questions, and academic essays allow writers to gain deeper understanding of the questions that they are exploring. In this course, you will learn to create complex, analytic, well-supported arguments that matter in academic contexts. The course will also hone your critical thinking and reading skills. Working closely with your peers and instructor, you will develop your essays through workshops and extensive revision. Our course readings will cover a variety of genres and serve as models or prompts for assigned essays. The readings will loosely follow the theme “Rural America,” and together we’ll explore questions of what “rural” means, who lives in rural America, and what divides the rural from the urban. Readings will touch on topics related to farming, food, race and ethnicity, and how our hometowns shape us. The specific questions that you pursue in your written assignments do not have to relate to the course theme—they can and should be whatever interests you most.

Learning Goals for English 125:

- To cultivate practices of inquiry and empathy that enable us to ask genuine questions, engage thoughtfully and rigorously with a wide range of perspectives, and create complex, analytic, well-supported arguments that matter in academic contexts and beyond.
- To read, summarize, analyze, and synthesize complex texts purposefully in order to generate and support writing.
- To analyze the genres and rhetorical strategies that writers use to address particular audiences for various purposes and in various contexts.
- To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing of varying lengths.
- To develop strategies for self-assessment, goal-setting, and reflection on the process of writing.

Required Texts:

- All readings will be available electronically on the course’s Canvas site or will be distributed as handouts.
- Please make sure you have the ability to print the readings and other course materials, such as peer review feedback. If you anticipate that this will be difficult for any reason, please come talk to me.

NOTE: This course is part of the English Department Writing Program, or the EDWP; the course goals, overall design, and many of the following policies were developed by the EDWP.

Course Requirements and Final Grade Weights:

Daily engagement—15%

- attendance
- participation in class discussions and small group activities
- low-stakes writing assignments, which will prepare you for class discussions and serve as building blocks for your major essays

Peer review workshops—10%

- written peer review feedback
- complete drafts for workshops
- active participation in workshops

Short narrative—15%

- 3-5 pages: an interpretive argument that is based on careful, detailed analysis of a significant “moment of awakening”

Rhetorical analysis—20%

- 4-6 pages: an argument that analyzes patterns of language use within a particular text or community

Research-based argument—20%

- 7-10 pages: an argument that draws on original research to contribute to an academic conversation or scholarly debate

Radical revision—15%

- 5-8 pages: substantial revision of an earlier essay that changes its genre, mode, audience, and/or purpose, coupled with a reflection on your revision process

Reflections—5%

- cumulative reflection letter
- other reflection activities

DAILY COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is subject to change. The syllabus posted on Canvas will be regularly updated and should be assumed to be the most accurate.

UNIT ONE: SHORT NARRATIVE

Thursday, January 9: Introductions and Classroom Community

- *Readings*
 - (In class) De La Paz, Oliver. "In Defense of Small Towns." *American Journal: Fifty Poems for our Time*, edited by Tracy K. Smith, Graywolf Press, 2018, pp. 10-11.
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - (Do in class) Write five sentences about your hometown and share them with the class.

Tuesday, January 14: Reading like a Writer and Beginning to Unlearn

- *Readings*
 - Bunn, Mike. "How to Read Like a Writer." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing 2* (2011): 71-86.
 - Baldwin, James. "Why I Stopped Hating Shakespeare." *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings*. Vintage International, 2010, pp. 65-69.
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Reflections on what you were taught in high school: jot down at least five qualities of good writing/writers and five qualities of bad writing/writers.

Thursday, January 16: Characteristics of Narrative

- *Readings*
 - Dillard, Annie. "Total Eclipse." *The Atlantic*, 8 August 2017.
www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/08/annie-dillards-total-eclipse/536148/. Accessed 11 June 2019.
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Access survey and field trip vote

Tuesday, January 21: Audience and Motivating Moves

- *Readings*
 - Meg Sweeney, "Motivating Moves" handout
 - O'Gieblyn, Meghan. "Preface," "Dispatch from Flyover Country." *Interior States*. Anchor Books, 2018, pp. xi-xv, 3-18.

Thursday, January 23: Constellating Experiences

- *Readings*
 - hooks, bell. "Preface: To Know Where I'm Going," "Kentucky Is My Fate." *Belonging: A Culture of Place*. Routledge, 2009, pp. 1-24.
 - Prine, John. "My Old Kentucky Home, Goodnight." Oh Boy Records, 2019. *Spotify*, open.spotify.com/album/6NVpVhMqlNUu4M7vQuOez1?si=acB3sDuxR-C-tNEiAfOopQ.

- Lynn, Loretta. “Coal Miner’s Daughter.” *Coal Miner’s Daughter*, MCA Records Inc., 1988. *Spotify*, open.spotify.com/album/2SayIIdZkrtb9I4BbdnyOr?si=UliXLtrmRRmaTbPCG3xBpA.
 - Waldon, Kelsey. “Kentucky, 1988.” *White Noise / White Lines*, Oh Boy Records, 2019. *Spotify*, open.spotify.com/track/3PIY1joW8VtV8a6tC9ACt7?si=f9brnwYDQhOewCUFeca2Lw
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Email me a three-sentence proposal for your literacy narrative.

Tuesday, January 28: Practicing Peer Review

- *Readings*
 - Jeremiah Chamberlin, “Workshop Is Not For You”
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Complete draft of literacy narrative

Thursday, January 30: Peer Review Workshop: Literacy Narrative

- *Readings*
 - Your group members’ drafts
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Peer review feedback

Monday, February 3: Final Literacy Narrative Due

UNIT TWO: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Tuesday, February 4: Analyzing Rhetorical Appeals

- *Readings*
 - Long Soldier, Layli. “38.” *American Journal: Fifty Poems for our Time*, edited by Tracy K. Smith, Graywolf Press, 2018, pp. 73-80.
 - Da’, Laura. “Passive Voice.” *New Poets of Native Nations*, edited by Heid E. Erdrich, Graywolf Press, 2018, p. 65.
 - Laura Bolin Carroll, “Backpacks vs. Briefcases: Steps toward Rhetorical Analysis,” in *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Vol. 1*, <http://writingspaces.org/sites/default/files/carroll--backpacks-vs-briefcases.pdf>

Thursday, February 6: Analyzing Patterns and Conventions of Language Use

- *Readings*
 - Read one of the following articles closely (I’ll assign groups in class) and skim/speed-read the other two.
 - Anderson, Michele. “Go Home to Your ‘Dying’ Hometown.” *The New York Times*, 8 March 2019. www.nytimes.com/2019/03/08/opinion/sunday/urban-rural-america.html. Accessed 11 March 2019.
 - Jones, Sarah. “Whitewashing Trump Country.” *The New Republic*, 21 February 2018. newrepublic.com/article/147136/whitewashing-trump-country. Accessed 7 November 2018.

- Anderson, Darran. “Future Shock in the Countryside.” *The Atlantic*, 2 November 2018.
www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/11/climate-change-and-technology-make-rural-areas-vital/574447. Accessed 2 November 2018.
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Notes on your assigned article’s audience and rhetorical strategies

Tuesday, February 11: Practicing Rhetorical Analysis

- *Readings*
 - Continued discussion of last week’s readings
 - Class playlist
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Add a song to the class playlist.

Thursday, February 13: Organizing Arguments

- *Readings*
 - Solnit, Rebecca. “The Garden of Merging Paths.” *As Eve Said to the Serpent: On Landscape, Gender, and Art*. The University of Georgia Press, 2001, pp. 109-132.

Tuesday, February 18: Organization, cont.

- *Readings*
 - Solnit, Rebecca. “Policing, or et in Paradise Ego.” *As Eve Said to the Serpent: On Landscape, Gender, and Art*. The University of Georgia Press, 2001, pp. 109-132.
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Complete draft of rhetorical analysis essay

Thursday, February 20: Peer Review Workshop: Rhetorical Analysis Essay

- *Readings*
 - Your group’s drafts
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Peer review feedback

Monday, February 24: Final Rhetorical Analysis Essay Due

UNIT THREE: RESEARCH-BASED ARGUMENT

Tuesday, February 25: Participating in a Scholarly Conversation through Original Research

- *Readings*
 - Biss, Eula. “Time and Distance Overcome.” *The Iowa Review*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2008, pp. 83-89.
 - Gaipa, Mark. “Breaking Into the Conversation: How Students Can Acquire Authority for Their Writing.” *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 4.3 (2004): 419, 422-433.

Thursday, February 27: Library Visit

- Meet at Shapiro

- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Preliminary research question for research-based argument

March 3-5: No Class—Spring Break

Tuesday, March 10: Analyzing, Incorporating, and Citing Evidence from Original Research

- *Readings*
 - Jørgensen, Finn Arne. “Why Look at Cabin Porn?” *Public Culture*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2015, pp. 557-578.

Thursday, March 12: Class Cancelled due to COVID-19

Tuesday, March 17: Exploring Research Methods; Beginning to Go Online

- *Readings*
 - Carson, Rachel. “A Fable for Tomorrow,” “The Obligation to Endure,” and “Elixirs of Death.” *Silent Spring*. Mariner Books, 2002, pp. 1-37.

Wednesday, March 18: Annotated Bibliographies Due on Canvas Discussion

Thursday, March 19: Annotated Bibliographies

- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Canvas feedback on bibliographies

Tuesday, March 24: Research Methods, cont.

- *Readings*
 - Ali, Christopher. “We Need a National Rural Broadband Plan.” *The New York Times*, 6 February 2019.
 - Carson, Rachel. “A Fable for Tomorrow,” “The Obligation to Endure,” and “Elixirs of Death.” *Silent Spring*. Mariner Books, 2002, pp. 1-37.
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Complete draft of research-based argument

Thursday, March 26: Peer Review Workshop: Research-based Argument

- *Readings*
 - Your group’s drafts
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Peer review feedback

UNIT FOUR: REVISED/REPURPOSED ARGUMENT

Tuesday, March 31: Revising and Repurposing

- *Readings*
 - Hurt, R. Douglas. “The Age of Prosperity: The South.” *American Agriculture*. Purdue University Press, 2002, pp. 222-228.
 - Giscombe, C. S. “Boll Weevils, Coyotes, and the Color of Nuisance.” *Black Nature*, edited by Camille T. Dungy, The University of Georgia Press, 2009, pp. 109-113.

- Toomer, Jean. “November Cotton Flower.” *Cane*. Penguin Books, 2019, p. 5.

Thursday, April 2: Strategies for Substantially Revising or Repurposing an Argument

- *Readings*
 - Adrian, Kim. “Introduction.” *The Shell Game: Writers Play with Borrowed Forms*, edited by Kim Adrian, University of Nebraska Press, 2018, xi-xvi.
 - Lil Nas X. “Old Town Road,” “Old Town Road – Remix.” *7 EP*, Columbia Records, 2019. *Spotify*, open.spotify.com/album/4IRiXE5NROxknUSAUSjMoO?si=DhazOPWGQT-9p_I_1rZGhQ
 - Lil Nas X. “Old Town Road (feat. RM of BTS) [Seoul Town Road Remix].” Columbia Records, 2019. *Spotify*, open.spotify.com/album/7CQho9XJ69KLTUdM9vUZyW?si=sVZ9uW_ETjeu8JkmWsFmkA
 - Sheffield, Rob. “The ‘Old Town Road’ Goes on Forever.” *Rolling Stone*, 19 July 2019. [rollingstone.com/music/music-features/old-town-road-lil-nas-x-yeehaw-manifesto-859566](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/old-town-road-lil-nas-x-yeehaw-manifesto-859566). Accessed 27 July 2019.

Friday, April 3: Final Research-based Argument Due

Monday, April 6: One-paragraph proposal for radical revision due

Tuesday, April 7: Translating an Argument for a Different Context

- *Readings*
 - Moore, Lorrie. “Very Deep in America.” *The New York Review of Books*, 18 August 2011.
 - “Pilot.” *Friday Night Lights*, season 1, episode 1, NBC, 3 October 2006. *NBC*, <https://www.nbc.com/friday-night-lights/video/pilot/3687475>
- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Extra credit: by Monday night, email me a screenshot that represents something you’d like to discuss in the pilot of *Friday Night Lights*.

Thursday, April 9: Reflecting on Your Growth as a Writer; Creative Forms

- *Readings*
 - DSP essays and essays from the semester

Tuesday, April 14: Works-in-Progress Workshop

- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Presentation of in-progress revised/repurposed argument

Thursday, April 16: Works-in-Progress Workshop

- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Presentation of in-progress revised/repurposed argument

Tuesday, April 21: Looking Backwards and Forwards

- *Readings*
 - Vuong, Ocean. “Someday I’ll Love Ocean Vuong.” *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*, Copper Canyon Press, 2016. pp. 82-83.

- *Writing Assignments Due*
 - Cumulative reflection letter

Monday, April 27: Final Revised/Repurposed Argument Due