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WRITING IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ENVIRONMENT
ONLINE COURSE – BLHS 120-101; CRN: 33824
Spring Semester 2019

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce students to academic writing, focusing on the development of critical methods in interdisciplinary research. The class will address the primary aspects of argument, method, organization, evidence gathering, persuasion, mechanics, form and style. To write with precision and care and to persuade others through writing indeed demand the utmost skill of an artisan. As Edmund Morrison writes, “Like stones, words are laborious and unforgiving, and the fitting of them together, like the fitting of stones, demands great patience and strength of purpose and particular skill.” We will identify the primary stages of writing and explain how to express one’s critical ideas, as Joe Williams suggests, with clarity and grace--from settling on a topic to organizing one’s thoughts and presenting them as effectively as possible. Students will learn to identify and select certain analytical questions that pertain to specific fields or disciplines (e.g., literary theory and criticism, cultural studies, media studies, communications, psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, women’s studies, public policy and planning, intellectual history, art history, religion, ethics, and science). Students will be encouraged to examine key methodological relations between two or more fields. We will seek to sharpen and narrow the focus of our investigations, while at the same time examining critical issues from multidisciplinary vantage points. Students will conduct research on historic events, current affairs, and future outcomes, exploring the connections between critical methodologies and interpretation. We will supplement our weekly discussions with articles, essays, fiction, and film screenings from around the world. Students will have the opportunity to discuss and share their writing and ideas in a collaborative and open environment of respectful and positive exchange.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Williams, Joe. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 12th Edition. NY: Longman, 2016.
ISBN-13: 978-0134080413.

**A Selection of scholarly articles, short stories and essays have been posted on Canvas.

RECOMMENED TEXTS:

Aaron, Jane E. *The Little, Brown, Compact Handbook*. 9th Edition. NY: Longman, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-0321986504.

Course materials are available for purchase in the Georgetown Bookstore.

RECOMMENDED READINGS FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES:

ART HISTORY

Arnold, Dana. *Art History: A Very Short Introduction*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2004.

D'Alleva, Anne. *Look! The Fundamentals of Art History*. NY: Prentice Hall, 2006.

Hatt, Michael and Charlotte Klonk. *Art History: A Critical Introduction to Its Methods*. Manchester University, 2006.

MEDIA STUDIES

Campbell, Richard, et al. *Media and Culture Fifth Edition: An Introduction to Mass Communication*. 5th edition. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2005.

Long, Paul and Tim Wall. *Media Studies: Texts, Production, Context*. NY: Longman, 2009.

Stokes, Jane. *How to Do Media and Cultural Studies*. NY: Sage Publications, 2003.

Turow, Joseph. *Media Today: An Introduction to Mass Communication*. 3rd Edition. T & F Books US, 2009.

LITERARY STUDIES

Goodman, Lizbeth. *Literature and Gender*. NY: Routledge, 1996.

Whites, James Boyd. *The Legal Imagination*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Ward, Ian. *Law and Literature: Possibilities and Perspectives*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Furseth, Inger and Pal Repstad. *An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion*. UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2006.

Bowie, Fiona. *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction*. UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006.

Spilka, Bernard and Daniel N. McIntosh. *The Psychology of Religion: Theoretical Approaches*. UK: Westfield Press, 1997.

See "Writing the Religion Paper":

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/humanities/religion.shtml>

HISTORY

Howell, Martha C. and Walter Prevenier. *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Presnell, Jenny L. *The Information-Literate Historian*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Storey, William Kelleher. *Writing History: A Guide For Students*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1999.

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Marsh, David and Gerry Stoker. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 1994.

Wolff, Jonathan. *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students will be asked to participate in weekly activities on VoiceThread, Discussion Board and Text Entry and meet with the professor a minimum of two times during the summer term (either face-to-face at the downtown SCS campus or on zoom, whichever is most beneficial and convenient for you). Active participation requires completion of the assigned readings on time, viewing all lectures, taking class notes, engaging in class discussions on VoiceThread and Discussion Board and giving full input on individual and

group presentations. Participation is required, and you are responsible for meeting all of the deadlines as stated in the syllabus. **Should you find yourself falling behind on assignments, please contact the professor immediately to discuss the situation and receive assistance and guidance before it becomes a more serious problem.** The student's success depends upon the level of engagement one brings to the course, and one's grade will subsequently reflect the quality and effort that each student demonstrates throughout the term and the proficiency of one's comprehension of the materials. The student will be asked to complete a series of short writing exercises, submit work on VoiceThread, Discussion Board and TextEntry, deliver several class presentations, submit a formal outline and draft, write two analytical essays and complete a final research paper (the topic will be selected by the student and will be approved by the instructor). The total percentage of your grade will be determined according to the following scale:

- 20% assignments on Discussion Board and VoiceThread;
grammar and punctuation exercises
- 15% film analysis
- 20% ethnography or oral history paper
- 15% class presentations (style and critical methods)
- 30% final research project
(approximately 12-15 pages, not including "Works Cited"
and notes**)

**The documentation for your research papers must strictly follow the MLA, APA or the Chicago (Turabian) format. The choice of format and documentation depends on the methods and topic of your paper. See lecture on SCS Library Review for Module 6 for details.

FINAL LETTER GRADES:

Based on the scores and percentages above, your point totals will determine your final grade according to the following criteria:

93% and above	A
90% – 92%	A-
87% - 89%	B+
83% - 86%	B
80% - 82%	B-
77% - 79%	C+
73% - 76%	C
70% - 72%	C-
67% - 69%	D+
60% - 66%	D
59% and below	F

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Design detailed and sophisticated arguments that use precise rhetorical strategies in academic writing.
- Apply specific types of critical methodologies in the Humanities and the Arts and the Social Sciences.
- Learn the basis for interdisciplinary research and the meta-reflexive nature of academic inquiry.
- Conduct field research that draw upon ethnographies, oral histories, evidence gathering, description, analysis, statistics and the interpretation of data and information.
- Correct informal fallacies in argument and explain why they fail to have proper internal coherence.
- Define the six basic organizational schemes (arguments that are based on category; definition; causality; resemblance; evaluation and ethics; and proposal) in relation to stasis theory.
- Develop an understanding of classical argument by identifying the exordium, narratio, propositio, partitio, the enthymeme, the warrant, grounding, backing, the confutatio, qualifier, concession, confirmatio and peroratio, which impact the assumptions and beliefs of readers and audience.
- Identify and apply rhetorical strategies from Stephen Toulmin's system.
- Avoid mechanical errors in one's writing and to document sources correctly according to MLA, Chicago and APA formats.
- Apply concrete techniques that pertain to the elements of style in writing.
- Broaden one's understanding of world literature, film, and culture through the study of acclaimed works by Homer, John Lucas, Jhumpa Lahiri, Gita Mehta, Ang Lee, Richard Wright and Zora Neale Hurston.
- Use a range of scholarly works in critical thinking and written analysis.
- Determine credible and authoritative sources in library research, including computer-related sources, e.g. search engines and Internet websites, to use and avoid.
- Think historically and diachronically in order to understand how concepts develop over time in order to establish an intellectual framework for arguments.
- Be able to compose several drafts in consultation with students in peer-reviewed workshops.
- Write well-crafted sentences and paragraphs.
- Be able to transition smoothly from one idea to the next.
- Be able to synthesize materials and write about them cogently.
- Develop a sense of diction and the appropriate uses of language.
- Establish a foundation for academic writing across disciplines.

WRITING CENTER — Students that would benefit from additional assistance in their writing should visit the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu>) in the second floor of Lauinger Library. Please take advantage of this service in developing your analytical writing skills.

INCOMPLETE POLICY — No incomplete grades will be given for the course. In the event of an extreme circumstance such as a death in the family, serious illness or other major problem, you may request special consideration to the general rule above.

LATE POLICY — Students are expected to turn in all class assignments by the specified due date. The student's grade for papers will be lowered one step ("A" to "A-," for instance," or "B" to "B-") for each day that the assignment has not been received after the due date. Should you experience any difficulties in meeting a deadline, it is your responsibility to contact the professor before the due date to make arrangements for an extension so that you will not be penalized. Once a new due date has been set, the student must abide by the agreement that has been made.

TURNITIN.COM—Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers must be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be added as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers in the future. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

DISABILITIES—If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.

EXTREME WEATHER, EMERGENCIES, AND INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY— During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day if we are ever planning to meet face-to-face, please check the university's website or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. Class will continue to meet online. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Canvas will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

GEORGETOWN HONOR SYSTEM—All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at www.georgetown.edu/honor, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:
In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

PLAGIARISM—The sources for all information and ideas in your assignments must be documented, following the style rules of the American Psychological Association. In addition, all quotations must be identified as quotations, using quotation marks and indicating the source of the quotation, as mandated by APA style. Anything less than these standards is plagiarism.

APA style is not taught in this course; a summary of APA style is available at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail. If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student will receive a grade of F for the course.

POLICY ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES—
The following is university policy: Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Jan. 9th - 13th

ORIENTATION – INTRODUCTION TO
COURSE: WRITING IN AN
INTERDISCIPLINARY ENVIRONMENT

Jan. 14th – 20th

MODULE ONE: STRATEGY OF ARGUMENT

Read: Homer's *Iliad*, Book II

Watch Lecture: Overview of Interdisciplinary
Studies

Discussion Assignment: Artifact (VoiceThread)

Read: Richard Wright's "The Library Card" from his autobiography, *Black Boy*

Writing Assignment: Thesis Statement for Richard Wright's "The Library Card"

Discussion Assignment: Critique of Peer's Thesis Statement

Writing Assignment: Rewrite Thesis Statement (Text Entry)

Jan. 21st

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY – NO CLASS

Jan. 22nd – 27th

MODULE TWO: STRATEGIES OF ARGUMENT

Read: John Lukacs' journal article, "Seventy Years Later"

Discussion Board Assignment: Discuss John Lukacs' journal article, "Seventy Years Later"

Watch Lecture: "Seventy Years Later"

Read: Jhumpa Lahiri's short story, "A Temporary Matter"

Discussion Board Assignment: Discuss Jhumpa Lahiri's short story, "A Temporary Matter"

Writing Assignment: Listing of references to India and Indian culture in "A Temporary Matter" (VoiceThread)

Watch Lecture: "Diaspora Studies"

Jan. 28th – Feb. 3rd

MODULE THREE: STRATEGIES OF ARGUMENT

Watch Lecture: Classical Argument

Read: Michelle Malkin, "Racial Profiling: A Matter of Survival"; Arsalan Iftikhar, "Losing Liberties";

Michelle Levin, “The Case for Torture”; McQ, “Situational Ethics and the Argument for Torture.”

Group Presentation: PowerPoint Presentation on National Security Issues (VoiceThread)

Writing Assignment: Peer Feedback on Group Presentations

Feb. 4th – 10th

MODULE FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Watch Lecture: Methodology

Assignment: Individual Methodology Presentation (VoiceThread)

Watch Film: Ang Lee’s *Eat Drink Man Woman*

Watch Lecture: *Eat Drink Man Woman*

Discussion Board Assignment: Discuss the film, *Eat Drink Man Woman*

Writing Assignment: **Film Analysis of *Eat Drink Man Woman* – Due Wednesday, Feb. 13th, by 11:59.**

Feb. 11th – 17th

MODULE FIVE: ORGANIZATION & DEVELOPMENT

****Important Reminder****: **Film Analysis of *Eat Drink Man Woman* due on Wednesday, Feb. 13th, by 11:59pm.**

Watch Lecture: Organization & Coherence

Discussion Board Assignment:
Topic Sentence Exercise

Watch Lecture: Organizational Schemes

Group Presentation: PowerPoint and VoiceThread Presentation on Social Issue

Feb. 18th

PRESIDENTS' DAY – NO CLASS

Feb. 19th – 24th

MODULE SIX: EVIDENCE GATHERING

Read: Geri-Ann Galanti, “How to Do Ethnographic Research”;
Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History*;
Selections from Zora Neale Hurston’s *Dust Tracks on a Road* (example of autoethnography)

Watch Lecture: Evidence Gathering

Watch Lecture: SCS Librarian Review

Discussion Board Assignment: Discuss possible ethnography or oral history projects for your paper.

Writing Assignment: Ethnography and Oral History Paper – Settle on a topic, conduct field work and do interviews as needed. **Ethnography or Oral History Paper will be due on Wednesday, Mar. 20th, at 11:59pm.**

Individual Conferences: Meet with professor to go over the film analysis paper (set up meeting times and locations—approximately 10-15 minutes).

Feb. 25th – Feb. 28th
(we will continue Module Seven
After Spring Break ends)

MODULE SEVEN: STYLE

Read: Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup’s *Style* and go over lessons 1-12.

Writing Assignment: Do writing exercises for at least three lessons in *Style* (TextEntry)

Mar. 1st – 11th

SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES

Mar. 12th - 17th

MODULE SEVEN: STYLE, continued

Individual or Group Presentation: PowerPoint and VideoThread presentation on one of the lessons in the book, *Style*.

Discussion Board Assignment: View at least two lessons (different from the ones that you selected for your writing assignment above) on VoiceThread, and provide peer reviews of the videos.

Mar. 18th – 24th

MODULE EIGHT: MECHANICS

Writing Assignment: Complete grammar and punctuation exercise packet and submit assignment on Canvas.

Watch Lecture: Grammar Rules

****Important Reminder**:** **Ethnography or Oral History Papers due on Wednesday, Mar. 20th, at 11:59pm.**

Mar. 25th – 31st

MODULE NINE: ARGUMENT AND METHOD

Watch Lecture: Argument and Method

Writing Assignment: Complete prolegomena form and submit to professor (TextEntry)

****Begin the work to gather evidence for your research project and sharpen the focus and argument of the paper as a result.**

Individual Conferences: Meet with professor to go over the film analysis paper (set up meeting times and locations)

Apr. 1st – 7th

MODULE TEN: GATHERING EVIDENCE, RESEARCH, FIELD WORK

Writing Assignment: Research Proposal Outline Due on Wednesday, Apr. 10th, at 11:59pm.

Assignment: Peer Review of Research Proposals
Due by Sunday, Apr. 14th, at 5pm. (VoiceThread)

Watch Lecture: Gather Evidence, Research, Field
Work

**Continue to conduct archival/library research.

Apr. 8th – 17th

MODULE ELEVEN: ORGANIZATION & OUTLINE

Lecture: Organization and Outline

Writing Assignment: Submit Literature Review
(TextEntry)

Writing Assignment: Submit Outline based on
organizational schemes (TextEntry)

Individual Conferences: Meet with Professor via
zoom to go over your research projects.

Apr. 18th – 23rd

EASTER BREAK – NO CLASS

Apr. 24th – 28th

MODULE TWELVE: DRAFTING & WORKSHOP

Watch Lecture: Drafting & Workshop

Writing Assignment: Submit initial draft of paper

Apr. 29th – 30th

MODULE THIRTEEN: FORMATTING & PRESENTATION

Watch Lecture: Formatting and Presentation

Writing Assignment: Submit Bibliography

Individual Presentations: meet via Zoom conference
to discuss your research papers

Final Research Papers Due – May 13th

