

BLHS 076: Interdisciplinary Writing

Dates: T 5:20pm - 7:50pm // 08/28/19 - 12/20/19

Location: This course takes place on-site at the Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies' building located at 640 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20001. Additionally, Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies (SCS) uses Canvas as its Learning Management System. To learn more about Canvas, please go through the Canvas Guide for Students.

Faculty: Grace Aldridge Foster, M.A.

Contact Information: gaf49@georgetown.edu

Virtual Office Hours: By appointment

If you send me an email, please include "BLHS076" in your email subject line—and the more descriptive it is, the more likely I am to see it and respond to it quickly. (I get a bazillion emails every day. Help me help you by making yours stand out.) Typically I will respond within 24 hrs.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Writing is a powerful and necessary tool, yet it can feel like the odds are increasingly stacked against us. The rules change all the time, and it seems like no one—not your professors, your employer, your discipline, or your opinionated aunt—can agree. APA, Chicago, or MLA? Two spaces after a period or one? Oxford comma? First person? Passive voice? Everyone has a different take.

On top of that, we have to consider how we get people to read what we write in the first place. Attention spans are shorter than ever, yet people also consume greater volumes of information than ever. The reading public increasingly seems to value brevity (thanks to Twitter and the rest of social media), yet academia still seems to expect length and complexity.

And then writing also serves so many different purposes. It documents history, produces culture, solidifies business deals, and helps us think through problems. It's both art and science. It's both end and means. It's both practical tool and expressive art.

Where does all of this leave us, as students of writing—especially when there are huge gulfs between writing for academia, writing for the public, writing for work, and writing for pleasure?

We're seeking to answer that question, and bridge those gaps, in this class. We'll focus on quickly and efficiently analyzing different rhetorical situations and assessing how to write for different audiences and different scenarios with confidence and accuracy. We'll decide on the characteristics of strong writing and learn how to measure whether our writing is working.

Most important, we'll consider what stays the same and what changes as we move from one writing task to the next, and from one discipline to another.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Make, defend, identify, challenge, and determine the scope of an argument
- Write effectively and present information clearly for specific audiences in appropriate forms and media
- Confidently apply revision and editing techniques to your own and others' writing
- Use Plain Language to make sure your audience understands your message
- Shift between different rhetorical situations, drawing from your toolbox of writing techniques
- Set metrics for assessing your own and others' writing
- Use those metrics for analyzing your own and others' writing
- Develop your own methodology (process) for approaching writing as one of the fundamental skills in the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences—as well as in practical and professional situations
- Assess how writing conventions and expectations differ across disciplines and professions
- Understand the consistent elements of effective writing across disciplines and professions
- Discover and analyze primary and secondary sources relevant to specific research questions in particular academic disciplines
- Engage, process, and critique various sorts of arguments from a logical perspective, employing critical thinking
- Express in writing insightful critical analysis and understanding of texts about complex human questions to ponder and solve problems from more than one perspective or approach

REQUIRED READINGS

The following are the required reading material for this course:

- The Craft of Research, 4th Ed, by Wayne C. Booth, etc. The U of Chicago P, 2016.
- *They Say, I Say*, 3rd Ed. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.
- *On Writing*, 10th Anniversary Ed. King, Stephen. Scribner, 2010.
- A selection of articles, excerpts, and writing samples will be available on Canvas

Recommended Texts:

- The Elements of Style, by Will Strunk and E.B. White. (Any edition)
- *Dreyer's English*, by Benjamin Dreyer. Random House, 2019.

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Written work is due by the assigned due dates. Follow-ups and class participation are contingent on the timely submission of your initial responses.

Late Submission Policy:

As stated in the <u>Student Handbook</u>, you must notify me and obtain my approval if you are unable to complete any assignment by the published submission deadline. I will gladly consider granting extensions for assignments as long as the request is made at least 24 hours before the due date/time. The request must include the date and time when you intend to submit the assignment. If you fail to give both a date and a time, however, the request will not be honored. However, no late submissions or extensions are available for the last week of class or for any missed lectures. Late responses with no previous arrangements for all assignments will be penalized by 10% for each day or portion of a day that the assignment is late, unless previous arrangements have been made.

Discussions and Assignments

Assignments and Grading Percentages:

(15%) Class participation. You'll participate in our discussions every week. You'll be respectful and humble and inquisitive. (1% each week)

(15%) Weekly short blog posts. Unless I give you a specific prompt for the next week's blog post, your post each week will consist of a question, based on the reading, that will help guide

our discussion in class. Blog posts are due by 8pm the day before our class meets. All blog posts are required reading for class each week. (1% each week)

- (20%) Assignment 1. Your first substantial writing project is a translation exercise. You'll communicate the same message through two different mediums to two different audiences. When you submit the two written products, you'll also include one paragraph analyzing the writing choices you made. How does your style differ in the two products? Did you include the same details or different ones? More details on the content of the assignment will follow.
- (20%) Assignment 2. Your second substantial writing project will be public facing and persuasive. You may choose from a few different genres: an op-ed, a film/book/show review, a twitter history, etc. You may also propose a different genre. You may also choose to do this project with a partner. If you choose this option, you'll also have to submit a short reflective essay (300-500 words) each, describing the process of co-writing with a partner. Your writing must be evidence-based, even though it's not a formal research paper. More details on the content of the assignment will follow.
- (10%) Final Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography. Your proposal should be an informal write-up of 350 to 500 words. You should describe your research question and topic, your motivation for choosing that topic, what you hope to learn or practice by writing this paper, and a brief research plan. You will also include five bibliography entries accompanied by a short (3-5 sentences) annotation for each.
- (20%) Final Paper and Reflective Essay. Your final project for this class will be either an academic research paper or a white paper (the professional equivalent). The topic should be something in your field, or your concentration within the Liberal Studies program. The final will include two parts:
 - 1. A research paper of approximately 8 to 10 pages.
 - 2. A reflective essay explaining the choices you made, the conventions in your field, the challenging or frustrating parts of the research or writing process, etc.

The research paper/white paper should be no more than 10 pages, but it could be less. However, I expect you to submit 12 total pages of writing, between your research paper and your reflective essay. This means that you can choose to submit an 8-page research paper *if that is the number of pages you require to make your argument most effectively*, but you will then be responsible for submitting a 4 page reflective essay. In other words, a shorter essay actually means you'll have more to explain about your process, not less.

Professors rarely explain their reasons for the parameters of writing assignments, and I've observed that this damages students' motivation and ability to be strategic about their projects. So, here's why I'm asking for 12 pages of your writing: I need a long enough sample to see how you write sentences, develop paragraphs, develop sections, develop a longer argument, incorporate evidence, etc. But I often find that when I read 15-page papers, there are at least 5 pages worth of unnecessary content. I don't want to read those unnecessary five pages, and I don't want you to waste your time writing them.

You'll be assessed on your ability to make an argument, your understanding of the conventions in your field, the quality of your prose, the accuracy of your citation styles, etc. We will be developing the rubric for this project together throughout the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is provisional and subject to change.	
Class 1: 9/3 How to read and think like a writer	Course and syllabus overview.
How to read and think like a writer	How do we learn? // How do we learn to write? // What makes great writing?
	What's in it for you? Setting personal KPIs and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) goals.
	What's the relationship between school writing and work/real-world writing?
	 Assigned Reading: Listen to <i>This American Life</i>, Episode 663, "How I Read It") "What Writing Is," pp.103-107 of <i>On Writing</i>, Stephen King Bring in a piece of exemplary writing
Class 2: 9/10 How to write for your audience instead of for yourself	ART method (Audience, Response, Tone) DRAFT method (Desired Outcome, Relationship, Audience, Format, Tone)
	Assigned Reading: • The Craft of Research (4th Ed.), Chapter 2, "Connecting with Your Reader: Creating a Role for Yourself and Your Readers"
Class 3: 9/17 How to write for your professor	Assigned Reading:
Class 4: 9/24	Assigned Reading:

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How to write for a general audience	 Op-eds/think pieces from your favorite publications Articles written by academics/phds for public audiences (the NYT one by psychologists that David tweeted)
Class 5: 10/1 How to write in Plain Language (usability, scannability, writing for reading on screens)	Assigned Reading: Go to https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/ Read the following pages and all of the sub-pages under them: "Write for your audience" "Organize the information" "Design for reading" "Follow web standards" "Test your assumptions"
Class 6: 10/8 How to write in Plain Language (sentences)	What tools can you use to test your writing? (Flesch Kincaid, WebFX, Hemingway Editor, Grammarly, etc.) Assigned Reading: Go to https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/
	Read the following pages and all of the sub-pages under them: • "Choose your words carefully" • "Be concise" • "Keep it conversational"
	Recorded BRIEF Writing webinar
Class 7: 10/15 How to decide what to write about Assignment 1 (translation) due	Assigned Reading: • The Craft of Research, Chapters 3 and 4
Class 8: 10/22 How to make an argument (development)	Assigned Reading: Excerpts from They Say, I Say Excerpts from The Craft of Research
Class 9: 10/29 How to incorporate evidence Assignment 2 (persuasive/opinion piece) due	Assigned Reading: Op-ed vs. white paper (TBD)
Class 10: 11/5 How to tell a story	Assigned Reading: • pp.17-101, On Writing by Stephen King
Class 11: 11/12 How to manage a big research/writing project	Assigned Reading: • Ask a professor about their writing process

Proposal for Final Project Due	
Class 12: 11/19 How to revise your writing	 Assigned Reading: "Toolbox," pp.111-137, On Writing by Stephen King Watch "Self-editing" recorded webinar Bring in Assignment 1 or 2, or something you submitted in another class
Class 13: 11/26 How to write in your field	How do you know what makes good writing in your field? Where do you look?
(+ short module on writing for slides/presentations/powerpoint)	 Assigned Reading: Set a timer and spend 1hr reading through the style guide of choice in your field (MLA, APA, AP, etc.) Set a timer and spend 1hr looking browsing the eminent journal in your discipline (ask a professor or librarian if you need help) Ask a prof or subject librarian to recommend an exemplary article and bring it to class
Class 14: 12/3 How to write in your field	Short in-class presentations on your topic
Final Project Due by 5pm on	

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations

This course consists of 15 weeks. You are expected to do the readings, attend the weekly lectures, and to engage with the course material in depth. Your responsibilities include completing the assignments, and turning in your final project report. Participation is essential to your success in this class. In order to get full credit for participation, you will have to attend and participate in all discussions.

Time Expectations

Students should plan on spending approximately 2-5 hours per week outside of class to complete the work for each week.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Technical Requirements

As part of your learning experience, you can expect to:

- 1. Communicate via email including sending attachments.
- 2. Navigate the internet using a Web browser.
- 3. Use office applications such as Microsoft Office or Google Docs to create documents.
- 4. Learn how to submit assignments in Canvas.
- 5. Communicate with peers using discussion boards and other platforms.
- 6. Upload and download saved files.
- 7. Have easy access to the Internet.
- 8. Navigate Canvas, including using the email component within Canvas.
- 9. Use a microphone to record audio through your computer.
- 10. Use an internal or external camera to record video through your computer.

In this course we will use VoiceThread, TurnItIn and Zoom.

- VoiceThread is a tool that enables teachers and students to upload and asynchronously present images, video, and/or other media and respond to others presentations with audio, video, and/or text comments. Instructions for VoiceThread are available here.
- TurnItIn is a writing assessment tool that is used to detect plagiarism and allows teachers to provide assignment feedback to students. <u>Instructions for TurnItIn are available here</u>.
- Zoom enables users to conduct synchronous ("real-time") conferences, presentations, lectures, meetings, office hours and group chats via audio, video, text chat and content sharing. <u>Instructions for</u> <u>Zoom are available here</u>.

Computer Requirements

Computer requirements to complete the course are listed by Canvas in the Instructure Guides.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. We assume you have read the honor code material located at http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code, 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. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code.

The Honor Code pledge follows:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University 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

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out Plagiarism.org.

Citation Style

This course uses MLA style for all writing and research assignments. Resources for this citation style are available through

Georgetown Library Citation Guide

MLA Style Guidebook

GRADING

Grading in this course will be determined by the following grading scale:

• A: 93% to 100%

• A-: 90% to 92%

• B+: 87% to 89%

• B: 83% to 86%

• B-: 80% to 82%

• C+: 77% to 79%

• C: 73% to 76%

• C-: 70% to 72%

D+: 67% to 69%

D: 63% to 66%

• F: 62% and below

ACCOMMODATIONS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equity and access to programs and facilities. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the Academic Resource Center, the office that oversees disability support services, (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu;) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website. Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services

SCS offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed online, at the School of Continuing Studies downtown location, and on the main Georgetown campus:

- Academic Resource Center
- 202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services
- 202-687-6985
- Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA)
- (202) 687-4798

Georgetown Library

Students enrolled in online School of Continuing Studies SCS coursework have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). Students can access these resources through the Library's Homepage by using their University username (NetID) and password (this is the same login information used to access email, BlackBoard, etc.). The Library does not mail physical items to students.

SCS students may make an appointment with a librarian to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. Appointments are conducted using Google Hangout (video-conferencing function) through the Georgetown Gmail System or by telephone. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the Services & Resources Guide for Online Students for additional information.

Research Guide

The Bachelor of Liberal Arts program has an extensive online <u>Library Research Guide</u> designed for the subject and research specifications of our program. This Guide will give you direct access to the library resources central to your course research work.

Learning Resources

SCS offers a host of learning resources to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the Writing Center and Refworks.

- The Writing Center offers professional writing support through its online peer tutoring service.
- Refworks is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

Technical Support

Click on the Help link (on the bottom-left corner in Canvas) to reach Canvas Support, including the Canvas Student Guide and 24 hour Canvas Support Hotline at 855-338-2770.

In this course we may use VoiceThread, TurnItIn and/or Zoom.

- VoiceThread is a tool that enables teachers and students to upload and asynchronously present images, video, and/or other media and respond to others presentations with audio, video, and/or text comments. Technical support for VoiceThread is available.
- TurnItIn is a writing assessment tool that is used to detect plagiarism and allows teachers to provide assignment feedback to students. Technical support for TurnItIn is available.

 Zoom enables users to conduct synchronous ("real-time") conferences, presentations, lectures, meetings, office hours and group chats via audio, video, text chat and content sharing. Technical support for Zoom is available.

COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

Netiquette Guidelines

To promote the highest degree of education possible, we ask each student to respect the opinions and thoughts of other students and be courteous in the way that you choose to express yourself. The topics in this course can be controversial and promote debate. Students should be respectful and considerate of all opinions.

In order for us to have meaningful discussions, we must learn to genuinely try to understand what others are saying and be open-minded about others' opinions. If you want to persuade someone to see things differently, it is much more effective to do so in a polite, non-threatening way rather than to do so antagonistically. Everyone has insights to offer based on his/her experiences, and we can all learn from each other. Civility is essential.

Statement of Student Conduct, Civility, and Engagement

The School of Continuing Studies offers students the opportunity to engage with faculty, staff, and peers in ways that foster intellectual growth and development in their chosen field of study. It is important to recognize that each member of our community brings his or her own values, thoughts, perspectives, and experiences into each interaction. We expect students to behave in a manner that is civil and respectful of others, and appreciate the learning opportunities that come from engaging pluralistic perspectives in a dynamic educational environment.

Engagement within the SCS Georgetown community takes places in on-campus meeting spaces and classrooms, and extends to online learning platforms and forums. Students should be particularly mindful that participation in class discussions, group assignments, emails, blogs, and social media reflect upon them personally, academically, and professionally. All viewpoints, editorials, and opinions expressed by students represent those students exclusively – and not the students' instructors, classmates, academic program, School, or University – even in cases when students are using Georgetown-affiliated systems like email, blogs, and online portfolios. The expectations for respect and civility are consistent for on-campus classes and spaces, as well as cyber, virtual, and online environments. Thus, civility and cybercivility are expected of all students, in all campus spaces.

SCS students are expected to adhere to the SCS guidelines for student conduct and the University Code of Student Conduct. In the event that a student's behavior is perceived to fall outside the stated SCS guidelines or may be a violation of the Code of Student Conduct, the matter may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for further review and possible sanctioning. Such instances can include but are not limited to: disruption of official university functions (including teaching, research, administration), failure to comply with a directive issued by a University official, harassment and bullying, and incivility. For questions regarding the SCS student conduct expectations please review the policy in-full found in the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Undergraduate Bulletin. For questions about the Code of Student Conduct, please review the information provided by the Office of Student Conduct.

Communication with Peers

Notifications

In this course we will use Canvas to send email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the Canvas system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages at least once per day. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name and module.
- Do not send messages asking general information about the class, please post those in the General Questions Discussion Board Forum.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. 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.

Copyright

The materials used in Georgetown University courses ("Course Materials") generally represent the intellectual property of course instructors which may not be disseminated or reproduced in any form for public distribution (e.g., sale, exchange, etc.) without the written permission of the course instructor. Course Materials include all written or electronic documents and materials, including syllabi, current and past examination questions/answers, and presentations such as lectures, videos, PowerPoints, etc., provided by a course instructor. Course Materials may only be used by students enrolled in the course for academic (course-related) purposes.

Published course readings (book chapters, articles, reports, etc.) available in Canvas are copyrighted material. These works are made available to students through licensed databases or fair use. They are protected by copyright law, and may not be further disseminated or reproduced in any form for distribution (e.g., uploading to websites, sale, exchange, etc.) without permission of the copyright owner.

More information about intellectual property and copyright can be found here: https://www.library.georgetown.edu/copyright

More information about computer acceptable use policy and intellectual property can be found here: https://security.georgetown.edu/it-policies-procedures/computer-systems-aup

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.

Title IX at Georgetown

https://titleix.georgetown.edu/

Sexual Misconduct

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") prohibits discrimination based on sex in any educational programs, which includes sexual harassment or any acts of sexual misconduct. Title IX requires the University, upon becoming aware of any incident of sexual harassment and misconduct to respond appropriately to protect and maintain the safety of the University community, including students, faculty, and staff.

Georgetown University prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking.

Discrimination based on sex, including sexual misconduct and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status, subverts the University's mission and threatens permanent damage to the educational experience, careers, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Please know that as a faculty member I am committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault. However, University policy also requires me to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct.

Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

Jen Schweer, MA, LPC

Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention (202) 687-0323 jls242@georgetown.edu

Erica Shirley

Trauma Specialist Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) (202) 687-6985 els54@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at:

https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/get-help

Pregnancy Adjustments and Accommodations

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical need and academic requirements.

Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out at: https://titleix.georgetown.edu/student-pregnancy.