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Writing in the Social Sciences ENGL 21002

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ENGLISH 21002: Writing in the Social Sciences
Fall 2018 | The City College of New York | NAC 5/148
Tues, 12:20-1:45 | Fri, 12:30-1:45
Ms. Cooper | ccooper@ccny.cuny.edu

Welcome to your Fall 2018 Early College Course English 21002: Writing in the Social Sciences. In this course, we will study, practice, and refine our capacities for diverse forms of writing in the social sciences. We will be reading and responding to topics in social justice, law, economics, and political science through works of both fiction and nonfiction. Our analysis will center on a wide range of texts, targeting writing that is critical, persuasive, and reflective—all the forms of writing that are typically found in the social science fields.

This course will focus on issues and ideas in the social sciences relevant to responsibility, social organization, health, community, individuality, equality, rights, and memory. Behind each element of our study is the understanding that excellent, well-organized writing emerges from engaging questions, close reading, and reasoned reflection. Our responses will regularly and continuously seek to identify central claims, feature well-selected evidence, and back up our arguments with sound reasoning.

As a writing course, our class will focus on the skills of previewing the text, careful reading and annotating for main ideas, summarizing, analyzing, considering questions, engaging in accountable talk and discussions, comparing texts and perspectives, structuring our responses, refining claims, selecting evidence, building arguments, engaging in peer review, and polishing final drafts. At the end of our class, students will have a portfolio of writing that showcases progress across these skills.

The final project for this course will be a 5-7 page paper, excluding your works-cited page, all in MLA format. This paper will be devised from a central problem or concern in the social sciences that our course has touched upon, and will respond to a question that the student will devise. We will work toward the development and through the successive steps of this project as our course gets underway, with more intensive attention to this final project in the second half of our studies. Each element of our planned study—including but not limited to close reading strategies, writing process, research, grammar, and college-level writing—is designed to support student growth as a writer and successful completion of the final paper as a model writing assignment students can use and share going forward.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate 1) competence in the discipline of close reading, 2) an understanding of the ways in which writers approach and unpack topics in the social sciences, 3) an understanding of genre and type, 4) competence in respectful debate and discussion of the ideas our course covers, and 5) effective organization, presentation, and expression of ideas in response to diverse texts.

This course emphasizes reading and writing skills that are important to have in place for a successful future start to college-level and higher education studies.

Texts:

This course relies on materials that have been organized and shared with students via

Blackboard and/or a class website. We will follow the flow of study as outlined by the materials shared. This class is OER compliant. **Our class website is: English21002.wordpress.com**

Additional texts will be added periodically to enhance our study of a particular topic, genre, or perspective in the social sciences. These materials will be shared online and, as a result, students should make review of our class website and Blackboard site a regular part of your routine for this course. Our class website features extensive supplementary guidance on reading, writing, research, grammar, and successful study habits. Students will be expected to have read any assigned texts BEFORE the start of class, rather than in-class.

Class Rules:

To best prepare you for the rigor and expectations of this college-level course, the following rules will be adhered to:

- You will be on time. Being late to more than two classes will lower your grade by one full grade level.
- You will submit your work on time.
- No late assignments will be accepted.
- No make-up assignments will be given.
- Phone and/or headphones are forbidden in class. You will only be asked once to put such items away, after which point your grade will be lowered.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of anybody else's words or materials. Any assignment with your name on it signifies that you and you alone are the author. The wording and ideas are yours. Materials that are properly cited will not be considered plagiarism. Stealing the work of others and passing it off as your own is not tolerated in any academic environment and comes with significant consequences. Evidence of plagiarism will result in one or more of the following: a failing grade for the assignment, an F in the course, a report filed, a disciplinary action. In most formal and higher level academic environments, plagiarism can lead to expulsion.

Written Work:

We have the benefit of a tutor, Ms. Adams, joining us every Friday. Ms. Adams' email is: madelynadams1997@gmail.com. All assigned work, with the exception of any worksheets we complete or in-class writing, must be typed. Your typed work will adhere to the following conventions:

- 12-point font in Times New Roman
- Standard margins
- Double spaced with no extra spaces between paragraphs
- All work cited must be cited in proper MLA-style format.

Course assignments and grading:

- 1) Final research paper: 5-7 pages PLUS a works-cited page in MLA format: 20%
- 2) Reading/writing assignments: 30%
- 3) In-class writing exercises, written or oral quizzes: 30%
- 4) Attendance and participation in class discussions: 20%

CLASS OVERVIEW: Please note specific activities and assignments as described are subject to change. Note our class is not in session Sept. 11, 18, or Nov. 23.

Aug 28	Warm up: what are the social sciences? What is writing in the social sciences? Introductions, syllabus, tutor is introduced, students took tutor’s survey, distribution of Raoul and Marie diagnostic, discussion of who it to blame. Homework is students completing a Raoul and Marie Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) chart.
Aug 31	Warm up: What was hard about completing your CER chart? What was easy? Why? In-class discussion: What does it mean to be an active reader? What is a passive reader? Discussion supplemented by handout drawn from the “Reading Strategies” supplemental section of class website. Students receive first section of <i>Chinatown’s Ghost Scam</i> and preview text. In-class reading by paragraph, coupled with in-class annotation review and practice. HW: Summarize what has been read in 2-3 sentences. Also read the section “Reading Strategies” on class website. Text 1: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/10/30/chinatowns-ghost-scam
Sept 4	Metacognition, annotation, and close reading Students receive remainder of the article <i>Chinatown’s Ghost Scam</i> Read para by para, annotating for main idea, stopping and discussing contents. Moving from summarization to annotation of text.
Sept 7	Warm Up: When was the last time you were surprised? Explain. Discussion Surprise in the context of the text, and a review of what we need to do to ensure we are reading closely and carefully (continued focus on skills of previewing, annotation, and summarization). Read and complete <i>Chinatown’s Ghost Scam</i> together, pausing to allow students to annotate for the main idea as we go. Discussion. Homework: write a complete summary of the article
Sept 14	Accountable Discussion 1: Students receive and write in response to discussion questions. Discussion structure explained, rubric provided. Student-led discussion. HW: a one para to one page reflection on this format for discussion.
Sept 21	Warm up: What is one thing you are passionate about? Explain. Return to reading skills: preview, annotation (questions, connections, etc), and summarize Distribute Junot Diaz’s <i>MFA vs POC</i> TEXT 2: https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/mfa-vs-poc Previewing, reading, and annotating for the main idea. HW: Finish reading the essay, do a CER for Diaz’s main claim.
Sept 25	Accountable Discussion 2: Students receive and write in response to discussion questions on MFA vs. POC. Discussion structure explained, rubric provided. Student-led discussion. HW: Use completed MFA vs. POC CER to write a one-page analysis of Diaz’s main claim in his essay.

<p>Sept 28</p>	<p>Warm up: A social issue you are passionate about and why? On quality annotation and reminder of the four elements of successful annotation: interest, connection, questioning, summarizing. Introduction of James Baldwin and his role in shaping the craft and artistry of the American essay. Baldwin: <i>Notes of a Native Son</i> TEXT 3: http://www5.csudh.edu/ccauthen/570f15/baldwin.pdf Students begin reading essay in-class, annotating for the social issues or concerns that are covered in the essay, per the four elements of annotation. HW: Complete reading of essay, prepare for in-class Accountable Discussion.</p>
<p>Oct 2</p>	<p>Accountable Discussion 3: Students receive discussion questions based on Baldwin text. Students lead discussion, are evaluated per usual discussion rubric. HW: A one page reflection paper on any one of the discussion questions, which must also feature at least two pieces of properly cited (MLA format) evidence from the text.</p>
<p>Oct 5</p>	<p>Warm up: What are three things you do—or can do—to ensure you capture the main idea of what you are reading? Share out. Write strategies on the board. Students shared main idea of Baldwin’s essay. Collect student writing on this essay.</p>
<p>Oct 9</p>	<p>Warm up: What is passive voice? What is active voice? Define and distinguish. Discussion on differences, when to use, with emphasis on active voice. Handout: correct examples of passive voice construction, transitioning to active voice. HW: Always write in active voice! And research James Baldwin, bringing in one article on the writer from a credible source.</p>
<p>Oct 12</p>	<p>Warm up: How did your further research on James Baldwin influence your perception of him? Students receive major assignment handout (Paper: What is one social issue that Baldwin identifies in his writing, and how does it resonate today?) Text 4: Students receive Clint Smith's article from the New Yorker about James Baldwin (message to teachers) HW: Students read complete article Students complete handout on main ideas of article Students outline for first major paper.</p>
<p>Oct 16</p>	<p>Warm Up: How did your reading of Smith’s essay further your understanding of Baldwin’s work as it is interpreted today? Discussion: comparing and contrasting Smith (2017) and Baldwin (1955) HW: Completion of handout to support structure of student assessments.</p>
<p>Oct 19</p>	<p>Accountable Discussion 4: Students receive discussion questions based on Smith’s text. Students lead discussion, are evaluated per usual discussion rubric. HW: A one page reflection paper on any one of the discussion questions, which must also feature at least two pieces of properly cited (MLA format) evidence from the text.</p>
<p>Oct 23</p>	<p>Focus this week: Selecting strong evidence to support your claim. Warm up: What is one current event that matters to you and why?</p>

	<p>Discussion.</p> <p>Pivot to evidence selection in text, text being an LA Times article rounding up different points of view on the Charlottesville riot of Aug 2017.</p> <p>Students receive long handout that walks them through steps of evidence selection as well as additional questions on how they thought this went.</p> <p>We read the news piece together and discuss it.</p> <p>HW: Students complete the evidence selection portion of the handout, but hold off on the metacognition section for next class.</p>
Oct 26	<p>Warm Up: Reflection on evidence selection in support of answering handout questions.</p> <p>Discussion.</p> <p>Completion of evidence handout and pair-share.</p> <p>Evidence selection in support of major assessment paper: Baldwin's ideas today.</p> <p>HW: Utilize outline and evidence selection to date to complete first draft of paper.</p> <p>Bring in Between the World and Me to next class.</p>
Oct 30	<p>Introduction of Ta-Nehisi Coates with a short statement on his biography.</p> <p>Text 5: Between the World and Me (BTWAM), by Ta-Nehisi Coates</p> <p>Students receive and begin to read first 33 pages of Between the World and Me.</p> <p>HW: Students complete reading of the 33 pages, annotating for four elements and CER/main ideas.</p>
Nov 2	<p>Accountable Discussion 5:</p> <p>Distribution of Coates discussion questions. Students select a few and do a 20 min free-write in response.</p> <p>Students host/lead in-class discussion, are evaluated per discussion rubric.</p> <p>HW: Read to page break on page 64.</p> <p>Baldwin papers are due.</p>
Nov 6	<p>Warm up: Students write short responses to question of the structure of Coates' book.</p> <p>Review of CER of BTWAM.</p> <p>Students are provided with a deeper CER handout, asked to write the central claim Coates is making, the evidence to back it up, and the reasoning they see behind that claim (CER in practice).</p> <p>Discussion of the basic CER sheet.</p> <p>HW: Read to page 88, prep for all-class discussion.</p>
Nov 9	<p>Accountable Discussion 6:</p> <p>Distribution of Coates discussion questions. Students select a few and do a 20 min free-write in response.</p> <p>Students host/lead in-class discussion, are evaluated per discussion rubric.</p>
Nov 13	<p>Distribution of final paper for this unit: the persuasive essay on BTWAM in response to a question of students' own devising.</p> <p>CER as it pertains to the persuasive essay, exercise and handout.</p> <p>HW: Students will read to page 132 and do a 10 min freewrite in support of their persuasive essay (brainstorm).</p>
Nov 16	<p>Warm Up: On genre type in the social sciences.</p> <p>Brainstorming handout (double sided) students work on this individually, discuss in pairs, all-class discussion.</p> <p>First paragraph handout—students are supported in the initial drafting of their own opening paragraphs.</p>

	Homework: Finish BTWAM
Nov 20	Accountable Discussion 7—Finishing BTWAM Warm up: Overview of agenda, distribution of discussion questions (final discussion on Coates book) and student free-write in response. Student-led discussion, evaluated per rubric. Students receive handout and support on structuring and outlining their persuasive BTWAM papers. HW: Draft/revise final paper
Nov 27	Warm Up: Health and wellbeing in the social sciences Students received an overall handout on mental illness and answered generally questions on the issue as they currently understand it. Discussion of handout results. Text 6: The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman https://www.nlm.nih.gov/theliteratureofprescription/exhibitionAssets/digitalDocs/The-Yellow-Wall-Paper.pdf Brief reading and discussion of themes and topics per this reading, based on student annotation and CER mastery. HW: Finish reading/annotating the story
Nov 30	Final BTWAM papers due today. Students warm up with review of popular ads from 1800s and responding to these ads on a handout provided. Discussion of the ads and what they bring up for us/ how they make us feel. Ads present the backdrop of the society in which <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> was written. Students receive discussion questions on TYW, discuss in pairs, and then as a whole group. HW: Write one additional page to add on to the short story—what happens next? Possible supplemental text: The Noonday Demon (Solomon).
Dec 4	Warm Up: What is confessional writing in the context of the social sciences and why is it important? Discussion of confessional writing. Introduction of TEXT 7: Lu Xun’s <i>Diary of a Madman</i>. HW: Complete reading of <i>Diary of a Madman</i> , annotate for four elements, complete CER in response to the question “Which is a greater force in either story, rebellion or control?”
Dec 7	Accountable Discussion 8 Distribution of Gilman/Xun discussion questions. Students select a few and do a 20 min free-write in response. Students host/lead in-class discussion, are evaluated per discussion rubric. Use Dec 4 CER to draft and complete paper responding to same question, utilizing strong claim, evidence, and reasoning work as studied across course.
Dec 11— LAST CLASS	Final paper due, final reflections.