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Writing for the Humanities and the Arts

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Writing For the Humanities and Arts (ENGL 21001)

City College of New York, Spring 2023

Coronavirus Statement

Please prioritize your physical/emotional health, your ability to care for your loved ones, and your financial/safety needs. If life circumstances make it difficult for you to complete activities for this course, **please email me** so we can figure out a plan.

Do not come to class if you are experiencing Covid-like symptoms. Even if it's just a cold, better safe than sorry. You will not be penalized. **Covid-like symptoms include sore throat, cough, fatigue, nasal congestion, runny nose, headache, and muscle aches.**

Course Description (Official)

Writing in the Humanities is one of the “sequel” classes to ENG 110: Freshman Composition. Here, we will continue developing the skills practiced in ENG 110 with a particular eye toward the kinds of writing tasks one might find either in humanities courses at City College or in “the humanities” in the rest of the world. What are “the humanities”? In the Renaissance, the term encompassed basically everything that wasn't theology (so, think God Studies vs. Human Studies). Today, the term typically refers to areas of study that deal with aspects of human culture, or anything that isn't STEM, social science, or professional training. That's why the other versions of ENG 210 are “Writing for the Social Sciences,” “Writing for the Sciences,” and “Writing for Engineering.” In this class, we'll practice argumentation, research skills, genre analysis, and how to adapt our writing for multiple contexts. Writing “for school” is only one type of writing, and as humans living in the world, we may want to use written language for a lot of other purposes as well. Studying the humanities is primarily useful if we also want to engage with the humanities — that is, living as people in the world, enjoying what the world has to offer, and intervening to make it a better place.

Course Objectives

- acknowledge your and others' range of linguistic differences as resources, and draw on those resources to develop rhetorical sensibility
- enhance strategies for reading, drafting, revising, editing, and self-assessment
- negotiate your own writing goals and audience expectations regarding conventions of genre, medium, and rhetorical situation
- develop and engage in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- engage in genre analysis and multimodal composing to explore effective writing across disciplinary contexts and beyond

- formulate and articulate a stance through and in your writing
- practice using various library resources, online databases, and the Internet to locate sources appropriate to your writing projects
- strengthen your source use practices (including evaluating, integrating, quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, analyzing, and citing sources)

Required Texts

Assorted PDFs and links to online readings

Grading

See Grading Contract document (after the syllabus and course schedule)

Technology Platforms For Our Course

This class is in-person. We will use Blackboard for most of our course activities, but we will also use Zoom for conferences, email, and Google Docs.

Attendance and Participation

Everyone has a unique perspective and set of experiences that brings value to the classroom. Many activities are designed so that we can learn from each other as well as from our participation in the activity itself. Everyone benefits from your presence!

However, please do not come to class if you are experiencing Covid-like symptoms. Covid-like symptoms include sore throat, cough, fatigue, nasal congestion, runny nose, headache, and muscle aches.

Late Work Policy

There are TWO late work deadlines this semester (3/13 and the final exam period). For any assignments due prior to 3/13, there is no penalty for lateness as long as you turn them in before then. The same thing goes for the second half of the semester and the second late work deadline.

The exception to these rules are peer review drafts and feedback. These **MUST** be turned in on time in order to receive credit for them, because turning those in late has a negative impact on others.

Classroom Conduct

As writing students, it is your responsibility to choose the best, most respectful way to express your ideas. When considering your words, ask yourself, "Am I contributing to the learning environment, or am I hurting the learning environment?"

Phones, Laptops, and Tablets

Please keep your devices on silent during class, but feel free to use them for class-related activities or personal matters that cannot wait until after class. This will be done via the honor system, unless you are doing something that is disruptive to the rest of the class. If you choose to use your device for something unrelated to class, please be mindful of how you may be distracting others from their own learning. (Keep your volume off/low!)

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research, or writings as your own. This is unethical, detrimental to your learning, and a violation of the City College Academic Integrity Policy. Plagiarism can include:

- Copying another person's actual words without attributing the words to their source
- Presenting another person's ideas in your own words without acknowledging the source
- Changing just a couple words of someone else's writing so that it is technically different
- Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the sources
- Failing to acknowledge collaborators on assignments
- Downloading someone else's essay and turning it in as your own

It is also plagiarism to use a text generator like Chat GPT and pretend the writing is your own. **If you use Chat GPT or a similar tool for any assignment in this class**, you should:

1. **Read and revise** whatever it generates (it's good at some things, but very bad at other things)
2. Write a note at the bottom of the assignment acknowledging that you used it and reflecting on how it helped you as a writer, what you gained from it, and how you revised the text it generated.

Chat GPT is a tool, just like spellchecker is a tool. There's nothing inherently wrong about using tools that help us, but since this is a **writing class**, in which our whole task is to study and discuss writing while growing our skills, we need to be **honest** about our composing processes and **reflect** on how different writing tools impact our writing and our experiences as writers.

For an overview of CCNY's academic integrity policy and a link to the full policy, please visit <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-resources/academic-integrity-policy/>

Resources

Accessibility:

The AccessAbility Center provides resources to students with accessibility needs and is located in the North Academic Center Room 1/218. Contact disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu / 212.650.5913 / visit: <https://www.cuny.cuny.edu/accessability>. **Or you can just email me with your accessibility needs.**

Mental Health:

Mental health is very important, and mental illness should be treated with the same seriousness as physical illness. There are many steps you can take to maintain your mental health, ranging from practicing positive life habits, to talking with a loved one about your feelings, to seeking professional therapy and/or psychiatric medicine. **Just like you may need to miss class to visit a doctor if you are physically ill, you should also prioritize your mental health above coming to class in a similar fashion.** Rhetoric and writing are important life skills, but **having a healthy brain is more important.**

City College's Counseling Center offers **FREE** confidential counseling services, group therapy, and workshops to all students. Their full website with a description of all services is here:

<https://www.cuny.edu/counseling/counseling-center-faq>

(Side note: The counseling center is required to get a parental consent form from students who are under 18.)

Academic and Other Support:

- Safety, Health, and Wellness Resources: <https://www.cuny.edu/shs/medical-services>
- Resources for Immigrant Students:
<https://www.cuny.edu/we-are-one-cuny/city-college-immigration-center>
- Gender Resources, Including Locations of All-Gender Bathrooms on Campus:
<https://www.cuny.edu/health-wellness/gender-resources>
- Emergency grants: <https://www.cuny.edu/health-wellness/emergency-grants-program>
- For International Students: <https://www.cuny.edu/iss>

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is located on the 3rd floor of the Cohen Library in the North Academic Center and offers online consultations for anyone who wants to talk about their writing with someone! Writing centers are **not** just for people who are "bad" at writing. They're for anyone who wants an outside opinion on their paper. I used the writing center a LOT when I was in college!

<https://www.cuny.edu/writing>

Course Schedule for Writing for the Humanities and Arts, Spring 2023

Day	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
1/25 (Wednesday)	Introductions to each other and the course		Introduction posts Fill out getting to know you survey
1/30 (Monday)	How to Read an Academic Article	“In the Name of Citizenship: The Writing Classroom and the Promise of Citizenship.” by Amy Wan (accessible through CCNY library)	“Yourself as Reader and Writer”
2/1 (Wednesday)	The Rhetorical Situation	Lloyd Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation”	Reading Response Posts
2/6 (Monday)	Introducing Paper 1: Opinion Editorial	“Should Writer’s Use They Own English?” by Vershawn Ashante Young (accessible via the CCNY library site)	News sources posts
2/8 (Wednesday)	Analyzing Examples	Read TWO of the options of example op-eds on Blackboard (All examples are recent OpEds published on major news sites, selected anew each semester)	
2/13 (Monday)	NO SCHOOL		
2/15 (Wednesday)	Brainstorming + Drafting	“Shitty First Drafts,” by Anne Lammott	Project 1 Rhetorical Analysis
2/20 (Monday)	NO SCHOOL		
2/21 (Tuesday) CUNY Monday	Zoom Conferences		
2/22 (Wednesday)	Peer Review		Op Ed First Drafts Due
2/27 (Monday)	What is a Genre?	Watch: “Understanding Genre Awareness” Read: “Navigating Genres”	Op Ed Final Drafts Due
3/1 (Wednesday)	Introducing Genre Guide Project		Genre Logs Unit 1 Reflections
3/6 (Monday)	Searching for		

	Examples		
3/8 (Wednesday)	Practicing Genre Analysis 1		Example Posts Due
3/13 (Monday)	Practicing Genre Analysis 2		Responses to Example Posts Due FIRST LATEWORK DEADLINE
3/15 (Wednesday)	Zoom Conferences		
3/20 (Monday)	Exploring Genres 1		Genre Guide First Draft Due
3/22 (Wednesday)	Exploring Genres 2		Genre Guide Feedback Due
3/27 (Monday)	Introducing Multimodal Project		Revised Genre Guides Due
3/29 (Wednesday)	Brainstorming		Due after class: Brainstorming Worksheet
4/3 (Monday)	Zoom Conferences		Project Plan Due
4/5 (Wednesday)	SPRING BREAK		
4/10 (Monday)	SPRING BREAK		
4/12 (Wednesday)	SPRING BREAK		
4/17 (Monday)	Analyzing Samples (Multimodal Arguments)	Readings TBD (samples selected from Missy Watson's OER course materials)	
4/19 (Wednesday)	Peer Review		Multimodal Assignment First Drafts
4/24 (Monday)	Zoom Conferences		

4/26 (Wednesday)	Analyzing Samples (Proposals)	Readings TBD (samples selected from Missy Watson's OER course materials)	Multimodal Assignment Second Draft + Descriptions
5/1 (Monday)	Workshopping Proposals		Proposal for/analysis of your multimodal assignment
5/3 (Wednesday)	Discussing Portfolio		Multimodal Assignment Final Draft Due
5/8 (Monday)	Revising		Revised OpEd Revised Genre Guide
5/10 (Wednesday)	Compiling Portfolios		First Draft of Portfolio Essay
5/15 (Monday)	Reflecting		Revise & Compare Multimodal Assignment
Finals Period 5/17 (Wednesday) 1:00pm			Portfolio Due LATEWORK DEADLINE

ENG 210 Grading Contract
Spring 2023

For this course, we will use a grading contract, a system of grades that are based primarily on your **labors and efforts**.

That means that your final course letter grade will be based on your participation, attendance, and successful completion of assignments and revisions. The way this works is, as long as you **fully complete** each assignment (i.e., it meets all of the stated assignment requirements), you don't need to stress out about how "good" it is.

You can read over the criteria for each grade below, choose what grade you want to receive in this class right now, and as long as you fulfill each of the criteria listed, **that is the grade you will receive in May**.

My hope is that using a Grading Contract will invite you to feel more comfortable taking risks, making mistakes, and being transparent about your questions and stances. It will also invite me to focus my energies on providing feedback to support you as a person, thinker, and writer, instead of assigning numbers to your work and then defending those numbers.

Criteria for an A:

- All non-final drafts are complete and turned in on time
- All final drafts are complete and meet the assignment requirements
- You participated in all of the peer reviews
- You have 4 or fewer absences
- You have completed all or all but one of the other assignments & activities
- Your final portfolio is complete and detailed

Criteria for a B:

- All non-final drafts are complete and turned in on time, one exception acceptable
- All final drafts are complete and meet the assignment requirements
- You participated in all of the peer reviews, one exception acceptable
- You have 5 or fewer absences
- You are missing 2 or fewer other assignments & activities
- Your final portfolio is complete and detailed

Criteria for a C:

- You met at least one non-final draft deadline
- All final drafts are complete and meet the assignment requirements
- You participated in at least one peer review
- You have 6 or fewer absences
- You are missing 3 or fewer other assignments & activities
- Your final portfolio is complete

Criteria for a D:

- All final drafts are complete and meet the assignment requirements
- You have 7 or fewer absences
- You are missing 4 or fewer other assignments & activities
- Your final portfolio is complete, or complete except for one component

Criteria for an F:

- You are missing one or more final drafts
- You have 8 or more absences
- You are missing 5 or more other assignments & activities
- Your final portfolio is missing two or more components

Moving Between Categories:

- You must meet **all** of the criteria for a category in order to receive the grade associated with that category. The exception is absences, which can be made up for in various ways.

Ways to Make Up For Absences:

If absences is the only criterion you are missing for your target grade, you can make up for this by exceeding a different criterion in your target grade.

An imaginary example: Sophia has turned in all of her final drafts, she turned in every non-final draft except one, her portfolio is complete and detailed, and she's missing only two other assignments. However, she has 6 absences. Sophia meets all of the criteria for a B, except her number of absences would put her in the C category. Fortunately, even though Sophia missed one of the non-final draft deadlines, she still participated in peer review that day and gave feedback to others, which means she participated in every single peer review. "Participated in every peer review" is one of the criteria for an A (for a B, she was allowed to miss one peer review). Since she has one criterion in the A category, this makes up for her C-level number of absences. Sophia receives a B.

But maybe you don't exceed any of the criteria, or maybe your target grade is an A, so there isn't a way to exceed the criteria in order to make up for absences. You can also make up for absences by doing an additional task that will contribute to our class in some way. For example:

- Create a handout or other resource to share with the class (and/or future classes)
- Prepare a summary + reflection on one of the readings, to be shared with the class
- Find and then annotate a strong sample essay with an eye toward providing guidance for current or future students

If you want to do any of the above tasks, or propose your own, please feel welcome to pitch me ideas/discuss them with me in advance.

I reserve the right to make exceptions to the grading contract, but only in a way that will benefit you. For example, if you or someone else in your home gets sick and you have to stay home for multiple weeks in order to heal and protect our classroom community from catching your illness, I'm happy to exempt those days from your absences count.