

College Writing 1: Harnessing Everyday Writing Skills in an Academic Setting

L59 CWP 100 52

Ridgley 219, MWF 2-3pm

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"But it is part of the business of the writer--as I see it--to examine attitudes, to go beneath the surface, to tap the source." - James Baldwin, Notes of a Native Son

Course Description

In our digital media landscape, we all spend a lot of our leisure time writing for various web audiences. These short, ephemeral posts on Facebook and Twitter, through email and messaging apps, or in comment sections seem inconsequential when writing longer pieces in a professional setting. But the techniques we learn by writing for new media--concision, creating a voice, responding with intelligence and humor--are relevant to the kind of writing one does in the college classroom.

Writing well takes practice, and if we recognize that we are practicing all the time, we can harness skills we have already mastered and adapt them for the various genres of academic writing. This course will emphasize that no one is starting from square one with academic writing, especially in the digital age. Our primary focus will be to master several modes of college writing with an eye toward making use of the skills we don't know that we already know.

With this as our starting point, we will work collaboratively to develop the particular skills needed to succeed in writing on a college level: creating and sustaining complex arguments, conducting research, and engaging with the written work of others, all while refining your own unique voice as a writer.

Required Materials

n.b.: Regardless of what is on the schedule for a particular day, bring all your books with you to every class.

The Writer's Presence: A Pool of Readings, 7th ed. Donald McQuade and Robert Atwan, eds.

So What?: The Writer's Argument. Kurt Schick and Laura Schubert.

Who Says?: The Writer's Research. Deborah Holdstein and Danielle Aquiline.

Notes of a Native Son. James Baldwin.

A Pocket Style Manual. 6th Edition. Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers.

Some additional readings will be available through Blackboard (BB), email, or as handouts.

Course Requirements

Required Essays:

Analysis of an Advertisement	15%
Personal Essay	15%
Rhetorical Analysis	20%
Argumentative Essay	20%
Research Paper	30%

Please note that all papers must be completed to pass the course.

Revisions:

There are two required paper revisions, the Analysis of an Advertisement and the Argumentative Essay. Both the original and the revision will be graded, and the average of these two grades will count toward the final grade. Additionally, you will turn in and workshop a draft of the Research Paper. This draft will receive extensive comments from me and from your peers, but it will not be graded.

Workshops:

There are two required workshops. We will workshop the Argumentative Essay and the Research Paper. During the weeks that we workshop, class will be cancelled. You will all be assigned to a group of four students, and each group will meet for one day that week (during the regularly scheduled class period) to discuss your papers. While I will be present at all workshop sessions, you will take primary responsibility for the conversation about papers in your group. More details on these workshops will be provided in class.

Conferences:

There will be two mandatory conferences with me for further feedback on your writing. Failure to attend a scheduled conference will count as an absence. You are also encouraged to come in during my office hours or schedule an appointment with me at any time.

Participation:

Much of the quality of this class will be based on your participation and good will. Your final grade will be influenced by your diligence in completing homework assignments, doing the required reading, and actively participating in class. The quality of your Research Paper Prospectus, Annotated Bibliography, and Portfolio will affect your participation grade. The participation grade will be given as +/- one third of a letter grade based on your participation in the entire year. (A- to A, or A- to B+, for example). If your participation is neither above or below average, I may assign a neutral grade for participation. I will often assign activities and small writing assignments as needed to facilitate the learning process. These are not necessarily listed on your course calendar, so you will be responsible for finding out about homework (and other information) if you miss a class. Your classmates are a good resource for this information.

Course Policies

Attendance: Unlike in high school or in lecture-based college courses, our class is reliant on the participation of the whole group. Together we'll create a positive learning environment. So though you may miss three classes, no questions asked, perfect attendance is encouraged because one person's absence can affect everyone else's experience. Each additional absence beyond the first three will lower your final grade a third of a letter grade (A- to a B+, for example). *More than six absences will automatically result in a failing grade for the course.* If however, you miss more than the permitted number of classes due to emergency or illness beyond your control, and you report this to me at the time it occurs, I may be able to work out a fair and reasonable solution.

Tardiness: Arrive early enough so that you are unpacked, sitting down, and ready to work at ten minutes after. If you arrive after 2:10, you will be considered tardy. Three tardies equal one absence. If you miss more than a third of class, you will be counted absent that day. If you are late to class, I recommend you talk to me after class and let me know why.

Paper Submissions: You will hand in all of your papers as hard copies. Electronic submissions, when needed in addition to the paper copy, will not count as having turned in your paper unless you make special arrangements with me ahead of time. Your papers should be typed and carefully proofread, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on each side. This means you must change the default margins in most word-processing programs. Please use a reasonable-sized and readable font for all of your papers. If it

looks like you have doctored the page length, I *will* check the wordcount on your papers. The desired wordcount range can be found on assignment sheets along with the desired page range. Keep in mind that a paper that is much too long is not necessarily a better paper. Plan ahead for printing problems. I will not accept electronic submissions of your essays unless you have made arrangements with me ahead of time.

Late Assignments: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day of the deadline. The research paper will be due to my mailbox in the English office of Duncker Hall by 5pm on December 8th. Handing in assignments late will no doubt negatively affect your final grade. If you know your paper will be late, let me know *before* the due date. For every day that your paper is late, the paper's grade will be lowered a third of a letter grade (A- to a B+, for example). More than likely, you are better off turning in a less-than-perfect essay on time rather than a better one later. Other smaller assignments will not be accepted late unless you have made special arrangements with me ahead of time.

Class Decorum: Again, the learning environment of our classroom is dependant upon our collective effort and good will. Some of the materials we will read may provoke intense discussion, so it is important that all of us are respectful of each other in word and in deed.

Technology Use: The use of technology has its place in the classroom, but also its limits. I will explicitly tell you when to put laptops and tablets away, but there will be times when they are acceptable for note-taking and in-class research. You must respect my decisions on when those technologies are acceptable, and if they become a distraction I reserve the right to ban them in class altogether. There is no need for cellphone or smartphone use in class. If your cellphone disrupts classroom discussion more than once over the course of the semester, you may be asked to leave, after which you will be counted absent for that day.

University Writing Requirement: All students at Washington University in St. Louis must earn a grade of C- or better in this course in order to fulfill the University Writing requirement. All major papers must also be turned in to pass the course.

Academic Integrity: Integrity is a key component of the intellectual environment we are trying to create. Academic dishonesty of any kind is not tolerated at the University. Students who inadvertently plagiarize will be given an opportunity to correct their mistake. However, any paper that is deliberately plagiarized will not be accepted. The student will receive no credit for the assignment, may fail the course, and will be

referred to the Academic Integrity Committee for further disciplinary measures. For a detailed explanation of the University's AI policy and procedures, please see <http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html>.

Students with Disabilities: If your work for this class requires special arrangements, contact WU Disability Resources (DR) at 935-4062 or drc@dosa.wustl.edu. As long as your instructor receives timely guidance in writing from the DR office, you may receive any specific accommodations for which you are eligible. DR serves as the official university resource for approving and arranging students' accommodations, and handles all information confidentially. Requests for accommodation must be made at the beginning of the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

M 25 August: Introduction

W 27 August: Sherman Alexie, "The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me"
(TWP 27-30)
So What?, Ch. 1 (1-14)

F 29 August: David Mamet, "The Rake: A Few Scenes from My Childhood" (TWP 158-63)
Marjane Satrapi, "My Speech at West Point" (TWP 207-11)
Selections from *Persepolis* (handout)
So What? Ch. 1 (14-24)

M 1 September: NO CLASS (Labor Day)

W 3 September: Michihiko Hachiya, "Hiroshima Diary" (TWP 107-112)
Dinaw Mengestu, "Home at Last" (TWP 170-175)

F 5 September: Alice Walker, "Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self" (TWP 244-250)
(Begin reading Baldwin)

M 8 September: Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*, "Preface" and pages 3-45

Personal Essay Due

W 10 September: Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*, pages 47-86

F 12 September: Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*, pages 87-115

M 15 September: Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*, pages 119-161
Ads in Class

W 17 September: Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*, pages 163-179

F 19 September: Michael Berube, "Analyze, Don't Summarize" (TWP 318-321)
So What?, Ch. 3 (69-73)

M 22 September: Amy Cunningham, "Why Women Smile" (TWP 347-354)
Advertisement Analysis Due

W 24 September: George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" (TWP 527-538)

F 26 September: Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted"
(TWP 411-421)
Sherry Turkle, "How Computers Change the Way We Think" (TWP 600-606)

M 29 September: Flannery O'Connor, *A Good Man is Hard to Find* (930-945)
So What?, Ch. 8 (163-168)

W 1 October: *Who Says?*, Ch. 2 (6-15)
Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address* (TWP 491-494)

F 3 October: Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" (TWP 633-641)
Advertisement Analysis Revision Due

M 6 October: *So What?*, Ch. 6 (124-143)
Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried" (TWP 915-929)
additional selections (handout)

W 8 October: Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (TWP 716-732)

F 10 October: Nora Ephron, "The Boston Photographs" (TWP 655-660)

M 13 October: *So What?*, Ch. 3 (50-60)
Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal" (TWP 831-838)
Rhetorical Analysis Due

W 15 October: Camille Paglia, "The Pitfalls of Plastic Surgery" (TWP 774-780)
So What?, Ch. 3 (60-69)

F 17 October: NO CLASS (Fall Break)

M 20 October: David Foster Wallace, "Consider the Lobster" (TWP 839-855)

W 22 October: Lauren Slater, "The Trouble with Self-Esteem" (TWP 822-830)
So What?, Ch. 7 (144-161)

F 24 October: Errol Morris, "Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire" (TWP 753-761)
So What?, Ch. 3 (74-78)

M 27 October: Laura Kipnis, "Against Love" (TWP 733-740)
Who Says?, Ch. 4 (30-48)

W 29 October: *Who Says?*, Ch. 5 & 6

F 31 October: Michael Pollan, "What's Eating America?" (TWP 781-786)
Argumentative Essay Due

STUDENT CONFERENCE WEEK

M 3 November: **Argumentative Essay Revision Due One Week After Workshop**
Workshops: Group 3

W 5 November: Workshops: Group 2

F 7 November: Workshops: Group 1

M 10 November: Library Visit
Who Says?, Ch. 3 (17-29)
Research Prospectus Due

W 12 November: Stephen King, "Everything You Need to Know About Writing Successfully--in Ten Minutes" (TWP 451-457)

F 14 November: *Who Says?*, Ch. 9
Joan Didion, "On Morality?" (TWP 366-371)

M 17 November: *So What?*, Ch. 4 (93-96)
Who Says?, Ch. 7 (90-96)
Annotated Bibliography Due

W 19 November: Critical Essay: TBD
Who Says?, Ch. 8 (99-110)

F 21 November: Critical Essay: TBD
Who Says?, Ch. 10

M 24 November: James Baldwin, "Why I Stopped Hating Shakespeare" (handout)
Research Paper Draft Due

W 26 November: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

F 28 November: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

M 1 December: Workshops

W 3 December: Workshops

F 5 December: Workshops, Evaluations and Reflections

M 8 December: **RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**
 PORTFOLIOS DUE

****NOTE: THIS COURSE SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE****
Any changes will be communicated in class or through email.