

# English 226-001: Writing about Writing

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The origins of writing are credited to the Sumerians in Mesopotamia who developed a cuneiform script around 3,500-3,000 BCE. In the Western tradition, rhetoric is said to have begun in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. in Greece. Some of you may have heard of Plato and Aristotle. We also know that the Greeks were not the only culture engaged in rhetoric and writing, but Aristotle wrote *The Art of Rhetoric*, and thus, this rhetoric is in many ways the basis for how writing gets taught in academia today. Further, the writing course as we know it was developed at Harvard in the late nineteenth century. One reason for developing such a course still holds forth today: students coming into the university cannot write—or so many (including teachers) will claim. Those coming to college in the 1900s were no longer just the elite few, but rather a boom in enrollments brought in students with different literacy skills. Thus, a placement exam was initiated, and writing was linked to a canon of literature. As English A and B courses became filled with students, teachers were overwhelmed with three hundred themes a week to grade. During this time a few graduate programs developed that focused on writing and rhetoric.

Spring 2025



TTH 9:30-10:45  
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T 12:30-1:30 (Tilly 337)  
W 10:00-11:00 in LGCIE  
(RSU 101)  
TH 12:30-1:30 (Tilly 337)

To say that history repeats itself is an understatement. In the 1970s, the colleges in New York began open admissions, meaning that anyone—returning veterans, immigrants, non-native English speakers, adults-- who wanted to enroll in college could. Once again, colleges found themselves trying to deal with the writing issues they saw in papers done by these “non-traditional” students. Composition studies became part of many more graduate programs.

Today we look at writing and a variety of rhetorics coming from many different spaces. Racial and ethnic groups claim and perform their own rhetorics, and Aristotle now must share the stage. Feminist Rhetorics, LBGTQI+ Studies, and Disability Studies scholars are all contributing to the discussions of *whose* writing counts. There are embodied rhetorics, visual rhetorics, performance rhetorics and creative writing, business writing, professional writing, museum rhetorics, technical writing, digital rhetorics, cultural rhetorics, makings—and more. Certainly, today’s technology, especially AI, has brought changes to the writing classroom that fascinates and frustrates teachers (and always has done so). Because of social media, some claim that students are writing much more than they did in the past, and others lament the effects texting is having on a student’s ability to write a paper in standard written English (SWE). Even SWE is a complicated issue.



## Class Assignments and Projects:

**Reader's Response:** Readings are one of the most important aspects of this class. If you do not do the reading, you will have little to contribute. These responses will all be the jumping off point for most of our discussions. For each set of readings and before each class, you are responsible for writing at least 500 words which demonstrates that you have read **all** the readings assigned completely (not just the first page). First, you should provide a concise summary with key points of what we are reading. Second, provide a reaction that engages with the argument(s) made by the author. Consider what the reading is about, what your reactions are to the author, what else have you read that connects to this piece, or how this reading is relevant to your experiences. In the end, this is informal writing in the sense that you don't need to develop a thesis, but you do need to apply your critical literacy skills. I will collect these and spec grade them (see handout on spec grading), and you will include them in your portfolios.

### Careers in Writing and Writing Studies Mini Presentations:

WWS Careers Presentation—Prepare a ten-minute detailed presentation using Power Point, Google Slides, or Prezi or some other presentation form. Provide a handout\*. Your presentations should include the following, but please don't just present these as a list—be creative!

1. Name of Career
  2. Nature of Work (Brief job description)
  3. Working Conditions (Where do people in this career field work? What are any local places that people in this career field work? What opportunities are there for remote work? What are any physical, emotional, and/or social demands for this job? Advancements?)
  4. Training and Education Requirements (What do you need a license? College Degree? Advanced Education? Certification? Experience?). Describe the qualifications you'll need for this occupation.
  5. Time Requirements (Approximately how many hours are required per day, during the week, weekends, month and/or year)
  6. Job Outlook (Is this job in demand or is the demand declining? Indicate what the job prospects are for the future.) This should include statistics and trends.
  7. Earning Potential (What is the average salary for this profession? What are ways to increase the salary? Is it salary or hourly pay? What about overtime/ bonuses?)
  8. Related Occupations (What other occupations that are similar to the career you chose?):
  9. Helpful Courses and Educational Opportunities. What classes/electives could you take in preparation? What are helpful curricular or extracurricular experiences (internships, student publications/presentations, etc.) How, specifically, does an English major prepare you for this job?
- These are ongoing presentations throughout the semester. In class we will pick subjects and dates.**

### Composition Rhetoric Studies: Keywords in Writing Studies

The CR Project requires that you explore, in depth, one of the critical terms from the *Keywords in Writing Studies handout* (on website) by first reading the Introduction and then browsing the book for a term that catches your attention. During your initial browsing, chose 3-4 terms which interest you; then you will narrow that to one term to write about. You will also write up your exploration and include it in your mid-term portfolio (3-4 pages).

This project is not just a summary of the entry in *Keywords in Writing Studies*, but rather you should **critique, challenge and build** upon the text perhaps offering something that has not been included within the term or a new way of thinking about the term. In other words, since this edition of

*Keywords in Studies*(which is from 2015), what has shifted or changed that provides a different perspective on the keyword? What might be added as a keyword to compliment or add contrast? How might AI have an influence? Consider, too, how the term reflects your own interest as a student, potential teacher, or other participant in writing studies.

We will discuss this project in class, and we will take your writing through a review process. An early draft will be due on Tuesday, February 11 to share, and the final draft will be due on March 17 in your mid-term portfolio.

You will give a 5-minute summary of it in class. We will have time to work on pieces of the assignment in class. This project will be due in its final form in your mid-term portfolio (March 17).

**Writing as Art:** For this project, you will conduct a similar writing experience from “Thirteen Ways of Looking at an Egg.” Each of you will be given a yet-to-be-determined object which you will reflect on and write about culminating in a poem, short creative nonfiction or fiction piece, or other artful writing. This assignment calls for you to hand in all reflective writing about our object along with the final creative piece in your midterm portfolio. (A handout with more details is forthcoming)

**Writing in the Professions:** For this project, you will be working in teams (even though that can be difficult) to create one of the following, the subject of which needs to be run by me before you start. You will also create a poster to present at the STARs Symposium in April (TBD):

- A Public Service Announcement Campaign which includes multi-genre/multimodal materials. Your materials must be in 4-5 different forms, but contain the same message. *This project allows you to prepare some message that will be beneficial to the public and create 4-5 forms of broadcasting it. An example would be a campaign on healthy eating where you would create a newsletter, a brochure, a logo for a t-shirt and water bottle, and a bookmark with healthy eating tips.*
- Marketing and instruction materials for a new electronic device. Your device can be one that is already in play, but your materials must take on a new direction. Use 4-5 different materials. *This project allows you to develop a new electronic device or version of an existing one. You then creating advertising and instructions for it. An example would be a new version of a smartphone where you would create an image of the design, brief instructions of the features, a full-page ad for a magazine, and a you-tube video or radio advertisement or a brochure.*
- A print and e-magazine on a subject of your choice (no pornography). Create 4-5 layouts. *This project allows you to develop a magazine on a subject of your choice featuring 4-5 layouts. An example would be a health magazine which has a short article on the benefits of walking, a new diet, an exercise routine, and an advertisement for running shoes. Your magazine should have a cover and table of contents.*
- A journalistic series which included visuals and hyperlinks. Use 4-5 different entries. *This project allows you to develop a journalistic series with inserted pictures and hyperlinks to help readers understand concepts or history, etc. An example would be a series on four areas of access to water and can include a short piece on Flint, Michigan, a piece on the Dakota Pipeline, a piece on river pollution, and a piece on clean-up of water. Embedded in these are links to further the reader’s understanding.*

We will discuss further options and details. You will also have time to work on this project in class. This project will be due in its final form with your final portfolio.

**Portfolios:** At both the mid-semester and at semester’s end, you’ll submit a portfolio of your work for me to read, critique, and grade. The mid-semester portfolio must contain an Introduction or cover piece; the pieces you worked on in the first half of the semester: your CR assignment and your WA assignment as well your Reader’s Responses. The final portfolio must contain an Introduction or cover piece the pieces you worked on in the second half of the semester: your response to the tutoring session, and your PW assignment as well your Reader’s Responses.

Your cover pieces for each portfolio (ideally 3-4pages) should critically reflect on the work you have been doing and how this work informs you about Writing and Writing Studies. Talk specifically about readings, your reactions, your interactions, and your engagement. What have you learned? What surprised you and why? Talk about the assignments and how they help you understand this area of Writing Studies. In the final portfolio discuss your future in Writing and Writing Studies.

### **Attendance, Academic Honesty, and Other Suggestions**

1. In Native communities, we talk about the four Rs: Reverence, Reciprocity, Respect, and Responsibility. I make every attempt to conduct my personal and professional life under these four Rs. I hold great admiration for each of you and for the work we will do together. We are in a space of sharing gifts of learning with one another. As with any endeavor, there are responsibilities that we take on and expectations that need to be fulfilled. It goes without saying that respectful behavior is expected from all of us. Respecting one another includes coming to class on time and prepared as well as being present and engaging in deep listening as well as contributing. While we may disagree, and I hope we will, there are ways to challenge and ask difficult questions in ways that do not devalue anyone in the room.
2. **You must come to class regularly and on time and being present in class.** Being in class demonstrates your responsibility to your studies and your peers. While things happen such as illness, car troubles, unplanned events, it is to your benefit to make every class. If something serious happens let me know, so you keep up with the work. However, if it seems that you just are not taking the class seriously, your grade will be affected. Thus, **three** or more absences (equally 1.5 weeks of class) means you should not expect to pass the course. Please notify me on the day you are absent by phone or email (listed at the top of this document). When absent, you must bring documentation such as a doctor’s note. If you are absent, you are responsible for getting and completing the assignment. Further, two times late equals one absence. If you are late, enter and take your seat without disrupting the class. Likewise, if you must leave class to use the facilities, do so without interrupting and please don’t spend more time than is necessary. Being late on a consistent basis and/or continually leaving the classroom will bring down your grade.
3. **Use of Electronic Devices:** Sometimes it seems we must be available to others 24/7, which leaves no time for anything else. Yet this “on-call status” does not allow for us to be attentive to other things. While I may not say anything to you, I (and other students) do take note of your attentiveness in class whether you are constantly on your cell phone or laptop or doing work for other classes, or playing games, or on social media. Please be respectful of us all and use devices only when necessary.
4. **Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism—** Today, there are so many tempting ways to avoid doing your own work. Between the ability to Google anything and the arrival of ChatGPT, the options are endless. But in the end, the one being cheated is yourself. Do you want to rely on a machine to do your thinking? Deliberate plagiarism is intellectual theft. It not only jeopardizes your grade, but has other serious consequences. This is a link to BSU’s Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://catalog.bridgew.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=970> . Trust yourself and your ability to do the work. We will talk more about this in class.

5. **Participation:** Attendance and participation are not the same things. Participation means that you are physically, mentally, and vocally present in class. Much of our work is based on work you have done in your reading responses or through your observations. You should come to class prepared and ready to work. Each person should respond thoughtfully and carefully to the discussion. Participation is a major player in your final grade, so I urge you to fully engage in the class.
6. **Feel challenged**—While the workload can be heavy at times, there is still so much more to contribute. If you find something that looks interesting, bring it in or discuss it in your responses. Speak and ask questions in class. Do your homework and come to class prepared to work. While it seems like a lot, stick with it. Enjoy the learning, work hard at it, and open yourself to thinking in challenging ways.
7. **Wellness and Accommodations:** Any student who needs special accommodations due to a documented disability must register with the Student Accessibility Services in the Academic Achievement Center (1<sup>st</sup> floor of RSU) [SAS@bridgew.edu](mailto:SAS@bridgew.edu) . A letter will be provided for you which needs to be delivered to me before the add/drop period. At that time, we can discuss your specific needs. Likewise, the BSU Wellness Center (<https://studentbridgew.sharepoint.com/sites/Wellness-Center> ) has many resources for students
8. The Writing Studio and all tutoring services are also located in the AAC: <https://studentbridgew.sharepoint.com/sites/AcademicAchievementCenter>
9. **Talk to me**—I make myself available in multiple ways. My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus and I can always find other times to meet with you. Let me know if there are any issues before they grow. Please do not feel intimidated by my “rules” or the course materials; they are designed to help you become a stronger reader, writer and learner. I am also interested in what you have to say as a member of our classroom community; I am involved in helping you say what you want in the context of your assignments and will respectfully respond to your work.
10. Have a sense of humor.
11. Be creative. Take risks.

**Evaluating Your Work: I value your labor in taking a class. If you complete all the work on time fulfilling all the requirements with minimal but satisfactory effort, you will earn a C for the class. Earning a B means you complete the work on time fulfilling all the requirements with above average effort. Earning an A means you complete the work on time fulfilling all the requirements, demonstrating clear and critical thinking, and going above the ordinary. Below is a rough scale for the components of the course.**

I will not be grading individual pieces for this class, but I will be making comments on them. Your grade for this course will be based on your two portfolios—one at mid-term and one at the semester’s end. While not receiving grades on individual projects can be frustrating, a portfolio system offers room for you to develop as a writer. Your two letter grades for these portfolios include

- Meeting all the requirements in each project and for the portfolio;
- Assessing the quality of your written work, including your thoughtful revisions;
- The quality of your effort in class, in workshops, in class discussions, in general;
- How you demonstrate your willingness to try new things, think in new ways, and explore different perspectives.

**Breakdown of assessment percentages:**

Participation	10%
Reader's Response	15%
Writing in the Professions	15%
Writing Studies	15%
Writing as Art	15%
Two Portfolios	30%

You should, from your efforts and my comments, know how you are doing in the class. At any time during the semester you are unsure, come speak with me.



**Tentative Schedule** (Like any piece of writing, this is a draft and will undergo revision. As we go on I may update some readings, but I will let you know.)

**Note:** It is your responsibility to read materials **before** coming to class and to prepare any assignments. All readings will be posted to my website ([www.joycerain.com](http://www.joycerain.com)) [Spring 2024>ENGL 226>Readings] under the day they are due for class.

Some readings will be from the e-book *Bad Ideas* which is accessible at the top of the reading list.

**WEEK 1: January 23—**

**T** We meet for the first time today, so introductions are necessary. For your introduction, provide a professional social media profile. Your profile and picture of your choice will be compiled on a Google Doc.

Read “Meaning” (Lisa King) and discuss.

Discuss: What is this class about? What should this class be about?

**Prepare for next class:** Please read “The Rhetorical Situation” and “Rhetoric is Synonymous with Empty Speech”(in *Bad Ideas*) and watch the YouTube video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYMUCz9bHAs>

Complete your Reader’s Response and bring a copy to class.

**WEEK 2: January 28 and 30**

**T** Rhetoric—What the heck is it? Introduction to section on Composition Rhetoric

Discussion of readings

Mini-presentations on careers in Writing and Writing Studies—sign-up sheet

**Prepare for next class:** Please read Brandt (literacy), “America Is Facing a Literacy Crisis” (in *Bad Ideas*), and “Why Johnny Can’t Write.” Find another “Johnny Can’t…” article to compare. What do you see as a crisis? Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class.

**TH** Inkshedding and discussion

**Prepare for next class:** Please read Royster and Villanueva. Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class.

**WEEK 3: February 4 and 6**

**T** Discuss Royster and Villanueva

How are Royster and Villanueva countering mainstream rhetorics?

Writing groups to discuss Composition Rhetoric (CR) assignment.

**Prepare for next class:** Please read Anzaldúa. Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class.

**TH** Discuss Anzaldúa. How is her rhetorical style different?

**Prepare for next class:** Prepare your CR assignment for an in-class workshop. As a fun activity in honor of Valentine’s Day, write a love poem that takes place in the kitchen or in a junk yard. Bring your poem to class.

**WEEK 4: February 11 and 13**

**T** In-class workshop and time to work on CR assignment.

Share poems.

**Prepare for next class:** Please read the introduction to *Errors and Expectations* and “Errors: Windows to the Mind.” Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class. Also, please write 1-2 paragraphs on your grammar pet peeve—that is, what is one grammatical mistake that just drives you crazy? Why?

**TH** Discussion of *Errors and Expectations* and “Errors: Windows to the Mind.”



Share grammar pet peeves.

**Prepare for next class:** Please read 3 selections from the section *Bad Ideas* about Style, Usage, and Grammar in *Bad Ideas* Complete your Reader's Response and bring copy to class. Draft your CR Project.

**During Week 5 Monday classes will be held on Wednesday**

**WEEK 5: February 18 and 20**

**T** Discussion of Style, Usage and Grammar

Share drafts of CR Project

Introduction to Writing as Art. Handing out objects

**Prepare for next class:** Please read "Thirteen Ways of Looking at an Egg" Complete your Reader's Response and bring copy to class.

**TH** Inkshedding Discuss "Thirteen Ways" WA assignment and time in class to work on it.

**Prepare for next class:** Please read "Creative Writing is a Unique Category" in *Bad Ideas*

**WEEK 6: February 25 and 27 (these readings are likely going to change)**

**T** Discuss "CW is Unique Category" Time in class to work on WA assignment

**Prepare for next class:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/seth-abramson/six-myths-about-the-creat\\_b\\_705279.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/seth-abramson/six-myths-about-the-creat_b_705279.html) Look up information on MFA programs. Complete your Reader's Response and bring copy to class . Continue working on your WA assignment and bring that to class to share.

**TH** Discussion of the MFA. Writing groups to discuss WA assignment.

**Prepare for next class:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ronald-h-balson/bestseller-success-storie\\_b\\_4064574.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ronald-h-balson/bestseller-success-storie_b_4064574.html) ; <http://www.vqronline.org/blog/2012/10/15/literary-press-selfpub/#.Utw58RMo6P8>

Complete your Reader's Response and bring copy to class . Bring your object descriptions to workshop.

**Week 7: March 4 and 6**

**T** Discussion of publishing. Workshop of WA assignment.

**Prepare for next class:** Begin preparing your mid-term portfolio. Write a draft of your cover piece to share with writing groups.

**TH** Share cover pieces in writing group. Time in class to continue working on them.

**Prepare for next class:** Please read "The Art of Revision" and "How to Read a Poem." Also read poems from handout. Write a response and bring it to class. Bring a poem to class—your own or one you enjoy. Ready your mid-term portfolio to turn in next class.

**WEEK 8: March 11 and March 13—Spring Break. Enjoy and be safe.**

**WEEK 9: March 18 and March 20**

**T Mid-term Portfolios Due.** Discuss Poems, "The Art of Revision" and "How to Read a Poem." Share poems.

**Prepare for next class:** Please read "Multimodal" "Resume Guide" and the website on Technical Writing. Write a response and bring it to class.

**TH** Introduction to Technical and Professional Writing. Discussion of readings. Choose groups for collaborative project. In class project.

**Prepare for next class:** Please read the following: "Digital Immigrants/Digital Natives, in *Bad Ideas*" "Can We Teach Digital Natives?" Pecha Kucha <http://www.pechakucha.org/> "We Have Met the Enemy..."

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/27/world/27powerpoint.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/27/world/27powerpoint.html?_r=0)

C.R.A.P. Information: [http://www.presentationzen.com/chapter6\\_spread.pdf](http://www.presentationzen.com/chapter6_spread.pdf)

?" Complete your Reader's Response and bring copy to class .

**WEEK 10: March 25 and March 27**

**T** Discussion of readings and Presentation Styles.

**Prepare for next class:** Please read an online manual for your phone or other electronic device. Look specifically at the sections that describe your device and the settings. Try following one of the directions to try something you have not done or known about. How usable are the directions? Also, please read “Usability over Time.” In your response discuss both these readings. Finally, look at “Crochet 101.”

**TH** Discussion of usability. In class we will be practicing with directions.

**Prepare for next class:** Write directions for making your favorite meal or craft or something else you make. (Do not look up the directions, but rather write your directions from your memory). Bring to class to share with writing group. Also, please view “Laws that Choke Creativity”: [http://www.ted.com/talks/larry\\_lessig\\_says\\_the\\_law\\_is\\_strangling\\_creativity.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/larry_lessig_says_the_law_is_strangling_creativity.html) and Check out Malik William’s website: <http://www.liptunesmusic.com/>. Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class .

### **WEEK 11: April 1 and 3**

**T** Share directions with writing group.

Discussion of copyright and fair use.

**Prepare for next class:** Please read “Bound by Law” and check out US copyright laws. Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class .

**TH** Discussion of “Bound by Law” and check out US copyright laws.. Preparing Professional Writing (PW) assignment. **Creating Posters.**

**Prepare for next class:** Please read “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty” and excerpts from *The Non-Designers Design Book*

**and** read around on the following websites:

<http://www.users.muohio.edu/romanots/assignments.htm> and

<http://writing.colostate.edu/gallery/multigenre/introduction.htm>

<http://multimodalcomposition.wordpress.com/2011/02/06/defining-multimodal-composition/>

and <http://www.ncte.org/governance/MultimodalLiteracies>

Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class . Bring your PW assignment to date.

### **WEEK 12: April 8 and April 10**

**T** Discuss “*Sticky*,” *Non-Designers*, and *multimodal*. **In-class project.** Writing groups to share PW assignment.

**Prepare for next class:** Prepare your part of PW assignment for in-class work.

**TH In-class work on collaborative project**

Introduction to Embodied Rhetorics and Cultural Rhetorics

**Prepare for next class:** Please read excerpts from *Rhetorical Bodies* and Levy on bodies. Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class .

### **WEEK 13: April 15 and 17**

**T**—No class

**TH** Discussion of *Rhetorical Bodies* and *Levy* Continued work of PW assignment

**Prepare for next class:** Please read “U.S. Memorials…” Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class .

### **WEEK 14: April 22 and 24**

**T** Discussion of “U.S. Memorials” Work for PW assignment **and posters**

**Prepare for next class:** Please read “Land-based Pedagogies.” Complete your Reader’s Response and bring copy to class .

**TH** Discussion of “Land-based..”. Workshop for poster presentation

**Prepare for next class:** Finish Posters for symposium

**April** STARs Symposium Begins

**WEEK 15: April 29 and May 1**

**T Prepare for next class:** Please read the introduction to *Legible* Complete your Reader's Response and bring copy to class .

**TH Catch-up and Wrap-up**

**Prepare for next class:** Prepare your final portfolio to hand in by May 10th

**Classes end Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup> . May 6<sup>th</sup> is Reading Day. Finals are May 7<sup>th</sup> -13**