

LIVING IN (& WITH) THE WORLD ARGUING ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

TCXG 272
WRITING EFFECTIVELY
WINTER 2008

MW 10:30- 12:45@ CP 334A
Website: www.catalyst.washington.edu
Librarian: Jennifer Sundheim, sundheim@u.washington.edu
TLC -<http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/ctl/>

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This intermediate expository writing course is designed for students with previous college-level expository writing experience and focuses on writing critical analyses of a range of texts in the arts and sciences as preparation for upper division writing tasks. In this course, emphasis will be placed on close reading, critical thinking, and managing the writing process to developing well-supported arguments within give time constraints.

For this course we will consider the theme of living in the world and sustainability. According to UNESCO, "sustainability is a systemic concept, relating to the continuity of economic, social, institutional, and environmental aspects of human society. It is intended to be a means of configuring civilization and human activity so that society, its members and its economies are able to meet their needs and express their greatest potential in the present, while preserving biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and planning and acting for the ability to maintain these ideals indefinitely. Sustainability affects every level of organization, from the local neighborhood to the entire planet." Generally sustainability encompasses three intertwined ideals: a healthy economy, a healthy society and a healthy environment.

On the surface this may appear to be a class focused on environmentalism; however, the goal of this course is to use the environment as a focal point to discuss persuasion and argumentation about a timely and often divisive topic. Throughout the course we will read a variety of texts that debate about the environment and sustainability – examining arguments from multiple perspectives – with the intention of uncovering how language is used to persuade. Daily writing assignments and discussions will prepare you to effectively make your own persuasive argument about a related topic that is interesting to you.

REQUIRED TEXTS



Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *"They say/I say": The moves that matter in academic writing*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006.
Hallowell, Christopher, and Walter Levy. *Listening to Earth*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2005.
Lunsford, Andrea A., John J. Ruskiewicz, and Keith Walters. *Everything's an argument*. 4th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

Note: You will also be required to do research to find complimentary texts about topics that interest you.





C O U R S E O B J E C T I V E S

It is not my goal to make you an expert writer for all writing situations in 10 weeks because that would be impossible. Rather, my goal is to provide you with rhetorical tools, opportunities to practice, and feedback on your writing so that you gain a greater awareness of how writing is used as a tool of persuasion so that you may write more effectively in a variety of rhetorical situations. In order to help you gain writing skills and meet the learning goals stated below by the end of the quarter, we will focus on close reading, researching, and the writing process.




Close Reading

-  Succinctly summarize the central point of texts and analyze texts for credibility and persuasive techniques.
-  Synthesize readings to see common themes and understand the critical debates about the topic of sustainability.




Research

-  Determine probable accuracy of texts and research by questioning the source of the data, the limitations of the information gathering tools or strategies, and the reasonableness of the conclusions.
-  Conduct independent research specific to your particular area of interest.
-  Identify subject areas related to a research topic, use relevant databases available through the UW Tacoma Library, and integrate appropriate sources.
-  Assess quantity, quality, and relevance of search results to determine gaps in information retrieved and revise search strategies as necessary.

Writing Process

-  Use appropriate pre-writing strategies to brainstorm, analyze, and research subject matter before writing.
-  Give in-depth feedback on others' writing.
-  Utilize feedback from readers to improve your own writing through revisions that entail changes in content and structure as well as sentence-level editing.

Writing

-  Incorporate primary and/or secondary research into analyses.
-  Write two short (3-4 pages) and one longer (6-8 pages) thesis-driven critical analyses that are well-organized and clear, using in-text and bibliographic citations in APA or MLA.
-  Complete three formal assignments (approx. 11-15 pages total) and do a major revision of at least one assignment.

C L A S S R O O M C O M M U N I T Y

Consider this class as your reading and writing community where everyone's ideas and opinions are worthy of attention and consideration, regardless of whether you agree with them. I encourage you to use inclusive language and non-sexist language whenever possible. Respect for diversity of all kinds – in terms of race, ethnicity, age, sex and gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, political and ideological belief, and so on -- is vital to creating a respectful, safe, and STIMULATING intellectual environment. These diversities and differences can be our most valuable asset as a class. Please respect the other members of this class so we can all be open and honest about who we are and what we think and believe.

G R A D E D W O R K

Participation (10%)

Participation grades will be evaluated on a check system based on engagement with classroom activities and assignment guidelines. Additionally, members of the class will also participate in an online discussion board, which is meant to locate our writing in a network that is readable by all and allows for continuing conversations amongst groups. You will be required to post responses to the board, which will be evaluated based on critical insight and productive use of "comments." Finally, thorough and insightful reviews of your peers' papers as well as thoughtful participation in the peer-review writing workshops are important components of your participation grade and will be evaluated accordingly.

The use of personal computers are permitted for class activities, but not for personal use, such as checking email, surfing web sites, visiting chat rooms, and/or playing music. Distracting behavior such as: sleeping in class; chatting with classmates or whispering during lectures and/or discussions; texting; arriving late; and leaving early during class activities is frowned upon and will be negatively reflected in your participation grade.

Daily Writing Assignments (10%)

Daily writing assignments are vital to fostering discussions in which each student contributes original, informed ideas about the text. These assignments include short informal writing activities, response papers, and early drafts of formal writing assignments. These short writing assignments will be graded on the thoroughness of their engagement with the text and rhetorical control; grades range from no credit to a check plus for excellent work.

Essays (50%) - Literature Reviews (15% each) & Final Essay (20%)

You will be required to produce two critical literature reviews (3-4 pgs) that ask you to investigate a topic of your choosing in relation to the course theme of sustainability. You will substantially build upon and revise one of the literature review essays to write a thesis-driven critical analysis (7-8 pgs) in which you make original, intellectually rigorous, and well-researched arguments. You will be required to utilize peer review – both giving and receiving feedback from peers – to work through the writing process. These papers will be graded on the complexity of the argument, use of textual evidence to support arguments, rhetorical use of language and conventions, and the comprehensiveness of revision between drafts.

Multi-Media Research Project (20%)

You will develop a project of your choice such as a poster, website, brochure, report, or visual presentation (or an alternative approach) on a topic related to your final essay. We will have a project fair at the end of the quarter, at which time you will be able to share what you have learned with others. The project is intended to compliment your research and writing process, by providing you an alternative approach to analyze persuasion and argument in 5 different text-types and demonstrate how arguments about sustainability are made while employing alternative media forms that show attention to considerations of audience.

Portfolio (10%)

You will build a portfolio throughout the quarter, either electronic or paper-based; your portfolio will serve as a space for you to compile texts and use informal writing to analyze arguments for your multi-media project. In addition, the portfolio offers you a place to reflect and demonstrate what you are taking away from this course in relation to the course objectives, as well as other things you learned "on the side". For those of you in IAS or thinking about graduate school, you will need samples of your writing, so you should save everything; this portfolio can serve as the start of your IAS exit writing portfolio or as a place to save your work for later reference.

L A T E W O R K

Because assignments build upon each other, turning work in late seriously impedes your ability to complete the required work of the course and negatively impacts your ability to contribute to discussions and your peer writing group. Therefore, work submitted late will result in penalties which will affect your overall grade for the course. It is your responsibility to be aware of deadlines and turn your work in a timely manner. Daily writing assignments, such as response papers, annotated bibliographies, and drafts, will not receive any credit if turned in after the beginning of class on the appropriate due date. In regard to essays, I will subtract .5 (or half a letter grade) for every class day that the paper is late. Essays not received in hard copy at the beginning of class are considered late and will be graded accordingly. I do not accept assignments via email. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the hard copy to me in class or during office hours AND it is your responsibility to get the assignments from a classmate or from the course website. You must attend class regularly in order to stay informed and should not count on the course website as your only source of information.

E X P E C T A T I O N S

As the grader of your classroom participation and written work, I have high expectations. I am most interested in seeing you demonstrate your ability to: work with complex ideas; take intellectual risks; use language and conventions rhetorically; adapt to different audiences, genres, and rhetorical purposes; consider counterarguments and make concessions to opposing viewpoints; explore and evaluate resources thoughtfully and seriously; comprehensively revise your work and rethink your approaches to ideas and writing. I don't grade on a curve. That means anyone has the opportunity to earn whatever grade his/her work merits as measured by the course grading rubric. Final grades in the "A" range (4.0) will be reserved strictly for exceptional work. "B" grades (3.0) will be considered for work above the average. "C" grades (2.0) will reflect the typical expectations of college work for a sophomore-level class. "D" grades (1.0) will be for work below typical expectations. "F" grades will be for work that does not meet the class standards.

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Participation	Numerical Equivalent
A	4.0		
A-	3.5	✓+	4.0
B	3	✓	3.0
B-	2.5	✓-	2.0
C	2	0	0
C-	1.5		
D	1		
F	.5 No credit		

C O M M U N I C A T I O N

It is my goal to create an environment where both teacher and students routinely practice a respectful exchange of thoughtful ideas. I believe that learning is a result of relationship, and communication is at the heart of that interchange. Because I want to avoid anything that causes a break-down of good dialogue, I've learned to be wary of e-mail. While it is convenient, e-mail can also create problems precisely because it is so instant. People have been known to say things in e-mail that they never would have said if they were facing their listener or if they had taken time to gather their thoughts. Feel free to e-mail me questions that need quick answers or to set up appointments, but anything important should be discussed in a way that promotes maximum understanding. So let's plan on face-to-face conversation when anything of issue is at stake – that's what my office hours are for, and I'd love for you to stop by. If those times are impossible for you, then we can arrange for another mutually convenient time. (By the way, another insufficient time and place to discuss anything of substance is the busy setting before or after class.) Because email is another form of course-related communications, there are boundaries around the times in which I am available and when you can expect a response; in other words, you should not expect a response to emails sent outside of traditional working hours, such as in the evenings or weekends. If you are absent for any reason, please do not email me to ask what you missed. Better to contact a trustworthy peer and to check the course website.

A C A D E M I C H O N E S T Y

Academic honesty involves properly citing other people's ideas and language in your writing. In your writing in this class you are encouraged to cite extensively from the work of others. However, if you fail to cite other people's ideas and language in your work, you've committed plagiarism. Summarizing someone else's work and not citing them is also plagiarism. Don't plagiarize. If you run out of time or energy on an assignment, come and talk to me about an extension. For more information on academic honesty and how to avoid plagiarism see <http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/orientation/guide/guide-13.html>.

I N C L E M E N T W E A T H E R

In the case of inclement weather (snow and ice), Call the UWT snow #: 253-383-INFO. This number will inform you whether the campus has been closed. If the campus is open, we will be having class. You can also call us at our offices (253.692.4755 or 253.6924624) for recorded information about the meeting of our class. In almost all cases, we will meet as long as the university is open; I will send an announcement to the class listserv if class is to be cancelled.

T E A C H I N G A N D L E A R N I N G C E N T E R (T L C)

The Teaching and Learning Center offers academic support for students at all levels of expertise--review, undergraduate, graduate and TA. For your writing, reading, learning strategies and public speaking needs, please make an appointment online at <http://moodle.tacoma.washington.edu/signup/index.shtml> or visit KEY 202. For your math needs, assistance is available on a drop-in basis, Monday to Friday, hours are posted at http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/ctl/about_us/mathhours.cfm

D I S A B I L I T Y S U P P O R T S E R V I C E S

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a temporary or permanent disability, contact Lisa Tice, Manager of Disability Support Services (DSS) in the Mattress Factory Building, Suite 206. An appointment can be made through the front desk of Student Affairs (253-692-4501), by phoning Lisa directly at (253) 692-4493 (voice)/(253) 692-4413 (TTY) or via e-mail at ltice@u.washington.edu. Appropriate accommodations are arranged after you have conferred with the DDS Manager and presented the required documentation of your disability to DSS.