

Introduction to College Writing: WR 101

Fall 2023

Course Description

I envision the goals of Writing 101 at Emerson to be twofold:

1. Building an understanding of discourse, rhetoric, genre, and audience through the exploration of texts, and the generation of writing.
2. Fostering student implementations of writing processes that treat writing not as an individual, singular act, but as an ongoing process that involves drafting, peer review, revision, and self-care.

In order to build an understanding of discourse, rhetoric, genre, and audience, you will be interacting with appropriately challenging texts that may stretch your understanding of societal or academic issues while also introducing you to a variety of forms, genres, and rhetorical choices. Rigorous exploration of these texts both outside and inside of class will help you to develop reading and analysis skills, and link genre distinction to rhetorical choice and situation. I encourage you to push beyond whether or not they personally like or dislike a text, towards **why a text is doing what it is**. By generating essays, you will learn cornerstone rhetorical moves such as coming to terms, stating propositions, forwarding and countering, and taking an approach. You should come to understand these techniques not merely as copy and paste formulae, but as strategic building blocks for communicating your ideas and participating in academic and other discourses.

Equally important is that each of you **develops an individual writing process**. Students should come to understand the writing process as consisting of several crucial steps: drafting, peer-review, and revising being the most important. Alongside those required steps, you should explore your own writing processes, experimenting with different generation and revision practices that work for you. Examples of this are collaborative thinking, word maps, outlining, free-writing, and mindfulness exercises. It is impossible for me to prepare you for every type of writing you may ever be asked to generate in their lives, but it is possible to prepare you to feel confident in breaking down any writing tasks into a series of steps, and help you get to know what writing practices work effectively for them.

In Writing 101, you will be taught forms of writing such as the 2 Reasons Essay, Rhetorical Analysis, the Personal Essay, and the Scholarly Essay. The 2 Reasons Essay and the Scholarly Essay are especially critical.

Above all, Writing 101 is a space where you should come to understand that **your voice matters**. Through the exercises and readings in Writing 101, students should grow the confidence and skills they need to not only communicate their ideas, but to believe in them as well.

For my course specifically, I ask each student to keep a journal throughout the semester, in order to document the writing and learning process. I also implement the concept of the Writing Studio, which in idea is a space that functions similarly to an art studio, in which students are invited to work on their individual projects in a shared, collaborative, and creative space.

Learning Objectives

Emerson's strategic learning objectives state that our graduates should be ready to create, communicate, collaborate, critically think, and civically engage. In alignment with those SLOs, by the end of the semester you will be able to:

- Understand the principle of discourse variation by examining how different forms of the essay—academic, literary, popular—enable writers to create authorial stances, position themselves in relation to texts, readers, and the wider culture, and come to terms with significant issues through analysis and interpretation.
- Work with a range of texts to understand how writers negotiate linguistic, cultural, and political differences in a society divided along the lines of class, race, gender, sexuality, language, nationality, and so on. Understand the writer's responsibility to participate in conversations about diversity and to hold themselves accountable for their position and how it influences the conversation.
- Identify and work with rhetorical strategies that are typical of the reasoning in academic and intellectual writing, such as putting issues in context, stating propositions, giving reasons, evaluating evidence, justifying assumptions, negotiating differences, and pointing out implications.
- Recognize that writing is a process by learning to write peer reviews that offer useful suggestions for other students' work in progress and to design effective revision strategies by reflecting critically on work in progress.

Course Requirements/ Grade Distribution

Writing Project 1: 15%

Writing Project 2: 20%

Writing Project 3: 20%

Writing Project 4: 20%

Participation*: 25%

*Participation includes journal entries, attendance, in-class participation (group work, attentiveness, and raising hands in class, etc.) and being prepared and ready for each class meeting.

Reading and Assignment Schedules

All readings and assignments must be completed by the beginning of class time on the date they are listed in the Canvas calendar.

Required Texts

- *Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts* by Joseph Harris (second edition) — available in the college bookstore or on reserve in the library in both print and [ebook](#) formats. It is also available online for free.
- *Writers & Readers* — this is an Emerson-produced text provided as a free PDF, but if you prefer a paper copy the print/copy center on campus can produce one for you.
- Additional readings will be either posted on Canvas, or accessible through the Iwasaki Library databases.

Attendance

This will be an extremely collaborative semester, reliant on group discussion, small group work, and regular engagement with the writing of your peers. For that reason regular attendance and participation are crucial and students are expected to attend all class meetings unless there are extenuating circumstances. If you are unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to let me know as early as possible, and to plan ahead if you know of a schedule conflict at some point during the semester. Prior notification does not necessarily mean the absence is excused, and it is your responsibility to be familiar with college policies (as explained in your student handbook) regarding what is and isn't counted as an excused absence. But all of us have lives outside the classroom which can become complicated, so if you will trust me to be humane and compassionate, I will trust you not to take advantage of that.

Writing Studies program policy is that more than two unexcused absences will lower your semester grade by one half letter (e.g., B+ becomes B), and more than three will result in further reduction and possible failure of the course. Being tardy twice also counts as an absence. Please be aware that except under unusual circumstances, attendance via Zoom will not be an option. If you miss class I will be glad to meet with you during my office hours to help you catch up on the conversation.

Materials

Please bring assigned reading to class if we will be discussing it that day, either in electronic or hard copy form. If you are without a copy of the day's reading, it may count as an unexcused absence. Please also come prepared with a way to access your Writing Journal.

Due Dates and Late Assignments

On the day an assignment is due, it should be posted to Canvas by the time specified on the calendar. Low-stakes assignments such as reading responses are intended to foster discussion in

class, so will not receive credit if turned in after the conversation has happened (or during class while the conversation is happening). Major assignments like essays will lose one half-letter grade each day they are late unless we have agreed to an extension. Please also note that the process of drafting, peer review, and revision is a primary focus of this course, and while drafts will not be graded the failure to turn one in on time will lower your grade on the final assignment, because it will prevent you from fully participating in that collaborative process with your classmates. So having a draft ready on time for peer review should always be a priority even if you know the draft is a long way from what the finished essay will be (as a first draft should be!). If you find yourself overwhelmed or struggling with an assignment, please talk to me as early as possible so we can work together to overcome the challenge. Due dates are necessary for our class to work together in a cumulative way across the semester, but it is always my goal to support you and to provide flexibility when necessary and when possible.

Classroom Technology

You are always welcome to bring your laptop or tablet to class, and will often be allowed or encouraged to use them for class purposes (though you are not required to have a device and assignments are designed with this in mind). My preference is to give you the benefit of the doubt and assume you are using your devices for work, rather than distraction. However, if your device becomes disruptive to other class members or myself, I will ask you to put it away.

Other Resources

Please adhere to MLA formatting and citation guidelines for all assignments. You may find more information and examples at the link provided by Purdue University:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the college's policy on plagiarism as explained in your student handbook and on the college website. Please know, however, that learning to work with sources effectively and variously is a primary goal of this course, and errors may occur as you do that. You won't ever be in trouble for honest misunderstanding or formatting errors, which are bound to occur when we write in new ways, as opposed to deliberate, deceptive cheating which will be taken quite seriously.

Academic Assistance

The Lacerte Writing and Academic Resource Center aims to support Emerson students and faculty by developing personalized strategies for academic success. Writing Consultants are available for projects related to writing, research, and communication, while Academic Success Consultants work with students on time management, study approaches, academic problem

solving, and English Language Learning development. Professional staff members advise and coach students who would like additional support. Content-specific peer tutors are also available by request. The WARC's mission is to develop confident and independent writers and learners. All appointments are free.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Emerson is committed to providing equal access and support to all students who qualify through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may fully participate in the Emerson experience. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services at SAS@emerson.edu or 617-824- 8592 to make an appointment with an SAS staff member. Students are encouraged to contact SAS early in the semester. Please be aware that accommodations are not applied retroactively.

Statement of Diversity and Inclusion

Every student in this class will be honored and respected as an individual with distinct experiences, talents, and backgrounds. Students will be treated fairly regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, socioeconomic status, or national identity. Issues of diversity may be a part of class discussion, assigned material, and projects. The instructor will make every effort to ensure that an inclusive environment exists for all students. If you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the classroom climate, please do not hesitate to speak with the course instructor or to contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 617-824-8528 or by email at diversity_inclusion@emerson.edu.

Statement of Equal Opportunity

If you have been impacted by discrimination, harassment or sexual violence, I am available to support you, and help direct you to available resources on and off campus. Additionally, the Office of Equal Opportunity (oeo@emerson.edu; 617-824-8999) is available to meet with you and discuss options to address concerns and to provide you with support resources. Please note that because I am an Emerson employee, any information shared with me related to discrimination, harassment or sexual violence will also be shared with the Office of Equal Opportunity. If you would like to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Healing & Advocacy Collective, the Emerson Wellness Center, or the Center for Spiritual Life.

Plagiarism Statement

It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the [College's policy on plagiarism](#). If you have any question concerning the Emerson plagiarism policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, speak to your instructor.

Copyright

United States law governs the use of copyrighted material. These laws prohibit reproduction of the material for purposes other than the intended instructional purposes of this course. Other uses, including commercial use and any further electronic distribution of the material, may constitute copyright infringement. For more information, see [Emerson College's Copyright Policy](#).

In-Class Recording Statement

Regardless of modality or whether this course is being recorded by the College with the permission of the students for classroom purposes, this class is considered a private environment and it is a setting in which copyrighted materials, creative works and educational records may be displayed. Audio or video recording, filming, photographing, viewing, transmitting, producing or publishing the image or voice of another person or that person's materials, creative works or educational records without the person's knowledge and expressed consent is strictly prohibited.