First-Year Writing Program

Fall 2018

Course Descriptions

Brief Overview of First-Year Writing Options

At Carnegie Mellon, all undergraduate students are required to fulfill a First-Year Writing course requirement. This requirement can be completed in two different ways:

Option 1: Enroll in one of two full-semester courses (9 units each):
See p. 3
76-101: Interpretation and Argument
76-102: Advanced First-Year Writing (by invitation only – Apply here by June 29th for consideration)

Option 2: “You pick 2”: Enroll in two of three half-semester “mini” courses* (4.5 units each):
See p. 12
76-106: Writing About Literature, Art and Culture
76-107: Writing About Data
76-108: Writing About Public Problems
*Minis should be completed back-to-back within a single semester

76-100, Reading and Writing in an Academic Context, is a prerequisite for some incoming students whose first or primary language is not English. Students who are placed in 76-100 should complete it during their first semester, before choosing one of the two above options to fulfill the First-Year Writing requirement during their second semester.

If you are a multilingual student and you have received an email about taking a placement exam, then you should wait to register for a First-Year Writing course until your course placement has been determined. All other students can enroll in either one full-semester course or two mini courses, as detailed above.

Please see the following pages for more information and specific course topics for each of the First-Year Writing courses.

*This version of the document was updated on 6/14/2018 and is subject to change.
General Description of 76-100: Reading and Writing in an Academic Context (9 units)

76-100 is a portfolio-based, academic reading and writing course for multilingual students, particularly those who are not native speakers of English or who consider English to be their weaker language. In the course, students develop a rhetorical and linguistic toolkit of resources for accommodating the needs of readers within a North American university context. Students read and write short arguments and then revise those arguments throughout the semester for their portfolios. By the end of the course, students should be able to articulate a stronger understanding of themselves as writers of academic English, which should include identifying particular areas of strength and areas that they need to develop further. Students who take this course qualify through an online placement test that is administered through the university prior to the fall semester.

Scroll down to see the particular descriptions for the 76-100 courses, as well as their schedules and faculty.

Technology and its Quandaries
We are surrounded by technology. It permeates every aspect of our lives enabling us to communicate, work, and heal more efficiently. It also intrudes on our personal and moral spaces raising questions about privacy, job security, and medical boundaries. In this course, we will examine the impacts of the internet/social media, artificial intelligence, and biomedical engineering on daily life and the ethical issues raised by each of these phenomena. We have the ability to create and share items that were once considered part of science fiction, but now we must decide which activities and projects are in the best interest of life on earth, and which could ultimately destroy us.

Over the course of the semester, students will read a range of texts, and then compare, contrast, summarize, evaluate, and synthesize authors’ arguments. Students will use the information and skills learned from these analyses to propose the subject for their final papers: a source-based, thesis-driven argument that takes a position on one of the controversies about technology.

Representing my Self in Language...Being Myself in Language
What does it mean when we choose to write in another language? How does multilingualism shape our identities and our perspectives about the world? How do we write with an authentic voice in English? In this section of 76-100, we will read and write a variety of different texts about the general theme of what it means for someone to use more than one language. For our class, we will specifically focus upon themes related to using English as an additional—or second—language. Throughout the semester, we will summarize, compare, and respond to other writers who discuss various topics related to the various ways we might relate to English. Finally, in response to these sources we will have read throughout the semester, we will write our own positions about our relationship(s) with the languages we use. By the end of the semester, students will submit a portfolio of their semester’s work, including their own texts about the course theme and their reflections about their own writing processes and language choices in academic English.

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<td>76100 B</td>
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<td>Kevin Haworth</td>
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<td>76100 C</td>
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<td>76100 I</td>
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Option 1: Full-semester course to fulfill First-Year Writing Option

General Description of 76-101: Interpretation and Argument (9 units)

Gen Ed: Fulfills Category 1: Communicating requirement for H&SS and a designated writing course for other colleges.

Interpretation and Argument is a foundational, inquiry-driven writing course that introduces students to a variety of strategies for making compositional decisions in writing and communication. Within the course, students learn genre-based skills applicable to a variety of different fields. Students use a comparative genre analysis method to learn how to use models to take on new writing tasks, including an academic research proposal and a research article that contributes to an ongoing academic conversation. Faculty who teach 76101 typically select texts—ranging from scholarly texts, journalism, and film—about an issue so that students can identify interesting questions for their own research projects. Students should expect explicit, research-based instruction, practice, and reflection to build knowledge in controlling their writing processes and writing clear, well-supported, reader-oriented arguments. Because the course emphasizes the real stakes of communicating with readers and listeners, students share with their peers both low and high stakes written work within an interactive and collaborative classroom environment.

Section B
Jamie Smith MWF 9:30-10:20
Never Tickle a Sleeping Dragon: Harry Potter and Popular Culture
In 1997, J.K. Rowling first published Harry Potter and Philosopher’s Stone. Since then, the Harry Potter series has been the most widely sold book franchise to date. It has been translated into 67 languages, made into eight blockbuster films, excessively commercialized and even built into a theme park. This year we will additionally see the second installment in its spin-off series, Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them. With all of this excitement, the main question our 76-101 course will explore is: are the Harry Potter books “good”? Why or why not? What has made Harry Potter so popular in our culture, and is this popularity deserved? We will consider issues related to Harry Potter and education; for instance, how do we reconcile the novels’ current status in popular culture with a more formal literary tradition? Additionally, we will interrogate the economic status of the Harry Potter series: is the formidable franchise merely a money-making game? Or are technological and social media like Pottermore revolutionizing the way we read and consider literary culture? In what ways does Harry Potter compare with other commercially successful series (Star Wars, The Hunger Games, the Marvel universe)? Finally, we will explore how literary critics (both inside and outside of academia) view the novels from an ethical standpoint; namely, are the Harry Potter books harmless entertainment, or do they promote potentially dangerous ideologies for children?

In this course, we will look at a collection of articles, excerpts and film that explore these very questions. As a class, we will converse around all of the Harry Potter novels, though students need not have read the series previously. Students will demonstrate their ability to analyze and synthesize the arguments around perspectives on Harry Potter in popular culture. At the end of the course, students will have the opportunity to develop their own contributions to the ongoing discussion regarding Harry Potter’s place in culture, academia, and the marketplace.

Section C
Jamie Smith MWF 10:30-11:20
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Section CC
Rebecca Wigginton MWF 10:30-11:20
Cyborgs, Microchips, and “Playing God”: The Ethics and Possibilities of Human Enhancement Technology
What is the relationship between technology and (or in) the human body, and what could it be? At Code Conference 2016, Elon Musk suggested that “we are already cyborgs,” and as far back as the 1960s, Marshal McLuhan’s groundbreaking work in media studies argued that we’ve always used technology as extensions of ourselves. This course invites you to consider the possible and acceptable forms that human-integrated technology may take in the future and what forms they have already taken in the present. Given that this shift is already happening, and that many experts are confident the shift points to the next big turn in our technological and human evolution, we will not limit our course discussions to whether or not it “will” or “should” occur, but we will instead focus on consideration of what forms human-implanted technology is already taking and seems likely to take next. Within this frame, we will discuss the implications these forms have for ethics, medicine, religion, “big data,” and the law. Readings include both popular and academic articles, along with one novel that imagines what human-integrated technology might look like in the near future—M.T. Anderson’s Feed (2002). As we enter into an ongoing conversation taking place in a variety of fields, you will develop skills in the fundamental practices of critical reading and academic writing and apply them to complete assignments in which you analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, write an academic research proposal based upon those synthesizes, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation on human-integrated technology.

Section D
Rebecca Wigginton MWF 11:30-12:20
Cyborgs, Microchips, and “Playing God”: The Ethics and Possibilities of Human Enhancement Technology
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Section DD
Sarah Hancock MWF 11:30-12:20
Coffee Culture: The Brand and Brew of Caffeine Addiction
How do you take your coffee? A shot of espresso? Lots of milk and sugar? Fair-trade only? Do you like to drink your coffee in the shop that features local art? Perhaps the one with the comfy couches? In cities, coffee shops are around every corner, offering a warm beverage, usually a WiFi connection, and hopefully a seat. These public spaces are often referred to as “third spaces,” a place that is neither home nor work, but is still a place where we spend a lot of our time. Why do we choose to spend our time in particular coffee shops? Does it matter that we prefer to drink our coffee in a certain way? This course will explore the necessity of interrogating our seemingly simple, everyday choices as coffee consumers. We will investigate questions about our personal taste for our coffee drink, the space where we drink it, and the land and people who provide that product for our consumption. These questions will help us to consider our coffee choices outside of the mindlessness of routine.

Throughout the semester, we will read and analyze articles from popular, academic and empirical research journals in order to propose a question to enter research-driven conversations about coffee culture. By engaging with these articles, we will be able to examine the consequences of our choices on a personal, a local, and a global scale. Over the semester, we will synthesize many authors and debates in order to write academic research proposals that argue for original projects on the implications of our coffee preferences and the necessity of understanding the weight of our coffee choices. Students will conduct research and write their own contribution papers that resolve questions posed by these proposals.

Section E
Tim Dawson MWF 11:30-12:20
Race, American Identity, and Public Policy
In 1903, W.E.B. DuBois claimed that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.” In the 21st Century, suggestions that America is entering a post-racial era have been answered by controversies, social movements, and demographic trends that reveal the persistent relevance of "race" to notions of identity and to questions of public policy. In this course you will have the opportunity to investigate how ideas about “race” relate to processes of establishing and maintaining cultural, economic, political, and social boundaries; individual and national identity; or contemporary policy debates. To support your investigation, you will learn and practice strategies for critically analyzing arguments in a range of academic and popular genres, prepare group and individual presentations, and write three major papers, with the third developing a contribution to a specific, ongoing discussion in a particular community of inquiry.

Throughout the process of developing your papers and presentations, you will learn and practice skills of analysis, planning, and research for drafting and revising academic arguments and strategies for analyzing your own work and the work of your peers.

Section F
Bret Vukoder MWF 12:30-1:20
A Seat in the Dark: Why We Watch Movies
As the story goes, when the French film pioneers Auguste and Louis Lumière premiered their brief 1895 film “The Arrival of a Train a La Ciotat Station,” the crowd of spectators jumped up from their seats in a fit of fear,
believing the train was charging directly towards them. They were certain it was real. Seven years later, another Frenchman George Méliès’ debuted the whimsical and bizarre tale of A Trip to the Moon, invoking a sense of wonder and possibility in the audience. Cinema from thereon became many things, offering viewers a spectrum of experiences teetering between reality and fantasy, representation and imagination.

Even amidst the rise of television and the Internet, movies today are still a tremendously popular medium. Ticket sales have remained fairly steady in the last twenty years, and viewers now have instantaneous access to a seemingly endless library of films via Netflix, Amazon, or On-Demand. Prolific and pervasive, movies have become such a staple of modern culture that we rarely step back and ask why we watch them. In what ways can cinema tell us who we are or what we should be? Is it possible to express ourselves from a seat in the theater? Can cinema make or reinforce communities? To what extent can movies enlighten or trivialize? Why do they entertain us?

These and other questions will serve as the focus for this 76-101 course. In exploring the connection between the spectator and cinema, we will learn and apply analytical methods for engaging academic and popular criticism, feature-length films and clips, other primary artifacts, and more. Students will write essays that analyze arguments and synthesize perspectives surrounding this topic, culminating in a final essay in which they make a contribution to our contemporary knowledge that will in part answer the question of why we watch movies.

Section FF
Pierce Williams MWF 12:30-1:20
Drawing Lines around the Arts, Humanities, and Sciences
What is the relationship between the Arts, Humanities, and the Sciences? For those working in the liberal and fine arts, the loaded question of “So, what exactly do you hope to do with your [English, History, Fine Arts, Theater] degree?” is all too familiar. For those working in mathematics, engineering, or the “hard” sciences, it can be frustrating to encounter some assumptions about how science and technical expertise is bland, non-creative, and strictly logic-based. And yet the writing of such contemporary authors as David Foster Wallace, whom we will read, dissolves these distinctions, employing artful expression to relay complex scientific and mathematical ideas, or vice versa. Many authors have also employed rigorous scientific thinking to illuminate art, literature and music. Historically, writers from Benjamin Franklin to Humphrey Davy have taken issue with the distinction between the arts, humanities and sciences, claiming that a balance of each is necessary for harnessing the full potential of the human intellect. This very old debate between the disciplines continues in contemporary debates over not only funding for school programs and research, but also what the public should most emphasize in education: the humanistic production of “well-rounded” or “culturally literate” individuals, proficiency in the expressive potential of the arts, or the technical preparation of eventual participants in the world economy through emphasis on science, math, engineering and business.

This class interrogates assumptions about types of knowledge and examines these assumptions in the popular imagination. By engaging in debates about the distinctions associated with these disciplinary boundaries, we will explore our own assumptions about how productive the arts/sciences distinction is. In some cases it may be; in others it may not. Over the course of the semester, we will analyze and synthesize the arguments of a number of writers and experts in order to formally propose our own research questions and make a unique contribution to a discourse community within this disciplinary debate.
Section G
Hannah Ringler 12:30-1:20

*What is my nationality, and how do I know?*

What is your nationality (American, Chinese, French, Indian-American)? More importantly, how do you know? Is it your family tree? Birthplace? Language? Culture? DNA? Passport? In this section of 76-101, we will grapple with these ideas to ask ourselves, what is nationality? Students will read popular and scholarly arguments about different ways that we can understand who we are as individuals, and what makes up a national people. We will try to understand the different reasons that someone might call themselves one nationality, and why that is a difficult choice. For example, can you call yourself “Irish” if you great-great grandparents immigrated to America from Ireland? Can you call yourself “Japanese” if you are an American emigrant? Can you call yourself “Korean” if only one parent is Korean? In essence, if so many factors can make up how we talk about nationality, what do we call ourselves when some of those conflict? We’ll discuss why these are difficult questions, how their answers vary, and why this matters to us. In this course, students will engage with these ideas by drawing upon their own experiences and expertise and listening to others. Students will learn to analyze texts for their arguments, synthesize their ideas, and learn the skills needed to participate in a scholarly conversation. After having read and analyzed a variety of arguments on this issue, students will write a formal research proposal and paper by drawing upon their knowledge from this class and their own disciplines.

Section HH
Sophie Wodzak 12:30-1:20

*Journalism in the digital age: where do we go from here?*

The internet has changed the way we consume news. In their struggle to keep up with the 24-hour news cycle and find new ways to generate revenue online, many news outlets have changed the way they generate and distribute content: Headlines serve as clickbait, pundits flood the airwaves, and comedy news shows compete with traditional media. Is this the end of journalism as we know it? In this section of 76-101, we will examine the effects the internet is having on fundamental journalistic values such as accuracy and fairness, and consider whether it is possible to preserve these values in the new digital media landscape. Students will analyze the challenges facing journalism today, and synthesize experts’ opinions about how best to cope with these challenges. By engaging with the course readings and conducting their own research, students will make predictions about where journalism is headed in the 21st century, and offer their own suggestions for how to cope with the various challenges it faces.

Section I
Sophie Wodzak 1:30-2:20

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Section II
Kendra Williamson 1:30-2:20

*Correctness and Communication*

“How are you?” “I’m doing good, thanks.” “You mean you’re doing WELL?” We’ve all encountered instances where our words are noticed and corrected, and perhaps we sometimes correct others’ words. But is there a
“right” way to speak? How do we define and prioritize correctness in relation to communication? This course explores the issue of language and standardization, including questions of whether the United States should have a national language, the appropriateness of stigmatized regional or racial dialects, and how (or whether) grammar should be taught. Using readings focused on dialect, language, and language policy, students in this class will learn transferable principles for analyzing, understanding, and writing in different genres. This course includes three papers: a comparative genre analysis (CGA) that aims to identify and characterize writing features, a research proposal that synthesizes the existing conversation surrounding a research need that students identify according to their own interests, and a research paper (contribution paper) that makes an original argument that fills that research need. By the end of the semester, students will have developed an arsenal of skills related to reading, analysis, and writing that can be extended to new contexts throughout their academic, professional, and every-day lives.

Section M
Rachel Kravetz MWF 3:30-4:20
Crafts Movements
Recent years have seen an unmistakable interest in the handcrafted. This impulse is apparent in Pittsburgh’s pervasive do-it-yourself culture, with its commitment to the original, specially made item, but we can also look for craft in the materials science labs of CMU. This class will examine the contemporary phenomenon within the context of a drama that played out in the late nineteenth century: the British Arts & Crafts movement. In response to industrialization, strong voices declared the value of the handmade over the machine-made as a cure for social ills. Why did writers demand handcrafted architecture and decor, and how did they capture the attention of the public? How did designers implement their mandate? We will trace how the movement flowered in America and globally before considering current calls for ethically produced clothes, food, and experiments. Does contemporary craft combat or extend the “commodity fetishism” that socialists deplored in the nineteenth century? To what extent does craft live up to the aspiration of accessibility to all? How does craft interact with and stand in tension with technology? With fine art? In this course, you will develop academic reading and writing skills, explore various methods and compositional structures, and pursue and argue for a research question that leads to an original argument related to historical or contemporary craft.

Section OO
Craig Stamm TR 9:00-10:20
The Sociology of Video Games
In 2014, a series of events now referred to as Gamergate revealed widespread misogyny throughout the larger male-dominated gaming community. Initially debating the ethics of video game journalists, the conversation became loaded with violent threats and the defamation of female video game developers. While the outcome of Gamergate is still hotly debated in relation to the parties involved, one thing was made clear: video games are no longer a niche interest. With over half of the American population reported to play video games, they now outsell the global box office, making video games a new dominant form of media. The virtual societies of video games enable us to participate in experiences difficult to capture through other means, while also paralleling real world power structures and prejudices. How can we understand video games as tools for social change? How does a post-Gamergate gaming community move forward without abandoning the work of the past? How do we define video games? In terms of goals, interaction, or technology? The goal of this class is to investigate these questions surrounding video games, while also considering issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation in relation to the history of video games. The course requires no previous knowledge of or experience with video games, and some assignments will include playing relevant games that highlight the issues we’ll be discussing in our readings. We will read various articles addressing the sociological issues of games, and students will be asked to write their own papers analyzing, critiquing, and synthesizing these perspectives, leading to a final paper where they will craft their own contribution on how we can understand video games as tools for sociological reflection and progress.

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Section P
Craig Stamm TR 10:30-11:50
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Section PP
Nathan Pensky TR 10:30-11:50
Pop Culture and Social Responsibility

In this section of 76-101, students will analyze their involvement in and engagement with pop culture. To focus on the ethics of this cultural engagement, we will discuss several models of social responsibility, and apply these models to our own participation with pop culture. Our goal will be to question how ethics and social responsibility intersect with pop culture. Social issues now weigh more heavily on mainstream pop cultural artifacts than ever before. The discussion of online fandom communities and their social justice concerns, for example, play a large part in this cultural shift. We will attempt to make sense of this shift by reading and analyzing a series of ethical arguments on the subject of pop culture consumption. Through these readings, we will address questions such as these: Am I personally responsible for the culture of violence in professional sports, and if so, how? Do I contribute to Western culture’s obsession with unrealistic standards of beauty for women? Can I watch a Woody Allen movie or a Bill Cosby comedy special and still be a good person? For our purposes, interrogating our engagement in pop culture means entering an academic conversation? In this course, you will develop skills in critical reading and academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the ongoing conversation on the ethical dilemmas related to consuming pop culture.

Section RR
Kitty Shropshire TR 4:30-5:50
CONSPIRACY! Power and Paranoia in American Culture

Who killed JFK? Is NASA hiding evidence that the Earth is actually flat? Is the Queen of England a shape-shifting reptilian from the Alpha Draconis star system? And more importantly, how can we know for sure? Despite unflattering representations of conspiracy theorists as paranoid fanatics who exist on the fringes of society, recent research suggests that at least half of all Americans believe in at least one conspiracy theory. If this is true, what are the implications for contemporary American culture and politics? Should we understand conspiracism as a threat to the intellectual health of the nation, or as a type of radical skepticism and freethought? Does conspiracism depress political engagement or invigorate it in new ways?

Guided by these questions, this section of 76-101 will examine the relationship between the “stigmatized
knowledge” of conspiracists and the kinds of “institutional knowledge” produced at universities. Not only will we question how we know what we know, we will also consider the broader social, political, and ethical implications of different forms of knowledge-making. Readings will be drawn from a variety of fields, including political science, sociology, cultural studies, and--of course--from conspiracy theorists themselves. Students in this course will develop critical reading, writing, and media literacy skills while learning the foundations of academic authorship. Ultimately, each student will learn about academic genre features, write an academic research proposal, and produce an original research paper that synthesizes scholarly perspectives and contributes an original perspective on a conspiracy theory of the student’s choosing.
**General Description of 76-102: Advanced First-Year Writing: Special Topics (9 units)**

Gen Ed: Fulfills Category 1: Communicating requirement for H&SS and a designated writing course for other colleges. **Students enroll in these sections by invitation only.** [Apply here](#) by June 29th for consideration.

**Section A**  
**Jamie Smith MWF 11:30-12:20**  
*Gothic Literature*  
What is the Gothic? A collection of stories about monsters, dungeons, and madwomen? A type of pop culture? A method of social critique? A canonical genre? A time period? A feeling? In this advanced section of First-Year Writing, students will learn what it means for a text to be considered “Gothic” literature and observe how this mode has fluctuated throughout the past two hundred years. We will additionally analyze novels and arguments about literature and culture, explore and adopt literary lenses, and finally propose our own arguments and contribute to ongoing academic discussions about Gothic literature.

In this class, we will read three Gothic novels – Matthew Lewis’s The Monk, Bram Stoker’s Dracula, and Daphne du Maurier’s Rebecca – along with secondary criticism and writing that introduces theoretical literary lenses like feminism, digital humanities, and film studies. As we learn to write effectively in an academic and professional setting, we will consider how these vibrant texts engage with important issues of their (and our) time, like revolution, gender, race, sexuality, nationality and religion. Instructor lectures will additionally introduce other cultural and historical materials like visual arts, periodicals, music, film, and letters in order to enhance students’ contextual knowledge and skills for writing about Gothic literature within particular moments and over time. Note: Students enroll in this section by invitation only.

**Section B**  
**Peter Mayshle MWF 11:30-12:20**  
*The Rhetoric of Memory: Monuments, Museums, and Publics*  
Memory resides privately in the mind but once made public, memory becomes rhetorical. How, then, does memory act in the public sphere? In this seminar-like advanced first-year writing course, students will be introduced to the rhetoric of memory, in particular, to the ways public memory informs and performs in built environments. Drawing on classical and contemporary readings in rhetoric and communication studies, we will explore a variety of memory sites such as monuments, museums, cultural events and performances. While students will engage with these spaces through site visits and participation, and producing multimodal projects, we’ll be focused primarily on learning to write a social science article: you’ll learn to create research questions, write literature reviews, describe your methods, conduct analysis, and draw meaningful conclusions from that analysis. By experiencing and examining public memory, students gain important knowledge and skills applicable to public communication and civic engagement, thereby helping them develop as engaged citizens. Note: Students enroll in this section by invitation only.

*This version of the document was updated on 6/14/2018 and is subject to change.*
**Option 2: “You pick 2” mini course options for First-Year Writing Requirement**

**Guide to Understanding the Skills in Each Mini Course (76-106, 76-107, & 76-108)**

Each of the “you pick 2” First-Year Writing course experiences have been designed to introduce students to particular organizational structures, writing situations, and sets of rhetorical skills. You can see a brief overview below. Scroll down for the particular descriptions of these courses, as well as their schedules and faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Genre or type of writing &amp; purpose</th>
<th>Organizational structure</th>
<th>Rhetorical skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>76-106: Writing About Literature, Art &amp; Culture</strong></td>
<td>Academic writing, interpretive, humanistic</td>
<td>Thesis-driven with Topic Sentences, Claim/Reason/Evidence Explanation</td>
<td>Applying a theoretical lens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>76-107: Writing About Data</strong></td>
<td>Data-driven, academic writing</td>
<td>IMRD &amp; visualizing data</td>
<td>Synthesizing data from sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>76-108: Writing About Public Problems</strong></td>
<td>Writing for professional or public purposes</td>
<td>Problem/Solution/Feasibility &amp; formatting for busy readers</td>
<td>Perspective taking (for audience and for stakeholders)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Descriptions of 76-106: Writing About Literature, Art and Culture (4.5 Units)

76-106 courses focus upon teaching skills for making arguments from literary and artistic texts and extending those interpretive and communicative skills beyond the first-year writing classroom. The skills you’ll encounter in these courses are highlighted below.

- **Genre or type of writing & purpose**: Interpretive, humanistic academic writing
- **Organizational structure**: Thesis-driven with topic sentences, hierarchical argument (Claim, Reason, Evidence, Explanation)
- **Rhetorical skills**: Applying close reading strategies, applying a theoretical lens

**Writing about Literature and Culture**

In 1967, Roland Barthes (a French literary critic) wrote an essay that claimed that the author is dead. If the author is dead, how do we proceed with reading, analyzing, and writing texts? If the author is dead, why should we? This 76101 course uses artistic, literary, and cultural texts (e.g., poetry, short story, lyrics, video clips) to introduce students to a variety of academic reading and writing practices that enable students to discuss texts and evidence from multiple perspectives. We will examine how literary and cultural scholars write about texts (defined broadly), how they make claims, provide reasoning, and use textual support to argue for particular ways of seeing cultural objects. Throughout the semester, students will draw upon prior strategies and develop new ones for close reading and for critical analysis in order to produce their own thesis-driven arguments about why texts matter. We will consider and write about the extent to which these reading strategies are relevant for other kinds of reading and analysis by comparing texts from a variety of different disciplinary contexts.

**Writing about Art and Culture**

The philosopher of art Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote in his essay “Eye and Mind,” “There is clearly no one master key of the visible.” This course uses two- and three-dimensional art objects (painting, sculpture, and possibly architecture or photography) to introduce a variety of academic reading and writing practices that enable students to discuss artworks and visual evidence from multiple perspectives. First, we will examine how art historians describe visual art and practice this skill. The class will analyze how writers make claims about art, provide reasoning, and use visual support to argue for ways of seeing art objects in an academic context. We will then encounter a series of approaches to thesis-driven writing on art, focusing on the “lenses” of personal and period style, biography, and iconographic analysis. At this stage, you’ll compare one of our academic texts to a piece of art writing for the public to reflect on how genre, purpose and audience shape a writer’s rhetorical strategies. These reflections will help us to consider how such strategies vary based on context, and thus to reflect on how the work of this class carries beyond our classroom. Finally, having developed strategies for deep analysis and clear argumentation, you will apply a lens to produce your own academic argument about the significance of a chosen art object or set of objects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Day and Timeslot</th>
<th>Instructor Name</th>
<th>76-106 Course Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 &amp; A2</td>
<td>MWF 9:30-10:20</td>
<td>D. Wetzel &amp; R. Rowley</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 &amp; B2</td>
<td>MWF 10:30-11:20</td>
<td>D. Wetzel &amp; J. Quirk</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 &amp; C2</td>
<td>MWF 12:30-1:20</td>
<td>Rachel Kravetz</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 &amp; D2</td>
<td>MWF 2:30-3:20</td>
<td>Rachel Kravetz</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1 &amp; E2</td>
<td>MWF 1:30-2:20</td>
<td>Steven Gotzler</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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General Descriptions of 76-107: Writing About Data (4.5 Units)

76107 courses focus upon teaching skills for reading data-driven texts and writing data-driven, academic writing. These courses apply to all majors, because we encounter arguments about both quantitative and qualitative data in our global society. The skills you’ll encounter in this course are highlighted below.

- **Genre or type of writing & purpose**: Data-driven, academic writing
- **Organizational structure**: IMRD & data visualization structures
- **Rhetorical skills**: Synthesizing data from sources

Writing about Data

Our lives are increasingly shaped by writing that involves numbers: newspapers routinely report the latest medical fads; politicians support their political agendas with both dubious and credible statistics; parents use data to decide where to buy a house and where to send their kids to school. This section will focus on interpreting and making arguments using mainly numerical data but also qualitative data. We will look at research in a range of disciplines—including psychology, education, medicine, engineering, and the sciences—and note how writers select and analyze the data they collect. We will also examine what happens to this research when it is picked up by the popular media. Students will also practice collecting and analyzing their own data and reporting it to suit the needs of various stakeholders. There are two primary audiences for this section. Students in data-driven majors will find the section useful preparation for communicating in their disciplines. Students in other fields will learn how to critique and respond to the many ways that numbers shape our lives. This section presumes a basic ability to calculate averages, percentages, and ratios, but no advanced mathematical or statistical preparation. Instead, this section provides a fascinating look at how numbers and words intersect to create persuasive arguments in academic, professional, and popular contexts. Students will compare and analyze texts that make arguments with data, practice rhetorical strategies for synthesizing and representing data so that by the end of the class, students will apply these strategies to write an original data-driven research proposal.

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<tr>
<td>A1 &amp; A2</td>
<td>MWF 9:30-10:20</td>
<td>David Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 &amp; B2</td>
<td>MWF 10:30-11:20</td>
<td>Joanna Wolfe &amp; Calvin Pollak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 &amp; C2</td>
<td>MWF 12:30-1:20</td>
<td>Robert Calton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 &amp; D2</td>
<td>MWF 2:30-3:20</td>
<td>Rebecca Wigginton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1 &amp; E2</td>
<td>MWF 1:30-2:20</td>
<td>Robert Calton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Descriptions of 76-108: Writing About Public Problems (4.5 Units)

76108 courses focus upon teaching skills for communicating a need for change in practice or policy, interacting with stakeholders with professional consideration, and for producing oral, written, and visual communication to make a nonacademic proposal for change. The skills you’ll encounter in this course are highlighted below.

- **Genre or type of writing & purpose**: Professional, nonacademic genres
- **Organizational structure**: Problem/solution/feasibility and formatting for busy readers
- **Rhetorical skills**: Perspective taking for audience and stakeholders

Writing about Public Problems

If all problems required a simple fix, we could don our Avenger costumes, pick up Thor’s hammer, and right the world’s wrongs. But most problems aren’t so simple. Most of the problems we encounter require careful investigation and research so that we might propose solutions that connect with others to make change. In this 76101 class, we will learn how public problems are defined and argued across a range of texts, including proposals, op-ed genres, and white papers. By analyzing a range of proposal texts, we will identify the different kinds of legwork necessary to write a successful proposal, arguably one of the most challenging aspects of writing a persuasive recommendation for change. We will examine how writers unpack problems rhetorically and use evidence to argue solutions for different stakeholders who may not share common values. We will learn strategies for evaluating and synthesizing data from existing research to use in a proposal argument, and we will learn to communicate with individuals professionally over email and other kinds of communication channels in order to pursue relevant information. By the end of the course, students will write their own change proposal that recommends a solution and a feasible plan for solving a real problem.

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<tr>
<td>A1 &amp; A2</td>
<td>MWF 9:30-10:20</td>
<td>Susan Tanner &amp; Richard Branscomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 &amp; B2</td>
<td>MWF 10:30-11:20</td>
<td>Susan Tanner &amp; Laura McCann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 &amp; C2</td>
<td>MWF 12:30-1:20</td>
<td>Peter Mayshle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 &amp; D2</td>
<td>MWF 2:30-3:20</td>
<td>Peter Mayshle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1 &amp; E2</td>
<td>MWF 1:30-2:20</td>
<td>Tim Dawson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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