

ENGL381-01: Science Writing

Class Time: MWF 10:00-10:50 (01)
MWF 12:00-12:50 (02)

Course Mode: In-Person

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. David S. Martins, Associate Professor of Rhetoric

Contact Information: DSMgla@rit.edu

Office Hours: MWF 9:00-9:50 in-person or via Zoom. Students may also make appointments.

Instructor-Student Communication Email will be our primary mode of individual communication. I'll use the Starfish system for alerts and kudos. myCourses will be the platform to push out messages to the whole class (e.g., News), and for online discussions, etc.

Online Course Material: myCourses will be the platform for all course activities.

Course Description

Study of and practice in writing about science, environment, medicine and technology for audiences ranging from the general public to scientists and engineers. Starts with basic science writing for lay audiences, emphasizing writing strategies and techniques. Also explores problems of conveying highly complex technical information to multiple audiences, factors that influence science communication to the public, and interactions between scientists and journalists. The course examines new opportunities for covering science, important ethical and practical constraints that govern the reporting of scientific information, and the cultural place of science in our society. (Gen Ed Elective; Artistic Perspective; Ethical Perspective; Writing Intensive)

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate criteria of successful science writing
- Analyze and evaluate samples of science writing
- Use rhetorical strategies to write about scientific subjects

Teaching Philosophy

I strive to create a student-centered environment in which your interests and energy shape the learning opportunities in the course. Your active participation is extremely important to me. I expect you to attend class on time every day, with the assigned reading and/or writing completed before you arrive, prepared to discuss your ideas and writing with me and your peers.

It is also my aim to cultivate a respectful environment in the classroom. Because we will be meeting synchronously, online, it will be especially important for us to stay mindful about how we interact and communicate with one another as we utilize the affordances of online learning and overcome its limitations. We will work together to decide more specifically what that means for us, as a class, though

generally preparedness, consideration of others' contributions, and a willingness to work collaboratively will go a long way towards fostering a productive, respectful classroom environment. As a starting point, some general principles often include:

- Every person deserves respect.
- Reasonable people can and do disagree.
- Tolerance and patience are required of all.
- The rules for civil discourse often need to be negotiated and reinforced on individual, group, and class levels.
- Each individual should understand the privileges that they have in the United States based on skin color, gender, and other social assets such as economic class, level of education, and so on.
- Equality between and among discussants should be the relational norm.

(Adapted from N.C. James, 1997, pp. 197-198, "Classroom climate and teaching (about) racism: Notes from the trenches.")

As ENGL 381 is an upper level course, you will be expected to write every day and to support your classmates in their writing process. This includes participating in peer review and sharing drafts of your writing for review.

Course Topics

If you look at the Case assignments below you will see a clear articulation of major course topics: Genre – Narrative – Ethos – Professional Ethics. In addition, we will consistently address "Responsible Conduct of Research," Collaboration, and Writing Processes.

Course Materials

Required Texts and Resources

All course readings, artifacts, course documents, etc., will be available in [myCourses](#). Other course resources will be found online or in the Wallace Library.

Technology requirements:

All students must have access to myCourses and other online tools for communication or collaboration (e.g., Zoom, etc.).

ITS Service Desk

The ITS Service Desk is your point of contact for your RIT Computer Account, network, or technology-related issues. The Service Desk can:

- Troubleshoot your technology issues
- Create a [work request](#) ticket and connect you with ITS specialists

When you contact the ITS Service Desk by phone, e-mail, or in-person we create a **ticket** and share it with you. Your ticket allows you to track progress on your issue, communicate with us quickly, and refer back to the solution if you encounter the problem again. You can also leave us feedback on how we handled your problem.

- Phone Support: (585) 475-4357
- Web Form: help.rit.edu
- In Person: [Frank E. Gannett Hall, Room 1113](#)

Assignments

Reading Log

At the beginning of the semester I will ask you to create a GoogleDoc ("LastName - Reading Log"), saved in the course shared google drive, in which you keep a list of the science writing that you read during the semester. These readings are entirely your choice. For the log, I will ask that you record the full bibliographic information for each source, including URLs for online materials, along with a 1-2 sentence description of the reading and a 2-3 sentence reaction to the reading. Every two weeks I will check in on your reading log simply to check to make sure that you have been reading. By the end of the semester, in order to receive credit for the reading log assignment, I will expect there to be 10+ entries.

Popular Sources: [New Scientist](#), [Wired](#), [Popular Science](#), [TED Science Talks](#), [Discover](#), [Smithsonian](#), [National Geographic](#), [Scientific American](#), National Public Radio's [Science Friday](#), PRI's Earth and Sky.

A Selection of Science Writers: Rebecca Skloot, Annie Dillard, Stephen Jay Gould, Carl Sagan, Neil DeGrasse Tyson, Elizabeth Kolbert, Mary Roach, Richard Feynman, Loren Eiseley, Lewis Thomas, Rachel Carson, David Quamen, E.O. Wilson, Rick Bass, Sandra Steingraber.

A Selection of Academic Journals on the Public Communication of Science: *Public Understanding of Science*, *Science Communication*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Communication*, *Health Communication*, *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *Social Studies of Science*, *Science, Science, Technology and Human Values*.

Group Slides

The conceptual readings are often long and/or difficult. You will be assigned to a 4-person group that you will stay with throughout the semester to support you as you make sense of and present your understanding of the core concept readings (i.e. "Genre"; "Narrative"; "Ethos"; "Circulation"; "Professional Ethics"). In each slide presentation, identify 2-3 generative ideas from the reading, explain your understanding of them, and consider how you might use those ideas to analyze and/or produce science writing. Take care to quote sentences or passages key to your developing understanding of those concepts. As we develop our analytical toolbox, save your group's slide-deck in the course shared google drive. In class, we will look at each group's slides to discuss the concepts and their application. I will provide feedback on every group's slides.

Case Analyses

The majority of our work together will be focused on 4 different "cases" that introduce you to a specific rhetorical concept, to prompt engaged consideration of complex science- and technology-related issues, and to provide opportunities for you to present your understanding of rhetoric, writing and science.

Case 1 – Genre

Purpose: This assignment gives you an opportunity to learn about "genre." Understanding different aspects of how genre works offers strategies for making sense of how scientific knowledge is produced, presented, and circulated.

Process: You will read, discuss, and write about the designated conceptual readings and provided artifacts. In small groups, you will collaborate in GoogleSlides to present your group's understanding of the conceptual reading: *Naming what we know*, "Concept 2." The purpose of the slides are to create an analysis "crib sheet" that you and others in the class can use in future writing tasks for this course. Groups will receive feedback on their presentation on the rhetorical concept.

After we work together as a class to understand "genre" we will move on to read and discuss the case artifact: Ferris Jabr's "[The Social Life of Forests](#)." Groups will then add additional slides to their presentation that provide their "reading" of the artifact through the conceptual lens of genre, and publically present their slides to the class for discussion and feedback.

Deliverable: In 4+ slides, Groups will present a discussion of "genre" and analyze the genre features of Ferris Jabr's "[The Social Life of Forests](#)." In its analysis, groups must make a claim about how distinct genre features structure your understanding of the science presented in the article. Do not try to identify all the genre features; instead, focus on just one or two characteristics that really stand out to the group, and present to class how those characteristics function for making meaning of the artifact. Please refer to specific ideas about "genre" expressed in the conceptual reading at relevant points in your analysis.

Evaluation: Each presentation will be evaluated on: 1) the group's understanding of "genre" as a rhetorical concept, 2) the clear, coherent organization of the artifact analysis, and 3) the integration of analysis, quoted evidence from the readings, and visual design of the slides. The presentations will also serve as a key aspect of class discussion of the artifact and the presentation of science it addresses.

Conceptual Reading:

"Concept 2: Genre" (2019) In *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle (Eds.) Utah State University Press. 35-47.

Nijhuis, Michelle "[Brief Guide to Writing Reported Essays](#)"

Walker, Cameron "[The Art of the Essay](#)"

Artifact:

Ferris Jabr. (December 6, 2020 Sunday). The Social Life of Forests. The New York Times. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.rit.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61FT-C2G1-DXY4-X081-00000-00&context=1516831>.

Case 2 – Narrative

Purpose: This assignment gives you an opportunity to learn about "narrative." Understanding how narrative works offers strategies for making sense of information and experience, and the role narrative plays in personal and collective meaning making.

Process: Like the previous case, you work collaboratively to read and make sense of the designated conceptual reading and provided artifact. In small groups, you will collaborate in GoogleSlides to present your group's understanding of the conceptual reading: **Palczewski, Ice and Fritch on "Narrative."** The purpose of the slides are to create an analysis "crib sheet" that you and others in the class can use in future writing tasks for this course. Groups will receive feedback on their presentation on the rhetorical concept.

After we work together as a class to understand “genre” we will move on to read and discuss the case artifact: Harriet Washington’s **“The Black Stork: The Eugenic Control of African American Reproduction”** from her book, *Medical Apartheid*. Groups will then add additional slides to their presentation that provide their “reading” of the artifact through the conceptual lens of narrative, and publically present their slides to the class for discussion and feedback.

Deliverable: In 4+ slides, Groups will present a discussion of “narrative” and “judge” Washington’s narrative in Harriet Washington’s **“The Black Stork: The Eugenic Control of African American Reproduction.”** In its judgement, groups must make a claim about how distinct narrative elements impact their understanding of the history of science presented in the book chapter. Do not try to identify all the rhetorical moves Washington makes; instead, focus on just one or two narrative strategies that really stood out to the group. Please refer to Palczewski, Ice and Fritch’s ideas about “narrative” at relevant points in your analysis.

Evaluation: Each presentation will be evaluated on: 1) the group’s understanding of “narrative” as a rhetorical concept, 2) the clear, coherent organization of the artifact analysis, and 3) the integration of analysis, quoted evidence from the readings, and visual design of the slides. The presentations will also serve as a key aspect of class discussion of the artifact and the presentation of history of science it addresses.

Conceptual Reading:

Palczewski, Catherine Helen, Richard Ice, & John Fritch. 2016. “Narrative.” *Rhetoric in Civic Life*, Second Edition. Strata: State College, PA. 129-159.

Rosen, Julia. [“Narrative X-rays”](#)

Ananthaswamy, Anil. [“Weaving a Seamless Tale from Threads of Narrative and Exposition”](#)

Artifacts:

Washington, Harriet A. 2006. ““The Black Stork: The Eugenic Control of African American Reproduction.” *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*. 198-215.

Case 3 – Professional Ethics

Purpose: This assignment gives you an opportunity to present what you and a partner have learned during research about the “responsible conduct of research” practices in your chosen field.

Process: For this assignment, you will engage in a range of research. Individually, you will be asked go through [“Responsible Conduct of Research”](#) modules offered by RIT through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program). You will need to register for that training; instructions for how to register will be provided. Then, in pairs, you will collaborate on a Google Doc that presents your understanding of the conceptual reading, **“Limning the Semantic Frontier of Informed Consent,”** with the intent of highlighting the questions that the reading raises for you after the online training.

Additionally, you will be asked to go to the websites of one or more of the professional organizations in your field and explore the materials, statements, examples, etc., of responsible conduct of research that the organization provides. Another useful source will be the subject-specific [“InfoGuides”](#) located under the “Research Guides” tab on the [Wallace Center Library website](#). While “responsible conduct of research” may be terms used by your professional organization, other terms it might use include: ethics, human subjects in research, and professional conduct.

Deliverable: The results of your research inquiry will be presented to the class in a poster presentation. You may use PowerPoint or any other visual presentation format that you wish. The stipulation is that the poster presents your research purpose, method and findings in an organized, coherent and effective way. Because many of you are interested in the same fields, you may elect to do this assignment in groups of 2-3.

Evaluation: Your poster will be evaluated for its clear, coherent organization, effective use of visual and textual content, and the integration of both primary and online, secondary research. Members of collaborative teams will also be evaluated on their professionalism and effort.

Readings:

Washington, Harriet A. 2016. "Limning the Semantic Frontier of Informed Consent." *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 44: 381-393.

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) "[Responsible Conduct of Research](#)" modules

Case 4 – Ethos

Purpose: This assignment gives you an opportunity to learn about "ethos." Understanding how different rhetors/authors endeavor to establish trust with their audience is key to knowing how scientific knowledge is presented, circulated, and believed.

Process: Like the previous case, you work collaboratively to read and make sense of the designated conceptual reading and provided artifact. In small groups, you will collaborate in GoogleSlides to present your group's understanding of the conceptual reading: Celest Condit's "**Public Health Experts, Expertise, and Ebola: A Relational Theory of Ethos.**" The purpose of the slides are to create an analysis "crib sheet" that you and others in the class can use in future writing tasks for this course. Groups will receive feedback on their presentation on the rhetorical concept.

After we work together as a class to understand "ethos" we will move on to read and discuss the case artifacts, which include a variety of **public appearances and statements by U.S. Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy**. Groups will then add additional slides to their presentation that provide their "reading" of the artifact through the conceptual lens of ethos, and publically present their slides to the class for discussion and feedback.

Deliverable: In 4+ slides, Groups will present a discussion of "ethos" and "evaluate" Murthy's cultivation of ethos. In its evaluation, groups must make a claim about how Dr. Muthy's rhetorical strategies either help to establish trust, or calls trust into question. Do not try to identify all the ways he attempts to appeal to his audience; instead, focus on just one or two strategies that really stood out to the group, and show how those strategies impacted your trust in him. Please refer to Condit's ideas about "ethos" and "expertise" at relevant points in your analysis.

Evaluation: Each presentation will be evaluated on: 1) the group's understanding of "ethos" as a rhetorical concept, 2) the clear, coherent organization of the artifact analysis, and 3) the integration of analysis, quoted evidence from the readings, and visual design of the slides. The presentations will also serve as a key aspect of class discussion of the artifact and the presentation of history of science it addresses.

Conceptual Reading:

Condit, Celeste M. 2019. "Public Health Experts, Expertise, and Ebola: A Relational Theory of Ethos."
Rhetoric & Public Affairs 22(2): 177-215.

Artifacts:

["Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, MD, MBA"](#)

["Dr. Vivek Murthy on Face the Nation"](#)

Tippet, Krista. ["Vivek Murthy and Richard Davidson: The Future of Well-Being"](#)

Murthy, Vivek. ["Work and the Loneliness Epidemic: Reducing Isolation at Work is Good for Business"](#)

Mascarelli, Amanda. ["Storygram: Amy Maxmen's 'How the Fight Against Ebola Tested a Culture's Traditions'"](#)

Raja, Tasneem. ["Storygram: Annie Waldman's 'How Hospitals Are Failing Black Mothers'"](#)

Pitch Portfolio for Investigative Essay

Purpose: This project gives you an opportunity to select a "story" in science, medicine, nature or technology and write a "pitch" for an investigative essay that would present your research on that topic to a specific audience, using what you know about genre, narrative, ethos and ethics.

Process: Throughout the course, we will read selections from "The Open Notebook" focused on "pitches." Links to some of those selections are already posted in myCourses, more are found at the pitch database itself. As we read about pitches and read different examples, we will cultivate our understanding of their genre, how narrative is used in the pitch itself, and how writers create a strong sense of ethos. During the last weeks of class, you will be preparing multiple drafts a pitches for a story based on the reading you have done this semester (and that is highlighted in your reading log).

I will ask you to skim through the [pitch database](#), filtering for "features." There are over 150 successful pitches there, along with links to the resulting investigative essays. After you select **4** titles that seem most interesting to you. Take some time to consider the moves, detail, and intertextuality of the pitch. Read at least two of the features and include them in your reading log. (You can, of course, read all four, and even more if you like!)

Deliverable: Some of the world's best science writing happens in essay forms in popular venues—not in books. For this assignment you will write and revise a pitch for a researched, science-based essay that you propose to write for a specific magazine, journal or website. For this pitch, you will prepare the following: 1) a genre analysis of effective pitches you read on The Open Notebook, 2) a brief description of a selected publication venue, including your sense of what pitch requirements/"instructions for authors" info the publication might provide, 3) a formal "pitch" based on your genre analysis, and 4) a 3-4 source bibliography on or related to the story you are pitching.

Evaluation: Your final pitch will be evaluated on your effective use of relevant "pitch" genre features, your use of narrative to describe the story you are pitching, and the clear, coherent establishing of your own ethos so that you "get the green light."

Draft 1 Due: 4/11

"Jury" Draft Due: 4/18

Final Portfolio and Reflective Cover Letter

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is for you to reflect on what you have learned over the course of this semester.

Process: During the pitch assignment, you will be receive feedback in-class and on early drafts, and revising your writing in response to written feedback. When I evaluate your writing, I will be providing revision suggestions and assigning a provisional grade. For the final, you will revise your pitch and resubmit the improved pitch. After you revise the pitch, you will write a cover letter reflecting on the revisions you completed, as well as what you have learned this semester about science writing.

Deliverables: *Reflective Cover Letter* – In 2-3 pages, write a cover letter describing the significant revisions and your revision process for your pitch, providing a rationale for those revisions, and reflect on what you have learned about genre, narrative, and ethos in science writing, as well as your own writing processes, and responsible conduct in research.

Evaluation: Your cover letter will be evaluated on the clarity of your reflection, and the details used to illustrate what you have learned this semester.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Writing Assignments

The draft schedule below highlights the reading and writing assignments planned for each week of the semester. In order to meet the course goals and objectives, I may occasionally revise assignments and due dates, as well as course requirements. Changes will be posted in myCourses.

Date	Class Time	Assignment for Next Class Meeting
1/10	Introductions; “Learning Zone” Intentions; Weekly Reading Log; The Open Notebook	Read: Syllabus
1/12	Syllabus; In-class Reading	Read: Siri Carpenter, “ How to do a Close Read ”; Alexandra Witze, “ How to Read a Scientific Paper ”
1/14	Discussion: How do you read “science writing”? Case 1: “Genre”	Groups 1 & 2 Read: Michelle Nijhuis, “ Brief Guide to Writing Reported Essays ” Groups 3, 4 & 5 Read: Cameron Walker, “ The Art of the Essay ” Due: Group Slides on “Genre” (Tues., 7pm)
Week 2 – Case 1: Genre		
1/17	<u>Celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr – No class</u>	
1/19	“Essay” Genre	Everyone Skim: “Concept 2: Genre” Group 1: “2.0 Writing Speaks to Situations...” Group 2: “2.2 Genres are Enacted...” Group 3: “2.3 Writing... Enacting Disciplinarity” Group 4: “2.4 All Writing is Multimodal” Group 5: “2.6 Texts Get Their Meaning...”
1/21	“Genre” in multiple parts; In-class work on slides	Read: Jabr, Ferris “ The Social Life of Forests ”

Week 3		
1/24	Genre features of “The Social Life of Forests”	Re-Read: Jabr, Ferris “ The Social Life of Forests ” Due: Draft 2, Case 1 deliverable – revised group slides Read: Palczewski, Ice and Fritch on “Narrative” Due: Group Slides on “Case 2: Narrative”
1/26	Intertextuality	
1/28	Pitches – first thoughts; In-class: Pitch Database	
Week 4		
1/31	<i>Case 2: Narrative</i>	Groups 1 & 3 Read: Julia Rosen, “ Narrative X-rays ” Groups 2, 4 & 5 Read Anil Ananthaswamy, “ Weaving a Seamless Tale from Threads of Narrative and Exposition ” Due: Revised Group Slides Read: Washington’s “The Black Stork” pp. 190-202 Read: Washington’s “The Black Stork” pp. 202-215
2/2	Case 2: Narrative (cont.)	
2/4	“The Black Stork” – pp 190-202	
Week 5		
2/7	“The Black Stork” – pp. 202-215	Due: Draft 1, Case 2 deliverable – revised group slides Re-read: Washington’s “The Black Stork” Due: Draft 2, Case 2 deliverable – revised group slides Due: Reading Log (4-5 entries)
2/9	Narrative Structure of “The Black Stork”	
2/11	Genre and Narrative features of “The Black Stork”	
Week 6		
2/14	Reading Logs – Share “best of”	Explore: Pitch Database Read: Washington, “Semantic Frontier” Due: Group Slides on “Semantic Frontier”
2/16	Pitches – new observations	
2/18	<i>Case 3: Professional Ethics</i> ; Groups of 2-3	
Week 7 – Unit 3		
2/21	<i>Case 3: Professional Ethics</i> (cont.)	Due: “Responsible Conduct of Research” modules Due: “Responsible Conduct of Research” modules Due: Professional Organization Website Review
2/23	“Responsible Conduct of Research”	
2/25	Research on Organizations	
Week 8		
2/28	Poster/Handout Design	Due: Group Poster
3/2	Group Work on Poster – No class session	
3/4	Group Work on Poster – No class session	
Week 9 – SPRING BREAK		
3/7-11	Spring Break – no class session	

Week 10		
3/14	Professional Ethics Poster Session	Read: Condit, “Public Health Experts”
3/16	Case 4: Ethos	Due: Group Slides on “Ethos”
3/18	Review “Ethos” Group Slides	Read: “ Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, MD, MBA ”
Week 11		
3/21	Dr. Vivek Murthy; In-class Viewing: “ Dr. Vivek Murthy on Face the Nation ”	Re-watch: “ Dr. Vivek Murthy on Face the Nation ” Listen/Read: “ Vivek Murthy and Richard Davidson: The Future of Well-Being ”
3/23	Murthy’s Ethos in Interviews	Read: Murthy, “ Work and the Loneliness Epidemic: Reducing Isolation at Work is Good for Business ”
3/25	Murthy’s Ethos in Writing	Due: Draft 1, Case 4 deliverable – revised group slides
Week 12		
3/28	Authorial Ethos in Science Writing	Groups 2, 3, & 5 Read: Amanda Mascarelli, “ Storygram: Amy Maxmen’s “How the Fight Against Ebola Tested a Culture’s Traditions” ” Groups 1 & 4 Read: Tasneem Raja, “ Storygram: Annie Waldman’s “How Hospitals Are Failing Black Mothers” ”
3/30	Authorial Ethos in Science Writing (cont.)	Due: Draft 2, Case 4 deliverable – revised group slides
4/1	Your own “ethos”	Explore: Pitch Database Due: Pitch Genre Analysis
Week 13		
4/4	Genre of Pitches	Due: Database Research
4/6	What has (and has not) been written?	Due: Publication Venues
4/8	Selecting a publication venue	Due: Pitch, Draft 1
Week 14		
4/11	Conferences – no class session	Due: Revised Pitch
4/13	Conferences – no class session	
4/15	Conferences – no class session	
Week 15		
4/18	Pitch Jury	
4/20	Pitch Jury	
4/22	In-class Writing: Reflective Cover letter	
Week 16		
4/25	Best Science Writing from your “Reading Log”	
Final Portfolio & Course Reflection DUE: 5/??, 12:00 p.m.		

Grading/Evaluation

I will use the electronic grade book in **myCourses**, so you will be able to check your current standing at any time. Grades will be posted on myCourses within 2 weeks of deliverable submission.

Components of Evaluation

Graded Item	% of Grade
Reading Log (C/NC)	10%
Case 1 – Genre (C/NC)	10%
Case 2 – Narrative (C/NC)	10%
Case 3 – Professional Ethics (C/NC)	15%
Case 4 – Ethos(C/NC)	10%
Pitch Portfolio (Graded)	25%
Cover Letter (C/NC)	10%
Participation & Professionalism (Graded)	10%
Total	100%

Grade Scale

Based on the 100% total listed above, letter grades will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Total % Points	B+	87–89.99	C+	77–79.99		
A	93-100	B	83–86.99	C	73–76.99	D	60-69.99
A-	90-92.99	B-	80–82.99	C-	70-72.99	F	0-59.99

Late Work

Failure to complete all class writing assignments and activities may result in failure of the course. Depending on the circumstances, I reserve the right not to accept late work.

Starfish

This course participates in the RIT Starfish academic alert system, which is designed to promote student success through communication between students, instructors, and advisors. When I am concerned about an individual student's academic performance, I may raise an academic alert to notify the student as well as their advisor(s). If you receive an academic alert email, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to discuss the issue/s. (See <http://www.rit.edu/starfish>.)

Writing Commons

The UWP Writing Commons provides free writing consultations for all RIT students at any stage of the writing process. Located on the first floor of the Wallace Center, the Writing Commons is staffed by peer and professional writing consultants with diverse backgrounds and from a variety of academic disciplines. Writing consultants help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies, whether you need help getting started, organizing your thoughts, developing ideas, using sources effectively or properly formatting your citations, or are struggling with grammar and mechanical issues. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, go to: www.rit.edu/WritingCommons.

Course Expectations

Time commitment

Since this is a 3-credit hour course, you should plan to spend 9-12 hours per week doing work for this class (e.g., readings, research, discussions, writing assignments, etc.). A general way to think about the time commitment in any college course is that you should be working 2 to 3 hours per week outside the “classroom” for every credit hour per week in the classroom. For an online, 3-credit hour class, it adds up to 9-12 hours per week, total.

Participation

Barring any unforeseen issues such as illness, quarantine, etc., engaging in class activities in a timely fashion is essential for your learning the materials. In this class, participation expectations can be met by completing assigned tasks by the stated due date, attending my Zoom office hours, and completing collaborative tasks with your classmates as needed throughout the semester. If you have questions about your participation in this course, please contact me.

Revision

Revision is a very important part of the writing process, and so you will revise your assignments actively based on my feedback and on the feedback of your classmates. You are responsible for keeping *all* your work—including invention activities, drafts, and all responses to those drafts—over the course of the term. This will serve as a chronicle of your progress as a writer. During our final “exam,” you’ll write a reflection on what you’ve learned over the semester, and having artifacts of your writing process throughout can prove invaluable to this reflection.

Academic Integrity Statement/Plagiarism

In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. This definition applies to texts published in print or online, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers. As an institution of higher learning, RIT expects students to behave honestly and ethically at all times, especially when submitting work for evaluation in conjunction with any course or degree requirement. The University Writing Program encourages all students to become familiar with the [RIT Honor Code](#) and with [RIT’s Academic Honesty Policy](#).

General Course Policies

Statement on Reasonable Accommodations

RIT is committed to providing academic adjustments to students with disabilities. If you would like to request academic adjustments such as testing modifications due to a disability, please contact the Disability Services Office (DSO). Contact information for the DSO and information about how to request adjustments can be found at <https://www.rit.edu/disabilityservices/>. After you receive academic adjustment approval, it is imperative that you see me during office hours so that we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary.

RIT Resilience

Success in this course depends heavily on your personal health and wellbeing. Recognize that stress is an expected part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom. I strongly encourage you to reframe challenges as an unavoidable pathway to success. Reflect on your role in taking care of yourself throughout the term, before the demands of exams and projects reach their peak. Please feel free to reach out to me about any difficulty you may be having that may impact your performance in this course as soon as it occurs and before it

becomes unmanageable. In addition to me and your academic advisor, there are many other support services on campus that stand ready to assist you.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect

RIT has put forth [Policy P05.0 Diversity Statement](#) for all community member. RIT through its policies and practices is responsible for building an inclusive environment where membership in the community allows for faculty, staff and students to reach their fullest potential, both professionally and personally. RIT is committed to the development, administration and interpretation of policies and procedures in a way that is consistent with our commitment to diversity and is in compliance with federal, state and local laws. RIT's policies and procedures are administered in a way that supports fair treatment for all faculty, staff, students, and the RIT community at large.

Statement on Title IX

Title IX violations are taken very seriously at RIT. RIT is committed to investigate complaints of sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault and other sexual misconduct to ensure that appropriate action is taken to stop the behavior, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. Please view the [Title IX Rights and Resources at RIT](#); you can find additional syllabus language that you can modify as need on its Syllabus Language subpage.

Course Copyright Policy

All course materials students receive or to which students have online access are protected by copyright laws. Students may use course materials and make copies for their own use as needed, but unauthorized distribution and/or uploading of materials without the instructor's express permission is strictly prohibited. (See Policy C03.2 (<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/c032>)).

Policies Specific to this Online Course**Online Safety**

As with any other online community, the lack of physical interaction in an online classroom can create a false sense of anonymity and security. Good judgment and decision making are critical when choosing to disclose personal information with others whom you do not know, which will likely include individuals within our class for you.

RIT COVID-19 Safety Plan

RIT is committed to the safety of the RIT community and beyond. Because the situation is still in a rapid state of change, checking the RIT Ready website, and specifically the RIT Safety Plan for the most up to date information is recommended: <https://www.rit.edu/ready/rit-safety-plan>

Continuity of Learning (Course-level)

In the event that there is a disruption in our learning, I will communicate all changes to you as quickly as possible. If a personal interruption removes me from our online instructional space, you will be informed of this directly via email and on myCourses. In this communication, any changes in the learning structure will be carefully outlined, as will all necessary steps moving forward, for you and for me. Communication is key, and it will be important for you to check your RIT email and myCourses regularly this semester so that you are always "in the know".

Continuity of Learning (Student-level)

The RIT Safety Plan includes a section specifically for students, including accommodations, travel, health, etc.: <https://www.rit.edu/ready/rit-safety-plan#for-students>. This site will be updated as needed to provide important information regarding your requirements for being on campus and staying healthy. In the event that there is a disruption in your ability to learn with us, communication is key. The faster you can communicate these disruptions with me, the easier it is to keep you on a successful path in this course. If your absence from class is due to personal illness, please contact the Disability Services Office (<https://www.rit.edu/disabilityservices/>) as soon as possible. You may also reach out to your Academic Advisor who can assist you in making all of the necessary contacts with DSO, your instructors, etc.

Changes to the University Calendar

In the event that there is a significant change to the University calendar, this syllabus will be modified to meet those changes, if necessary. Modifications will be shared immediately with our class via myCourses and communications directly from me.