Critical Reading & Writing

English 185 10J

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:00 - 11:40 a.m.

Spring 2018

Oxford College of Emory University

Language Hall 102

As technologies go, writing has arguably been one of the most transformative for human societies. According to archeologists like Denise Schmandt-Besserat, writing originated in ancient systems of accounting, helping farmers keep track of goods, such as sheep and grain. These early systems of accounting were eventually repurposed for other contexts, such as the legal, religious, medical, and magical, evolving into the complex symbolic systems we recognize as writing. Most of today's social systems would not be possible without writing, which is used in many ways and for many purposes. Today's digital technologies, in fact, run on layers of code and mark-up—all predicated on writing—often for the purpose of conveying and displaying written communication. For most of us, imagining a world without writing is next-to-impossible, since we ourselves are products of the cultures that have developed with and through writing.

In this section of Critical Reading and Writing, our theme will be writing itself, with a primary focus on its role in academic work. Disciplines—like biology, psychology, and literature—are important categories for understanding writing in academic contexts, and so we will engage with how writing works in disciplines, though we will also put this in conversation with other contexts, like the personal and public. Writing is fascinating and complex, in large part because it is and does so many things. It is tool, activity, artifact, and action.

It is inquiry, expression, and persuasion. It is process and product. It has complex relationships with other modes and activities, such as talking and reading. And it has complex relationships with people and situations. Finally, writers can learn to write more effectively, but never actually finish learning, since we can always deepen our understanding and mastery of written language and since we can always learn to better interact with other human beings.

Because most writing is social—it seeks to produce change in other human beings, whether that change is simply a changed understanding of something or a changed course of action—we will ground our inquiry on writing in the study of rhetoric, an art and discipline with roots in ancient Greece and Rome. Modern rhetorician and literary theorist Kenneth Burke defined rhetoric as "the symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols," going on to specify that "wherever there is meaning, there is persuasion, and wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric." The discipline of rhetorical studies will provide us with a vocabulary and conceptual framework for thinking about written communication and academic literacies more precisely and for setting up the continued growth as a reader and writer in your other courses at Oxford College, particularly your three Continuing Writing requirements.

Dr. Gwendolynne Reid
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30 p.m. & by appt.
Note: Bear in mind that I check my Emory email on weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.—in general, you can expect a response from me within 24 hours.

Learning Goals, or Why We're Here…

A liberal arts education is preparation for full participation in public life, participation that includes being an informed citizen and voter, but also communicating and leading. Cicero and Quintilian, in fact, emphasized the importance of a liberal education for developing a flexible, "copious" style that would allow citizens to respond to diverse rhetorical situations throughout their lives. Oxford College recognizes this, providing you with both a liberal arts education and attention to your development as a communicator, including written communication. English 185 is Oxford's gateway writing course, providing you with preparation for writing in college and beyond, but also preparing you to maximize your ongoing growth as a writer in your three Continuing Writing courses.

Toward these ends, English 185 is designed around the following Student Learning Outcomes:

Critical Reading	Students will develop their ability to read texts closely and critically, focusing first on understanding before moving to evaluation.
Critical Writing	Argument: Students will develop their abilities to compose, organize, and support academic arguments in order to engage in ongoing intellectual conversations.
	Revision Process: Students will understand that good writing is the result of a process of planning, drafting, receiving and giving feedback, and revision.
Research	Students will develop the abilities to find evidence using library and other resources, to incorporate their findings into academic arguments, and to document their sources.
Oral Expression	Students will develop, through informed conversation, the ability to speak clearly and persuasively about the texts they study.

In addition to these shared outcomes, I have added the following learning outcomes for our section of 185:

Rhetorical Awareness: Students will develop an awareness of how communication varies according to rhetorical situation and will develop a rhetorical vocabulary to better analyze and adapt to new reading and writing situations.

Disciplinary Awareness: Students will develop an awareness of disciplines as important elements of academic rhetorical situations and of the roles reading and writing play in disciplinary inquiry.

Words are things; and a small drop of ink, falling like dew upon a thought, produces that which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.

—Byron

Kenneth Burke was an American literary theorist and rhetorician. How is his parlor metaphor useful for thinking about academic writing?
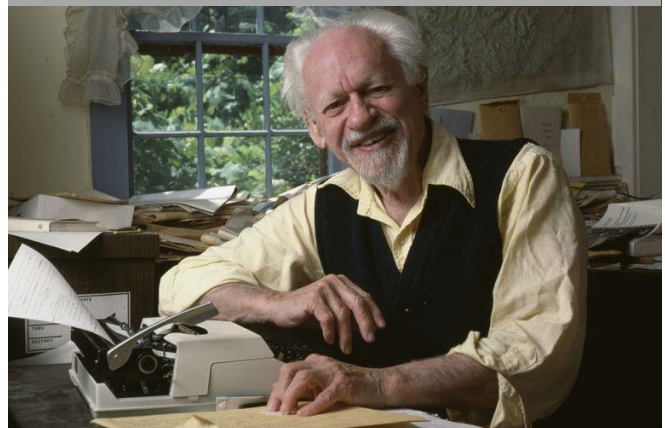
Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.

—Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, pp. 110-111

Course Organization & Assignments

Unit 1: Reading & Writing Rhetorically (Weeks 1-2)

Unit 2: Reading & Writing in the Humanities (Weeks 3-5)
     Project 1: Rhetorical Analysis, 15%

Unit 3: Reading & Writing in the Natural Sciences (Weeks 6–9)
     Project 2: Analysis of Scientific Accommodation, 20%

Unit 4: Reading & Writing in the Social Sciences (Weeks 10-15)
     Project 3: Autoethnography, 20%
     Project 4: Remediation Showcase (collaborative), 15%

                    Major Project Course Total: 70%

Other Course Assignments
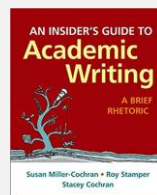Writer's Log, 10% (average of 1 grade for each of our 4 units)
Reading Discussion Leader, 10%
Class Contributions (participation, peer response, etc.) 20%

                    Other Course Assignments Total: 30%

Required Texts & Materials
(Texts at Oxford's bookstore or Amazon)

An Insider's Guide to Academic Writing: A Brief Rhetoric & LaunchPad (2015), ISBN: 978-1319020309

They Say I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, 3rd edition (2014), ISBN: 9780393935844

The Little Seagull Handbook,3rd edition (2016), ISBN: 978-0-393-60263-0

At least $15 of Eagle Dollars for printing (perhaps more if you find paper works well for you.

Projected Course Schedule

Unless hyperlinked, readings other than our textbooks are available through our library course reserves. If I revise our schedule, I will do so at least twenty-four hours before class and will make a Canvas announcement to let you know.

Week	Date	Title	Read/Watch/Listen	Do
Unit 1: Reading & Writing Rhetorically				
Week 1	H 1/18	Introductions		
Week 2	T 1/23	Beliefs about writing	The syllabus. *They Say/I Say* (*TS*) Ch. 12, "I take your point." Edwards & Paz's "Only geniuses can be writers."	List your beliefs about writing and writers, reflecting on where these beliefs came from and which of these are helpful or hurtful to you as a writer. How do your beliefs connect with Edwards & Paz's argument? (writer's log)
	H 1/25	Writing in new situations	Dirk's "Navigating genres."	List the genres you produce & encounter in twenty-four hours. What actions do they perform? Which are familiar to you and which are new to you? How do you learn new genres? (writer's log)
Week 3	T 1/30	Reading and writing rhetorically	Rhetorical analysis assignment sheet (P1). *Insider's Guide* (*IG*) Ch. 2. Covino & Joliffe's "Elements of rhetoric" (pp. 10-21). Explore the Silva Rhetoricae for more rhetorical terms (focus on the left-hand side).	Describe a text you read recently that you feel you read rhetorically and explain what makes it a good example *rhetorical* reading. Reflect on when and how it can be useful to read in this way and how to help yourself do so (writer's log).

Unit 2: Reading & Writing in the Humanities				
	H 2/1	Rhetoric in academic disciplines	*IG* Ch. 5 + Timothy Holzhauser's "Rhetoric of a 1943 war bonds ad" (*IG* Ch. 3). *TS* "Introduction." "BEAM: Bizup's four types of sources" (handout on Canvas).	List 3+ exhibits that might be interesting to analyze through a rhetorical lens (see Bizup's BEAM). Reflect on why and for whom an analysis would be interesting and significant. (writer's log)
Week 4	T 2/6	Analyzing the genre	Rose's "Urgency, anxiety, and getting to work: Paranoid temporality and the marketing of higher education." Post's "Obama's speech at Howard: Becoming King." Read about *anaphora* in the Silva Rhetoricae.	**P1 grading contract due.** Rhetorical analysis matrix + describe a question/problem you find interesting/important about how your exhibit works rhetorically and why. (writer's log).
	H 2/8	Reading and writing in the humanities	*IG* Ch.6, "Reading and writing in the humanities" + Lamott's "Shitty first drafts."	"Down draft" of rhetorical analysis (2+ pages; upload + bring 2 paper copies).
Week 5	T 2/13	Connecting to conversations [Library session]	Skim *IG* pp. 60-71. *Little Seagull* (*LS*) "R1: Doing research." Hjortshoj's "Footstools and furniture."	List of questions/information that could help deepen your analysis grouped by BEAM (writer's log). Bring laptop.
	H 2/15	Peer response workshop	Straub's "Responding—really responding—to other students' writing." *TS* Part 1 ("They Say").	"Up draft" of rhetorical analysis, complete with beginning, middle, and end (bring 2 paper copies).
Week 6	T 2/20	Style and correctness workshop	Williams & Colomb's "Actions." *LS* "R4: Integrating sources, avoiding plagiarism" + skim MLA chapter.	"Dental draft" of rhetorical analysis with draft of writer's statement (upload + bring 2 paper copies). Bring *Little Seagull*.
Unit 3: Reading and Writing in the Natural Sciences				
	H 2/22	Science and the public	Roberts-Miller's "Sciencing in public" and Ceccarelli's "Defending science: How the art of rhetoric can help"	Submit **final draft** of rhetorical analysis to Canvas (P1). Locate a reference to science in the public sphere; reflect on what makes it interesting (writer's log).
Week 7	T 2/27	Writing in the natural sciences	*IG* Ch. 8. Analysis of scientific accommodation assignment sheet (P2). St. Fleur's "City bees stick to a flower diet rather than slurp up soda."	Locate 3+ popular science "exhibit" texts that could be interesting to analyze (articles, podcasts, videos, ads, etc.). Reflect on what makes them rhetorically interesting (writer's log). Bring laptop.
	H 3/1	Reading in the natural sciences	*TS* Ch. 14, "Reading for conversation." Hjortshoj's "Reading: How to stay on top of it." Pain's "How to (seriously) read a scientific paper."	**P2 grading contract due.** Attempt to locate the corresponding scientific article for 2 popular science exhibits you're considering. Which pair seems most interesting to analyze? Why? (writer's log). Bring laptop.
Week 8	T 3/6	Deepening your analysis	Your chosen sources. Fahnestock's "Accommodating science: The rhetorical life of scientific facts"	"Down draft" of analysis of scientific accommodation (2+ pages; upload + bring 2 paper copies).

	H 3/8	Peer response workshop	*TS* Ch. 11 (revision). Hoover's "Origins of continental drift theory and the influence of rhetoric."	"Up draft" of analysis of scientific accommodation, beginning to end (upload + bring 2 paper copies).
Week 9	3/13-15	Spring break		
Week 10	T 3/20	Style and correctness workshop	*TS* Ch. 8 & 10 (connection & metacommentary)	"Dental draft" of analysis (upload + bring 2 paper copies). Bring *LS*.
Unit 4: Reading and Writing in the Social Sciences				
	H 3/22	Reading and writing in the social sciences	*IG* Ch. 7.	Submit **final draft** of analysis of scientific accommodation (P2).
Week 11	T 3/27	Writing about culture through self	Autoethnography assignment sheet (P3). Hall's "Introduction to autoethnography." Woods's "I'm just doing my homework: My experiences as a nerd."	List, map, or freewrite on your cultural groups and identities as exhaustively as possible (i.e. I'd include things like firstborn, bilingual, nerd, teacher). Which ones are you most interested in learning more about? Why? (writer's log)
	H 3/29	Connecting experience with research	Skim Ellis, Adams, and Bochners's "Autoethnography: An overview" (read sections 2 & 3 carefully). Watch "Picking Your Topic IS Research";	Begin your "field work" on your chosen group/identity, perhaps interviewing others and consulting photos, memorabilia, journals, videos, etc. to help with recall. Reflect on your process—what are you learning and remembering? What new questions are arising? (writer's log). Bring your laptop.
Week 12	T 4/3	Writing narratively about experience	Franklin's "Structure." Burrell's "From victim to advocate: Finding opportunity in my identity as a victim of social injustice." MacGregor's "How to format dialogue."	**P3 grading contract due.** Write about a memory relevant to P3, creating an "active image" that "shows, not tells" (writer's log + bring 2 paper copies).
	H 4/5	Mode and media as part of communication	Remediation assignment sheet (P4). Read the first four sections of "Remediation." Watch "What is a Mode?" "Reflecting on Vegetarianism." "Looking Back on Social Media's Impact on Generation Z"	Create a written version of a text that is primarily NOT alphabetic text and reflect on what is gained and lost in the process. What are the implications for communicators and communication? Which of your projects would gain the most from being remediated? (writer's log)
Week 13	T 4/10	Relating narrative and analysis	Your P3 sources. Castrodale & Zingaro's "'You're such a good friend': A woven autoethnographic narrative discussion of disability and friendship in higher education."	Tell the story of how your thinking has evolved as you've read what others have said about your chosen identity/group for P3, integrating at least 3 other scholars' papers as "argument sources" in BEAM (writer's log).
	H 4/12	Planning remediations		Collect a handful of samples of your target remediation genre and do a mini-analysis of its rhetorical action, situation, form, substance, etc. How will this apply to your remediation? (writer's log)

Week 14	T 4/17	Peer response workshop		"Up draft" of autoethnography, beginning to end (upload + bring 2 paper copies).
	H 4/19	Peer response + work session		**P4 grading contract due.** Upload + bring a printed detailed plan of your remediation for peer response (e.g. 2-column script or storyboard, if a video).
Week 15	T 4/24	Style and correctness workshop.	Olson's "Punctuation Made Simple." Skim *LS* APA chapter.	"Dental draft" of autoethnography (upload + bring 2 paper copies). Bring *Little Seagull*.
	H 4/26	Reflecting on the course		Submit **final draft** of autoethnography (P3). Bring laptop for access to writer's log.
Final Exam	5/7, 2 – 5 p.m.	Final presentations		Remediation showcase. Submit **final version** of remediation (P4).

Grading Contracts

Grades can be a helpful form of classroom communication, proving concise feedback that students can then use to adjust their learning goals and strategies. Grades are less helpful, however, when they shift from a tool *for* learning to the focus *of* learning. Part of that shift includes a shift from an innate desire to learning and grow to a desire to gain a reward or avoid a loss. With that can also come an unhealthy degree of anxiety that can make it harder to process and integrate new information and experiences. Grade-related performance anxiety can also make it harder to take the risks necessary to stretch ourselves in new ways.

In an attempt to keep the positive aspects of grades, while minimizing their deleterious effects, **I will be employing grading contracts for each of the major projects**. This means that for each assignment, I will outline the criteria necessary to achieve an A, B, or C and **you will choose your grade ahead of time**. I will reserve Ds and Fs for egregious cases, such as non-completion, cheating, or plagiarism.

When you submit a project, I will first verify that you have met the criteria for the grade you contracted for. If you have not, I will return the ungraded project for you to rectify within a certain timeframe. If you have, I will assign a +/- grade within your chosen grade based on the quality of your work. For example, a student who contracted for a B and met that criteria in an outstanding way would receive a B+. Assignment sheets will include grade options that resemble the following (with details specific to the assignment):

C-Level Work

Meets the learning goals and criteria for the assignment, but with minimal development and research.

B-Level Work

Meets the learning goals and criteria for the assignment, with moderate development and research and perhaps one or more accompanying project components (e.g. annotated bibliography, writer's statement). Includes criteria for higher-order cognitive tasks (e.g. application, analysis).

A-Level Work

Meets the learning goals and criteria for the assignment, with extensive development and research and several accompanying project components (e.g. annotated bibliography, writer's statement, appendices). May require specific additional project sections/components to deepen the writing and inquiry. Includes criteria for higher-order cognitive tasks (e.g. synthesis, evaluation, creation, metacognition).

Where to Get Help

Our Course Website & Syllabus: I've tried hard to think of the questions that might nag you in the wee hours of the night when I'm not available. If a question arises, take a look around our Canvas site and our syllabus—chances are, I've written out an answer already.

Oxford's Writing Center: The Oxford Writing Center is another place to grow as a writer. Talking through your writing with an experienced writer can be a helpful way to grow your ideas, plan your writing, or focus your revision. I recommend making full use of this free resource and scheduling visits early and often. Do not think of it as remedial help—many of the strongest student writers are so strong precisely because they are proactive in visiting the center.

Oxford's Library: Oxford's librarians offer one-on-one research consultations with students. These can be early or late in your process (though I recommend early). Because research, reading, and writing are such interrelated processes, research consultations can yield many, many rewards for writers.

Counseling & Career Services: Oxford's Counseling & Career Services (CCS) provides a range of free services related to your personal and professional development. This can include helping you work through a difficult time, guiding your career/life planning, or even developing résumés and professional letters. These are great people to reach out to for help.

Canvas Help: For technical issues with Canvas, click on the "Help" tab. You'll find many resources, including a 24/7 hotline: 844 765-2516.

AskIT: Many technological problems can be resolved by submitting questions to Oxford's AskIT.

Me!: If you cannot find an answer to your question, ask me! I have weekly office hours and can also make appointments at other times to discuss your writing and progress.

Course Policies

Accessibility: Accessibility is important to me. My goal is to create an accessible, inclusive learning environment in which all students feel they can learn effectively and in which we all learn from each other's' diverse perspectives. If you have concerns about your ability to participate in this class, please see me as soon as possible. If you have a disability that may require accommodation, contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). It is your responsibility to notify me and the OAS of your accommodation needs, but we'll find solutions together (adsroxford@emory.edu).

Attendance & Tardies: I've designed this course to be a cooperative learning experience, which means that absences reduce everyone's potential learning. Plan to attend each class, arrive on time, and have something to contribute every day. If you must be absent, I will treat **up to one week of absences as automatically excused** (two class meetings), after which your final grade will be penalized by a quarter-letter grade per absence (.25). Students with no more than one absence will earn an extra quarter-letter grade on their course contributions grade (.25). Arriving to class late is disruptive and erodes the valuable time we have together. Arrive *before* the official start of class so that we can start on time. I will treat three tardies or early departures as the equivalent of one absence.

Course Contributions: Creating a positive learning environment is a collective responsibility that requires us all to contribute actively to the course. Reading actively, completing your writing log entries, coming to class with assignments prepared, and committing to being fully present in mind and body will help you contribute meaningfully. Plan on:

- Coming to class prepared and with something positive to contribute.
- Attending all class sessions (except in the case of unavoidable emergency/obligation).
- Being respectful of all class members (i.e. communicating interest, listening, using names, turn-taking, etc.).
- Minimizing disruptions (i.e. leaving during class, your phone ringing).
- Staying actively focused on the class (i.e. minimizing distractions).

Your course contributions grade will include random participation grades, self-graded participation, peer response, and homework (e.g. draft due dates).

Grading Scales: I use the GPA scale to convert letter grades for calculation. I also have two additional scales I use for homework and course contributions that I convert to the GPA scale: (1) the completion scale (credit = 4, partial credit = 2, no credit = 0); (2) the contribution scale (outstanding = 4, active = 3, passive = 2, unengaged = 1, unacceptable = 0). Because Canvas can only grade on the 100-point scale, you will see individual grades in Canvas, but no automatically-calculated course grade.

Honor Code & Plagiarism: Plagiarism and cheating undermine our work as learners and scholars. We cannot build new knowledge together if our contributions are not our own. As a writing course, we will actively learn about the conventions for attribution and source handling. That said, you are expected to abide by our Honor Code from the very beginning and should be proactive in seeking help if you are unsure of how to integrate

Course Policies, continued

Honor Code & Plagiarism, continued: source material. Bear in mind that the honor code states that submitting work to me declares that work to be your own without unauthorized help. The Purdue OWL is a useful resource on plagiarism.

Homework: Unless otherwise noted, homework should be submitted as writer's log entries. These should be available for use in class activities (i.e. printed or electronic). Homework will be graded using the completion scale or contributions scale—this is the place to take risks and be creative. Fully engaged, thoughtful responses matter more than correctness.

Late Work: Late projects will be deducted one +/- per calendar day late (i.e. a third of a letter grade). Late writing log entries will affect your participation grade (lack of preparation). A pattern of late entries will be reflected in your writing log's final grade as evidence of a low level of engagement with the course.

Major Projects: Major projects will be submitted through Canvas as .doc or .docx files. We will practice adapting to different academic style guides (e.g. MLA and APA); please follow the document formatting conventions of the style we are practicing for a given project.

Note on Student Work: Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford and Emory faculty/staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.

Technology: I see learning to use writing technologies effectively as part of learning to write, and so we will make regular use of your laptop. Please bring your laptop to every class, but only pull it out when I ask you to. I expect you to be digitally unleashed to promote being present in both mind and body during class. For example, phones should be silenced and in your bag so that we can be fully present with each other; and notifications and distracting software/platforms (e.g., social media) should be closed on laptops when in use (consider airplane mode while taking notes). Our goal will be to use technology in ways that enhance our collective learning and minimize distraction and disrespect. Let's be mindful of our valuable time together—our class is a privilege and gift many have not had (and do not have) the opportunity to benefit from. Please let me know if you have ideas for how to improve the integration of technology in our classroom.