

University Writing - Data Sciences and Engineering

Jenna Schoen

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C1010.002	Spring 2018
<i>Day/Time:</i>	Tuesday and Thursday - 8:40 - 9:55 a.m.
<i>Location:</i>	Philosophy 408A
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University Writing

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Course Description

Can an animal feel pain, joy, or fear as a human does? Will a machine ever be able to think like a human can? What does it mean to feel, to think, and, moreover, to be human? How does technology narrow, extend, reveal, or blur the boundaries between the human and non-human? Might technology transform humans into new creatures? Can a technology become a living and thinking being itself? How should we treat future

animals, machines, humans, and cyborgs in a world where the human is not the only feeling and thinking creature?

These are some the questions we will be exploring in our data science-themed University Writing class. University Writing is designed to help undergraduates read and write essays in order to participate in the academic conversations that form our intellectual community. In our section, we will be discussing what it means to be human and how science and technology complicate that question. We will be reading essays that approach this question in various ways. These essays and our discussions will then provide fodder for your own writing.

This class does not presume that students will arrive with any background or identified interest in the data sciences and data engineering. Above all, our focus is to develop as writers and readers. Together, we will study how scholars make and support their arguments. Our readings will include academic essays and book chapters, as well as other scholarly and popular texts, all addressing questions of technology and science in some way. In the process of writing academic essays, we will practice the same kind of critical analysis, revision, collaboration, and research skills that these scholars use in their work every day. The main goal for this course is for you to emerge as a more confident reader and writer, capable of writing clear, persuasive prose – skills that will serve you no matter what field you choose.

We will give special attention to the practices of close reading, rhetorical analysis, research, collaboration, and substantive revision. Students will learn that writing is a process of continual refinement of ideas and their expression. Rather than approaching writing as an innate talent, this course will teach writing as a unique, learned skill that can be practiced and developed. Over the course of the semester, you will read and discuss texts from a number of fields, complete regular reading and writing exercises, write several longer essays, and prepare an editorial for a public audience.

Note: Your syllabus is a reference document to be frequently consulted. In it you will find course policies, all major due dates, and a schedule of readings. The syllabus is available online on our Google Site. Readings and due dates are subject to change throughout the semester, but I will give you warning well in advance and update the online syllabus if anything changes.

Requirements

1. Four **progression essays** ranging from 750-3000 words. Final essays must be submitted on Canvas (under “Files”) and emailed to me as a private Google Doc
2. One **presentation**, in which you and a classmate will contextualize a course reading, historically and biographically (10 minutes max.), and lead discussion.
3. One **workshop**, in anticipation of which you will upload a shared Google Doc to the Workshop folder on our Google Drive. You will also read and comment on your peers’ workshop drafts before workshop days.
4. Attend and participate in all classes and conferences

Assignments

- **Workshops:** At least once during the semester you will workshop a draft of an essay. You must have the essay shared on the class Google Drive **24 hours** in advance of the workshop, so that your peers can read and comment on your essay. For every other workshop, you will write marginal and end-note comments on your peer’s workshop essay. These responses are essential not only because they provide feedback to your peer, but also because they foster a critical and revisory perspective towards your own writing.
- **Presentation:** Once during the semester you and a classmate will present on a reading assignment. You will have 5-10 minutes (10 minutes **max**) to contextualize the reading (historically, theoretically,

and/or biographically). Then you will lead a class discussion for 25-30 minutes, asking prepared and thoughtful questions on the assigned essay. You and your partner should prepare both the context and discussion questions together, but you can choose how to divide the presentation.

- **Drafts:** (500-2800 words). You will be writing your essays in a series of drafts (the number of drafts varies per progression). Drafts are opportunities to explore your ideas, but they are also the beginnings of formal essays. The better your draft, the more useful will be the feedback you will get on it. Drafts are **required**, and though they do not receive individual grades, if you fail to submit any draft of a progression (proposal, exploratory, formal), your final essay grade will suffer. So it is critical that you submit all drafts (and on-time).
- **Final Essays:** (750+ words; must have a **title**, **word count**, and a **works cited** page) Each progression culminates in a **final essay**, which will evolve out of your exercises and drafts. Your final essay will likely differ substantially from the previous drafts in form, and often in content. Your final essay will receive a **formal grade**. All final essays should:
 1. develop an idea or argument in a coherent, compelling way;
 2. have a thoughtful beginning, middle, and end;
 3. have a tone appropriate for the intended audience;
 4. demonstrate regard for the essay's aesthetics.

You will write four essays, which can be broadly described as follows:

- **First progression: textual analysis of one object.** You will write about a single essay, identifying a textual question and answering it through a close reading of the content and form of the essay. The goal of this essay is to deepen our understanding of the value or implications of a single rich text by extending its work or by filling in its gaps.
- **Second progression: supplementing textual analysis with theoretical tools.** You will read a set of scholarly texts with rich definitions, concepts, and oppositions. You will then select two of these texts to read alongside an exhibit of your choice. The goal of this progression is to produce a rich close reading of an exhibit via an intellectual conversation.
- **Third progression: developing and executing a research project.** You will read a major text which raises a series of questions, and in response to one of those questions, present a textual problem in an exhibit of your own choosing. The goal of this progression is to develop a research project of your own that engages with contemporary scholarship.
- **Fourth progression: speaking to a wider audience:** You will write an opinion piece that would be suitable for publication. The goal of this progression is to develop a compelling, unique authorial voice.

Required Texts

- The syllabus, course description, requirements, readings, assignments, and links to resources are available on our course Google Site: <https://sites.google.com/site/uwspring2018/> Bookmark this link!
- Some readings will be assigned from **The Morningside Review** (TMR), which is the journal of selected essays from Columbia's Undergraduate Writing Program. In addition to the required readings, you are strongly encouraged to read other TMR essays that model each of the four progressions.
- You might need to consult an up-to-date style manual for current MLA citation formatting conventions. Here is an online version: **The Online Writing Lab from Purdue University**.

Required VR Headset

- Though there are no required textbooks for this class, you are required to purchase a VR headset for P3. I strongly suggest **Google Cardboard** which is only \$15 and works perfectly well with many VR experiences.

Technology

- As mentioned above, we will be using a Google Site instead of Courseworks. On the Google Site, you will find the syllabus, announcements, additional resources, and links to four important Google Drive folders:
 1. Readings folder: where you will find all of our assigned course readings (essays, TMR essays, craft texts)
 2. Draft prompts: where you will find the draft prompt assignments for each progression, as well as a checklist for each essay
 3. Draft folder: where you will create a single draft file per progression (labelled “Last Name P(x) Draft File”), in which you will write (or copy-paste) all of your progression drafts
 4. Workshop folder: where you will post the draft of an essay 24 hours before your workshop
- Because we will be working directly with Google Docs in class, I encourage you to bring your laptop to class everyday. This way you can directly edit your draft in class and see peer comments on the workshop essay. If you do not have a personal laptop that you can bring, then you must print out and bring all your responses, drafts, and workshop papers to class.
- Though I encourage you to bring and use your laptops when they are helpful in class, if you are browsing websites, texting, etc., then I will have to ask you to no longer use your laptop in class, which will be very inconvenient for you.
- Even if you bring your laptop to class, **you must print all reading assignments** and bring them to class annotated. There will be no laptop use during presentations.
- Unfortunately the Google Site cannot be reached via our Columbia email addresses, so you have to use a personal Gmail account in order to access the site. I will be collecting your Gmail addresses so that I can add you to the site, but if you do not have or do not wish to use a personal Gmail, I have made a general Gmail account with the username uwspring17@gmail.com and password ilovewriting

Course Policies

Final Grades

Your course work for the semester will be weighted as follows:

Progression	Word Limit	Weight
Progression 1: <i>Critical Response</i>	1200-1500 w.	20%
Progression 2: <i>Conversation Essay</i>	1500-2000 w.	25%
Progression 3: <i>Research Essay</i>	2400-3000 w.	35%
Progression 4: <i>Editorial Essay</i>	~750 w.	20%
Total		100%

Essay Grading

Each final essay will receive a number grade out of 100 possible points. At the end of the semester, I will adjust these numbers for each essay's weight, total them, round to the tenth place, and assign a course grade as follows:

Course grade	Number grades
A+	97.5-100
A	92.5-97.4

Course grade	Number grades
A-	89.5-92.4
B+	87.5-89.4
B	82.5-87.4
B-	79.5-82.4
C+	77.5-79.4
C	72.5-77.4
C-	69.5-72.4
D	59.5-69.4
F	0-59.4

- “**A**” (93-97) essays not only fulfill the goals of the progression, but push beyond those goals in surprising ways. They reflect excellence and artistry in writing. Usually this is because the writer has found something compelling to write about and has taken great care to attend to his or her language and form.
- “**A-**” (90-92) essays fulfill all the progression goals and have some moments of excellence and artistry. However, they are not entirely pristine or even.
- “**B+**” (88-89) essays fulfill nearly all of the progression goals, but struggle to execute one or two of them. They are more uneven than A or A- papers.
- “**B**” (83-87) essays show an understanding of all the progression goals, but struggle to execute several of them fully. They might also have some structural or stylistic problems.
- “**B-**” (80-82) essays struggle to execute several progression goals, and indicate incomplete understanding of the progression goals. They show hard work but have larger structural or stylistic problems.
- “**C**” (70-79) essays fail to execute several of the progression goals. These kinds of essays may show a fair amount of work, but do not come together evenly, and have major structural or stylistic problems.
- “**D**” (60-69) essays fail to meet most of the progression goals. These essays appear to have been hastily written, incomplete, or thrown together.
- “**F**” (0-59) essays fail to meet all or nearly all of the progression goals.

Late and Missed Assignments

Keeping deadlines is an important aspect of this class, as it gives you the time to develop and revise your ideas, and it gives me the time to offer you productive feedback. I can’t comment on late formal drafts, so it is essential that you submit drafts on time in order to receive written feedback before your final essay is due.

Besides each progression’s final essay, progression drafts and other assignments are graded pass/fail. However, late and incomplete assignments deduct from your final progression essay grade. Each **late draft** will deduct **2 points per day** late. Each **late final essay** will deduct **3 points per day** late. Missed **workshops and presentations** will deduct **5 points** from the current progression grade. Missed **workshop comments** will deduct **2 points** from the current progression grade.

I will allow each student **one** 48 hour extension on **one** assignment (one exploratory draft, one formal draft, one final draft, etc) in the semester (**not per progression**). You **must** notify me at least an hour before the assignment is due in order to apply the extension. I will not give any other extensions for any other assignments.

All **final** essay drafts must be submitted to Canvas and emailed to me by the deadline in order to be considered on time. According to the policy of the Undergraduate Writing Program, failure to submit the final draft of any essay by the end of the semester will result in an automatic failure for the course.

Absences and Lateness

Absences affect your essay grades until they begin to affect your final course grade. The grade penalties are as follows:

Number of absences	Grade Penalty
1-3	3 points off progression grade per absence
4	3 points off final course grade
5	10 points off final course grade
6	20 points off final course grade
7	F or UW, course grade

It is also critical that you are on time for class. Every **2 latenesses** will count as **1 absence**.

The following are the only reasons for **excused** absences:

- **Religious observance:** By the fourth class session, send me an email — copied to your academic advisor — in which you outline all of the dates you will be absent for the semester.
- **Athletic commitments:** Only participation in athletic contests will count as excused absences; practice sessions do not. Prior to any absence, you must send me a completed and signed “Columbia University Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Absence Notification Form”.
- **Illness:** A signed doctor’s note is required to excuse an absence. You should bring the note to class on the day you are able to return. You should also email me and tell me that you’ll be missing class.
- **Section changes:** If you change your section of University Writing in the first two weeks of class, you must provide your new instructor a completed and signed “University Writing Attendance Confirmation” form. Please see Mr. John Stobo in the Undergraduate Writing Program office, 310 Philosophy Hall, for a copy of the form.

Conferences

You will have **two** conferences with me during the semester. These conferences give you the opportunity to discuss your ideas, to work through your drafts, to prepare for presentations, or to revise your essays. You are welcome to come and see me in office hours or by appointment to discuss any aspect of the course.

Assessment and Response

During the first three progressions, I will write marginal and end-comments to your formal draft as well as your final draft. For your final progression, you will receive end-comments on your proposal, and marginal and end comments on your final draft.

My comments are designed to help you assess your draft and prioritize goals for the next stage of your writing. Just as important, my comments will offer you practical strategies designed to further your ongoing development as a writer. If you have any questions about my comments, please make an appointment with me to review them.

Academic Integrity

University Writing will provide you with strategies for working ethically and accurately with the texts you engage and fulfilling the Columbia Undergraduate Honor Code. We will discuss source use practices that prevent plagiarism, a serious academic offense that runs counter to our academic community’s core values of

honesty and respect for others. Here is a partial list from the Columbia University Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity of some of the forms plagiarism can take:

- “*Verbatim copying without acknowledgment* – copying a whole paragraph or larger sections; in effect, claiming that the writing is your own.”
- “*Copying select phrases without acknowledgment* – using your own words to pad the selectively copied words of others.”
- “*Paraphrasing text without acknowledgment* – rewriting text in your own words, but using the idea or argument as your own.”
- “*Using data gathered by another, claiming it as your own* – even if you submit an analysis of the data that is yours alone.”

Final drafts that contain plagiarism will receive a zero, may result in failure of the course, and the case will be reported to the director of the Undergraduate Writing Program and the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards. That office initiates the dean’s discipline process and determines whether to apply sanctions, which range from a warning to expulsion from the university.

Writing Center

At the Writing Center you can receive free individual consultations on your writing at any stage in the writing process, including brainstorming. Writing consultants work with all members of the Columbia community on any academic or nonacademic writing. You can make an appointment and view drop in hours on their website.

Other Support Services

- *Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*: Columbia University provides students who register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) with a range of support options and will provide you with a letter stating the accommodations to which you are entitled, without disclosing any other information about you. If you know or believe you have a disability of some kind, please consult with Disability Services and your advising dean as soon as possible; University Writing instructors need official documentation from the ODS in order to provide accommodations, and we cannot make retroactive accommodations.
- *Counseling and Psychological Services*: The Office of Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) provides many kinds of support for student wellness and academic success.

Course Calendar

Progression One

1. Tuesday 1/16

- Course Introduction

2. Thursday 1/18

- Reading:
 - **Ford**, Richard. “Save the Robots.”

3. Tuesday 1/23

- Reading:
 - **Turing**, Alan. “Computing Machinery and Intelligence.”
- Presentation 1 (Turing)

4. Thursday 1/25

- Reading:
 - **Jamison**, Leslie. “The Empathy Exams.”
- Presentation 2 (Jamison)

P1 Exploratory Draft due Friday 1/26

5. Tuesday 1/30

- Reading:
 - **Bahk**, Sue. “The Final Judgement in ‘Monster Culture.’” (from The Morningside Review)
 - **Martin**, Emily. “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles.

6. Thursday 2/1

- Workshops 1 & 2 (P1 Draft)
- Due:
 - WR (Writing Response) 1 & 2
 - **P1 Formal Draft**

7. Tuesday 2/6

- Workshops 3 & 4 (P1 Draft)
- Due:
 - WR 3 & 4

Progression Two

8. Thursday 2/8

- Reading:
 - **Hofstadter**, Douglas. “On the Seeming Paradox of Mechanized Creativity.”
- Presentation 3 (Hofstadter)

P1 Final draft due Monday 2/12

9. Tuesday 2/13

- Reading:
 - **Slater**, Lauren. “Dr. Daedalus.”
- Presentation 4 (Slater)

10. Thursday 2/15

- Reading:
 - **Dennett**, Daniel. “Self as a center of narrative gravity.”
- Presentation 5 (Dennett)

11. Tuesday 2/20

- Reading:
 - **Grandin**, Temple. “Animals are not things.”
 - **Graff** and **Birkenstein**. “Yes/No/Okay, But”
- Presentation 6 (Grandin)
- Due:
 - **P2 Proposal**

12. Thursday 2/22

- Reading:
 - **Man**, Emily. “Brainy or Busty? Both. Sexuality and Intelligence in BBC’s Sherlock” (from The Morningside Review)

13. Tuesday 2/27

- Due:
 - **P2 Exploratory Draft**

14. Thursday 3/1

- Workshops 5 & 6 (P2 Drafts)
- Due:
 - WR 5 & 6

15. Tuesday 3/6

- Workshops 7 & 8 (P2 Drafts)
- Due:
 - WR 7 & 8
 - **P2 Formal Draft**

Progression Three

16. Thursday 3/8

- Reading:
 - **Hayles**, Katherine. “Embodied Virtuality: Or How to Put Bodies Back into the Picture”

P2 Final Draft due Monday 3/19

17. Tuesday 3/20

- Reading:
 - **Harris**, Joseph. “Forwarding.”

18. Thursday 3/22

- Reading:
 - **Booth**, **Colomb**, and **Williams**. “From Topics to Questions” and “From Questions to Problems”

19. Tuesday 3/27

- **Meet in Butler 203**
- Due:
 - **P3 Proposal**

20. Thursday 3/29

- Reading:
 - **Doniger**, Wendy. “Many Masks, Many Selves.”
- Presentation 7 (Doniger)

21. Tuesday 4/3

- Reading:
 - **Wright**, Rebecca. “Hives, Damn Hives, and the Internet” (From The Morningside Review)

22. Thursday 4/5

- Due:
 - **P3 Exploratory draft**

23. Tuesday 4/10:

- Workshops 9 & 10 (P3 Drafts)
- Due:
 - WR 9 & 10

24. Thursday 4/12

- Workshops 11 & 12 (P3 Drafts)
- Due: - WR 11 & 12
 - **P3 Formal draft**

Progression Four

25. Tuesday 4/17

- Reading:
 - **Dyson**, Freeman. “Science, Guided by Ethics, Can Lift Up the Poor.”

Publishing the Op-Ed Event on x (1-2:30pm)

26. Thursday 4/19

- Reading:
 - **Crawford**, Kate. “Artificial Intelligence’s White Guy Problem” (from The New York Times)
 - **Hawking**, Stephen. “Transcendence looks at the implications of artificial intelligence - but are we taking AI seriously enough?” (from The Independent)

27. Tuesday 4/24

- Workshops 13 & 14 (P4 Drafts)
- Due:
 - WR 13 & 14

28. Thursday 4/26

- Last day of class
- Due:
 - **P4 Proposal**

P3 Final draft due Sunday 4/22

P4 Final draft due Wednesday 5/2

Key Dates

Progression	Proposal	Exploratory Draft	Formal Draft	Final Draft
P1	—	Friday 1/26	Thursday 2/1	Monday 2/12
P2	Tuesday 2/20	Tuesday 2/27	Tuesday 3/6	Monday 3/19
P3	Tuesday 3/27	Thursday 4/5	Thursday 4/12	Sunday 4/22
P4	Thursday 4/26	—	—	Wednesday 5/2