University Writing - Data Sciences and Engineering

Jenna Schoen

Spring 2016

C1010.503	Spring 2017
Day/Time:	Tuesday and Thursday - **10:10 - 11:25 a.m.**
Location:	
Instructor:	Jenna Schoen
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University Writing - Data Sciences and Engineering Syllabus

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 informal reading and writing exercises, write several longer essays, and prepare an editorial for a public audience.

In this course, writing will be taught both through praxis ("doing") and analysis ("breaking up into pieces"). Classes are divided into **Reading Days** and **Writing Days.** For both of these you will come to class having thoroughly prepared a brief assigned reading: that is, you will have done the reading at least twice, marked especially interesting or challenging passages, and prepared several well thought-out discussion questions; in addition, on Writing Days, you will have prepared a Response Letter (details in class). The primary difference between Reading Days and Writing Days is that on the former we will be discussing Course Readings, which are published essays in modern English; and on the latter we will be discussing your own work and development.

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 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 CourseWorks

2. **Reading assignments** and **writing exercises**. Complete all exercises in your project file on our shared Google Drive

3. One **Reading Day Presentation**, in which you'll contextualize a Course

Reading, historically and biographically (10 minutes max.), and lead discussion

4. One **Writing Day Workshop**, in anticipation of which you will upload a shared Google Doc to the Workshop folder on our Google Drive

5. Attend and participate in all classes and conferences

Assignments

You will do at least three types of writing in this course: **exercises**, **drafts**, and **final essays**. These assignments will connect with one another in a developmental sequence called a **progression**. We will be working on **four progressions** this semester.

- **Exercises**: (100-750 words) Exercises include any kind of writing that you do in class or on your own to practice skills that you will need for successful completion of the final essay. They are short, preliminary writing tasks designed to help you reflect on the readings, generate ideas, practice skills you will use in an essay, and give feedback to classmates. Exercises are not essays, but each exercise will help you build toward your essay draft. Exercises do not receive individual grades. They will be treated as **pass/fail** assignments.

- **Drafts**: (750+ words) After you have completed a series of exercises, you will write **two drafts** of your essay for the progression. Like the exercises, the 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. In this class you will learn ways to improve even the best work you can produce on your own. To facilitate revision, your drafts will receive comments from both me and your classmates. Drafts are **required** but do not receive individual grades.

- **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 problem or 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/uwfall2016/ Bookmark this link!

- Additional readings will be assigned from **The Morningside Review**, which is the journal of selected essays from Columbia's Undergraduate Writing Program.

- You might need to consult an up-to-date style manual for current MLA citation formatting conventions. Here is an online version: **The OnlineWriting Lab from Purdue University**.

Technology

- As mentioned above, we will be using a Google Site instead of Courseworks. On the Google Site, you find the syllabus, announcements, additional resources, and links to two important Google Drive folders. The first folder (Readings) contains all of our course readings, organized by progression and class day. The second folder (Writing) will be where you complete all of your writing exercises and drafts. After the first day of class, create a document in the "P1" folder, and title it with your last name. This will be your "project file" for the first progression. You will complete all of your writing exercises and drafts in this file (labeling them accordingly). We will then work directly with these files in class, and your peers and I will comment directly on drafts during peer reviews, etc.

- Because we will be working directly with Google Docs in class, this means you must bring your laptop to every class. If you do not have a personal

laptop that you can bring, this is fine. Just email me after the first class and we will work something out.

- 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 uwfall16@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: *Critical Response*	1200-1500 w.	**15%**
Progression 2: *Conversation Essay*	1500-2000 w.	**20%**
Progression 3: *Research Essay*	2400-3000 w.	**35%**
Progression 4: *Editorial Essay*	~750 w.	**15%**
Presentation, Workshop & Participation		**15%**
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
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**" (*100-90*) essays not only fulfill the goals of the progression, but push beyond those goals in surprising ways. This is more likely to be possible when the writer has found something compelling to write about and has taken great care to attend to his or her language and form. **A** essays reflect excellence and artistry.

- "**B+**" (*89-87*) essays may excel in certain areas and reflect superior understanding of the progression's goals, but are sufficiently uneven to preclude it from receiving an **A**.

- "**B**" (*80-87*) essays are good, competent papers.

- "**C**" (*79-69*) essays reflect struggle in fulfilling the progression's goals. These kinds of essays may show a fair amount of work, but do not come together well enough to be competent papers.

- "**D**" (*69-59*) essays may appear to have been hastily written, incomplete, or thrown together.

- "**F**" (*59-0*) essays fail to meet the minimum level of expectations for the progression.

Late and Missed Assignments, Drafts, and Final Essays

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. If you turn in work late, I may not be able to provide you feedback.

If you hand in a **formal draft 48+ hours late**, your **final essay grade will be lowered by 10 points**. If you hand in a **final essay late**, your **final essay grade will be lowered by 3 points for every day that it is late**.

All final drafts must be submitted to Courseworks 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.

Presentation, Workshop, and Participation Grade

Your presentation, workshop, and general participation make up 15% of your grade. Presentation and workshop grades are based on the requirements of each assignment (short context presentation, prepared discussion questions, workshop draft ready 24 hours in advance, etc). Your participation grade is based on attendance, tardiness, and attention in class. Unexcused absences will affect your grade as follows:

Number of absences	Grade Penalty
Number of absences	Grade Penalty
1-3	3 points off participation 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 and Office Hours

You will also have **two** 20-30 minute 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. These conferences also count towards your participation grade (a missed conference will incur 10 points off the participation grade).

Assessment and Response

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

The 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: Close Reading

1. **Tuesday 1/17**

   - Course Introduction

2. **Thursday 1/19**

   - Reading:
     - **Martin**, Emily. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles"
     - **Bahk**, Sue. "The Final Judgement in 'Monster Culture.'" (from The Morningside Review)
   - Presentation 1 (Martin)

3. **Tuesday 1/24**

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

4. **Thursday 1/26**

   - Reading:

- **Turing**, Alan. "Computing Machinery and Intelligence."
- Presentation 3 (Turing)

5. Tuesday 1/31

- Workshop 1 (P1 Draft)
- Due:
  - Exploratory Draft

6. Thursday 2/2

- Reading:
  - **Hofstadter,** Douglas. "On the Seeming Paradox Mechanized Creativity."
- Presentation 4 (Hofstadter)

7. Tuesday 2/7

- Workshop 2 & 3 (P1 Draft)
- Due:
  - P1 Formal Draft

Peer Review of P1 Formal Draft due Thursday 2/9

Progression Two: Conversing

8. Thursday 2/9

- Reading:
  - **Sacks,** Oliver. "Anthropologist on Mars."
  - **Booth**, **Colomb**, and **Williams**. "Revising Style: Telling your Story Clearly."
- Presentation 5 (Sacks)

9. Tuesday 2/14

Reading: - **Man**, Emily. "Brainy or Busty? Both. Sexuality and Intelligence in BBC's Sherlock" (from The Morningside Review) - Workshop 4 (P1 Draft)

10. **Thursday 2/16**

- Reading:
  - **Grandin,** Temple. "Animals are not things."
- Presentation 6 (Grandin)
- Due:
  - Exercise 1

Final draft for P1 due Friday 2/17!

11. **Tuesday 2/21**

- Workshop 5 (P2 draft)

12. **Thursday 2/23**

- Reading:
  - **Slater,** Lauren. "Dr. Daedalus."
- Presentation 7 (Slater)
- Due:
  - Exploratory Draft

13. **Tuesday 2/28**

- Workshops 6 & 7 (P2 Drafts)

14. **Thursday 3/2**

- Reading:
  - **Dennett**, Daniel. "Self as a center of narrative gravity."
- Presentation 8 (Dennett)
- Due:
  - Formal Draft

Progression Three: Researching

15. **Tuesday 3/7**

- Reading:
  - **Hayles**, Katherine. "Embodied Virtuality: Or How to Put Bodies Back into the Picture"
- Presentation 9 (Hayles)

16. Thursday 3/9

- Workshop 8 (P2 Draft)
- Due:
    - Exercise 1

Final Draft for P2 due Sunday 3/12!

Spring Break 3/13 & 3/17

17. Tuesday 3/21

Meet in Butler 306 - Reading: - **Booth**, **Colomb**, and **Williams**. "From Topics to Questions" and "From Questions to Problems" - Due: - Exercise 2

18. Thursday 3/23:

- Reading:
    - **Doniger, Wendy**. "Many Masks, Many Selves."
- Presentation 10 (Doniger)

19. Tuesday 3/28

- Workshop 9 (P3 Draft)
- Reading:
    - **Wright**, Rebecca. "Hives, Damn Hives, and the Internet" (From The Morningside Review)
- **Jakub**, Lucy. "Who Swims with the Blobfish?: Anthropomorphic Bias in Conservation" (From The Morningside Review)

Exploratory draft for P3 due Wednesday 3/29!

20. Thursday 3/30

- Reading:
    - **McLuhan, Marshall.** "The Gadget Lover: Narcissus as Narcosis."
- Presentation 11 (McLuhan)

21. Tuesday 4/4

- Reading:
    - **Booth**, **Colomb**, and **Williams**. "Introductions and Conclusions."

- Workshop 10 (P3 Draft)

22. Thursday 4/6:

- Reading:
  - Nagel, Thomas. "What is it like to be a bat?"
- Presentation 12 (Nagel)
- Due:
  - **Formal draft** for **P3**

23. Tuesday 4/11

- Workshop 11 (P3 Draft)

Progression Four: Opining

24. Thursday 4/13

- Reading:
  - Formerly published UW Op-Eds
- Due:
  - Exercise 1

Final draft for P3 due Sunday 4/16!

25. Tuesday 4/18

- Reading:
  - **Dyson, Freeman.** "Science, Guided by Ethics, Can Lift Up the Poor."
  - **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)
- Presentation 13 (Dyson)
- Due:
  - Exercise 2

26. Thursday 4/20

- Reading:

  – **Sagan, Carl**. "Pale Blue Dot."
- Presentation 14 (Sagan)
- Workshop 12 (P4 Draft)

Friday 4/21: Going Public: Writing and Publishing the Op-Ed (1-2:30pm)

27. Tuesday 4/25

- Workshops 13 & 14 (P4 Drafts)

28. Thursday 4/27

- Due:
  – Exploratory draft

Final draft for P4 due Friday May 5 !

Key Dates

Progression	Exploratory Draft	Formal Draft	Final Draft
P1	Tuesday 1/31	Tuesday 2/7	Friday 2/17
P2	Thursday 2/23	Thursday 3/2	Sunday 3/12
P3	Wednesday 3/29	Thursday 4/6	Sunday 4/16
P4	Tuesday 12/6	—	Monday 12/12