

ENGLISH 125: WRITING AND ACADEMIC INQUIRY

WINTER 2018, SECTION 51
MW 8:30-10:00AM
ROOM TBA

INSTRUCTOR

Kate Sherwood (ksher@umich.edu)
459 Lorch Hall

OFFICE HOURS

Tue 9:00AM, Thu 2:00PM
(or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, you'll learn how to take part in the process of academic inquiry. You'll learn to use your critical reading skills to approach a complex new topic, to pose your own questions, and to build your own well-supported arguments. Working closely with your peers and instructor, you'll develop four major essays through research, workshops, and extensive revision and editing.

This section's theme: Language

We use language to communicate more than our literal message; the language choices that we make have personal and social meaning. Rather than being a set of rules carved into stone, language is flexible, and we change it to suit our needs in the moment. This abundance of meaning makes language a perennial topic for debate. Whether the issue is what language you should speak or how you should speak it, it seems that everyone has an opinion. In this section of English 125, language will be the critical topic of investigation. You'll learn to find, evaluate, and contextualize information about this topic in order to support your own writing.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this class is to teach you how to produce writing that matters—both in the academic context and beyond. When you leave this class, I want you to be able to:

- Read, summarize, analyze, and synthesize complex texts purposefully in order to generate and support writing;
- Develop strategies for approaching and understanding a complex topic in an academic context;
- Produce complex, analytic, and well-supported writing;
- Analyze the genres and rhetorical strategies that writers use to address particular audiences for various purposes and in various contexts;
- Develop strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing of varying lengths.
- Develop strategies for self-assessment, goal-setting, and reflection on the process of writing.

All of these skills take practice, which means that you will be actively participating in critical reading, writing, and discussion throughout the semester.



French and Jula mix in Burkina Faso, a former French colony.

PARTICIPATION

This is a discussion course, which means that its success depends on your participation. In order to fulfill the requirements for a good daily engagement grade, you need to come to class prepared and willing to discuss your ideas.

- **Effective participation relies on you being an engaged reader.** As you're reading materials for the class, please use whatever strategies keep you alert and active, such as:
 - Flagging important passages and key phrases and writing notes in the margins or in a reading journal
 - Jotting down questions that you want to ask about the reading during discussion
- **Effective participation entails being an engaged listener and balanced contributor.** If you tend to talk a lot in class, please try to leave room for other students to speak. If you tend to be quiet in class, please make an effort to add to discussion.

PREPARATION FOR CLASS

It's incredibly important that you come prepared to class so that you can meaningfully participate in our discussions. This means completing readings and assignments on time.

Each class period has *readings for discussion* and *assignments due* listed next to it in the calendar. These readings and assignments should be done before class unless the calendar says otherwise. It's your responsibility to check the course calendar before every class so you know what's due for that day.

The readings serve two purposes: They provide information about either the writing process or about the theme of the course, and they provide examples of types of writing that you might be trying out. Some

of the readings are intentionally challenging. If you're having difficulty, give it your best shot.

When you don't have a major writing assignment due, you'll generally have a small, informal writing assignment instead. These are low-stakes opportunities for you to practice necessary skills, as well as preparation for class discussion.

Each class period, you should bring:

- Printed copies of the readings and assignments
- A pen(cil) and paper

I know that this is hard on your printing quota, but it's important because we'll discuss them extensively. In order to save impressions, keep your printed copies until the end of the semester. We'll revisit some of the readings and assignments, and you don't want to have to print them out twice.

Because it's so important that you come prepared, three failures to bring required materials to class will count as one absence. This policy will be enforced—so yes, it's taken seriously!

Informal assignments aren't graded, but you can only miss one informal writing assignment without penalty. Any further missed informal assignments will count as one absence.



A stop sign in Canada uses three official languages of Nunavut: English, French, and Inuktitut.

ATTENDANCE

This isn't a lecture course. The discussions and workshops that take place during class are a fundamental part of your learning, and can't easily be made up. Attending class is crucial for your own success and for the success of the course.

You can only miss two class sessions without penalty. Once you've reached your limit of two unexcused absences, I'll lower your final daily engagement grade by one letter for each additional absence.

I'll excuse an absence if you bring me a note from a doctor or health professional, a signed letter from a University team or program, or documentation of a family emergency.

If a class period or due date conflicts with your religious holidays, please notify me in advance so we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I'll ask you to turn in assignments ahead of the holiday. In accordance with UM policy, an absence due to a religious conflict will be excused.

If you do miss class, please ask another student to share their notes and tell you about what you missed.

Please make sure to arrive on time for class. Arriving late causes you to miss important material and is disruptive to others. Be in your seat and ready to begin class by 8:40AM. I'll count three late arrivals as one absence.

PEER REVIEW WORKSHOPS

Peer review workshops will play a central role in our course. By identifying what's working and what's not working in each other's drafts, you'll help each other to clarify and strengthen your writing. Commenting on others' work is also one of the best ways to improve your own writing; identifying strengths and weaknesses in your peers' drafts will heighten your

awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in your own. We'll have several different kinds of workshops throughout the semester.

Participating in these workshops and subsequent revisions will be a fundamental part of the work you do for each of your major essays; it's not possible to skip the workshop (or snooze through it) and still do well. Therefore, it's important that you're prepared for these workshops, which means work to be reviewed must be completed on time. It's also important to give, receive, and incorporate feedback in a critical, constructive, and thoughtful way.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices aren't allowed unless it's for a class activity and permission to use laptops has been explicitly granted. They're simply too distracting—both to the students using their devices, and to the students around them. This means that your **cellphones, laptops, and tablets should remain in your bags**. If you expect a call during class (e.g. for a family emergency), please let me know in advance.

If I catch you using an electronic device during class, which includes quickly checking your phone, I'll count it as one absence. Please do what you need in order to avoid the temptation.



The National Theater in New York in the 1940s, when it was known for its Yiddish Vaudeville.

OFFICE HOURS

Coming to office hours will help you improve your grade, because we can talk about your assignments, issues that we've been discussing in class, any difficulties that you're having, and/or your future plans. I encourage you to come to office hours throughout the term. You don't need an appointment to come to my scheduled office hours. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, please let me know so that we can arrange to meet at an alternate time. Please be considerate of my time by coming to scheduled office hours if you can, but don't hesitate to ask for an alternate time if you need to.

I usually don't answer email after 5:00pm.

ACCOMMODATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

The University of Michigan is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students, and I am committed to making learning as accessible as possible for all of my students. If you have a disability and need an accommodation to participate in this class or to complete course requirements, please ask Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to provide documentation of the accommodations that you need. Then, please share this documentation with me as soon as possible, preferably within the first few weeks of class. I will treat as private and confidential any information that you share.

If you suspect that you may have a disability and would like to be tested, Services for Students with Disabilities can provide free screenings and referrals to low-cost diagnostic services. Here is the contact information for Services for Students with Disabilities:

LOCATION: G-664 Haven Hall

PHONE: (734) 763-3000

WEBSITE: <http://ssd.umich.edu/>

PLAGIARISM

Building on others' words and ideas is an essential element of effective scholarship. However, we must give credit to those whose words and ideas we incorporate into our writing. Using someone else's words, ideas, or work without proper attribution is plagiarism, and such an act is considered a serious ethical violation within the academic community.

If you complete an assignment for one course and then submit that same assignment as original work for a different course, you are also committing plagiarism.

We will discuss what constitutes plagiarism, but if you have additional questions about how to reference material that you find in books or online, please let me know.

If you commit an act of academic dishonesty in this course either by plagiarizing someone's work or by allowing your own work to be misused by another person, you will face the following consequences:

- You will fail the assignment and may fail the course
- I will report the incident to the Director of the English Department Writing Program
- I will also forward your case, with an explanatory letter and all pertinent materials, to the LSA Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.
- The Dean will determine an appropriate penalty, which may involve academic probation and/or community service.
- If you commit plagiarism while you are already on probation for plagiarism, you may be asked to leave the University.

Plagiarism is never worth the risk.

SUBMITTING YOUR WORK

Unless otherwise stated, all of your work will be submitted on Canvas **and** printed out and brought to class the day it's due.

You're responsible for making sure that your assignments upload correctly. Missing and corrupted files will be counted as late/incomplete, depending on the type of assignment. This means you should open the file once you upload to Canvas to make sure that nothing went wrong. If you're having trouble with Canvas, you're also responsible for contacting me as soon as possible.

Your umich username should be the first element of your assignment's filename, and the title of the assignment the second element. For example, if I was uploading IWA #10, the filename would be:

ksher IWA10.docx

This helps me to keep track of your files and to grade your work faster!

Formatting requirements

In this class, we'll experiment with different genres of writing. This means that your formatting choices might vary. However, unless otherwise stated, assignments should have the following default formatting:

- In .doc or .docx format
- APA style

The reason for requiring APA citation style is to familiarize you with using a style guide. There are many different styles out there and you need to be flexible. There are many good guides online, but my personal favorite is the Purdue Online Writing Lab, found here:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/1/>

You don't need title pages or abstracts for small assignments, but you do need them for your major essays.

SWEETLAND CENTER FOR WRITING

The Sweetland Center for Writing—located at 1310 North Quad—is an amazing, free resource! If you'd like additional feedback or assistance as you're planning, drafting, or revising your writing assignments, you can schedule an individual appointment with a Sweetland faculty member, drop in for a peer-tutoring session, correspond online with a peer tutor, or submit your work online to receive feedback within 72 hours.

Sweetland faculty members and peer tutors will not edit or proofread your work, but they can assist you with understanding assignments, generating ideas, developing and organizing arguments, using evidence and sources, and clarifying your writing.

For more information, please visit:

<https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/>



A window in Ann Arbor says "peace" in many different languages.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

15% daily engagement:

Attendance, participation in class, informal writing assignments

65% major essays:

10% Close Reading Essay, 20% Analytic Argument Essay, 20% Explanatory Essay, 15% Research-Based Revision Essay

10% peer review workshops:

Peer review letters, complete drafts for workshops, active participation in workshops

10% self-reflection:

Self-reflective cover letters, revision plans, and other materials submitted with major essays

The grading standard for the course will be as follows:

- “C” designates average work
- “B” designates good work
- “A” designates excellent work

You’ll need to perform work that’s consistently above average in order to earn an “A” or “B” in this course. I hold your work to a high standard because:

- The skills that you’ll work on developing in this class are crucial—and not just for your classes. You need to be able to read critically, to evaluate complex ideas, to form well-supported opinions, and to communicate clearly in writing. Regardless of your initial skill level, this course will push you to improve.
- Developing your skills as a writer will help you succeed in your remaining classes, in graduate or professional school, and in the workplace. You might not enjoy receiving rigorous feedback or a “B” or “C” on an assignment, but honest feedback will enable you to improve your writing and achieve greater success.

This is the grading scale:

	B+	C+	D+
	87-89.99	77-79.99	67-69.99
A	B	C	D
93-100	83-86.99	73-76.99	63-66.99
A-	B-	C-	D-
90-92.99	80-82.99	70-72.99	60-62.99

There will be no extra credit or make-up work in this class. Also, because this class moves quickly and it’s so important that you focus on the current material, it is not possible to revise a final draft once it has been turned in.

If you turn in a major assignment late, it will be docked one letter grade for each day that it’s late unless you have an official excuse. Other assignments can’t be turned in late. If you’re having trouble completing an assignment on time, please talk to me before it’s due in order to avoid this penalty.

SEQUENCE OF MAJOR ESSAYS

	Audience	Targeted Writing Skills	Percentage
Close Reading Essay <i>A careful, detailed analysis of evidence</i> <i>3-5 pages</i>	Other students in your English 125 course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading like a writer • Close reading (carefully unpacking and analyzing evidence) • Incorporating and citing evidence • Building an argument from careful analysis of a text, object, or phenomenon 	10%
Analytic Argument Essay <i>A thesis-driven argument that is based on close evaluation of evidence</i> <i>4-6 pages</i>	Readers with a particular interest in this topic, text, or phenomenon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close reading • Formulating a driving question • Identifying your interlocutors; imagining yourself as a participant in a broader conversation or debate • Articulating the “so what” or broader significance of your argument • Creating a nuanced, debatable thesis statement • Using rhetorical appeals (ethos, logos, pathos) to support your argument • Incorporating and citing evidence • Engaging with possible resistance to your argument 	20%
Explanatory Essay <i>A nuanced, sophisticated exploration of a topic that arrives at new insights by analyzing a phenomenon in a new context</i> <i>8-10 pages</i>	A well-read, general audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating a complex topic through the analysis of evidence • Incorporating evidence from multiple sources • Generating new insights from putting texts or phenomena into conversation with each other • Connecting different parts of your argument 	20%
Entering the Conversation: Research-Based Revision <i>A substantially revised essay that grows out of essay #2 or essay #3</i> <i>8-12 pages</i>	Your choice of audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying your interlocutors; participating in a broader conversation or debate • Substantially revising your argument (including your driving question, thesis, audience, purpose, and/or evidence) by engaging with others’ idea • Assessing how you’ve grown as a thinker, reader, writer, and member of a scholarly community • Setting new goals for yourself as a writer 	15%