**English 1130.004 – Academic Writing – Winter 2016**

**Douglas College – New Westminster Campus**

**In-Class Meetings: S2801 / Tues. & Thurs. – 8:30 – 10:20pm   
Dr. David N. Wright / wrightd@douglascollege.ca  
Drop-in Office Hours: Tues. 10:30 – 11:30 / Office: NWS2806C (appointments as needed)**

**Course Description:**

This course takes as its premise that thinking about, designing, and playing games is a great way to understand and model the rules, requirements, and strategies for writing in academic contexts. By playing, discussing, making, and reading about games, this course introduces students to the process of writing academic argument papers, and to strategies, assignments and exercises that develop their abilities as researchers, readers and writers of scholarly prose. Students will examine the general principles of composition, and the specific conventions of academic writing as practiced in several disciplines, but particularly in the Arts and Humanities. Students will gain experience in locating, evaluating and using sources within their own writing.

**Required Texts:**

Required readings will be accessed through Blackboard, the Douglas College library, the Internet, or some combination of these spaces. All other required reading will be chosen by students individually as it applies to their research topic / focus. This course makes extensive use of reading material freely available on the Internet and through the Douglas College Library databases. Links to required readings and other materials will be posted to Blackboard. Please make every effort to do the readings for the class **before** the class meetings and bring a copy, or a way of reading the texts due for the class meetings (paper, tablet, phone, etc.). Most will find it handy to be able to access readings while in class.

**Because there is no physical textbook for this course, I will often send announcements through Blackboard notifying you of new readings, comment threads, and generally reminding you that the course exists. If you do not use Blackboard, it is your responsibility to keep up-to-date with what’s happening on the website and come to class having done all the required work. YOU WILL NEED ACCESS TO A COMPUTER AND THE INTERNET TO COMPLETE THIS COURSE.**

**Course Policies:**

* All assignments (except the in-class essay) should be typed, double-spaced, in 12pt font, with minimum 1-inch margins and be formatted in MLA or APA style (depending on the subject) with a title, proper in-text citation and a work(s) cited page.
* All assignments are due in class on the due date.
* Late essays will be accepted for 7 days (including weekends), without penalty, after the due date. However, work submitted after the due date will not receive written comments.
* Late essays handed in after the 7-day grace period noted above will incur a penalty of 5% per day **starting from the original due date**.
* Game Reflection Journals **must be submitted in class on the due date. There are no extensions or Emailed submission allowed (see below).**
* Each student is allowed **one exception** for the Game Reflection Journal where s/he **may hand in the Journal up to 7 days late OR by Email. There are no other extensions for this assignment.**
* **Other than in the exception noted immediately above, Game Reflection Journals** submitted after the due date will receive a 0/3. Please make sure you are familiar with the requirements for the Game Reflection Journals as they are outlined on the Game Reflection Journal Assignment Sheet attached.
* Extensions or extended absences should be accounted for in person and will require proper substantiating documentation (i.e.: a doctor’s note), and may result in a penalty of 5% per business day.
* Essays and other class assignments cannot be rewritten. Proper citation formatting is required for all essays and essays must be formatted according to a citation style. Correct citation, according to the rules of the MLA or APA style guide (depending on subject), is mandatory for all essays. **Failure to cite correctly and use the correct style guide will result in a marked essay with no marginal notes.**
* Missed in-class essays can be re-scheduled in person with the appropriate supporting documentation (i.e. Doctor’s note). In-class essays cannot be rescheduled for personal reasons, such as travel. In-class essays or other writing exercises cannot be re-written.
* If you choose to Email assignments to me, they should be submitted in a compatible format (I.e.: .doc/ .docx/ .pdf – **No Apple .pages files please**) **on the day and time of the deadline to the Email address above.** Please include your name in the filename (essay1\_davidnwright.doc). I will acknowledge the receipt of your essay by Email within 24 hours. **If you submit your essay using an Email address other than the one assigned by Douglas College upon your enrolment, please be advised that you may be subject to the terms and conditions of the United States Patriot Act.**
* You are responsible for reading **ALL** the readings listed in the course schedule and available through Blackboard.
* Though not assessed, in-class attendance is required to complete aspects of this course.
* You are encouraged to participate fully in the classroom through the use of mobile devices, tablets, laptops, and otherwise. However, please make sure that all audible alerts from these devices are turned off.
* Though not explicitly stated above, draft writing is a required element for this course. Please be sure to make yourself aware of drafting workshop dates and any penalties associated with missing them.
* Students who do not complete and submit three essays and complete at least two Game Reflection Journals (70% of the course work) will receive a final grade of UN (unofficial withdrawal) for the course, which will later become an F.
* Plagiarism—using the ideas or words of another—a published source, website, chat-room, forum thread, internet portal, social networking site, essay-writing service, tutor, or friend—in your writing without proper acknowledgement—is a serious offence that will result in a minimum penalty of an F/0% for the assignment. I will show no pity toward plagiarized papers. Ignorance is not an excuse.
* All Douglas College policies apply in this course; in particular, I draw your attention to the Academic Integrity Policy and the User Conduct Policy available through the Douglas College website.

**Assignment Weights and Due Dates (Subject to Change, with Notice):**

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| **Assignment** | **Weight** | **Comments** | **Due** |
| Game Reflection Journals | 15% | Minimum 500 words, each.  There are 5 modules worth 3% each. | Jan. 19, Feb. 2, 23, March 16, 30. No extensions—one extension only |
| Essay #1 | 15% | ~750 words | Jan. 31, 2017 |
| Essay #2 | 20% | ~1000 words, written in class during class time. | Feb. 28, 2017 |
| Long Proposal and Draft Bibliography | 10% | You cannot hand in Essay #3 without handing in a proposal and draft bibliography with 5 sources. | March 16, 2017 |
| Annotated Bibliography | 10% | Minimum 10 sources with annotations. | March 30, 2017 |
| Essay #3 | 30% | ~1500 words, plus minimum five sources. | Due April 13, 2017 (in class) - returned, graded with comments **OR** Due April 19, 2017 (no later than 1pm in LLPA Fieldbase (NW2600)) - returned, graded *without* comments |

**Explanations and Expectations:**

**Essays and Other Written Assignments:** The course will require two take-home formal essays and one in-class essay. In order to pass—a grade of P—the course, students must complete and submit all essays. Topics for the essays will be distributed well in advance of the due date.

For those of you unfamiliar with the requirements of a college-level English course, please remember that good writing is imperative for a positive assessment. Essays should include a relevant thesis statement supported by exposition that is clear and logical. Errors in sentence structure, argumentative logic and grammar, spelling, etc., will affect your grade negatively. Take the time to proofread your work for typos, formal problems and logic. Keep an extra copy of all essays (except those written in exam booklets). It is your responsibility to provide a copy of your essay—or other work—should it go missing.

Explanations and expectations for assignments in the course will be included in the assignment instructions. All the assignments in this course require good writing, comprehension, and critical thinking skills to be successful.

**Ethics Statement:** This course prioritizes the formal requirements of “academic writing” usually understood as proper citation, the logical development of persuasive claims, and a somewhat formal voice. You have an ethical responsibility to write at a level that reflects the absolute best of your abilities in the English language. Remember, your completed essay is a reflection of your effort. Your essays will be graded for a) the application of course content in the service of making a claim; b) grammar; c) vocabulary; d) argumentation; e) rhetorical style; f) organization and; g) for their attention to the rules of proper academic essay format. **All of these components figure equally into your final grade for each assignment**.

**Peer Evaluators / Tutors:** While having others respond to your work outside of class can be helpful, if someone else does more than point out errors and problems and discuss corrections in a general way (if a friend, family member, or an individual solicited on-line rewrites your sentences, adds words that are not your own, or provides you with a thesis or structure for your essay) you are not learning to improve your work. Having others write all or part of your essay or assignments is plagiarism and academic dishonesty. If you are working with a tutor on your essays, you should inform me of that fact and be prepared to submit, if requested, all notes and drafts of your home essays so that I can see what kind of help you have received. Failure to show draft work, if requested, will result in an F/0% on the assignment in question.

**Statement of Responsibilities:** My responsibilities for this course are to introduce a wide range of examples and academic writing styles, and to offer strategies for generating, organizing, and writing academic essays. If there is ever something you do not understand, please do not hesitate to raise questions during class. As well, feel free to come and see me during office hours or Email me if you want clarifications, suggestions, or general guidance. However, be prepared with something to talk about, or some general ideas about your problem(s). I will not develop, write, proofread, etc., your paper for you. I encourage you to take advantage of my office hours or Email with questions should you have any problems, but I will not teach the course directly to individuals who do not participate fully in the class. If you cannot make the scheduled office hours, feel free to inquire about making an appointment.

**Explanation of Grading Procedures:** If you receive a grade you are unhappy with, or do not understand, you should make every effort to come and see me promptly. Do not let grades fester or take on undue gravity. I am more than willing to explain where you went wrong and give you plenty of pointers for improvement. If you do not attend to issues with your writing, you cannot expect to improve. I am never grading your work with an eye for cruelty. I am grading your work in order to show you where you stand amongst students who take—or have taken—an English course at Douglas College. As much as possible, try to manage your expectations where grades are concerned. The point of the course is to improve your writing. If your writing did not need improvement, or assessment in a college context, you would not be here. This course is difficult for some because it demands a level of writing that reflects college and university contexts, not the aptitude of your personal expression or comprehension. In this class, I am grading your writing and how you present the content of your essay.

**Learning Climate:** Douglas College is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe working and learning environment for all its members. Students and faculty members are expected to adhere to the User Conduct Policy. Students should alert me immediately if they have any questions about this policy and its application, or if they have concerns about course proceedings or participants.

**Class Participation:** Since conversations are essential to the quality of this class, we will work together to create an atmosphere premised on difference. College-level discourse does not shy away from sensitive issues, including questions of race, gender, class, sexuality, politics, and religion, and neither will we. There are going to be differences in opinions, beliefs, and interpretations when we read commentary, question it, and engage history and culture. You need not agree with the arguments presented during class or with what your peers or I have to say. In fact, it is important to think critically and question course material. But please do so intelligently, without the assumption that everyone agrees with you or shares your experiences. Difference is central to creating a classroom in which a variety of ideas can be exchanged and points of view can be explored. Ultimately, what is crucial to this course is that you are comfortable expressing yourself and your ideas. If, for whatever reason, you are not, then you should notify me immediately in class or visit me during my office hours. I understand that some people are more comfortable speaking in front of the class than others. That said, participation in office hours also augments learning. If you are not comfortable bringing your concerns directly to me or are not satisfied with my response to your inquiries, then I encourage you to contact the Chair of the Department of English.

**Expectations for Work Away From the Classroom:** I expect that you will be spending anywhere from 2-7 hours each week working on the materials for the course outside the face-to-face classroom setting, either through reading, research, or essay drafting (or all three). If you are doing less than that, you’re not meeting the minimum expectations for the class and can expect the results that come with lack of effort and engagement. Successful essay writing takes time—usually between 3 - 4 hours per page. Leave yourself enough time to complete the assignments according to your expectations.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

Reading Objectives: Successful students should learn to

* read source material actively and critically;
* distinguish main from supporting points;
* distinguish among statements that require evidence, statements that require explanation, and statements of fact requiring documentation;
* identify and assess thesis claims, particularly from scholarly sources;
* understand the development of a piece of writing;
* recognize and understand the function of discipline-specific writing strategies and conventions;
* paraphrase and summarize readings accurately and appropriately.

Writing Process Objectives: Successful students should learn to

* make specific written observations on and provide critical responses to assigned readings;
* use pre-writing techniques such as brainstorming and outlining;
* recognize and use writing strategies, including discipline-specific means of framing research questions, introducing source materials, or citing evidence, as appropriate to writing occasion;
* summarize, paraphrase and quote effectively;
* revise drafts effectively:
* read thoughtfully and respond effectively to their own written work;
* read thoughtfully and respond effectively to peer responses to their written work;
* read thoughtfully and respond effectively and constructively to the written work of other students.

**Content, Organization and Style Objectives:**

Content: Successful students should learn to

* write a thesis that is significant and appropriate to the audience and purpose of the written work;
* develop the thesis effectively, providing evidence that is relevant, accurate, specific, and sufficient;
* provide appropriate introductions to and contexts for the evidence.

Organization: Successful students should learn to

* employ effectively introductions and conclusions that are appropriate to the audience and purpose;
* write unified, coherent paragraphs, the development of which is governed by appropriate topic sentences.

Style: Successful students should learn to

* employ diction and tone suitable to written academic discourse;
* employ grammar and syntax suitable to written academic discourse;
* document sources according to a current documentation system, such as presented in the MLA or APA Handbook;
* format their written assignments in a recognized style, such as presented in the MLA or APA Handbook.

**Game Reflection Journals Assignment Sheet**

**English 1130.004 and 1130.008 – Academic Writing**

**Tues. and Thurs. / Douglas College / David N. Wright**

**Worth: 15% (or 3% for each submission)**

**Due: Jan. 19, Feb. 2, 23, March 16, 30. (See course outline for late penalties and conditions.)**

**Length: Minimum 500 words**

**Instructions and Details:**

Along with the required reading, you will complete and submit five "Game Reflection Journals" over the length of the course. I will “prompt” each Game Reflection Journal with a question or activity, usually two weeks before the due date. Each Game Reflection Journal submission **must** be a minimum of 500 words and follow all the formal conventions and guidelines for proper scholarly prose outlined in the course or it will be penalized.

Although Game Reflection Journals can be thought of as informal, they should include a brief title and maintain proper sentence structure. To some extent, the prompts for Game Reflection Journals will guide what you write about, but you should feel free to use the journals as an opportunity to make new connections, ask questions, or generally reflect on your participation in the course.

**Desired Outcomes:**

In order to make the Game Reflection Journals as worthwhile as possible, most prompts will ask you to:

* reflect on a game and its intricacies—how was it played, what did it teach you, why is it of interest to the course?
* make suggestions about how the game you play mirrors the processes we are discussing relevant to writing in academic contexts
* use the game as a way to think about social issues, logic, or other aspects of critical analysis and thinking
* record your frustrations (with the required tasks, academic contexts, or the concepts under discussion)
* reflect on your learning—what did you learn that you didn’t know and how are you gaining confidence (or losing it) as the course proceeds?

**Grading Procedures for Modules**

Each Game Reflection Journal is graded using the criteria below as a guide. Half marks will be deducted for *repeated* grammatical errors. (You can make a few mistakes, but the writing should be clear, correct, well organized, understandable, and on subject.)

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| --- | --- |
| **Worth:** | **Rubric (what I am marking for):** |
| 0.5 point | Is the journal entry well written, with good paragraphing, syntax, word choice, and sentence structure? |
| 1.5 points | The journal entry responds to the prompt in at least 3 different ways—takes on at least 3 **different** aspects or components of the game and relates each to a learning outcome (or theory). |
| 0.5 point | Meets the 500-word minimum. |
| 0.5 point | Exceeds the 500-word minimum. |
|  |  |
| **Total:**  **3 Points** |  |

I will usually return marked Game Reflection Journals within one week of the submission. If you ask a question in the Game Reflection Journal, I will do my best to answer it either in the submission itself or in class, anonymously, if I feel the question is relevant to your peers.

**Delivery and Due Dates:**

Game Reflection Journal #1: Prompt delivered on Jan. 5; Due Jan. 19

Game Reflection Journal #2: Prompt delivered on Jan. 19; Due Feb. 2

Game Reflection Journal #3: Prompt delivered on Feb. 2; Due Feb. 23

Game Reflection Journal #4: Prompt delivered on Feb. 23; Due March 16

Game Reflection Journal #5: Prompt delivered on March 16; Due March 30

**Final Note:**

Please do not obsess about Game Reflection Journals or let them take on undue gravity in the course. Missing a Game Reflection Journal, or doing it wrong, will not result in failing the class. The journals are meant to give you a space to reflect on your learning, and cycle through the course outcomes as we approach and move past. Avoid making the Game Reflection Journals a source of anxiety—write about where that anxiety comes from in the Game Reflection Journal instead.