

UNIVERSITY WRITING PROGRAM

Critical Reading & Writing

David Yockel, Jr. (dwyuwp@rit.edu)

Course Syllabus (Fall 2020)

UWRT 100.03

3:35 P.M. – 4:25 P.M. (MWF)

Brown Hall (BRN)-1120

Office Hours:

MWF: 2:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. and by appointment.

While I do have an actual, physical office located in the A-level of Building 6, Liberal Arts Hall, Room A112, this semester **all of my office hours will be held virtually via Zoom**. The above times will be posted in our myCourses calendar.

All University Writing Program courses share a common mission and approach:

This approach teaches students that effective writing is a recursive process, influenced by individual learning styles, social context, purpose, feedback, technology, and audience. Students use digital and print resources to find, evaluate, and integrate relevant source information into their writing. Students cultivate the ability to read, understand, interpret, and discuss intellectually challenging texts that represent different cultural perspectives, and academic disciplines.

UWRT 100 CRW: Critical Reading and Writing

Critical Reading and Writing is a one semester, three-credit course limited to 15 students per section. This course is designed to help students develop the literacy practices they will need to be successful in their First-Year Writing course. Students will read, understand, interpret, and synthesize a variety of texts. Assignments are designed to challenge students intellectually, culturally, and rhetorically. Through inquiry-based assignment sequences, students will improve their writing by developing academic research and literacy practices that will be further strengthened in First-Year Writing. Particular attention will be given to critical reading, academic writing conventions, and revision. Small class size promotes frequent student-instructor and student-student interaction. The course also emphasizes the principles of intellectual property and academic honesty in academic writing.

Required Materials:

- All required readings for this course are in the Content folder on our myCourses page.
- A portable digital device (i.e., a laptop or tablet) for in-class reading and writing purposes.
- Access to a word processing program that is compatible with Microsoft Word.

Helpful Links to Other Resources:

- [Norton Field Writing Guide](#)
- [Grammarly.com](#) (The free account is pretty good, so you don't need to subscribe to the Premium one.)
- [GrammarCheck](#) (The free account doesn't require any registration)
- [Open Office Homepage](#)

- [RIT Portal to Office 365](#)
- [Norton/WRITE Web Resource](#)
- [RIT NoodleTools](#)

Attendance and Participation:

Because UWRT courses are participation and discussion-based courses, attendance is an important component of your participation in this course. You are allowed to miss six (6) classes this semester. Beginning with the next absence after this limit, your course grade may be lowered 1/2 letter grade for each absence. Extenuating circumstances (a death in the family, serious illness, etc.) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The writing program does not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences, so you do not need to tell your instructor why you missed class. However, if you anticipate exceeding the 2-week absence limit, you should talk with your instructor immediately.

Any student who misses more than 1/3 of the classes may be given an "F" in the course. (UWP policy on attendance)

****NOTE: This attendance policy is now a bit more flexible because of COVID-19 and all the possible circumstances that may arise because of it. But, at the end of the day, just communicate with me, stay current with your work, and we will get through this semester together!**

In other words, you are responsible for all work you miss, even if your absences have been excused. I expect you to come to class prepared and on time. You should come to class with the assigned reading/writing completed. I also expect that you will treat your fellow classmates and me with respect, and to make sincere attempts to listen to and understand what your classmates are saying – as I will do with you.

Late Work Policy:

Listen, I've been there. Many of you juggle insanely heavy course loads, participate in any number of university clubs and/or sports teams, and, who knows, maybe even maintain real human relationships as part of a robust social life. While I am aware of and sympathetic to the way these variables interact, you still need to complete and submit the work in a timely manner so I can provide you with comprehensive and useful feedback. Ultimately, failure to complete work (both "low-stakes" exercises and formal writing assignments) on time will negatively affect your grades and can severely limit the amount of commentary you will receive from me.

Document Submission Protocol:

- ALL drafts of your formal writing assignments must be submitted to me via the corresponding **Assignment Folders** on our myCourses page.
- Because I provide detailed feedback on your rough drafts by using the "Track Changes" function on Microsoft Word, **ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE IN "DOC" OR "DOCX" FORMAT.**

Academic Integrity Policy:

As an institution of higher learning, RIT expects students to behave honestly and ethically at all times, especially when submitting work for evaluation in conjunction with any course or degree requirement. All students are encouraged to become familiar with the RIT Honor Code and with RIT's Academic Integrity Policy. The RIT policy on Academic Integrity is online:

<https://www.rit.edu/academicaaffairs/policiesmanual/d080>

Particularly for first-year students, much of the plagiarism seen in writing classes is often unintentional. Frequently, a student in a first-year writing class may turn in work that leaves off quotation marks or incorrect paraphrasing without the intention of cheating. Therefore, I will teach correct practice, and then will expect appropriate work.

There are, of course, other situations that are cases of intentional plagiarism (e.g., a student submits a paper purchased over the internet; student submits a paper written by another student, etc.).

To help you avoid accidental plagiarism, I will spend time in class talking about how to cite information correctly and how to paraphrase. To help you as you write your papers, we use Turnitin in the **Assignment Folders** for all my courses. You will be able to see your reports, so you can fix problems with paraphrasing before I grade your work.

Email Policy and myCourses “Announcements”:

I will e-mail the entire class, using RIT registered e-mail accounts, from time to time with important announcements regarding class. You are responsible for keeping up with these announcements and with the course schedule and assignments. You should also get in the habit of checking the “Announcements” section on our myCourses homepage. This is where I will post the course schedule for the current week(s) as well as other interesting and important information. I will not change an assignment without at least a 24-hour advance notice, unless I am extending a deadline to give students more time.

Note on Institute closing:

In the event that RIT is closed, all radio and television stations will be notified. I will not email the class in the event of a school closure. I will email everyone if I need to cancel class for some other reason.

Name Preferences:

If you have a preferred first name and/or pronoun preference, please let me know either in class or by email so I can honor your preference. If you would like MyCourses and your RIT teachers to have your first name preference automatically known, you can change your first name preference through the Registrar's office by completing the form accessible on [this page](#) and then returning it to that office.

The UWP Writing Commons:

The Writing Commons will be offering synchronous online consultations this semester. Please check out the document in the “Course Syllabus & Resources” folder under the “Content” tab of our myCourses page for more information.

RIT Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS):

Here is a link to the [CaPS homepage](#) and the following is a message from CaPS Director, David Reetz:

“Success in this [class] depends heavily on your personal health and wellbeing. Recognize that stress is an expected part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom. Your instructors and I strongly encourage you to reframe challenges as an unavoidable pathway to success. Reflect on your role in taking care of yourself throughout the term, before the demands of exams and projects reach their peak. Please feel free to reach out to me about any difficulty you may be having that may impact your performance in your courses or campus life as soon as it occurs and before it becomes too overwhelming. In addition to

your counselor/academic advisor, I strongly encourage you to contact the many other support services on campus that stand ready to assist you.”

Academic Accommodations:

RIT is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request accommodations such as special seating or testing modifications due to a disability, please contact the Disability Services Office. It is located in the Student Alumni Union, Room 1150; the Web site is <http://www.rit.edu/dso>. After you receive accommodation approval, it is imperative that you speak with the instructor so that you can work out whatever arrangement is necessary.

RIT Ready Pledge:

Protecting the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff is RIT’s top priority. We firmly believe that by working together, by everyone taking this on as a personal responsibility, we can create a semester of great accomplishment and pride.

As RIT Tigers, we recognize that our actions impact others, and we all play a role in keeping our RIT community healthy and safe against the spread of COVID-19. Please take the RIT Ready Pledge if you have not done so already: <https://www.rit.edu/ready/pledge>.

COVID-19 Class Protocols:

Before entering class, please make sure that you are wearing your mask/face covering. Before we can begin class, you will need to complete your location check-in and take your designated seat while doing your best to maintain proper social distance. Once class is finished, you will need to clean your learning space before leaving the room. Most importantly, remember that this is new to all of us, so let’s support each other as we all learn how to best navigate these new realities together.

UWRT 100: Course Requirements & Grade Allocation

Low-Stakes Assignments:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| • Community Practice | 15% |
| • Discussion Posts | 10% |
| • Reflection Journal | 10% |

High-Stakes Assignments

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Assignment #1 (Critical Analysis)* | 10% |
| • Assignment #2 (Critical Synthesis)* | 25% |
| • Assignment #3 (Literacy Narrative Research Project)* | 30% |

**Detailed descriptions of the requirements for these assignments will be available on myCourses.*

Grading Scale:

A (93-100), A- (90-92.9), B+ (87-89.9), B (83-86.9), B- (80-82.9), C+ (77-79.9), C (73-76.9), C- (70-72.9) D (60-69.9), F (< 60).

Community Practice

As we move toward our course objectives, what we are really doing is evolving as a **community of practice**. *Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly* (Wenger-Trayner, 2015). In other words, we will grow and improve as readers, writers, and thinkers as we read, write, and think about reading, writing, and thinking *together*.

Together, we will **make knowledge** by engaging in and refining **literacy practices** that are driven by a particular set of **values** that our work will explore, represent, and continually redefine.

15% of your total course grade is determined by your engagement in the following activities:

Community Building

- ✓ Adding to the Conversation
 - engagement in class discussions
 - presentation and “translation” of **Discussion Posts**
- ✓ FYW Teamwork
 - collaborative writing exercises (both in and outside of class)
 - discussions/workshops on class readings

Commitment to the Writing Process

- ✓ Attendance at and preparedness for all peer review workshops
- ✓ Attendance at and preparedness for your mandatory instructor conferences
- ✓ Completion of “CRW Worksheets” and prewriting exercises

Discussion Posts

10% of your final course grade will be determined by your engagement in this forum.

As we work through complex and stimulating texts by more accomplished authors, looking at, commenting on, and responding to student writing (*your* writing) will be an integral component of this course. In the Discussions tab of myCourses, there will be topics created, each named after a text we will be reading in the course (or some concept that we have discussed in class). Before the class during which the reading will be discussed, you will need to post a thread to the corresponding topic.

Our ultimate goal will be to utilize these posts as centerpieces of in-class discussions (and/or writing exercises) so don’t be surprised when your comments become a large part of our conversation. The hope, too, is that the work we do in this space will help to develop your awareness of, and relationship with, the recursive nature of writing. Remember, “Good writing is a developmental process, one that immerses students in the practice of working as a writer” (Clark), and these discussion posts are just that: practice spaces for your longer, high-stakes writing assignments. So use them as opportunities to explore creative interpretations of texts or unconventional rhetorical strategies.

You need to post at least one thread (of approximately 150-200 words) for every text that we read and discuss in class. In order to help you do that, below is a “menu” of writing moves that you can make in

that post. You should choose **at least 2 of these moves** and be prepared to share your ideas with the class on the day that the reading will be discussed.

- **Quote** from the article and explain what's "interesting" about what the author has to say
- **Compare** or **Contrast** an idea from the article to something you've read before
- Evaluate a **Use** or **Limit** of the author's **Approach** to their method or writing of the article
- **Forward** or **Counter** a specific idea from the article
- **Create a Visual** which adds to the conversation about the article (diagram, meme, etc.)
- Write a **Discussion Question** to ask the class
- **Confirm** or **Challenge** one or more of the author's claims based on your observation or experience

While these posts will be graded on a pass/fail basis, it does not mean that merely completing the post will get you full credit. We will talk more about this in class during the first week of meetings.

CRW Reflection Journal

10% of your final course grade will be determined by your completion of these exercises.

While the Discussion Posts are spaces for you to explore and negotiate the complex texts we read and the rhetorical strategies we analyze and employ, your Reflection Journal (or "Writer's Log") will be a place for you to reflect on your *own* composition processes and the choices *you* make as a writer. Try to think of these entries as exercises in self-regulation—opportunities to plan, adjust, or maybe even abandon different rhetorical strategies as you identify your voice and develop authority as the creator of relevant, impactful discourse.

While I highly suggest (plead) that you simply keep a running Word document on your laptop or tablet (or maybe even your phone), some of you may still choose to respond to in-class journal prompts in a spiral/composition notebook. Just know that if you decide to go this route you will still be responsible for translating (i.e. transcribing or scanning) your work into some digital format (docx/pdf/jpeg) that can then be uploaded to the corresponding Dropbox on myCourses.

Also, even though you will be responsible for completing approximately 10 journal entries (give or take a few), you will only "hand in" your journal twice this semester. Specific due dates for these submissions (and what each one should include) will be posted to our myCourses calendar.

Finally, if you miss a class, it is up to you to make sure you keep up with these entries. I will continually update the list of prompts in a document in the "Content" section of our myCourses page.

Assignment #1: Critical Analysis

Using the critical reading strategies that we have discussed so far this semester, you will produce a close, analytical reading of James Gee's "**Discourse, small-d, Big D.**" In other words, I want you to identify and represent the main ideas in Gee's essay and reflect on how your own reading, writing, and language practices confirm or challenge the claims made and concepts discussed by the author.

The work that you have already completed in your low-stakes writing assignments (discussion posts, journal entries, and in-class reading worksheets) should be a great resource as you attempt to respond critically to Gee's discussion of **d/Discourse** and how it impacts the ways we use **language** and the **identities** that we perform as we engage with different **communities** throughout our social, academic, and professional lives.

FIRST DRAFT REQUIREMENTS:

- **DUE IN CLASS on Monday, September 7 for Peer Review Workshop.**
- **Should be at least 750 words, typed, and double-spaced.**
- Present a critical summary of Gee's main ideas.
- Incorporate at least two direct quotes from the text.
- Include presentation and discussion of your own personal experience and how it relates to the ideas in Gee's article.
- DO YOUR BEST to adhere to proper MLA Citation Format.

FINAL DRAFT REQUIREMENTS:

- **DUE in Assignment Folder by Thursday, September 17.**
- **Should be at least 1000 words, typed, and double-spaced.**
- Present a critical summary of Gee's main ideas.
- Incorporate at least two direct quotes from the text.
- Include presentation and discussion of your own personal experience and how it relates to the ideas in Gee's article.
- DO YOUR BEST to adhere to proper MLA Citation Format.

Assignment #2: Critical Synthesis

In this assignment, you will **significantly revise** the “final draft” of your critical analysis essay, moving beyond a close reading/summary of James Gee’s “Discourse, small-d, Big D” by bringing another text into your discussion. To do this, you will **use your own experience to either highlight or challenge the ideas surrounding d/Discourse, literacy, identity, and culture** raised by both Gee and Bronwyn T. Williams. (You may choose to discuss *either* of the two articles we read by Williams.)

In this assignment, you will need to address the following requirements:

- 1.) You will be adding **at least two more body paragraphs** to your Critical Analysis essay (or their equivalent into already existing paragraphs) that consciously make rhetorical moves of your own as you work to develop an authorial voice and original argument. **IMPORTANT:** Do not just stitch two paragraphs onto the end of your first draft. Some of the ideas and moves that you discussed in your first draft may end up being deleted, depending on whatever **YOUR purpose** in this new draft is going to be.
- 2.) You will also need to rework your current **introduction** so that it provides a clear sense of YOUR purpose/audience and your STAKE in the issues you plan to raise. (What are the issues/ideas you want to explore/discuss? Why do you care? What do you hope your audience will take away from your essay?) For example, a personal *anecdote* is an opening move that many writers make to accomplish this.
- 3.) You will need to create an effective **conclusion**. Basically, you need to tell your reader what new understanding that you have reached by reading these texts and writing about them. Here are some rhetorical strategies or “moves” that many authors make:
 - a. Echoing the introduction, but now with insight
 - b. Reflection on implications of the points and evidence raised
 - c. Possible way(s) to implement the ideas raised
 - d. Speculating on what would occur if the audience implemented the ideas being raised (or did not)
 - e. Proposing a policy or practice
 - f. Suggesting the limits of the work and asking for more research
 - g. Relating how the writer’s work fits into the work of the others
- 4.) Based on any concerns raised in my feedback to your original draft when we meet together next week (9/30-10/2), you will need to address those issues in your revision as well.

Other requirements for this next draft:

- **Incorporate, interpret, and discuss at least one (1) direct quote from each text you choose to utilize.**
- **Use MLA Citation Format and Works Cited page**
- **ROUGH DRAFT DUE WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7TH: Minimum 1000 words**
- **FINAL DRAFT DUE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11TH: Minimum 1200 words**

Assignment #3: Literacy Narrative Research Project

Much of our class discussion this semester has been about the different and complex social contexts that create, validate, and proliferate the literacy practices of a culture and, more specifically, the different discourse communities and individuals of which they are composed. Moreover, this course was designed, in part, to develop your understanding of the social, linguistic, and cultural influences that have shaped you as a writer, student, and individual. Therefore, this *project* is an opportunity for you to reflect upon your own literacy learning as well as that of your classmates and present your understanding of those experiences in writing.

Major Components:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| ✓ Classmate Interview & Literacy Profile | (15%) |
| ✓ Research Article Write-Ups | (10%) |
| ✓ Literacy Narrative (Rough Draft) | (10%) |
| ✓ Literacy Narrative (Final Draft) | (65%) |

*** Detailed articulations of each major component is available on our myCourses page. These include comprehensive prompts as well as all relevant due dates. ***

UWRT 100: Critical Reading & Writing Course Schedule (Fall 2020)

Week 1:

(8/19) NO CLASS – Directed-Self Placement Procedure

(8/21) Introductions & Syllabus Review

- **Homework:** Please complete the Diagnostic Writing Exercise and submit it to the corresponding Assignment Folder in myCourses before class on Monday, 8/24.

Week 2:

(8/24) Discussion of Diagnostic & In-Class Writing Exercise: "Writing is like..."

- **Homework:** Please read Mike Bunn's "How to Read Like a Writer" and post a thread to the Discussion Forum in response to the reading.

(8/26) Discussion of Mike Bunn's "How to Read Like a Writer"

- **Homework:** Please print out, read through, and annotate the transcript for Adichie's TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story."

(8/28) TED Talk: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – "The Danger of a Single Story"

- **Homework:** Read James Gee's "Discourse, small-d, Big D" and post a thread to the discussion forum.

Week 3:

(8/31) Discussion of James Gee's "Discourse, small-d, Big D"

- **Homework:** Please revise and expand the discussion thread you posted in response to James Gee's text.

(9/2) Begin discussion of **Assignment #1: Critical Analysis** / In-class Writing Exercise

- **Homework:** Please read and be ready to discuss the "Sample Student Essay on Discourse."

(9/4) Writing Commons Support / Peer Review & Peer Learning Workshop

- **Homework:** Complete **Assignment #1: Critical Analysis (Rough Draft)**

Week 4:

(9/7) **Assignment #1: Critical Analysis (Rough Draft) DUE in class** for Peer Review Workshop.

(9/9) NO CLASS: **Mandatory Conferences**

(9/11) NO CLASS: **Mandatory Conferences**

Week 5:

(9/14) In-Class Writing Workshop: **Drafting a Revision Plan**

(9/16) In-Class Writing Workshop: **Implementing a Revision Plan**

- **Homework:** Complete and submit **Assignment #1: Critical Analysis (FINAL DRAFT)** by 11:59 P.M. on Thursday, September 17th.

(9/18) In-Class Writing Workshop: **Reflection Letter**

- **Homework:** Please read Williams's "Home & Away: The Tensions of Community, Literacy, and Identity" and post a thread to the discussion forum before class on Monday, 9/21.

Week 6:

(9/21) Discussion of Bronwyn T. Williams's "Home & Away: The Tensions of Community, Literacy & Identity"

- **Homework:** Read Williams's "The Truth in the Tale: Race and 'Counterstorytelling' in the Classroom" and post a thread to the discussion forum before class on Wednesday, 9/23.

(9/23) Discussion of Bronwyn T. Williams's "The Truth in the Tale: Race and 'Counterstorytelling' in the Classroom"

- **Homework:** Please read the prompt for **Assignment #2: Critical Synthesis** in our myCourses content folder.

(9/25) Continued discussion of Williams / Introduction to **Assignment #2: Critical Synthesis**

- **Homework:** Please read the Sample Student Critical Synthesis Essays and post a thread to the discussion forum before class on Monday, 9/28.

Week 7:

(9/28) Discussion & Analysis of Sample Student Papers

(9/30) NO CLASS: **Mandatory Conferences**

(10/2) NO CLASS: **Mandatory Conferences**

Week 8:

(10/5) In-Class Writing Workshop: **Invention & Planning for Critical Synthesis**

(10/7) **Assignment #2: Critical Synthesis** (Rough Draft) **DUE in class** for Peer Review Workshop.

(10/9) In-Class Writing Workshop: **Revision**

Week 9:

(10/12) Overview of **Assignment #3: Literacy Narrative Research Project**

- **Homework:** Please read Sherman Alexie's "The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman & Me" and post a thread to the discussion forum before class on Wednesday, 10/14.

(10/14) Discussion of Sherman Alexie's "The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman & Me"

- **Homework:** Please read Sherman Alexie's "The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman & Me" and post a thread to the discussion forum before class on Wednesday, 10/16.

(10/16) Discussion of Malcolm X's "Learning to Read"

- **Homework:** Being work on CRW Worksheet #4

Week 10:

(10/19) In-Class Writing Exercise: **Literacy Narrative Brainstorming Activity**

(10/21) In-Class Exercise: **Classmate Interviews**

- **Homework:** Please read "Heroes, Rebels, and Victims: Student Identities in Literacy Narratives" by Bronwyn T. Williams and post a thread to the discussion forum before class on Friday, 10/23.

(10/23) Discussion of Williams's "Heroes, Rebels, and Victims: Student Identities in Literacy Narratives"

- **Homework:** Complete your Classmate Literacy Profile and post to the discussion forum before class on Monday, 10/26.

Week 11:

(10/26) In-Class Exercise: **Literacy Profiles Discussion & Analysis**

- **Homework:** Please read Deborah Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy" (pp. 165-173) and post a thread to the discussion forum before class on Wednesday, 10/28.

(10/28) Discussion of Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy" (pp. 165-173)

- **Homework:** Please read Deborah Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy" (pp. 173-183) and post a thread to the discussion forum before class on Wednesday, 10/30.

(10/30) Continued discussion of Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy"

Week 12:

(11/2) Project Statement & Research Methods

(11/4) In-Class Group Work: **Source Evaluation Workshop**

(11/6) **In Class Workshop:** Writing About Primary & Secondary Sources

Week 13:

(11/9) In-Class Workshop: Article Write-Up

(11/11) Article Write-Up Presentations and discussion

(11/13) Article Write-Up Presentations and discussion

Week 14:

(11/16) Peer Review of Assignment #3

(11/18) NO CLASS: Mandatory Conferences

(11/20) NO CLASS: Mandatory Conferences

Week 15:

(11/23) In-Class Writing Exercise: CRW Journals

Finals Week:

- Assignment #3 Final Draft due.
- CRW journals also due in Dropbox this week.