

T WRT 111

Discourse Foundations

Sections B and F

2 Credits • Pass/No-Pass Grading

University of Washington Tacoma

Autumn 2013

Section B: T 4:15–6:20 in CP 103

Section F: T 1:30–3:35 in CP 334A

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Office hours: M/W 2:00–3:30 at Metro Coffee
1901 Jefferson Ave. (north side of Tioga Library building)

Course Description

Discourse Foundations is a 2-credit supplementary writing course for students concurrently enrolled in another writing-intensive course. Discourse Foundations will meet weekly for two hours to help you develop writing skills and strategies that you will use throughout your career at UWT. Our time will be split between discussions and activities designed to build **metacognition** and a weekly **writing workshop**.

Metacognition refers to a writer or thinker's awareness of their own thought processes; you are thinking metacognitively when you *think about how you think*. Metacognition helps you reflect on and assess not only *what* you write but also *how* you write and *why* you make the decisions you make as a writer. This will help you understand more deeply how to approach a variety of writing assignments and writing situations: because metacognition allows you to assess your own thought processes, it also helps you strategize how you might modify your thought processes in order to work in a new context or satisfy a new set of criteria. We will also spend time discussing professors' expectations in order to inform your metacognitive practices.

Our writing workshops will complement our work on metacognition by giving you weekly opportunities to receive critical feedback on your writing and to offer critical feedback on other students' writing. Our workshops will help you develop strategies for each phase of the writing process, from initial brainstorming and planning to final proofreading. Each week, you will have the chance to bring and discuss syllabi from other courses, writing assignments, drafts of your work, and any questions related to writing in order to begin building a repertoire of strategies you can apply throughout your studies. Our writing workshops and our work on metacognition will also

reinforce each other in some important ways. For example, offering constructive criticism of peers' work often helps writers reflect more critically on their own writing. In addition, workshops will also expose you to some of the genres of writing that you will be expected to produce as college students, which will provide specific instances of the requirements and criteria that shape our metacognitive approach to writing.

Because our course emphasizes metacognition and consists largely of workshops, you can expect to participate actively and regularly. If everyone comes to class with an issue or question to discuss and a willingness to collaborate with other writers, this class will yield rewards in your written work this quarter and beyond.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Develop awareness of genre and genre conventions
- Develop metacognitive skills about your learning and writing
- Understand what professors want you to write and how to seek out that information if you don't understand what the professor wants
- Evaluate your own writing
- Evaluate your peers' writing and give concrete feedback
- Interpret a professor's comments and implement them to improve one's writing
- Become self-sufficient writers
- Seek out resources to address writing challenges
- Evaluate one's own writing and develop the ability to effectively revise
- Become familiar with the conventions of academic discourse

Required Materials

- Online access to *A Writer's Help* through Bedford/St. Martin's, available from the UWT bookstore
- A notebook devoted to this class for class notes and your metacognition journal

Participation

Active, engaged participation in full-class discussions, small-group activities, peer reviews, and individual work is absolutely crucial to your success in this course and at UWT more generally. In order to earn full credit for participation, you must contribute frequently and substantially to our discussions and activities. Given our focus on workshops, meaningful participation also requires that you be willing to share and discuss your own work and to offer constructive criticism of other students' work. (See the grade breakdown below.)

It is impossible to participate in class if you are absent from class. If you must miss a session, please call or email me **before** that session begins in order to have your absence excused. **Each student is allowed one excused absence per quarter.** Additional absences will result in a proportionate loss of credit for participation. In addition, disruptive, distracting, or disrespectful behavior – for example, **texting or checking Facebook** rather than paying attention and participating – will **lower your participation grade.**

Assignments and Evaluation

The first table below lists the proportion of your total course grade allotted to each assignment. The second table translates the letter grades you will receive on your papers into the percentages that will be used to calculate your total grade. **This course will be graded on a Pass/No Pass basis; in order to pass the class, you must achieve a final grade of 85% or higher.**

Participation	50%
Genre taxonomy	10%
Metacognition journal	15%
Portfolio and cover letter	25%

A+ = 100%	B+ = 89%	C+ = 79%	D+ = 69%
A = 96%	B = 86%	C = 76%	D = 66%
A- = 93%	B- = 83%	C- = 73%	E = 0-50%

Assignment Descriptions

- **Genre taxonomy:** your genre taxonomy will catalogue and analyze the genres you have worked in previously (i.e., the kinds of assignments you have written); in addition, your genre taxonomy will compare those previous genres to the genres you encounter in other courses throughout the quarter. For each genre you analyze, your paper will answer a set of questions that you write in order to identify and compare the constituent features or main components that make up genres. This taxonomy will help you draw comparisons between your work at UWT and your previous work in order to identify both tried and true practices that might continue to be useful and places where you will need to develop new strategies to suit your current situation.
- **Metacognition journal:** your metacognition journal will consist of class notes, in-class writing activities, and out-of-class reflections that you will write as homework each week. Writing in your metacognition journal every week will improve your metacognitive reflections on your own writing process, thereby helping prepare you to meet new writing situations with confidence. You will

also revise some material from your metacognition journal to include in your portfolio.

- **Portfolio and cover letter:** at the end of our course, you will turn in a portfolio consisting of revised versions of other work you do for the course, including a revision of your genre taxonomy. You will also analyze two of your own essays in connection with the concepts we discuss and the strategies we develop, drawing from and revising parts of your metacognition journal to explain and analyze the decisions you make as a writer. Your portfolio will be introduced by a cover letter that anticipates the kinds of writing you will do in the future and forecasts strategies that you might use when you encounter those new situations.

Formatting, Submitting, and Retaining Written Work

All drafts of major papers must be typed in black ink and double-spaced, with one-inch margins and a standard 12-point font. Although you will submit final drafts of some assignments on Canvas, you must print hard copies of drafts and bring them to class when instructed to do so on the course schedule.

In order to maintain a record of your work at UWT and track your development, I strongly encourage you to retain graded copies of all your assignments for this class. If you would like to receive a graded copy of your portfolio and cover letter (due finals week), you may either provide me with a self-addressed, stamped envelope or email me to arrange a time to pick up your graded paper during the winter quarter. **Please do not contact the Department of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (my home department) or the Office of Undergraduate Education (which administers WRT classes) to retrieve your graded work.**

Late Work

Except in the case of an unforeseeable emergency, or unless you have made alternate arrangements with me ahead of time, you may not submit any late assignments other than major papers. You may submit major papers late, but with a penalty of **10% for each weekday** (Monday through Friday, including holidays) that the assignment is late. For example, if a major assignment is due on a Thursday but is not submitted until the following Tuesday, the grade for that assignment will be penalized by 50%. If a final draft is not submitted within one calendar week of its original deadline, that assignment will receive a score of **zero credit**.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is among the gravest offenses a college student can make, and it has absolutely no place in this class (or anywhere else on this campus). As defined in

UWT's official course catalog, "[p]lagiarism is using the creations, ideas, or words of someone else without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like." Any assignment that engages in plagiarism, in part or in whole, will receive a score of **zero credit**. In severe or repeated cases of plagiarism, the instructor reserves the right to pursue whatever official institutional sanctions he deems appropriate, including but not limited to assigning a **final course grade of 0.0**.

If you borrow another writer's wording – even just a short phrase or a small part of a sentence – you must use quotation marks and appropriate citations to indicate when and where you use someone else's text in your own writing. Failure to do so counts as plagiarism.

Additional information can be found at
http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/11-12_uwt_catalog_complete.pdf.

Teaching and Learning Center

The UWT Teaching and Learning Center offers a wide range of assistance with writing assignments, from the early stages of selecting and narrowing a topic to the final stages of revising and editing drafts, and from global issues of developing and supporting a thesis to finer points such as citing sources, quoting and paraphrasing properly, and avoiding common mistakes in grammar and mechanics. Visit TLC's website to read about the services offered or schedule an appointment:
<http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/tlc/> .

UWT Counseling Center

The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UWT students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students. To schedule an appointment, please call 692-4522 or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), located in MAT 354. Additional information can also be found by visiting
http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc_about.cfm/ .

Disability Support Services

The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. Disability Support Services (DSS) functions as the focal point for coordination of services for students with

disabilities. In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any enrolled student at UWT who has an appropriately documented physical, emotional, or mental disability that “substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working],” is eligible for services from DSS. If you are wondering whether you may be eligible for accommodations on our campus, please contact the DSS reception desk at 692-4522, or visit http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss_about.cfm/.

Ground Rules

In order to foster an environment in which everyone in the class can participate and benefit, please observe the following ground rules:

- Discussion, either as a full class or in small groups, will be central to our daily sessions. So will writing workshops and peer reviews, in which you will be asked to critically examine your peers’ writing – and to accept thoughtful criticism of your own writing. Tolerance and inclusiveness are utterly crucial when discussing potentially controversial issues or examining the written work of someone with a different viewpoint than one’s own. Therefore, students in this class are urged to be thoughtful and sensitive in contributing to discussion and providing feedback on peers’ work. Please refrain from making comments that are racist, sexist, homophobic, classist, or otherwise exclusionary toward a specific group. This does not mean that you can’t be critical when you want or need to be – it means that you need to think carefully about both what you say and how you say it.
- Although attendance is important for success, it is not enough merely to be here physically – you need to be here “all the way.” Please **do not** send text messages, update your Facebook status, read email, skim the newspaper, surf the web, take a nap, or engage in any other activity that distracts you from what we are doing in class. (By the way, multitasking is a myth: multitasking is not doing two or more things well at the same time but rather doing two or more things poorly and in alternation.) Such behavior not only prevents you from engaging fully in the class but also distracts other students and shows disrespect to the class and to the instructor. **Please put your extraneous reading material, phones, personal electronic devices, and other distractions away during class time.**

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Assignments are listed in this schedule next to the day that they are due. For example, you should write your first metacognition journal entry **before** our class session on T, 10/8, not after. Metacognition journal prompts are identified by ALL CAPITALS. Final drafts of major assignments are indicated by ***boldface italics***; some will be due in class,

while others will be due online via Canvas, so make sure you pay attention to details. Remember to bring copies of your drafts or other materials for our workshop sessions.

T, 10/1 *Introduction to the course*

T, 10/8 *Discussing genre*

- METACOGNITION JOURNAL #1: What does the syllabus for our course say about how I view students and student writing? How does it compare to the syllabus from your writing class? What can you learn about your professors and what they value from course syllabi?
- Bring to class: the syllabus for your main writing course

T, 10/15 *Interpreting assignment sheets*

- METACOGNITION JOURNAL #2: Answer the following questions based on your reading of the writing assignment from your writing course: 1) How does this kind of writing relate to other kinds of writing you've done? 2) What are the genre expectations of the assignment? 3) How will your writing be evaluated? Explain in your own words. (You do not need to number your responses.)
- Bring to class: a writing assignment from your main writing course

T, 10/22 *Understanding the writing process*

- METACOGNITION JOURNAL #3: What is your usual writing process? How do you write, when do you write, and where do you write? And why?
- Bring to class: a draft of a paper
- ***Final draft of genre taxonomy due on Canvas***

T, 10/29 *Understanding the writing process (cont'd)*

- METACOGNITION JOURNAL #4: How effective has your usual writing process been for you? How might you need to change your writing process for upcoming assignments in your other courses?
- Bring to class: a draft of a paper

T, 11/5 *Convincing professors to value your rhetorical choices*

- METACOGNITION JOURNAL #5: Think about two experiences you have had as a writer – one when a teacher liked your writing, the other when a teacher did not. What were some differences between those situations? Why was one paper successful but the other wasn't?
- Bring to class: a draft of a paper **OR** a teacher's comments on a final draft (you will need to share those comments, so you are welcome to remove or obscure your grade for the assignment)

T, 11/12 *Interpreting teachers' feedback*

- METACOGNITION JOURNAL #6: How do you interpret a teacher's feedback? What have you learned from a teacher's feedback about what he or she values in writing?
- Bring to class: a draft of a paper

T, 11/19 *Strategizing for your final papers*

- METACOGNITION JOURNAL #7: Based on feedback from your writing professor and the work we have done in this course, how do you plan to approach the final paper for your main writing course? What skills, strategies, concepts, or techniques do you think will be helpful with that paper? Has our course changed the way you think about writing assignments like that final assignment?
- Bring to class: a draft of a paper

T, 11/26 *Strategizing for future assignments*

- METACOGNITION JOURNAL #8: Look ahead to the courses you will be taking next quarter. How do you anticipate using the concepts and strategies from our course in future writing assignments? How will you continue to grow and develop as a writer?
- Bring to class: a draft of a paper
- *Metacognition journal due in class*

T, 12/3 *Assessing and responding to future writing situations*

T, 12/10 *Final draft of portfolio and cover letter due at final exam session*