

TCORE 101
Section H

Introduction to Academic Writing

University of Washington Tacoma
5 Credits
Autumn 2017 • M/W/F 9:30–10:50 in WCG 209

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MDS 311B

Course Description

TCORE 101 introduces students to useful strategies and practices for academic writing, with particular emphasis on critical reading, the writing process, and working with sources. This course is designed to help you become a more confident and strategic college-level reader and writer, even as you read and write increasingly challenging texts. Academic writing always involves joining and responding to ongoing conversations, so as you learn to articulate your own positions and points of view, you will also begin learning the conventions of academic writing that will help your voice be heard and appreciated by other participants in those conversations.

This section of TCORE 101 takes a “writing about writing” approach. Although this approach is likely to strike students as unconventional, it will allow us to pursue several crucial questions concerning the unstated assumptions and unwritten “rules” that often inform our attitudes about writing: what is “good” writing? Who gets to define “good” writing? Who benefits from such definitions? How do they benefit? How can first-year college students enter into the communities and conversations that structure academic writing? How do writers develop a sense of authority that allows them to take ownership and control over their own identities as writers?

Students in this course will pursue these important questions, first, by reading texts by composition scholars as well as other texts pertaining to our discussions of writing, and second, by completing four major writing assignments along with several supporting assignments. Major assignments will be drawn from our primary textbook (Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs’s *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*, 3rd edition) and will consist of the following:

- the Challenging and Exploring Your Conceptions about Writing, Reading, and Research essay
- your choice of any major assignment described in chapter 3, “Individual in Community”

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at his discretion. Changes to course policy will be communicated in class, on Canvas, and via email.

- your choice of any major assignment described in chapter 4, “Rhetoric,” **except** the Rhetorical Analysis of a Previous Writing Experience essay
- a final portfolio consisting of a reflective cover letter introducing your work, plus 10–15 pages of revised, polished writing from this course

Writing is a lifelong endeavor, not something that can be mastered in a short 10-week quarter; this course won’t teach you everything you need to know as a writer, but it will help you develop skills, strategies, and practices that will equip you to encounter and navigate new writing situations and that will contribute substantially to your ongoing progress as a college-level writer.

This class will be highly student-driven, and you are expected to contribute regularly to class discussions and to participate actively in all class activities. Class sessions will combine full-class discussion, small-group or one-on-one collaboration, writing workshops, peer reviews, and in-class writing. Thus, it is crucial that you come to class regularly and that you come to class prepared to participate.

Learning Goals

This course contributes to the following learning goals for First-Year Writing at UWT:

- You will read rhetorically through processes of meaning-making, learning, and communicating purposefully and to various audiences.
- You will revise in recursive processes that continually re-see, rethink, and research ideas, questions, and new information
- You will reflect as a way to understand your own reading practices, and you will produce understanding (or theory) that helps you cultivate flexible and rhetorically based practices for future use.
- You will proofread and edit drafts in self-conscious ways that allow you to consider future proofreading and editing practices as rhetorical in nature and as part of the writing process.
- You will engage in academic research as a process that includes A) recognizing when information is needed to support writing and B) having the ability to locate, evaluate, incorporate, and acknowledge appropriate sources.
- You will problematize your existential writing situation or pose problems that your own language practices may create when they are set next to the dominant academic discourse or when others read and judge your writing.

For further details on these learning goals, see www.tacoma.uw.edu/university-writing-program/fyw-learning-goals.

Required Materials

- Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs, *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*, 3rd ed. (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2017), ISBN 978-1-319-03276-0; available at the UWT Bookstore
- Supplementary readings, available on Canvas
- Regular out-of-class access to Canvas
- In-class access to online readings and your written work:

- You may print and bring to class **hard copies** of online readings, drafts of assignments (both yours and your colleagues’), and your assessments of colleagues’ work; or,
- You may bring to class a **laptop or device** to access those readings and drafts electronically

Grading and Assignments

This section of the syllabus provides details concerning our course grading contract and describes the kinds of work you will do for the course.

Grading Contract

Grades for this course will be determined not by my judgment of the quality of your written work, but by your compliance with the course grading contract. Early in the course, we will discuss a draft of the grading contract, possibly revising it as a group; we will also have opportunities later in the course to discuss and negotiate revisions to the contract. (Note that I will retain veto power during negotiations.) Whatever revisions we make to the grading contract and whatever details we agree on, your grade in the course will be determined according to that contract. We will meet individually during finals week to discuss whether and in what ways you have met the conditions outlined in the final, ratified version of the grading contract.

Assignment Descriptions

Daily work in class will consist of full-class discussions, small-group or one-on-one discussions and activities, individual and collaborative in-class writing, and revision workshops. Out-of-class written work will consist of a labor log, several drafts of major papers, written assessments of colleagues’ drafts-in-progress, three major papers, and a final portfolio.

- **Labor log:** One crucial way you will reflect on your work as a writer this quarter will be keeping a labor log. Your labor log will track all the work you do for this course, both quantitatively (by noting the time you spend working on this course) and qualitatively (by describing your level of engagement with your work for the course, your attitude toward that work, the conditions under which you do that work, etc.). We will discuss the labor log during the second week, at which point you will begin using it to track your work through the end of the quarter.
- **Drafts of major papers:** Most weeks, you will use the feedback you receive during our revision workshops to revise a draft-in-progress over the weekend; you will submit revised drafts to Canvas by 9:30 a.m. Wednesdays (the start of our meeting time) in order to allow your colleagues sufficient time to assess your revisions. It is very important that you regularly and substantively revise drafts based on colleagues’ feedback and that you submit all required drafts and revisions in order to fulfill the obligations of the grading contract.
- **Written assessments of colleagues’ work:** In preparation for our revision workshops, you will compose written assessments of two of your colleagues’ drafts-in-progress and post those assessments to Canvas by the start of class whenever a workshop is scheduled (most Fridays). Although you will be discussing drafts in person during our workshops, your written assessments will serve several important functions: they will give you (as a reader) a

chance to collect and organize your thoughts about colleagues' drafts; they will provide a written record of your assessments for your colleagues to consult; and they will provide textual evidence of your engagement with the course and your fulfillment of the grading contract. As you write your assessments, it is crucial that you assess **at least two colleagues' drafts** for each workshop and that you focus your assessment on substantive issues, not superficial errors.

- **Revision workshops:** Most weeks, our Friday sessions will consist of a revision workshop in which you summarize and elaborate on your written assessments of each other's drafts, as well as offer feedback to colleagues whose drafts you haven't assessed in writing. Depending on where we are in the course, your assessments and revision workshops will focus on different aspects of colleagues' drafts. It is crucial that you attend and fully participate in these workshops and that you assess drafts with an eye toward improving them through revision, not toward summarily judging their quality or editing grammatical errors.
- **Reading journal (two paragraphs or more per entry):** Most weeks, you will write a two-paragraph entry on either an assigned reading or a source you find through independent research. Each journal entry will **summarize** a reading fairly and accurately in one paragraph and then **respond** to that reading in one or more subsequent paragraphs. Your reading journal will serve several useful purposes: it will give you repeated practice with skills that are necessary for participating in academic discourse; it will provide a record of your evolving thoughts and ideas as we move through the course; it may provide material that you can revise for your major essays; and it will give you material to select for further polishing and inclusion in your final portfolio. Over our 10-week quarter, you will write seven or eight journal entries (total TBD), at least two of which must summarize and respond to sources you find through independent research.
- **Final portfolio:** For your final project in this course, you will revise some of your earlier work for this course based on the feedback I give you (as well as any relevant feedback from colleagues that you haven't had time yet to address), complete the final draft of your third major essay (on rhetoric), and then assemble a final portfolio. Your portfolio will consist of A) a reflective cover letter discussing how you have developed as a writer and/or how you have responded to feedback as a writer, B) your revisions of earlier work for this course, and C) the final draft of your rhetoric paper. In addition to the cover letter, your final portfolio should include 10–15 pages of revised, polished writing.

Attendance, Participation, and Late Work

Regular, punctual attendance and active participation in class discussions are absolutely crucial to your success in this class. **I expect everyone to attend all of nearly every class session, with minimal absences.** You will receive credit for your participation in discussions and activities, and ***you cannot receive credit for participating in a discussion that you miss.*** If you must be absent from class on account of illness, family emergency, or other unforeseeable circumstances, please contact me as soon as you can, preferably in advance of your absence. **If you must leave a session before the end, please notify me in advance;** my expectation is that you will stay for the duration of every session unless you have a legitimate, unavoidable obligation to attend to. After

you miss a session, in whole or in part, please ask a classmate to fill you in and let you look at their class notes.

Participation includes both written and oral components: you will participate in the course by engaging in writing activities in class and by contributing to full-class discussions. In addition, you will participate in regular writing workshops that will help you develop topics and revise and edit drafts of your essays.

Finally, you are expected to complete all assignments for the class and to submit them on time. See the grading contract for details concerning attendance, participation, and late work.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Maintaining academic integrity is crucial to the advancement of scholarship, and scholars at all levels are expected to produce original work and to avoid plagiarism. As defined in the University of Washington Tacoma'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.

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 parenthetical citations to indicate when and where you use someone else's text in your own writing. Failure to do so counts as plagiarism.

Please review UWT policies on plagiarism and academic integrity at www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/38211.

Formatting, Submitting, and Retaining Written Work

All written work for the course will be submitted via Canvas. You may use whatever word-processing software you prefer, provided that it can save files in one of the following formats: Word document (.doc or .docx), rich-text format (.rtf), or PDF. Be advised, though, that I have virtually no expertise in programs other than Word, so if you need assistance with a technical issue but you use another program, I will be unable to help.

In order to maintain a personal record of your academic progress, I strongly encourage you to retain graded copies of your major assignments for this class. If you would like to receive detailed comments on the final draft of your major paper, please contact me after the end of the course to request feedback. **Please do not contact the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences or the Division of Culture, Arts, and Communication to retrieve your graded work.**

Writing Center

The Writing Center at 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 www.tacoma.uw.edu/university-writing-program/writing-center to read about the services offered at the Writing Center or to schedule an appointment; you can also email the TLC at uwttteach@uw.edu or call them at 253-692-4417.

Student Counseling Center

The Student Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW Tacoma 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 253-692-4522 or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), located in MAT 354. Additional information can also be found by visiting Student Health Services' website at www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc_about.cfm.

Disability Resources for Students

The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. Disability Resources for Students (DRS) 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 UW Tacoma 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 DRS. If you are wondering if you may be eligible for accommodations on our campus, please contact the DRS reception desk at 253-692-4508, or visit www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/38768.

Course Outline

We will proceed according to the general outline below. A daily schedule of readings and assignments through the first two weeks follows this section; a daily schedule for the remainder of the course will be distributed in class and on Canvas.

Weeks 1–2 (9/29–10/6):	Introduction to the course/Challenging and Exploring Your Conceptions essay
Weeks 3–5 (10/9–10/27):	Individual in Community essay
Weeks 6–9 (10/30–11/22):	Rhetoric essay
Weeks 10–11 (11/27–12/8), plus finals week:	Preparing the final portfolio

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Assignments are listed in this schedule next to the day that they are due. For example, you should read the first draft of our course grading contract **before** our class session on 9/29, not after. Writing assignments are marked by **boldface**; parenthetical notes following a writing assignment specify the time of day an assignment is due and the location on Canvas where you should turn it in.

Note that some assignments need to be completed and submitted by the start of class, some by the end of the day, and some by 8:00 a.m. (to allow plenty of time for colleagues to read and assess each other's work before our Thursday workshops). Readings from our primary textbook (Wardle and Downs's *Writing about Writing*) are abbreviated *WAW*; all other readings are available on Canvas.

W, 9/27 *Introduction to the course*

F, 9/29 *Negotiating the course grading contract*

READING: course grading contract (first draft)

READING: Richard Straub, "Responding—Really Responding—to Other Students' Writing" (*WAW* 44–55)

M, 10/2 *Introduction to the Challenging and Exploring Your Conceptions about Writing, Reading, and Research essay*

READING: *WAW*, from chapter 1: "Threshold Concepts: Why Do Your Ideas about Writing Matter?" (1–29)

READING: "Writing about Threshold Concepts: Major Writing Assignment" (*WAW* 62–63)

W, 10/4 *Cataloguing and comparing conceptions of writing*

READING: *WAW*, from chapter 1: "Threshold Concepts" (30)

READING: Stuart Greene, "Argument as Conversation: The Role of Inquiry in Writing a Researched Argument" (*WAW* 31–43)

- As you read, use Swales's CARS model (assigned and discussed for 10/2) to annotate the introduction to Greene's article (32–34)

F, 10/6 *Writing workshop #1: Challenging and Exploring Your Conceptions*

WRITING: draft of Challenging and Exploring Your Conceptions due on Canvas (9:30 a.m.)

- **Note:** typically, you will draft written feedback on two colleagues' drafts in preparation for each writing workshop. However, since this is our first workshop, we will simply discuss this draft in person, without written assessments. **Please remember to bring a copy of your draft to class for our workshop.**

A daily schedule for the remainder of the course will be distributed in class and on Canvas. Note that the final draft of the Challenging and Exploring Your Conceptions about Writing, Research, and Reading essay will be due **F, 10/13**, on Canvas.