

English 225.010
Making Arguments that Matter

Monday/Wednesday 1:10 - 2:30

Mason Hall G463

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“Perhaps the world's second worst crime is boredom. The first is being a bore.”

-- Jean Baudrillard

Departmental Course Description:

All sections of English 225 focus on examining and employing effective academic argumentation. Academic argumentation here refers to the presentation, explanation, and assessment of claims through written reasoning that utilizes appropriate evidence and writing conventions. The course builds on and refines skills from introductory writing courses English 124 and 125, as well as provides a basic introduction to finding, and effectively incorporating research into student writing, for use in a range of future academic contexts.

Section Description:

This course revisits and builds on the academic writing skills you learned in English 125, with a particular emphasis on research. This section focuses on making arguments that matter. In this class, you will write and revise three research papers on topics of your choosing. For each paper, students should develop a research question that is of genuine intellectual interest to them, develop an interesting and debatable answer to that question, support that answer with sources, and articulate that answer in a way that persuades a reader--persuades them, not just that the answer is correct, but that the question is worth asking in the first place, that this is an argument that genuinely matters. One thing that makes this section of English 225 unique is, it's your class. The concepts, the readings, and even the course policies will be developed collectively based on students' needs and interests.

Readings

All readings will be made available online via CTools.

Work Commitments

- **Paper 1 (20%)**
A 7-page paper on a topic of your choosing.
- **Paper 2 (20%)**
An 8-page paper on a topic of your choosing.
- **Paper 3 (20%)**
A 9-page paper on a topic of your choosing.
- **Participation (15%)**
Contributions to class discussion and completion of smaller assignments.
- **Final Portfolio (15%)**
A collection of your previous papers, including a significant revision/expansion of one of the papers and a reflection on your writing process.
- **Student Lesson (10%)**
A one-time lesson on a writing concept that you will develop with the instructor outside of class and present with the instructor on an assigned day.

Resources

- **The Sweetland Writing Center**
The Sweetland Writing Center can offer you expert one-on-one assistance at all stages of the writing process. You can schedule an appointment via their website: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland>. You can also call them at **734-764-0429**. Their offices are located at **1310 North Quad**.
- **Disabilities**
If you would like accommodation for a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Any information you give me will be treated as strictly confidential. I also encourage you to contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities in order to obtain disability verification and assistance in determining reasonable accommodations. Their website can be found at: <http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/>.
- **Plagiarism**
The definition of and department policy about plagiarism are available online at: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp>. If you plagiarize, you will fail the course and your case will be sent to the Dean of Student Affairs, who will review the case and may recommend further penalty.

Schedule of Due Dates for Major Assignments

Jan 7	Introductions
Jan 12	Developing research questions
Jan 14	Library Day -- Class meets in Shapiro Undergraduate Library room 4059
Jan 19	No class -- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Jan 21	Student Lessons will be assigned today
Feb 2	A complete rough draft of Paper 1 is due today Student Lessons begin today
Feb 9	The revised draft of Paper 1 is due today
Feb 23	A complete rough draft of Paper 2 is due today
Feb 28 - Mar 8	SPRING BREAK
Mar 9	The revised draft of Paper 2 is due today
Mar 30	A complete rough draft of Paper 3 is due today
Apr 6	The revised draft of Paper 3 is due today
Apr 20	The Final Portfolio is due today

Course Policies

- **Attendance**

- Attendance will be taken by way of a sign-in sheet at the start of class.
- Absences will be excused for personal emergencies, religious observances or official university functions.
- You may have three unexcused absences without penalty.
- More than three unexcused absences will result in the loss of $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade per additional absence.
- You can make up for an unexcused absence by writing three additional peer edits of other students' papers.
- A student who is late to class must wear the "late hat."
- If you are stuck with the "late hat" three times, that is the equivalent of one unexcused absence.

- **Email**

- Allow for 48 hours for responses to any emails.
- Email the instructor when not able to attend class for a reason that is excused.
- Email the instructor for short and simple questions regarding issues that cannot be answered elsewhere (e.g. the syllabus or assignment sheet) and that do not involve much discussion.
- For anything that would require more than a few sentences of response, such as questions about a paper topic, feedback on paper drafts, or questions about the grading, schedule a face-to-face meeting with the instructor.
- Also, schedule a face-to-face meeting with the instructor to discuss any issues that might affect your attendance or performance in the class.

- **Laptops**

- While it is proven that students test better when taking notes by hand compared to students who take notes using a laptop, for this course, a laptop would be useful for many reasons. Students may use their laptops to easily access readings without having to print them off. Laptops may also be used to edit paper drafts to show corrections and comments. As long as laptops are not a distraction to the class, they serve as a useful resource. MP3 players may not be used during class, but phones may be used only as a research tool when appropriate, as well as tablets or e-readers. If someone abuses the privilege of laptop use in class, they get three strikes after which they will no longer be permitted to use electronic devices in class.

- **Late Assignments**
 - A late paper draft will incur a penalty of 10% off each day it is late.
 - Late peer critiques will incur a penalty of 1% off the participation grade.
 - You may miss one shorter assignment without penalty, after which they will incur a penalty of 1% off the participation grade.
 - Extensions will be provided in case of family emergencies or serious illness, or if you email the instructor 48 hours prior to class.

- **I reserve the right to change these policies if necessary.**

Student Lesson Assignment

There is a line that educators often repeat: “Learn One, Do One, Teach One.” The idea is that, in order to really understand a concept, you need to first learn it, then put it into practice, then explain it to someone else. Only when you’ve taught the concept to someone else do you really *get* it. In your first year writing class you learned writing and you did writing, and in this class you’ll be learning and doing even more writing, but you’ll also get some experience with that third step.

Once during the semester, you will be responsible for designing and leading a 45-60 minute lesson on a writing concept. I have assigned the concepts and the dates of your lessons based on your introductions.

NOTE: The assignment is to design a *lesson*, not a presentation. A presentation can be *part* of a lesson, but should be no more than 15 minutes, and ideally less. Rather, lessons include things like in-class writing activities, small group activities, worksheets, games, debates, and discussion, as well as presentations and sometimes media (like videos, music, or images). A good lesson typically incorporates several different activities that reach students with different learning styles. For instance, a good lesson might include a 10 minute presentation, a 5 minute video, 15 minutes of group work, a 10 minute writing activity, and 15 minutes of full class discussion.

In case you think I’m just pawning my work off on you, don’t--I’ll be collaborating with you in both designing and leading the lesson.

Now that you’ve been assigned your lesson date, schedule a time to meet with me *no later than one week prior to your lesson date* for a one hour one-on-one meeting. If your lesson is the week after spring break, you need to meet with me before the break.

Bring to that meeting:

1. Two to four essays that will serve as that day’s reading. These essays can come from the sources that I had you follow online or from another source, but you need to be able to explain how the essays fit the lesson.
2. Six to eight discussion questions about the readings. These should be open-ended, not questions that can be answered with a fact or a single word.
3. Two to four ideas for activities that the class can do with the writing concept. Feel free to take ideas from other classes--what teaching techniques have other instructors employed that have really helped you learn in the past?

If you are struggling to develop lesson ideas, come talk to me earlier than one week prior to your lesson. You can also get ideas from

<http://web.calstatela.edu/dept/chem/chem2/Active/main.htm>.

In our meeting, I will provide some resources on the writing concept, we will talk about your ideas, and we'll work together to revise and organize the discussion questions and activities. During that meeting, we will also divide responsibilities on the day of the lesson. For example, I might lead discussion, but expect you to be the "point person" if discussion starts to wane. Or I might ask you to briefly introduce your concept before delving into activities. Variety is important, so every lesson will look a little different.

This assignment is worth ten points:

- 1 point for scheduling and showing up to your one-on-one meeting a week or more prior to your lesson.
- 2 points for bringing two to four essays to that meeting and having an idea for how they fit the lesson.
- 2 points for bringing six to eight discussion questions to that meeting.
- 2 points for bringing two to four ideas for activities to that meeting.
- 1 point for showing up on the day of your lesson.
- 2 points for leading part of that lesson in class.

Schedule of Lessons

Week 5

Feb 2 Workshop

Feb 4 Purpose/Stakes (Avery)

Week 6

Feb 9 Sentence Variety (Tom)

Feb 11 Focus (Brett)

Week 7

Feb 16 Integrating Sources (Anjali)

Feb 18 Voice (Becky)

Week 8

Feb 23 Organization (Matthew)

Feb 25 Transitions (Zachary)

SPRING BREAK

Week 9

Mar 9 Details and Imagery (Harrison)

Mar 11 Counterarguments (Molly)

Week 10

Mar 16 Analyzing Sources (Collette)

Mar 18 Paraphrasing/Summarizing (Christopher)

Week 11

Mar 23 Rhetoric (Angelica)

Mar 25 Logos, Ethos, and Pathos (Richard)

Week 12

Mar 30 Introductions/Attention-Getters (Shreya)

Apr 1 Conclusions (Kimberly)

Week 13

Apr 6 Diction (Michael)

Apr 8 Persona/Code Shifting (Cody)

Week 14

Apr 13 Revision (Amita)

Apr 15 Logical Fallacies (Jared)

English 225 Paper #1

Write a seven page paper on a topic of your choosing. The paper must answer a question that is of genuine intellectual interest, presenting an interpretation of something that another intelligent person might reasonably interpret differently or taking a position on an issue with which another intelligent person might reasonably disagree. The paper should argue for its interpretation or position clearly and persuasively, and should respond to reasonable counterarguments.

The paper should ground its argument in the logically sound interpretation of evidence, and that evidence should come from sources that are reliable and up to date. You should use at least five sources. At least two of those sources should be scholarly sources (books or journal articles). The other sources may be scholarly sources or popular sources, such as magazine articles. You should also feel free to draw on works of fiction, art works, or works from other media if they are relevant to the argument that you want to make.

You should cite at least two sources that explicitly disagree with your argument. These can be scholarly or popular sources, but they must present reasonable counterarguments, not straw men.

A few other parameters:

- Avoid the words “also” or “another.”
- Avoid the words “nature” or “people” or any synonyms for the words “nature” or “people.”
- Use the verb “to be” no more than once per page.
- Feel free to ignore these parameters if you can use these devices in interesting ways--just be aware that using these increases the chances that your writing is too cliched or superficial.

Your research question is due January 14. Remember the six kinds of questions academic papers ask (Fact, Definition, Interpretation, Value, Consequence, and Policy) and have a clear sense of what kind of question you are asking. Come to class prepared to conduct research on your topic.

A complete rough draft (at least five pages long) is due February 2. Bring two hard copies to class that day.

The revised draft (seven pages long) is due February 9.

English 225 Paper #2

Write an eight page paper on a topic of your choosing. Like the first paper, it must answer a question that is of genuine intellectual interest, presenting an interpretation of something that another intelligent person might reasonably interpret differently or taking a position on an issue with which another intelligent person might reasonably disagree. The topic may or may not be related to your first paper's topic, but it should answer a different *kind* of question from your first paper (remember the six kinds of questions academic papers ask: Fact, Definition, Interpretation, Value, Consequence, and Policy). The paper should argue for its interpretation or position clearly and persuasively, and should respond to reasonable counterarguments.

The paper should ground its argument in the logically sound interpretation of evidence, and that evidence should come from sources that are reliable and up to date. You should use at least five sources. These can be either scholarly sources, such as books or journal articles, or popular sources, such as magazine articles.

In Paper #1 you were required to cite two sources that explicitly disagreed with your argument. You are not required to do so here, but presenting authoritative counterarguments will still help you develop your argument.

Unlike paper 1, this assignment is asking you to integrate a variety of kinds of evidence in making your argument. Use at least three of the following:

- Quantitative data (such as statistics) represented in a graph, chart, or table
- Personal anecdotes
- First-person interviews
- Works of literature
- Photographs
- Illustrations
- Screen grabs from films, TV shows, or websites
- Links to other media, such as videos, audio clips, or gifs

The sources that these pieces of evidence come from count towards your five sources; however, images do not count towards the paper's page count.

An outline of the paper (in whatever form is useful to you) is due on February 16.

A rough draft (at least five pages) is due February 23. Bring two hard copies to class.

The revised draft (eight pages long) is due March 9.

English 225 Paper #3

Write a nine page paper on a topic of your choosing. Like the first two papers, the third paper must answer a question that is of genuine intellectual interest, presenting an interpretation of something that another intelligent person might reasonably interpret differently or taking a position on an issue with which another intelligent person might reasonably disagree.

There are two differences with this assignment. First, your paper must ask a different kind of question from the first two papers. Remember the six kinds of questions academic papers ask: Fact, Definition, Interpretation, Value, Consequence, and Policy. If your first paper asked a policy question and your second asked a question of definition, your third paper must ask one of the other four kinds of questions.

Your paper should include a cover page that lists the questions asked by all three of your papers and identifies their type. For example:

- Paper 1: Question of definition. Does corporate philanthropy fit the definition of philanthropy?
- Paper 2: Question of policy. Should the drinking age be lowered to 18?
- Paper 3: Question of value. Is offensive political satire worth the risk of inciting violence?

The third paper's topic may or may not be related to the topics of the first two papers, so long as it asks a different question. The paper should argue for its interpretation or position clearly and persuasively, and should respond to reasonable counterarguments.

Second, your paper must use at least six sources, including at least two primary sources and at least two secondary sources. Primary sources are things like statistical data, artifacts, images, or historical documents that your paper examines directly; secondary sources are texts that interpret primary sources. So, for example, if you were writing about the constitutionality of a law, the law itself and the constitution would be primary sources; scholarly or news articles about the law would be secondary sources. Many of you have already been working with both primary and secondary sources, but for this paper it is a requirement that you work with both.

Your question is due March 16. The first four pages are due March 23. A complete rough draft (at least 7 pages) is due March 30. The revised draft (nine pages) is due April 6.

English 225 Final Portfolio

Your final portfolio is worth 15 percent of your grade and contains two parts:

1. A revision and expansion of one of your three previous papers.

This revision should incorporate my comments on the previous graded draft, and should expand the draft by at least one page. So, if the previous draft was 8 pages, the new draft should be at least 9 pages. Also, it should incorporate at least one new source that was not in the previous draft. Note: this revised draft will be graded on its own, and will not replace the previous grade.

2. A 2-3 page reflection in which you evaluate your own writing.

Look back at the introduction that you wrote in the first week of the semester. Was your writing process for your three papers in this class different from your process as you described it in your introduction? What areas of your writing did you identify as strengths in your introduction? How, if at all, do you see those areas in a new light now than you did at the beginning of the semester? What areas did you identify as needing improvement at the beginning of the semester? How, if at all, did your writing improve in these areas? Cite specific examples from your three papers.

Also in your reflection, point to the major changes you made to your revised paper. How did you incorporate the instructor comments to reformulate the paper? What parts are new?

Finally, discuss where you will go from here. In what contexts do you see yourself writing in the future? And what areas do you feel you still need to work on?

Submit your portfolio electronically as a single PDF file. It should contain the reflection first, followed by the revised paper, followed by the original version of the same paper. Email it to me at bsmatzke@gmail.com. The email's subject line should be "(First Name Last Name) - Final Portfolio."

The portfolio is due by 5pm on Friday, April 24.