Course Description

Transition to College Writing will provide you with the opportunity to practice academic writing skills that will serve you well in college and beyond. We will focus intensively on strategies for close reading, analyzing (as opposed to summarizing), and responding in writing to a variety of texts (some academic, some popular, some written, some multimedia)—tasks you will be asked to do often as a college student—talking at length about how to read and write arguments at the college level. That sounds basic, right? "I know how to read and write," you might be thinking. True. If you didn't already have some expertise, you wouldn't be here! AND, the kind of reading and writing you need to do here, even if you excelled in high school, is a different beast. In college, you need to join ongoing intellectual conversations taking place in a variety of contexts and ways among many groups. You'll find that being able to read carefully and think critically are essential to joining these conversations, so we will spend much time practicing these skills. At the end of this course, you will be able to reflect, analyze, synthesize and evaluate in your reading, writing, and thinking.

Because we're all better at digging in to learning when we have a stake in the game, I've designed the content of this course around one major question that should be important to each of us: Who are we in the world? In order to answer that, each of us needs to think first about who we are individually, and then about what defines the “we” in that question.

The writers whose work we will consider offer diverse views on identity: class, race, gender, sexual orientation, region, nation—you name it. They also offer insights into the conventions of communication in various groups of people (discourse communities), both academic and popular. They talk about these subjects in a variety of ways—some concrete, some more theoretical, some abstract. Our readings will serve us as ways into the questions of “who am I?” and “who are we in the world,” models of effective writing of
different kinds (genres), and guides to different ways of talking to audiences. The readings are intended to be thought-provoking, and I doubt we will all agree on any of them. I expect that we will disagree, when we do, respectfully and productively.

Course Goals & Objectives

The official, big-picture goals of the course are for you to:

- Develop an effective writing process
- Develop arguments in writing
- Develop critical thinking and analytical reading skills
- Develop studenting and study skills
- Use an electronic portfolio to develop and present yourself as a writer

In the features and course writing projects described below, you will find, identified in bullets, related course goals & objectives corresponding to these.

This course includes several unique features designed to assist you in meeting course goals and objectives as you develop as a reader, a thinker, and a writer:

- First, you will meet with me face-to-face for at least four half-hour conference sessions, during which we will discuss what you are working on for the course and your development as a writer and student. Most of my feedback on your writing will take place in these conferences, rather than in writing. The purpose of this is to dispel the dangerous, nasty myth of writing as solitary and one-dimensional, and to give you an opportunity to have an ongoing, interactive discussion about your work. Research shows that people who think/talk about what they’re doing—and especially how they’re doing it—learn more effectively. In addition to feedback on your writing, then, these conferences help you develop your:
  - Writing process (identifying what works for you and what doesn’t),
  - Creating thoughtful, well-placed arguments, and
  - Having successful, purposeful communication with your professors.

- Second, you will also meet with a small group of other students and me for at least two other sessions, and much of our class time will consist of full-class and small-group workshops, so that everyone gets substantial feedback from more than one person on every major project, and on “feeder projects” as well. These conferences and class workshop sessions help you meet the course goals of:
  - Providing and using feedback to improve drafts, and
  - Developing a sense of audience and purpose
Third, you will create an electronic portfolio, which will showcase your work for the course and your evolution as a writer. You will have access to this portfolio long after our course is complete, and you can—and should—continue to use it as a place to demonstrate and reflect on your evolution as a writer. The ePortfolio is designed specifically to help you:

- Develop a sense of audience and purpose
- Reflect on collected pieces of writing
- Integrate visual and textual composition
- Reflect on connections between academic writing and co-curricular experiences

Course Writing Projects

For this course you will complete several different kinds of writing assignments, and we will discuss them all at length when they are assigned. To give you a taste of what is to come, though, here is a brief description of the amount and kinds of writing you will do for this course:

- **Major Projects** You will write four major projects that will vary in length from 2-3 pages to 5-7 pages (or the multimedia equivalent). These projects will ask you to perform a variety of analytical, multi-modal, and research-based tasks of the kind you will often be asked to do during your college career. You will be provided with plenty of opportunities to practice the skills required for each major project by way of minor, often collaborative, “feeder” projects and other in-class exercises. You’ll find the prompts for the major projects, along with assessment rubrics for the first two, at the end of this syllabus. We’ll create the assessment rubrics for the 3rd and 4th major assignment, as well as for the ePortfolios, together. These projects **all** help achieve the course goals of:
  - Interpreting writing assignments
  - Exploring methods of topic selection
  - Practicing various kinds of argumentation
  - Providing and using feedback to improve drafts
  - Practicing revision and editing skills

  - **Major Project 1: Rhetorical Analysis**
    - *Feeder Project: Co-authored rhetorical analysis of one piece*

In addition to the goals listed above for all writing projects, this project (and its feeder project) work toward the course goals of:

- Practicing thesis development
Integrating textual evidence via effective quotation and paraphrasing
Annotating texts to identify arguments, sub-arguments, organizational strategies, and use of evidence

Major Project 2: Research-Based Argumentative Essay
  Feeder Project: Argumentative Essay Revision Plan for DSP

In addition to the goals listed above for all writing projects and Major Project 1, this project (and its feeder project) work toward the course goals of:

- Developing analytical questions about a text
- Developing a sense of audience and purpose
- Learning organizational strategies

Major Project 3: Re-Purposing/Re-Mediation of Major Project 2
  Feeder Project: Co-authored analysis of models

In addition to the goals listed above for all writing projects and Major Projects 1& 2, this project (and its feeder project) work toward the course goals of:

- Applying principles of academic integrity
- Integrating visual and textual composition

Major Project 4: Evidence Based Reflective Introduction to Portfolio

In addition to the goals listed for all writing projects, this project (and its feeder project) work toward the course goals described in the ePortfolio discussion above.

Blog Posts
You will blog throughout the semester. Your posts will be between 200-300 words each and should grow to include images, video, hyperlinks, etc., as you learn the technology and writing conventions of blogging. These blog posts

- You will be placed in a group with two peers, who will be your blog team. You will write one blog post each week of the course and respond to each of your blog team members’ posts as well. Each week, you will post your blog by Friday at 11:55pm (roughly midnight), and by the following Monday at noon, you will respond to each of your blog team members’ posts.

- I will always read your posts. I won’t respond individually to each one, but I will often bring in examples from the posts to use in class, and/or write my own posts responding to common issues I see in yours.
I’ll give you a prompt to respond to each week, but in general these are meant to be an opportunity for reflection, for sharing trials and tribulations related to writing, for thinking through the work you’re doing as you’re doing it, and recording your journey this semester. They also will help you practice the platform on which you’ll be building your ePortfolios. The point of the blogging is to work toward the course goals of:

- Exploring methods of topic selection,
- Developing analytical questions about texts,
- Integrating visual and textual composition,
- Participating effectively in class discussions, and
- Reflecting on connections between academic writing and co-curricular experiences

**Reflective Writing** You will write one major reflective essay (Major Project 4) that will introduce your Electronic Portfolio. Also, throughout the semester, as you complete major assignments, you will write shorter reflections (many on the blog) that ask you to consider how the writing you are doing is helping you hone your skills. Many of the reflections you will write during the semester can—and should—serve (in a revised version) as material framing your ePortfolio work. All of the reflective writing in this course (whether in individual writing projects or on the blog) is meant to help you reach the course goals of:

- Developing a sense of audience and purpose
- Reflecting on collected pieces of writing
- Reflecting on connections between academic writing and co-curricular experiences

**Electronic Portfolio** You will select carefully from each type of writing described above to include in your electronic portfolio, which will demonstrate your developing skills, abilities, and decision-making processes as a writer and student. Though the portfolio is itself made up of all the writing you do all semester, it will take a bit of work to make it all make sense together, and we will spend time talking about how to compile and refine your electronic portfolio so that it is an attractive and useful text. As mentioned above, the ePortfolio is designed specifically to help you:

- Develop a sense of audience and purpose
- Reflect on collected pieces of writing
- Integrate visual and textual composition
- Reflect on connections between academic writing and co-curricular experiences
• **Explore at least 4 different resources from the Menu of Resources that appears at the end of this syllabus.** You *must* use the Sweetland Peer Tutoring Center’s in-person peer tutoring service (in Angell Hall, the Undergraduate Library, the Duderstadt Center, etc.) as one of your resources. You also *must* use the live video-chat SyncOWL as one of your resources. You can then choose which other resources you’d like to use to fulfill your requirement of using 4 resources. Please provide ample evidence of your use of the resource in the reflections you write about your papers. Use one resource for each paper. Note: You should feel free to explore more than 4 different resources. Indeed, it might behoove you to consult with a Sweetland peer tutor about each of your major essays. The purpose of this work is to help you develop studenting and study skills, in particular the goals of:

  - Managing time and meeting deadlines
  - Finding and using campus resources

**Course Requirements**

This course, while not graded, is credit/no credit. To receive credit for this course, turn in excellent, polished work and meet all of these requirements along the way:

• **Come to class and individual conference sessions regularly.** If unavoidable commitments or emergencies interfere with your ability to attend any class or conference session, please consult with me as soon as you can. You are responsible for catching up on what you may miss due to any absence. *Students who miss more than three class sessions or more than one individual conference session will not receive credit for the course.* Be sure to trade contact information with someone else in the class so that you can get information from them when/if you miss a class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and come prepared for the next class session as if you had attended. I do not reteach class sessions. I am, however, happy to meet with you in office hours to answer your questions or discuss the material with you.

• **Get to class and individual conference sessions on time.** Every two times a student is late either to class or to an individual conference session, it will count as one absence. If you know ahead of time that you will have difficulty making it to a class or conference session on time, please consult with me.

• **Participate respectfully and actively in every class and in individual conference sessions.** Students who have prepared for class and are attentive to and engaged in whatever we are doing every day will do well in this class. That’s just common sense. Similarly, students who participate actively and productively in individual conference sessions will do well. You should:
- take notes,
- raise questions, and
- respond to ideas and questions that come up in our discussions.

**I absolutely do not tolerate side conversations or texting during class.** If I see it happening, I will ask you to stop. I also reserve the right to count you absent for the day if the behavior is disruptive.

- **Complete all assignments with care and on time.** To receive credit for this course, students must complete all assignments carefully, thoughtfully, and on time. If you know ahead of time that you will be unable to make a deadline, talk to me about it, and we will see if alternative arrangements can be made. **Students who make a habit of turning in careless work should expect not to receive credit for the course.**

- **Read your fellow students’ work with care and provide constructive feedback.** To help you revise your papers, you will receive feedback from your fellow students, and you will provide feedback to them on their work. This exchange of constructive criticism is called “peer review,” and we will do a lot of it. Peer review provides you with useful feedback on your work and helps you practice reading with a critical eye. **To receive credit for this course, students should come prepared on all peer review days and actively and productively engage in peer review. If you miss a peer review day in class, you should not expect to receive credit for the course.**

- **Do all of the course readings on time and carefully, attend all required outside events.**
  
  - You are not required to purchase any textbooks for this course, though I do recommend that you have a good dictionary to consult while you are reading and writing, and I do want you to have an up-to-date college writing handbook, with MLA-style documentation guidelines. I strongly recommend Andrea Lunsford’s *The Everyday Writer*, which not only has style guides, but also terrific advise about research, writing, revising, and editing.

  - All of the required readings for this course are available as PDF files or links to web content through CTools. You can access them by logging into CTools, clicking on the tab for our class, then clicking on “Resources” in the list on the left. A list of course readings will appear, with titles that match the titles provided on the course schedule. **Always print** and annotate copies of these readings (scrap paper or two-sided copies are fine) and bring them to class on the days we are scheduled to discuss them.

  - I expect all students to take notes, and to come to every class prepared to talk about the reading assigned for the day. **It is more than fine to come to class confused by a reading but with questions about what you read;** in fact, if
you aren’t confused by something, you’re probably doing something wrong. 😊 Coming with questions shows me you are engaging with the text, even if you struggled to make sense of it.

- **Craft and submit an electronic portfolio.** The electronic portfolio is the culmination of all your work for the course, and it provides a way for you to reflect on your development as a writer. *To receive credit for this course, you must submit a complete and thoughtfully composed portfolio.* You will have lots of help along the way.

### COURSE POLICIES

- **Assignment Formatting Guidelines:** Adhere to standard rules of formatting for all assignments. All paper submissions you make to CTools and print in hard copy must be typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman font. Margins for all document submissions should be 1 inch on all sides. Do not include a title page but do title every piece. Number all pages. Adhere to MLA style.

- **Assignment Submission Guidelines:** In this class, you will submit your assignments electronically. Major assignments will be posted to CTools. Please see the Course Schedule for specific instructions. On peer workshop days, you will be required to print out drafts to bring to class.

- **Disruptions in Class:** If we are working on laptops, please stay focused only on the project at hand and avoid checking email, Facebook, etc. If we are not working on laptops, keep your laptop closed. Turn off and put away all cell phones and other electronic devices before class starts. If for some reason you need to keep your cell phone on, please ask for my permission before class. I do not tolerate side conversations when class is in session. Be on time for class, be attentive, and refrain from packing up your books and putting on your coat until class is dismissed.

- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is, simply put, “using someone else’s words and ideas without giving proper credit to the source” (Lunsford, *The St. Martin’s Handbook*, 393). Because the products of most academic work are words and ideas, they are given a high value in the university community. Using them without acknowledgment is the gravest of all academic sins. You will always be on the receiving end of my absolute faith that you are all smart people who can—and will—achieve what I ask of you and reach the goals you set for yourselves. Please refer also to this link [on the English Department web site](http://example.com).

- **Students with Disabilities:** The Services for Students with Disabilities is available to assist university students who need accommodations due to a disability. If you would like to request such accommodations for this course, please make an appointment to see me.
• **Fun:** Vigorous, active engagement and participation is required for successful performance in this course. Nobody worth her salt ever said that learning shouldn’t be a pleasure. I intend to have fun. I hope you’ll do the same!

**Reaching Me, Working with Me**

I cannot say this enough: I am here for you. I’m happy to talk with you about any aspect of the course or your experience at U of M at any point in your learning process. One of my biggest joys as a teacher is working with students in and out of the classroom.

But don’t just take my word for it. Here’s what a few of my past students have to say about office hours:

"Writing, if we let it, can become so daunting and impossible in our minds. Taking drafts or even strings of ideas to Shelley has provided me with renewed inspiration time and time again. Sitting down with her often clarified my thoughts, knocked my project off its pedestal, and made the writing process seem more achievable to me, the writer. Whether it be over a Skype date or in her North Quad office, Shelley has given me purposeful and directive feedback to push me forward -- the only direction I ever want to go." –Emily Martin

"Make sure you take advantage of office hours. It’s the best way to work with Shelley to improve your writing. Even if you feel like your papers are strong or you’re getting good grades, I’d recommend you chat with Shelley to make them even better. There’s no such thing as a perfect draft, right?! Also, I know you’ll have fun talking with Shelley--she’s a wonderful conversationalist! Plus, she’ll even Skype with you if you don’t feel like making the trek to North Quad." –Mark Chou

"I skyped with Shelley on more than one occasion. I have never had a teacher offer to take her personal time and do something like this with me. Shelley and I laughed and worked together on my projects over Skype using the screenshare feature. She gave me such helpful advice! Take advantage of her offer to Skype with you. It’s worth more than the points (although those are great, too) for the insight she provides. SHELLEY IS THE BEST!!!" – Sarah Vollmer

It’s easiest to reach me by email if you can’t come by office hours, and I will always respond to your emails within 24 hours (except on the weekends, when it could take up to 48 hours). I’m more than happy to set up an appointment with you, to meet in my office or to skype or gchat. Bottom line? I’m available to you. Don’t pass up that opportunity.
About Me

I have a Bachelor’s Degree and a Master’s Degree in English (with an emphasis on dramatic literature), from the University of Kansas and a Ph.D. in Theatre History & Criticism / Performance as a Public Practice from the University of Texas at Austin. I’ve been teaching writing, in various forms, for almost thirteen years. I write and publish about teaching, rhetoric, live performance, and television. In my life outside the university, I’m a dramaturg (ask me what that means if you’re interested), a runner, a TV afficianodo, and a ghost enthusiast.

Teaching Philosophy (My Job)

For me, teaching is a team sport in which we all have positions to play. I have expertise, and you also have expertise, and we’ll put our various strengths together. You will always be on the receiving end of my absolute faith that you are all smart people who can—and will—achieve what I ask of you and reach the goals you set for yourselves.

I don’t do much lecturing. Instead, I expect that you come to class having read and thought about the material for the day, and we put that material on its feet together, using what you’ve read about so that you learn more deeply. We do a lot of teamwork and collaborate in a variety of ways, both in and out of the classroom.

Let me be clear: I expect a LOT from you. This is because in my experience, students rise to the standards set for them—so why would I set the bar low? I care deeply about my students and enjoy their company, I aim to create an atmosphere of civility, inquiry, a dual emphasis on process and product (how we learn/create as well as what we learn/create), collaboration, and fun. AND out of all that I demand rigorous, disciplined work. You are all smart people, and I believe in our ability to do stellar work together.

Active Learning and Reflection (Your Job)

In order to succeed in this course, you will be active learners in this classroom—and ideally in all of your work at the U of M. Research shows that people who think and talk explicitly about what they’re doing—and especially how they’re doing it—learn more effectively. They are also much better equipped to apply knowledge and skills from one area to another (what we call “transfer”), something all employers highly value.

In this course, you will do a lot of thinking and writing about your own thinking and writing—what we call metacognition. You will write in multiple genres and multiple media, learning how to analyze, create, and support arguments of college-level quality, and you will reflect along the way on your processes, successes, and challenges.

As is standard in college, you can expect to do 2-3 hours of homework for every hour we meet (i.e. 16-20 homework hrs per week).
Resources Menu for WRITING100 Students

Sweetland Peer Tutoring Center
http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/forstudents/peertutoring

Sweetland peer tutors are trained upper-level undergraduates who assist fellow undergraduates of all skill levels at any stage of the writing process, including brainstorming ideas for papers. The peer tutors, one of the most valuable academic resources for undergraduates at U of M, work in Angell Hall during the summer. In the fall and winter, they work in Angell Hall as well as in several satellite locations. See http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/forstudents/peertutoring for hours and locations. Note that all peer tutoring locations operate on a walk-in basis, so you should just visit one of the locations above during regular hours to work with a tutor.

Sweetland SyncOWL and OWL
http://sitemaker.umich.edu/sweetlandwritinghelp/home

Sweetland peer tutors also offer online help with writing through two online consultation services, the SyncOWL (fall and winter) and OWL. The SyncOWL allows you to work with a tutor via a live online video chat. The OWL allows you to submit your paper to a tutor with specific questions and receive written feedback within 72 hours (note that this option is time-sensitive). Both of these are excellent options if an illness or injury is preventing you from getting around campus.

Writing Workshop
http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/forstudents/writingworkshop

From the website above: “The Writing Workshop at the Sweetland Center for Writing aims to help students become more confident, skilled, and knowledgeable about writing and the subjects they write about. This free consultation service provides students the opportunity to work one-on-one with a Sweetland instructor.” Appointments must be made online and generally book up about a week in advance, so planning ahead is essential with this resource. You may not consult with a Writing Workshop instructor on any work for WRITING100, but you are welcome to bring writing from any other course.

English Language Institute Conversation Circles
http://sitemaker.umich.edu/conversation/home
This program, sponsored by the English Language Institute (ELI), encourages cultural exchange and provides non-native students with opportunities for language practice. From the website: “In each conversation circle, a small group of non-native speakers of English (up to 6 people) are paired with a native-English-speaking volunteer, for a weekly hour-long conversation practice. Participants browse the list of conversation circles, and can then choose to join the group with the most convenient meeting time and/or with the leader who interests them the most. Groups often meet at coffee shops or restaurants, explore Ann Arbor together, play games or sports together, or simply sit outside for a casual chat. The emphasis is on day-to-day, informal communication (including slang and idioms), and becoming comfortable not just with English, but with U of M and American life in general.”

**Instructional Support Services**
http://blogs.lsa.umich.edu/issmediacenter/

ISS Media Center is staffed with people available to assist students needing help with tech-related class projects, including video and audio projects. Check out their blog for information how to get help, and also check out their list of workshops.

**Reference Librarians at Shapiro Library**
http://www.lib.umich.edu/shapiro-undergraduate-library/ugl-indepth-research-help

The Shapiro Library reference librarians are happy to work with individual students or small groups to help with research projects. This service requires an appointment that must be made at least 24 hours in advance.

**Duderstadt Center**
http://www.dc.umich.edu/training.htm

Located on North Campus, the Duderstadt Center houses the Digital Media Commons, which offers free introductory-level workshops to students interested in multimedia technology. These workshops are great opportunities to explore tech-related interests. See the link above for a list of workshops with descriptions and information about how to sign up.

**Time and Stress Management**
http://mitalk.umich.edu/academic-skills

If you are having trouble managing work for your courses from a time or stress angle, a counselor can offer valuable advice and strategies for getting a handle on things. An appointment is required; call 734-764-8312.
Fall and winter terms only:

**WRITING100 Peer Workshops**

Several times throughout the semester, Sweetland peer tutors will offer 1-hour workshops on different writing-related topics (such as, “writing introductions and conclusions,” “integrating sources into your papers”). These workshops require participation from students who attend and will be capped at 20 students per workshop.

**Tech Deck**  
http://www.lib.umich.edu/techdeck

The Tech Deck works with individual students and small groups to help with “media-rich” class projects. Students wanting to go the extra mile with their e-portfolios will find this a valuable resource.

**English Language Institute Speaking Clinics**  
http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/resources/speakingclinics

The Speaking Clinic gives non-native students an opportunity to work on improving their spoken English in individual or small group settings. No academic credit is earned through Speaking Clinics; instead, they offer short-term coaching on specific English speaking goals.

**English Language Institute Writing Clinics**  
http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/resources/writingclinics

Like Writing Workshop, but staffed by faculty trained specifically to work with non-native students. You may consult with an ELI specialist on work for any course, including WRITING100. This is an extremely valuable resource for international students.

**Word²: Writer 2 Writer**  
http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/aboutus/wordwritertowriter

This series lets you hear directly from University of Michigan professors about their challenges, processes, and expectations as writers and also as readers of student writing. Each semester, Word² pairs one esteemed University professor with a Sweetland faculty member for a conversation about writing.