Writing 120 Syllabus (2015 fall)

Course Information

Class time: T/Th 1:00PM – 2:30PM  
Classroom: 2468 MH  
Instructor: Jing Xia  
Office hours: Mon 3:00-3:30pm, Tue 12:00-12:30pm, Thu 11:45am -12:45pm, and by appointment  
Email: jxiaapl@umich.edu  
Office: North Quad 1347#  
Office Phone: (734) 936-3143

Textbook


Course Description

This course is designed for students who feel most comfortable doing academic writing in a language other than English. This course is in the seminar format where student discussion and student projects are highly emphasized. In addition to seminar classes, students also have the opportunity to meet with the instructor one-one-one before each major assignment. Through this course, students will

• Understand and use the writing process  
• Synthesize and analyze multiple points of view  
• Articulate and support one’s own position regarding various issues  
• Adjust writing to multiple audiences, purposes, and conventions  
• Become conscious and responsible writers, both for college and beyond  
• Learn to access and become involved with the discourses of the university community

Seminar-Format

Writing 120 is a seminar class in which students will be doing some reading/projects before class and be prepared for a discussion in class. It is NOT a lecture class. Please do not expect me to be talking all the time. Rather, you are expected to read the course material before class, raise questions and share your ideas in class. Your active participation in class discussion and group projects is highly encouraged and will be rewarded. Your instructor will be the facilitator and consultant.
One-on-one Conference

This is a special feature of Writing 120. In order to help you develop as a writer, each of you will meet with me before each major writing assignment. A sign-up sheet including all my availabilities will be shared with you before each conference. You can select a time that works best for you. Here are some expectations for the conference:

• Please arrive on time. If you are late, it will be counted as “late.” *Two later arrivals equal to one class absence.*

• Please knock at the door when it is your scheduled time.
  o Some of you may feel shy to knock at the door if you see me in conversation with another student. Please don’t. Just knock at the door to give me a reminder.

• You should come to the meeting with a **hard(printed) copy** of your draft and some prepared questions for us to discuss. Conference session will **not** consist of me “telling you what’s wrong” and “how to fix it.” Instead, expect to engage in a genuine two-sided conversation about your work-in-progress.

• Please try your best to avoid rescheduling. I will encourage you to swap your time with another student if you find your original time not working.

Major Assignments

**Personal Narrative, 4-5 pages/1000 words**

This assignment asks you to respond to a misconception (*i.e.*, a false idea) you've encountered upon arriving at the University of Michigan and/or the United States. You have two basic options to choose from:

Option A: What did you imagine would be true about coming here that has turned out not to be true? *(Another way of thinking of it might be: What has surprised you most / been the biggest adjustment since coming here?)*

Option B: What have you found that people here believe about you and/or your home country that is false?

For either option, you will need to (a) describe and explain the misconception; (b) describe how you have experienced or encountered it; (c) identify what is false about the misconception, and offer evidence to demonstrate its falsehood; and (d) propose an alternative idea, based on your experience, that is closer to the truth.

**Rhetorical Analysis Essay, 4-5 pages/1000 words**

Rhetoric is at the center of argument and persuasion. In order to write convincing arguments, we need to learn the basic rhetorical concepts and how they are used in different forms. By the time of this assignment, you should have analyzed the rhetorical skills of advertisement, speeches and articles. In this assignment, you will apply what you have learnt to examine a given article. You can also write on an article at your choice, but please consult me in advance for approval.
Once you decide on an article, you will discern and describe the way the author makes an argument (“text”) to appeal to the specific audiences (“context”). You are not to take a position on their argument per se—that is, you’re not to agree or disagree with what they’re saying. Your primary job is not to advocate or criticize their stance, but to analyze and describe their ways of forwarding their argument. You can agree or disagree with the original argument but the most important task is for you to find ways to show why the original way of forwarding his/her argument is effective, engaging or appealing.

Response Essay: 5-6 pages/1200 words

A reaction essay is just what the name suggests—a paper explaining your reaction to an article, film, or lecture. Reaction essays will develop your ability to summarize others’ ideas, identify main themes, arguments or conflicts, and create your own response. In your reaction paper, you will develop one primary idea or perception, support it with specific evidence (usually references to individual arguments or quotations), and present your idea and the evidence with clear language and in a logical sequence. You will use the close reading skills you have learnt in the previous assignment to extract pieces of arguments from the original article and integrate them into your own arguments.

Researched issue-analysis essay, 8-10 pages/2000 words

Imagine you are invited to write an article for The New York Times, discussing your opinions on a controversial issue. You will write a well-researched analytical essay that contains your position, and that describes, explains and analyzes this issue with multiple, possibly conflicting perspectives. Your reader will be someone who is curious to learn new things but has no special knowledge in your topic area. You can use the argumentative form; you can use personal narratives; you can create a story to deliver a “lesson/message.” In all scenarios, you need to include at least one opposing view in this paper. You can address the opposing view through qualifier, concession or counterargument. You need to cite at least five sources; three of them need to be reputable. A reference list should be provided at the end of your paper. Please follow the APA or MLA citation convention consistently. The final draft needs to be at least eight pages, excluding references.

Final portfolio

This assignment will help you to know yourself better as a writer. Writing is not about practice; it is also about reflective learning of oneself. Your ability to see your growth, your strength and your weakness is as important as the numerous practices you have done for this course. You will be asked to do detailed annotation for all the writings you have produced for this course as well as the Directed Self Placement (DSP) essay you have completed prior to coming to UM. You will read them carefully, add notes to them, write an 800-word reflective letter and teach a mini-lesson (7-minute) about what you have learnt in this course.
Grades

Grade composition:

- Narrative essay                      40
- Rhetorical Analysis essay               50
- Response essay                      60
- Oral presentation of the final project    20
- Researched issue-analysis essay                    100
- Final Portfolio                                        60
- Participation                                  40

Final course grade:

- A+: 97.0-100.0%
- A: 93.0%-96.9%
- A-: 90.0%-92.9%
- B+: 87.0%-89.9%
- B: 83.0%-86.9%
- B-: 80.0%-82.9%
- C+: 77.0%-79.9%
- C: 73.0%-76.9%
- C-: 70.0%-72.9%
- D+: 67.0%-69.9%
- D: 63.0%-66.9%
- D-: 60.0%-62.9%
- F: lower than 60.0%

Grading Policies

It’s difficult to earn an “A” in this course. “A” means outstanding work—work that makes a reader think, “Wow!” “B” is very good work—work that very much impresses a reader; work that meets all criteria satisfactorily. Contrary to popular belief, “C” work is not “bad” work; it is average work—work that does not stand out as much, but work that exhibits fair competence. “D” work is below average and thereby demonstrates incompetence. “F” is altogether incompetent.

I don’t grade on efforts beyond the “process” category in the rubric. I don’t think effort can ever be accurately and objectively measured. I also think grading on efforts may send confusing messages on the quality of your work. I will encourage you to make effort because that’s how you can make an improvement, but I cannot grade on it when I’m grading your paper.

Incomplete or incorrect submission:

- No grade will be given to incomplete or incorrect submissions. Please check the formatting requirement and the minimum length requirement for each assignment carefully. I will normally not offer any grade to papers that cannot meet these basic standards. However, if you do have some difficulty, please contact me at least 48 hours before the due time.

Late submission:

- You will be solely responsible for the timely submission of the right version of your work.
- Whether it is a draft or the final version, your prompt submission is required.
- If you are late, you need to send me a separate email explaining the situation. Late
submission without any reason will not be accepted.

- 10% will be taken off each day for late submissions.
- The deadlines are firm. Rarely will I grant an extension. If it is an emergent case (You need to provide proper documents), please notify me 48 hours in advance. Please do not send me an email a few hours before the deadline requesting a deadline for reasons like “my computer crashed,” “my internet was down,” “I was food poisoned,” “I felt very depressed.”

Grade dispute:
You are welcome to discuss with me if you do not agree with a grade, but you need to extend that request within one week.

Attendance Policies
You are expected to sign in prior to the start of each class. If you forget, please email me right after class.

Please arrive on time and stay for the whole class session. Arriving late causes you to miss important material and is disruptive to others. I will count two late arrivals as one absence. The same policy applies to those who leave class early.

You are expected to attend all classes. If you cannot attend a class, you need to inform me in writing prior to or right after your absence. You can have up to two excused absences if you have given me proper notification. Uninformed absences will lower your final grade by a third (e.g., an “A” grade will become an “A-”).

If there are graded in-class exercises or activities on the day of your absence, regardless of your reason of absence, you need to come up with ideas for an equivalent project AND ask me for approval within three days of your absence in order to earn that portion of your grade.

If you need a third absence but don’t want to be penalized, you need to do makeup work. Please email me to discuss this further. Generally, I will grant you the absence, but you need to come up with ideas to make up for your learning.

If you need to miss class six times or more, I would advise you take the class next semester.

Participation
You are expected to be active in in-class and online discussions. The amount and the quality of your input will both be evaluated. I’m aware some of you may be shy. I do not expect all of you to be active since the first day of class, but you need to be able to contribute to class discussion in some form after the first few weeks.

To some degree, participation overlaps with attendance. Although I do not have a separate attendance category in the course grading system, students who attend all classes by default will have a larger chance to get a higher participation grade as they have more time to contribute.

You are expected to read the assigned material before class. Signs of active reading (e.g., reading
notes, underlines or highlights) will be appreciated and rewarded.

Unless specified otherwise, smart phone or laptop (or similar devices) are not allowed during class time. If you prefer taking notes on these devices, please contact me individually. I’d be glad to designate you to certain seats.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know. I can modify some aspects of the assignments, in-class activities, and teaching methods to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate accommodations. I will treat as private and confidential any information that you provide.

Here is the contact information for Services for Students with Disabilities:
- location: G-664 Haven Hall
- phone: (734) 763-3000
- website: [http://ssd.umich.edu/](http://ssd.umich.edu/)

**Religious Observances**

If a class session or due date conflicts with your religious holidays, please notify me so that we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence. In accordance with U-M policy on Religious/Academic conflicts, your absence will not affect your grade in the course.

**Plagiarism**

All assignments must be written for this course. Using papers originally written for another course will be considered as self-plagiarism and no grade will be awarded.

You are expected to write your paper on your own in English. Papers that are written entirely in your native language and translated with the aid of an electronic or human translator will not be accepted. It is acceptable to use electronic translators or bilingual dictionaries as a reference in looking up individual words or phrases as you write. Plagiarism is also a violation of the LSA Academic Conduct Code and will automatically result in failure in the course. Furthermore, as the LSA Academic Judiciary Manual of Procedures specifies, a student may be expelled from the university for such misconduct. Please refer to the following memo for more information on plagiarism: [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp)

**Writing Center**

Our campus Writing Center is located on the first floor of North Quad. It opens 9am- 5pm Monday to Friday throughout the semester. You can also avail yourself to their satellite centers which open in the evenings and over the weekend. Online consultation service is also available.
through their Online Writing Lab. Detailed information can be found here: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/undergraduate/inpersonwritingsupport
# Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Preparing for College Writing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>09/08</strong></td>
<td>Who are in our class? What are we going to learn?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>09/10</strong></td>
<td>What is good writing?</td>
<td><em>Academic Writing Style</em> (PDF) Sample Short Essays</td>
<td>- Reading questions due next class</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>09/15</strong></td>
<td>Guest speaker on Chat Café (1:10-1:25pm) What’s the role of grammar in writing?</td>
<td><em>Correctness</em> (PDF)</td>
<td>-Reading questions due next class</td>
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<td><strong>09/17</strong></td>
<td>Workshop on ideas of misconception</td>
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<td>Assign Essay 1, first draft due at 8pm, 09/21; Final draft due at 8pm, 09/28.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>09/22</strong> (lab)</td>
<td>Peer review</td>
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<td><strong>09/24</strong></td>
<td>Section Review</td>
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<td><strong>II. Entering the Academic Community</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>09/29</strong></td>
<td>Who are the audiences? How to make them ‘care’?</td>
<td>Chapter 7 “So what, who cares” in They Say I Say (pp. 92-102)</td>
<td>Reading questions due next class</td>
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<td><strong>10/01</strong></td>
<td>What is rhetorical analysis?</td>
<td><em>Rhetorical analyses</em> (PDF)</td>
<td>Reading questions due next class</td>
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<td>Assign Essay 2, first draft due at 8pm, 10/05; final draft due at 8pm, 10/12.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>10/06</strong></td>
<td>Peer review</td>
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<td><strong>10/08</strong> (lab)</td>
<td>Group 4 Advertisement (or speech) analysis in the language lab</td>
<td><em>Move the Audience</em> (PDF)</td>
<td>Reading questions due next class</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td><strong>10/13</strong></td>
<td>What is a position paper?</td>
<td><em>Understand Position Papers</em> (PDF)</td>
<td>Reading questions due next class</td>
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<td><strong>10/15</strong></td>
<td>What are the typical ways to respond? How did the writer respond?</td>
<td>Chapter 5 “Three ways to respond” in They say, I say (pp.55-67).</td>
<td>Assign Essay 3, first draft due at 8pm, 10/21; final draft due at 8pm, 10/28.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>10/20</strong></td>
<td>Fall Study Break</td>
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<td><strong>10/22</strong></td>
<td>Peer review</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 8</strong></td>
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<td>Section review</td>
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### III. Crafting Extended Argument

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<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>10/29</th>
<th>Integrating other’s ideas</th>
<th>Introduction: “Entering the conversation” in They say, I say (pp. 1-14) Chapter 1: “they say” in They say, I say (pp. 19-28)</th>
<th>Reading questions due next class</th>
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<td>11/03</td>
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<td>How to respond to objections?</td>
<td>Chapter 4: “Yes, No, Okay, But” in They Say, I Say (pp. 55-67). Chapter 6 “Skeptics may object” in They say I say (pp. 78-91)</td>
<td>Reading questions due next class</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>11/05</td>
<td>How to develop ideas?</td>
<td>Rewrite to Develop (PDF)</td>
<td>Assign Essay 4: oral presentation due in class on 11/12; first draft due at 8pm, 11/16; final draft due at 8pm, 11/30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>11/10 (KNC lab)</td>
<td>Paired workshop on Essay 4</td>
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<td>-prepare for your presentation</td>
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<td>11/12</td>
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<td>Paired presentation on your initial ideas of Essay 4</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>11/17</td>
<td>Peer review</td>
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<td>11/19</td>
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<td>Workshop on citation conventions</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>11/24 (lab)</td>
<td>Section Review</td>
<td>- Reading questions due next class</td>
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<td>11/26</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving break</td>
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### IV. Editing Skills

| Week 13 | 12/1 | Ways to revise | “Revision Strategies” 533-540 (PDF) | -Assign final portfolio project: oral portion due 12/10 in class; written portion due at 8pm 12/13.
-Reading questions due next class |
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<td>12/3</td>
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<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Chapter 8 “As a result” in They Say I say (pp. 105-120)</td>
<td>-exercise on subjects and verbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>Subjects and verbs</td>
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<td>-prepare for your individual reflective presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>Last day of class</td>
<td>Individual Presentation on one writing strategy you find particularly</td>
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<td>-prepare for the written portion of the portfolio.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/13</td>
<td>Final portfolio due</td>
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