Writing 240 Syllabus (2015 fall)

Course Information

Class time: W 4:00-5:00PM  
Classroom: 1155 NQ  
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: Room 1347, North Quad (inside Sweetland)  
Phone: (734) 936-3143

Course Description

Writing 240 is a one-credit graded course focusing on oral communication skills. Students will analyze the rhetorical structure of typical American university lectures, create presentations to different audiences, and learn the strategies for successful participation in American university classroom discussion and group projects. By the end of this course, you will:

• Feel more comfortable interacting with peers, instructors and advisors about your social or academic needs;  
• Develop a basic understanding of the principles and techniques of persuasion in interpersonal, group and public speaking contexts;  
• Improve listening, note taking and observational skills;  
• Improve information searching, organizing and analyzing skills;  
• Become more knowledgeable in creating effective visuals;  
• Become more confident and skillful in sharing your disciplinary knowledge with different audiences.

Textbook


Course Assignments

Interview Report (written & Oral):
This task asks you to interview a professor a teaching assistant to learn their typical day. By interviewing your professor, you will practice your skills of starting an academic conversation. You will also learn how to maintain a conversation and how to take notes. You can follow these steps to complete the task: 1) contact your professors asking for their interests and availabilities; 2) conduct the interview and take interview notes; 3) report your findings in class. Your report needs to be approximately five minutes. The oral portion will be 5 minutes and the written portion will be 1-page-long.

UMMA report (oral)

The purpose of this assignment is to develop your ability to collect information, analyze information and be able to present it in a logical and engaging manner. In this assignment, you will visit the UMMA museum and share your unique perspective of this museum. You can take pictures if it is permitted by the museum; You want to experience the art work in real life and recognize how it reinforces or contrasts your experience seeing the reproduction of an artwork in book or on a website. You also want to select some artworks that are related in some way (e.g. the same author, period, subject matter) and see how seeing works in a larger context than one picture at a time enriches or shapes your understanding of that author, period, or subject matter. In your report, you can use your photos, interview excerpts or external search results to illustrate your points. The report need to be 8- to 10- minute long.

Class observation report (written & oral)

The purpose of this task is to give you first-hand experience collecting data through observation. Rather than being a passive recipient of knowledge in a class, your role of being a student observer will also “force” you to be more attentive to the content as well as the strategies your peers use in class participation. In particular, you will 1) choose two classes you want to investigate; 2) take notes of other students’ classroom participation (the list of focusing points will be generated in our class later); 3) organize your notes and create a 5-minute in class report. You will also write the gist of your observation in a 1- to 2- page report.

Speech Analysis (written & oral):

As you will probably be asked by your other instructors to make class presentations, here we will learn the most effective rhetorical strategies that can be used in a presentation from influential speeches in history. In class, we will analyze the rhetorical strategies in those speeches together and you will use what you learnt in class to examine a given speech. I will provide you with a list of speeches, and you can also volunteer to analyze speeches from other sources. You are also expected to do some research as to the social
context of that speech. You will report your analysis in a 2-page written analysis and a 5- 7-
minute oral presentation.

**Mini-lecture on a Discipline-Specific Topic (oral):**

This task is a continued preparation to help you better prepared for classroom
presentations you will face in your disciplinary courses. You will practice presenting a
specialized topic to non-specialist audiences. In particular, you will give an 8- to 10-minute
lecture in which you teach your classmates and instructor something about your own area
of study. If you haven’t chosen a major yet, you can teach us on a topic you have some
insider knowledge about. You want to use the structure we have learnt in previous
assignment: introduction of why this topic is meaningful to your audience; illustration of
what the topic is about; conclusion on the implications of the topic. As the topic will be
discipline specific, you are expected to provide a printed handout to all your classmates.
The lecture need to be 8- to 10- minute-long and you are encouraged to include visuals or
multi-media in your presentation.

**Grades:**

Score distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview Report (written and oral)</td>
<td>20 + 20 = 40</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMMA Report (oral)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class observation report (written and oral)</td>
<td>40 + 40 = 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Analysis (written and oral)</td>
<td>40 + 40 = 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on a disciplinary topic (handout needed)</td>
<td>70 + 10 = 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final reflective writing</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>400</td>
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</table>

Final course grade:

- **A+: 97.0%-100%**
- **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**

**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 timely submission of your work.
- If your submission is late, you need to send me a separate email explaining the reasons. Late submissions without an accompanying will not be accepted.
- You will lose 10% of the total grade each day your work is late.
- If you can provide legitimate evidence for being late, such as an official document from your coach, a doctor’s note, or a signed letter of a family emergency, I will offer you an extension. But please contact me in advance. Reasons such as “my internet did not work,” “I thought it was due another day,” “I didn’t feel well,” “I need to prepare for an exam,” do not fall into the “legitimate” category.

**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.

**Participation**
You are expected to be active in class. You will self-report your participation grade (I reserve the right to override your evaluation). Please evaluate yourself on the following three categories: 1) come to class on time and stay in class for the whole session; 2) complete the reading with clear evidence; 3) fairly active in class discussion. If you meet these criteria, you can report an “A” for class participation on that day.

If you can earn 12 A’s throughout the semester, you will be rewarded with at least 55 points in the “attendance and participation” category in your final grade. If you can earn 10 A’s, you will earn at least 50 points; if you earn 8 A’s, you will earn 40 points; if you earn only 6 A’s, we will look at your participation records together to decide on a reasonable grade.

Cellphone or computer usage will significantly affect your participation grade. Please don’t use cellphones or laptops unless being asked.

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

You are expected to attend all classes. However, I do understand unexpected circumstances may arise and will approve you **two** excused absences, providing you write me an email before or right after the absence explaining the reason. Otherwise, I will consider it as an unexcused absence and lower your final course grade by a third (e.g., an “A” grade will become an “A-”).

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 the class early.

Note there is an overlap between your attendance and participation. If you attend all or almost all classes, it means you will have more opportunity to have higher grades in participation. If you miss the class more than twice and cannot provide legitimate reasons for the third absence, you need to propose some ideas to make up for your absence. Or, your final grade will be lowered by a third.

If you need to miss this course five times, I would advise you consider taking it in another semester.

**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.

If you are representing the university in a university-sponsored activity such as a sporting event or academic tournament, you should let me know at the beginning of the term which days you will have to miss. You are responsible for completing the work that you will miss. You can turn in material early, and you can submit work and take exams while you are on the road. If you miss several classes due to extenuating circumstances, I may require you to complete additional make-up work.

**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
# Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings and assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wk 1:</td>
<td>Syllabus Introduction</td>
<td>Chapter 2: academic life (pp. 22-37) – 1 page notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 2:</td>
<td>How to conduct an interview? Roles of professors;</td>
<td>Assign interview homework, due at 8pm 10/06</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/23</td>
<td>Instructor expectations regarding email from students.</td>
<td>Chapter 2: academic life (pp. 38-55) – 1-page notes</td>
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<td>Wk 3:</td>
<td>Student attitudes towards homework. Instructor expectation regarding grades.</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/30</td>
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<td>Wk 4:</td>
<td>Presentation of your interview report; Debriefing of the interview experience</td>
<td>Assign museum project, due at 8pm 10/20.</td>
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<td>10/07</td>
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<td>Wk 5:</td>
<td>Tour to UMMA</td>
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<td>10/14</td>
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<td>Wk 6:</td>
<td>Presentation of your UMMA experience</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Communicating by email (pp. 56-65)</td>
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<td>10/21</td>
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<td>Assign class participation project, due at 8pm 11/03.</td>
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<td>Wk 7:</td>
<td>Appointments and office hours</td>
<td>Chapter 4: interacting with instructors and advisors (pp. 87-90). Complete task 2 and 3.</td>
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<td>10/28</td>
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<td>Wk 8:</td>
<td>Presentation of your observation of other students’ class participation</td>
<td>Chapter 9 in “The Public Speaking Project” <a href="http://www.publicspeakingproject.org/PDF%20Files/Intros%20Concl%20Web%201.pdf">http://www.publicspeakingproject.org/PDF%20Files/Intros%20Concl%20Web%201.pdf</a> (1-page note) Assign speech analysis project, due at 8pm 11/17.</td>
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<td>11/04</td>
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<td>Wk 9:</td>
<td>Rhetorical strategies</td>
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<td>11/11</td>
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<td>Wk 10:</td>
<td>Presentation of your speech analysis</td>
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<td>11/18</td>
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<td>Wk 11:</td>
<td>Thanksgiving break</td>
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<td>11/25</td>
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<td>Wk 12:</td>
<td>Library research for your chosen topic</td>
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<td>12/02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 13:</td>
<td>Presentation on a topic of interest to you</td>
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<td>12/09</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Final reflective paper due</td>
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<td>12/16</td>
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