

ENG 201H

Intermediate Composition

Spring 2015
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"Just write every day of your life. Read intensely. Then see what happens."

Most of my friends who are put on that diet have very pleasant careers."

—Ray Bradbury, in
Writer's Digest

...writing activities and assignments should be designed with genuine purposes and audiences in mind... (Framework for Success)

Welcome to ENG 201H, Intermediate Composition, a course designed to foster your growth as a reader, researcher, and writer.

Part of our work this semester will be to consider the idea of "identity." In this digital age, how do we represent ourselves to the world? In what ways does technology influence the way we interact with others? What are the consequences, both positive and negative, of the ways in which we use technology to work, play, and create?

Another part of our work will be to consider the nature of knowing. How is knowledge

made? What counts as "knowing" in different contexts? How does writing function as a significant component of how we understand our world? We will dip into epistemology – "a branch of philosophy that investigates the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge" as we work to develop your voice as a writer (definition from dictionary.com). Who are the audiences that you are writing for? What are your purposes? In what ways can you effectively design your writing – both with words as well as images, links, videos, or other forms of media – to meet the needs of your

audience?

Thus, in ENG 201 we will work together as you develop the habits of mind to become an even more effective writer in a variety of contexts. Launching with the "Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing," we will explore the habits of mind – "ways of approaching learning that are both intellectual and practical." Nearly everything that you write in this course will emerge from your own interests and inquiry.

Our work together should guide you on your path to deeper research and writing.

Course Texts:

Nicholas Carr (2011) *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (ISBN 978-0393339758)

Graff and Birkenstein (2014) *"They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* (Third Edition) (ISBN 978-0393935844)

Booth, Colomb, and Williams (2008) *The Craft of Research*, Third Edition (ISBN 978-0226065663)

Course Overview

Unit 1: Writing to Inform

Combining information from several sources to clearly and coherently explain something to readers *who are not already familiar with the information*.

Unit 2: Writing to Evaluate

Writing to evaluate can take many forms such as an editorial, a review, or an analysis of a report and *clearly defines criteria for the evaluation* as well as a fair and accurate assessment of the experience, performance, or product.

Unit 3: Writing to Convince

Moving beyond merely informing your readers and will also strive to persuade them to accept your position on a particular topic that is *open to debate and has no clear solution*.

Unit 4: Research Project

As a culminating project, you will *define a problem and research possible solutions*, leading to a presentation at SCREE.

Unit 5: Composing Multimedia

The final component of our work will move you from primarily alphabetic forms of writing into multimedia production.

Flexibility. Persistence. Curiosity.

These habits of mind will guide your writing.

Course Objectives

The course objectives are extrapolated from the learning outcomes established in the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*. After completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Use all aspects of writing processes, including invention, drafting, revising, editing, and polishing.
2. Use a variety of technologies—from traditional pen and paper to electronic—for invention, drafting, revising, editing, polishing.
3. Listen to, reflect on, and make informed revision decisions based on responses to their writing provided by their classmates and instructors.
4. Use appropriately the conventions of written English (such as formal and informal rules and strategies for content, organization, style, supporting evidence, citation, mechanics, usage, level of diction, etc.).
5. Analyze the rhetorical features of a variety of types of texts (nonfiction, informational, imaginative, printed, visual, spatial, and otherwise).
6. Apply key rhetorical concepts, such as audience, purpose, context, and genre.
7. Apply rhetorical strategies, such as ethos, logos, pathos; organization; tone and diction; figures of speech, etc.
8. Write texts informed by research for multiple audiences and purposes including (but not limited to) interpretation, analysis, synthesis, critique, argumentation, and problem-solving.
9. Generate research questions and/or problems to guide research.
10. Conduct secondary research (including expert opinion and empirical data) using methods for investigating questions appropriate to the student's discipline and using a variety of print and non-print sources;
11. Evaluate source material for credibility, bias, quality of evidence, and quality of reasoning.
12. Incorporate source material (including, when appropriate, empirical data) into their writing, giving credit to the sources by using appropriate and correct citations.

Unit 1: Writing to Inform

Throughout our lives, we are presented with a variety of texts that are designed to inform. In contrast to writing that is designed to convince the reader of a particular position, or to evaluate a product, experience, or performance, writing to inform requires a writer to analyze and synthesize information from a variety of sources without passing judgment.

In this unit, we will explore many opportunities for informational writing, including the use of data to create appropriate visuals and effective documents design techniques. You may present your writing in the form of a web page, a brochure, or an article in a newsletter or magazine. Additionally, we will seek opportunities to produce and publish writing for an outside organization such as a non-profit or student group.



Unit 3: Writing to Convince

Writing is often designed to move people into action. We will explore Aristotelian elements of argument as well as Toulmin's model of argumentation based on his study of legal cases.

Ultimately, the work in this unit will lead to a research proposal for the **Student Research and Creative Endeavors Exhibition (SCREE)**. While this initial research project will not be as lengthy as your senior honors project, consider it a "proof of concept." In that sense, you will be working to create a research proposal for a very brief and focused project.

We will consider what it means to develop an arguable position and consider what counts as evidence in a variety of disciplines. Part of this work will be to interview an expert in your chosen field of study as well as to examine a published article in a peer reviewed journal.

Throughout the course, and especially in this unit, we will rely on Graff and Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say* as a way to think about how to enter the academic conversation across a variety of disciplines.

Unit 2: Writing to Evaluate

One of the most common genres in all disciplines and professions is the review (also sometimes called a critique, commentary, or response). It can take many forms such as an editorial, a scholarly commentary, a review of a book, film, recording, or performance, an internal or external evaluation of a process or procedure, or an evaluation of a research report. Poor evaluations are simply a list of ill-informed opinions. Smart evaluations can provide a new lens through which we understand the world.

We will work to describe fairly and accurately whatever you are evaluating; the level of detail in your description depends on the rhetorical situation (i.e., who you're writing for, when, and why). You should identify and analyze the relevant strengths and weaknesses of whatever it is you are evaluating; depending on your topic, you might need to state explicitly the criteria for evaluation. All your evaluative claims must be supported by facts, informed opinion from credible sources, or your own reasoning.

Unit 4: Research Project

A significant component of your Honors College experience comes through the your Senior Honors Project. As you likely know, you are enrolled in this section of ENG 201H during this second semester of your first year as a way to begin thinking about and working toward that research project. Here, we will rely on Booth, Colomb, and Williams to develop your skills as a researcher.

Depending on your interests and field of study, the research project will take a different shape. Again, as a writing course, we will consider the nature of knowledge making in various disciplines. Epistemology and identity both play critical roles in understanding what counts as knowledge. How is that knowledge constructed? By whom?

Your research project will be brief, given the fact that we are working in a one semester course and that the time between the SCREE application and presentation is just over a month apart. Still, you will consider the elements of a solid proposal and how to accomplish a reasonable research goal in this limited time.

Writers need the “[a]bility to compose in multiple environments – from traditional pen and paper to electronic technologies.” ~ Framework for Success



Unit 5: Composing Multimedia

In this final unit, we will explore new opportunities for composing more than just words on paper or screen; here, we will begin our work with various forms of media including audio, video, and hypertext.

For some of you, composing with these forms of media may come as second nature, as you have tinkered with movie making, website design, and audio recording before. For some of you, these forms of media will be a departure from what you might expect in a “writing” classroom. Why, you might ask, would we spend time creating and composing multimedia?

There are a variety of answers to this question, and we will work to help you discover your own answers this semester. One answer that you can turn to for the moment comes from the National Council of Teachers of English, who believe that

Writers need to be able to think about the physical design of text, about the appropriateness and thematic content of visual images, about the integration of sound with a reading experience, and about the medium that is most appropriate for a particular message, purpose, and audience.

Your success as a writer will depend on an ability to create digital, multimodal texts.

Contract Grading

While grades are an important part of any college experience, I firmly believe that they should not supersede inquiry, learning, and reflection. Additionally, when you are truly engaged in a writing process – one that respects creativity, flexibility, and persistence – our traditional methods of grading do not always measure these qualities of writers and their process. Grading contracts represent one way to accomplish this goal while deemphasizing, though not completely eliminating grades. Thus, I want to adopt the following grading contract with each of you: if you complete all class activities, writing assignments, conferences, reflections, portfolio, and the research project, you will earn at least a B in the course. This means that you will:

- Attend class regularly and meet due dates
- Come to class prepared and participate in all activities, especially in peer review and other collaborative tasks
- Complete all writing assignments, including blog posts, short, in-class activities, and longer, more sustained projects
- Sustain effort over time, especially in revision, making substantive changes to your writing and not simply surface level editing
- Prepare for our individual writing conferences and follow-up appropriately with revisions

In order to earn an A, you will need to create writing that is of exceptional quality. Along with Ms. Dine, I will provide you feedback and guidance so you can create excellent writing. Your final grade is in your control.

These criteria are adapted from Jane Danielewicz and Peter Elbow. "[A Unilateral Grading Contract to Improve Learning and Teaching](#)" *College Composition and Communication* 61.2 (2009): 244-268.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

CMU provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities or services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the office of Student Disability Services (250 Foust Hall, 774-3018, TDD #2568), and then contact me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity

I would expect that because you are planning to be teachers, you already value academic honesty and respect for others in the classroom. Violation of the University policies will result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or course and could seriously jeopardize your student teaching plans. **All forms of plagiarism are in violation of these policies and are unacceptable in this class.**

Writing Center

Because writing is such an important part of a college education, CMU provides free writing center support to all CMU writers, at any stage of the process, from brainstorming to final editing, and for any class. I encourage, but will not require, you to utilize the writing center. You will find their services valuable both as writers and future teachers of writing. For questions about this service, email: writcent@cmich.edu or call 989.774.2986.

Overview of Course Meetings (Mondays, 2:00 – 3:15 PM in Anspach 308 Computer Lab)

Please come prepared to participate in writing workshop on Monday and complete all readings before class on the date assigned. You should have access to the readings during class. Additional readings – based on current events, new ideas, your recent blog posts, and our own research – will be assigned throughout the semester.

Writing Conferences

Throughout the semester, you will meet with Ms. Dine or Dr. Hicks at least four (4) times for approximately 30 minutes to discuss your writing. These conferences will be scheduled on an on-going basis and can be face-to-face, by phone, or via Google hangout.

Unit 1: Writing to Inform

January 12 and 14

- Mon – [Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing](#)
 - Begin blogs
- Wed – Understanding the Academic Conversation
 - Read: They Say/I Say Ch 12 and 14
 - Read: [Why Blog? Searching for Writing on the Web](#)

January 21

- Wed – Beginning to Look at Questions
 - Read: Read: The Shallows, Prologue, Ch 1 and Ch 2
 - Read: The Craft of Research, Ch 1 and 2
 - Read: [Wikipedia: Epistemology](#)
 - Begin creating personalized reading list via Feedly/Flipboard

January 26 and 28

- Mon – Entering the Academic Conversation
 - Read: They Say/I Say Intro and Ch 1
 - Read: The Craft of Research, Ch 3 and 4
 - Read: [What Is “Academic” Writing?](#)
- Wed
 - Read: The Shallows, Ch 3 and 4

Unit 2: Writing to Evaluate

February 2 and 4

- Mon
 - Read: They Say/I Say Intro and Ch 2 and 3
 - Read: The Craft of Research, Ch 5 and 6
 - Read: [From Topic to Presentation: Making Choices to Develop Your Writing](#)
- Wed
 - Read: The Shallows, Ch 5 and 6
 - Approximate Due Date for Essay 1: Writing to Inform

February 9 and 11

- Mon
 - Read: They Say/I Say Intro and Ch 4 and 5
 - Read: The Craft of Research Ch 7, 8, and 9
 - Read: [Finding the Good Argument OR Why Bother With Logic?](#)
- Wed
 - Read: The Shallows, Ch 7 and 8

Considered both a mode (genre) of writing as well as one form of media in which we can write, you will share a great deal of your thinking this semester via blogs.

Because your interests will vary by discipline – and because what it means to create an argument in various disciplines differs – you will create your own reading lists both through academic sources as well as through popular media sources. Later in the semester, these sources will become a primary component of your reading and research.

Nicholas Carr’s *The Shallows*, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2011, will serve as one text we use to both think about identity and epistemology as well as to analyze an extended academic argument.

February 16 and 18

- Mon
 - Read: They Say/I Say Ch 6
 - Read: The Craft of Research Ch 10 and 11
 - Read: [The Sixth Paragraph: A Re-Vision of the Essay](#)
- Wed
 - Read: The Shallows, Ch 9 and 10

Unit 3: Writing to Convince

February 23 and 25

- Mon
 - Read: They Say/I Say Ch 7-8
 - Read: [“I need you to say ‘I’: Why First Person Is Important in College Writing](#)
- Wed
 - Read: [Introduction to Primary Research: Observations, Surveys, and Interviews](#)
[Putting Ethnographic Writing in Context](#)
 - Additional readings TBD based on student interests and topics
 - Approximate Due Date for Essay 2: Writing to Evaluate

March 2 and 4

- Mon
 - Read: They Say/I Say Ch 9-10 and one of 15, 16 OR 17
 - Read: The Craft of Research 7, 8, 9
- Wed
 - Read: [On the Other Hand: The Role of Antithetical Writing in First Year Composition Courses](#)
 - Additional readings TBD based on student interests and topics

March 16 and 18

- Mon
 - Read: [Navigating Genres](#)
 - SCREE Application deadline
 - Monday, March 16, 2015 at 5pm EST
- Wed
 - Read: [Why Academics Stink at Writing](#)
 - Readings TBD based on student interests and topics

Unit 4: Research Project

March 23 and 25

- Mon
 - Read: The Craft of Research, Ch 12-13
 - Read: [Reading Games: Strategies for Reading Scholarly Sources](#)
 - Read: [Annoying Ways People Use Sources](#)
- Wed
 - Additional readings TBD based on student interests and topics
 - Approximate Due Date for Essay 3: Writing to Convince

As we move further into the semester – as well as deeper into your research and writing – we will shift from a whole class analysis of one book into various readings that you all discover and present to your classmates. These readings can come from a variety of sources, and we will be reading/viewing them through an analytic lens, thinking carefully about how authors construct arguments and used evidence to support claims.

Typical class sessions will be focused in slightly different ways on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Mondays will be a “writing workshop,” during which Dr. Hicks or Ms. Dine will present a brief lesson related to the week’s readings from They Say/I Say and/or The Craft of Research. We will spend the majority of our time writing and responding to one another’s writing.

Wednesdays will be a more traditional “seminar” session in which we will have class discussions about the readings, your research projects, and our on-going inquiry into identity and epistemology.

March 30 and April 1

- Mon
 - Read: The Craft of Research, Ch 14
 - Read: [Ten Ways To Think About Writing: Metaphoric Musings for College Writing Students](#)
 - Read: [Writers on Revising](#)
- Wed
 - Additional readings TBD based on student interests and topics

April 6 and 8

- Mon
 - Read: The Craft of Research, Ch 15
 - Read: [Beyond Black on White: Document Design and Formatting in the Writing Classroom](#)
- Wed
 - Additional readings TBD based on student interests and topics

Unit 5: Composing Multimedia

April 13 and 15

- Mon
 - Read: The Craft of Research, Ch 16-17
 - Writing Commons: [New Media](#), [Copyright and Writing](#), and [Remediation](#)
- Wed
 - Readings TBD based on student interests and topics
 - Approximate Due Date for Essay 4: Research Report

April 20 and 22

- Mon
 - Readings TBD based on student interests and topics
- Wed
 - SRCEE is Wednesday, April 22, 2015
 - 1:00-4:00pm in Finch Fieldhouse

April 27 and 29

- Mon
 - Readings TBD based on student interests and topics
- Wed
 - Begin Multimedia Presentations

Monday, May 4 – 2:00 to 3:50

- Conclude Multimedia Presentations

As we near the end of the semester, each of you will be asked to share a reading with the class and will lead a brief class discussion and/or activity about that reading. Dr. Hicks and Ms. Dine will help you select your readings and you will make it available to the class ahead of time.

The goal for this activity multi-purposed:

1. This gives us a glimpse into your research, writing, and thinking
2. Each article should stimulate further discussions about identity and epistemology
3. We can continue to see examples of high-quality writing from a variety of authors about multiple topics, thus helping each of us think more critically and creatively about our own writing.

Just as the nature of and expectation for literacy has changed in the past century and a half, so has the nature of writing... These developments not only expanded the types of texts that writers produce, they also expanded immediate access to a wider variety of readers.

~ NCTE Beliefs About the Teaching of Writing

Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, & National Writing Project. (2011, January). Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing. Retrieved from <http://wpacouncil.org/framework/>
National Council of Teachers of English. (2004). NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/writingbeliefs>