

college writing I:

a first-year composition course

[eng 110 // fall 2015]



What does it mean to be “a writer”?

How does writing influence our own view of the world?

How can writing shape others’ views as well?

“

Write. Rewrite. When not writing or rewriting, read. I know of no shortcuts.

—Larry L. King
Author & Playwright

“

Because this business of becoming conscious, of being a writer, is ultimately about asking yourself, ‘How alive am I willing to be?’

—Anne Lamott
Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life

Although you may not realize it, as a member of today’s technology-driven and social media-networked society, you write all the time. You post status updates on Facebook. You comment on friends’ Instagram photos. You tweet links to interesting articles on Twitter, promote social causes on Tumblr, and do whatever-it-is-that-kids-these-days-are-doing on sites like Reddit, Tinder, and Yik Yak. In fact, you write so much and so often that some have argued that the current generation of young adults is *the most literate generation ever*.

But what does all of this writing accomplish for you as individuals—or for us as a society? How and why do we use writing to make sense of the world in which we all live? And, more importantly, how and why does writing enable us to shape that world in new and meaningful ways?

Admittedly, these are enormous questions that cannot be answered in one semester-long writing class. So rather than solving all the world’s problems between now and December, we’re going to spend our time together working to understand both **HOW we use words on an everyday basis to communicate with one another**, and **WHY it is becoming increasingly necessary to write effectively for various genres, purposes, and audiences in the 21st century**. As we explore these two fundamental questions together, we will also work to develop habits of study (reading, writing, reflecting) that will prepare you for success both here as a student at UWL and in whatever career path(s) you follow after graduation.



ENG 110 (43)

T/TH 11:00AM – 12:25PM
Wimberly 332

Dr. Tom Jesse

Wimberly 425M
(608) 785-6934

Office Hours

M/W/F 1:30 – 3:00PM
(or by appointment)

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student learning outcomes (SLOs)

Rhetorical Competence

Students who complete English 110 with a C or better should:

- be able to communicate effectively in writing
- write with a clear sense of a purpose
- respond to the needs, knowledge, attitudes, and values of different audiences
- respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
- adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- write in several genres and contexts

Critical Thinking, Reading, & Writing

Students who complete English 110 with a C or better should:

- be able to use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, and thinking
- understand how to find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize appropriate sources
- understand how genres shape reading and writing
- be able to integrate the ideas of others with their own
- be aware of the relationships among language, knowledge, and power

Processes

Students who complete English 110 with a C or better should:

- have flexible strategies for generating ideas, revising, editing, and proofreading
- understand writing as a recursive process
- be able to critique their own and others' work and use feedback effectively

Knowledge of Conventions

Students who complete English 110 with a C or better should:

- be able to use a format appropriate to the context
- have knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
- be able to cite and document sources appropriately
- control such features as syntax, grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling

a note on office hours

Being a professor can be (and often is) an incredibly time-consuming gig, but nothing I do here at UWL is more important to me than my students. If you ever need to talk with me about course readings and assignments—or about anything else—there's a 90% chance you'll find me holed up in my office on the fourth floor of Wimberly (425M).

My official office hours for the Fall 2015 semester are MON WED FRI 1:30-3:00PM, but you're welcome to stop by any time. Yes, I might be busy, and yes, I might have to keep things brief until we can find a less hectic time to chat, but please don't ever feel like you're not welcome to drop in and ask a question, raise an issue, or vent some frustration. My door is always open—even when it's closed.



policies & procedures

Core Assignments

Units of Study

This course has been divided into three units in order to help organize the concepts, terms, and genres of writing we'll be working with this semester. These units are:

1. **Writing as Self-Discovery**
2. **Writing as Inquiry**
3. **Writing as Argument**

Within each unit, you'll be asked to complete regular reading assignments and prepare for in-class discussions on the readings and/or essays that we're currently working on as a class.

In addition to these daily expectations, each unit will involve some combination of the following three assignments:

Informal Writing

Consisting of everything from brief journal responses to structured feedback during peer workshops, you will be asked to write at least once every class period. Though these pieces will not be graded individually, they play a vital role in the writing process and will be evaluated as a part of your larger, more formal writing assignments.

Reading Responses

Reading Responses (RR) are shorter writing assignments—no more than 600 words (two typed pages)—that address one aspect of the required reading from our class texts. You will complete two RR essays during the semester, and their purpose is to help you better understand course material by giving you opportunities to do less formal, more concentrated work with key concepts and terms before moving on to each of our Major Unit Projects.

KEYS TO SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE

Read all assigned readings
(Preferably more than once to
be sure you “get” them)

Participate in discussion

Ask LOTS of questions

**Come see me during my
weekly Office Hours**

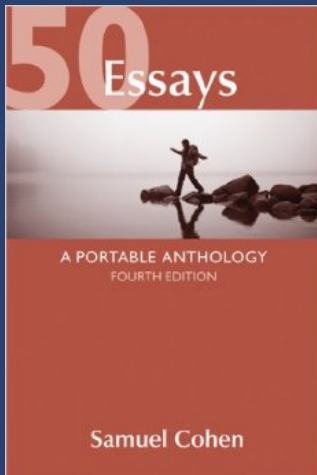
**Attend class regularly and
punctually**

Turn in work on time

Plan and work proactively

Maintain digital backup files
(at least three) for every
assignment you submit this
semester

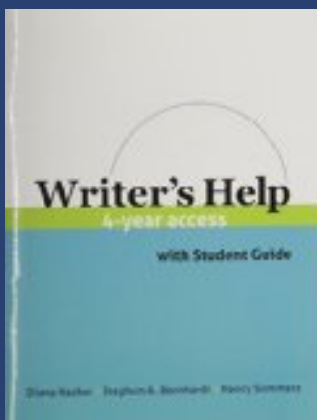
COURSE TEXTS



50 Essays: A Portable Anthology
Bedford/St. Martin's (2014)



They Say / I Say
W.W. Norton (2014)



Writer's Help Student Handbook
Bedford/St. Martin's (ONLINE)

Major Unit Projects

In addition to Informal Writing and Reading Response assignments, you will be expected to brainstorm, draft, and revise one Major Unit Project (MUP) for each of the three units that make up this course. The MUP is a longer formal writing assignment that constitutes a significant portion of your overall grade, and each unit has been designed as a scaffold to support your progress from rough idea to finished product. The MUP represents a culmination of all the smaller work (reading, writing, and responding) you've completed in the weeks leading up to the due date.

Unit 1: "Why I Write" (*Personal Narrative*) Due THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1

This project asks you to reflect critically on the various writing tasks you engage in on a daily basis in order to answer what may seem like a simple question: *Why do you write?* Although no research sources are required for this assignment, you will still be asked to support the claims you make with evidence from your current and/or previous experiences as a writer.

[900-1200 words // 3-4 typed pages]

Unit 2: [Re]Search & [Re]Vise (*Research Narrative*) Due THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

For this project, you will begin by reading and responding to a pair of essays from one of our course texts (*50 Essays*). Then, as we work our way through the research process, you will explore the issues raised in these essays to see how—or if—your initial response needs to be revised in light of new information. The finished project will walk readers through your research journey by highlighting the impact these discoveries have had on your view of the issue(s) at hand.

[1800-2100 words // 6-7 typed pages]

Unit 3: The Op-Ed Essay (*Public Argument*) Due TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22

The course's final project builds upon MUP #2 to take your discovery "public"—that is, to craft an op-ed essay designed to persuade readers of the merits of your position on the issue you have been researching. In addition to this written component, MUP #3 also includes a small-group presentation designed to put multiple voices in dialogue concerning possible solutions to some of the most pressing social, cultural, and economic issues of our time.

[1200-1500 words // 4-5 typed pages]

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Further information about these three Major Unit Projects will be provided via detailed Assignment Sheets at the beginning of each unit. Please consult the Course Calendar (located at the end of this syllabus) to ensure that you're aware of MUP due dates. If you see any potential conflicts with your schedule, it is your responsibility to notify me as soon as possible so that we can make alternative arrangements.

Grades & Assessment

Grading Philosophy

The number one source of anxiety for both students *and* professors is how grades in a given course will be determined. This is something we both think about, and I want to make my grading philosophy as transparent as possible so that we can all be on the same page. If you have any questions at any time about how your grade is being determined, be sure to consult this section of the syllabus in addition to contacting me so that we can resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

Simply fulfilling the minimum course requirements warrants an average grade (i.e., C). A higher than average grade will be based on three factors:

- 1) the distinctive quality and development of your written work;
- 2) the consistent demonstrating of critical and creative thinking in the drafting and revision process; and
- 3) a willingness to take risks by exploring new subjects, genres, and techniques.

As part of my pedagogical philosophy, I believe that high grades should be an indication of student work that goes above and beyond the “bare minimum” of mere acceptability. Students who attempt to skate by on natural ability or who place minimal importance on the work they submit for my courses tend to earn lower grades. Those who

work to improve upon their strengths and shore up any of their weaknesses tend to be rewarded accordingly. Although hard work will not *automatically* earn you a higher grade, over time it does tend to result in better performance.

As one of my former professors succinctly put it:

Coming to class every day and completing your assignments is not something that earns “extra credit” or an automatic A.

These behaviors are merely a baseline expectation for being in this course.

Most importantly, I want everyone to understand that while I have high expectations for the work you submit in this course, I also have every confidence that you will be able to meet (or exceed) these expectations if you put in the time and effort necessary to do so. If you’re willing to push yourself to get the most out of this class, I’m willing to support you every step of the way.

Grade Breakdown

Given the variety of assignments in this course, the following weightings have been designed to reflect the amount of time, effort, and dedication each assignment requires. Those assignments that ask more of you have been weighted accordingly; those that ask less will also count less toward your final course average.

Success in this class depends on your ability to effectively prioritize assignments and readings based upon their importance both to you and to your grade. I simply ask that you make the most informed choices possible when deciding where to devote your time and attention.

Daily Work/Quizzes	10%
Reading Responses (2 @ 10% ea.)	20%
MUP #1	15%
MUP #1 can be resubmitted	
MUP #2	25%
MUP #2 can be resubmitted	
MUP #3	20%
Final Presentation	10%

Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Quality of Work	Range for Final Grade	GPA Points Awarded
A	95	Outstanding	93-100	4.00
A/B	90		89-92	3.50
B	85	Exceeds Expectations	83-88	3.00
B/C	80		79-82	2.50
C	75	Meets Expectations	70-78	2.00
D	65	Below Average	60-69	1.00
F	55	Unacceptable	59-below	0.00

General Policies

Attendance

Regular attendance is necessary for your success in this course, as most (if not all) of the work we do in class is not reproducible after the fact. Four absences will be allowed for the semester without penalty. (That is equal to two full week of class.) Your fifth and sixth absences will each result in a one-letter-grade deduction from your final course average. Any absence after six, unless there are unusual circumstances (you are hospitalized, etc.), will earn an F for this course. Absences due to illness, sleeping, and long weekends are NOT excused—they all count equally toward the six-absence limit. Since illness is likely at some point during the semester, you are urged to save your absences for times when you are too sick to come to class.

If you know in advance of any classes that you will need to miss, please speak with me to determine if you can complete work ahead of time. Students representing UWL in a university-mandated activity that requires missing class should provide official documentation of schedules and turn in work in advance.

Late Work

Major assignments for this class will be submitted electronically through the course's D2L website. Assignments are to be uploaded before class on the day that they are due, and student work will be considered late if it is submitted any time thereafter. Be sure to check the course

calendar regularly so that you are not confused or mistaken about when assignments are due.

Late papers will be penalized one letter grade for each class period beyond the due date, unless a) the student has an official university absence, and b) the instructor has agreed to late submission in advance of the due date. If you know you will be missing a class, then you need to submit the assignment ahead of time or meet with me well in advance of the due date for us to discuss the issue.

Technology problems (computer crash, printer malfunction, D2L issues, etc.) are not acceptable excuses for submitting work after it is due. Please plan ahead to avoid any last-minute crises related to the submission of your assignments.

Electronic Devices

During class, I ask that you please refrain from using your cell phones, laptops, and/or tablets. So that this doesn't become an issue, please turn off or silence any electronic devices you bring into the classroom. You will be notified in advance if you should bring laptops to class for work; otherwise, assume that you won't need them.

When class is underway, texting, checking Facebook or Instagram, tweeting, etc. from your phone or computer means that you are not engaging in the daily activities of our course. I need you as focused as possible on the work we're doing at all times—it's the only way you'll be able to get something valuable from class each and every day.

Classroom Atmosphere

As both a physical and an ideological space, the classroom is dedicated to the fostering of student learning—but this learning can only take place if each of us (students and instructor alike) feels welcome in that space. In this college-level atmosphere, I expect everyone to act and speak respectfully and to use gender-neutral language. This is a place for the exchange of ideas in an environment of collegiality, camaraderie, and community. Students whose behavior distracts or disrespects others will be asked to leave and will be counted absent.

Many of the texts we will be discussing in this course involve topics ranging from race and socio-economic status to religion, gender and politics. As we make our way through this material, I ask you to remember that these topics are part of our discussions because they play a key role in the texts (and the contexts) we are studying. As a reading audience, our conversations should treat this material in the same fair, nondiscriminatory, and nonjudgmental manner that we would expect for our own work.

Communication about Class Interruptions

In the event of a campus incident that impacts the availability of teaching spaces, any changes or cancellations will be communicated via your university email account. Some of this information may also be posted on the UWL home page.

Eagle Alert System

This class will be participating in the “Eagle Alert” system through WINGS. This system is designed to promote student success. If I notice that you are experiencing difficulties early in the semester, I may enter feedback into the program and you will receive an email indicating that feedback has been left. I may also enter positive feedback encouraging you to think about additional opportunities for success. You can access this feedback through your student center in WINGS.

If you find feedback has been entered for this course, I highly encourage you to meet with me so that we can discuss using one or more of the campus resources listed on the [UWL “Student Success” homepage](#).

The UWL Writing Center

The Writing Center is located in the Murphy Library Learning Center. I encourage you to take your writing to the Writing Center throughout the semester if you would like additional help during any part of the writing process. For more information about center services, please visit [their website](#).

Disability Statement

Any student with a documented disability (e.g. ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Acquired Brain Injury, PTSD, Physical, Sensory, Psychological, or Learning Disability) who needs to arrange academic accommodations must contact The ACCESS Center (165 Murphy Library 608-785-6900 ACCESSCenter@uwlax.edu) and meet with an advisor to register and develop an accommodation plan. In addition to registering with The ACCESS Center, it is the student's responsibility to discuss their academic needs with their

instructors. You can find out more about services available to students with disabilities at [The ACCESS Center website](#).

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a violation of the [UW-L Student Honor Code](#), and is unacceptable. All work handed in for this class must be the students' own individual work. Plagiarism or cheating in any form may result in failure of the assignment or exam, failure of the course, and may include harsher sanctions. Refer to the [UW-La Crosse Student Handout](#) for a more detailed definition of academic misconduct.

For helpful information on how to avoid plagiarism, go to <http://libguides.uwlax.edu/con tent.php?pid=363671>. You may also visit the Student Life Office if you have questions about plagiarism or cheating incidents. I encourage you to discuss any concerns regarding plagiarism or cheating with me directly and well before any assignments are handed in. Failure to understand what constitutes plagiarism or cheating is not a valid excuse for engaging in academic misconduct.

Veterans and Active Military Personnel

Veterans and active military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to me. For additional information and assistance, contact the [Veterans Services Office](#). Students who need to withdraw from class or from the university due to military orders should be aware of the [military duty withdrawal policy](#).

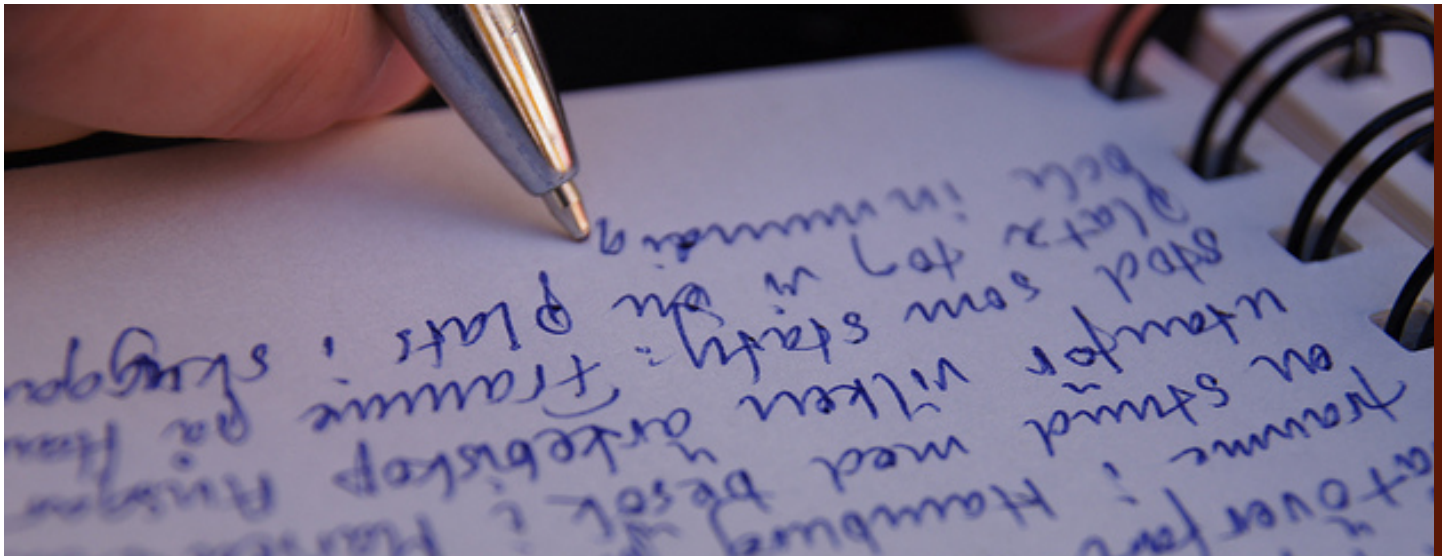
Mandated Reporting of Sexual Harassment

As a faculty member of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, I am a mandated reporter of sexual harassment (including sexual violence). This means that I am obligated to disclose any detailed or specific information I receive about such incidents involving a member of this campus while that person is a member of this campus, regardless of whether the incident takes place on campus or off. I care about your well-being, and our course assignments sometimes lend themselves to disclosure, but you should not share any details of an incident with me until you have discussed your options under the new Title IX guidelines. There are confidential reporters available to students at UW-L where you can have this discussion.

The contact in Student Life is Ingrid Peterson, Violence Prevention Specialist, at (608) 785-8062 or ipeterson@uwlax.edu. I am also happy to help direct you to counseling and support services. Simply ask me to assist you in locating a confidential reporter and I will help you to do so.

A Brief Note on the Course Calendar

The calendar that follows is subject to change, especially as class needs and/or scheduling conflicts arise. Any changes to class meetings or assignment deadlines will be promptly communicated to the entire class via multiple message formats (university email, D2L updates, etc.).



unit one

writing as self-discovery

Week One (Sept. 8 & 10)

- T
9/8 Welcome & Introductions
Defining What It Means to "Write"
Syllabus Overview
Brief Tour of D2L & *Writer's Help* Websites
- TH
9/10 Reading Like a Writer
Writing and Personal Identity
RR #1 and MUP #1 Assignment Sheets
Brainstorming for MUP #1
[Download & Read Course Syllabus](#)
[Read Alexie \(50E pp. 15-19\)](#)
[Read King \(50E 221-26\)](#)

Week Three (Sept. 22 & 24)

- T
9/22 Historical Literacy Narratives
What Makes a Strong Personal Narrative?
Effective Peer Workshop Procedures
[Read Douglas \(50E 118-24\)](#)
[Read Malcolm X \(50E 273-82\)](#)
- TH
9/24 Peer Workshop: MUP #1 Rough Drafts
Areas of Concern (Q&A Session)
"Editing" vs. "Revising" Your Writing
[Bring MUP #1 Rough Draft to Class](#)
*****PAPER COPY*****

Week Two (Sept. 15 & 17)

- T
9/15 Responding to What Others Say
Why Use the *TSIS* Templates?
Crafting a Successful RR Essay
MLA Basics (1): Headings/Margins/Fonts
[Read TSIS Intro & Chp. 1 \(1-29\)](#)
- TH
9/17 Language, Culture, and Power
Conceptualizing the Personal Narrative
The "Big Two": Audience & Purpose
[Read Tan \(50E 417-23\)](#)
SUBMIT RR #1 TO D2L DROPBOX

Week Four (Sept. 29 & Oct. 1)

- T
9/29 Saying Why It Matters
MLA Basics (2): Headers & Paragraphs
Review MUP #1 Expectations
MUP #1 WORKDAY
[Read TSIS Chp. 7 \(92-101\)](#)
- TH
10/1 Thoughts & Reflections on MUP #1
The "Research Narrative" Genre
Discuss MUP #2 Assignment Sheet
Student Interest Survey/Discussion
SUBMIT MUP #1 TO D2L DROPBOX



unit two

writing as inquiry

Week Five (Oct. 6 & 8)

- T 10/6 Why Do We Research?
 “Inquiry” vs. “Argument”
 Making Time for the Research Process
 Select MUP #2 Topics
 Read WH ([Research](#) / [Res. Questions](#) / [Res. Strategy](#))
- TH 10/8 Responses to the 50E Essays
 Developing Research Qs
 RR #2 Assignment Sheet
 Read Assigned Essays for MUP #2 (50E)
 Bring Two Response Paras.
 PAPER COPY

Week Eight (Oct. 27 & 29)

- T 10/27 Crafting the Research Thesis
 Outlining and Organizing
 What Makes an Effective Introduction?
 Midterm Course Surveys
 Read WH ([Thesis](#) / [Intro](#))
SUBMIT ANNO BIB TO D2L DROPBOX
- TH 10/29 Connecting All the Parts
 Working Thesis & Mini-Intro
 Conclusions: What Purpose Do They *Actually* Serve?
 Read TSIS Chp. 8 (105-20)
 Read WH ([Conclusion](#))

Week Six (Oct. 13 & 15)

- T 10/13 Preparing to Respond
 The Art of Summarizing
 Work on 50E Summaries
 Read TSIS Chp. 2 (30-41)
 Read WH ([Summarizing](#))
- TH 10/15 Discuss 50E Summaries
 Assessing Your Initial Position
 Gathering Research Sources: Tools of the Trade
 Read TSIS Chp. 4 (55-67)
SUBMIT RR #2 TO D2L DROPBOX

Week Nine (Nov. 3 & 5)


- T 11/3 Up for Discussion: Gladwell
 on Social Media
 Clarifying YOUR Position
 Q&A for MUP #2 Essays
MUP #2 WORKDAY
 Read Gladwell (50E 169-81)
 Read TSIS Chp. 5 (68-77)
- TH 11/5 Peer Workshop: MUP #2
 Strengths & Weaknesses
 Self-Assessment: THESIS and CLARITY
 MLA Basics (4): Works Cited
 Bring MUP #2 Rough Draft
 PAPER COPY

Week Seven (Oct. 20 & 22)

- T 10/20 Discuss Source Summaries
 Successes & Struggles
 Research Strategy: Annotated Bibliographies
 Read WH ([Annotated Bibs](#))
 Bring Two Source Summaries
 PAPER COPY
- TH 10/22 MLA Basics (3): Quoting
 Ethical Quotation Practices
MUP #2 WORKDAY
 Read TSIS Chp. 3 (42-51)
 Read WH ([Integrate Quotes](#) / [When to Use](#))

Week Ten (Nov. 10 & 12)

- T 11/10 Personal Academic Writing
 Review MUP #2 Expectations
 In-Class Work with MLA Works Cited
MUP #2 WORKDAY
 Read TSIS Chp. 9 (121-28)
 Read WH ([Works Cited](#))
- TH 11/12 Reflections on MUP #2
 From Research to Argument
 The Op-Ed Essay Genre
 MUP #3 Assignment Sheet
SUBMIT MUP #2 TO D2L DROPBOX



The purpose of argument, should
not be victory, but progress.

unit three
writing as argument

Week Eleven (Nov. 17 & 18)

- T 11/17 Intro to Classical Rhetoric
“Persuasion” vs. “Coercion”
Imagining an Audience, Pt. 1
Brainstorm MUP #3 Topics
Read Klinkenborg (50E 240-44)
Read Ephron (50E 152-58)
- TH 11/19 Arguing Reasonable Positions
The Op-Ed Thesis
Finalize MUP #3 Topics
Final Presentation Overview
Read Ehrenreich (50E 129-38)
Read WH ([Argument](#))

Week Fourteen (Dec. 8 & 10)

- T 12/8 Imagining an Audience, Pt. 2
Vocabulary & Phrasing
MLA Basics (5): Review Q&A
MUP #3 WORKDAY
Read WH ([Audience](#))
- TH 12/10 Peer Workshop: MUP #3
Areas of Concern (Q&A)
Review MUP #3 Expectations
MUP #3 WORKDAY: The Final Presentation
Bring MUP #3 Rough Draft
PAPER COPY

Week Twelve (Nov. 24 & 26)

- T 11/24 Establishing Your Credibility
Locating Sources for MUP #3
The Role of the “Naysayer”
The Op-Ed Annotated Bib
Read WH ([Credibility](#) / [Opposing Arguments](#))
Read TSIS Chp. 6 (78-91)

- TH 11/26 **NO CLASS**
(Thanksgiving Holiday)

Week Fifteen (Dec. 15 & 17)

- T 12/17 Final Presentations
Thoughts & Reflections on the Semester
SUBMIT PRESENTATION HANDOUT TO D2L DROPBOX
- TH 12/17 **NO CLASS**
(UWL Final Exams Week)

Week Thirteen (Dec. 1 & 3)

- T 12/1 Up for Discussion: Singer on
World Poverty
Metacommentary as a Rhetorical Strategy
Read Singer (50E 378-85)
Read TSIS Chp. 10 (129-38)
SUBMIT ANNO BIB TO D2L DROPBOX
- TH 12/3 Swift’s “Modest” Argument
Satire as Persuasion
Strategies for Concise Prose
Read Swift (50E 408-16)
Read WH ([Conciseness](#))

**FINAL EXAM
INFORMATION**

Your final draft of MUP #3 must be submitted to the D2L Dropbox by 10:00AM on Tuesday, December 22 in order to receive credit for the exam.

Early submissions are highly encouraged and will be accepted beginning Thursday, December 17.