

English 100: Critical Reading and Writing I

Dr. Jes Battis (he/they)

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Classroom: CB 408, T/R 2:30-3:45

Office AH 366 (Office Hours: T 1:00-2:00; W 2:00-3:00)

Course Description

English 100 is designed to facilitate and improve your academic writing through a variety of assignments. The course is as much about reading as it is about writing, and you'll be asked to analyze a number of texts: from persuasive and personal essays to science writing and TED Talks. By studying the arguments that drive these texts, you'll be able to apply these techniques to your own writing. We'll conclude the class by focusing on a short novel. We'll also cover bibliographic styles (MLA), proper attribution of sources, and how to avoid plagiarism.

Class Goals: To write in a number of practical genres; to read and analyze quoted material from sources; to discuss writing and its social significance; to construct well-crafted arguments with textual evidence; to edit and proof-read; to revise work; to address topics of social significance in a global classroom.

Textbooks

Gaiman, Neil. *Coraline*. 2012.

Lunsford, Andrea. *Easywriter*. 2019.

Course Schedule

UR = Reading available on UR Courses

Jan 7

Introductions; Course Outcomes; Lunsford 34: "Pronouns"

Numbers in Lunsford's *Easy Writer* refer to sections—so "1" is Section 1

Jan 9

TBR: Lunsford, "A Writer's Choices" (pp.2-9);

TBR: John Loeppky, "Disabilities Are Not Curses" (UR)

Discussion of Narrative Essay

Jan 14

In-Class Narrative Essay

Jan 16

TBR: Lunsford, 13: “Integrating Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism”; Sample Cover Letter (UR); Lunsford, 31: “Subject/Verb Agreement”
Discussion of Cover Letter

Jan 23

TBR: Lunsford, 29: “Sentence Fragments”; 37, “Verbs and Verb Phrases”
Chimamanda Adichie, “We Should All Be Feminists” [UR]

Jan 28

TBR: Lunsford 2: “Exploring, Planning, Drafting”; Sample Essay [45f]
Discussion of Short Essay
Cover Letter Due (Submit to UR Courses)

Jan 30: **No Class**

Feb 4

Library Tutorial: MLA

Feb 6

TBR: Chariandy, “I’ve Been Meaning To Tell You” [UR]
TBR: Lunsford, 38: “Commas”;

Feb 11

TBR: Lunsford, 15f: “Sample MLA Style Essay”; 15e, “Building a Works Cited”; 8: “Arguing Ethically and Persuasively”

Feb 13

TBR: Wohlleben, “Secret Life of Trees” [UR]
Essay Workshop

Feb 18: **Winter Break**

Feb 20: **Winter Break**

Feb 25

Discussion: Reading Poetry
TBR: Chen Chen, “Poem in Noisy Mouthfuls”; Harman Kaur, “Phulkari”
Submit Short Essay to UR Courses

Feb 27

TBR: Arielle Twist, “Oscana”; Randy Lundy, “Listen”; “Gnosis”
TBR: Lunsford, 33: “Modifier Placement”; 28: “Shifts”

Mar 3

Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia” [UR]

TBR: Lunsford, 41: “Apostrophes”; 42: “Quotation Marks”

Mar 5:

Discussion of How to Read a Novel

Discussion of Essay

TBR: Sample Essay [UR]

Mar 10

TBR: *Coraline*

Mar 12

TBR: *Coraline*

Mar 17

TBR: *Coraline*; Pullman Review of *Coraline*

Mar 19

TBR: *Coraline*; Fairfax Review of *Coraline*

Mar 24

Peer Review [Bring 1st page of essay to class]

Mar 26

Peer Review Continued [Bring revised 1st page of essay to class]

Mar 31

Review Discussion of Signaling Phrases, Significance, Conclusions

April 2

Extended Office Hours—No Class

Essay Due by Midnight

April 7

Course Review; Exam Discussion; Evaluations

Assignments/Evaluation

Job Cover Letter: 10% [Hand-In]

Short Hand-In Essay: 20%

Narrative Essay: 10% [In-Class]

Hand-In Final Essay: 30%*

Final Exam: 30%* [In-Class]

*** You must pass the final exam, and submit the final essay, in order to secure a passing grade in the course**

Assignment Descriptions

All assignments will be uploaded to UR Courses—make sure the filename of your assignment includes your name, the assignment, and the date submitted (e.g., Smith_ShortPaper_Date)

Cover Letter

1-2 pages double-spaced (must include proper salutation and sign-off at end)

A cover letter is a versatile document that combines elements of a formal email, a resumé, and an argument. When you write a cover letter, you're positioning yourself as the best possible candidate for a job that you'd really love. It should be precise and well-organized, demonstrate research (about the position), and show off your written communication skills. Remember: most managers will throw out a cover letter that contains typos and grammatical mistakes.

Search through some HR websites for jobs that you might be interested in (or look on sites like Indeed and others that post diverse jobs). Check out the HR posting at the U of R to see how job ads are worded and what they're looking for.

Once you've researched the job that you'd like to get, draft an approximately two-page letter (double-spaced) in which you do the following:

- Identify the job for which you're applying
- Say *why* you're applying for this position
- Describe your experience and how it would apply to the position
- Give concrete examples of what you'd do in this position
- Discuss your strengths as an employee and what you'd contribute to the organization

Review and proof-read your cover letter to ensure that it is free of grammatical issues and typos of any kind.

Narrative Essay Assignment: Telling a Story

In-class

Length: 3-4 paragraphs (double-spaced)

Should contain: a thesis, descriptive language, engaging discussion of an event, a conclusion about the event

The basic task of this assignment is to tell a story. Choose a significant event that occurred **more** than a year ago (to ensure that you've had some time to think about it). The event could focus on transition, such as beginning/ending a social relationship. It could focus on travel, such as encountering a new (or familiar) place. It could focus on something that happened in the workplace, or embarking upon university studies. It could be about an important athletic event, or a visit to an art exhibition, poetry reading, or museum. The event need not be life-altering, but it should be something that you really want to talk about, and which can provide plenty of descriptive detail.

A good narrative essay combines analysis of **specific moments** with discussion of the event's **broader significance**, and autobiographical information that will allow the reader to understand how they should interpret this particular story. You will write this essay in the first-person, shifting clearly between past and present tense (e.g., "Looking back, I *remember* that day from high school in precise detail. I *walked* into the classroom and everything changed.") Your discussion will move from describing specific moments in detail, to considering the overall arc of your story and why you've chosen to write about it. Whatever opinion you've formed about this event will become your **thesis**: i.e., why the event is significant within your life, what you learned from it, and what the after-effects were. Your opening paragraph will introduce this thesis, and your concluding paragraph will reinforce it.

Through this technique, you are developing an **argument** about an event within your life. Your story is the text, and you will explain its significance.

While telling your story, use the following techniques:

- Use descriptive language to convey your setting, what you're feeling, how you physically experience the event, and what you perceive in the background (what are the other characters in your story doing?)
- Incorporate language that **shows** the reader something, rather than simply telling them (e.g., "My blood boiled" vs. "I was really angry.")
- Structure your paragraphs so that they move between experiencing the event *in the moment* and analyzing its significance
- Include signal phrases such as: "the point of it was"; "what I'm trying to say"; "what I realize now"; "this mattered because"; "in the end..."

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Short Hand-In Essay

Length: 3 pages double-spaced + bibliography

You will be making two argumentative "moves" in this essay:

1. Choose a text from the syllabus and identify the author's argument/focus (what are they saying, and why is it significant?)
2. Analyze the strengths/weaknesses of their discussion. In essence, you are developing your own POV here by **arguing about an argument**. You will do this by identifying and discussing **quoted material** from your source. Consider the following questions:

Does the author cite evidence to support their argument?

Does the author appeal to our emotions, our reason, or both?

Does the author blend personal and critical information, and is this effective?

Your essay should do the following:

- Analyze **textual evidence** which applies to the author's argument
- Evaluate the strength/weakness of their argument based on **textual evidence**
- Introduce a thesis and follow it to a logical conclusion

Your essay will be evaluated on clarity of expression, grammatical consistency, organization of ideas, proper integration of quoted material, and proper formatting of an MLA-style bibliography. You must also attach a title page which includes your name, section number, title of essay, and current date. The title should reflect the essay's content, and suggest a miniature argument.

Be sure to proof-read for spelling errors and typos.

You may write on one the following texts:

Adichie, Chimamanda. "We Should All Be Feminists." *TEDX Talks*, April 12 2013.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc&t=1s

Chariandy, David. *I've Been Meaning To Tell You: A Letter To My Daughter*.
 McClelland and Stewart, 2018.

Loepky, John. "Disabilities Are Not Curses." *The Carillon*, Nov 30 2014.
<http://www.carillonregina.com/disabilities-are-not-curses/>

Wohlleben, Peter. *The Hidden Life of Trees*. Greystone Books, 2016.

Final Paper

5 pages double-spaced + title page (including title, student name, course number)

This paper will focus on Neil Gaiman’s novel *Coraline*. You will include:

- 1) Quoted material from the novel
- 2) Quoted material from the 2 reviews of *Coraline* (on UR Courses)

You will discuss:

- 1) What do the critical writers argue about *Coraline*?
- 2) Where does *Coraline* fit within the genre of children’s fantasy/horror?
- 3) What are some specific passages from *Coraline* that, you think, connect with the arguments of your critics?
- 4) What is your own perspective on the novel and its critics? Do you agree/disagree with the criticism? What, to you, are the strengths/weaknesses of the novel?

You must follow current MLA citation guidelines by citing your sources throughout the essay. **Do not paraphrase—you must provide direct, precise quoted material from your sources to support your discussion.**

Your opening paragraphs should introduce both your primary and secondary-scholarly texts. Mention why you chose these scholars, and how you’ll address their work. Say where these texts come from.

As with your short paper, you should include signalling phrases which remind the reader where your discussion is going, and why it’s important:

“In the previous paragraph I discussed _____, and now I’ll move on to _____”

“This point is important to my overall argument because _____”

“What makes this quotation significant is _____”

“I’ve argued throughout that _____, and what gives this discussion broader social significance is _____”

“This discussion is particularly important to me because _____”

Your conclusion should make a firm point about the discussion, and explain your own perspective on the material. Avoid saying that the topic is simply interesting, that the scholars make “many points,” or that the texts are “open to interpretation.” Be as specific as possible in describing what your essay **does** as a discussion, and why the discussion is important to Arthurian Studies. You may use “I” and discuss your personal reflections

on the material, so long as you connect your own ideas/experiences with both primary and secondary-scholarly material.

Class Conduct and Other Matters

We'll be running this classroom as a safe space. This means that, while you may feel challenged at times, you should never feel *unsafe*—if you do, please let me know. Students are welcome (though certainly not required) to share their pronouns or other elements of their identity, and we should all work to respect people's preferred modes of address. This is a process. We'll make mistakes sometimes, and that's OK. I'll make note of any material that might be triggering.

Office Hours

When I first started college, I was confused about how office hours worked. It felt like I was bothering my professors by stopping by to ask them questions. Precisely the opposite is true—we *want* you to stop by during these scheduled times. This is the best way for me to get to know you, chat about your work, and see how you're doing. These conversations tend to be most useful when I know that you're coming by (i.e., give me a shout beforehand and let me know approximately what time you'll stop by). If the scheduled office hours don't work, let me know and we can find a different time to meet.

Accessibility

A classroom can be an intense space, and we'll make every effort to ensure that the physical space of the classroom is accessible. If any issues occur to you regarding the layout of the class, do let me know. There is no "correct" way to exist in a classroom. You don't need to be extensively taking notes, making eye contact, or responding to discussion at all times (though you should be engaged—and there are many ways to demonstrate that). You should do whatever you need to in order to facilitate learning. If you need to draw or use a tool or play with something, go ahead. If you need to get up and move, please do. If you feel overwhelmed by a sensory element of the classroom (i.e., lights, sounds, smells), let me know and I'll see what I can do. If you need to leave for a brief period, that's fine too—just do it quietly.

Note-Taking

Laptops are fine, but don't try to write down everything that's happening in class discussion, using full sentences. Instead, focus on what's significant, and use abbreviated headings that are linked by their significance:

- 1) Disability in Loeppky article
 - a) brains have "different operating systems"
 - b) "ableism" creates issues

- i) campus should be more accessible

Here, we **begin** with a broad topic (Loeppky's article); We move to **sub-points** (neurodiversity, ableism); We end with an **argument-point** (accessibility)

Support and Accessibility

I use “support” instead of “accommodation” because the latter sounds like a favour, and it's likely that what you're asking for is an equal playing field rather than an accommodation. This is handled first through the Office for Student Accessibility, and then through the Arts Accessibility Office, who will process paperwork. If you have an accessibility contract, I will receive it in the first week of class—we can go over it together, or I can simply sign it and return it to the appropriate office. If you **don't** have a contract but think you might need support, let me know and I can help you to work with Student Accessibility to get you the support that you need.

Neurodiversity

I'm on the spectrum, and I also have some hidden disabilities. If you'd like to talk about strategies for dealing with anxiety/sensitivity, as well as ways to address issues of processing/executive function (i.e., scheduling tasks and following instructions), feel free to chat with me! I can recommend reading as well. One thing I ask is that you don't approach me with significant questions either *immediately* before class starts or *immediately* after it ends—instead, you can swing by my office 10 minutes before/after.

Extensions

You may request an extension **a minimum of 48 hours** from the assignment due date. Extensions should be requested in writing (i.e., through email). We will then work out an alternate due date. It's your responsibility to check in with me, while working on the assignment, to ensure that you're going to make the alternate due date. If you end up needing more time than we'd originally negotiated, you need to notify me beforehand. I will try to be as flexible as possible, so long as you keep in contact. If you do not hand in the assignment by the agreed-upon alternate due date, you may receive a failing grade on the assignment.

Safe Spaces

The UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Gender Diversity and the Women's Centre are both located on the 2nd floor of Riddell. These are safe spaces where you can hang out (UR Pride also has an excellent library). My office (AH 366) is also a safe space—if you're feeling a bit overwhelmed and just need to chill out or talk, come by. If you need to talk to a counsellor, you can visit Counselling Services in Room 252 of Riddell.

Avoiding Plagiarism

* Plagiarism is defined as the failure to properly credit ideas which are not your own, but which inform your discussion. This can be as simple as unconsciously duplicating the organization and style of an article that you've read, or as complex as paraphrasing the work of an author without clearly citing that his or her ideas do not belong to you. When in doubt, provide a citation, which the instructor will then be able to look up. The MLA style manual contains a thorough section on how to avoid plagiarism, which you should familiarize yourself with. It is relatively easy to detect work that has been improperly lifted from another source, and if this appears to be the case, your essay will immediately be submitted to the Dean of Students for evaluation. A charge of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and—if the infraction is serious enough—a failing grade for the course. **Excessive para-phrasing, and reproducing details from Wikipedia without citing the article, constitutes plagiarism.**

Grading Chart

	80%+	70%-79%	60%-69%	50%-59%	0%-49%
Clarity	Paragraph structure and word choice are precise and thoughtful. Demonstrates grammatical expertise, with no (or very few) mistakes.	Grammatical expertise, with few errors. Paragraphs are orderly, and some ingenuity evident in overall expression.	Grammatical errors present which distract from argument. Style is perhaps a bit mechanical. Some lack of interesting discussion.	Significant number of grammatical errors. Random arrangement of paragraphs. Discussion is basic and lacks creativity.	Grammatical and stylistic problems completely obscure the essays argument.
Argument	Thesis statement is clear. Argument is thoughtful and creative. Discussion flows coherently, and reaches a proper conclusion. Includes phrases to guide the reader towards main points.	Thesis statement is clear. Argument is well-structured, if sometimes a bit obvious, and reaches a proper conclusion. Some lack of signalling phrases.	Thesis statement is too broad. Argument is unclear at times, or falls into observation. Lack of proper conclusion.	Thesis statement is unclear and perhaps disconnected from the text. Argument difficult to follow, and/or relies heavily on opinions and generalizations.	Thesis statement and argument do not seem to be present. Discussion lacks a logical structure. No attempt has been made to closely analyze the text.
Sources	Essay draws upon a wide variety of sources, which clarify and support its argument. Sources are properly attributed, and have been skillfully integrated within the essay's discussion.	Essay draws upon sufficient amount of sources, which pertain to its argument. Some minor problems with arrangement or attribution of sources.	Essay draws upon some sources which generally support its argument. Not all sources have been properly integrated within discussion.	Essay includes scant sources, which do not always support its specific argument. Sources are 'dropped' into discussion without being integrated.	Essay includes too-few or no sources at all. The sources present are not well-integrated, or there may be serious problems with attribution.