

Rewriting America

Professor Merrill Cole
M-Cole@wiu.edu / @merrillcole on Twitter
<http://faculty.wiu.edu/M-Cole/>

Introduction to Writing
English 100, Section 024
Fall Semester 2016

Office: Simpkins 109
Hours: M, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.; TTh, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
& by appointment

T, 11:00-12:15, Simpkins 309
Th, 11:00-12:15, Simpkins 114

Introduction

The myths that structure American culture and the American self are the central focus of this section of Introduction to Writing. The United States is not a story to memorize and repeat, but an open field in which we can intervene. The premise of this section is that America and Americans are works in progress. As critical participants in this society, we can negotiate, question, challenge, and revise America.

This class is a collaborative endeavor, where you have the opportunity to make your own arguments about American, to get feedback from your classmates and me about how you can tell these arguments better, and to help your classmates develop their arguments.

Catalog Description

100 Introduction to Writing. (3) Instruction and experience in the basics of clear, accurate, and effective paragraphs and essays. Required of students placed in the course during initial registration. Not open to students who have completed ENG 180 or 280 with a grade of C or above. Graded A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, or U.

Computers in this Course

Inside and outside of the classroom, you are required to write with Microsoft Word, to use the Internet for research, to use Western email and WesternOnline, and to set up a Twitter account, if you don't have one already. At the end of the semester, you will also set up a Google Sites account to submit the final portfolio.

Student fees give you access to computer labs in various locations on campus. You will need access to a computer regularly.

Course Objectives

Introduction to Writing provides students with a preview of the writing skills needed to complete Western's required writing courses successfully, to do the writing required in other courses, and to communicate effectively using today's communication technologies, including social media. Here are the five crucial student goals:

Writing Process

Reflect on the writing processes you used in the past and identify new strategies for invention, drafting, revising, and editing.

Discourse Community

Define community, with emphases on comparing and contrasting past communities to present ones, and on negotiating different communities.

Rhetoric

Learn how to define an audience for a particular piece of writing and how to craft language to persuade that audience.

Genre

Learn that writing comes in different formats that make different demands on the writer, and acquire the skills for writing and revising in various genres.

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Research

Reflect on past practices and develop new strategies for research, reading, and critical thinking.

Required Texts

Hacker, Diane. *Rules for Writers. Eighth Ed.* ISBN: 9781457683046
Readings to download from WesternOnline.

What to Bring to Class

On Tuesdays, bring a flash stick, so that you can back up work done in class. Bring a folder with pockets to save in-class writing and handouts. On Thursdays, bring a notebook and writing implement for in-class writing, note taking, reader responses, and peer reviews. *You must save all of your work, both electronic and hand-written.* Lost work gets zero credit.

Assignments

Rewriting America involves three four-page essay assignments, creative homework, research homework, and in-class writing. I will only give quizzes if students fail to do the reading or participate. Except for in-class writing in the non-computer classroom, all writing needs to be composed on a computer; and all assignments need to be uploaded to WesternOnline. I do not want hard copies.

All essays go through multiple drafts. *You will not pass the assignment, if you fail to turn in each draft on the due date, or fail to complete assigned peer reviews.*

At the end of the semester, you'll choose two of the three essays for inclusion in the portfolio. These essays will go through a third draft and a final draft. Then, you'll compose a three-page self-reflective essay, in which you elaborate the rationale behind your essay selection and how your writing has improved, or not improved, over the semester.

Absences will not be taken lightly, only excused with a doctor's note, or other suitable documentation. Please refer to <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php> for student rights and responsibilities. Everyone *must* actively participate. Lack of participation will damage your grade.

Assignment 1: The Letter (3 Weeks)

We start with the letter, a genre with which almost everyone is familiar. We'll consider the relationship between writing and reading, and explore issues of cultural identity. We'll closely read Langston Hughes' Poem, "Theme for English B." Students will complete short reports on who the poet was and what his world was like. We'll consider how writing in a particular time and place impacts what we write and who we are. We'll also discuss how to use other people's ideas and words without plagiarizing them. The speaker of Hughes' poem writes a letter to his English instructor. Your task is to write a letter of introduction to the audience of your choice (professor, sorority, employer, etc.) that spells out who you are and where you find yourself in American society.

Assignment 2: Self-Critique (3 Weeks)

This is the **first essay** assignment. Describe an important personal experience that changed your way of thinking and perhaps your behavior, too. In other words, write about an important personal experience in which you realized you were wrong. We will study published writers who are critical of themselves and their social limitations. The essay, starting with a "tweesis," will go through a rough draft and a second draft. The assignment includes a mandatory one-on-one conference with me. You will also complete peer reviews of two other students' rough drafts. If you intend to include this essay in the portfolio, you will need to complete third and final drafts.

Assignment 3: Autoethnography (3 Weeks)

This is the **second essay** assignment. Identify a discourse community to which you belong and analyze how it has shaped your identity. Explore how this community uses writing. Research this community and write a brief history of it. All of this is preparation for your American or American immigrant autoethnography, in which you use self-reflection and writing to explore your personal experience and how it connects to wider social meanings and understandings. You'll examine what it means to be you and what it means to belong to a particular group of people. This essay will go through a rough draft and a second draft. You will complete peer reviews of two other students' rough drafts. If you intend to include the essay in the portfolio, you will need to complete third and final drafts.

Assignment 4: Politics (3 Weeks)

This is the **third essay** assignment. Compose a fable or fairy tale that conveys a message you wish to convey about social inclusion or exclusion. Then, compose a thesis-driven essay about a political issue that matters to you *on the basis of personal experience*. That experience provides the main evidence to back up your thesis, but you are required to cite at least one of the semester's readings and include it (or them) on the Works Cited page. This essay uses MLA formatting. It will go through a rough draft and a second draft, and it includes a mandatory one-on-one conference with me. You will also complete peer reviews of two other students' rough drafts. If you intend to include this essay in the portfolio, you will need to complete third and final drafts.

Assignment 5: Portfolio (3 Weeks)

Choose two of the three essays for a third revision. This revision will go through a final peer review. Then, you will revise it a final time and compose a three-page self-reflective essay elaborating how your writing has improved over the semester, what final changes you made to your essays, and the rationale behind your portfolio choices. The two final essays and the self-reflective essay will be uploaded to Google Sites.

Plagiarism

You must do your own work in this class and identify whatever portion of your writing is collaborative with others, borrowed, or something you wrote in another context. Do not recycle a project you have done, or are doing, in another class. Whenever you borrow graphics, quote passages, or use ideas from others, you have to acknowledge that use, following appropriate MLA conventions for documenting sources. If you have doubts about whether or not you are using your own or others' writing ethically and legally, ask me.

Student Conduct

In this classroom you may encounter ideas, values, beliefs and perspectives different than your own. I want to encourage you to articulate your own perspective without fear, but intimidating or disrespecting others has no place in our classroom. *Turn off your cellphone.* If I find that your cellphone is on, I will ask you to leave; and you will receive an unexcused absence. Excessive disruption of the class may result in disciplinary action and will affect your grade.

Grading

Participation (including in-class writing and tweets)	10%
Homework (including research & creative assignments)	10%
Peer Reviews	10%
The Letter	5%
Self-Critique	10%
Autoethnography	15%
Politics	15%
Portfolio	25%

In order to proceed to English 180, you must pass ENG 100 with a C. More than four unexcused absences will result in a “U” grade. Plagiarism will result in a “U” grade. See WIU’s Policy on Academic Integrity at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

I will do everything I can to help you succeed in this class and at WIU, so please don’t hesitate to email me, or to visit my office. I am happy to go over ideas, drafts, and thesis statements. If something or someone in the class bothers you, or if there’s an issue in adjusting to college life, please come talk with me.

Dropping the Course

This course requires my permission and the permission of the Director of Writing in order to drop. If you wish to drop this course, you need to speak with me first, and I will forward your request to the Director for consideration. Because you need permission to drop, you should begin the drop process early.

Please take the opportunity to meet with me in Simpkins 109, during my office hours, or by appointment, to talk about the readings and your writing.

The Writing Center

The University Writing Center can assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The tutor's job is to add another voice in response to your writing. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center can help with generating ideas, suggesting organization, and even working through grammatical issues.

The University Writing Center is located in Malpass Library (3rd Floor, West Side). Call for an appointment (298–2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment to your session. For more information on other locations, see www.wiu.edu/uwc.

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Discrimination Policy

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

Please note that this syllabus does not contain a schedule or detailed course calendar. I want to keep everything flexible. I might change my mind at the last moment. It is your responsibility to pay attention in class every session to know what we're doing. If you can't make it to class, or if you forget, it's again your responsibility to contact me by email, so that I can inform you about what you missed and what the homework is.