

English 1106
Spring 2012
Pamplin 3001
MW 4:00-5:15

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Course Materials

Composition at Virginia Tech: Written, Spoken, and Visual Composition, 6th Ed.
(and PDFs which can be found on Scholar under “Resources”)

Course Overview:

Participation and membership in various communities demand many skills of us that are related to reading and writing: observation, inference, analysis, convention, rebellion, revision, and reflection. Think about it. Do you read Google search results the same way you read a novel, or a textbook? In other words, every academic, workplace, or extracurricular language community has its own ways of writing, reading, and making meaning.

Throughout this semester, each of you will be studying a discourse community in order to understand its literacy practices. Ideally, this community will be either related to your major/field of study or to a social/workplace environment in which you participate.

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- Continue to practice writing as a process, using multiple invention and revision strategies
- Write in several genres that require paraphrase, synthesis, analysis, evaluation, argument and documentation skill
- Practice using the conventions of written and spoken composition
- Practice writing from research and developing different types of research projects—including fieldwork as well as library and on-line research methods
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the conventions of bibliographic citation forms
- Demonstrate an understanding of the uses of source material of all types, taking care to always distinguish between source material and the student’s own work

We will be studying these environments through interviews with the people who occupy them, observations of the spaces in which writing occurs (offices, computer labs, public spaces, etc.), and by examining the writing itself in order to understand the ways in which a given discourse community shares and creates new knowledge, maintains and introduces new members, and uses language to accomplish these and more social actions related to literacy. Literacy practices include acts of communicating that are particular to a community (i.e. the way you write for school is different from the way you write to friends, etc.).

We will accomplish this kind of analysis and reflection about discourse communities through the following assignments and **major assignments**:

- Critical analysis of source material
- Argument supported by source material
- Fieldwork notes
- Fieldwork report
- **Research Proposal (1)** - Proposal email due February 13th
- **Rhetorical analysis of genres in your writing community (2)** – genre analysis due February 29th
- **Setting a subject within its historical, political, and/or cultural context (3)** -Interview summaries due March 26th
- **Uses of visuals to display information (4)** - Visuals due April 2nd
- **Citation and bibliographic forms appropriate to the assignment (5)** – Annotated bibliography due April 16th
- **Researched paper using both primary and secondary sources (6)** – final research project due May 2nd (Presentations April 23rd – May 2nd)

We will use tools to help us approach issues of writing and expand our ideas of the forms in which rhetoric can be employed.

Drafts: I believe that a piece of writing grows and develops best when it is approached in stages and with feedback from other experienced writers. I will comment on your drafts at least once before the final is to be submitted. You will also engage in peer feedback workshops in class at least once before the final is to be submitted. If you are not present for peer review, you must take your paper to the writing center at least 24 hours before the paper is due so that an experienced writer can provide feedback and you can have ample time to revise. A paper which has not received my comments during a draft stage cannot be submitted for a final grade. It must first be submitted as a rough draft and will lose points (-10%) for being submitted after the due date. You will then have the same amount of time as the rest of the class had to submit the final draft. Example: The rough draft of a paper is due Tuesday and the final is due Thursday. You do not submit a rough draft on Tuesday, but bring a paper to class on Thursday. I will respond to the draft and then you will have two (2) days to revise and submit the final by Saturday (-10% for being late).

Readings:

This course will require you to read for each class period. With that in mind, we will begin the semester with some questions to consider before/after reading. Writing tasks will often include some reflection based upon the reading for homework. These are to be completed in your Scholar wiki page. I will expect that you will come to class with your notes from the readings. Our class discussions will test your reading by asking you provide opinions about what we have read so I will expect you to come to class prepared each day to write or present on reading topics.

Writing Groups: At the beginning of the semester, you will be grouped together with 3 or 4 of your classmates. For the purposes of growth and constructive criticism, you will be sharing your writing with them all semester. I encourage you to give your group a name and a tagline/motto to begin establishing a unified identity right away.

Writing journals: Before you turn in each major assignment, you will be asked to complete a writing journal which asks you to focus on a particular aspect of your writing process. This is part of your grade. Please print them and hand them in with each major assignment. Assignments will not be accepted without a writing journal attached. Failure to attach a writing journal will result in a late paper and loss of 10% of the total grade. Then, after each major assignment you will be asked to reflect upon the comments I have given you in a second writing journal. Once an assignment is handed back, you will have two (2) weeks to write a follow-up journal reflecting on your progress. These journals will, over time, help you identify your strengths as a writer and guide you in focusing on areas of improvement. Keep them in anticipation of the final, end-of-term reflection.

Writing tasks: Every week we will be writing much more than this syllabus might initially let on. You will have major assignments for which you will earn a final grade; however, writing is a process and therefore much writing will happen before you submit them for evaluation. As such, these low-stakes writing tasks are key to your reflective practice and growth as a writer. They should be kept for analysis and in anticipation of your final, end-of-term reflection. When a writing task is assigned, it should be submitted to your wiki no later than 4:00pm on the due date.

Course Breakdown:

Major Assignments: 75%

Research Proposal.....	5%
Genre Analysis	15%
Visual Communication	10%
Three (3) Interviews/Summaries	10%
Annotated Bibliography.....	10%
Final Research Project	25%

Participation: 25%

Wiki Entries/Field Notes (10) / End-of-term Reflection	20%
Attendance/Participation	5%

Evaluation Guidelines for Composition					
	CONCEPTION	THESIS	SUPPORT	STRUCTURE	LANGUAGE
A	sophisticated analysis; original; shows command of interpretive and conceptual tasks; fulfills, then exceeds the expectations of the assignment in some critical way	essay controlled by clear, precise, well-defined thesis; is sophisticated in both statement and insight; attempts or achieves an innovation of the argument or issue being studied	provides substantial, well-chosen evidence (quotations or specific examples) used strategically; connections between ideas are evident; thesis consistently supported	apt, seemingly inevitable sequence of paragraphs; appropriate, clear and skillful transitions between sentences and paragraphs	precise diction; syntactic variety and sophistication; clear command of Standard English; no or few errors; imaginative but mature use of vocabulary and sentence structure
B	shows good understanding of the texts, ideas, and methods of the assignment; goes beyond the obvious	clear, specific argumentative thesis central to essay; may have minor terms undefined	pursues thesis consistently; clearly develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate evidence; makes effort to link rather than stack ideas	distinct units of thought in paragraphs; clear transitions between developed, coherently arranged paragraphs	some stylistic difficulties; occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax; some wordiness (or distractingly pompous diction); few minor errors; some syntactic variety
C	shows an understanding of the basic ideas and information involved; may have some factual or conceptual errors	general central thesis or controlling idea; gives little indication of organization to follow; lacking some specifics	provides some evidence, but not always relevant, sufficient, or integrated into paper; undeveloped ideas or little analysis; limited use of textual evidence	some awkward transitions; some brief, weakly unified, or undeveloped paragraphs; uneven paragraphing	more than a few minor grammatical errors; imprecise diction; awkward syntax; wordiness; over-reliance on passive voice; quotations poorly integrated
D	confuses some significant concepts; does not respond directly to the assignment	vague thesis; mostly factual rather than argumentative; unspecified elements	evidence scant, vague or awkwardly incorporated; digresses without developing ideas; no analysis	tends to narrate or merely summarize; wanders; repetitive; illogical arrangement of ideas	some major grammatical errors (subject-verb agreement; fragments); numerous minor errors; repeated inexact word choice; inappropriate format

F	no clear understanding of reading or concepts; inappropriate response to assignment	no discernable thesis; contradictory or unsustainable thesis	little or no development; evidence simply listed or missing; plagiarizes	arbitrary or no paragraph structure; illogical or no transitions	errors in almost every sentence; several major errors (such as s-v agr., frags, comma splices)
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Additional Helpful Policies

Successful professionals:

- ✓ **come to class:** prepared, on time, and drama-free. Preparation, for this class, means you are present, **with a laptop**, and you have done the readings. You are allowed two (2) absences for the semester without penalty. After your third absence, you will not be able to earn 5% for participation and this will negatively affect your grade.
- ✓ **participate** often and thoughtfully; the nature of this class requires your daily participation. It will shrivel and die without each of you.
- ✓ help foster an atmosphere of learning and respect; **you are a member of the Hokie Nation**. This includes doing your best to limit the use of electronics (cell phones, laptops) to a manner related to class work only. Identification of any electronic device for personal use will result in dismissal and an absence on my roster for the day. If you wish to be counted as present, your mind should be just as present as your body.
- ✓ **turn in assignments on time** unless you've spoken to me prior to the due date.
- ✓ **check Scholar and e-mail regularly.**
- ✓ come to me for help. I love to help! Serioulsy. I have **office hours** set aside weekly for the sole purpose of working with you on your writing: Shanks Hall 440 M 2:00-3:30 and by appointment.

Revision Policy:

If you are never given a chance to rewrite, lessons in writing are more difficult to achieve. I believe revision is a significant part of the writing process. Each paper can be revised as many times as you'd like as long as you meet with me before and after submitting the revised paper. All revisions must be submitted no later than 2 weeks after the paper was handed back with comments for the revision grade to be factored into the final paper grade. The grades of the two assignments will be averaged but you will not be able to lose points should a revision receive a lower grade than the original. Revisions submitted for the purpose of writing growth without a request for reevaluation/re-grading are always welcomed and will be accepted anytime.

Writing Center:

You have very helpful resources available to you, so don't be afraid to ask for help. In addition to my office hours in Shanks Hall 440 M 2:00-3:30, the Virginia Tech Writing Center is on the second floor of the library, near the Learning Commons (M-F 9:00-5:00). They accept walk-ins but I recommend making scheduling an appointment. For more information, visit <http://www.composition.english.vt.edu/wc>.

Honor Code:

The Virginia Tech Honor Code states that “every student has the right to live in an academic environment that is free from the injustices caused by any form of intellectual dishonesty.” Certain forms of intellectual dishonesty will subject you to course failure. All students are expected to abide by VT’s Honor System. The Honor Code reads as follows: “I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment.” By turning in an assignment in this class, you are pledging this as true. If you have questions about what “unauthorized assistance” means for a particular assignment, please don’t hesitate to ask. See www.honorsystem.vt.edu for more information.

Statement of Understanding:

In addition to my role as your instructor, I am also a graduate student and a human being. My classroom should be welcoming to all students. Please notify me if you need accommodations because of a disability (learning disability, attention deficit disorder, psychological, physical, etc.), medical condition, or for any other social or cultural reason(s). Students with disabilities should also contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office in 150 Henderson Hall, <http://www.ssd.vt.edu>.

All course requirements, policies, and schedules may be changed by the instructor (with notice) if circumstances require it.