
DWR Teaching Hub

DWR

Sep 09, 2022

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Welcome to the DWR Teaching Hub, the teaching resource and document management system for the Department of Writing and Rhetoric. The Hub contains all teaching guides, policy documents, and vetted assignment materials for DWR writing and speech courses, as well as a self-service portal for common semester-based tasks.

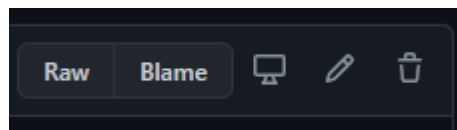
ABOUT THE TEACHING HUB

Welcome to the third iteration of the DWR Teaching Hub. In Summer 2021, we decided it was time to migrate the Teaching Hub away from the WordPress platform where it has lived for the last several years. Since the Teaching Hub primarily serves text that is often changing and because of the robust cloud storage options provided by the University, the complexity and vulnerability of a database-centric CMS for the Teaching Hub is no longer warranted.

The Teaching Hub’s new platform is a Python-based documentation generator engine called [Sphinx](#) hosted through a service called [ReadTheDocs](#). The primary advantage to this approach is that the Teaching Hub no longer has any significant security vulnerabilities because there is no database. Static, versioned documentation is also a best practice for professional technical communicators.

1.1 Editing the Teaching Hub

GitHub edits



To edit any Teaching Hub page on GitHub, click the pencil to open the text editor.

Anyone can submit edits to the DWR Teaching Hub. If you notice a typo, an error, or outdated information anywhere on the Teaching Hub, you can correct it by clicking **Edit on GitHub** in the top right of the page. You’ll need to log in to GitHub to submit edits. You can sign in with any Microsoft account or create a brand new account by clicking “Sign Up” in the top right.

Once you’re logged in to GitHub, click the pencil icon to edit the page.

1.1.1 ReStructured Text

All Teaching Hub pages are written in a markup language called ReStructured Text. ReST is similar to Markdown in that it allows you to design complex documents with multiple formats using only plain text. Once you get the hang of it, it’s just as fast as writing a document in Word or Google Docs and you don’t have to worry about how it will be displayed on the web.

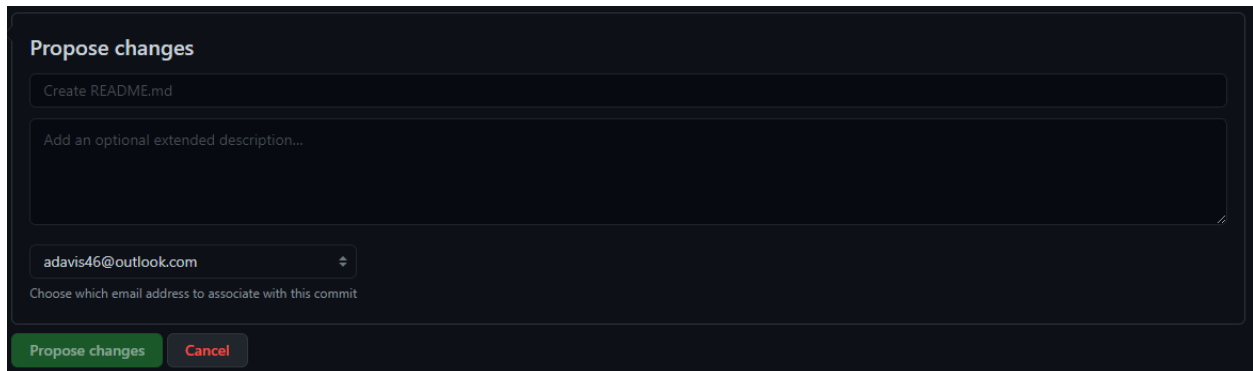
More Information

- [Read about the ReST markup language used by Sphinx](#)

- [ReStructured Text/Sphinx Cheat Sheet](#)
-

Fixing typos or errors in content doesn't require the use of ReST markup. Just looking at the raw version of a page in the GitHub editor should show you everything you need to know.

1.1.2 Submitting an Edit

The image shows a dark-themed 'Propose changes' dialog box from GitHub. At the top, the title 'Propose changes' is in white. Below it is a text input field containing 'Create README.md'. Underneath that is a larger text area with the placeholder 'Add an optional extended description...'. Below the text area is a dropdown menu showing 'adavis46@outlook.com' with a small arrow icon to its right. Below the dropdown is the text 'Choose which email address to associate with this commit'. At the bottom of the dialog are two buttons: a green 'Propose changes' button and a red 'Cancel' button.

Enter a title and a brief description of your page edits and submit a Pull Request.

When you are done making edits to a page, write a title and description of the changes you made and click **Propose Changes**. This creates a [GitHub Pull Request](#) on the Teaching Hub main repository. We'll review the edits and, if accepted, we'll merge them into the production version of the Teaching Hub.

Don't worry about messing something up. Pull Requests have to be approved before they alter production pages. If you make a mistake in your Pull Request, we'll either ask you to fix or fix it ourselves before merging it into the live Teaching Hub.

Questions? Contact [Andrew Davis](#).

SYLLABI AND OFFICE HOURS

All DWR faculty must submit syllabi for each course they're teaching and updated office hour information at the beginning of each semester.

Please upload each syllabus individually and fill out the required metadata for each upload. If you use the same syllabus for multiple sections, list the relevant section numbers separated by commas.

Important:



Fig. 1: Please use your @olemiss.edu account credentials when opening the links below.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Teacher Development

During Fall 2021, join your DWR colleagues for workshops related to their DWR Summer 2021 *Professional Development Grants*. Workshops will run approximately twice a month and will be recorded for remote viewing. Grant recipients and presenters include Tyler Gillespie, Kate Hooper, Deidra Jackson, Rachel Johnson, Alice Myatt, Susan Nicholas, Amber Nichols-Buckley, Jeanine Rauch, Colleen Thorndike, and Don Unger.

Teacher Development Workshops (2021-2022)

3.2 Course Observations (Fall 2021)

DWR policy requires all faculty to be observed at least once per three-semester cycle (see the Observation Policy). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the current cycle has been expanded to include the Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022 semesters. As the University continues to monitor and respond to pandemic conditions, changes in this schedule may occur. Changes will be announced via the listserv.

See also

- *Observations and Course Reviews*
 - *DWR Observation Policy*
-

3.3 Professional Development Grants and Workshops

One of the objectives in the DWR's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan is to "Support Faculty and Staff Development and Promote Teaching Excellence." DWR course enhancement grants support continuous improvement and professional development for our teaching faculty.

3.3.1 Professional Development Grants

2021-2022 Call for Proposals

Teaching and Learning in the “New Normal”

One of the objectives in the DWR’s 2018-2022 Strategic Plan is to “Support Faculty and Staff Development and Promote Teaching Excellence.” To support continuous improvement and professional development for our faculty, the department is pleased to welcome proposals for Summer 2021 Professional Development Mini-Grants.

This year’s grants will fund teacher-to-teacher knowledge building and professional development instead of large-scale revisions to DWR courses. One of the things the pandemic highlighted is the critical roles community building and professional development play in sustaining good pedagogy and teacher growth. Despite the difficult circumstances of the last year, the few teacher-led workshops that took place had broader attendance and greater engagement than ever before. As the teaching and learning environment returns to “normal” in Fall 2021, it is important to hold on to and share what we learned.

In that spirit of sharing, we welcome grant applicants to propose workshops with accompanying resource collections that facilitate teacher-to-teacher knowledge building. These workshops would be scheduled for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 with two primary goals:

1. To start conversations and inspire discussions among colleagues about innovations in pedagogy, educational technology, and scholarship.
2. To collect and curate resources to advance collective knowledge and inspire others in the future. Interested faculty are invited to apply for a Course Enhancement Mini-Grant to propose a workshop or similar event to take place during the 2021-2022 academic year. Workshop topics may include (but are not limited to):
 - Evaluation and discussion of a digital teaching tool
 - Guided discussion of scholarship
 - Demonstration of an assignment, activity, or course unit
 - Presentation of ongoing research related to teaching and learning
 - Introduction of a community-based project related to the work of the DWR
 - Successful grant applicants will receive \$400 in development funds and exclusive time and support from the DWR Instructional Designer, Andrew Davis.

Application Information

Interested faculty should submit a grant application by **May 3, 2021**. The application form contains the following sections:

1. **Presentation/Workshop Category**
 - Technology
 - Pedagogy
 - Research
 - Community
2. **Detailed narrative including the following:**
 - Description of workshop
 - Alignment to the DWR’s mission and vision

- Benefits and Feasibility for DWR Faculty
- Description of resources and materials to be shared
- Assessment and feedback mechanisms

3. Timeline and Workshop Scheduling

- Preference for Fall or Spring Semester and tentative availability
- Preference for face-to-face or virtual delivery

Screening of Applications

Applications will be evaluated based on potential to generate conversation and knowledge building among faculty. Applications will be screened using the following rubric:

Criteria	Min-i-mal	Av-er-age	Good	Ex-cel-lent
Application Completeness: Does the grant application include all required components? Are important details missing?	1	2	3	4
Mission and Vision: Does the proposed workshop advance the mission and vision of the DWR? Does it build knowledge that will make DWR faculty better at what they do?	1	2	3	4
Benefits and Feasibility: Does the workshop content add measurable value for DWR faculty? Is the proposed topic relevant to a significant number of faculty? Will faculty be able to apply what they learn in a meaningful way?	1	2	3	4
Sustainability: Does the proposal offer sufficient supplementary resources and content that faculty can use in the future? Will interest in the topic persist after the presentation itself?	1	2	3	4

Terms of Award

The Instructional Designer will contact grantees periodically to check on their progress and to offer assistance. Grantees should deliver a title, summary, and tentative outline of resources to the Instructional Designer at least one week before the scheduled presentation date.

All shared resources and a complete recording of the workshop (if delivered virtually) will be posted to the Teaching Hub for faculty to access in the future. Grantees must agree to apply CC-0, CC-BY, or CC-BY-SA licenses to the content they share. Any concerns about copyright or licensing should be discussed with the Instructional Designer prior to the workshop date.

Apply for an Award

The application period for the 2021-2022 grants has closed.

3.3.2 Teacher Development Workshops (2021-2022)

During Fall 2021, join your DWR colleagues for workshops related to their DWR Summer 2021 *Professional Development Grants*. Workshops will run approximately twice a month and will be recorded for remote viewing. Grant recipients and presenters include Tyler Gillespie, Kate Hooper, Deidra Jackson, Rachel Johnson, Alice Myatt, Susan Nicholas, Amber Nichols-Buckley, Jeanine Rauch, Colleen Thorndike, and Don Unger.

Coming Up Next

Workshop Info

Title

Thinking Little: Civic Engagement on a Local Level

Presenter

Emily Cooley

Date

Monday April 4, 11:00AM CDT

Modality

Virtual

Description

In the workshop, we will discuss ways to help our students “think little” by engaging with their research topics on a local level. I will be using my Argument for Positive Change Research Essay and Multimodal Letter for Change assignment prompts as examples.

Event Details

[Event Details](#)

Access

[Register for Zoom Meeting](#)

Workshop Info

Title

Reflection versus Justification: A Preliminary Study of How Writing Feedback Influences FYC Writing Students

Presenter

Mary Ann Parker and Ellen Shelton

Date

April 2022 (TBA)

Modality

TBA

Description

In order to gain a greater understanding of the effects of feedback on FYC students’ mindsets toward writing, one DWR instructor (Mary Ann Parker) and one DWR lecturer (Ellen Shelton) have piloted a quantitative study designed to discover how teachers are assigning and responding to student writing in high school classrooms and how FYC students perceive the effects of those written comments through the lens of their first-year writing composition course in college.

Access

Registration Link Coming Soon

Workshop Recordings

Workshop Info**Title**

Mindful Moments: Contemplative Pedagogy in the Writing Classroom

Presenters

Tyler Gillespie, Susan Nicholas, Amber Nichols-Buckley

Date

Tuesday September 7, 1:00 CDT

Modality

Virtual

Description

In this workshop, Susan Nicholas, Tyler Gillespie, and Amber Nichols-Buckley will share research on the benefits of contemplative pedagogy for teachers and students and provide concrete resources, including meditation exercises, mindfulness prompts that could be used for reflection or process work (like peer review!), and contemplative class activities. We will end the workshop with a brief mindfulness session and a discussion with teachers on how to get started.

Access

[View Workshop Stream](#)

Materials

[Slideshow with Resources](#)

Workshop Info**Title**

Advancing Student Learning with Digital Tools (Paired Workshops)

Date

Thursday September 30, 10:00 - 11:30 CDT

Modality

Virtual

Access

[View Workshop Stream](#)

Title

Connecting... Creating a Class Blog Network for Meaningful Online Conversations

Presenter

Colleen Thorndike

Time

10:00am CDT

Description

This presentation will discuss the benefits of using blogs and a class blog network (RSS feed) for

discussion in online classes. Blogs are a great alternative to discussion boards and can cultivate an online class community. While the focus of this presentation is online classes, this strategy can also be used in hybrid and/or in-person classes.

Resources

[Slideshow](#)

Title

Advancing Student Skills with Synthesis and Timed Writing

Presenter

Alice Myatt

Time

10:45am CDT

Description

In this presentation, I review an assignment sequence that combines timed writing with synthesizing sources for a literature review. The timed writing is divided into sections that, taken in sequence, lead students to produce synthesized paragraphs that they may then incorporate into other writing assignments. One part of the workshop will offer suggestions for incorporating this approach with other units (for courses that may not have a timed writing assignment). Resources will include a shared Google Drive folder that has the timed writing unit sequence and synthesis specific resources from Excelsior OWL and other online sites.

Resources

[Google Drive Folder](#)

Workshop Info**Title**

Making the Most of Group Presentations on a Shortened Timeline

Presenter

Kate Hooper

Date

Thursday October 14, 3:00pm CDT

Modality

Virtual

Description

In this presentation, Kate Hooper will share methods for leveraging group presentations to advance curricular goals when the course schedule provides little (if any) wiggle room. She will share the problems she faced and solutions she implemented for developing group projects and presentations during intersessions, summer sessions, and Web courses. Relevant for anyone who has a group project with a presentation element.

Access

[View Workshop Stream](#)

Materials

[Slideshow with Resources](#)

Workshop Info

Title

Bringing the Writing Center to the Classroom: Creative Ways to Enhance Peer Collaboration and Learning

Presenter

Rachel Johnson

Date

Monday November 1, 2021, 1:00pm CDT

Modality

Face-to-Face

Location

Oxford Writing Center

Access

[Watch the Recording](#)

Workshop Info

Title

Blown Cover: Why Calling my Students 'Scholarly Academic Researchers!' Did Not Alter Their Mindsets When They are Simply Trying to Get from One Research Paper to the Other

Presenter

Deidra Jackson

Date

Wednesday November 10, 11:00am CST

Modality

Virtual

Access

[View Workshop Stream](#)

Workshop Info

Title

Teaching Beyond the Classroom: DWR and the Community (Paired Workshops)

Date

Wednesday December 1, 2:00 - 3:30 CST

Modality

Virtual

Access

[View Workshop Stream](#)

Title

Enhancing Writing Skills with Middle School and High School Students from North Panola County

Presenter

Jeanine Rauch

Time

2:00pm CST

Description

This workshop will present writing techniques used to help middle school and high school students understand the importance of Audience and Purpose within an essay, practice community mapping, writing for change, and place-based arguments. Discussion will also take place on ways to outreach our services to the surrounding counties or communities.

Title

Starting a Conversation about a Community Literacy Center at the University of Mississippi

Presenter

Don Unger

Time

2:45pm CST

Description

As Department of Writing & Rhetoric faculty members consider how to expand existing partnerships with the North Panola School District in Panola County and the Marks Project in Quitman County, among others, this presentation describes how a community literacy center could provide vital infrastructure for such work. Integral to that, this presentation opens up a conversation about the role that community literacy centers play for academic departments, their institutions, and local communities. In this presentation, I will discuss: how these centers reflect the research, teaching, and/or service missions of their home departments; how these centers are structured, including programming, services, and staffing; and how these centers impact different stakeholders

Workshop Info**Title**

“I’m fixing to talk about” – Keeping your speaking/writing style while adapting to your audience

Presenters

Carrie McCormick

Date

Wednesday January 26, 1:00PM CST

Modality

In-Person

Description

The workshop will begin with a quick lesson on knowing one’s audience, move into an exercise that utilizes The New York Times dialect quiz, “How Y’all, Youse and You Guys Talk” to discuss and draw attention to various speech patterns. The workshop will contain an interactive activity focusing on our own distinctive word use/dialect and how that can create in/out group membership, and end with discussing potential assignments in each of your classes.

Location

Lamar Hall 323 (DWR Conference Room)

Access

[View Workshop Recording](#)

Workshop Info**Title**

Teaching Outside the Box: New Approaches to Reaching Students (Paired Workshops)

Date

Tuesday February 15, 1:00PM - 2:30PM CST

Modality

Virtual

Access

Registration Link Coming Soon

Access

[View Workshop Recording](#)

Title

Journaling Naked: The Unplugged Assignment in Online Instruction

Presenter

Dixon Bynum

Time

1:00PM CST

Description

Even with the best pedagogical practices, the online classroom can often remain a limited, virtual space for students, especially so during a pandemic. Incorporating assignments which emphasize experiential learning and reduce the use of technology (hence “naked”) can help counteract this perception and aid in student reflection. This workshop will introduce two informal writing assignments used in WRIT 101 and 102 that employed experiential learning and cover student survey reactions to those assignments.

Title

Teaching to Support Executive Function

Presenter

Meredith Harper

Time

1:45PM CST

Description

“Executive function” refers to the mental processes that govern one’s ability to focus on tasks and juggle information. This presentation will provide an overview of current scholarship on the role of executive function in learning at the university level. Drawing from educational and cognitive psychological research, this presentation will inform attendees about the different processes that comprise executive function and how these cognitive processes impact students’ ability to read, write, and think critically.

Workshop Info**Title**

Using Creative Writing Techniques to Write Academic Research Essays

Presenter

Jeanine Rauch

Date

Wednesday March 2, 1:00PM CST

Modality

Virtual

Description

This workshop will cover various creative writing techniques that will prompt students to find alternative ways get their ideas on paper for their academic research paper.

Event Details

[View Event and Add to Calendar](#)

Access

[Register for Zoom Meeting](#)

3.3.3 2020-2021 Course Enhancement Grant Workshops

One of the objectives in the DWR's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan is to "Support Faculty and Staff Development and Promote Teaching Excellence." DWR course enhancement grants are available to support continuous improvement and professional development for our teaching faculty. The year's workshops are held online and recordings of each will be posted to this page.

LaToya Faulk

Title

Essay Writing at The Sentence Level

Presenter

LaToya Faulk

Date

April 29, 4:00 – 5:00 CDT

Description

Utilizing Nora Bacon's *The Well-Crafted Sentence: A Writer's Guide to Style*, LaToya Faulk's workshop will detail results from two in-class activities implemented in WRIT 100 and WRIT 101 which emphasized attention to a diversity of well-conceived sentence structures in the writing process. Additional attention to voice, style, and tone—specifically as it relates to both (1) helping students establish working writing identities, and (2) analyzing the sentence structures of published writers in order to compare and closely identify a multitude of voices, styles, and tones which can then be emulated or drawn from in students' own writing—were also implemented in the writing process as developmental strategies to improve students' development of ideas at the sentence level. Conclusively, this workshop will outline course strategies while also provide an overview of scholarship supporting pedagogical practices that encourage attention to voice and style as elements of craft in the writing process

Access

[View the Workshop Recording](#)

Marc Watkins**Title**

Making the Online Course a Welcoming Space for First-Year Writing Students

Presenter

Marc Watkins

Date

April 12, 1:00 – 2:00 CDT

Description

The Course Enhancement Grant allowed Marc Watkins to explore ways to make his Writ 102 online/hybrid course more welcoming and engaging to students. The goal was to transform the way students viewed the syllabus through open-pedagogy policies so that they no longer viewed the syllabus as a contract or “terms of service agreement” that was static and ignorable. Instead, the syllabus became a dynamic space in which students entered into conversation about their learning and were empowered to engage with more fully. Additionally, he revamped the student guide module to help students understand the transition between a traditional and online/hybrid course. Students were also invited to engage in experiential learning and developed a series of student-created tutorials and guides to help future students navigated challenges within the course.

Access

[View the Workshop Recording](#)

Alice Myatt**Title**

We’re not in Kansas Anymore: Exploring Student Learning through Video Discussions

Presenter

Dr. Alice Myatt

Date

March 25, 1:00 – 2:00 CDT

Description

Can a social networking tool like Flipgrid foster community-building among vulnerable student populations and thus aid success and retention in their academic work? Can video discussions increase engagement and success among notoriously underprepared Fall online WRIT 102 students? Dr. Alice Myatt’s 2020 Course Enhancement project integrated weekly video discussion assignments designed to facilitate self-efficacy, exploration, and reflection into her online WRIT 102 classes. Her workshop will highlight the successes and the challenges this project posed during a chaotic COVID semester and invite attendees to discuss ways to expand on the project in the future.

Access

[View the Workshop Recording](#)

Tyler Gillespie

Title

Toward an Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecology in First-Year Writing

Presenter

Tyler Gillespie

Date

February 11, 1:00 – 2:00 CST

Description

Asao Inoue asserts conventional writing assessments privilege the white, middle- and upper-class students historically aligned with academic discourse. To combat inequity, Inoue says instructors should adjust “our assessment systems to favor labor over the gifts of racial habitus.” In fall 2020, Tyler Gillespie adapted Asao Inoue’s labor-based contract grading for his Writ 101 classes, and he will discuss the framework, planning, strategies, implementation, and student feedback in this presentation.

Access

[View the Workshop Recording](#)

Tori Brown

Title

Good Grief: Grappling with the Group Speech Online

Presenter

Tori Brown

Date

October 15, 12:00 – 1:00

Description

Did you have negative experiences working in groups as a student? Has the dread prevented you from assigning group work in your classes that you teach? Come hear how Tori discovered the “hack” to group work online.

Access

[View the Workshop Recording](#)

Materials

[Assignment Description and Guidelines](#)

Trey Bagwell and Jeanine Rauch

Title

Combatting Transfer Shock: Improving WRIT 250 for Transfer and Non-Traditional Students

Presenter

Trey Bagwell and Jeanine Rauch

Date

October 21, 12:00 – 1:00

Description

This workshop discusses the needs of non-traditional/transfer students and how best to meet those needs through conferencing and writing activities in and outside of the classroom, which in turn helps all students become critical thinkers

Access

[View the Workshop Recording](#)

3.3.4 2019-2020 Course Enhancement Grant Workshops

One of the objectives in the DWR's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan is to "Support Faculty and Staff Development and Promote Teaching Excellence." DWR course enhancement grants are available to support continuous improvement and professional development for our teaching faculty. In Spring 2020, several of the grant workshops were held online. The recordings of these workshops are available below.

Carrie McCormick**Title**

"Popculture Podcast" – A Scaled Assignment to Create Group Engagement and Focus on Vocalitics

Presenter

Carrie McCormick

Description

This three project scaled assignment focused on the efficient encoding of messages along a channel as well as prompting earlier group formation and engagement in the online environment. The students analyzed a podcast, created an individual podcast, and then lastly created a group podcast. Students were specifically instructed to pay attention to and analyze their vocalics, and they completed reflections of their performances at each step along the way to create awareness of their own speaking styles and abilities.

Kerry Bowers**Title**

Adventures in Dogfooding: Research, Recalibration, and the Writing Process

Presenter

Kerry Bowers

Description

This presentation discusses the results of a research project involving dogfooding, a recursive pedagogical practice that advocates having instructors complete their own assignments. The project involved completing the full sequence of assignments comprising the coursework in Advanced Composition. The process not only produced a current set of models, but also provided valuable insights for improving pedagogy and recalibrating instruction.

LaToya Faulk

Title

Using Writing to Fix What's Broken: A Rhetorical Genre Studies & Social Problem-Solving Approach to Teaching First Year Writing

Presenter

LaToya Faulk

Description

This pedagogical undertaking investigates the impact of a centralized genre knowledge curriculum where students applied understanding of ethnography as a functional disciplinary genre in the social sciences to their critical understanding of Matthew Desmond's *Evicted*. Students were asked to reiterate the genre features of Desmond's work by creating several major writing tasks which sought to foster an awareness of the real mechanisms of genre features while satisfying QEP and learning outcome demands. Students first analyzed Desmond's *Evicted*, then wrote a social problem narrative which used community discourse and first-hand interviews to vocalize a chosen issue within society that concerned them; next, an I-Search paper was assigned to help students foster deeper understandings of the social problem by consulting primary, secondary, scholarly, and popular sources. Once sources were consulted, students wrote a proposal argument that used the social problem narrative and source material to introduce practical solutions to the social problem attended to throughout the course of the term. Lastly, an infographic which informs community members through visual representation of the issue and proposed solution was crafted by students. This workshop will walk you through assignment details and share student writing samples as a way to shed light on the affordances and drawbacks of the applied curriculum.

Claire Mischker

Title

Revising the Editing Class: Curating OER Resources to Enhance Writing 370

Presenter

Claire Mischker

Description

In our catalog, Writing 370 is titled "Editing and Proofreading in Professional Contexts" and has historically focused on rhetorical grammar. This presentation addresses the organization of OER resources collected in pursuit of lower cost (free!) class materials that reconcile more appropriately with the course's revised assignments, learning outcomes, and focus—all three of which will be briefly discussed. I will also suggest directions for further development of enhanced resources for Writing 370.

Access

[View the Workshop Recording](#)

Colleen Thorndike

Title

Let's Get Digital: An Overview of DMS 101 & the Digital Media Studies Minor

Presenter

Colleen Thorndike

Description

This presentation will give an overview of topics covered in DMS 101 and show some sample assignments and student work. I'll also share some general information about the Digital Studies Minor and the various majors who take these classes.

Access

[View the Workshop Recording](#) [View the Slideshow](#)

3.4 Opening Session

The DWR holds Opening Sessions each August and January before the semester begins. Scheduled, recordings, and supporting materials are archived [here](#).

3.4.1 Spring 2022 Opening Sessions



The Spring 2022 Opening Session will be held virtually on Thursday January 13.

If you are in Lamar Hall, we will still provide a breakfast for you. Please let [Wendy Goldberg](#) know by Wednesday morning if you want a breakfast to pick up in the kitchen. Grad students, if you are in your offices, let Wendy know and she will arrange something.

Schedule

All sessions will be recorded. Recordings will be available by Friday morning.

Time	Description	Access
8:30	Graduate Students: We will review the curriculum and answer your questions.	Zoom Link TBA
10:15	All 102 Faculty: Meeting with all 102 teachers (except FasTrack).	Zoom Link TBA
11:30	Theme Breakouts	Zoom Links TBA

3.4.2 Fall 2021 Opening Session

Attention: We've been watching the local COVID-19 data and have adjusted our plans for opening session. All **required** meetings will be online. Most will be short videos recorded by our colleagues and posted here by Wednesday August 18 . Please view them all before the start of classes on Monday.



The Fall 2021 Opening Session will include synchronous and asynchronous components.

On Thursday August 19, we invite you to visit Lamar Hall anytime between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to grab a box lunch from Tallahatchie Gourmet, a DWR gift, comfortable facemasks, and physical copies of the Common Read and CRE Teaching Guide. Glenn, Wendy, Karla, Karen, and Stephen will staff the giveaway tables, located in the lobby of Lamar Hall's third floor. This is optional, but we would love to see you next Thursday!

On Thursday and Friday, the core faculty will be available in their offices from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you have any questions about the semester, please visit or Zoom with [Guy](#) (Writing 101), [Wendy](#) (Writing 102), [Kate](#) (Speech 102 and 105), [Chip](#) (Writing 100 and FASTrack), [Angela](#) (Liba 102), or [Karla](#) (Writing 250) during these hours. [Andrew Davis](#), [Chad Russell](#), [Glenn Schove](#), [Karen Forgette](#), [Joanne Mitchell](#), and [Stephen Monroe](#) will also be available in Lamar Hall during those hours on Thursday and Friday. Please drop by with any and all questions. We're here to help.

Live Events

Synchronous meetings may take place in-person or virtually. Check the “Access” column to confirm the modality

Thursday August 19

In-Person events take place in Lamar Hall.

Time	Description	Access
11:00-1:00	Boxed Lunches and Gift Giveaway: Join your colleagues to pick up a boxed lunch, gifts, and copies of the Common Read at lunchtime.	3rd Floor Lobby
1:00-2:00	Speech Curriculum Meeting: Welcome new faculty and discuss last year's assessment data.	Lamar 323
2:00-3:00	New IT Security Policies: Join Marc Watkins and the Rapid Response Team to discuss the DWR's new Information Security policies and procedures.	Zoom Meeting

Friday August 20

In-Person events take place in Lamar Hall.

Time	Description	Access
8:15-9:15	Live Q&A with Stephen, Karen, Glenn, Joanne, and Andrew: Bring any questions or concerns you have about teaching this semester to this informal Q&A session.	Zoom Meeting
9:00-4:00	Administrative and Core Office Hours: The core faculty will be available in their offices from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Lamar Hall / Teams

On-Demand Sessions

On-demand workshop sessions will be available on-demand starting Wednesday August 18. When you click “View Workshop Stream,” you will be asked to log in to your UM Blackboard account.

Description	Presenter	Length	Access
Masks and First-Day Concerns: How to have a safe and productive classroom this fall.	Guy Krueger	6:28	View Workshop Stream
Attendance Policies for First-Year Writing: Learn about the DWR’s flexible/resilient attendance policy recommendations for Fall 2021.	Wendy Goldberg	13:01	View Workshop Stream
Mastering Masked Instruction: Considering instructor immediacy, clarity, and safety in the COVID classroom	Kate Hooper	3:10	View Workshop Stream
Updates to the Teaching Hub Information about the newly redesigned DWR Teaching Hub and new instructional resources for Fall 2021.	Andrew Davis	14:34	View Workshop Stream
Using Microsoft Teams: Basic collaboration tools and features of Microsoft Teams and how it functions as a communication tool in the DWR.	Andrew Davis	19:53	View Workshop Stream
Notes for Teaching WRIT 100/101: Basic curriculum details about WRIT 100 and WRIT 101.	Guy Krueger	7:44	View Workshop Stream
WRIT 100/101 Blackboard Template: Learn about the updates to the WRIT 100/101 Blackboard template and how to use it with your course.	Andrew Davis	18:02	View Workshop Stream
RhetLab Common Read Workshop (Reading like a Writer): Learn about the new Reading like a Writer RhetLab Module	Mary Ann Parker	5:44	View Workshop Stream
RhetLab Common Read Workshop (Information Literacy): Learn about the new Information Literacy RhetLab Module	Eliot Parker	11:37	View Workshop Stream
RhetLab Common Read Workshop (Responding to a Prompt): Learn about the new Responding to a Prompt RhetLab Module	Kellye Makamson	5:34	View Workshop Stream
Information Security Policy and Training: Overview of digital acknowledgment for new IT Security Policies.	Marc Watkins	7:19	View Workshop Stream
Writing Center Orientation for New Faculty: Complete overview of DWR Writing Centers services and policies for new teachers.	Rachel Johnson	7:55	View Workshop Stream
Update from the Writing Centers: News and updates from the Writing Centers about the Fall 2021 semester.	Rachel Johnson	7:29	View Workshop Stream
Update from the Speaking Center: Learn about the goings on at the Speaking Center this semester and plans for the future.	Ellie Moore	0:55	View Workshop Stream
Student Retention: Retaining first year students and being flexible about grading/assignment deadlines.	Marc Watkins	21:57	View Workshop Stream

3.4.3 Spring 2021 Opening Sessions



The Spring 2021 Opening Session included synchronous and asynchronous components. On-Demand sessions were developed and recorded by DWR faculty and uploaded for Panopto for teachers to access at any time.

Synchronous Sessions

Synchronous orientation sessions take place live in a Zoom meeting at the scheduled time.

Date and Time	Description
Thurs 1/14, 10:00	Business Theme Meeting: A meeting of WRIT 102 Business Theme teachers.
Thurs 1/14, 1:00	Pop Culture Theme Meeting: A meeting of WRIT 102 Pop Culture Theme teachers.
Thurs 1/14, 2:00	Environment Theme Meeting: A meeting of WRIT 102 Environment Theme teachers.
Fri 1/15, 12:00	Food Theme Meeting: A meeting of WRIT 102 Food Theme teachers.

Sessions On-Demand

Previously recorded workshop sessions are available on-demand starting Wednesday January 13. Click “View Workshop Stream” to view the session in Panopto.

Lessons Learned: Helping Students Succeed Wendy Goldberg, Fara Shook, and Susan Wood discuss lessons learned from teaching WRIT 102 in the Fall aimed at helping students succeed this semester.	View Workshop Stream
Helping Students Make Connections Meredith Harper discusses student engagement and models methods for helping students think about audience.	View Workshop Stream
About Project One Wendy Goldberg discusses the first class project that has been added to the WRIT 102 curriculum.	View Workshop Stream
About Project Two Wendy Goldberg discusses the second class project that has been added to the WRIT 102 curriculum.	View Workshop Stream
About Project Three Wendy Goldberg discusses the third class project that has been added to the WRIT 102 curriculum.	View Workshop Stream
Writing Groups in WRIT 102 Shanna Flaschka discusses writing groups in WRIT 102 and how to incorporate them into your Spring 2021 classes.	View Workshop Stream
Eduflow Peer Review Shanna Flaschka provides a brief overview of the Eduflow peer review platform.	View Workshop Stream

3.4.4 Fall 2020 Opening Session



The Fall 2020 Opening Session included synchronous and asynchronous components. On-Demand sessions were developed and recorded by DWR faculty and uploaded for Panopto for teachers to access at any time. Expand the link below to view the On-Demand sessions.

Previously recorded workshop sessions are available on-demand starting Monday August 17. Click “View Workshop Stream” to view the session in Panopto.

View Sessions on Demand

100/101 Model Syllabus: Guy Krueger and Chip Dunkin discuss the new model syllabus and what policy sections you may want to adjust. ([View Workshop Stream](#))

Blackboard Template Tutorial: Andrew Davis walks you through the WRIT 100/101 Blackboard Template and demonstrates how to customize it. Stream VideoView Workshop Stream ([View Workshop Stream](#))

Resilient Teaching: Eliot Parker, Carrie McCormick, and Josh Eyler introduce the concept of resilient teaching and share what they learned from this summer’s learning community. ([View Workshop Stream](#))

Speaking Center: Ellie Moore introduces the Speaking Center and explains how it will operate this fall. ([View Workshop Stream](#))

Student Retention: Marc Watkins and Guy Krueger discuss student retention strategies for first-year students. ([View Workshop Stream](#))

To the Ballot Box Initiative: Don Unger shares the work of the Community Engagement Committee with the “To the Ballot Box” initiative. ([View Workshop Stream](#))

Using Microsoft Teams: Andrew Davis demonstrates the basic collaboration tools and features of Microsoft Teams. ([View Workshop Stream](#))

WRIT 102 Curriculum Revision: Wendy Goldberg will introduce changes to the WRIT 102 curriculum that include critical thinking projects. ([View Workshop Stream](#))

Writing Center: Rachel Johnson, Claire Mischker, Deidra Jackson, and Jeanine Rauch discuss the new Writing Center website and the plans the centers have for the Fall. ([View Workshop Stream](#))

3.4.5 Fall 2016 Orientation

Teachers led workshops on various topics on the Thursday and Friday after Fall 2016 Orientation. Their workshop materials are posted here.

Title

Managing Difficult Classroom Conversations

Workshop Leader

Angela Green

Materials

- [Handout](#)
 - [DWR CompTalk Reading Groups](#)
 - [Handbook for Facilitating Difficult Conversations in the Classroom](#)
 - [Preparing Students for Difficult Conversations](#)
 - [How To Tell People They Sound Racist](#)
 - [How to Listen When You Disagree: A Lesson from the Republican National Convention](#)
 - [Establishing Ground Rules](#)
 - [Project Implicit](#)
-

Title

Student-Teacher Conferencing

Workshop Leaders

Whit Hubbard and Alison Hitch

Materials

[Handout](#)

Title

Helping Students: Toward Dynamic Presentations by Managing Speaking Anxiety

Workshop Leaders

Kate Hooper and Ellie Moore

Materials

PowerPoint

3.5 Faculty Meetings

Full DWR Faculty Meetings are held at **4:00pm Central Time** on the second Friday of each month during the regular semester. For Fall 2021, faculty meetings will be held on Zoom. To submit an agenda item, please contact [Stephen Monroe](#). Calendar invitations will be sent to the DWR list-serv a week before each meeting.

Date	Agenda	Access
2/18	Published Agenda	View Event

OBSERVATIONS AND COURSE REVIEWS

The DWR requires all teachers to be observed and all online courses to be reviewed on a regular basis. Please use this interface to record and submit observations and course reviews for face-to-face and online DWR classes. For help with this system, please contact [Andrew Davis](#).

4.1 Course Observations (Fall 2021)

DWR policy requires all faculty to be observed at least once per three-semester cycle (see the Observation Policy). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the current cycle has been expanded to include the Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022 semesters. As the University continues to monitor and respond to pandemic conditions, changes in this schedule may occur. Changes will be announced via the listserv.

4.1.1 Face-to-Face Course Observations

Contents

- *Observation Forms*
- *Policy*
- *Best Practices*
- *Additional Reading*

The DWR maintains a teaching-centered culture and wants every teacher to be successful. As faculty, we learn from each other and share ideas. We value academic freedom, appropriate levels of standardization, research-based pedagogies, and deliberate innovation. We believe teaching can be improved through purposeful reflection. Regular classroom observations help to improve our teaching practices. We learn as much from observing others as we learn from being observed. This ongoing exchange of ideas strengthens our culture by showcasing and improving the unique contributions we each bring to the profession. As a routine of support and collegiality, we expect that teaching observations will protect and enhance our high pedagogical standards.

Observation Forms

Important: Faculty: submit an observation request form before your observation takes place (both observation types)
Observers: select the observation type to submit an observation report.

- [Observation Request Form](#)
 - [Observation Checklist Report](#)
 - [Short Narrative Report](#)
-

Policy

- All faculty, regardless of rank or position, must be observed during their first semester of teaching at UM. These formative observations (through which colleagues provide feedback to one another) should be conducted by a core faculty member, the assistant chair, or the chair.
- All other faculty, regardless of rank or position, must be observed once every three regular (fall/spring) semesters. These formative observations should be conducted by a full-time DWR faculty member, the assistant chair, or the chair.
- All graduate instructors, regardless of experience, must be observed before midterm of their first semester of UM teaching and once more at any point during the remainder of their first year. In the second year of teaching and beyond, graduate instructors must be observed once per year. These formative observations should be conducted by a core faculty member.
- All faculty seeking promotion should be observed in the year prior to promotion. These summative observations (through which instruction is evaluated) should be conducted by the chair, the assistant chair, or a core faculty member who is senior in rank.
- Faculty who teach online should submit each distinct course taught for evaluation once every three regular (fall/spring) semesters. These holistic evaluations should be conducted by the DWR instructional designer and/or online faculty members designated by him or her in conjunction with the Division of Outreach Online Course Enrichment program. For teachers who also teach face-to-face classes, this evaluation is in addition to their regular observations.

Faculty members and graduate instructors schedule their own observations. After the observation, the observer will submit an observation report through the Teaching Hub. The report will be distributed to the observer, the observed faculty member, and optionally the core instructor the course observed. Online course evaluations, in addition to being shared with the above-referenced individuals, are shared with the Division of Outreach. The schedule for online course evaluation is maintained by the DWR instructional designer in coordination with the Division of Outreach.

Best Practices

- To establish trust and reciprocity, create teaching observation partnerships or triads with colleagues.
- Build variety by partnering with different colleagues and using different methods over time.
- If you have trouble finding a partner or group, reach out to the communications specialist for names of faculty members who have not yet been observed.
- Keep the observation forms and their content private. Share the forms only with the faculty member observed, the DWR communications specialist, and, for online course evaluations, the appropriate curriculum committee chair.

- Keep in mind the distinction between formative observations (to provide feedback to a colleague) and summative observations (to evaluate instruction). Remember that summative observations only occur in the year prior to promotion.
- Pre-observation conversations via email or in person allow colleagues to pinpoint areas for focused observation.
- Post-observation conversations via email or in person allow colleagues to share ideas and learn from each other.
- Be mindful that teaching observations have limitations, including unforeseen circumstances, collegiality issues, and biases about pedagogy, subject matter, etc. They are a snapshot of one teacher in one class on one day.

Additional Reading

- Bernstein, Daniel J. 2008. "Peer Review and Evaluation of the Intellectual Work of Teaching." *Change*. March/April.
- Bernstein, Daniel J., Jessica Jonson, and Karen Smith. 2000. "An Examination of the Implementation of Peer Review of Teaching." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. 83: 73-86
- Bernstein, Daniel., A.N. Burnett, A. Goodburn and P Savory. 2006. *Making Teaching and Learning Visible: Course Portfolios and the Peer Review of Teaching*. Anker.
- Center for Teaching Effectiveness. "Preparing for Peer Observation: A Guidebook." University of Texas, Austin.
- Chism, Nancy V. 2007. *Peer Review of Teaching: A Sourcebook*. 2nd Edition. Anker.
- Glassick, C. M. T. Huber, and G. Maeroff. 1997. *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*. Jossey-Bass.
- Hutchings, Pat. 1995. *From Idea to Prototype: The Peer Review of Teaching*. Stylus
- Hutchings, Pat. 1996. "The Peer Collaboration and Review of Teaching." ACLS Occasional Paper No 33.
- Hutchings, Pat. 1996. *Making Teaching Community Property: A Menu for Peer Collaboration and Peer Review*. Stylus
- Hutchings, Pat. 1998. *The Course Portfolio*. Stylus
- Perlman, Baron and Lee I. McCann. 1998. "Peer Review of Teaching: An Overview." Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology and Department of Psychology, Georgia Southern University.
- Seldin, P. 1997. *The Teaching Portfolio*. 2nd Edition. Anker.
- Seldin, P. 1999. *Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching: A Practical Guide to Improved Faculty Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions*. Jossey-Bass.
- Shulman, Lee S. 2004. *Teaching as Community Property: Essays on Higher Education*. Jossey-Bass.

4.1.2 Web Course Reviews

The DWR requires that all Web courses are reviewed once every three semesters. Even if a faculty member is observed teaching face-to-face, each unique web WRIT or SPCH course must have a review on file. For example, if James is teaching one section of WRIT 101 face-to-face, two sections of WRIT 250 online, and one section of WRIT 310 online, he must receive a review for WRIT 250 and a review for WRIT 310.

Important:

- [Request Web Course Review](#)
 - [Submit Web Course Review](#)
-

Web Course Review Criteria

All online DWR courses are reviewed by experienced online faculty using a common evaluation rubric. The rubric was adapted from the Division of Outreach's online review program and customized to the needs of DWR faculty and the realities of the courses we teach.

The rubric is divided into 5 categories. There are several evaluation criteria within each category. Reviewers will also provide narrative feedback for each category as well as summary comments at the end of the review.

Faculty will receive a copy of each online course review for inclusion in FARS.

Rubric Criteria Checklist

This checklist explains what online course reviewers look for for each of the rubric criteria.

Course Landing/Getting Started	Creates a "Getting Started" or "Welcome" page that includes critical course information and the syllabus and set it as the course home OR Posts an announcement or send a welcome email to students at the beginning of the term. Provides clear instructions on how to navigate the course, Provides clear instructions on how to access supplementary course content (online textbook, integrated courseware, etc.), including relevant purchase information if applicable. Explains to students how the course works and what they need to do to be successful.
Instructor Introduction	States specific technology and/or software requirements for the course: Required file formats (docx, odt, rtf, etc.), Required cloud storage if applicable, Communication tools (Zoom, Slack, Hangouts, etc.), Collaboration tools (Google Docs, Office online, etc.), Integrated courseware or e-textbook. Establishes communication guidelines and netiquette: Office hours (ftf and online), Email, chat, and videoconference protocol, Student-to-student communication and collaboration protocol Syllabus document is clearly linked from the course landing page and is available in PDF, HTML, or Word format.
Technology Requirements	States specific technology and/or software requirements for the course: Required file formats (docx, odt, rtf, etc.), Required cloud storage if applicable, Communication tools (Zoom, Slack, Hangouts, etc.), Collaboration tools (Google Docs, Office online, etc.), Integrated courseware or e-textbook. Establishes communication guidelines and netiquette: Office hours (ftf and online), Email, chat, and videoconference protocol, Student-to-student communication and collaboration protocol Syllabus document is clearly linked from the course landing page and is available in PDF, HTML, or Word format.
Syllabus Document	Syllabus document is clearly linked from the course landing page and is available in PDF, HTML, or Word format.
Syllabus Content	Includes required DWR Syllabus sections: Required texts and courseware, Instructor contact information and office hours, Course description and learning outcomes, Major assignments and grade distribution, Grading Scale, Attendance policy, Attendance for students on scholarship policy, Academic honesty/plagiarism policy, Accessibility/SDS policy, Writing Centers statement, Library resources statement, Changes/updates clause

Course Structure, Objectives, and Assessment

Course Organization	Divides content into manageable “chunks” and organizes them into distinct units, modules, or lessons, Arranges the flow of content in a logical, predictable fashion, Uses suitable words to label course menus, Labels learning units in a way that helps students understand their location in the course
Course Interface Design	Uses appropriate mechanisms in Blackboard (folders, pages, links, etc.) to present content consistently, Applies consistent information design in each subdivision (weekly folder, learning module, unit, and individual content area) so that students know what to expect, Deletes unused or unnecessary items from course navigation menu, Uses course links instead of copies of content to ensure consistency of information if changes are required, Makes external links open in a new window/tab (target=”_blank”), Uses in-line content areas to display information rather than attached documents where appropriate, Uses PDFs instead of Word documents for read-only information.
Major Projects and Assignments	Provides outcomes, description, recommended process, deadlines, and grade weight for major projects, Uses consistent information design/document format for major project descriptions, Provides links to all major project descriptions in one location (in addition to in the subdivisions where they are assigned).
Formative Feedback	Provides mechanisms for formative feedback to students in the form of graded drafts, revisions, discussion boards, blogs, or other platforms for instructor/student interaction.
Summative Feedback/Rubrics	Attaches standardized rubrics (Blackboard-based or external) to major assignments and ensure students have access to rubric scores or provides other means of summative assessment (tests, quizzes, etc).
Deadlines and Work-flow	Provides deadlines for major projects up front and communicate any changes to the deadlines as necessary, Provides timeline/schedule for multi-step projects with several components, Follows consistent pattern for deadlines if possible (i.e. work due on the same day each week), Indicates parameters for timed assessments (if applicable).

Collaboration, Interaction, and Learner Engagement

Student/Instructor Interaction	Schedules minimum number of required conferences with students (for applicable courses), Provides numerous opportunities for individual conferences (online and f2f, if possible), Incorporates a variety of platforms for digital communication and allows student flexibility in methods of communication.
Student/Student Interaction	Schedules peer review/ peer assessment of major projects (where applicable), Includes structured student/student interaction (discussion forums, polls, chats, blogging, etc.), Provides opportunities for students to interact informally (discussion board, Slack, GroupMe, etc.)
Instructor Responsiveness	Explains timeline for returning work with feedback, Provides necessary updates if the timeline changes, Provides a mechanism for students to discuss feedback and/or grades with the instructor. Mark only one oval.

Resources, Materials, and Accessibility

Text-Based Content	Uses adequate font size consistently. Uses styled text for headings to create document structure, Avoids non-standard fonts, Avoids using color as a primary signifier of meaning, Ensures good color contrast when color is required, Avoids images of text, Provides alternative text for hyperlinks.
Image-Based Content	Uses PNG images if possible (instead of JPG), Resizes images to fit content area, Avoids unnecessary or decorative images or graphics, Includes appropriate <alt> tags for all images.
Audio-Based Content	Uses consistent volume settings for recorded audio, Avoids extraneous or distracting noise or errors in recorded audio, Publishes audio in .mp3 or .wav formats or shares via SoundCloud, Google Drive, or other streaming service, Provides text transcript of all audio files.
Video-Based Content	Limits length of videos to 5-10 minutes, Incorporates videos only if they add value to the lesson, Publishes videos with YouTube, Google Drive, Wistia, or other streaming service, Provides closed captioning and text transcript for all video files.
External Links	Ensures that links to external content are functioning and clearly identified, Evaluates the external content using the criteria above for text, image, audio, and video.
Files and File Types	Uses appropriate content types that make navigation simple, Uses items or pages instead of attached files where appropriate, Uses streaming video instead of attached video, Uses PDFs instead of Word documents where appropriate, Ensures that attached files are optimized for the web.
Courseware and eTexts	Adapts LTI cartridges for courseware or textbooks to the structure and format of the course, Uses consistently-formatted web links for non-LTI e-Texts, Uses consistent language to describe assignments and tasks involving courseware or e-Texts, Integrates courseware or e-Texts into the existing curriculum and avoids treating them as add-ons, Verifies that courseware grade center integration is correct.

Copyright and Licensing

Copyright Compliance	Obtains permissions to use copyrighted content or conducts fair use evaluation of content, Documents copyright permissions or fair use evaluation.
Attribution	Cites material not owned by the instructor in a clear and consistent manner.
Licensing	Indicates how original course material is licensed (CC, Public Domain, MIT, All Rights Reserved, etc.), Provides standard language on major course pages indicating licensing.
Student Friendly Language	Provides explanation of copyright, attribution, and licensing in language that students will understand, Includes a statement that all copyrighted material may only be used for educational purposes, Includes a statement that all licensed materials may only be used in accordance with the terms of the license.

STUDENT WORK RELEASE FORMS

In order to collect writing or record their likeness for research purposes, students must sign a publication release form.

Digital Release Form: Please share the WRIT or SPCH publication release form with your students.

Paper Release Form: Please print the WRIT or SPCH publication release and distribute to your students. Forms may be returned to Andrew Davis in Lamar Hall Suite B.

DOCUMENT UPLOADS

Contents

- *Assessment Archive*
- *Other Uploads*
 - *WRIT 102 Assessment Project*
 - *Writing Centers*

6.1 Assessment Archive

Submit zipped files of student work each semester as directed by the Assessment Coordinator. Please watch the following videos for guidance on downloading your student work from Blackboard and uploading it to the DWR Assessment Archive.

Remember to sign in with your @olemiss.edu account to access the assessment archive.

[Access the Assessment Archive](#)

Tip: Watch these videos to learn how to upload your student writing for departmental assessment.

- [Downloading your Papers from Blackboard](#)
 - [Uploading papers to the assessment archive](#)
-

6.2 Other Uploads

6.2.1 WRIT 102 Assessment Project

Use the form below to upload WRIT 102 Synthesis assignment descriptions. Please clearly describe each file in the description field when uploading.

6.2.2 Writing Centers

After each OWC appointment, consultants should upload the Word document with comments to the shared Box folder. Files should be renamed: date (year month day), underscore, last name of consultant, underscore, last name of student.

Example: 20180827_Johnson_Gomez.docx

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Contents

- *Instructional Designer*
- *Blackboard Templates*

This section of the Teaching Hub provides guides and resources to support good pedagogy and instruction in all DWR Writing and Speech courses.

7.1 Instructional Designer

Make an appointment with Andrew Davis or stop by Lamar Hall Suite B, Rm. 22.

7.2 Blackboard Templates

The WRIT 100/101 Blackboard template provides a pre-developed course structure, major assignments, and grade center configuration for the standard, NYT, and NPR curriculum options. It is designed to accommodate face-to-face and web modalities and is fully customizable once added to a course.

The template is designed to save you time and headaches and to provide a consistent experience for students. If you would rather build your Blackboard shell from scratch, you're free to do so.

Get the Template

Download the Blackboard package below. The package is a .zip file, and you should not extract it. Some browsers (like Safari), may extract the .zip file automatically, so if you see an extracted folder, try downloading the package using a different browser.

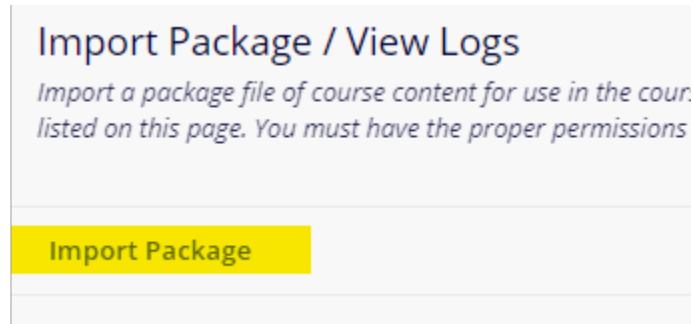
- [Download Blackboard Package](#)

If you would like to be added to the Blackboard sandbox for the template instead of using the package, just contact [Andrew Davis](#). This is a good option if you only want to use certain parts of the template.

7.2.1 Importing the Template

Log in to your Blackboard course. Below the main course navigation, select **“Import Package/View Logs”** from the Course Management Menu. On the next screen, click the “Import Package” button.

Important:



“Import Package” Button

Upload the .zip Blackboard package you downloaded earlier by clicking “Browse my Computer.” You’ll know you have successfully uploaded the package if you see the file name **“WRIT100-101 Template.zip”**

Important:

SELECT A PACKAGE

Click **Browse** to locate the course package:

Uploading large packages may take a long time.

★ Select a Package

Browse My Computer

Selected File

File Name

WRIT100-101 Template.zip

Do not attach

Attach the template .zip file that you downloaded earlier.

Import Selection



☒ Content Areas

☐ Adaptive Release Rules for Content

☒ Announcements

☐ Attendance

☐ Blogs

☐ Calendar

☐ Contacts

☐ Content Alignments

☒ Discussion Board

☒ Include starter posts for each thread in

☐ Include only the forums, with no starter

☐ Glossary

☒ Grade Center Columns and Settings

☐ Group Settings

☐ Journals

☐ Retention Center Rules

☒ Rubrics

☒ Settings

☐ Availability

☒ Banner Image

☐ Course Guest Access

☐ Course Observer Access

☐ Duration

☐ Language Pack

☒ Navigation Settings

☐ Tasks

☒ Tests, Surveys, and Pools

☐ Wikis

Select the package items to import into your course.

Click the check boxes next to the following items to import:

- Content Areas
- Announcements
- Discussion Board
- Grade Center Columns and Settings
- Rubrics
- Settings (automatically checks “Banner Image” and “Navigation Settings)
- Tests, Surveys, and Pools

Click **Submit** when you’re done.

7.2.2 Cleaning Up

All of the Blackboard menu items in your course before the import will still be there when it’s finished. You should delete all menu items except the following:

- Announcements
- My Grades
- Welcome
- About this Course
- Current Week
- Course Content
- Major Assignments
- Reflection Blog
- Additional Resources
- Panopto Video
- RhetLab Dashboard
- UM Writing Centers

Feel free to reorder or rename these items as you wish.

TOOLS AND DOCUMENTS

8.1 Teaching Tools

- [Generic Syllabus Maker](#)
- [Assignment Calculator](#)
- [DWR H5P Server](#)
- [ZamZar File Convertor](#)

8.2 Departmental Equipment Checkout

The DWR has a number of Chromebooks, Macbooks, Windows laptops, and other equipment available for checkout to DWR faculty and to students enrolled in DWR classes. Please visit the front desk in Suite B to see what's available.

Certain equipment requires a University Loan Receipt for long-term checkout. Please [download and print](#) the loan form and submit it to Andrew Davis when checking out this equipment.

8.3 Zoom

All UM faculty, staff, and students have centrally managed Zoom accounts for video meetings. Please visit Zoom's [Getting Started](#) page for more information about downloading and using Zoom.

When signing in to Zoom, select "Sign in with SSO" and enter the domain "olemiss." You can also go directly to olemiss.zoom.us. You will be prompted to sign in with your MyOleMiss credentials.

All UM Zoom accounts have Pro licenses for unlimited meetings.

8.4 Frequently Requested Documents

The Box folder below contains frequently requested DWR and university documents for download. To recommend a document for this folder, contact [Joanne Mitchell](#).

REMOTE SUPPORT FOR DWR FACULTY

Teams and Outlook Resources

- [Interactive Teams Demo](#)
- [Teams Help and Learning](#)
- [Staying productive while working remotely](#)
- [Microsoft365 Remote Work resources`](#)
- [Full documentation](#)
- [When to use a Private Channel on Teams](#)
- [Outlook Help and learning](#)
- [Introduction to Outlook Calendar](#)
- [Zoom and Outlook](#)

9.1 Supporting Work in the DWR

The DWR Remote Teaching Task Force is committed to support all DWR faculty, regardless of their teaching modality. We are encouraging all faculty and staff to use [Microsoft Teams](#) to keep in touch with each other and the administrative team. We're all pretty familiar with Zoom at this point, and Teams is a lot more than just video calling. Teams has reduced the volume of email for 12-month faculty and staff who have relied on the platform this summer.

Though you can access Teams in a web browser, we recommend you [download the application](#) for your computer and mobile device. Remember to sign into Teams with your UM Office365 email address and password.

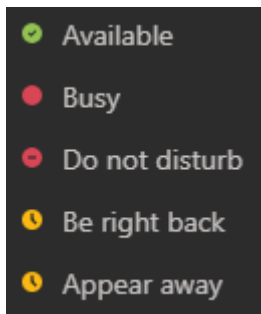
Join the DWR on Teams

When you join the DWR Team, you'll have access to the three public channels: General, Break Room, and Remote Support. You can chat with or call anyone at UM in Teams even if they're not members of the DWR Team. The Remote Support button will connect you directly to the Remote Teaching Task Force for support requests. If you haven't joined the DWR Team already, you'll be prompted to do so.

[Click here to join the DWR on Teams](#)

9.2 DWR Rapid Response Team

Teams Statuses



The small circle next to the recipient's name in a Teams chat indicates their availability.

The DWR Remote Teaching Task Force is committed to support all DWR faculty, regardless of their teaching modality. Feel free to contact members of the task force individually through chat or email below.

For general support, feel free to post to the main channel. Someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

When you click “Start Chat,” you will be prompted to sign in with your UM email account information. Then, you’ll have the option to open a chat in Microsoft Teams (or download it) or to use the web version. We recommend downloading the Teams application eventually, but the web version works just as well. Once the Teams window has loaded, you can chat or start a video/audio call if the person you’re trying to contact is available.

Direct Contact Information

If the recipient is offline, your chat will be sent as an email.

[Contact the Rapid Response Team](#)

SPEECH COURSES

10.1 SPCH 102: Public Speaking

Contents

- *Course Description*
- *Course Design*
- *Required Course Materials*
- *Assignment Sequence*
- *Assignment Weights*
- *Core Assignment Descriptions*
- *Grading*

10.1.1 Course Description

Speech 102 explores the fundamentals of organizing, preparing, and delivering speeches in a variety of public forums.

10.1.2 Course Design

SPCH 102 is a skills-building course and allows students repeated opportunities to work through the speech process. The assignment-based design engages Blooms Taxonomy from comprehension to creation a minimum of five times. Reading, discussion, and quizzes occur throughout the course to enhance memory and understanding of core concepts. Peer coaching and/or review, as well as post-presentation journaling enhance analysis and evaluation.

For online version, students should speak to a live audience in a public setting for the informative and persuasive assignments. Live audiences should consist of no less than five adults or peers. If space is available, online instructors may explore a hybrid model.

Sample Syllabus

- [Sample Syllabus](#)
 - [Sample Calendar](#).
-

10.1.3 Required Course Materials

O'Haire, D., Rubenstein, H., & Stewart, R. (2019). *A pocket guide to public *speaking* (6th ed.). Bedford/St. Martin's.

Using LaunchPad with the 6th edition textbook is optional; however, you should use whichever option you requested for submission into myolemiss.

- If you asked for LaunchPad, the ISBN for LaunchPad was entered into myolemiss. Launchpad includes the eBook and six-month access.
- If you asked for the book only, the ISBN for a print copy was entered into MyOleMiss.

You may share all relevant purchasing options for your course on your syllabus. See “Syllabus Sample” for options.

10.1.4 Assignment Sequence

See also

[*SPCH 102 Assignment Library*](#)

The following series of speech assignments allow students to repeat the process of conceiving, researching, organizing, developing, practicing, and presenting original speeches throughout the course. The short, informative, and persuasive sequence is recommended. The group presentation may be sequenced at the discretion of the instructor (after practice/short presentations are completed).

1. **Two short presentations** to orient students to the process (2-4 minutes).
2. **Informative presentation**, furthering research and analysis of self, audience, and topic, as well as increasing organizational expectations (5-7 minutes).
3. **Persuasive presentation** to explore the fundamentals of argumentation, as well as enhance content evaluation and organizational skills.
4. **Small group presentations** add problem-solving and group communication to the speech process. For online sections, the assignment should focus on group communication/problem-solving and have a presentation outcome or element. Examples include, but are not limited to: 1) a kiosk-style presentation to which all group members contribute or 2) a live, group meeting with individual presentations by members addressing a common goal.

Note: More short presentations (under 5 minutes) may be added wherever instructors find the assignments most useful for their individual curriculum.

10.1.5 Assignment Weights

- **Short presentations** (Intro, Special Occasion, Impromptu, etc.) should equal 10% of semester/term grade.
- **Long Presentations** (Informative, Persuasive, and Group) should equal 50% of semester/term grade.
- **Written Assessments** (Quizzes, Tests, Outlines, etc.) should equal 20-25% of semester/term grade.
- **Participation** (Journals, Peer reviews, Discussions, etc.) should equal 15-20% of semester/term grade.

10.1.6 Core Assignment Descriptions

Informative

Presentation of 5-7 minutes should provide relevant, accurate information. Evidence of audience orientation, coherent organization, effective language, verbal fluency, purposeful expression, and sound research are required. Delivery should be extemporaneous. Students should verbally cite a minimum of five, credible sources.

Persuasive

Presentation of 6-8 minutes should build argumentation targeting a specific audience/context. Presentations should include clearly stated thesis and claims, adequate evidence, sound reasoning, audience orientation, purposeful movement, effective organization, and expressive/connective delivery. Students should verbally cite a minimum of five, credible sources.

Group

General purpose may be for informing, persuading, entertaining, or addressing a special occasion. The presentation should be relevant, unified, organized, polished, and extemporaneous.

10.1.7 Grading

Normed rubrics for informative and persuasive assignments are available in the assignment library. Using the rubric to determine grades maintains consistency across sections of DWR courses. Please use normed categories and criteria to enhance assessment outcomes. If you wish to add categories or criteria you may, but please do not remove any. Other rubric assignments are also available in the assignment library but are not normed.

Please share rubrics with students at the beginning of each unit. The goal is to provide grades and feedback to students within one week of presentations.

10.2 SPCH 105: Business and Professional Speech

Contents

- *Course Description*
- *Course Design*
- *Required Course Materials*
- *Assignment Sequence*
- *Assignment Weights*
- *Core Assignment Descriptions*
- *Grading*

10.2.1 Course Description

Speech 105 is a practical introduction to the principles and skills of effective communication in business and professional settings. The course includes frequent performances in business situations requiring effective communication practices.

10.2.2 Course Design

SPCH 105 is a skills-building course, which allows students repeated opportunities to work through the professional presentation process, communicate and work in small groups, build interview skills, and practice effective dyadic and intrapersonal communication. The assignment-based design engages the presentation process in varied contexts a minimum of five times. Reading, discussion, and quizzes occur throughout the course to enhance memory and understanding of core concepts. Peer coaching and/or review, as well as post-presentation journaling enhance analysis and evaluation.

An online version is not currently being offered but is being developed. The online version will explore professional communication using virtual tools in an authentic manner.

Sample Syllabus

[Sample Syllabus](#)

10.2.3 Required Course Materials

Spch 105 is part of the [Z-degree option](#). An Open Educational Resource is provided for use in the Assignment Library. Please share the materials via Blackboard.

10.2.4 Assignment Sequence

See Also

[SPCH 105 Assignment Library](#)

The following series of speech assignments allow students to repeat the process of conceiving, researching, organizing, developing, practicing and presenting in professional contexts throughout the course. Instructors may use the sequence below or sequence can be rearranged so long as: 1) at least one short presentation precedes longer presentations and 2) the informative precedes the persuasive. When developing sequence consider how each assignment will inform the next.

1. **Two short presentations**, such as a briefing, an elevator pitch, or panel presentation, orient students to the process (2-4 minutes).
2. **Aninformative presentation** relevant to a specific professional context furthers research and analysis of self, audience, and topic, as well as increasing organizational expectations (5-7 minutes). A Q & A should follow the presentation to enhance interview/response skills.
3. **Apersuasive presentation** relevant to a professional context explores the fundamentals of argumentation, as well as enhances content evaluation and organizational skills (6-8 minutes). A Q & A should follow the presentation to enhance interview/response skills.
4. **A small group assignment**, presenting the results of a challenging group assignment, may be informative or persuasive and adds problem-solving, small group communication, and group performance to the speech process.

5. An **interview assignment** may require a live, virtual, and/or print deliverable. The interview unit should cover types of interviews in the workplace, preparing to ask and answer questions, as well as practice with Q & A. The instructor may choose the type of interview students will use for application or instructors may allow the students to choose based on their interests and needs.

Types of interviews

- Information-gathering/research
- Diagnostic (viable option for students majoring in STEM fields)
- Selection (prep and practice should focus on screening interview)
- Performance
- Disciplinary (viable option for an upper level Business Administration major)
- Entertainment/Journalistic (i.e., radio interview or informing the press; viable for performing arts, sports majors, or public policy majors)

The type of interview assigned will determine deliverables due.

Example 1: An instructor may assign an information gathering interview in preparation of an informative or persuasive topic. The deliverables might be transcripts and analysis of the interview, as well as a survey response from the interviewee assessing the student's interview skills.

Example 2: For a diagnostic interview, the deliverable might be finding/sharing a case study of an unusual issue, submitting an analysis of the case, and the suggested diagnostic approach for similar cases in future. The student would share the diagnostic plan with a professor or professional in the field and interview the professor/professional to receive feedback on the plan. The interviewee would complete a survey assessing the student's interview skills.

Note: More short presentations or assignments may be added wherever instructors find the assignments most useful for their individual curriculum.

10.2.5 Assignment Weights

- **Short presentations** should equal 10% of semester/term grade.
- **Long Presentations** (Informative, Persuasive) should equal 35% of semester/term grade.
- **Group/Team Assignment** should equal 15% of semester/term grade.
- **Interview Assignments** should equal 15% of semester/term grade.
- **Written Assessments** (Quizzes, Tests, Outlines, etc.) should equal 10–15% of semester/term grade.
- **Participation** (Journals, Peer reviews, Discussion) should equal 10–15% of semester/term grade.

10.2.6 Core Assignment Descriptions

Informative

Presentation of 5-7 minutes should be relevant to a professional context, as well as provide relevant, accurate information. Evidence of audience orientation, sound organization, effective language, verbal fluency, purposeful expression, and sound research are required. Delivery should be extemporaneous.

Persuasive

Presentation of 6-8 minutes should be relevant to a specific professional context, as well as build argumentation targeting a specific audience/context. Clearly stated thesis and claims, adequate evidence, sound reasoning, audience orientation, purposeful movement, effective organization, and expressive, connective delivery are required.

Group Project

The group project should be a problem-solving project with a deliverable. A presentation regarding process and/or results should involve all group members. The presentation should be relevant, unified, organized, polished, and extemporaneous. The presentation may be live or mediated.

Interview

The interview assignment may be a simulation presentation, a project submission (i.e. kiosk-style demonstration or how-to video), or an assigned topic for a core/required presentation (i.e., information gathering for an informative). At minimum, the interview assignment should measure students' understanding of interview type, recognition of purpose/context, and ability to prepare and apply for type of interview assigned. Preparation phase should include setting, Q & A, and dress.

10.2.7 Grading

Rubrics for informative and persuasive presentations are normed and available in the assignment library. Rubrics for interview and group will be developed as part of the OER project and should be available by mid-August 2019. Please share the rubric with students at the beginning of each unit. Using the rubric to determine grades provides consistency across sections of DWR courses. The goal is to provide grades and feedback to students within one week of presentations.

10.3 SPCH 210: The Art of the Interview

Contents

- *Course Description*
- *Course Design*
- *Required Course Materials*
- *Course Sequence*
- *Core Assignments*
- *Grading*

10.3.1 Course Description

Speech 210 (1cr) provides intensive skills training to prepare students for job interviews. Particular attention is given to tailoring application materials and increasing virtual presentation skills. Two versions of the course currently exist – full 15-week and 7-week mini-mester.

10.3.2 Course Design

Spch 210 is designed as an intensive, skills-based course focused on deliverables. By the end of the course, students should have engaged in a variety of interview processes and created job search materials, which should be useful as they engage in future employment endeavors. The course allows students repeated opportunities to engage six phases of job interviewing: 1) analyzing career opportunities, 2) examining the role of social media, 3) building a network, 4) tailoring a cover letter and resume to a specific position, 5) identifying types of interview questions, 6) constructing responses to common interview questions during telephone, video, and live, virtual interviews.

Sample Syllabus

- [Sample Syllabus](#)
 - [Sample Calendar](#)
-

10.3.3 Required Course Materials

No text is required. All resources should be freely available online or embedded in the course website.

10.3.4 Course Sequence

Unit 1: Beginning the Search

1. Syllabus Quiz
2. Introduction video/discussion
3. SOAR analysis and discussion (including worksheets & job/internship announcement)

Unit 2: Self-marketing via Social Media

1. 30-second commercial
2. LinkedIn Page (including worksheets)
3. Discussion board/peer review

Unit 3: Screening Materials

1. Targeted cover letter
2. Targeted resume

Unit 4: Virtual Interviewing

Please use the following sequence for the interviews.

1. InterviewStream & peer review
2. Telephone interview & exit discussion
3. Skype-type interview & exit discussion

10.3.5 Core Assignments

See Also

SPCH 210 Assignment Library

Assignment Weights

Title	Weight
Introduction video and discussion True	10%
Syllabus quiz	5%
SOAR analysis and discussion	10%
30-second commercial (i.e., elevator pitch) & discussion	10%
LinkedIn Page & peer review	15%
Cover Letter and resume	15%
InterviewStream & peer review	10%
Telephone Interview	10%
Final (Skype-type) Interview	15%

Introduction video and discussion

The introduction video serves two purposes: 1) to lay the ground work for an online, learning community and 2) to assess the current video/camera, presentation skills of students. The video should be two to three minutes, and students should be asked to make a favorable first impression and encouraged to respond to each other's posts.

Syllabus quiz

To ensure students have read and understand the course policies and procedures, require a syllabus quiz by the end of the first week.

SOAR analysis and discussion

The SOAR analysis is an off-shoot of the analysis method used in some businesses. Students select a specific job or internship to pursue during the course. Students should be qualified for the position and analyze their strengths in relation to the position and the hiring organization, the opportunities the position will provide for advancing career goals, how personal aspirations connect to the position, and finally their readiness to take on the position. Students should discuss each other's analysis.

30-second commercial

A fully edited video introduction with good production values, the "commercial" can last 30-60 seconds and is essentially an elevator pitch, which will form the foundation for career fair introductions, LinkedIn summaries, and cover letters. The content should express central ideas discovered in the SOAR analysis.

LinkedIn Page

Students should demonstrate an ability to engage the interest of future employers by crafting an audience-oriented profile and listing relevant experience and media.

Cover Letter and Resume

The cover letter and resume should be targeted to the position or internship the students chose at the beginning of the semester. On the page, students should demonstrate ability to organize and arrange material for easy flow. Special attention should be given to organization, format, content, proofing, and concision.

InterviewStream & discussion

Instructors will make a 5-10 question interview appropriate to the position the student has chosen. Students should demonstrate competency for verbal and nonverbal language and technical ability. Students should peer review or discuss the InterviewStream videos.

Telephone Interview

Instructors will create an individual interview, screening script to engage each student with questions appropriate to the position the student has chosen to pursue.

Final (Skype-type) Interview

Students will create a short presentation in response to a prompt, which should be appropriate for the position being pursued. The presentation should demonstrate oral and virtual communication skills, as well as a conversation starter. Questions for this interview are more flexible and responsive.

Worksheets

Provide necessary preparation for core assignments. During the minimester format, some students may have difficulty turning in worksheets in time for meaningful feedback before an assignment deadline. You may schedule worksheets and/or include the worksheets in the overall scoring; you may also give students the option to turn in worksheets by a set date if the student desires feedback (but not require the worksheets be turned in). Turning in worksheets during the 15-week course is advised to keep students engaged and motivated.

Discussion Boards

Provide social learning and peer-to-peer feedback opportunities. Consider prompts that will challenge students to provide meaningful commentary.

10.3.6 Grading

Rubrics for each project are available in the assignment library. Please share the rubric with students at the beginning of each unit. Please submit the rubric to Blackboard grades to help with departmental assessment. Using the rubric to determine grades also provides consistency across sections of DWR courses. The goal is to provide grades and feedback to students within one week of presentations.

WRITING COURSES

11.1 WRIT 100/101

Contents

- *Course Design*
- *Required Texts*
- *Suggested Assignment Sequence*
- *Major Projects*
- *Grading*

11.1.1 Course Design

Writing 100/101 is designed as an introductory course to academic writing featuring genres commonly used in other academic situations such as analysis, argument, and reflection. Students choose to take either Writing 100 or Writing 101 and then move into Writing 102 or Liberal Arts 102 after successful completion of either course; they are not placed into either course by test score or writing sample.

Sample Syllabi

- [Standard Curriculum](#)
 - [NYT Curriculum](#)
 - [NPR Curriculum](#)
-

11.1.2 Required Texts

Standard Curriculum:

- *The Writer's Practice*
- Common Reading Experience Text
- UM RhetLab modules

New York Times Curriculum:

- Semester-long subscription to *The New York Times*
- Common Reading Experience Text
- UM RhetLab modules
- *The Writer's Practice* (optional)

NPR Curriculum

- Access to the internet and the NPR website
- Common Reading Experience Text
- UM RhetLab modules
- *The Writer's Practice* (optional)

11.1.3 Suggested Assignment Sequence

The suggested assignment sequence is as follows: Common Reading Text project, Analysis, Argument, Multimodal, Commonplace Book. The Common Reading Text project emphasizes the critical reading, critical thinking, analysis, research, and synthesis skills that are vital to college writing. This project is the ideal starting point because the assignment is based on the Common Reading Text, which students are given over the summer. With related campus events, the Common Reading Text can help teachers establish a community of readers and writers. The next project, the Analysis, helps students build the critical thinking skills they need to write analytically in many of the other assignments, both in Writing 100/101 and across the university. The Argument strengthens students' research skills by asking them to work with outside sources and utilize the University library. The Multimodal project, which is a sort of revision or rethinking of a previous paper, takes place later in the semester. The Commonplace Book is an ongoing, semester-long project that requires students to reflect on their learning and writing practices.

See Also

WRIT 100/101 Assignment Library

11.1.4 Major Projects

Students are expected to complete five major units, each of which comprises critical reading and response, a drafting process, and reflection. In at least three of the units, students should be assigned a short timed-writing exercise as part of the writing process. A brief overview of each project, with a description of the areas students usually struggle with, is provided below. (Click the arrow next to the project title to expand).

Common Reading Text Project

The Common Reading Text project emphasizes the critical reading, critical thinking, analysis, research, and synthesis skills that are vital to college writing. Students respond to one of the prompts included in the annual Common Reading Resource Guide.

Areas to Highlight

Some students may not have read or finished the source text and will benefit from a pre-semester reminder to read the book. They may have limited experience with reading/interpreting a writing prompt. Students will have varied experience in analysis and argument, and most will have little experience with synthesizing texts/voices. Students may also not be familiar with extensive drafting and the rigor of college expectations. The Common Reading Text Project is roughly a two and one-half week unit.

Analysis

In analysis, students examine an issue or an artifact's component parts to understand how it makes meaning. Analysis is roughly a three-week unit.

Areas to Highlight

Many students don't have much experience with analysis and often have difficulty moving past summary. Some are unaccustomed to examining individual parts of an issue or an artifact and may need guidance in breaking down the whole. Often, students struggle with identifying an analytic thesis that answers the questions how, why, and/or so what. Once students have a draft in place, the most common problems are organization and focus. It is not uncommon for a student to try to cover many different ideas. These writers need help organizing their thoughts and focusing their essays. Students sometimes struggle with providing enough specific evidence to support their analyses. These writers may need to be alerted to areas that would benefit from additional evidence.

Argument

In argument, students make a claim and support that claim with evidence. While instructors may assign for this project different types of argument, the essay should require background information on the topic as context for the argument, a clearly-expressed main claim, evidence, and refutation of counter-arguments. Argument is roughly a four-week unit.

Areas to Highlight

Students often need help narrowing a topic to a specific, debatable claim. Some students struggle to provide enough specific evidence to support their claims and need help locating and evaluating sources. Students often need help integrating quoted material and paraphrases into their texts as well as documenting their sources. Students may also need help considering opposing viewpoints or counterarguments and refutation.

Multimodal

In the multimodal assignment, students re-work or re-think an earlier project in a different mode or medium. Multimodal is roughly a two-week project.

Areas to Highlight

Students often don't recognize that a change in mode or medium requires a change in technique, so they need help in understanding how electronic, visual, or spoken text is different from print text and, thus, how to think about audience. Students may also need help with unfamiliar technology.

Commonplace Book

The commonplace book is a personalized space for recording, organizing, and reflecting on a student's learning. This semester-long project incorporates daily, weekly, and unit reflections, culminating in a final reflective post.

Areas to Highlight

Students are generally unfamiliar with self-reflection and metacognition and need many opportunities throughout the semester to practice. Many will need help with being more specific about their learning. Students may have difficulty demonstrating their progress, or lack thereof, through examples, often resorting to more telling than showing. Students may also struggle to understand how tagging can be a mechanism to represent the larger structures of their learning.

11.1.5 Grading

Rubrics for each project are available on the assignment library. Sharing the rubric with students at the beginning of each unit, and using the rubric to determine the project's final grade, helps students understand the expectations for each project and the reasons for the final grade. Using the rubric to determine grades also provides consistency across sections of DWR courses. Projects should be graded and returned within one week of submission.

11.2 Corequisite WRIT 101

See Also

- *WRIT 100/101 Teaching Guide*
 - *WRIT 100/101 Assignment Library*
-

Contents

- *About the Corequisite Course*
- *Active/Rhetorical Reading*
- *Analysis*
- *Argument*
- *Attendance and Prompt Arrival*
- *Revision*
- *Sources*
- *Thesis*
- *Vocabulary*

11.2.1 About the Corequisite Course

Corequisite Writing 100 combines the DWR's introductory course to academic writing, Writing 100, with a corequisite course, designed to support students' work in Writing 100 while simultaneously fulfilling the DS 98 requirement. Corequisite Writing 100 meets five days per week, with Writing 100 scheduled on M/W/F and the corequisite course scheduled on T/Th. Upon successful completion of the course, students move into Writing 102 or Liberal Arts 102.

The corequisite course mirrors the sequence of Writing 100 with a focus on drafting and revising the major projects as well as journaling, discussing readings, working in small groups, and examining ways to improve writing.

The grade for the corequisite course is comprised equally of attendance, preparation, participation, and the journal.

See Also

[Corequisite Pacing Guide](#)

11.2.2 Active/Rhetorical Reading

[Sofa to 5k: Active Reading](#)(from Florida State; suggested time is 40 minutes): This exercise demonstrates the relationship between active-reading and efficient-reading.

[Active Reading Before and After](#)(from Texas State; suggested time is 30 minutes): This exercise asks students to consider and improve reading techniques, as well as demonstrating the benefits of active reading to retention and comprehension capability.

[Reading Retention](#)(from John Gardner and Betsy Barefoot; suggested time is 30 minutes): This exercise highlights a retention strategy in relation to the transition to college and helping students persist in the first year.

[Active Reading Practice: Speed Dating Style](#)(from Texas State; suggested time is 25 minutes): This exercise allows students to gain an appreciation for the variety of opportunities to engage with a common text, as well as to gain comfort in sharing with one another, especially early in the semester.

[Double Entry Notebook](#)(adapted from the Hacker Handbook; suggested time is 45 minutes): This exercise helps students identify, analyze, and respond to key passages and/or ideas within a text.

[Making Active Reading Work for You: Designing a Textual Interrogation](#)(from Texas State; suggested time is 25 minutes): This exercise helps students gain insight into personalized learning methods and meta-awareness of one's relationship to a text.

11.2.3 Analysis

[A Helpful Breakdown of an Analysis Paragraph](#)(suggested time is 10-20 minutes): This exercise helps students recognize the elements of an analysis paragraph.

[Ad Analysis](#) (from Writing Commons, time varies according to reading): These readings include some exercises and questions pertaining to ad analysis.

[“Analyzing Advertisements”](#) (from The University of Southern Florida; time is 3 minutes and 32 seconds): This YouTube video gives a summary of rhetorical appeals and the rhetorical triangle.

[Analyzing Artifacts](#)(from learner.org, suggested time is 10-15 minutes): This exercise gives practice in close examination of a physical object.

Artifact and Analysis(from Smithsonian, time varies according to exercise): These exercises relate to analyzing a physical object.

Audience Analysis(from Writing Commons, time varies according to reading): These readings include some exercises and questions pertaining to audience analysis.

Conducting a Spatial Analysis through the Lens of Universal Design(from Writing Commons, suggested time is 30+ minutes): This reading and exercise gives students information about and practice in conducting a spatial analysis.

Instructions for Newspaper Analysis(from Bears Den English, suggested time is 30-45 minutes): This exercise gives students practice in analyzing a news article.

Persuading an Audience Using Ethos, Pathos, and Logos(from The New York Times Learning Network, suggested time is 30-45 minutes): In this activity, students explore how writers use ethos, logos, and pathos to persuade an audience.

Rhetoric (from Writing Commons, time varies according to reading): These readings include some exercises and questions pertaining to rhetorical appeals, logical fallacies, and rhetoric in general.

“Rhetorical Analysis of Taylor Swift’s Blank Space” (from www.teachargument.com; time is 15 minutes and 53 seconds): This YouTube video models the close reading and critical thinking required in analysis.

Rhetorical Mad Libs(from Stanford; suggested time is 50 minutes): This activity encourages students to think about audience when writing a rhetorical analysis.

“What is Analysis” (from The Seahorse Project; time is 2 minutes and 25 seconds): This YouTube video defines analysis and gives some concrete strategies.

11.2.4 Argument

Problem/Solution Process Guide(adapted from The Writer’s Practice by John Warner, suggested time is several class periods): These guided questions help students reflect on their choices as they compose the argument project.

Invention/Brainstorming: Writing can Lead to Change (suggested time is 30-45 minutes): These articles showcase how one researcher, a 12-year-old girl, asked an interesting question and changed the video game industry.

Brainstorming: Head, Heart, Hand (suggested time is 20 minutes): These questions help students brainstorm potential research interests.

Information Literacy and Research: Authorial Biases (suggested time is 50-60 minutes): This short reading and handout helps students who are evaluating sources consider the question of authorial biases.

Counter-argument Exercise: Modeling “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (suggested time is 50-75 minutes): This reading/writing assignment gives students practice in crafting counterarguments.

11.2.5 Attendance and Prompt Arrival

Bellringers(suggested time is 3-5 minutes at the beginning of class): This exercise reinforces the importance of attendance and getting to class on time.

11.2.6 Revision

Modeled Grading(suggested time is 20-30 minutes): Through this exercise, students become aware of how writing is perceived by an evaluator, as well as common grammatical pitfalls

11.2.7 Sources

Incorporating Textual Evidence(from [teacheroffduty](#), suggested time is 30-45 minutes): This exercise provides practice in the conventions of source integration.

Integrating Evidence Modeling Activity(suggested time is 30-45 minutes): This exercise provides practice in integrating through quotation, summary, and paraphrase.

11.2.8 Thesis

Brainstorming and Thesis Development Exercise(from Texas State; suggested time is 60 minutes): This activity uses brainstorming to help students move toward developing a thesis.

Putting Theses to the Test(from Texas State; suggested time is 60 minutes): This activity allows students to practice identifying what makes a thesis statement strong versus weak and why.

Thesis Speed Dating(from Texas State; suggested time is 45-60 minutes): This exercise provides practice for students in evaluating thesis statements and talking with other writers about their work.

Thesis Statement Activity(from Excelsior OWL; suggested time is 5-10 minutes): Use this activity to check general knowledge of thesis statements.

11.2.9 Vocabulary

Possible Sentences(from Moore and Moore, *Reading in the Content Areas*; suggested time is 30-45 minutes): This simple strategy improves recall of vocabulary and comprehension of the text containing that vocabulary.

11.3 WRIT 102

See Also

WRIT 102 Resource Guide

Contents

- *Course Design*
- *Required Texts*
- *Assignment Sequence*
- *Major Projects*
- *Themes*
- *Grading*

11.3.1 Course Design

WRIT 102 (First-Year Writing II) is a theme-based, first-year, second-semester writing course designed to build on writing skills learned in either WRIT 100 or WRIT 101 and develop critical thinking and research skills appropriate for use in academic writing. The course pays special attention to developing argumentative skills, analyzing texts, and synthesizing information into thoughtful, coherent essays and projects.

The five themes are Business, Environment, Food, Pop Culture, and Power/Privilege. Each theme will use different readings from different textbooks, but the learning outcomes of the course and the assignments remain the same. The prerequisite for WRIT 102 is the successful completion (at least a D) in WRIT 100/101 or other similar course or AP credit. Classes are limited to 21 students. WRIT 102 is similar to LIBA 102 in that both fulfill the same requirements for graduation; Students will take either WRIT 102 or LIBA 102, but should not take both.

Each WRIT 102 instructor will be assigned a subject librarian who can lead or assist instruction in using library services. WRIT 102 instructors should coordinate with this librarian by sharing assignments and learning goals. It is courteous for instructors to stay with the class during this instruction period. If instructors plan to miss class during this library visit, they should arrange to have another W&R instructor there. The librarians have also created [courses pages for WRIT 102](#) which can be found here.

Instructors should hold at least one mandatory conference with students. It is recommended that this is done during the research paper drafts. Instructors may cancel classes to hold these conferences but cancellations should be comparable to the number of courses one teaches and should not extend beyond one week.

As is the case in every writing course, peer review and timely instructor feedback are important to student success.

Sample Syllabus

[Sample WRIT 102 Syllabus](#)

11.3.2 Required Texts

Each Theme has a Separate Textbook

Theme	Book
Business	<i>Money</i> , Fountainhead Press
Environment	<i>American Earth</i> , Library of America
Food	<i>Food: A Reader for Writers</i> , Oxford University Press (spring: Food Common Read)
Power & Privilege	<i>Rereading *America</i> , 10th edition, Bedford/St. Martins
Pop Culture	<i>Reading Pop Culture: A Portable Anthology</i> , 2nd edition, Bedford/St. Martin's

11.3.3 Assignment Sequence

WRIT 102 has six major assignments in roughly this sequence: Analysis, Synthesis, In-Class, Research, Multimodal, Commonplace Book. Each paper assignment should teach fundamentals of academic writing, including learning to find and evaluate sources, learning how to integrate and cite these sources correctly, and learning how to create a unique thesis in response to these sources.

See Also

[WRIT 102 Assignment Library](#)

11.3.4 Major Projects

Students compose six major projects. A brief overview of each project, with a description of the areas students usually struggle with, is provided below.

Analysis

Paper #1 is an analysis of a single text. This can be a response paper to an author's argument or a profile or analysis of a person, place, or thing. It should be 3-4 pages with at least a single entry on the Works Cited page and is worth 10-15% of the student's final grade.

Areas to Highlight

This assignment will help students learn to look closely at a text (academic or otherwise) and begin the fundamentals of quoting and citation. Because some students may have had a disruption in time between a WRIT 100/101/equivalent course and a WRIT 102 course, it is recommended that instructors go over thesis statements and paragraph construction. Students may also need help in understanding the difference between summary and analysis.

Synthesis

Paper #2 is a synthesis paper where students weigh at least two different arguments and synthesize a thesis in relation to these arguments. The skills learned in the synthesis paper should support the work done for the research paper. To that end, the WRIT 102 curriculum committee has offered two different tracks for the synthesis paper in the assignment library, with the recognition that these approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The first track practices locating, evaluating, and synthesizing sources, and the second track, focuses on developing a unique position in response to given texts. For either track, students should engage with 2-3 sources and practice citation in a 4-5 page paper. The Synthesis paper is worth 15-20% of the student's final grade.

This is probably the most difficult assignment in the WRIT 102 sequence. Students are confused about what defines a synthesis essay because it does not fit into familiar and practiced models of writing. The WRIT 102 committee, after lengthy discussions, essentially agrees with this assessment because of our own divergent opinions. See the WRIT 102 synthesis in the assignment library for more information on this discussion and the committee's conclusion.

Areas to Highlight

Instructors should go over plagiarism issues such as correct citation and using paraphrases as well as other skills that will help students succeed in the research paper. Students struggle with balancing their sources; students may also have trouble maintaining their writing voice in relation to the sources. If using two sources, students may need help in avoiding a compare and contrast paper.

In-Class Essay

The in-class essay is a timed writing exercise where students may do similar work as in papers 1 and 2 in that students might be asked to respond to a particular text or argument or evaluate a text's argument. This may be related to paper #3, the research paper. The in-class essay is worth 5-10% of the student's final grade.

Areas to Highlight

Timed writing can be intimidating to many students. Going over strategies to alleviate stress will be useful for this assignment and for future timed writing situations. Further, students may believe the writing process does not apply

to timed essays but instructors should model how to use brainstorming/outlining, drafting, and revision in this context, with special attention to time management. Students who do not do well in this assignment often do not prepare for the in-class essay or do not read the prompt carefully. Instructors may also opt for a practice timed essay in class. Students who need special accommodation should provide the appropriate paperwork from [Student Disability Services](#).

Research Paper

Paper #3 is the research paper where students will develop a research question relevant to the class theme. This paper should be 7-9 pages and use at least seven credible sources. This assignment is worth 25% of the student's final grade.

Areas to Highlight

This is the most intimidating assignment for students. Many of them may have never written this length of paper. Some may have only written an “informational” research paper and not an argumentative one. Since the class spends nearly a month of class periods on this assignment, the sequence of homework assignments, in-class work, and other elements of the process are important to a student's success. Emphasize their many avenues of support – the instructor, their peers, the consultants in the Writing Center, and the reference librarians.

Multimodal

The multimodal assignment revises the research paper into another mode. This assignment is worth 10-15% of the student's final grade.

Areas to Highlight

This assignment is perhaps the most individualized by theme; however, problems with technology will be the biggest issue. Instructors should take advantage of Andrew Davis (Lamar Hall Ste. B, Rm 1) to learn how to teach the technology to students. Instructors should keep in mind that this assignment can be as low or high tech as wanted.

In general, since this assignment is most often paired with the research papers, students may be tired of their subject or be reluctant to cut their papers. Further, failures in the paper version may translate to problems with the multimodal project. Try to return the research paper back as quickly as possible to alleviate this issue and try not to double-penalize them.

Commonplace Book

The commonplace book is a personalized space for recording, organizing, and reflecting on a student's learning. This semester-long project incorporates daily, weekly, and unit reflections, culminating in a final reflective post. This assignment is worth 15% of the student's final grade.

Areas to Highlight

Students are generally unfamiliar with self-reflection and metacognition and need many opportunities throughout the semester to practice. Many will need help with being more specific about their learning. Students may have difficulty demonstrating their progress, or lack thereof, through examples, often resorting to more telling than showing. Students may also struggle to understand how tagging can be a mechanism to represent the larger structures of their learning.

11.3.5 Themes

There are five themes for WRIT 102. Each theme is based on the same assignment sequence and outcomes, but may use different texts.

Pop Culture

We are surrounded by a constant stream of pop culture from films, music, television, social media, advertising, and many other media. But how often do we stop to ask ourselves what it all means? In this theme of WRIT 102, we will examine the various ways in which we influence and are influenced by pop culture. Some questions we may attempt to answer are: How are we affected by advertising? What can we learn from television, film, and music? What are the roles of race and gender in popular culture? Students should come into this course prepared to examine critically and thoroughly a variety of media and sources that are often disregarded or taken for granted.

Required Texts:

- Maasik, Sonia and Jack Solomon, eds. *Signs of Life in the USA: Readings on Popular Culture for Writers*. 8th Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012.
 - Reading Pop Culture: A Portable Anthology,* 2nd edition, Bedford/St. Martin's
-

Power and Privilege

Systems of power and privilege create more than just acts of discrimination in our culture, and yet these systems are invisible to many people. This course, through a variety of readings, videos, and supplemental material, will attempt to uncover and analyze the ways Power/Privilege manifest in the U.S. through issues of race, gender, class, ability, sexual orientation, and others. Students will learn to engage this material through rhetorical techniques and strategies in a way that enables them to join these cultural and social justice conversations with conviction and credibility. The course may explore such questions as: How does socioeconomic status from an early age impact one's path in life? Why is it so challenging to discuss systemic issues of racism in America? How do traditional gender roles hurt American men?

Required Texts:

- Columbo, Gary, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle. *Rereading America* 10th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016.
 - Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer's Reference with Writing in the Disciplines*. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011
-

Food

This WRIT 102 class explores writings and arguments about food in the United States. Among many topics, we may read about the beginnings of food and the politics of the planting, growing, and cultivation of meat and vegetables, exploring such questions such as "should farmers receive corn subsidies?" and "should there be government regulation on genetically modified foods?" We may then study the effects that food has on those who eat it. We may explore such questions as "How and why has our diet changed over time?" and "What has contributed to the obesity epidemic in Mississippi?"

Required Texts:

- Rollins, Brooke and Lee Bauknight, eds. *Food* Southlake, TX: Fountainhead Press, 2011.
-

- *Food: A Reader for Writers* Oxford University Press (Spring Semesters- SFA/DWR Common Read)
 - **For Spring only:** Common read co-sponsored by the Southern Foodways Alliance and the DWR.
-

Environment

What is the meaning of ecology and nature? What counts as an environment? How do current issues about our environment affect our daily lives? How do we begin to connect with and investigate the real issues of impacting local ecologies and environments? We will read and analyze a variety of genres—literary, social commentary, cultural analyses, theory, and philosophy that relate to our theme.

Required Texts:

- McKibben, Bill, ed. *American Earth: Environmental Writing since Thoreau*. Library of America, 2008
 - Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer's Reference with Writing in the Disciplines*. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.
-

Business

How many economic decisions have you made today? From what you had for breakfast to what you decided to wear to class, your choices have been influenced by businesses, both local and global. But there may be some issues of which you are many not even be aware. In this class we will explore a variety of questions related to business, including, but not limited to: is Wal-Mart good for America? Should corporations have the same legal rights as that of an individual person? Is out-sourcing jobs a good idea? What ethical obligations does a business have to the environment? to our health? to the nation?

Required Texts:

- Gillam, Kenneth M, ed. *Money*. Southlake, TX: Fountainhead Press, 2011.
 - Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer's Reference with Writing in the Disciplines*. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.
-
-

11.3.6 Grading

Rubrics for each project are available on the assignment library. There is a general essay rubric which can be used with papers 1, 2, 3, and the in-class essay. The multimodal and ePortfolio project have separate rubrics.

Sharing the rubric with students at the beginning of each unit, and using the rubric to determine the project's final grade, helps students understand the expectations for each project and the reasons for the final grade. Using the rubric to determine grades also provides consistency across sections of Writing courses. Projects should be graded within one week of submission.

11.4 WRIT 102 Resource Guide

Contents

- *Introduction*
- *Classroom Management*
- *Feedback on Papers*
- *Pacing of the Semester*
- *Grading*

11.4.1 Introduction

This guide is for first time instructors and was created in response to suggestions by former instructors. It has three primary functions.

Assignment sheets, rubrics, and other materials will be in the Assignment Library.

Handbook Replacement

Because WRIT 102 no longer uses a handbook, we thought this guide would be helpful to new instructors for collecting resources that they could use in the classroom.

See Also

Two open educational resources that you can use in addition to this guide.

- [Marc Watkins's WRIT 102 OER Collection](#)
 - [Excelsior OWL](#)
-

Troubleshooting Guide

The committee also drew on their experiences in the 102 classroom to pull together a troubleshooting guide about areas we noticed that our students consistently struggle with.

Class Management

Because new instructors sometimes find it challenging to pace out a class meeting, we have created detailed class plans that should give you a rough idea of how long different class activities might take. These instructional guides are not mandatory; we invite you to modify any materials based on your comfort and your learning goals for each class.

How to Use this Guide

Includes a weekly and daily calendar for both MWF and T/R classes. It will also reference documents in the assignment library as well as links to Open Educational Resources in [Excelsior OWL](#) and [Marc Watkins's WRIT 102 OER Collection](#).

11.4.2 Classroom Management

Contributed by Charlsie Haire

- Although students are very proficient at using SnapChat and Instagram, they may not be able to submit an assignment to the correct submission box on Blackboard. It's worth spending two minutes of class to show them exactly where to submit each major assignment.
- Many international students may not know how to paraphrase appropriately but are usually aware of this weakness. Some domestic students may not know how to paraphrase either but are more prone to think that practicing this skill is a waste of time. Explaining your rationale for repeating something that students may or may not have learned in high school may increase their motivation for completing activities like this.
- Students may be vocal about their frustrations with class activities and grades during class, which is not an ideal time to have a discussion about such matters. To avoid this, consider adding a clause in your syllabus expressing that you value their thoughts/opinions/suggestions/questions about grades and activities but to come to your office if they'd like to have discussions about these topics.
- College students still use the "my dog ate my homework" excuse, but now it's the "I left my homework in my dorm" excuse. You don't have to make an exception to accept late work for this excuse.
- There will always be one or two students who come to office hours every time you offer them. These students either want you to do everything for them or are "straight A" students who have a question about a comma.
- Have an activity/assignment or two ready to post to BB or send to a colleague in case an emergency prevents you from attending class on short notice. You could have a "back-pocket" activity/assignment for each theme or could have a few "general" back-pocket activities such as creating effective titles, practice with citations, etc.
- You probably care more about some students' progress than they do. Try to find a balance between "hand-holding" and teaching them to be responsible.

WRIT 102 Units

- **Analysis:** Even though students completed an analysis assignment in 100/101, some students may still think the first assignment is a summary. It's helpful to have a "summary vs. analysis" day during this unit.
 - **Synthesis:** Spending a good bit of time looking at sample papers for the synthesis assignment is a good idea, as many students will think they understand the assignment description but may not.
 - **Research:** As tempting as it may be, you can't try to talk about every bit of a paper in a 15-minute conference.
 - **Multimodal:** This assignment doesn't have to be complicated.
 - **CPB:** Ensuring that you save enough time at the end of class for CPB posts or that you begin classes with these will reinforce the value of reflection and will also lead to fewer missed posts on the CPB. Be sure that you emphasize that this is a semester-long project at the beginning of the semester.
-

11.4.3 Feedback on Papers

Providing effective feedback is an ongoing challenge in the writing classroom and there are a number of scholarly essays that explore this area. Novice writers often resist revision. You will find that students may change surface level errors when pointed out and will seem unwilling or unable to change deeper, global concerns. Part of this resistance is seeing first draft as “last draft.” I often tell students that good writing seems like no effort at all and so students strive for a perfect first draft without understanding the process that went into it. You can then imagine that they often feel like failed writers because their first drafts are so weak (the essay, “Shitty First Drafts,” might help alleviate this approach). Students will probably also not understand a number of your comments and will look at the feedback you provide as a code to be deciphered in order to “give what the teacher wants.” Be mindful of this as you leave comments on the paper and try to be consistent in what you say, referencing terms and lessons from class (to create a shared vocabulary).

It’s always good to give some kind of feedback on student writing during the process. You can do a full draft with comments or you can spotcheck different areas like thesis, introduction, etc. During the research paper, however, you should conference with students and review a draft, checking for issues with sources. This a good time to review the draft for any potential plagiarism problems.

The style of commenting may depend on the needs of the student. Some students will need more directive comments (specific suggestions for how to revise a sentence or paragraph) to help them improve. Others thrive on facilitative comments (open-ended questions to get the student thinking about their paper). Some are overwhelmed with the number of comments while others like a lot. You might consider asking students for what kind of comments they like.

Consider this question when commenting on student papers: What was the student trying to achieve and how can my comment help them achieve that? Focus on your student as a writer.

Good practices

1. Make the reading of comments be a reflective practice. Students often receive their graded papers and then do not read the comments. In fact, Underwood & Tregidgo (2006) recommend that grades and comments be given separately. Students see comments as a justification for the grade rather than help with future writing situations. These authors offer a number of good practices in their conclusion.
2. Students like positive comments, and it has been shown that such comments make students feel better about writing in general. Their writing, however, does not show much improvement. In summative comments, it’s a good idea to provide a good comment that acknowledges their work.

Underwood, Jody S., & Tregidgo, Alyson P. (2006). [Improving student writing through effective feedback: Best practices and recommendations](#). *Journal of Teaching Writing*, 22(2), 73-97.

11.4.4 Pacing of the Semester

WRIT 102 is a fast-paced class. It is tempting to spend more time on the analysis and synthesis units as some students will still struggle with these concepts. However, you will need a full month for students to work on the research paper and the last projects — the multimodal and final epilogue reflection — should be given sufficient instruction and process time. It’s the experience of the WRIT 102 curriculum committee that assigned readings will occur more frequently in the first half of the class; the second half of the semester will focus on the students’ research and writing. You may find that you aren’t assigning much from the textbook at this point. Below is a recommendation for how many class periods to devote to each unit.

Days per Unit

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Analysis	Synthesis	In-Class	Research	Multimodal	Epilogue
7	10	1	12	6	4

Tuesday/Thursday

Analysis	Synthesis	In-Class	Research	Multimodal	Epilogue
5	7	1	8	4	3

- Library Day: 1
 - Conferences: 1
-

Pacing of the individual class sessions

If you don't have a lot of experience running a classroom, one element that will take time to become comfortable with experience is understanding how long activities will take in a class. Aim for two activities in a 50 minute period and 3 activities in a 75 minute period. Your mileage will vary, of course, depending on the class personality. It's important to mix up the activities to keep students fresh and attentive. Sitting for a 50 minute lecture is nobody's idea of fun. Mix up the time with presentations, videos, group work, in-class drafting and reflective writing. The calendars in the assignment library will give you some idea of how you can structure a class.

11.4.5 Grading

Writing is personal and can make us feel vulnerable so students will often view your grading as highly subjective (and may also see it as a comment on how you feel about them). So, it's important to provide and reference some kind of grading rubric throughout the writing process. There are rubrics provided for each assignment that align with WRIT 102 learning outcomes. You may modify them, but keep in mind the goals for each assignment as you do.

Introduce rubrics early, perhaps in conjunction with a sample paper. Have students use the rubric to assess the writing. Make it clear throughout the writing process the areas you will be assessing specifically for the assignment and model this through a sample paper. Always give a copy of the rubric (printed or digital) to the student in addition to the feedback (though these do not have to be delivered at the same time).

It's important to return papers with feedback as soon as you can. Aim for a week after you have received the paper but not more than two weeks. Students will need the feedback to help them with their current writing task. If you find you are spending too much time on papers, how much feedback are you leaving?

See Also

Calendars and best practice guides for individual assignments are located in the [*WRIT 102 Assignment Library*](#)

11.5 LIBA 102

See Also

LIBA 102 Assignment Library

LIBA 102 is a first-year writing course conducted within the context of a research area within a specific discipline designed to build on writing abilities learned in WRIT 100/101. The course works to develop critical thinking and research abilities appropriate for use in academic writing within a particular discipline. The course pays special attention to developing argumentation, analysis of texts, and synthesis of information into thoughtful, coherent written projects. Students enrolled in LIBA 102 produce papers that are longer and more in depth than in WRIT 100/101. The course culminates in a final portfolio of the student's work.

11.5.1 Course Outcomes

The objectives of this course are

- to develop writing abilities learned in WRIT 100/101, including the understanding that writing is a process that develops over time through revision.
- to write for specific purposes and for specific audiences.
- to respond critically to different points of view so that the student creates effective and sustained arguments.
- to become proficient at locating primary and secondary research from a variety of sources and at evaluating the reliability of sources.
- to become effective researchers and writers of research papers as a member of an active writing, reading, and researching community, understanding that such writing should be free of serious grammatical and mechanical errors while following disciplinary writing conventions.

11.6 WRIT 250

Contents

- *Course Design*
- *Required Texts*
- *Assignment Sequence*
- *Major Projects*
- *Grading*

11.6.1 Course Design

Writing 250 is designed to continue the learning trajectory students begin in Writing 100/101 and Writing 102. The overall goal of this course is to strengthen the writing and research skills introduced in first-year composition classes so that students can conduct well-organized and -designed research in their major. Writing 250 assignments emphasize documenting sources, maintaining an online portfolio, and analyzing real research results. Students also create a digital presentation in order to gain experience using digital composing tools for writing and presentation.

See Also

- [Sample WRIT 250 Syllabus](#)
 - [Sample WRIT 250 Calendar](#)
 - [Additional Resources](#)
-

11.6.2 Required Texts

All WRIT 250 sections use a [custom OER textbook](#) designed and written by veteran WRIT 250 faculty.

See Also

- [Writing and Research in the Disciplines Blackboard Package](#)
 - [Writing and Research in the Disciplines direct link](#)
-

11.6.3 Assignment Sequence

Beginning in Spring 2014, all sections of Writing 250 were standardized to include the following assignments: 1) exploratory essay; 2) annotated bibliography; 3) literature review; 4) prospectus; 5) multimodal presentation, and 6) eportfolio final reflection/analysis essay. Classwork, homework, and process writing assignments are distributed through the ePortfolio in a “Research Toolbox” section.

See Also

[*WRIT 250 Assignment Library*](#)

11.6.4 Major Projects

Students compose six major projects. Assignments 2 through 5 comprise a large-scale research project. Students will be working with the same topic for the majority of the semester. A brief overview of each project, with a description of the areas students usually struggle with, is provided below. (Click the arrow next to the project title to expand).

Exploratory Essay

The Exploratory Essay is designed to introduce students to writing in the disciplines and to finding/using Library resources related to their major. This narrative essay requires students to find and compare academic and non-academic sources on the same topic. There are three variations of the assignment that instructors can choose from. The final product takes the form of a process narrative in which students trace their steps in finding and comparing sources. Usually, the exploratory essay ends up generating a topic idea that students will want to pursue for the subsequent assignments.

Areas to Highlight

Students often struggle with understanding the difference between academic journals themselves and the articles within them. This can be particularly difficult in online sections of the class. It is also important to walk students through Library database searches (or request a librarian demonstration), as students sometimes assume that any source that comes from a library search is peer-reviewed. Also, sometimes students make this first assignment more complicated than it needs to be: it's ultimately a process narrative, and instructors should emphasize that it's a relatively low-stakes entry-point into researched writing in the disciplines.

Annotated Bibliography

The second major assignment is an annotated bibliography based on secondary research for the research project students have identified. Students will articulate a topic and rationale in a topic proposal ePortfolio/Research Toolbox assignment around the same time as they are working on the annotated bibliography. For the annotated bibliography, students select 8 to 10 academic or professional research sources and write summaries and evaluations of each source. Students also write an introduction to the bibliography, in which they identify trends or concepts that connect the sources to one another.

Areas to Highlight

Students often struggle with selecting good sources, even though they have already had experience with the process with the exploratory essay. Some of the same issues are prevalent, including the use of popular/non-academic sources, as well as sources published in academic journals that aren't necessarily appropriate for a literature review (opinion pieces, book reviews, etc). Students also struggle with meaningful, detailed summary and specific evaluation of the sources, and sometimes tend to review the sources in very broad terms.

Literature Review

The literature review is a synthesis of secondary research on a student's topic. Students choose at least five of their secondary sources from the annotated bibliography to include in a literature review that describes the "state of research" in their major on their chosen topic. Emphasis is placed on identifying the gap in existing research, into which the student's proposed research project will eventually fit.

Areas to Highlight

Students struggle with synthesis of sources and identifying gaps in research. Also, sometimes students have trouble seeing "the big picture" of research, and instead more through their sources in isolation. It's important to emphasize the balance between direct quotation, paraphrase, and original synthesis, as sometimes students rely too heavily on direct quotation.

Prospectus/Research Study Design

The Prospectus is the culmination of the research project students have worked on for the entire semester. The prospectus serves as a formal proposal for an original primary research project in the student's major, based on the research question identified earlier in the semester. In the prospectus, the students combine a condensation of the literature review with a discussion of the results of their small-scale primary research project (mini-pilot or in-class survey), and outline an original study that they have designed to answer their research question.

Areas to Highlight

It helps to describe the prospectus as a sales pitch. Students should think of it as an opportunity to “sell” their proposed research project to a group of skeptical colleagues. Ultimately, they have to prove that they have credibility as researchers in their field and that their project is valid enough to stand on its own. The effectiveness of this approach depends largely on how well students can show how their original student fits into the discourse community established in their review of literature.

Multimodal Presentation

Students work on the multimodal presentation concurrently with the prospectus. The presentation is the student's opportunity to “sell” the research project proposed in the prospectus. Students are required to use different modes of expression in assembling the presentation, including video, audio, and handouts. In a face-to-face class, presentations usually take place during the last week of the semester. In an online class, students create recorded versions of their presentation and share on a discussion board.

Areas to Highlight

Students often don't recognize that a change in mode or medium requires a change in technique, so students need help in understanding how electronic, visual, or spoken text is different from print text and, thus, how to think about audience. Students may also need help with unfamiliar technology. Students also struggle with making their presentation persuasive (selling their proposed research) instead of informative (reviewing existing research).

Research Toolbox Reflection

The final ePortfolio/Research Toolbox reflection asks students to look back on the writing and research they have compiled throughout the semester, and identify a course outcome in which they believe they have shown as much growth. Students must also compare the artifact(s) they use to identify the outcome to one of their scholarly sources in order to show how their writing and research is similar to (or differs from) scholarly writing that is published in their field.

Areas to Highlight

Students are generally unfamiliar with self-reflection and metacognition and need many opportunities throughout the semester to practice. Some students struggle to limit the discussion in the ePortfolio reflections to one outcome and one project. Many will need help with being more specific about their learning. Students should demonstrate their progress, or lack thereof, through examples and by showing, not telling.

Research Toolbox/ePortfolio

Most Writing 250 teachers agree that regular in-class writing, group work, and emphasis on process help students succeed in the course. The committee has developed numerous activities and smaller assignments, called the Research Toolbox, which correspond to the major writing assignments for the course. These are low-stakes classwork and homework assignments that instructors can feel free to modify or rework to suit the needs of their own classes.

11.6.5 Grading

Rubrics for each project are available in the the [WRIT 250 Assignment Library](#). Sharing the rubric with students at the beginning of each unit, and using the rubric to determine the project's final grade, helps students understand the expectations for each project and the reasons for the final grade. Using the rubric to determine grades also provides consistency across sections of DWR courses. Projects should be graded and returned within one week of submission.

TEACHING IN THE MAJOR

The Teaching Guide for the Major in Rhetoric is under development.

Recommend a Student

Rhetoric majors gain the skills and tools of effective communication by learning to speak and design effectively while also becoming discerning critics of the communication practices saturating our world. Students take speech, writing, and rhetorical theory classes that examine communication in interpersonal, community, civic, academic, professional and historical contexts.

[Submit a Recommendation](#)

12.1 Syllabus Language

All Writing and Speech faculty should consider placing a blurb about the B.A. in Rhetoric and the Minor in Professional Writing in their course syllabi.

Syllabus Language

Enjoying this course? Consider the Rhetoric Major or Professional Writing Minor! Rhetoric majors take 11 writing, speech, and rhetorical theory courses. They learn how language and other symbols shape meaning, experience, identity, and point of view, and they become powerful speakers and writers. Professional writing minors take six professional communication courses that build the writing, speaking, teamwork, and project management skills employers are seeking. For more information contact: Karen Forgett, Rhetoric Major Advisor, kforgett@olemiss.edu; or Dr. Karla Lyles, Professional Writing Minor Coordinator, kmlyles@olemiss.edu).

[Download the Word Document Template \(with graphics\)](#)

12.2 Elevator Pitch

Define rhetoric

The study and practice of effective communication

Connect to course

How does your course do this?

What they could do with/in major

Rhetoric majors go on to graduate school, work in things like corporate communication, writing, editing, public advocacy, or anything that involves writing and/or speaking.

Call to action

Have Karen reach out to them for more information!

Example Class Announcements

SPCH 102	First-Year Writing
Our department houses the BA in Rhetoric, which is the study and practice of effective communication. In SPCH 102 we do this by learning how to adapt to an audience and create messages that will reach them. Rhetoric majors go on to graduate school or work in industry doing things like corporate communication, writing, editing, public advocacy, or anything that involves writing and/or speaking. I am happy to fill out the recommendation form so you will hear from the advisor, Ms. Karen Forgette, so you can get more information about the major.	Our department houses the BA in Rhetoric, which is the study and practice of effective communication. In writing classes, we do this by learning how to adapt to an audience and create messages that will reach them. Rhetoric majors go on to graduate school or work in industry doing things like corporate communication, writing, editing, public advocacy, or anything that involves writing and/or speaking. I am happy to fill out the recommendation form so you will hear from the advisor, Ms. Karen Forgette, so you can get more information about the major.

12.3 Marketing Materials

A committee was formed in Summer 2021 to develop a marketing plan for the new B.A. in Rhetoric. The Box folder below contains some examples of the marketing material you will see around campus.

2021-2022 Major and Minor Marketing

TEACHING IN THE MINOR

The Minor in Professional Writing prepares students to be successful communicators in their future careers. Coursework teaches students common workplace communication genres and equips them with skills such as team-work/collaborative communication, problem-solving, project management, digital composing, technical writing, editing, and critical thinking.

The Teaching Guide for the Minor in Professional Writing is coming soon.

See Also

- [Recommend a Student for the Minor](#)
 - [Request a Class Visit](#)
-

COMMON READING RESOURCE GUIDE



Are you Reading?

See Also

- World of Wonders Resource Guide (pdf)
 - World of Wonders Resource Guide (docx)
 - *WRIT 100/101 Assignment Library*
-

Contents

- *Using World of Wonders in the Classroom*
- *Get Outdoors and Serve*
- *Critical Thinking Exercises*
- *Integrating World of Wonders into EDHE 105/305*
- *Integrating World of Wonders into WRIT 100/101*
- *Appendix*

14.1 Using World of Wonders in the Classroom

The Common Reading Experience provides a shared intellectual experience for new members of the UM community. Through reading and considering a common book, new students engage with each other and with UM faculty in exploring issues relevant to today's global community. The Common Reading Experience helps students understand the expectations of college-level academic work, the nature of scholarly inquiry, and the values of an academic community. The program also enriches new students' campus experiences through co-curricular programs and events related to the book. The Common Reading Text is used in EDHE classes, Writing 100/101 classes, and other classes on campus. Visit the [Common Reading Experience website](#) for more information.

Why does UM have a Common Reading Experience?

By reading, writing, and learning together through the shared experience of the UM Common Reading Experience, students:

- Develop critical thinking, reading, writing, and research skills and abilities
 - Gain an emerging sense of confidence as learners, thinkers, readers, and writers
 - Develop a sense of community among peers, neighbors, and instructors
 - Develop connections among ideas, experiences, disciplines, and academic and personal goals
 - Relate the issues raised by the common book to their lives as new or returning students.
-

14.1.1 Why was *World of Wonders* selected?

World of Wonders is a collection of beautifully written and illustrated essays that invite the reader to participate in, marvel at, and reflect on the natural world. Through its careful consideration of a variety of plants, animals, and places, the book reminds us that we are surrounded by and part of an incredible ecosystem that deserves our attention, awe, and care. The book has been named the Barnes and Noble Book of the Year 2020 and a NPR Best Book of 2020. It was a finalist for the Kirkus Prize for Nonfiction.

14.1.2 Who is Aimee Nezhukumatathil?

Aimee Nezhukumatathil (neh-ZOO / KOO-mah / tah-TILL) is Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Mississippi. In addition to *World of Wonders*, she has published several poetry collections including *Oceanic*, *Lucky Fish*, *At the Drive-in Volcano*, *Miracle Fruit*, and *Lace & Pyrite*. Her work has appeared in the *Best American Poetry Series*, *American Poetry Review*, *New England Review*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Ploughshares*, and *Tin House*. She has been awarded the Pushcart Prize, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and an artist fellowship from the Mississippi Arts Commission. She was named a Guggenheim Fellow in 2020. In 2021 she became the inaugural poetry editor for *Sierra* magazine. She lives in Oxford with her husband and sons.

14.1.3 Who is Fumi Mini Nakamura?

Fumi Mini Nakamura is a New York-based freelance illustrator and designer. Born in Japan, she moved to Northern California in her early teens and holds a BFA in Pictorial Arts from San Jose State University. Her illustrations for *World of Wonders* as well as her other work can be seen on her [website](#).

14.1.4 How do I teach non-fiction?

The Common Reading Experience provides students and teachers in all disciplines a chance to interact with a shared text. Critical analysis of texts may feel like foreign territory to some teachers; however, analysis is a skill that is useful in all areas of education and beyond and can be approached in ways with which teachers are comfortable. Writing classes use the common reading text as the basis of a major project, but work with the book in other classes does not need to be so in-depth or take up entire class periods. Try to implement short in-class discussions, homework assignments, response papers, or journal writings using the themes and prompts listed in this guide. Or ask students to examine the choices Nezhukumatathil makes as a writer (style, structure, dialect, dialogue, etc.) and how they impact us as readers. Remember that you can concentrate on a few narratives that relate specifically to the themes of your course. This resource guide should provide starting points for discussions, homework, and/or writing assignments that will challenge students.

14.1.5 How do I encourage students to read?

Before assigning reading

- Preview World of Wonders with students. Introduce the book during class. Explain how the book will be used in the course and how it will help students meet learning outcomes. Share your own excitement about the book, perhaps describing some favorite passages, events, or people.
- Help students understand the depth of reading required. Display a passage, and model critical reading strategies such as text annotation and marginalia.

As students read

- Provide focused questions for students to consider while they are reading. Ask them to respond to those questions in writing before the next class.
- Have students identify and submit a discussion topic or question via email or Blackboard after they have read an assignment but before the next class meeting. Use their topics and questions as the basis for class activities.
- Require students to keep a reading response journal in which they comment on or question the reading assignment.
- Ask students to underline/highlight several passages from a reading assignment. In class, ask students to discuss one of their underlined/highlighted passages.

After students have read

- Use class time and activities to build on, rather than summarize, the reading assignment.
- At the start of class, assign a one-minute paper in which students identify both the most crucial part of the reading assignment and an unanswered question they have about the reading assignment.
- During the first few minutes of class, ask students to write about links between the reading assignment and the topic being discussed in class.
- Distribute one or two questions that build on the reading assignment. Use the think-pair-share protocol. Students first consider the question(s) on their own. Then they discuss the question(s) with a partner. Finally, they share their results with the class.

14.1.6 How do I lead a class discussion?

A good class discussion, like any part of teaching, should be structured yet open to improvisation. Following are some pointers for leading a discussion based on what students have read (or even their attendance at an event).

Preparation before the class meeting:

Though you may have already read the stories, be sure to review what the students are reading for your class meeting. Make a list of what you would like your students to learn from this exercise in order of importance.

- For instance, you might prioritize that students understand what they read.
- Then you might select a couple of scenes or events in the book that seem important or interesting (or even puzzling – just because you are leading class discussion does not mean you need to have all the possible answers).
- Perhaps you have selected several themes in the stories as your focus. You might choose scenes that relate to poverty, stereotypes, or the power of community.

- You might also ask students to respond to a specific quotation or passage.
- Jot down a few notes so you can access them easily during your class discussion.
- Annotate your own text.

Class time

- Establish respect. Class discussion is a time for exploration, and the classroom is a safe environment for students to say what they are thinking. Remind students of the first rule of the University creed: “I believe in respect for the dignity of each person.” Be sure students are listening carefully to each speaker and taking his or her ideas seriously.
- Before discussion, ask students to reflect on a directed, yet open, question in a five- to ten-minute writing. Encourage students to keep writing throughout the allotted time even if they run out of things to say. They will surprise themselves with this unstructured writing. This writing is not a quiz with one correct answer. Ask them questions such as “What do you think is the significance of X?”; “How has X changed over time?”; “Why did X do what he or she did?” You could also ask them to do a close reading of a particular passage, perhaps even comparing it to another passage.
- Avoid general questions such as “What did you think of the reading for today?” or “What did you find interesting?” These are dead-end questions that will lead to short discussions.
- To mix things up, you may also have them work together in small groups to find discussion starters or answers to your questions.

Other ideas and approaches

- Different classes have different personalities. Just make sure the environment in which students speak is a safe one, and continue to encourage discussion in different ways if something is not working.
- Some students will direct their comments just to you. Encourage them to talk to each other.
- If you had them write a response, invite students to share what they wrote.
- If you had them work in groups, invite representatives from each group to share what they found.
- Encourage students to point to specifics in the text. Ask them where they see what they see.
- Invite students to read sections out loud.
- Be open to where the conversation takes you. Sometimes students will pick up on details that you didn’t see.
- Try not to let the class discussion go over fifteen to twenty minutes. Students are most productive in that time frame.
- At the end of the discussion, recap the major points made or ask students to do so.
- Course-specific discussion prompts are included in the course-specific sections of this guide.

14.1.7 How do I deal with controversial topics?

Some issues in *World of Wonders* may spark controversy in the classroom. Issues that may generate controversy include but are not limited to cultural stereotypes, cultural identity, sexism, and racism. The Yale Center for Teaching and Learning's [Teaching Controversial Topics](#) can help you consider different approaches to discussing these issues.

Remember that the common read discussion should always serve your course outcomes. If a student raises an issue with which you have no expertise or are uncomfortable tackling, you might respond by explaining the topic is more suited for discussion in a different course (such as English, Sociology, or Political Science). For example, you might say, "[Controversy X] is an important issue, and it's one that you can study in depth in [Course Y]. [Course Y] is taught by an expert in that field. For the purposes of this course, let's keep the focus on [your course outcome Z]." Additional guidelines are below.

If a student raises a controversial issue unexpectedly, you may want to:

1. Acknowledge the student's remark.
2. Acknowledge that other students may hold different views or positions.
3. Assess your willingness to continue the discussion further.
4. Assess other students' willingness to continue the discussion further.

The following guidelines may be helpful for facilitating planned discussions of controversial issues:

1. Articulate a clear purpose for the discussion (for example, how the discussion is related to course objectives).
2. Establish ground rules, such as listening without interrupting the speaker, questioning ideas rather than criticizing individuals, offering at least one piece of evidence to support each point made, using "I" statements rather than "you" statements.
3. Be an active facilitator by redirecting students who are off topic or participating too actively, ensuring students are not put on the spot as spokespersons for certain groups, providing opportunities for all students to participate (orally or through writing), and being attuned to students' emotions.
4. Summarize the discussion at the end of class and obtain student feedback.

14.1.8 How do I build instruction around the stories' themes?

The essays weave many themes: appreciation of the natural world, power of observation, definition of place, family, cultural stereotypes, cultural identification, gender stereotypes, and others.

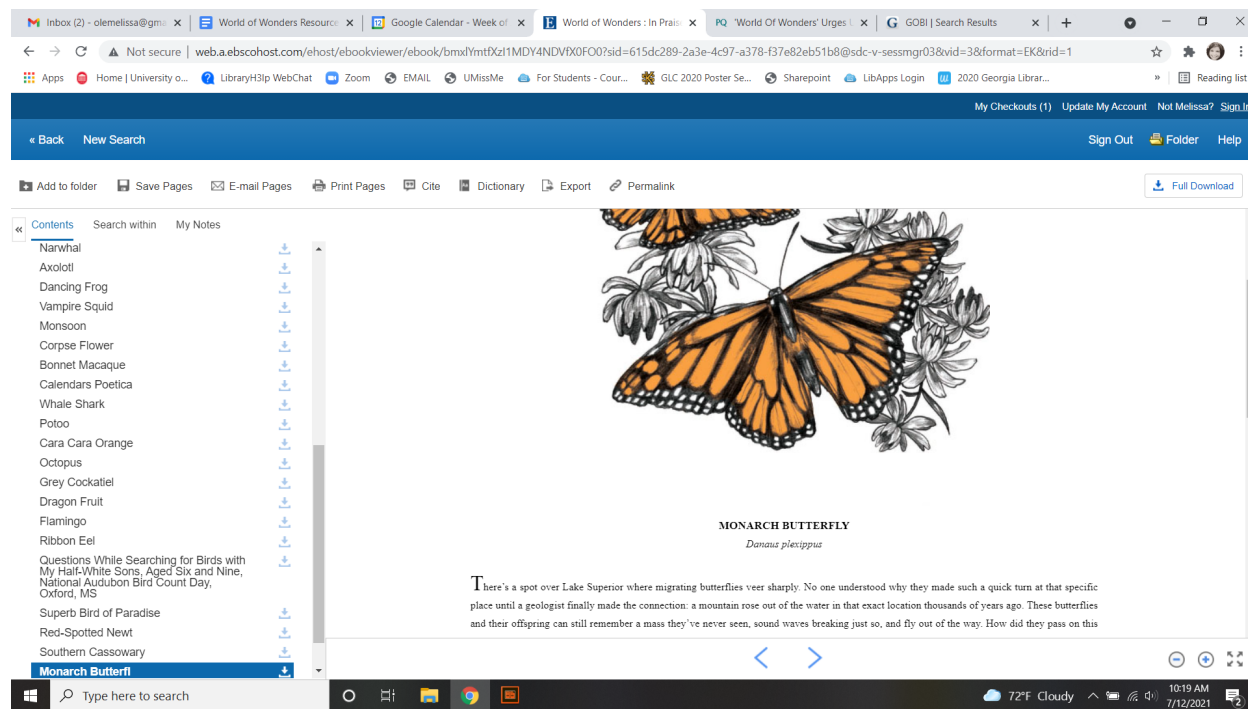
A class focusing on the theme of nature appreciation might look like this: 1. Individually, students identify and write about a passage that illustrates the theme of nature appreciation. (five to seven minutes) 2. As a class, students discuss the passages they have chosen. (ten to fifteen minutes) 3. With partners, students list why appreciation of the natural world is important to individuals, communities, and the world. (five to ten minutes) 4. Student pairs report their findings to the entire class. (ten to fifteen minutes) 5. Homework: Students write a personal appreciation of a place in nature. It could be their backyard, a place on campus, a park where they hung out in high school, etc. After describing why the place has personal value for them, students should discuss the value of that spot to the larger community.

14.1.9 What library resources are available?

Visit the [UM Libraries Common Reading Research Guide](#). Explore this website about World of Wonders featuring full text articles, videos, suggested readings, upcoming events, and more.

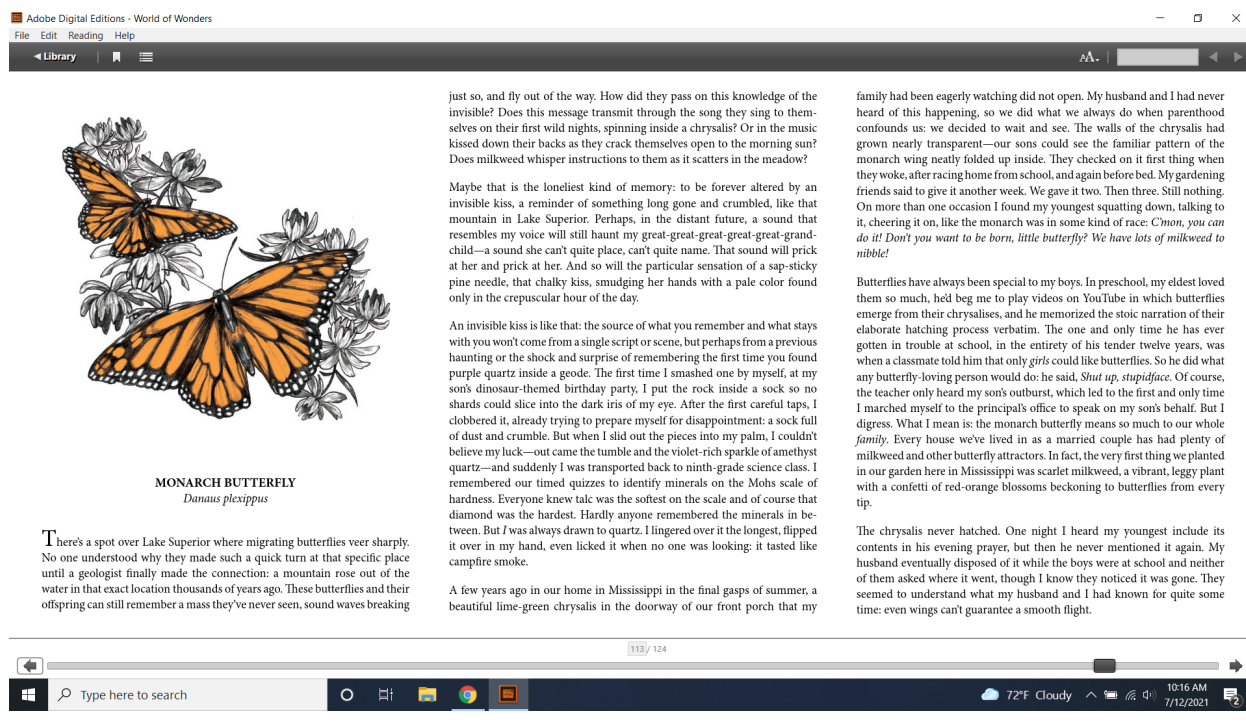
Accessing the Book

Anyone in the UM community can access the e-book version of [World of Wonders](#) by using their Ole Miss WebID and password. The e-book can be viewed on a desktop or mobile device but requires internet access. See image below for an example of how the book will look if you choose to read online:



Downloading the Book

If you set up a separate My EBSCOhost account, you can download the book to a single device for three (3) days, which will allow you to read anytime without internet access. Downloading the e-book also requires downloading Adobe Digital Editions (free) for reading in EPUB format. See the image below for an example of how the book will look downloaded to a PC:



A print copy of the book is available for three-day checkout at the Reserve Desk (1st floor of the J.D. Williams Library).

14.1.10 What events or speakers are being planned for the fall semester?

Thought-provoking events are an excellent way to get students involved with the book outside of the classroom. Please consider encouraging your students to attend an event and reflect on the overall message being delivered. For the most up-to-date list, visit the [UM Libraries Common Reading Research Guide](#)

14.1.11 What if one of my students has a disability and needs a copy of the book in a different format?

Students with disabilities should visit Student Disability Services in 234 Martindale as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester. SDS provides classroom accommodations to all students on campus who disclose a disability, request accommodations, and meet eligibility requirements. SDS will be able to help your student acquire a copy of the CRE book in an appropriate format. The [SDS website](#), has some helpful resources for instructors.

14.2 Get Outdoors and Serve

Where does one start to take care of these living things amid the dire and daily news of climate change, and reports of another animal or plant vanishing from the planet?
 —Nezhukumatahil, *World of Wonders* (159)

Some of the themes present in *World of Wonders* are place, interconnectedness, and being outside. One of the ways these themes intersect at the University of Mississippi and in Oxford is through service. Following are some service opportunities that connect us with others and the great outdoors.

14.2.1 On Campus

The campus catalpa offers up its creamy blossoms to the morning, already sultry and humid at nine o'clock in the morning.

—Nezhukumatathil, *World of Wonders* (6)

Nezhukumatathil's love of the UM campus shines through *World of Wonders*. Help students connect with caring for the natural beauty of UM through the [Office of Sustainability](#). Any UM student can volunteer to work with this office's recurring projects, like the [Green Grove](#) and [UM Compost](#) program, and students can also propose an initiative through the UM Green Fund.

14.2.2 In the local community

I could feel a shift in my body the first day we opened the door and stepped foot in Oxford, like tiny magnets in me lined up and snapped to attention because I was finally where I needed to be.

—Nezhukumatathil, *World of Wonders* (143)

At the University, opportunities for service are abundant, perhaps none more well-known than the Ole Miss Big Event, a “large-scale, one-day community service project” that features hundreds of UM students working to improve the community they love. You can guide students to find out more about the Ole Miss Big Event here: <https://bigevent.olemiss.edu/about/>.

14.2.3 In the local community and beyond

Suppose that boom shaking in our body can be a physical reminder that we are all connected—that if the cassowary population decreases, so does the proliferation of fruit trees, and, with that, hundreds of animals and insects then become endangered... We are all connected. Boom.

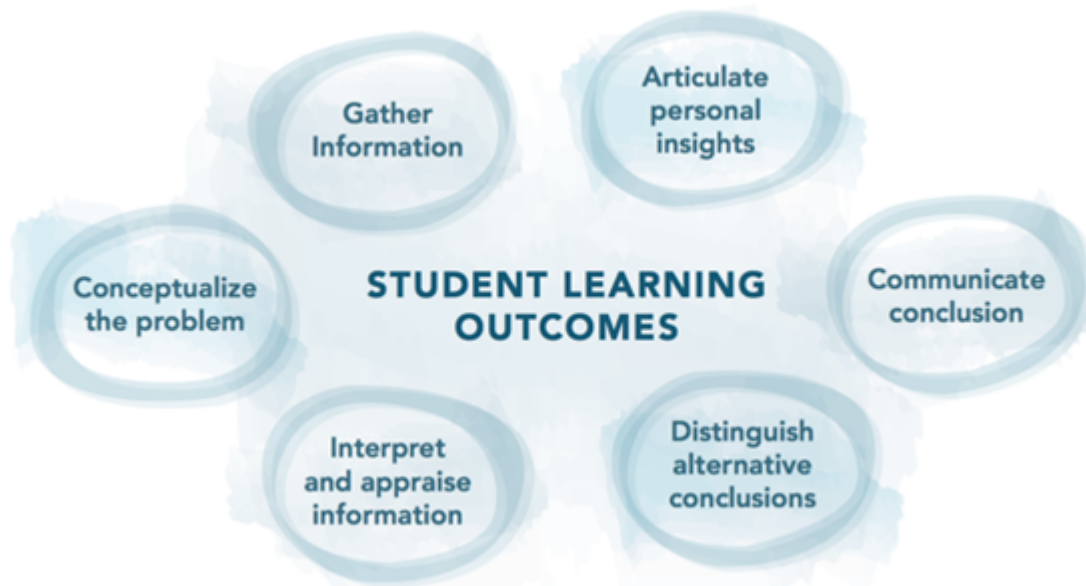
—Nezhukumatathil, *World of Wonders* (149)

Another way the themes of place, interconnectedness, and being outside come together is through service with organizations like Habitat for Humanity. In his book *Our Better Angels: Seven Simple Virtues That Will Change Your Life and the World*, Habitat for Humanity CEO and UM 2021 Convocation speaker Jonathan Reckford writes about community, one of the seven virtues: “When we reach out and become neighbors, when we help one another, we create a better place that supports all of us and lifts us up when we need it most” (47). This is the type of spirit present in so many UM students, people who develop a lifelong passion for the campus and the city of Oxford. Encourage students to learn more about Habitat for Humanity and how they can be a part of changing their lives and the lives of others by reading Reckford's book and by learning more about the local Habitat for Humanity group here: <https://www.habitat.org/us-ms/oxford/oxford-lafayette-county-hfh>.

14.3 Critical Thinking Exercises

Think Forward

The UM QEP, *Think Forward*, defines critical thinking as the ability to conceptualize problems, gather pertinent information, interpret data, appraise evidence, distinguish diverse points of view, and articulate personal insights, in order to present reasonable and effective arguments, responses, or conclusions.



The small group exercises below help students develop critical thinking skills.

14.3.1 Exercise related to the environment

1. The chapter “Southern Cassowary” describes a bird that many Americans might not know much about; however, the chapter has a deeper meaning in its message of interconnectedness and warnings of what changes to an ecosystem might mean. Read back over this chapter to discern Nezhukumatahil’s point. Then, do some research about your home area (city, state, or region) to determine a local animal or plant species that is in danger. What might the extinction of this animal or plant mean to the local ecosystem? Why does this matter in the bigger picture? What is happening to prevent and/or accelerate the animal’s or plant’s demise? What do you think will be the long-term outcome? Why? What could alter the outcome? Make an argument that considers the long-term impact and why people should or shouldn’t be more concerned.

14.3.2 Exercise related to privacy

2. While the chapter “Touch-Me-Nots” is ostensibly about a type of flower, it is also about privacy and power, how our privacy can be violated when others don’t respect our rights. Nezhukumatahil references examples of her privacy being violated physically, but privacy can be violated in non-physical ways, too. The Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution covers Americans’ right to privacy, and many companies, schools, businesses, and other organizations also have privacy policies. Examine the Fourth Amendment or any privacy policy that you would like to read over (think about the privacy policies for digital spaces such as TikTok, YouTube, etc.). In what way or ways do you feel like your privacy, physically or non-physically, is not respected? Why? Does it matter to you? Why or why not? Do other people seem to care? What can you or others do about it? After doing some research, make an argument about a specific area of privacy and why it is or is not a big deal to you.

14.3.3 Exercise related to racism

3. The state of Mississippi clearly has an ugly history with racism; however, Nezhukumtathil notes at times in *World of Wonders* that she has encountered racism in her life in various places, but perhaps least so in Mississippi. Chapters such as “Catalpa” and “Red-Spotted Newt” dig more into this idea. Research race and racism in America by finding a reliable source that examines the issue(s). For example, a piece might examine a town, county, state, or region, looking at race and racism. Or, you might find a statistical analysis of racist incidents in the U.S. There are many possibilities. Did the research or information match your expectations? Why or why not? How is racism or the absence of racism quantified or otherwise measured? How does this inform your understanding of race in America? How did what you learned align with or deviate from common assumptions about race and racism in America? What role does history have in shaping peoples’ understanding of racism?

14.3.4 Exercises related to research and writing

4. In “Southern Cassowary,” Nezhukumatathil notes the recent discovery of the bones of the *Corythoraptor jacobsi*, a dinosaur with a resemblance to the cassowary (146). After reviewing Nezhukumatathil’s essay, read the *Science Alert* news story about the discovery, “[The Newest Dinosaur to be Discovered Looks Just Like a Modern Day Bird](#),” and the *Nature* report of the finding, “[High diversity of the Gazhou Oviraptorid Fauna increased by a new “cassowary-like” crested species](#).” Then consider whether this resemblance signifies a coincidence (a concurrence of events without correlation or causal connection) or a correlation (a mutual relationship or connection between two things). What evidence can you provide to support your conclusion? If there is a correlation between the two, why is that correlation significant? If this is just a coincidence, why is there so much discussion about it? How do the writers in each text clarify their judgment of correlation or coincidence? Is there anything misleading about the ways the writers represent their judgments? Why is the clarification of coincidence vs. correlation important for readers?

5. In an [interview with the Ohio State College of Liberal Arts](#), Nezhukumatathil says that she hopes *World of Wonders*’ readers “get reminded of plants and animals they have always been curious about, and I hope that inspires them to learn more about those plants and animals.” To consider how writers inspire readers’ curiosity, try this informal experiment: Go to the [Trilobites](#) series index in *The New York Times*. Browse the article titles, short descriptions, and images there, choose one title/description/image that incites your curiosity, and answer these questions: What made you curious? A certain word in the title or description? Something specific in the image? Something from your own life that resonates with the subject? Then read the full article, and answer these questions: What did you learn from the full article? What did you learn from the associated images and/or videos? What will you remember from the article? How much of the article did you skip? Next, look over the list of related stories at the end of the article, and answer these questions. What’s the subtitle for the list? Why do you think the writer/editor chose that subtitle? Would you click on any of the articles in the list? Why? Finally, return to Nezhukumatathil’s quote. How can writers engage readers’ curiosity? How can writers encourage readers to learn more? What are the limits to what a writer can do?

14.4 Integrating World of Wonders into EDHE 105/305

The common reading book selection is used each year in EDHE 105/305 courses primarily as a framework for class discussions, projects, and writing assignments that explore social themes and/or issues from the book. EDHE 105/305 instructors use the text (with a focus on those themes and issues) to teach students how to explore their personal reactions, to understand and appreciate both the things that make them different from their peers and the things that they have in common, and to effectively and respectfully voice their own opinions and viewpoints.

14.4.1 Class Discussion/Writing Prompts

1. Many of the essays in *World of Wonders* deal with the theme of protection. “Catalpa Tree,” “Touch-Me-Nots,” and “Narwhal” are just a few that illustrate Nezhukumatathil’s message about times in our lives where we may need a shield or protective layer to help us through rough times. When do you feel the need for added protection in your own lives? How does the new environment of college add to that need? What elements (tangible or intangible) have functioned as a comfort or shield for you in times of need? Tie this with lessons on bystander intervention, sexual assault awareness, and personal safety.
2. In “Axolotl,” Nezhukumatathil introduces us to an amphibian with regenerative capabilities. She emphasizes the strength that can be found when we overcome obstacles and persevere despite setbacks. Combining this essay with our discussions about grit and resilience, what have you learned about yourself and your abilities in times of difficulty? What skills do you have that help you persevere when things are hard? What resources can be found on campus to offer support in this area?
3. Nezhukumatathil explores the idea of empathy in her essay “Vampire Squid.” She writes that our lived experiences help us to understand both ourselves and others better. Contemplate your MBTI [or the personality trait metric we use this year] results and reflect on how your personality traits set you up to be a more empathetic person. Why is empathy important? How do the personality traits of others affect your lived experiences?
4. “Bonnet Macaque” is a fun essay that highlights the importance of knowing how to laugh at yourself. Nezhukumatathil writes that pure joy is found in times of laughter and silliness. While college is a time for hard work and study and new discoveries, it should also be some of the most exciting and fun years of your life. What events or traditions are you looking forward to as you enjoy your first year at the University of Mississippi? How are you planning to get involved and make positive memories during your time in Oxford?
5. *World of Wonders* as a collection of essays is a departure for Nezhukumatathil, who is an accomplished poet. In “Calendars Poetica,” she gives us a peek into her artistic goal-setting strategies. How can her method of using small points of gradual progress to ultimately achieve her goal be translated into effective study skills? What time management strategies are most effective for you? As the year continues, look at your coursework and reflect on the progress and growth in both your skills and your mindset from the beginning of the semester to the end.
6. “Whale Shark” is an essay that challenges us to take a chance at exhilarating life experiences. Nezhukumatathil encourages her readers to surrender themselves completely to nature and let go of our stresses and hesitancy to fully experience what the world has to offer. What are the items on your freshman “bucket list” that can provide this sense of freedom and enjoyment? How can experiential opportunities like study abroad, performative projects, Rec. Sports challenge courses, and hands-on learning help to push you into a more fulfilling college experience?
7. Nezhukumatathil charms readers in “Questions while Searching for Birds” as she describes the irresistible innocence of the unfiltered thoughts of a child. She balances that with the honest and open answers she provides as a parent raising young children in Mississippi. How has your first year of college unlocked your childhood sense of wonder and curiosity? What questions would you ask if you could ask absolutely anything at all with no judgment or consequences? In turn, how do you answer those who question your thoughts, ideas, and worldviews?
8. A prevalent theme throughout *World of Wonders* is the power of creativity, particularly when inspired by nature. Essays like “Firefly,” “Corpse Flower,” and “Dragon Fruit” explore this idea of looking deeper into aspects of nature to find new levels of creativity and surprise. “Firefly” in particular conjures up the smells, feels, sights, and images that transport us to foundational memories in our lives. What vivid memories evoke positive visceral reactions for you? How do you see these memories providing strength and assistance to you as an adult on your own for the first time?
9. Mindfulness practices are excellent ways to reduce stress. *World of Wonders* is full of mindful moments, from sitting under the campus catalpa tree on a spring day to catching fireflies in the Mississippi dusk and stargazing in the dark of night. Nezhukumatathil encourages us to literally stop and smell the roses. The University of Mississippi is recognized as one of the most beautiful colleges in the country, lauded for its landscaping and traditional beauty. What are your favorite spots on campus? Where can you carve out a space for your own mindful moments when you need to get away to find peace, quiet, and serenity?

10. Nezhukumatathil returns again and again in her essays to the theme of “home.” She explores how the sense of place and home can change and adapt over time to encompass new locations, people, and senses. Using “Firefly,” “Peacock,” “Cara Cara Orange,” and “Grey Cockatiel” as references, how do you feel your own sense of home changing as you begin your college career? What parts of “home” do you want to keep with you, and which parts are you ready to grow beyond? Do you feel comfortable in your new home on campus, or are you struggling with feeling different or other? How can you adapt to your new college environment without sacrificing the positive aspects of your inherent identity shaped by your home?

14.4.2 Group/Individual Project Assignments

1. **Talk Response:** Have students listen to Aimee Nezhukumatathil’s [interview with The Mississippi Arts Hour on Mississippi Public Broadcasting](#). Have them think about the human connection to nature and how humans can also connect to each other through nature. How can you connect these themes to your first year at Ole Miss? In what ways can you connect to campus? These can be assigned as presentations, journal prompts, or an out-of-class writing prompt.
2. **Research Project/Presentation:** Think about the idea of conservation. Many of the stories in *World of Wonders* feature animals or plants that are unique and possibly protected. Choose a subject from the book and research world-wide conservation efforts. Be creative and use art to supplement the research, just as in *World of Wonders*. This can be assigned to individuals or groups.
3. **Vignette Writing Assignment:** All of the stories in *World of Wonders* connect Aimee Nezhukumatathil and her family to nature. Think about your life both before UM and now, during your first semester at UM. The natural world is a backdrop to our everyday lives. Often, we are walking through it, but not connecting ourselves to that experience. It’s usually a means to an end to get from point A to point B. How can you connect your life experiences to the natural world around you? Write a vignette (experience) that you can intentionally connect to the natural world around you. Write your own world of wonder.

14.4.3 Class Activities

1. After reading “Catalpa Tree” and “Corpse Flower,” take your class to visit the northern catalpa tree located next to the Student Union and the corpse flower located in the School of Pharmacy in Fraser Hall. Let your class observe the plants as Nezhukumatathil did, taking notes of their observations and impressions. Then let students sit outside and write their own short story or essay inspired by the uniqueness of nature.
2. Take your class through a Mindfulness exercise inspired by “Firefly.” Ideally in an outdoor location, walk your class through a quick meditation and the Five Senses activity, where they quietly focus on 5 things they can see, 4 things they can feel, 3 things they can hear, 2 things they can smell, and 1 thing they can taste. Discuss how practicing mindfulness can release stress and allow them to function better academically and creatively.
3. Break your class into small groups to brainstorm ways that Nezhukumatathil’s essays tie into the university Creed. Encourage them to be creative as they link particular stories to the individual tenants of the Creed. (Examples: “Peacock” = respect and dignity of each person, “Touch-Me-Nots” = personal integrity, “Axolotl” = fairness and civility, “Octopus” = academic freedom, etc.)
4. Take your class to a quiet and aesthetically pleasing outdoor spot to sketch, draw, or write in nature. In her [interview with Poets and Writers](#), Nezhukumatathil says: “I always teach wonder in my writing classes...Of course there are difficult days when I don’t feel like drafting a poem or the start of an essay. So think smaller: brick by brick. One line. One anecdote. Make a blank journal a *sky journal*...In it you can record the day/time of your observation of the moon. Or make a cloud report. Describe and/or sketch the clouds...Sketch them. Make a sunset report, even if it is just from your window. What do you hear at sunset? What do you smell? How about at sunrise? And you got it—these are like sports drills...The writing will always come. Sometimes you might need to make other things so the writing can come. But it will come.” Encourage your students to think of an upcoming assignment for any class and then to sketch or draw or write for 20 minutes about anything they

see. Afterwards, ask them to revisit the assignment and see if they have any new or creative ideas on how to approach the work.

5. Take your students on a refreshing, contemplative adventure on the Bailey Woods National Recreation Trail. This heavily wooded trail connects the University Museum to Rowan Oak, William Faulkner's residence. The trail is approximately 3/5 mile in length and takes an average of 20 – 25 minutes to hike one-way on foot. Have your students meet you at the trailhead in the parking lot at the rear of the University Museum. Students should wear tennis or hiking shoes because the trail is somewhat uneven at points. So that your students can enjoy the hike without any distractions, they should hike the trail single file in total silence and without any of the encumbrances of their daily lives. All backpacks and cellphones should be left behind safely in someone's car at the trailhead.

Before striking out on the hike, it can be helpful to gather your students at the trailhead and read to them some excerpts from literature that speak to the value of contemplation in nature such as the writing of Henry David Thoreau below. Reading some selected excerpts from our common read, *World of Wonders*, is highly recommended as well and can certainly strengthen your students' appreciation for the relevancy and value of the book.

I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would tend to forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to Society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head and I am not where my body is — I am out of my senses. In my walks I would try to return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? ("Walking," 1861)

It is recommended that you have your class pause together at random spots along the trail to soak up and enjoy the rare opportunity to totally disconnect from technology and to intentionally appreciate the surrounding stillness and quiet in nature. Once reaching Rowan Oak, students can gather together behind the house in the chairs on the lawn, coming out of silence to dialogue about hiking in silence and more deeply connecting with nature ... and most importantly, processing how this rare experience affected their understanding of *World of Wonders*.

On the return trip on the trail back to the Museum, students are encouraged to talk and share with each other. It is helpful to ask your students to note the difference in their overall experience of walking over in silence and returning out of silence.

Students should conclude the exercise by writing a reflection essay on their experience.

14.5 Integrating *World of Wonders* into WRIT 100/101

The first-semester, first-year writing courses—WRIT 100 and WRIT 101—use the Common Reading Text as the basis for a major writing project. This project emphasizes the critical reading, critical thinking, analysis, research, and synthesis skills that are vital to college writing. In this assignment, students are given a prompt pertaining to the Common Reading Text and asked to compose an essay that integrates the Common Reading Text with outside sources and/or the student's own ideas. The prompts are intentionally complex to introduce students to the expectations of college thinking and writing. First-year writing courses use the Common Reading Text as a basis for student reading and writing rather than as a literary study.

14.5.1 Affordances of *World of Wonders*

The short essay structure of *World of Wonders* affords instructors and students some options that previous Common Reading Texts have not. Most of the essays are short enough to be read in the first ten-fifteen minutes of class. Each essay can stand independently from the others, so each can be treated as a primary text. In fact, many of the essays were first published as columns in *The Toast* series, [World of Wonder](#). Although each first-year student received a hardbound copy during Welcome Week, the book can be accessed through the UM Libraries' multi-user e-copy.

14.5.2 Discussion Starters

1. Nezhukumatahil describes wonder this way: “[I]t takes a bit of patience, and it takes putting yourself in the right place at the right time. It requires that we be curious enough to forgo our small distractions in order to find the world” (56). How do the essays in this book exemplify her description of wonder? Is everything in the natural world a wonder? What’s your personal definition of wonder?
2. The subtitle of the book is “In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments.” Why use the word “astonishment”? What does it mean to be “astonished” by something? Does the word imply more about the “astonishing” item or the person who is “astonished” by it? What “astonishes” you in the world?
3. The book begins and ends in Mississippi. What impressions about Mississippi might readers take away from the book? How can writing shape readers’ understanding of place?
4. In “Corpse Flower,” Nezhukumatahil describes how she tracked blooming corpse flowers for three years. Why do you think she devoted so much time to that trek? What is it about that particular plant that inspires such fascination? What is it about anything that inspires devoted attention and research?
5. A [Star-Tribune](#) reviewer says about the book: “Its words are beautiful, but its cover and interior illustrations by Fumi Mini Nakamura may well be what first moves you to pick it up in a bookstore or online.” Do you agree? What is so arresting about the images? How do images and text work together to enhance a work?
6. A [Columbia Journal](#) reviewer notes, “Short as they are, the essays work best in small doses, savored like exquisite chocolates. Too much enforced wonder in short order can leave a person feeling like they’ve eaten too much sugar — jittery and sluggish, overfull and hollow at the same time.” What cues do you follow when reading a work? How do you know when to stop for a bit? What makes you want to keep going? How does a text’s length affect readers’ impressions of it?
7. An [Arts Fuse](#) reviewer comments on Nezhukumatahil’s tone this way: “She doesn’t scold her readers, but instead asks tender questions: when was the last time you cut a rug like some superb bird of paradise? Or stopped to notice the difference between an oak leaf and a maple leaf?” In addition to asking these questions, how else does Nezhukumatahil avoid a scolding tone in her writing? Why might her tone be more effective than a reproachful one? How effective did you find her tone?

14.5.3 Critical Thinking Exercises

1. The chapter “Southern Cassowary” describes a bird that many Americans might not know much about; however, the chapter has a deeper meaning in its message of interconnectedness and warnings of what changes to an ecosystem might mean. Read back over this chapter to discern Nezhukumatahil’s point. Then, do some research about your home area (city, state, or region) to determine a local animal or plant species that is in danger. What might the extinction of this animal or plant mean to the local ecosystem? Why does this matter in the bigger picture? What is happening to prevent and/or accelerate the animal’s or plant’s demise? What do you think will be the long-term outcome? Why? What could alter the outcome? Make an argument that considers the long-term impact and why people should or shouldn’t be more concerned.
2. While the chapter “Touch-Me-Nots” is ostensibly about a type of flower, it is also about privacy and power, how our privacy can be violated when others don’t respect our rights. Nezhukumatahil references examples of her privacy being violated physically, but privacy can be violated in non-physical ways, too. The Fourth Amendment

to the U.S. Constitution covers Americans' right to privacy, and many companies, schools, businesses, and other organizations also have privacy policies. Examine the Fourth Amendment or any privacy policy that you would like to read over (think about the privacy policies for digital spaces such as TikTok, YouTube, etc.). In what way or ways do you feel like your privacy, physically or non-physically, is not respected? Why? Does it matter to you? Why or why not? Do other people seem to care? What can you or others do about it? After doing some research, make an argument about a specific area of privacy and why it is or is not a big deal to you.

3. The state of Mississippi clearly has an ugly history with racism; however, Nezhukumatathil notes at times in *World of Wonders* that she has encountered racism in her life in various places, but perhaps least so in Mississippi. Chapters such as "Catalpa" and "Red-Spotted Newt" dig more into this idea. Research race and racism in America by finding a reliable source that examines the issue(s). For example, a piece might examine a town, county, state, or region, looking at race and racism. Or, you might find a statistical analysis of racist incidents in the U.S. There are many possibilities. Did the research or information match your expectations? Why or why not? How is racism or the absence of racism quantified or otherwise measured? How does this inform your understanding of race in America? How did what you learned align with or deviate from common assumptions about race and racism in America? What role does history have in shaping peoples' understanding of racism?
4. In "Southern Cassowary," Nezhukumatathil notes the recent discovery of the bones of the *Corythoraptor jacobsi*, a dinosaur with a resemblance to the cassowary (146). After reviewing Nezhukumatathil's essay, read the *Science Alert* news story about the discovery, "[The Newest Dinosaur to be Discovered Looks Just Like a Modern Day Bird](#)," and the *Nature* report of the finding, "[High diversity of the Gazhou Oviraptorid Fauna increased by a new 'cassowary-like' crested species](#)." Then consider whether this resemblance signifies a coincidence (a concurrence of events without correlation or causal connection) or a correlation (a mutual relationship or connection between two things). What evidence can you provide to support your conclusion? If there is a correlation between the two, why is that correlation significant? If this is just a coincidence, why is there so much discussion about it? How do the writers in each text clarify their judgment of correlation or coincidence? Is there anything misleading about the ways each of these writers represents their judgment? Why is the clarification of coincidence vs. correlation important for readers?
5. In an [interview with the Ohio State College of Liberal Arts](#), Nezhukumatathil says that she hopes *World of Wonders*' readers "get reminded of plants and animals they have always been curious about, and I hope that inspires them to learn more about those plants and animals." To consider how writers inspire readers' curiosity, try this informal experiment: Go to the [Trilobites](#) series index in *The New York Times*. Browse the article titles, short descriptions, and images there, choose one title/description/image that incites your curiosity, and answer these questions: What made you curious? A certain word in the title or description? Something specific in the image? Something from your own life that resonates with the subject? Then read the full article, and answer these questions: What did you learn from the full article? What did you learn from the associated images and/or videos? What will you remember from the article? How much of the article did you skip? Next, look over the list of related stories at the end of the article, and answer these questions. What's the subtitle for the list? Why do you think the writer/editor chose that subtitle? Would you click on any of the articles in the list? Why? Finally, return to Nezhukumatathil's quote. How can writers engage readers' curiosity? How can writers encourage readers to learn more? What are the limits to what a writer can do?

14.5.4 Prompts for Reflection

1. Nezhukumatathil quotes Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore at the beginning of her book: "The butterfly counts not months but moments, and has time enough." Students can often view their time in college using large measures of time (a semester, four years, etc.) and fail to stop and appreciate the moments. Of course, passing a big test, getting accepted for an internship, and graduating are all very memorable, but the college experience is made up of many smaller events. Reflect on how you have tried so far to enjoy the little moments of college life rather than thinking about the larger milestones. What has been a moment, something that might seem insignificant to others, that stands out to you so far? Why? How might you appreciate the moments more as you continue your journey?
2. The chapter "Calendars Poetica" is really Nezhukumatathil writing about writing, covering her inspiration and

exhaustion, her ebb and flow, of working on major writing projects during the year after she gave birth. Most college students might not work on projects such as books and poetry collections, but they are asked to write a lot. Reflect on your ebbs and flows of writing. Where do you do most of your writing? Is this the best environment for productivity? Why or why not? Do you focus solely on writing, or do you attempt to multitask? Why does this matter? Do you find inspiration in anything? What blocks do you face? Why do they matter? Do you have bursts of productivity such as the ones Nezhukumatathil mentions in the chapter? How might knowing more about yourself as a writer help your productivity? How might it help in other ways?

3. One of the messages of “Vampire Squid” is that while it can be dangerous for your mental health to be alone and isolated from others for extended periods, such times can also be used to reflect and grow in meaningful ways. College can feel busy and crowded, like you don’t get enough time to yourself to think and grow. Reflect on whether you have or have not had enough time to yourself so far in college. Why does this matter? What might you do going forward to make sure you get a little time to yourself?
4. The short chapter “Superb Bird of Paradise” is about opening up and being free, and how doing so can bring so many people together from different backgrounds. College is an opportunity to meet many different people and to find what makes you happy and comfortable. Reflect on how you think you have done so far at meeting new people and opening yourself up to new opportunities that you might not have considered in high school. Why does this matter? How might you branch out to meet new people and experience new events in the future? How might this impact your life?
5. “Firefly (Redux)” is about wonder and recapturing what Nezhukumatathil thinks many people have lost. She proposes that people will find love and happiness in taking life slowly and enjoying what nature has to offer. Further, she suggests that many young people spend too much time indoors and/or in front of screens. Reflect on how much time you spend indoors and/or in front of a screen. How do you think this impacts you? Why? How might you spend more time outdoors and less time in front of a screen in the future, or, how might you continue to spend a lot of time outdoors and limit screen time if you already feel good about this balance? How might you take life more slowly, and why does this matter?
6. In the chapter “Peacock” Nezhukumatathil recalls losing her love for drawing when her third-grade teacher tells her to get rid of her peacock drawing and start over using an American animal. Nezhukumatathil was very embarrassed by the incident and spent years being ashamed of her heritage. It takes many years, but she eventually reclaims the parts of her heritage that she loves and that make her happy. College can also be a time where it is easy to forget who you really are and what you like as you try to fit into a new situation. Reflect on what you think you might have ignored or neglected about yourself since you arrived at UM. Why has this happened? What can you do to not forget about some of the things that make you you? Why does this matter? How might you balance being true to yourself while growing, having new experiences, and finding out more about yourself?
7. The chapter “Grey Cockatiel” covers the story of how Nezhukumatathil’s mother and father searched for their missing bird when it escaped; however, it can be read as a tale about family and how people adapt to changes in their families. Nezhukumatathil’s parents got a bird when their daughters were both moved out and established in their careers. The beginning of college is also often a time of huge disruption in family dynamics. Many first-year college students have moved away from home, and the family living situation has changed. How have you adapted to the change in living situation? What are the positive and negative impacts of the changes? How might you recreate or simulate positives about your living situation at home? How has (or might) the change in living situation impacted your study habits or your school routine? Why does this matter in the bigger picture?
8. Nezhukumatathil has a curious mind, something that is of great benefit to college students. She makes a habit of noticing, questioning, and exploring the world around her. Those habits can be built and improved through practice. Start with these questions, adapted from [this list](#) at WabiSabi Learning: What surprised you or aroused your curiosity today? What do you already know about that topic or idea? What more do you want to know? Where or how would you start learning more?

14.5.5 Essay Prompts

1. *Practice critical reading, analysis, integrating sources, reflection, and comparison/contrast.*

One of the themes in *World of Wonders* is place. Aimee Nezhukumatathil describes her experiences with moving and her quest to find a place where she is happy and comfortable. Pick at least two chapters from the book that cover place, and note how Nezhukumatathil discusses place in her life and why it matters. Then, consider your own journey to the University of Mississippi. Did you come a long way to school, or are you still close to home? Was UM always your plan, or did plans change? How have you worked to make your new home a place that makes you happy and comfortable? Finally, compose a thesis-driven essay in which you compare and contrast Nezhukumatathil's experiences with your own, exploring how place shapes people, including yourself, and why this matters. You are welcome to bring in other sources if it helps, but be sure to cite at least two chapters from the book.

2. *Practice critical reading, analysis, integrating sources, and argument.*

World of Wonders is full of interesting stories about flora and fauna, but Aimee Nezhukumatathil often uses a chapter's featured plant or animal as a metaphor for exploring herself and/or those around her. Select one chapter where you think Nezhukumatathil's use of metaphor is especially strong or weak, and take notes on how she weaves together the story of the chapter's namesake with her own life. What is the connection Nezhukumatathil makes or tries to make? How does it work well or fail to work well? Why do writers use metaphor? How does using a metaphor to tell her story make the chapter more or less powerful? How do you, and how might other readers, relate to the chapter and the metaphor Nezhukumatathil uses? Compose a thesis-driven essay in which you examine and argue how Nezhukumatathil uses metaphor effectively or ineffectively in trying to reach readers and let them understand both her and the chapter's namesake better. You are welcome to look up and cite more about the plant or animal featured in the chapter, and be sure to cite *World of Wonders*.

3. *Practice critical reading, analysis, integrating sources, argument, and synthesis.*

Family is a key part of Aimee Nezhukumatathil's life and her book *World of Wonders*. From her parents and sister, to relatives in other countries, to her husband and children, Nezhukumatathil brings into her stories many family members and lets readers see how they impacted and still impact her. Select two chapters from the book that you think offer interesting insights to familial impact on the author. Then, compose a thesis-driven essay in which you synthesize your ideas and argue how the chapters you selected reveal something noteworthy about Nezhukumatathil. You may consider looking closely at why Nezhukumatathil is a writer, or a teacher. You may want to explore her love of nature and the outdoors. You might choose to examine personality traits you see her reveal in the book. These are just a few ideas of many possibilities. Whatever the case, your argument should feature one central idea where you use both chapters to show it. Be sure to cite the text.

4. *Practice critical reading, analysis, integrating sources, argument, and synthesis.*

What makes someone a good writer? Listed below are eight habits of mind, or intellectual characteristics, that the National Council of Teachers of English identify as essential to success in college and professional writing. Nezhukumatathil is a successful writer. Which of these habits of mind are exemplified in *World of Wonders*? How do these essays reveal these characteristics? Are any of these habits of mind absent? Write an essay analyzing how the essays in *World of Wonders* demonstrate (or fail to demonstrate) three or four of these habits of mind. Give specific examples from the text to support your analysis.

- Curiosity – the desire to know more about the world
- Openness – the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world
- Engagement – a sense of investment and involvement in learning
- Creativity – the ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas
- Persistence – the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects
- Responsibility – the ability to take ownership of one's actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others
- Flexibility – the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands

- Metacognition – the ability to reflect on one’s own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge

5. *Practice critical reading, analysis, integrating sources, argument, and synthesis.*

In her *Guardian* column about the genre of nature writing, “[Nature Writing is booming—but must a walk in the woods always be meaningful](#),” writer Zoe Gilbert criticizes contemporary nature writers for characterizing the natural world as a place of “enchantment” (paragraph 5, line 6) and for linking their wonder at the natural world with their own life experiences (paragraph 3). Read Gilbert’s column and think about *World of Wonders* in light of Gilbert’s criticism. Does Nezhukumatahil’s book exemplify Gilbert’s critiques of contemporary nature writing or not? What examples would you point to in support of your position? Do you agree with Gilbert that contemporary nature writing is too aspirational? Compose a thesis-driven essay in which you agree or disagree with Gilbert’s thesis and synthesize her critique of nature writing with *World of Wonders*.

6. *Practice critical reading and style analysis.*

Writer Stephen King argues that “description begins in the writer’s imagination but should finish in the reader’s.” Nezhukumatahil employs description throughout *World of Wonders* to help her readers envision the animals and plants she writes about. How would you evaluate her skills as a descriptive writer? Do her descriptions finish in the reader’s imagination? Construct a thesis-driven essay evaluating the effect of description in *World of Wonders*. Choose two or three extended passages of description from the book. Discuss what is being described in each passage and why it is significant to the essay in which it appears or to the book as a whole. Assess how the description in each passage is constructed, considering word choice, ordering of ideas, sentence structure, rhetorical devices, etc. Then, analyze the effect of the description on the reader. If the passages are from illustrated essays, consider how the illustration works with or against the description.

7. *Practice critical reading, genre analysis, and synthesis.*

Nezhukumatahil laments the general public’s lack of knowledge about the natural world in the 21st century when she writes: “It was indeed a sad day when I had to bring up a video online to prove that fireflies do indeed exist and to show what a field of them looks like at night. Seventeen students of twenty-two had never seen a firefly” (157). To combat that issue, Nezhukumatahil combines poetic description, select information, and personal narrative to engage readers with the natural world’s wonders. *Scientific American*, the oldest continuously published magazine in the U.S., is on the same mission, but the magazine writers take a different approach. Choose one of the animals or plants that intrigued you in *World of Wonders*. Then read a *Scientific American* discussion of the same animal or plant. Compare the ways in which Nezhukumatahil and the *Scientific American* writers approach their subject. Compare how each text is organized and how that organization is made clear to the reader. Consider the thesis and purpose of each text and whether the text delivers on the expectations the writer sets up. Think about the sources the writer uses and their impact on readers. Examine also how the writer defines terms and employs literary devices. Then write a thesis-driven essay in which you compare these types of writing. What are the advantages/disadvantages of each? Who might be drawn to one genre over the other? Is one genre of more educational value than the other? Possible Pairings: “Firefly” and “[How and Why do Fireflies Light Up?](#)”; “Peacock” and “[Peacocks Produce Sounds We Can’t Hear](#)”; “Comb Jelly” and “[Comb Jelly Genome Grows More Mysterious](#)”; “Narwhal” and “[Narwhal Found to Have a Trick Up its Tusk](#).”

8. *Practice critical reading, analysis, and progymnasmata.*

World of Wonders’ subtitle, “In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments,” situates the text within encomium, a text in praise of something. In crafting an encomium, the writer (or speaker) picks an object, focuses on a few key points, and then employs elevated language and literary devices to praise the object. Nezhukumatahil uses encomium to gently persuade her readers to care about the natural world. Choose something you wish people would care more about or pay more attention to and use encomium to convince your readers to do just that. Rather than crafting a formal argument, use praise, description, and an implied thesis to align your reader with your view.

9. *Practice critical reading, analysis, and synthesis.*

Empiricism is the acquisition of knowledge through observation and experience. In “Firefly,” Nezhukumatahil describes her devotion to observing fireflies: “I know I will search for fireflies all the rest of my days, even though they dwindle a little bit more each year. I can’t help it.” Nezhukumatahil is not the only person dedicated to close observation of the world around her. Listen to the NPR story about Yoruk Isik, “[Istanbul Man Turns Passion for Ship Spotting](#)

into [Beneficial Hobby](#),” and watch Gavin Pretor-Pinney’s TED Talk, “[Cloudy with a Chance of Joy](#). ” Then consider what these individuals have in common. What draws them to close observation? What characteristics do they seem to share? How do they seem different from each other? What do they learn from observation? What are the limits to observation for them? What are their motivations and goals for observing? Then, compose a thesis-driven essay in which you compare and contrast these individuals and their approaches to observation. Close by considering the role observation plays in your own learning.

14.6 Appendix

REFLECTION IN FIRST YEAR WRITING

Contents

- *Setup*
- *Background*
- *Pedagogy and Rationale*
- *Why a commonplace book?*
- *Commonplace Books and Blogging*
- *Teacher Testimonials*
- *Resources*

Since 2010, writing courses at the University of Mississippi have emphasized reflection, revision, and transfer of knowledge.

The Reflection Blog, or Commonplace Book, asks students to engage in frequent, diverse, and sustained reflection over the course of the first-year writing experience. Students use their blogs as a space to collect and unpack ideas. Through the different types of composition in the Reflection Blog, students will develop a more sophisticated understanding of what it means to be an academic writer and they will cultivate an “academic identity” as they move beyond their general education experience.

15.1 Setup

Note: In 2020, we are transitioning away from the “Commonplace Book” designation in favor of “Reflection Blog.”

DWR Reflection Blogs make use of the [Edblogs@UM](#) platform. Edblogs is based on WordPress, so if you’ve kept a blog before, you’ll be very familiar with the interface. This page of the guide should address any technical concerns you have with using student blogs in the classroom.

There are two ways to connect to your students’ blogs. You may have students add you as a user to their sites and use WordPress Reader to access their posts or you may use the “My Class” plugin to centrally manage your students’ sites. Instructions for both methods are below.

15.1.1 Classes

The Classes plugin connects you to student blogs in a teacher/students configuration. Even if you don't plan to maintain a class blog, you'll need to have one in order to use "My Class." Your default blog is located at "edblogs.olemiss.edu/MY-WEB-ID." Many teachers use their default blog as a class blog. (If your default blog is not set up for some reason, go to the [EdBlogs Signup Page](#) to create a new one).

To activate your class blog, go to the dashboard of the site you want to use as your class blog (probably your default site) and click **My Class** and **Create a Class**. On the Settings page, check the box next to **This is a class blog**. This will enable the rest of the settings and options for the Classes plugin. Here is an explanation of each one:

- **Allow students to post on the class blog:** Only change this setting if you want to require students to post to *your* blog in addition to their own. Most teachers do not do this. If you decide to use the class blog in this way, you can decide whether you want to moderate student posts.
- **Moderation on student blogs:** Most teachers leave these boxes unchecked. This function is primarily for K-12 teachers who use the Campus Press platform.
- **Privacy:** Set student site privacy to **Only registered users of this site can view it** by default unless you have a specific justification for requiring public student blogs. The nature of the Commonplace Book assignment lends itself to private blogs.
- **Reader:** Leave this option unchecked unless you want students in your class to have access to each other's posts. If you want to create peer review groups or reading pairs, adding individual users is a better option.
- **Teachers:** If you are team teaching a course or want to invite another teacher to observe your class blog, you can add other users as Teachers.
- **Student Permissions:** Check all the boxes to grant students full control over their sites. The Commonplace Book assignment is predicated on student ownership of the digital space, so there's no good reason to restrict access to WordPress core functions.
- **Default Blog Template:** You can automatically assign the Commonplace Book template to new student blogs *only* if you use the **Invite** function or request a batch job to enable your class blog at the beginning of the semester.

15.1.2 Adding Student Blogs to the Class

Students can request to be added to your class blog by going to ****My lass > Join a Class **** from their WordPress dashboard (after they've created a site).

They should search for your class blog by entering just the last part of your class blog's URL. For example, for **edblogs.olemiss.edu/mysite**, students will instead search for the last part of the URL. Using this example, they would search for **mysite**.

You can approve student join requests by clicking on ****My Class **** and selecting which students you want to approve.

15.1.3 Reader Lists

You do not need a separate class blog to use Reader lists to read student Commonplace Books. This option does not use the Classes plugin and instead relies on WordPress's native subscription/user system.

15.1.4 Creating Reader Lists

Instead of pulling your class rolls from MyOleMiss, this time you'll pull them from Blackboard.

Go to the Full Grade Center in your Blackboard course. From the toolbar at the top of your gradebook, click "Work Offline" and select "Download."

On the "Download Grades" page under "Data," select "User Information Only." Leave the rest of the options the same, and click "Submit."

On the next screen, click "Download". You can save the file to your computer or open it directly in Excel. You will see the following warning message. Click Yes:

The spreadsheet will show the first and last names of the students in the section and their usernames. Click and drag to select all the usernames in your class, and copy them to your clipboard (Ctrl/Cmd + C).

Now, log in to Edblogs at edblogs.olemiss.edu. Go to your WordPress dashboard. You should see the Reader. Notice "My Lists" in the right sidebar.

Click "Create New List." You can name the list by section if you want to divide your reader by section. Or, if you want all your students combined, just name the list with the semester. Paste the usernames that you copied from the Excel spreadsheet into the box and click "Create."

You can now click on the list from your Reader to view only the student blogs from the named section or semester. You can manage the list by clicking the small sprocket next to its name. From the manage screen, you can add or remove student blogs or delete the list completely.

You can repeat this process for multiple sections if you keep your classes separated.

15.1.5 For Students

Student instructions are available on the [student startup page](#) of edblogs.olemiss.edu.

15.1.6 Edblogs Requests

Use the links below to request various maintenance jobs on the UM EdBlogs network. Please allowed at least 24 hours for completion (more at the beginning and end of the semester). You will receive email confirmation when the requested job is complete.

15.2 Background

The Commonplace Book assignment is based on three core principles:

1. The definition of a Commonplace Book: "a book into which notable extracts from other works are copied for personal use" (**An important element in this definition is that not everything is collected, just what the writer of the commonplace book deems most notable.**)
2. The DWR program objective of reflection: "Reflection is a major component of the first-year writing sequence Reflection, or the ability to independently assess one's status in relationship to a learning experience, is bound up with the act of writing. Furthermore, the ability to self-reflect is an increasingly essential skill as the process of higher education becomes more and more heterogeneous and fragmented" (**The important element here is that the emphasis is on reflecting on learning not practicing composition, although, of course, the act of creating the commonplace book is practicing composition.**)
3. The big-picture objective "to give students raw material from which to generate their vision of the academy." (*The important element here is that students begin to create a structure or system for their vision of learning.*)

Using those principles as context, faculty working on this project defined the objectives for the commonplace book project as offering students:

1. the space to collect the ideas and artifacts they consider to be most valuable to their learning
2. the opportunity to reflect on what they have collected in order to make sense of their own learning
3. the opportunity to devise a structure for articulating that learning as they begin to generate their vision of the academy

Thus, the commonplace book is framed by a series of four practices:

1. daily reflection through which the student identifies and collects the most important one or two concepts/strategies/practices from each class session (1-2 minutes per class)
2. weekly reflection through which the student collects the most important artifacts (i.e., a passage from an *NYT* article, a peer review, a progymnasmata exercise, a comment from a writing conference, a rhetorical situation from another class, etc.) from each week with just a brief notation or comment as to why it was saved (5-10 minutes from one class each week)
3. unit reflection, developed from the DWR eportfolio unit reflection assignments (one class period extending into homework if necessary)
4. end of semester tagging and explanation of tagging through which the student develops categories to articulate and systematize major concepts and strategies that are the building blocks of his/her vision of the academy (two weeks)

In Spring 2016, we sat down with students and an instructor who participated in the Commonplace Book pilot program. This video includes their insights and reflections on the project.

15.3 Pedagogy and Rationale

The Commonplace Book is situated with the CCCC Position Statement on the Principles and Practices in Electronic Portfolios:

Principle #6: Integration and Curriculum Connections Students link artifacts in a flexible structure that (1) synthesizes diverse evidence and ideas, (2) invites linear or non-linear ways to read and evaluate e-portfolios, and (3) makes connections to portfolio-related evidence and relationships distributed across the Internet. Students may therefore use linking to represent how e-portfolio artifacts inter-relate with other courses in the larger context of whole-curriculum learning.

15.4 Why a commonplace book?

The commonplace book integrates the role of ePortfolio into the daily and weekly coursework of WRIT 100/101 as well as providing an opportunity for students to identify and articulate connections among ePortfolio artifacts. Like the standard WRIT 100/101 ePortfolio, this project incorporates unit reflections on major projects, but the commonplace book expands the scope of the ePortfolio to include daily quickwrites and weekly classical rhetorical exercises. In this way, the project becomes an ongoing “writer’s gym” or “writer’s workbook” that students access every class period. In daily quickwrites, students respond for 1-2 minutes to a creative or reflective prompt. In weekly progymnasmata, students complete sequenced exercises focusing on specific rhetorical strategies. In the final two weeks of the semester, students create categories that articulate their learning and tag each entry in the commonplace book with one or more of those categories, using the tags to identify connections among the diverse artifacts.

15.5 Commonplace Books and Blogging

The electronic space that most closely mirrors the classical commonplace book is a blog. Blogs are ultimately organized chronologically, the same way that a bound commonplace notebook would be, but the added classification features of categories and tags allow for dynamic organization of compositions. Commonplace as Blog also encourages student agency and ownership of design, organization, and purpose in physical terms as well as in conceptual terms. Another useful comparison is Commonplace as Pinterest for text. Though the visual design metaphor for Pinterest is less applicable, the notion that users construct meaning, set goals, and work through problems on the Pinterest platform is similar to what we are asking them to do in the Commonplace.

15.6 Teacher Testimonials

- *Daily Writes: The Road is Long with Many a Winding Turn* (Karen Forgette)
- *Taking Advantage of Ritualistic Reflection – A Comment on Daily Writes* (Amber Nichols-Buckley)
- *Commonplace Book: Expectations vs. Reality* (Colleen Thorndike)
- *One Woman's Perspective on the CPB* (Jenny Jackson)

Below we share words of advice, reflection, and encouragement from the teachers who piloted the commonplace book curriculum in 2016.

15.6.1 Daily Writes: The Road is Long with Many a Winding Turn (Karen Forgette)

The Bowling Green State University Center for Teaching and Learning has a great [handout](#) on teaching students to reflect. That handout provides a list of bullet points delineating the hallmarks of good reflection, including:

- Evidence of serious thinking and questioning
- Self-awareness and honesty
- Concrete and specific examples
- The ability to show relationships between prior and new knowledge

When I see evidence of these hallmarks in my students' commonplace books, I know they are moving into reflection territory. However, they journey through a lot of barren, flat landscape before reaching the Promised Land. Reflection, like all ways of knowing or habits of mind, takes practice and time.

Exhibit A

One of the reasons the DWR shifted from the ePortfolio model to the Commonplace Book model was to give students more opportunities to practice reflection. The daily writes are an integral part of that practice. Early daily writes tend to be summaries of class, like this one:

Today in our group discussions on The New York Times, I learned how other people maneuver the page and find articles that interested them. The other students that were in my group said that they decided on their topic mainly by what was appearing more frequently on the home page. My group also liked to write about things that dealt with them, including their religious beliefs or their home town.

This student is giving reflection a shot. He is describing what we did in class that day and trying to frame it within the larger context of his learning, but mostly, he's just recapping what he did. But that was September. By November, here's what that same student's daily writes looked like:

Today in class we had to listen to several other multimodal projects. I can honestly say that after listening to about fifteen seconds of other pieces, I could tell how awful mine truly was. Once again I was witness to the writing rule that your first draft is pretty much absolute crap and so are the next five or six tries. I also learned that I wrote my script filled with evidence, which would be great if my audience were forty five year old high school teachers that desperately want to see evidence. Sadly, that's not my audience. I learned that I have to make this script more interesting, and can possibly do so by taking away some facts and evidence and putting them into the project visually instead of audibly. I can guarantee that two days from now my script will be nothing like it is now.

Here the student moves beyond summarizing what happened in class to analyzing what he learned in class and considering how that learning fits into the larger scheme of his writing knowledge. He links his prior learning (writing is a process, audience awareness) with his current practice and devises a plan for improving his project. In terms of the hallmarks of good reflection, he takes his learning seriously, demonstrates self-awareness, provides concrete examples, and establishes connections.

The Takeaway

So how did he get there? He practiced (daily writes, weekly writes, and unit reflections). He paid attention to feedback (mine, his classmates', models of good reflection, and his own consideration of his commonplace book). He took ownership. By recording and thinking about what he was learning, he started to build his own intellectual framework for how he operates as a writer. Reflection is a long and winding road, as this student's work illustrates, but, as John Dewey said, "We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience." The more practice our students have in reflection, the more they will learn.

15.6.2 Taking Advantage of Ritualistic Reflection – A Comment on Daily Writes (Amber Nichols-Buckley)

I am a Writing Project teacher. So beginning class with a writing prompt has always been a natural part of my pedagogy. Since most of my teaching experience has been at the high school level, I've always had ample time for daily writing. But shifting to a college composition course with three 50-minute classes per week made it more and more difficult to get that daily writing done. Enter the 2014-15 academic year and my work on the commonplace book pilot. When I started using the commonplace book last year, I wasn't sure what the end result should really be. I knew I wanted to be a part of the pilot because it emphasized the importance of frequent reflection, and my hope was that students would reflect more authentically than I had seen them do previously. I also felt that the daily write portion of the commonplace book would force me to make time for reflection, which is essential to our students' growth as writers, sure, but more importantly, as academics. I realized quickly, though, that reflection is a difficult concept for our novice writers. And I realized that I struggled to teach it. Many daily writes seemed shallow, and a part of this was that students were rushed to finish them. In a 50-minute course, expect that most daily writes will be 3-5 minutes max. And expect that some days, you just won't fit it in at all. To help combat some of these issues, I brought it to the table at one of our pilot meetings. Karen Forrette shared some reflection terms from Kathy Yancey that truly resonated with me. Those are: Reflection in Action, Constructive Reflection, and Reflection for Presentation (you can read more about this in [her e-book](#)). I realized pretty quickly that daily writes are very much "Reflection in Action," which is loosely defined as composition that is written as an explanation to others for the purpose of understanding an event better ourselves. Daily writes are, at their core, "summaries" of the day. Often, I would prompt students to write about where they were in their process. Here is an example student response:

"I have no process at the moment. Right now I am just trying to get my life together. Something that I have been working on is preparing my mind mentally for this research paper. I am completely not even here today which is really unfortunate. But I think that I am going to do my paper on family dynamics. I was really into the essay about technology helping family relationships and not necessarily hurting them. I want to go somewhere in that direction."

Sometimes, I would allow the daily write to be a venting sesh on what was going on in their worlds. We played with other prompts as well, such as "#hashtagtheclass" or "Today's class got me like..." I would try to bring in common

phrasing from social media because this helped students understand their audience for daily writes, which is ultimately themselves. Here are some favorite hashtags:

- #todaywasreallyHELPFUL!
- #thestruggleisreal
- #needmore rhetorical strategies
- #ethosgameonehunna
- #shouldawrittenthats
- #OhThatsDueToday?!?!?
- #PrayForAnA
- #gottagetmyshitstraight
- #workthatprocess

In fact, #workthatprocess became like a class motto for students last year, and “#hashtag the class” really became one of our favorite go-to prompts, especially when we were pressed for time. Not only do daily writes help students reflect as ritual, but they are so helpful for the teacher. I never realized how much I would come to depend on daily writes for my own formative assessment. I could tell when students “got it” or when they were utterly confused. I could tell when they felt overwhelmed. I understood when remediation was needed. In fact, on those days when I just couldn’t fit a daily write into the day, I missed them. I almost felt like, “How do I plan for the next class without a daily write?” Ultimately, the daily writes served as good mini-reflections that would end up feeding into stronger, more authentic reflections (weekly writes, sometimes... unit reflections... often, end of semester final reflections, definitely). And to be honest, students’ later daily writes were places where I feel like I saw the truest glimpses into their writing voices. I’m not sure if it was because the daily writes were so low-stakes (ungraded) or because they were so short. Whatever the reason, the daily writes proved integral to helping students enter a deeper layer of reflection, what Yancey calls “Constructive Reflection” (which is essentially reflecting on prior reflections... reflections that are cumulative in nature). Expect that, at first, students will be writing their daily writes for you more than anything. With time, as you get to know them better, and as they get to know each other better (and, God-willing, get to know themselves better), you will notice their daily writes becoming more personal and authentic. And you’ll see this feed into their larger reflections as well.

15.6.3 Commonplace Book: Expectations vs. Reality (Colleen Thorndike)

Daily Writes:

Be flexible with when you give the daily write prompt: you could start class with it by having them reflect on the previous class or on their homework; you could toss out the daily write prompt in the middle of class as they’re transitioning from one activity to another; and, of course, you can have them write it at the end. Changing up when they do the daily write keeps them on their toes and they are more likely to have quality posts. Don’t be afraid to get creative and have fun with the daily prompts. Some of my favorites have been silly ones. Here are three daily write prompts and examples from student blogs: **PROMPT:** What hashtag(s) would you use to describe today’s class and why?

#whenInDoubtWriteItOut I only had fragments of a working thesis and some scatterbrained paragraphs walking into today’s class and I decided to just “brain dump” my topic and it turned into a darn good working thesis. The power point helped a lot too, I will definitely be pulling up those slides when I’m working later.

PROMPT: 5 words to describe today’s class

- Tiring
- Helpful

- Slightly irritating
- Interesting
- Insightful

PROMPT: Use pics/gifs to complete: This weather and the end of the semester got me like... [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) Each of these examples from different students' blogs show different levels of reflection, but highlight student engagement with the Commonplace book space. The last example is not reflective of the class itself, but of the student's mindset at the time (this was during a week of almost nonstop rain towards the end of the semester). This was a daily write I did because so many students were just tired and stressed and burnt out, so they needed a jolt of fun to snap out of the rain and end of the semester induced funk.

Overall blog

During the first meeting of the pilot group for this project, I had a few concerns about the commonplace book. It seemed really great and exciting, but I was worried about how students would react to it and my first thought was "How am I going to read and grade ALL of these things for FOUR classes?" It was an overwhelming task that I thought I would have to do every week. However, once the semester started and we met and discussed expectations of students and of instructors, we all began to realize that it would be nearly impossible to grade these daily and weekly writes and this reflective space isn't about grades at all. It's about letting students take ownership of their learning and work out how to write meaningful reflection. While I don't grade each and every daily write and weekly write, I read through them fairly quickly each day—I think of the daily writes as a barometer for student understanding and progress. It's a really wonderful way to assess what students are struggling with in a certain unit and when they really understand it, their posts show this. It's best not to mention grades or points or anything when it comes to the Commonplace book until the end of the semester when they are doing the final reflection and reading back through to tag and organize their posts. By de-emphasizing grades/points when you talk about the Commonplace, students should stop obsessing about them. In the fall semester I had more students obsess and ask about points/grades with the Commonplace (in 100/101) than in the spring—by 102 they just accepted it as a weird thing they had to do everyday in class and that was it. My best advice for dealing with students who obsessively ask about how it will be graded or what their grade is on it, is to tell them that the grade is on the final product, but in order to have a final product they need to work on it all semester. Making them accountable for doing the daily and weekly writes is part of the process of the Commonplace. I was worried about students buying into this idea and doing all of these posts. Some students won't do every post, a few will not do most posts, but the majority of students will post their daily writes without much grief. I've had more problems with students doing the weekly writes—they would forget about them since it was an out of class assignment. To combat this, I started doing Connect 10s once a week in class; I'd start class with a prompt asking students to make connections with something we had been working on in class and things outside of class—this could be how they write differently in different classes or coming up with a list of "writing rules". I give students 10 minutes or so to write and then we spend some time talking about their responses before moving on to another class activity. Students have the option of adding to their posts later that day if they want or they can just post what they wrote in 10 minutes. These Connect 10s, which are based on James Lang's Small Teaching ideas, changed weekly writes—students actually did them and they added great conversation and reflection to those class days. Most students find the Campuspress platform really easy to use—they just have to log in with their UM id and password and they immediately have a blog with a pre-set template. Then they just have to join your class (if you choose to run yours as a class blog—I highly recommend this). They can post easily—just clicking the + icon on their homepage. I add a link to the Campuspress log-in page to my class's Blackboard page, just so that my students don't have to remember the website or constantly ask me. It helps to walk them through the posting process a couple times, but they quickly get the hang of it. At the beginning of the semester, students may be confused about what goes on their blogs and what goes on Blackboard. I always tell my students that the blog is their space for their informal writing and Blackboard is for formal writing. I emphasize that informal writing is not graded and formal writing is graded. So the blog is reflections and informal posts and Blackboard is formal papers.

15.6.4 One Woman's Perspective on the CPB (Jenny Jackson)

I adore the Commonplace Book, and if you were to mention the CPB to me in passing, you would be stuck listening to me sing its praises (seriously, feel free to ask me about it). The Wordpress platform is easy to navigate and use and the possibility for students to make their CPBs their own (through theme and design) within Wordpress is more than there. While there is so much to say about how useful and effective the Commonplace book has been for my classes the past two semesters as a space for collecting writing and reflecting upon their work and experiences both inside and outside of the writing classroom (and how useful I believe it will continue to be), what I want to emphasize here to instructors who are about to complete the CPB for the first time is that it can also be fun. Yes, actual fun in the writing classroom. Teacher fun and student fun! One of the best memories I have from class last semester was brought on by a CPB activity thought up collaboratively with my lovely teaching circle. The activity prompted students to make a list of “the top five ways to survive the end of the semester” using only GIFs and to post these lists to the class blog instead of their personal blogs. My students and I were cracking up at GIFs of dogs running in circles or babies making faces at their parents, whatever they found to represent their stress and stress-relief tactics. It was the perfect activity to break up the tension of the end of the semester and to remind students to breathe, laugh, and relate to each other. Yes, the CPB has proven to be to be a great space for students and classes to collect writing and reflection in an organized and manageable way. However, the CPB is also just fun to use and offers opportunities to shake the typical classroom goings-on up a little. That’s what I really love.

15.7 Resources

15.7.1 Readings on Reflection for Instructors: Start Here!

Yancey, Kathy. *Reflection in the Writing Classroom*. Utah: Utah State University Press, 1998

- In this concise, readable book, Yancey explores the role of reflection in enhancing student learning in the writing classroom. Chapters on reflection-in-action, constructive reflection, and reflection-in-presentation detail the many ways reflection can be woven into writing courses and enhance student learning.
- Full-text available at J.D. Williams and online through [Utah State University Digital Commons](#).

Available in J.D Williams

Brockbank, Anne ,and Ian McGill. Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998.

Brockbank and McGill provide an overview of the theory and practice of reflection in higher education. Chapters 5, 7, and 8 detail reflection and developing reflective practices.

Brookfield, Stephen. Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

Brookfield guides teachers through the process of reflecting on their own classroom practices and includes several useful instruments to facilitate student reflection.

King, Patricia M., and Karen Strohm Kitchener. Developing Reflective Judgment. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.

King and Kitchener explain the intellectual stages of developing reflective judgment. The book details their own longitudinal study as well as other research and offers ideas for encouraging reflective judgment in the classroom.

Schon, Donald. Educating the Reflective Practioner. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986.

This classic work, one of the inspirations for Yancey’s *Reflection in the Writing Classroom*, argues for the redesign of professional education as a combination of applied science and coaching in the process of reflection-in-action.

Available online

Lang, James M. "Small Changes in Teaching: Making Connections." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 8 February 2016. <http://chronicle.com/article/Small-Changes-in-Teaching-/235230>

Lang explains how a commonplace book can help students make connections between what they are learning in the classroom and the outside world.

O'Neill, Peggy. "Reflection and Self-Assessment: Resisting Ritualistic Discourse." *The Writing Instructor*. 2002:04. <http://www.writinginstructor.org/oneill-2002-04>

O'Neill offers cautionary advice about the potential pitfalls and difficulties of assigning and assessing reflective writing.

Student Samples

We have curated several example commonplace books from students who participated in the 2015-2016 pilot courses. These exemplars were chosen by pilot instructors because they model best practices for commonplace book, and demonstrate authentic reflection. Students consented to the release of their work to be shared with faculty and other students.

15.7.2 Spring WRIT 100 (single semester) Examples

- Kelly Fagan
- Karlee Palomo
- Dana Williams

15.7.3 FASTrack WRIT 101 and 102 (full year) Examples

- Megan Anthony
- Madelyn Birkelbach
- Grey Young

Be sure to ask your students if they would like to share their commonplace books as exemplars, or if they would like to submit them to be [Featured Edblogs](#) on the sign-in page.

Teachers have used class blogs in various ways. Learn more about how class blogs work on the [Technical Support](#) page. Below are some class blogs from pilot year 2015-2016 teachers.

- Colleen Thorndike
- Amber Nichols-Buckley
- Karen Forgette

If you would like to feature your class blog here, please contact [Andrew Davis](#).

TEACHING SPEECH & WRITING ONLINE

TEACHING CIVIL DISCOURSE

See Also

[Download the PDF of this Guide](#)

Contents

- *Reading Materials*
- *Class Activities*
- *Civil Discourse Mini-Unit for First-Year Writing*
- *Other Resources*

Developed in Fall 2018 by: Karen Forgette, Kate Hooper, Rachel Johnson, and Don Unger

On March 21, 2019, at 6pm in Fulton Chapel, Alexander Heffner, host of PBS' The Open Mind, will give a lecture titled "Politics, Media, and the Future of Civil Discourse." (For more information about Heffner, check out [The Open Mind website](#). We hope to use this lecture to initiate a wider discussion at the University of Mississippi on the nature of civil discourse and the roles that reading, writing, speaking and listening play in shaping it. To that end, a group of writing and speech instructors, led by Rachel Johnson, met over fall 2018 to discuss how the topic enters into our curricula and to develop materials for our spring 2019 courses. This teaching guide resulted from those meetings. As you are contemplating your syllabi, assignments, readings, and activities for next spring, we encourage you to use these materials, or others, in order to engage students in conversations about civil discourse. This first section lists texts on civil discourse and related issues. The list items represent scholarly and popular press articles, as well as podcasts, websites, and other multimedia that may help shape your knowledge of civil discourse and/or serve as readings for your courses. We divided this list into categories that reflect some aspects of the national conversation on civil discourse. These categories include:

- Defining Civil Discourse
- Challenges of Civil Discourse
- Argument and Civil Discourse
- Academic Freedom and Civil Discourse

The second section describes classroom activities related to civil discourse. The third section provides a sample civil discourse mini-unit for first-year writing courses. Finally, the fourth section offers other instructor resources.

17.1 Reading Materials

17.1.1 Defining Civil Discourse

***On Being* Podcast Episodes** Several of these podcasts model civil discourse between people from opposing views and/or interview people with specific ideas/methods about how to practice civil discourse. See also the [Civil Conversations Project](#) from *On Being*.

***Justice Talking* from NPR Features** podcast episodes about controversial topics in which experts debate and discuss the issue (models civil, yet passionate discourse). Some of the links are older and may be broken, so anything assigned from this may need to be downloaded and hosted on a Blackboard page.

National Institute for Civil Discourse Podcast Series The University of Arizona's National Institute for Civil Discourse hosts a series of podcasts devoted to civil discourse on a range of issues including fake news, global trade, and the role of satirical media in political debate. These podcasts run from 20 minutes to a bit more than an hour and could be used in class or as homework assignments.

Voters Not Politicians Voters Not Politicians is a nonpartisan coalition working to change redistricting laws in Michigan. Their movement and website are examples of "civil discourse in action." Students could listen to the

1A episode describing the movement and then analyze the website's rhetoric.

Janus Forum Lecture Series (Brown University) This YouTube channel features lectures organized by Brown University. The event usually features two prominent thinkers or researchers who present their opposing viewpoints on an issue of concern. The dialogue between the speakers following their short lectures models civil discourse and demonstrates how the speakers tend to agree about several aspects of a problem – perhaps more so than they disagree.

Civil Discourse 101, from the Civic Education Video Series produced by MetroEast A quick video tutorial for engaging in conversation. The video could be used as a pre-discussion or extended group work primer in any class.

17.1.2 Challenging Civil Discourse

"Dialogic Civility: A Narrative to Live By" by Shelley D. Lane This article provides a blueprint for engaging a public narrative of dialogic civility. Written for communication instructors, the article informs on dialogic civility and can spark ideas for incorporating the practice in a variety of communication courses, including online. Find more on this topic by Shelley D. Lane in the book *Understanding Everyday Incivility: Why are They so Rude?*

***The Open Mind* (PBS with Alexander Heffner) - Interview with Teresa Bejan** This video clip features Teresa Bejan discussing portions of her book *Mere Civility: Disagreement and the Limits of Toleration*. Offers a counterpoint to calls for politeness and civility and a lot of really interesting history.

"There's Nothing Virtuous About Finding Common Ground" by Tayari Jones This op ed posits that arguments about moving to the middle or finding common ground aren't inherently virtuous (e.g., where is the middle ground in arguments about slavery? Indentured servitude?). It gets at contemporary issues undergirding what civil discourse means and how part of this discussion means deciding who we want to be as individuals and as a nation.

"You don't have to be nice to political opponents. But you do have to talk to them." by Teresa Bejan Professor and political theorist, Teresa Bejan, discusses the limits of civility in public discourse and portions of her book *Mere Civility: Disagreement and the Limits of Toleration*. She offers a lot historical examples of uncivil discourse from figures students might be surprised to learn were rather uncivil - like Martin Luther. Here is a link to a [scholarly forum](#) about Bejan's book. Each response is concise and provides a specific perspective on her arguments.

The Real Roots of American Rage: The untold story of how anger became the dominant emotion in our politics and personal lives—and what we can do about it" by Charles Duhigg.

Article was published in January 2019 issue of *The Atlantic*. Based on a psychological study of a contented, suburban town, the article explains how anger is a useful communication tool, which can be used to create positive change and promote resolution in interpersonal relationships, as well as harnessed to facilitate social change. Though anger has an

upside, history shows anger has also been manipulated for unethical reasons and that left unchecked, rage can create lasting, harmful effects on individuals and segments of society. Duhigg offers a way to recognize and understand anger and deescalate rage before it turns destructive.

A longer article, an intriguing **discussion or project starter for any class looking at emotion in relation to civil discourse**.

17.1.3 Argument as a Basis for Civil Discourse

“Sustaining Arguments” from **The Ethical Practice of Critical Thinking** by Fowler This short chapter introduces the idea of a “sustaining argument” as the ethical obligation of a critical thinker. Fowler defines these as “arguments which matter, about things which matter, to people who matter to each other” (5). He goes on to identify specific features of such arguments and explains that argumentation following this model is more likely to find an audience.

“Reasoning and Critical Thinking” and “Clarifying Meaning” by Hughes and Lavery in **Critical Thinking: An Introduction to the Basic Skills** (5th ed.) These two chapters are student-friendly in their length and tone. They approach critical thinking as a function of understanding argument. These chapters would be great for having students develop a vocabulary about how to evaluate and understand features of arguments and understand the principle of charity. They would pair nicely with activities related to argument dissection and reconstruction.

“Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love” by Jim Corder This article, published in *Rhetoric Review*, addresses how people develop as narratives, and even arguments, or put another way, how to approach these narratives and arguments as who someone is. While such a sensibility might seem a bit abstract and the article is a bit dense for first-year students, I think that they can understand how the arguments that we construct are part of what makes us who we are. Working from this standpoint, the article serves as a reminder for readers/listeners to consider how identity, narrative, and argumentation are deeply intertwined, and Corder encourages readers to show care for another by using rhetoric conscientiously. This article could be used in contrast to articles that emphasize the writer or speaker’s agency as Corder focuses on the listener/reader’s agency.

“Transformations in a civil discourse public speaking class: Speakers’ and listeners’ attitude change” by Barbara Mae Gayle Published in *Communication Education*, Gayle’s research suggests researching and presenting a speech or argument from one perspective may limit a students understanding. A method often used in debate classes, Gayle’s research suggests students are more likely to adjust their beliefs on an issue after crafting a speech or argument from opposing views.

17.1.4 Academic Freedom and Civil Discourse

“Academic Freedom: A Basic Guide” by James Liszka in **Start Talking: A Handbook for Engaging Difficult Dialogs in Higher Education** edited by Kay Landis This short essay offers a legal history on the concept of academic freedom. It also discusses when speech is covered or not covered by the principle of academic freedom. The concluding portion of the essay discusses several case studies where free speech became an issue in a classroom or higher education setting and discusses how such cases were decided or resolved.

17.2 Class Activities

Argument Dissection and Reconstruction The article linked above describes how to incorporate argument diagramming into a first year writing course to teach critical thinking skills. The activities/assignments described could work well as one day lessons or as an entire unit focused on developing or writing sound arguments.

Developing a Classroom Code of Civility Designed for presentation courses such as Public Speaking but may be adapted for any course in which civility may be promoted. At the end of this single-class activity, students will have an understanding of civility in order to: (1) identify civility and consequences of behaviors, (2) create their own communication civility code for classroom behaviors and presentations, and (3) practice civility throughout the semester.

Inquiry-based Civil Discourse This lesson from the journal *Communication Teacher* is appropriate for speech or writing classes focused on civil discourse, argumentation, debate, persuasion or political communication. The unit activity will help students build an understanding of civil discourse and its function in society. Students will: (1) increase their capacity to examine arguments critically, (2) enhance their own ability to self-reflect critically, and (3) improve their ability to engage in civil discourse. This activity will employ inquiry-based learning strategies to apply students' understanding of civil discourse in a dialogue with the broader campus community by partnering with campus media to develop and publish original opinion-editorial pieces. Because the DM may not be able to accommodate, classes could partner with various papers around the state, DWR could potentially host a FB or other social media page for published works in relation to the Civil Discourse, or speech students could verbally present their ideas to partner classes or an invited public audience.

Interactive, Immigration Timeline <<http://www.choices.edu/teaching-news-lesson/immigration-timeline/>>`__A one day lesson plan from the Choices: Teaching with the News curriculum by Brown University allows teachers to highlight civil discourse skills. Developed for K12, it is also appropriate for freshman-level speech or writing classes and might be an excellent choice for Power & Privilege sections.

“Circle of Viewpoints: A Routine for Exploring Diverse Perspectives” This activity from the University of Arizona’s Civil Discourse Institute employs a skeleton script to help students brainstorm new perspectives about a topic as well as related agents and questions. It can be used after an assigned reading, to introduce a topic, or to open discussions about controversial issues. Appropriate for speech or writing classes. (Requires part of or an entire class period)

“Text, Talk, Revive Civility & Respect” In this small group exercise, from the University of Arizona’s Civil Discourse Institute, groups receive text messages that guide them in participating in a civil discussion on two of the following issues: climate change, immigration, health care, same sex marriage, abortion, or campaign finance reform. Each group needs access to one cell phone. Appropriate for speech or writing classes. (Requires 1 -2 hours)

Train for Thanksgiving with our Angry Uncle Bot This quick and quirky New York Times article includes a simulation exercise developed by a psychiatrist through which students can navigate a conversation with a relative who holds opposing political views. It offers a five-step method for holding difficult conversations. Appropriate for speech or writing classes. (Requires 15-30 minutes including discussion)

“The Need to Revive Civility and Respect in our Communities” In this one-on-one activity, from the University of Arizona’s Civil Discourse Institute, students identify someone whom they perceive as being on the “other side of the political aisle” and use a scripted protocol to hold a conversation on civility. Appropriate for speech or writing classes. (Requires 30 minutes-1 hour)

“Here Now There Then” This whole class discussion exercise, from Visible Thinking at the Harvard School of Education’s Project Zero, uses a protocol to help students examine fairness issues and how thinking changes over time and place. Can be used with a variety of issues. Appropriate for speech or writing classes. (Requires part of or an entire class period)

“Making It Fair: Now, Then, Later” This whole class discussion exercise, from Visible Thinking at the Harvard School of Education’s Project Zero, helps students identify and evaluate actions that might make a situation more fair. Can be used with a variety of issues. Appropriate for speech or writing classes. (Requires part of or an entire class period)

“Reporter’s Notebook: A Routine for Separating Fact from Feeling” This small group activity, from Visible Thinking at the Harvard School of Education’s Project Zero, is designed for students who are midway into an investigation of a controversial issue. Small groups use a recording sheet to distinguish facts from feelings regarding the issue in order to provide clarity and make informed decisions. Appropriate for speech or writing classes. (Requires one class period)

“Tug of War: A Routine for Exploring the Complexities of Fairness Dilemmas” This whole class activity from, Visible Thinking at the Harvard School of Education’s Project Zero, helps students examine the forces that tug at both sides of a fairness or equity issue. Appropriate for speech or writing classes. (Requires part of or an entire class period)

17.3 Civil Discourse Mini-Unit for First-Year Writing

See Also

[Download the Mini-Unit Schedule](#)

17.4 Other Resources

[“Revive Civility from the National Institute for Civil Discourse”](#) The resource page has a “civility toolbox” with activities that would work as in-class exercises across several classes as well as infographics on related topics such as managing stress during difficult conversations, how to set up an environment for civil discourse, and fostering civil discourse on social media platforms.

[Civil Discourse: Addressing Differences in the Classroom](#) This podcast, from Emory University’s Center for Faculty Development and Excellence, features professors discussing civil discourse in the classroom.

[Civil Discourse in the Health Sciences](#) This podcast from, Emory University’s Center for Faculty Development and Excellence, features a discussion of the challenges of hot button issues in classes in the health sciences.

[Civil Discourse in the Humanities](#) This podcast, from Emory University’s Center for Faculty Development and Excellence, features a discussion of the challenges of hot button issues in classes in the humanities.

[A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future](#) Commissioned in 2012 and sponsored in part by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, this report calls on institutions of higher education to reclaim a mission of civic learning and democratic engagement.

[Teaching Critical Thinking - Some Lessons from Cognitive Science](#) Discusses a 6 part approach to promoting critical thinking in undergraduate classroom

[Argumentation Step by Step](#) Describes an approach to teaching argumentation that could be adapted to a first unit a writing or speech course. Focuses on achieving a milestone or competency before being able to advance –almost gamified as it is based on martial arts pedagogy.

[Center for Teaching: Difficult Dialogs](#) A step-by-step guide for teachers who may be wary of difficult dialogs. The guide will help you consider when and how to address difficult dialogs.

TEACHING WITH UM RHETLAB

Contents



- *Why are we using UM RhetLab?*
- *Integrating RhetLab with Blackboard*
- *Student Payment Options*
- *Making RhetLab Part of the Class*
- *Assigning UM RhetLab*
- *Dealing with Problems*
- *Why Quizzes?*

UM students enter Writing 100/101 classes with wide-ranging levels of exposure to rhetorical terms and strategies. UM RhetLab is designed to level the playing field for students by addressing the rhetorical content knowledge that DWR teachers emphasize. RhetLab modules consist of pre-tests, short readings with embedded activities, and end-of-module quizzes. Students work on these modules mostly outside of class, using the personalized learning features of the courseware to address their own needs and to take ownership of their learning. In annual surveys, two-thirds of 100/101 students have reported that the modules have helped them with their larger papers and projects. In this guide you will find best practices for teaching and learning with the Lumen modules.

18.1 Why are we using UM RhetLab?

The Lumen modules address three issues in our Writing 100/101 classes: students' varied levels of preparation for college writing; the limited means of assessment in composition courses; and the expense and generalized nature of copyrighted textbooks and courseware.

We know from the annual *Condition of College and Career Readiness Report* (2016, 2017, 2018) that less than 1/2 of ACT-tested high school graduates meet ACT college readiness English benchmarks and less than 1/2 meet reading benchmarks. Percentages are even lower for African-American and Hispanic students. Several studies (Pane et. al., 2015; Kiang et. al., 2016) have suggested that personalized learning tools can improve college readiness. The Lumen modules focus on the foundational rhetorical strategies and concepts first-year students need to meet the demands of college writing. Students use the modules in ways that suit their level of preparation. Some modules may serve as review of foundational knowledge while others introduce learners to new material and provide opportunities for practice.

The essay is the standard means of assessment in composition courses, which is appropriate. But the composition of an essay demands a solid grasp of foundational rhetorical concepts and facility with varied rhetorical strategies. Drilling down into an essay to pinpoint the concepts and skills students are struggling with is difficult, both for students and instructors. In *How Learning Works* (2010), Ambrose et. al. note that “adding structure and support — also called instructional scaffolding — to a practice activity in or out of class promotes learning when it helps students practice the target skills at an appropriate level of challenge” (132). The activities and quizzes in the Lumen modules operate as part of the instructional scaffolding students need to meet the challenges presented in a full-length essay or multimodal project. Because work in the modules is self-paced and quizzes can be taken more than once, students can work with a concept until they understand it, demonstrate their learning, and be affirmed for their knowledge, even if they cannot yet apply that concept in an essay.

While many textbook companies offer personalized learning courseware, those products are designed for mass audiences, protected by copyright, and come with a high price tag. Because the content of the Lumen modules was suggested and composed by DWR teaching faculty, it aligns closely with UM's first-year writing curriculum. As each module is an independent entity, faculty can easily order and implement modules to fit their individual course calendars. That close alignment and flexibility frees instructors from having to mine generalized, pre-packaged content for material relevant to their courses, and because the content of the modules is OER, their cost is low.

18.2 Integrating RhetLab with Blackboard

The Lumen Waymaker courseware integrates seamlessly with your Blackboard course.

Installation Instructions

[Download the Fall 2021 Package](#)

Import

1. In your WRIT 100 or 101 Blackboard course, click **Packages and Utilities > Import Package/View Logs** under Course Management.
2. Under **Select a Package**, click **Browse** and attach the .zip file you downloaded above.
3. Under **Select Course Materials**, check the boxes for:
 - Content Areas
 - Discussion Board
 - Grade Center Columns and Settings
 - Tests, Surveys, and Pools
4. Click **Submit**

Test

- In any course modules, open any of the links/pages and verify the content displays.
 - In any Module, open the *Study Plan* and select *Show What You Know* and verify the pre-test works and the Study Plan updates.
 - Return to any module and select *Quiz* and verify quiz works.
 - Open Grades and review that all graded items are connected to the Gradebook
-

18.2.1 Best Practices

If you use **course copy** to quickly generate your Blackboard environment from a previous semester's course, **do not copy the Lumen Package from the previous semester**. Make sure it is unchecked when you select the content to copy. Copying the package from one course to another breaks the LTI links between Waymaker and Blackboard.

Once the package has been imported, you can move and rename any of the Waymaker folders and links as if they were any other Blackboard content item (though if you use course copy, you'll have to remember where you put everything so you can remove it before copying).

Waymaker automatically creates Grade Center columns for each module quiz. By default, these columns are worth 20 points and are not assigned a category. We recommend you adjust the grade center columns as follows:

- Hide the Waymaker columns from student view. They see their scores when they complete each quiz; generating a Blackboard notification each time they take a quiz tends to make them more concerned about grades than they should be.
- Assign the columns to a category that corresponds to how they are weighted in your syllabus. If you combine the quizzes with other homework, just make sure your homework columns are in the same category as the quizzes.
- Consider keeping the category with the Waymaker quizzes out of the course grade calculation until the end of the semester. This can help with grade anxiety.

18.3 Student Payment Options

There are two ways that students can pay for the Lumen Waymaker modules. The first is to purchase an access code at the campus Barnes & Noble bookstore. The second is a direct pay option using either a debit or credit card. For either payment method, students will need to access the Lumen Waymaker modules through the tab on your course Blackboard page. From there, students will see two folders for each module: one a "Study Plan" and the other a "Quiz." The content, or "Study Plan," is made up of open educational resources (OER), so there is no payment option when accessing this material.

The quiz assessments are where students will be asked to enter payment. When students attempt to access any of the Lumen module quizzes, they will see a "Course Assessment Activation" screen where they will have three options: enter an access code purchased from the bookstore, pay directly using a debit or credit card, or use one of two free passes to take a quiz at the present time and pay later. (**Note: the direct pay option using a debit or credit card is the cheaper option as there is no bookstore markup involved.**) Finally, if a teacher feels like a student isn't completing quizzes because of a problem affording the materials for the class, the instructor can contact the DWR's Instructional Designer for assistance.

Payment Screen for Students

18.4 Making RhetLab Part of the Class

It is essential for students to see the Lumen Waymaker modules as valuable to their learning and as an integral part of the class. As such, the modules should be part of a homework score worth between 10%-15% of the final course grade. Teachers may count the modules as the sole component of the homework grade, or they may include other assignments and factor the work altogether. This range works best because it is substantive enough to demand students' attention, but it leaves the vast majority of the final grade to be determined by papers, projects, and other writing.

Teachers should help students see the modules as an important part of the class. This can happen in several ways:

Teachers can talk about them in class:

For example, a teacher may briefly cover the highlights from a module after students have completed their work on it. Ideally, this would involve explaining connections to the major paper or project that the class is working on at the time.

Teachers can refer to them in feedback:

For example, a teacher may make a comment on an analysis draft for the student to refer back to the "Rhetorical Appeals" module to bolster an idea involving ethos, logos, pathos, and/or kairos.

Teachers can mention them in student conferences:

For example, a teacher can talk to a student in a meeting about the argument paper on how to strengthen her thesis statement and avoid logical fallacies using the advice from the "Argument" module.

And teachers can ask students to reflect on them both during and after major papers or projects. See below for a couple of reflective ideas:

Daily Write example – "Reflect for about five minutes on how the 'Evaluating keys to successful analysis' module has impacted how you constructed your thesis on the analysis paper. How is this significant in your understanding of college-level analytical writing? Why does this matter in terms of your growth as a writer and learner?"*

Part of a Unit Reflection example – "How did the Lumen Waymaker modules that you completed during this unit impact your work and/or your approach to the assignment? Why does this matter?"

18.5 Assigning UM RhetLab

It is advisable to give students specific instructions and deadlines for their work on the modules. Like some students do with reading and other homework, they might be tempted to not take the modules as seriously as they should unless teachers make it clear that the rhetorical content knowledge and other material contained in the modules is important to their learning and to their class success. Teachers should inform and remind students that the modules can take on average about an hour to complete so they should budget their time appropriately (though many students do complete the work in a shorter time). Additionally, instructors should reinforce the fact that students can attempt the quizzes more than once to help improve their scores. This may mean students need to spend some additional time working.

Below are a few ideas for assigning the modules:

For a M/W/F class, assign one or two modules on Monday or Tuesday of a week, and require the work to be completed within seven days. For example, assign the first two modules on Monday, the first day of class. Make the due date the following Monday by class time. (Note: Some teachers might want to list a due date/time that is earlier than class time in case they want to look at the results in advance of the meeting.)

For a T/TH class, assign two modules on Tuesday of a week and require that one is completed by Friday and the other by the following Tuesday before class time.

For any course, assign one module as the only homework and require it be completed by the next class meeting.

As noted previously, teachers may want to plan on using a few moments of class time to discuss the modules after they are due in order to emphasize their value in the course and make connections to the larger assignments.

18.6 Dealing with Problems

Some teachers may experience low completion rates or poor work. In these cases, it is important to communicate with your students before a pattern is established. If a teacher assigns the first module or two and many students don't complete the work, make an announcement in class reminding students that the modules are designed to help them build up their knowledge and that they count for a significant portion of the final grade. Or, talk to students individually and let them know you are reviewing all the work in the class. Whatever the case, do not ignore the problem. All students – but especially first-year students – can benefit from a reminder that someone is accounting for their work.

If a teacher feels like the work on the modules is poor or substandard on a class level, emphasize again that students can take quizzes two times. And remember that teachers have the ability to grant extra attempts at quizzes for any student by going into the given quiz on Blackboard, then clicking “Manage Quiz Attempts,” finding the particular student or students, and choosing the number of extra attempts.

18.7 Why Quizzes?

All of the individual quiz questions in the Waymaker courseware are tied to an identified skill, which in turn is linked to a learning objective. Learning objectives are linked to module outcomes, which are themselves linked to course outcomes. Thus, each individual quiz question is connected in some way to a production-based learning outcome in WRIT 100/101. One concern faculty may have about the courseware is that the quizzes are only valid assessments of module content knowledge and that there is no substantive relationship between module content knowledge and writing skill. However, if we accept the validity of our course outcomes, as measured with rubric-based assessment of student writing, we must also accept the validity of these quiz questions as a measure of essential rhetorical skills.

This question appears in the analysis module quiz:

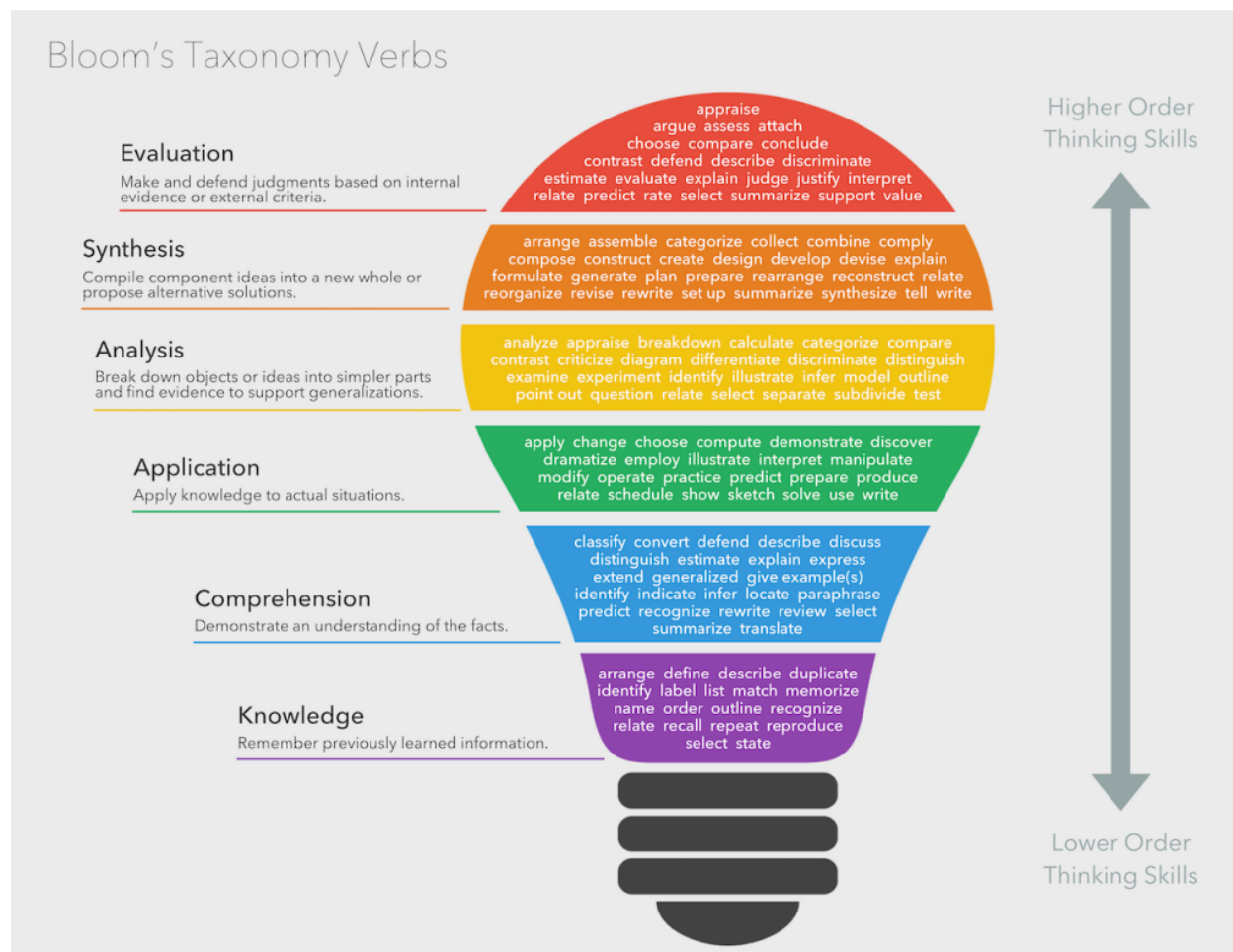
Which of the following best describes how evidence should function in an analytic writing?

Here is the full skill map for this question:

Level	Outcome
Skill	Recognize keys to successful analysis writing, Recognize and evaluate keys to successful, analysis writing.
Module	Evaluate keys to successful analysis
Course	Exploration and Argumentation: Students will use writing and other modes to analyze texts, explore unfamiliar ideas, engage with thinking different from their own, develop sound arguments, and reflect.

All of the skills and objectives in the courseware target the first two levels of Bloom's taxonomy. If we accept the validity of Bloom's taxonomy, foundational knowledge and comprehension are prerequisite for application, which is in turn prerequisite for analysis, evaluation, and other higher-order knowledge work. Students cannot analyze texts in their own writing until they can evaluate keys to successful analysis. In order to evaluate, they must first recognize those keys.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Verbs



When we evaluate student writing, we base our assessment on an application of learning objectives from the top three tiers of Bloom's Taxonomy: Evaluation, Synthesis, and Analysis. For example, when we decide if a student's thesis statement is "supported by sound reasons" or if it "demonstrates awareness of the depth of the issue," we're looking at the student's application of higher-order critical thinking skills. Are they able to construct a logical thesis that is supported by the right mix of evidence which targets a specific time and an identified audience?

Does assessing higher-order skills necessarily tell us about a student's lower-order skills? If a student cannot construct a thesis statement with sound reasons, can we know conclusively that it's because he or she doesn't understand logical fallacies? In the strictest sense, we cannot know. The instrument of assessment—our rubric—is not a valid measure of the lower-order skills. It's only a valid assessment of the criteria it explicitly measures.

Since students have gaps in knowledge or other significant preparation barriers coming in to college writing, it is important that we know where those gaps are. Assessing lower-order skills does not detract from our ability to teach and evaluate higher-order skills. A concern we hear about the courseware is that the quizzes just do not relate to the work the students are actually doing in class. This perception is not accurate: every quiz question in the modules aligns to specific skills, objectives, and learning outcomes. They target the three lower tiers of Bloom's taxonomy. This is by design: when we designed the courseware, we wanted to focus on lower-order skills. We already know that student writing itself is the best way to measure high-order skills. Nobody would try to replace reading and responding to student writing with multiple choice quizzes. Rather, these modules serve to measure skills that we were not otherwise looking at explicitly. Previously, we assessed this foundational rhetorical knowledge through assumption and guesswork. All the quizzes do is provide actual data about how students understand basic rhetorical skills.

Take a look at the chart below. It breaks down one of the WRIT 100/101 rubric categories into specific outcomes and traces how the courseware skills align to those outcomes. Notice how the rubric targets the top of Bloom's taxonomy

while the courseware skills target the bottom.

OXFORD TO THE BALLOT BOX

Contents

- *Overview*
- *Assignment Ideas*
- *DWR Topics*
- *Sample Prompts*
- *Tutorials*
- *Resources*

This guide provides Department of Writing & Rhetoric (DWR) faculty members with information about the Oxford to the Ballot Box project. This guide provides:

- An overview that details the project's rationale and partners
- General assignment ideas provided by the project advisory board
- Topics for common assignments in DWR courses
- Sample prompts and assignment sheets for various DWR courses
- Incorporating tutorials from the project coordinators
- Resources (e.g., readings, videos, films, websites, etc.)

As you design your curricula and materials for fall 2020, we hope that you consider participating in the Oxford to the Ballot Box Project by adapting an assignment or incorporating a new one that helps students address the importance of and challenges related to voting. Some of your students' work from these assignments could be featured in online venues and events that the project advisory board is developing.

If you decide to include an assignment related to the project in your fall 2020 course(s), if you have any questions about incorporating assignments into your class, please contact [Don Unger](#). If you have questions about the overall project, please contact [Jon Winet](#) and [Allen Spore](#).

See Also

[Download the Guide as a PDF](#)

19.1 Overview

This overview was developed by the project coordinators, Jon Winet and Allen Spore. It provides you with the project's aims, some event examples, and a list of advisory board members. Every four years the U.S. Presidential elections, from the early primaries in Iowa to the Inauguration, offer an important opportunity for engagement in the country's democratic process. It is our goal that the project will encourage thoughtful, civic discussion about the election and democracy, reflecting on the vital issues for our country and this election—from participation in voting by young people and women to the history of voter suppression, to race, health care and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic—while providing an opportunity for a broad and diverse range of people in the Oxford and University communities to voice their ideas and creative expression, capitalizing on the affordances of digital and online tools.

The project has been conceptualized over the past three years through meetings with a variety of Oxford participants. With the arrival of the pandemic we see our project making less of a pivot to digital, remote programs and more of a redistribution of efforts to already planned elements of our program. The content of the project remains substantially as initially conceptualized, with of course, a consideration of COVID-19 issues and the unknown social parameters of the “New Normal.” As the project is fundamentally based in public digital arts & humanities practices, we feel the project can still be realized with great impact and success. This may in fact be one of those “now more than ever moments.” We see the current moment as an opportunity for an even greater community focus and collaboration, as organizations pull together to get through this time.

The project will result in an archive of materials we believe will be of interest and of value to future historians. Anticipated program elements include:

Public programs (roundtables, talks and screenings) and satellite displays developed with our Advisory Board of humanities scholars, and in consultation and collaboration with community and University of Mississippi (UM) partners. With the uncertainty of the future, we plan to make our public programs flexible with the possibility of having them both online and live, the latter dependent on public health directives. We will conduct ongoing planning sessions to determine best practices in the “New Normal.”

- Roundtables, lectures and panels at the Power House and on the University of Mississippi and/or on line featuring civic leaders and election stakeholders, Confirmed programs for September include:
 - [Secretary of State Michael Watson](#) will visit campus to speak to one of Professor and Project Advisory Board member Sue Ann Skipworth's classes at the University of Mississippi about election issues. The public is invited. [Tuesday, September 15]
 - A lecture and Q&A by [Professor Marvin P. King, Jr.](#) on the history of voting in Mississippi, and on voter suppression and the impact of race on the state's politics and efforts to ensure widespread voter participation. [date TBA]
 - A panel composed of students to discuss voter participation, and/or the lack thereof, coordinated by [Professor Sue Ann Skipworth](#). [date TBA]

Educational Programs We are currently working with University of Mississippi Writing & Rhetoric Department to design curriculum components that actively engage students in research and documentation of the election process, creating public multimedia, multimodal projects on campus, and in Oxford and northern Mississippi using text, photography, video and audio—focusing on the election and social issues as part of the fall 2020 curriculum of their classes. Concurrently we will design a community multimedia “how to” document for people wishing to contribute to the project. Professor and Advisory Board Member Don Unger is our lead coordinator on this.

Additionally, we hope to collaborate with the **League of Women Voters Oxford/North Mississippi** on the role of women in politics, past and present, marking the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, the 19th amendment and the League. At the time of the submission of the application, the League's Board is meeting to consider the collaboration.

We plan to work with the **Overby Center for Southern Journalism and Politics**, UM Student Union, and Hotty-Toddy.com on presenting work from the project online, as well as using the numerous high definition electronic displays on campus and around Oxford. We have made initial contact with Charles Overby, and with HottyToddy.com News

Editor Alyssa Schnugg (see October 2, 2020 news story by Julia Peoples, “[Research Duo Announces Documentary Project In Oxford](#)”).

A dynamic website and ****social media****(e.g. Facebook Twitter, TikTok and Instagram) featuring original content–commentary, photography, and video and audio interviews from the project by community members, students as well as relevant material harvested from the Internet. The website will also serve as a permanent archive of the project. Community participation is key to the success of these and all elements of the project. Working with our partners at the Arts Council and University, we will actively reach out to Oxford’s diverse communities to invite their input and engagement. In the Time of Covid-19 we anticipate this to be a combination of electronic and in-person conversations.

An exhibit at the **Power House**, centrally located in Oxford, featuring photography, video and electronic displays. The project leads, Jon Winet and Allen Spore, and local Advisory Board members will coordinate with community residents and UM students and faculty to invite the contribution of texts, photography, and video to be displayed on large high definition displays. We plan to encourage contributors to create an image of Oxford, their families and neighbors, neighborhoods and civic spaces, campaign and issue-driven events and headquarters, all against the backdrop of the national election.

The Power House is an extraordinary and extraordinarily inspiring space, and consistent with YAC’s ethos and commitment to community-based practice to provide a space for informal dialog. Throughout the month of September, we will invite community members, political activists, Republican and Democratic Party volunteers and operatives to community forums and discussions of the issues. When unobtrusive and appropriate we will conduct interviews as well.

Working with YAC and UM, we will continue to design initiatives to engage and involve participants over the spring and summer of 2020. Anticipated audience and participants include YAC attendees and supporters; UM students, faculty; the Republican and Democratic political parties; local political activists; library patrons and civic organizations.

Project Advisory Board Members

- Jon Winet: Professor Emeritus and Public Policy Center Fellow, University of Iowa
- Allen Spore: Photographer, Former Americorps Vista for the North Panola School District
- Eric Crystal, PhD: Anthropologist, University of California, Berkeley
- Chris Rossi, PhD: Executive Director Humanities Iowa, University of Iowa
- Sue Ann Skipworth, PhD: Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Mississippi
- Don Unger, PhD: Assistant Professor of Writing and Rhetoric, University of Mississippi

19.2 Assignment Ideas

These assignment ideas were provided by the project advisory board in February 2020. They provide broad suggestions for assignments and topics that could be included in many different courses. Following this list, we provide specific assignment examples and resources for popular DWR courses.

- Interview a Republican/Democratic party leader or local candidate about a specific issue (student loans, inequality of income distribution, access to healthcare, Mississippi flag, impact of COVID-19, civil rights, etc.) Ask specific questions about their position and the rationale behind the position. Analyze their response in terms of logic, factual support and conclusion. State your own position on the issue with supporting logic and facts. Note that this could include photography, a short video clip and audio.
- Participant-observations: Attend a political lecture or event (Overby Center, League of Women Voters-sponsored event, Political Science event,). Summarize the main points of the presentation. Discuss points that you agree or disagree with and why. Note that this could also include video clips and photography *and* spot interviews with participants.

- Conduct historical research on a specific issue (voter suppression, women's suffrage and/or candidates, health-care, role of social media in elections, etc.). Summarize and analyze historical and contemporary positions on the issue.
- Interview students/Oxford residents. Ask them what for them is the most important issue in this campaign—and why. Provide some reflection and analysis of the logic and facts behind their positions.
- Interview and record (via Zoom or another video or audio application) a family member (grandparent, parent, aunt, etc.) on their earliest experience of voting. Photographs can be included, contemporary or from the time of their experience.
- Explore the role of social media and other news sources, asking people about their preferences and how they feel it helps form their opinions.
- Read **Why Facts Won't Change Our Minds** by James Clear. Summarize and analyze the key points and discuss how these issues affect our elections.

19.3 DWR Topics

19.3.1 WRIT 100, WRIT 101, WRIT 102, and SPCH 102

Each of the topics listed below could be included in assignments aimed at informative, argumentative, and scholarly research essays or speeches and approached from multiple perspectives. They could also inform daily writing prompts. In terms of WRIT 102 specifically, these topics might also work for the synthesis assignment.

1. How and when one is eligible to vote (various protections and restrictions)
2. How one registers to vote (and if this differs by place)
3. College students and voting
 - Registration issues
 - Polling locations
 - Costs of absentee voting
4. Pandemic voting
 - Safety of poll workers and voters
 - Naturalization on hold—how will affect first-time voting for some citizens?
 - Social media use and its impacts on voting decisions
5. How the election and voting processes work
 - Campaigning and campaign funding
 - Mail-In voting
 - Early voting
 - Absentee ballots
6. How parties and primaries work
7. Women's suffrage (2020 is the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women's constitutional right to vote).
8. Civil Rights Movement & voting (2020 is the 55th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965)
 - National legislation aimed at ensuring enfranchisement

- 19th Amendment
- Civil Rights Act of 1957
- Voting Rights Act of 1965
- Political machines (e.g., Tammany Hall, etc.)
- Methods of disenfranchisement/historical issues
 - 3/5th compromise
 - Radical reconstruction
 - Jim Crow laws
 - * Poll taxes
 - * Grandfather clauses
 - * Literacy tests
- Political machines (e.g., Tammany Hall, etc.)
- Violence and fear of violence
- Shelby County, AL v Holder Supreme Court Case of 2013

9. Security issues and voting

19.3.2 WRIT 250

Faculty members can bring voting into class discussion by assigning an election-themed research journal post, e.g., Identify a local or regional election issue that directly relates to your major or discipline. Find a scholarly source that deals specifically with the issue in question. Practice summarizing the source, and then list questions that apply to practices or perspectives from your discipline. *Note that this activity may work well in many DWR courses.*

19.4 Sample Prompts

This section is broken into two parts: a. prompts and assignment sheets. For each sample assignment prompt, we provide an overview and directions. Following these prompts, we provide a sample assignment sheet for a researched argument.

19.4.1 SPCH 102 Fundamentals of Public Speaking

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory by Abraham Maslow, which puts forward that people are motivated by five basic categories of needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Political campaign advertisements use these exact motivations to persuade voters. For this assignment, you will make the connection between these five basic categories and political advertisements. *Directions* Present to class one political advertisement example per category. Describe the use of the category in the political advertisement. Class members should understand why the political ad is a good example of the category and how it persuades voters. Maslow's Five Basic Categories of Needs:

1. Physiological needs (to have access to basic sustenance, including food, water, and air)
2. Safety needs (to feel protected and secure)
3. Social needs (to find acceptance; to have lasting, meaningful relationships)
4. Self-esteem needs (to feel good about ourselves; self-worth)

5. Self-actualization needs (to achieve goals; to reach our highest potential)

19.4.2 WRIT 300 Foundations of Technical & Professional Writing

Develop documentation and training materials for poll workers.

19.4.3 WRIT 350 Writing for Digital Media

Conduct a usability study of Mississippi's electronic voting system interface and physical apparatus.

19.4.4 WRIT 410 Grant Writing

Locate and analyze a voting/elections-themed RFP, develop a preliminary proposal. Partner with an election-oriented nonprofit to develop a preliminary grant proposal. Some suggested organizations that focus on fair elections include:

- [Fair Fight](#)
- [League of Women Voters](#)
- [The Joyce Foundation](#)

See Also

[Download Assignment Sheets](#)

19.5 Tutorials

If you are interested in including an assignment related to the project in your course and would like support from the project coordinators, Jon and/or Allen can lead the following activities and tutorials for you:

- Presentations on “Oxford to the Ballot Box” and previous election year projects
- Recording Interviews with Zoom: A nuts and bolts tutorials for recording interviews on Zoom and best practices for interviewing, drawing out the differences between an interview and a conversation.
- Photography - Environmental Portraiture | techniques and best practices - engaging the subject, collaboration, telling a story
- Zoom to iMovie to YouTube: A post-production tutorial to help students turn Zoom videos into edit videos and publish them online
- Zoom to Audacity to SoundCloud: A post-production tutorial to help students turn Zoom recordings into audio files and to publish those files online
- Zero to WIX in an Hour: An hour-long tutorial on using Wix to build websites

19.6 Resources

While the resources listed below do not cover all the topics listed previously, they might help get you started in considering supplementary resources that you can use in your class.

19.6.1 Readings

Drawing the Vote: An Illustrated Guide to Voting in America by Tommy Jenkins & Katie Lacker A well-documented 208-page graphic novel that details the history of voting rights in the US. This may serve as a supplemental source, or faculty might use portions of it that we can make available.

This Is What Democracy Looks Like, A Graphic Guide To Governance by the Center for Cartoon Studies A 32-page comic book that defines democracy (or traces lines of thought), describes how the US government is structured into branches; levels of government—from federal to local; the Constitution; voting; and protest in America. It's a somewhat basic overview, but it's free or cheap (donation based), available online, reads quickly, and can get students on the same page in contextualizing voting as part of a larger civic arena.

19.6.2 Videos

"50 Years and Forward: The Voting Rights Act in Mississippi" by the Mississippi Department of Archives & History and Southdocs.org A 13-minute documentary addressing the impact of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 on Mississippi

"A History of Voting Rights" from the *NY Times* A 3-minute video focused on the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Shelby County, AL v Holder case of 2013.

"The March@50 Episode 2 Voting Rights" from PBS A 9-minute video that describes the Shelby County, AL v Holder case of 2013.

19.6.3 Podcasts

"Facts Aren't Enough: The Psychology Of False Beliefs" from *Hidden Brain* A 51-minute podcast episode about misinformation online and why we often don't challenge it.

19.6.4 Films

1964: The Fight for a Right by Mississippi Public Broadcasting As the synopsis states, this 57-minute documentary describes the Jim Crow discrimination that Black people have faced in Mississippi, and the 10-week voter registration campaign in 1964.

American Experience: *"The Vote, Part 1"* from PBS One hundred years after the passage of the 19th Amendment, *"The Vote"* tells the dramatic culmination story of the hard-fought campaign waged by American women for the right to vote. (1 hour and 52 minutes)

American Experience: *"The Vote, Part 2"* from PBS Part Two examines the mounting dispute over strategy and tactics, and reveals how the pervasive racism of the time, particularly in the South, impacted women's fight for the vote. (1 hour and 52 minutes)

Eyes On The Prize: *"Part 5, Mississippi Is This America 1962–1964"* from PBS This 56-minute documentary focuses on Freedom Summer in Mississippi in 1964.

Iron Jawed Angels Two-hour movie about the women's suffrage movement in the 1910s, focusing on Alice Paul and Lucy Burns in particular. The film is posted to YouTube.

[*Kill Chain: The Cyber War on America's Elections*](#) from HBO Documentary A 90-minute documentary that focuses on the technological vulnerability of the U.S. election process.

19.6.5 Websites

[2020 Election: Secure Your Vote](#) by NPR This page on NPR's site collects all their articles pertaining to voting in upcoming US elections. You can find articles/radio snippets about virtually every current issue on our topics list here.

[Campus Vote Project](#) The website for a voting advocacy group for college students.

[Election Central: An Educational Guide to the US Elections](#) from PBS This website offers a ton of short video grouped into various topics, from campaigning and campaign finance, to voting rights and how voting works, to media literacy, and finally, resources on current political issues.

[The Long 19th Amendment](#) from Radcliffe's Schlesinger Library This resource includes a #SuffrageSyllabus and a "Suffrage School" with lessons aimed at folks of all ages. The materials teach users about the struggle for the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees women the right to vote. The 19th amendment was ratified on August 18, 1920, so 2020 marks the 100th anniversary.

[Mississippi Secretary of State: Elections & Voting Procedures](#) This page provides links to all the state regulations on voting and election procedures in Mississippi.

[Voters Toolbox](#) from the League of Women Voters This website includes a list of FAQs about voting for various stakeholders, including students.

ACADEMIC CONTINUITY PLANNING GUIDE

Contents

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20.1 Introduction

If you've never taught online before, moving your face-to-face writing or public speaking class online without much notice may seem impossible. However, as most veteran online teachers know, online teaching really isn't that different from face-to-face teaching. There are different tools, different affordances, and different workflows, but ultimately, your expertise and experience as a teacher is what matters.

This guide provides resources and practices that we thought might be useful. Don't feel like you have to choose a digitally-sophisticated solution to a challenge if it makes you uncomfortable. There are multiple solutions to every problem that comes up when teaching online. Ultimately, your authenticity and transparency matters a lot: if you are discouraged or overwhelmed by a tool or approach, your students will feel the same way. We want teaching online in a pinch to be as painless as possible for you and as non-disruptive for students as possible.

We have included pedagogical best-practices, tools and resources, and subject-matter specific guidelines in this guide. We always welcome revision suggestions or new contributions from faculty.

20.2 Ethos

While email does allow for instant communication in an online course, the online environment can provide other means of being “there” for students, means that go beyond the email communication of traditional face-to-face classes. Here are some techniques that veteran online teachers have found useful for reaching students when they need more than a standard email:

Apps such as Google Hangouts and Skype tend to work fairly well for conferencing with students, but we’ve had the best experience with Zoom. Zoom allows instructors to start a meeting with a student by sending that student a link to the meeting via email. Students don’t need to set up Zoom accounts; as long as the instructor has the student’s email address and an account of her own, the meeting link will work. All faculty members in the DWR have UM Zoom accounts. Contact Andrew Davis if you can’t access your account.

During your office hours, log on to whichever conferencing app you’ve chosen. If you’ve chosen Skype or Google Hangouts, any students logged into these apps will see that you’re available. Even if they choose not to contact you during that time, your visibility sends an important message.

Offer multiple conferencing apps if you can. Both Skype and Zoom, for instance, or both Google Hangouts and Zoom—and remain logged into these apps during your office hours. Some students might already have accounts with one app or another, so offering a range of meeting platforms makes it easier for students to contact you. For some students, mobile apps, such as FaceTime and Duo, may be the only option. Try to be flexible and adjust your expectations for formality if face-to-face conversation is essential.

If your teaching style involves posting weekly announcements, don’t simply email these announcements as text. Instead, try making a YouTube video of just you narrating the announcements to your students. Often, these announcements merely reiterate what students can find on their weekly schedule or in the syllabus, but having this kind of weekly reminder can help students stay on task, and help keep your face and voice in a very text-heavy environment. You can post links to your YouTube video directly in the course and email it to students. Pair your link to the YouTube announcements with a bullet-point synopsis, and use YouTube’s closed captioning feature. Pairing text with video helps keep this content accessible.

If a student emails you with a persistent problem, question, or issue, invite them to set up a conference with you, and do so repeatedly. Even if students don’t take you up on this offer—and many tend not to—make it clear that they are welcome to do so. This is the equivalent of keeping your door open during office hours; it also sends the message that, within the time you’ve set aside to teach the class, students are welcome to come meet with you. Not extending this welcome repeatedly and actively can make an online instructor seem aloof and distant.

And, of course, make it clear when students can’t contact you. If you tell students from the first week that you won’t be able to respond quickly or at all on weekends, most students will be understanding and respectful of this boundary. However, you might want to consider setting aside some late afternoon or evening times during the weekdays, since these times tend to be the most available for online students. Students are often taking online courses because their schedules are otherwise full. While the boundaries on your time need to be clearly stated, a little flexibility can go a long way. While teaching online precludes the possibility of being physically present for most students, techniques such as those outlined above can help establish the ethos of a face-to-face instructor, while offering a scheduling flexibility that the traditional classroom might lack.

20.3 Office Hours

Holding office hours virtually can be tricky. How do you provide the accessibility your students' need, especially if you live in a different town or city? What's the best way to help your students with assignments from afar? What do students find most comfortable and convenient for them? There are several options to make your office hours convenient for both you and your students. Here is the Department of Writing & Rhetoric's policy regarding office hours:

Teachers in the W&R are expected to hold regular office hours for the purpose of supporting the teaching mission through student conferencing. All teachers in the W&R are asked to hold a minimum of one weekly office hour per section taught, but no less than two hours per week. Please submit your office hours, posted on your syllabus, electronically to Glenn Schove no later than three working days prior to the first day of classes each semester.

In order to fulfill the Department's policy, you will need to maintain between two to four office hours per week (depending on the number of sections you teach). These are times that your students should be able to contact you to discuss their writing. Here are several options that online students tend to favor:

Continually check email during your posted office hours (remain logged into email account). We have found that most students tend to prefer to communicate through email rather than video conferencing or by phone.

You can provide students with a phone number to call to discuss their writing during office hours.

You can leave a video conferencing meeting open in a specified platform, letting students know they can access it at any time during your office hours to conference.

You can also combine several of these, or offer all of them, depending on your and your students' preferences. For example, you can leave your email running during your office hours, and let students know they can email to ask questions, or email to request a video conference. At which time, you can send them a link to meet. The most important thing is to let your students know that you are available to assist them with the various writing and multimodal assignments they will compose during the semester. It is also vital that you provide clear instruction as to how your office hours will work, and how students can take advantage of that time if they so choose. The best way to do this is to create an "Office Hours" tab in blackboard. When students click that tab, they should be able to read when you are available, and how they can access whatever platform you choose to use during office hours. We have also noticed that online students tend to have very demanding schedules, where they balance work, school, and families. For this reason, we highly recommend that you remain available to meet with students by appointment. That way, if your office hours are not convenient for some students, they will know they can still meet you with at a mutually convenient time.

Office Hour Scheduling Tools

- [Calendly](#)
 - [Google Calendar Appointment Slots](#)
 - [YouCanBook.me Office Hour Scheduling Tool](#)
-

20.4 Blackboard

Most DWR faculty use Blackboard to complement their face-to-face courses. However, moving a course fully online requires you to be familiar with Blackboard features you might not ordinarily touch. This section of the guide will walk you through some of the essential Blackboard content and assessment types.

20.4.1 Lectures

Narrate your PowerPoint slides or record a screencast as a way to deliver course content. You may use a computer with a microphone or a tablet to create this type of lecture. Your recording can then be uploaded to Blackboard for student viewing. External materials such as articles, blogs, videos, or websites may also be posted on Blackboard.

Helpful Resources

- [6 Tips for Creating Engaging Video Lectures](#)
 - [Record a PowerPoint Slide Show with Narration](#)
 - [Add Files, Images, Audio, and Video to Blackboard](#)
-

20.4.2 Assignments

Regular Assignments are the best assessment option for student writing. To create an Assignment, click Assessments > Assignment in any Blackboard content area. You can customize the assignment's presentation from the setup options. Once the link is created, students will go to it to submit their work. You can then access their submitted work from the Grade Center. See below for more information about the in-line grading tool.

Helpful Resources

- [Create and Edit Blackboard Assignments](#)
 - [Use SafeAssign in Blackboard Assignments](#)
-

20.4.3 Journals

Blackboard Journals are appropriate for shorter writing activities and classwork. If you aren't concerned with document format or in-line grading, journals can be much quicker to read and grade than traditional assignments. The Journal assessment type allows for multiple separate journal assignments. It's often clearer for students if you create a separate journal assignment for each assigned activity. Journals can be created from any content area by click Assessments > Journals.

20.4.4 Class Discussions

For a discussion-based class, create an online discussion board on Blackboard. In any content area, click

Helpful Resources

- [Create Blackboard Discussions](#)
 - [Strategies for Creating Online Discussion Prompts](#)
-

20.4.5 Grading Blackboard Assignments

The in-line commenting and grading feature in the current version of Blackboard is an essential tool for online teachers. Instead of downloading student essays, marking them up in Word, and reuploading them to Blackboard, instructors can now leave comments directly on student papers inside of Blackboard, post comments, and enter grades, all from one screen. You can find Blackboard's tutorial video for online grading below. Here are some things we have learned about the in-line grading feature and how well it works in writing courses:

Be conscious of the time-out feature. The inline editor times out after 60 minutes, so if you are in the middle of marking up a paper and you get up to do something else, make sure you click "Save Draft" and exit the in-line editor. You can come back to it later and pick up where you left off. If you leave the editor up and come back to it after an hour, any markup you attempt to add will not "stick." This can also become an issue if you have a sketchy internet connection. Your best bet: Click "Save as draft" often just to be safe.

If you want to leave styled comments, or use video/audio comments, click the "A" underneath "Feedback to Learner." You'll have the full Blackboard content editor in a popup window.

Use "Grading Notes" to leave notes to yourself about the paper. These aren't visible to the student, and can be really useful if you're going to conference with a student later.

The grade center column for the assignment must be visible to students in order for them to see your feedback. If you want to release all your feedback at once, hide the column from student view, complete your feedback, then unhide the column.

Students can access your feedback from two places: 1. Go back to the original assignment link where the essay was submitted. Once the feedback is released, the comments and grade will show up. Until then, the paper the student actually submitted will show up (so they can always check to make sure that their submission "went through" correctly). 2. Go to My Grades and click on the actual graded item (the drawback to this method is that they can see the grade here without actually reading the comments).

Finding In-Line Comments

You must leave some kind of grade in order for feedback to be visible to students. This can be tricky when you're leaving feedback on drafts. The best rule of thumb here is to be consistent. If points for drafts aren't a part of your grading scheme, make sure that students know that if they see "100/100" as the grade for their draft, it just means that they submitted it and you commented on it, not that they actually received an A+.

"Point Comments" work most consistently. Some of the other markup tools are more frustrating.

The in-line editor accepts most common file types (PDF, Doc, Docx, RTF), but not .pages files. See the section on file type naming for more tips about this.

Blackboard Tutorial: Using In-Line Grading

20.5 Google Classroom

Google Classroom provides an alternative to Blackboard that many teachers find preferable, especially for writing classes. You must have a go.olemiss.edu Google account to use Google Classroom (activate your account on MyOle-Miss). Access Google Classroom at classroom.google.com. When you create a new class, you can email the access code it generates to your students so they can join the course. You can also manually add them by their go.olemiss.edu email addresses in the "People" tab.

GC is not a full LMS and should not be considered a 1-to-1 replacement for Blackboard. However, for courses that aren't content heavy, like writing classes, its integration with Google Docs makes it more appealing.

Unlike most LMSs, Google Classroom is not hierarchical. Instead, the interface is designed around the feed/timeline metaphor. By default, all your activity shows up in the student's "Stream." You can also post announcements to the course stream that will be distributed to students as email.

You can organize your content in the "Classwork" tab. Instead of folders or learning modules, Google Classroom uses Topics to organize other content. Topics, like all other content on Classroom, are draggable. You can arrange them in whatever order you want. If you use Topics, make sure you select which topic you want something to go in when you create it. If you forget, you can always drag it to the correct position.

The four content types in GC are "Assignment," "Quiz Assignment," "Question," and "Material." Each one of these has its own use cases for your course.

20.5.1 Assignment

Anything you want students to turn in for a grade should be created as an Assignment. The Assignment popup screen allows you to give the assignment a title and add a description and attach any relevant documents or links. If you click "Add" and upload your assignment sheet as a Word document, it will automatically be imported into your courses Google Drive. You can add several other content types this way, or create new Google Docs content by clicking "Create." Google Classroom does have rubric functionality now. [Check out this help page](#) if you want to know more. Otherwise, you can assign a point value and due-date for the assignment just like in Blackboard. Be sure to put the assignment in the correct Topic if you use them. Finally, If you don't want students to see the assignment right away, clicking the arrow next to "Assign" will reveal options for "Schedule" and "Draft. Students submit assignments as Google Docs (or Word documents). You'll then provide feedback and a grade in Google Docs as well and return their document to them when you're done with summative comments.

20.5.2 Quiz Assignment

GC quizzes are delivered through Google Forms. The process is pretty straightforward, and if you've ever created a regular Google Form, creating a quiz works exactly the same way.

20.5.3 Question

Questions are good replacement for discussion forums. You can create a question thread and allow students to respond in short answer form (and to reply to each other). It isn't as robust as Blackboard's discussion forums, but it's also much easier to use on the student's end. Questions aren't gradable, so if you want to assign a point value to student responses you'll have to keep track of it elsewhere.

20.5.4 Material

GC "Material" is basically everything else. Whereas Blackboard distinguishes among several different content types, most content can be added to Google Classroom as Material. If you need to add links to readings, PDFs, videos, recorded lectures, etc, just add them as Material and make sure to put them in the correct topic.

Google Classroom is a great option to consider if you hate Blackboard or if you're already comfortable with Google Docs. We've created a very basic WRIT 101 Google Classroom course for you to explore. To add it as a student, go to classroom.google.com and use the code **noyclsp** to join the class.

To be added to the class as a teacher (to copy it or see the teacher-only features) just contact Andrew Davis.

20.6 Video Tools

There are a variety of tools to support synchronous video communication between you and your students and among your students themselves. Each platform has its own affordances and advantageous use cases.

20.6.1 Zoom

Helpful Links

- Zoom Technical Support Pages <<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>>`_files

All UM faculty, staff, and students have centrally managed Zoom accounts for video meetings. Please visit Zoom's Getting Started page for more information about downloading and using Zoom.

When signing in to Zoom, select "Sign in with SSO" and enter the domain "olemiss." You can also go directly to <https://olemiss.zoom.us>. You will be prompted to sign in with your MyOleMiss credentials.

All UM Zoom accounts have Pro licenses for unlimited meetings.

Zoom is a good choice for larger meetings, webinar-style presentations, or open "office hours" style meetings. Zoom also allows the host user to record the meeting to their computer. This is very useful if you're using Zoom for lecture capture. Feel free to contact Andrew Davis if you want to discuss use cases.

Zoom integrates with Blackboard, allowing you to schedule and manage class meetings without leaving your Blackboard Course.

20.6.2 Google Hangouts Meet

Google Hangouts Meet is the Google Suite video conferencing solution. It integrates with go.olemiss.edu calendars and email. Like Zoom, a user can go directly to <https://meet.google.com>, sign in to a go.olemiss.edu account, and initiate a new video meeting. Also like Zoom, a user can generate an access link to send to anyone else who needs to join the meeting (including non-go.olemiss.edu users).

Google Hangouts Meet is an ideal solution for Google Calendar users because it's already integrated. When you go to create a new event in your go.olemiss.edu calendar, you can click "Add Conferencing" to automatically pair a Hangouts Meet link with the event. When you add a student to the event, they'll receive an invitation in their email and it will go on their Google calendar.

add Google Meet to an eventFor more information about Google Hangouts Meet, visit the Google help pages.

×

Office Hours

Save

Mar 10, 2020

15:30

to

16:30

Mar 10, 2020

Time zone

☐ All day
 Does not repeat

Event Details

Find a Time

📍

Add location

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Add conferencing

🔔

Hangouts Meet

minutes

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Add notification

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Andrew Davis

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Busy

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✂

Add description

Guests

writstudent@go.olemiss.edu

addavis@go.olemiss.edu

Organizer

Guest permissions

☐ Modify event
 ☒ Invite others
 ☒ See guest list

20.6.3 FaceTime, Duo, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, etc

There are countless other video chat apps that your students may use. Try to be as flexible as possible with platform if it's really important that you meet a student face-to-face. Video conferencing works best on a laptop with a good broadband connection. For some of our students, that's not realistic for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, a good ole-fashioned phone call is the best way to resolve confusion and technical frustrations.

20.7 Best Practices

Adapted from UM [Academic Outreach](#)

20.7.1 For managing your students

Choose one form of communication with your students and stick to it. In focus groups, students said they preferred information to be posted in the announcements section of your Blackboard page, and then sent to them via Blackboard email to their UM email.

Communicate with your students early and frequently. Cultivating a sense that you are present with the students in a meaningful if non-literal sense is crucial to successful online teaching. Begin the online experience with some kind of very low stakes community-building exercise, deployed as early as possible, to help students feel like they're part of a community rather than individuals accessing course materials in parallel, isolated from each other.

Use tools and approaches familiar to you and your students: Try to rely on tools and workflows that are familiar to you and your students, and roll out new tools only when absolutely necessary. If a closure is caused by a local crisis, it may be already taxing everyone's mental and emotional energy; introducing a lot of new tools and approaches may leave even less energy and attention for learning.

Contact Andrew Davis if you have a student who is utilizing classroom accommodations so you can be sure to maintain those during periods of academic disruption.

Be sympathetic and flexible for students in distress, who lack the resources to fully access your class online, or who are unfamiliar with online learning.

Check in on students working behind or who are not logging into Blackboard during the academic disruption. They may be confused, sick, or distracted by caregiver responsibilities.

20.7.2 For managing your course

Focus on learning outcomes even if you need to adjust the specific activities that contribute to those outcomes. Keep students moving toward those outcomes. Avoid “busy work.”

Prioritize course activities and focus on delivering the ones with the most significant impact on learning outcomes. You will have to reconsider some of your expectations for students, including participation, attendance, communication, and deadlines. As you think through those changes, keep in mind the impact this situation may have on students’ ability to meet those expectations, including illness, lacking power or internet connections, or needing to care for family members. Be ready to handle requests for extensions or accommodations equitably.

Rearrange course activities if needed to delay those activities where face-to-face interaction is most crucial.

Provide Regular Feedback: Giving students detailed feedback on their writing and/or speaking is extra important when you can only communicate with students virtually. Do your best to return work promptly and maintain constant communication with students about their submitted work. You may want to reconsider your stance on responding to drafts or accepting revisions since your students won’t have the in-class support they might have come to expect.

20.8 Student Technology

Keep in mind, not all students may have appropriate technology or high-speed Internet at home. If you and your students will be meeting synchronously or sharing video files, check technical recommendations below. Though students may be able to engage if they do not fully meet the recommendations, they will have less difficulty if they can meet them. If a student reports they are having issues, refer them to IT for help. If they continue to have difficulties, you will need to work individually with students to determine what is plausible.

- Browser: Latest version of Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox (AVOID SAFARI when interfacing with Bb).
- For operating system: minimum of Windows 7 or Mac OS X v10.12 (“Sierra”). Computer should meet the minimum hardware requirement for its operating system (see website for Apple or Windows for info).
- For reliable audio-visual sharing: a consistent Internet upload speed of at least 2Mbps. You can check your connection on <https://speedtest.net>.
- Processor: 2.0 GHZ or better.
- Memory: 2GB or better.
- External or built-in webcam/microphone/speakers/mouse.

It’s a good idea to gauge student internet/bandwidth access in order to anticipate possible assignment difficulties down the road. This could be as simple as an email to your class asking students who have poor or inconsistent bandwidth access to contact you or as complex as a [survey](#) about specific technologies.

Try to be as flexible as possible with students. It’s a good idea to have low-tech alternatives in mind for your assignments that have high-tech requirements.

20.9 Writing Centers

In the event of a public health closure of UM campuses, the University Writing Centers are prepared to continue meeting the needs of our students through our online services. While we may not be able to run our centers at full capacity due to possible staffing limitations, we will continue to offer access to our two types of online appointments.

20.9.1 Live Chat Appointments

Live chat appointments are ideal for getting immediate feedback and answers to questions. The student and writing consultant are able to type messages, share drafts of writing projects, and make changes in real time. This type of appointment requires a consistent internet connection for the length of the appointment. Live chat appointments are best when conducted with a personal computer or laptop rather than a mobile device.

20.9.2 Correspondence Appointments

Correspondence appointments are asynchronous and ideal for getting feedback and answers to questions over a longer period of time. Students provide their draft along with information/requirements for a writing assignment prior to the reserved appointment time. About an hour after the reservation time, the student will receive an email notification that feedback has been uploaded by the writing consultant. These appointments can be completed without a consistent internet connection. A student can upload their paper from any wi-fi connection and return to our scheduler at a later time to download their written feedback. If you or your students have any questions, please visit our website for more information and step by step instructions: <https://rhetoric.olemiss.edu/writing-centers/online/>

You can find the most current information on UM's response to coronavirus at <https://olemiss.edu/coronavirus>.

Note: In the event of an institution wide closure, please do not require your students to use the WCs as we will likely be operating at a lower staffing capacity. You are welcome to offer extra credit or incentives, but please keep in mind that our online services may be in high demand across all campuses and department

20.10 Library

20.10.1 Library Building Hours

The library building is open for the time being, from 7am-5pm this week and 7am-7pm for the following weeks. This is subject to change, but you can go to the [Library hours page](#) for a full up-to-date schedule. All carrels are open, books can be checked out, library computers/printers/scanners are available, and **StudioOne is open** <[https://calendar.lib.olemiss.edu/allspaces`_>](https://calendar.lib.olemiss.edu/allspaces) for filming and reservations.

The IDEALab, Starbucks, and group study rooms are currently closed.

20.10.2 Extended Due Dates

All material currently checked out will be due May 8th. To return items through the mail, contact the library at libadmin@olemiss.edu or 662-915-7091 for details.

20.10.3 Interlibrary Loan

We have suspended ILL of physical items, but continue ILL of articles and chapters to the extent that other libraries can supply them. Be prepared for some possible delays.

20.10.4 Scanning Course Materials/Reserves

The Libraries can digitize materials needed for your course; if you have materials on course reserve, or need your course texts available electronically, apply [using the digitization request form](#).

For further information about copyright and fair use in times of crisis, you can read a detailed statement [here](#).

20.10.5 Book Ordering

Book ordering is open until April 17, and we're continuing to process book orders until then. If you'd like a physical book, we'll honor the request, but you'll have to come and pick it up as normal.

20.10.6 eBooks

eBooks are an option as well, and I'm happy to look for multi-user or unlimited-user ebooks for any course materials and get them in place by next week. We also have temporary unlimited access to many ebooks we currently own, so if you'd like to know the status of any ebook in our catalog, let Alex Watson know. Access to ebooks is available through OneSearch or the library catalog, and Alex Watson can get direct links for embedding purposes on request.

20.10.7 Videos, Tutorials, and Virtual Presentations

Library presentations are being made available virtually through Zoom, though they will need notice to get an expanded/enhanced Zoom account set up in preparation. They also have the ability to make non-interactive tutorials and presentations on request. You can search existing library videos on the library website.

20.10.8 LibGuides for Courses

If you'd like a special library page with resources for your class, we are in a position to make those for you. Contact me about it with your course information and any specific databases, books, or resources you'd like added to it. The resulting page will have a URL that is easily shared or dropped into Blackboard. Here's the list of existing guides

20.10.9 Library Chat

The library will be running its standard chat reference service Monday-Friday 11:00-3:00 CST for the time being. Alex Watson will also be personally manning a special chat reference for class-specific and subject-specific questions. If you'd like to make sure he is available to chat with a student or students, feel free to make an appointment via email. [Here is the direct chat link](#).

SPEECH COURSES

21.1 SPCH 102 Assignment Library

See Also

SPCH 102 Teaching Guide

SPCH 102 is a skills-building course and allows students repeated opportunities to work through the speech process. The assignment-based design engages Blooms Taxonomy from comprehension to creation a minimum of five times. Reading, discussion, and quizzes occur throughout the course to enhance memory and understanding of core concepts. Peer coaching and/or review, as well as post-presentation journaling enhance analysis and evaluation.

21.2 SPCH 105 Assignment Library

See Also

SPCH 105 Teaching Guide

Speech 105 is a practical introduction to the principles and skills of effective communication in business and professional settings. The course includes frequent performances in business situations requiring effective communication practices.

WRITING COURSES

22.1 WRIT 100/101 Assignment Library

Writing 100 and 101 follow the same outcomes and use common assignments. Teachers have three different curriculum options, and some may choose to combine the options. The curriculum choices are a textbook, The New York Times, and NPR. Select the course flavor below.

22.1.1 WRIT 100/101 Standard Curriculum

Contents

- *Common Reading Text Project*
- *Analysis*
- *Argument*
- *Multimodal*
- *Reflection Blog*

Writing 100/101 is designed as an introductory course to academic writing featuring genres commonly used in other academic situations such as analysis, argument, and reflection. For information on class size and conferencing requirements, please see the WRIT 100/101 Course Page. Students choose to take either Writing 100 or Writing 101 and then move into Writing 102 or Liberal Arts 102 after successful completion of either course; they are not placed into either course by test score or writing sample.

Common Reading Text Project

The first-semester, first-year writing courses—WRIT 100 and WRIT 101—use the Common Reading Text as the basis for the first major writing project. This project emphasizes the critical reading, critical thinking, analysis, research, and synthesis skills that are vital to college writing. In this assignment, students are given a prompt pertaining to the Common Reading Text and asked to compose an essay that integrates the Common Reading Text with outside sources and the student’s own ideas. First-year writing courses use the Common Reading Text as a basis for student reading and writing rather than as a literary study.

See Also

- [Daily Reflection Prompts](#)
- [Timed Writing Prompts](#)

Analysis

In analysis, students examine an issue or an artifact's component parts to understand how it makes meaning. The analysis project is usually the hardest project for students because they don't have much experience with it and have difficulty moving past summary. Analysis is roughly a three-week unit.

Areas to highlight: Many students are unaccustomed to examining individual parts of an issue or an artifact and may need guidance in breaking down the whole. Often, students struggle with identifying an analytic thesis that answers the questions how, why, and/or so what. Once students have a draft in place, the most common problems are organization and focus. It is not uncommon for a student to try to cover many different ideas. These writers need help organizing their thoughts and focusing their essays. Students sometimes struggle with providing enough specific evidence to support their analyses. These writers may need to be alerted to areas that would benefit from additional evidence.

See Also

- [Daily Reflection Prompts](#)
 - [Timed Writing Prompts](#)
-

Argument

In argument, students make a claim and support that claim with evidence. While instructors may assign for this project different types of argument, the assignment should require background information on the topic as context for the argument, a clearly-expressed main claim, evidence, integration of outside sources, and refutation of counter-arguments. Argument is roughly a three-week unit.

Areas to highlight: Students often need help narrowing a topic to a specific, debatable claim. Some students struggle to provide enough specific evidence to support their claims and need help brainstorming places to find evidence. Students often need help integrating quoted material and paraphrases into their texts as well as documenting their sources. Students may also need help considering opposing viewpoints or counterarguments and refutation.

See Also

- [Daily Reflection Prompts](#)
 - [Timed Writing Prompts](#)
-

Multimodal

In the multimodal assignment, students re-work or re-think an earlier project in a different mode or medium. Multimodal is roughly a two-week project.

Areas to highlight: Students often don't recognize that a change in mode or medium requires a change in technique, so students need help in understanding how electronic, visual, or spoken text is different from print text and, thus, how to think about audience. Students may also need help with unfamiliar technology.

See Also

- [Daily Reflection Prompts](#)
 - [Timed Writing Prompts](#)
-

Reflection Blog

The reflection to blog is a personalized space for recording, organizing, and reflecting on a student's learning. This semester-long project incorporates daily, weekly, and unit reflections, culminating in a final reflective post.

Areas to highlight: Students are generally unfamiliar with self-reflection and metacognition and need many opportunities throughout the semester to practice. Many will need help with being more specific about their learning. Students may have difficulty demonstrating their progress, or lack thereof, through examples, often resorting to more telling than showing. Students may also struggle to understand how tagging can be a mechanism to represent the larger structures of their learning.

22.1.2 WRIT 100/101 NYT Curriculum

See Also

- Required Text: A semester-long subscription to The New York Times
 - Optional Text (can be required by instructor): The Writer's Practice
 - [Additional Resources](#)
-

Contents

- *Common Reading Text Project*
- *Analysis*
- *Argument*
- *Multimodal*
- *Reflection Blog*

Welcome to the Writing 100/101 New York Times assignment library. Assignment sheets, rubrics, and student samples are available under each project content area.

Common Reading Text Project

The first-semester, first-year writing courses—WRIT 100 and WRIT 101—use the Common Reading Text as the basis for the first major writing project. This project emphasizes the critical reading, critical thinking, analysis, research, and synthesis skills that are vital to college writing. In this assignment, students are given a prompt pertaining to the Common Reading Text and asked to compose an essay that integrates the Common Reading Text with outside sources and the student’s own ideas. First-year writing courses use the Common Reading Text as a basis for student reading and writing rather than as a literary study.

See Also

- [Daily Reflection Prompts](#)
 - [Timed Writing Prompts](#)
-

Analysis

In an analysis, a writer closely examines an issue or an artifact, systematically breaking down and considering the components, as well as the context in which it was constructed, to posit an interpretation or evaluation. This assignment has several flavors based on *The New York Times*.

See Also

- [Daily Reflection Prompts](#)
 - [Timed Writing Prompts](#)
-

Argument

In argument, students make a claim and support that claim with evidence. While instructors may assign for this project different types of argument, the assignment should require background information on the topic as context for the argument, a clearly-expressed main claim, evidence, integration of outside sources, and refutation of counter-arguments. Argument is roughly a three-week unit.

Areas to highlight: Students often need help narrowing a topic to a specific, debatable claim. Some students struggle to provide enough specific evidence to support their claims and need help brainstorming places to find evidence. Students often need help integrating quoted material and paraphrases into their texts as well as documenting their sources. Students may also need help considering opposing viewpoints or counterarguments and refutation.

See Also

- [Daily Reflection Prompts](#)
 - [Timed Writing Prompts](#)
-

Multimodal

In a multimodal project, a writer recomposes an earlier project in a different mode. This assignment has several flavors based on *The New York Times*.

See Also

- [Daily Reflection Prompts](#)
 - [Timed Writing Prompts](#)
-

Reflection Blog

The reflection to blog is a personalized space for recording, organizing, and reflecting on a student's learning. This semester-long project incorporates daily, weekly, and unit reflections, culminating in a final reflective post.

Areas to highlight: Students are generally unfamiliar with self-reflection and metacognition and need many opportunities throughout the semester to practice. Many will need help with being more specific about their learning. Students may have difficulty demonstrating their progress, or lack thereof, through examples, often resorting to more telling than showing. Students may also struggle to understand how tagging can be a mechanism to represent the larger structures of their learning.

22.1.3 WRIT 100/101 NPR Curriculum

Welcome to the Writing 100/101 NPR assignment library. Assignment sheets, rubrics, and student samples are available under each project content area.

22.2 WRIT 102 Assignment Library

See Also

- [WRIT 102 Teaching Guide](#)
 - [WRIT 102 Sample Syllabus](#)
-

Contents

- [Rubrics](#)
- [Analysis](#)
- [Synthesis](#)
- [In-Class Writing](#)
- [Research Paper](#)
- [Multimodal Project](#)
- [Reflection Blog](#)
- [Critical Thinking](#)

Welcome to the Writing 102 Assignment Library. This library is organized by major unit. Where applicable, each assignment's page is subdivided by course theme.

WRIT 102 (First-Year Writing II) is a theme-based, first-year writing course designed to build on writing skills learned in either WRIT 100 or WRIT 101 and develop critical thinking and research skills appropriate for use in academic writing. The course pays special attention to developing argumentative skills, analyzing texts, and synthesizing information into thoughtful, coherent essays and projects. Students enrolled in WRIT 102 will produce papers that are longer and more in-depth than in WRIT 100/101. The course culminates in a final portfolio of the student's work.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are

- to develop basic writing skills learned in WRIT 100/101, including the understanding that writing is a process that develops over time
 - to write for specific purposes and for specific audiences,
 - to respond critically to different points of view, allowing the student to create effective and sustainable arguments,
 - to become skilled at locating primary and secondary research from a variety of sources and at evaluating their reliability, and
 - to become effective researchers and writers of research papers as a member of an active writing, reading, and researching community.
-

22.2.1 Rubrics

WRIT 102 uses a general rubric for all major assignments. There is a long version and a short version.

- [Long Rubric](#)
- [Short Rubric](#)

22.2.2 Analysis

Paper #1 is an analysis of a single text. This can be a response paper to an author's argument or a profile or analysis of a person, place, or thing. It should be 3-4 pages with at least a single entry on the Works Cited page and is worth 10% of the student's final grade.

Areas to highlight: This assignment will help students learn to look closely at a text (academic or otherwise) and begin the fundamentals of quoting and citation. Because some students may have had a disruption in time between a WRIT 100/101/equivalent course and a WRIT 102 course (even if it is only winter break), it is recommended that instructors go over thesis statements and paragraph construction that students should have learned in WRIT 100/101. Students may also need help in understanding the difference between summary and analysis.

22.2.3 Synthesis

From the [Online Writing Lab at Purdue](#), “Synthesize means that you combine information in a way that could coherently and effectively present your ideas or opinions. In some assignments, you will be required to synthesize sources or ideas. This means that you will combine the sources and ideas and organize them in a way that is appropriate and approachable to your readers.”

After much discussion and analysis of the way instructors develop and execute the synthesis paper assignment, the WRIT 102 curriculum committee offers two different tracks for the instructor, although each informs the other: one focuses on research and the other focuses on composition.

In either track, the committee agrees that the synthesis essay should have the following outcomes:

The student will:

- Write a 4-6 page essay with at least two, but no more than three, sources cited in a given citation style
 - Create and support a thesis using these sources
 - Select and evaluate high-quality, contextually relevant sources with an identifiable thesis, either stated or implied
 - Engage critically with sources by analyzing and evaluating source contexts and positions
 - Move beyond simple compare and contrast in blending (or integrating) sources
 - Address underlying assumptions and common themes within the sources
 - Become more comfortable with citation and good quoting/paraphrasing in preparation for the research essay
-

22.2.4 In-Class Writing

The in-class essay is a timed writing exercise where students may do similar work as in papers 1 and 2 in that students might be asked to respond to a particular text or argument or evaluate a text’s argument. This may be related to paper #3, the research paper. The in-class essay is worth 5% of the student’s final grade.

Areas to highlight: Timed writing can be intimidating to many students. Going over strategies to alleviate stress will be useful for this assignment and any future essay exam. Because the writing is so short, students may believe the writing process does not apply but instructors should model how to use brainstorming/outlining, drafting, and revision in this context, with special attention to time management. Students who do not do well in this assignment often do not prepare well for the in-class essay (by not bringing a required essay or optional notes) or do not read the prompt carefully. These areas should be addressed; Instructors may also opt for a practice timed essay in class.

22.2.5 Research Paper

Paper #3 is the research paper where students will come up with their research question in the context of the class theme. This paper should be 7-9 pages and use at least seven credible sources. This assignment is worth 20% of the student’s final grade.

Areas to highlight: This is the most intimidating assignment for students. Many of them may have never written this length of paper. Some may have only written an “informational” research paper and not an argumentative one. Since the class spends nearly a month of class periods on this assignment, the sequence of homework assignments, in-class work, and other elements of the process are important to a student’s success. Several class periods should be spent on developing a research question alone. This special care and attention will make the process much more manageable. Emphasize their many avenues of support – the instructor, their peers, the consultants in the Writing Center, and the reference librarians.

22.2.6 Multimodal Project

The multimodal assignment revises the research paper into another mode. This assignment is worth 15% of the student's final grade.

Areas to highlight: This assignment is perhaps the most individualized by theme; however, problems with technology will be the biggest issue. Instructors should take advantage of Andrew Davis (Lamar Hall Ste. B, Rm 22) to learn how to teach the technology to students. Instructors should keep in mind that this assignment can be as low or high tech as wanted.

In general, since this assignment is most often paired with the research papers, students may be tired of their subject or be reluctant to cut their papers. Further, failures in the paper version may translate to problems with the multimodal project. Try to return the research paper back as quickly as possible to alleviate this issue and try not to double-penalize them.

22.2.7 Reflection Blog

The reflection is a personalized space for recording, organizing, and reflecting on a student's learning. This semester-long project incorporates daily, weekly, and unit reflections, culminating in a final reflective post (called an epilogue).

Areas to highlight: Many students will have practiced self-reflection and metacognition in WRIT 100/101, and WRIT 102 should build from this foundation. However, students who placed out of WRIT 100/101 may not have had much practice at all. In general, many will need help with being more specific about their learning. Students may have difficulty demonstrating their progress, or lack thereof, through examples, often resorting to more telling than showing. Students may also struggle to understand how tagging can be a mechanism to represent the larger structures of their learning. In WRIT 102, it is also a challenge to make this assignment fresh and engaging rather than rote and reflexive.

22.2.8 Critical Thinking

This folder contains critical thinking exercises, assignments, and class activities as well as research that can be used with any major unit.

22.3 LIBA 102 Assignment Library

See Also

LIBA 102 Teaching Guide

Contents

- *Analysis*
- *Synthesis*
- *Research*
- *Multimodal*
- *Commonplace Book*

Welcome to the LIBA 102 Assignment Library. This library is organized by major unit. Where applicable, each assignment's page is subdivided by course theme.

22.3.1 Analysis

Paper #1 is an analysis of a single text. This can be a response paper to an author's argument or a profile or analysis of a person, place, or thing. It should be 3-4 pages with at least a single entry on the Works Cited page and is worth 10% of the student's final grade.

Areas to Highlight: This assignment will help students learn to look closely at a text (academic or otherwise) and begin the fundamentals of quoting and citation. Because some students may have had a disruption in time between a WRIT 100/101/equivalent course and a WRIT 102 course (even if it is only winter break), it is recommended that instructors go over thesis statements and paragraph construction that students should have learned in WRIT 100/101. Students may also need help in understanding the difference between summary and analysis.

22.3.2 Synthesis

Paper #2 is a synthesis paper where students weigh at least two different arguments and synthesize a unique thesis in reaction to these arguments. It should be 4-5 pages with at least two entries on the Works Cited page and is worth 15% of the student's final grade.

Areas to Highlight: Though themes may ask students to do different tasks, students are often most frustrated with locating and evaluating sources. Instructors should go over plagiarism issues such as correct citation and using paraphrases. Though challenging, this assignment gives students practice in working with texts for their longer research paper.

22.3.3 Research

Paper #3 is the research paper where students will come up with their research question in the context of the class theme. This paper should be 7-9 pages and use at least seven credible sources. This assignment is worth 20% of the student's final grade.

Areas to Highlight: This is the most intimidating assignment for students. Many of them may have never written this length of paper. Some may have only written an "informational" research paper and not an argumentative one. Since the class spends nearly a month of class periods on this assignment, the sequence of homework assignments, in-class work, and other elements of the process are important to a student's success. Several class periods should be spent on developing a research question alone. This special care and attention will make the process much more manageable. Emphasize their many avenues of support – the instructor, their peers, the consultants in the Writing Center, and the reference librarians.

22.3.4 Multimodal

The multimodal assignment revises the research paper into another mode. This assignment is worth 15% of the student's final grade.

Areas to Highlight: This assignment is perhaps the most individualized by theme; however, problems with technology will be the biggest issue. Instructors should take advantage of Andrew Davis (Lamar Hall Ste. B, Rm 22) to learn how to teach the technology to students. Instructors should keep in mind that this assignment can be as low or high tech as wanted. In general, since this assignment is most often paired with the research papers, students may be tired of their subject or be reluctant to cut their papers. Further, failures in the paper version may translate to problems with the multimodal project. Try to return the research paper back as quickly as possible to alleviate this issue and try not to double-penalize them.

22.3.5 Commonplace Book

The LIBA 102 Commonplace Book assignment is based on the WRIT 102 curriculum.

22.4 WRIT 250 Assignment Library

See Also

- [WRIT 250 Teaching Guide](#)
 - [WRIT 250 Sample Syllabus](#)
 - [WRIT 250 Sample Calendars](#)
 - [Additional Resources](#)
-

Contents

- [Exploratory Essay](#)
- [Annotated Bibliography](#)
- [Literature Review](#)
- [Prospectus](#)
- [Multimodal](#)
- [Research Toolbox](#)

Writing 250 is an advanced composition course designed to help students further develop the analysis, synthesis, argument, and research skills built in first-year writing in addition to introducing them to primary research. The course follows a Writing in the Disciplines approach, requiring students to choose topics within their fields to research and to write about to help prepare them for their later coursework in core classes. Writing 250 is offered both face-to-face and online.

22.4.1 Exploratory Essay

The Exploratory Essay is designed to introduce students to writing in the disciplines and to finding/using Library resources related to their major. This narrative essay requires students to find and compare academic and non-academic sources on the same topic. There are three variations of the assignment that instructors can choose from. The final product takes the form of a process narrative in which students trace their steps in finding and comparing sources. Usually, the exploratory essay ends up generating a topic idea that students will want to pursue for the subsequent assignments.

Areas to highlight: Students often struggle with understanding the difference between academic journals themselves and the articles within them. This can be particularly difficult in online sections of the class. It is also important to walk students through Library database searches (or request a librarian demonstration), as students sometimes assume that any source that comes from a library search is peer-reviewed. Also, sometimes students make this first assignment more complicated than it needs to be: it's ultimately a process narrative, and instructors should emphasize that it's a relatively low-stakes entry-point into researched writing in the disciplines.

22.4.2 Annotated Bibliography

The second major assignment is an annotated bibliography based on secondary research for the research project students have identified. Students will articulate a topic and rationale in a topic proposal ePortfolio/Research Toolbox assignment around the same time as they are working on the annotated bibliography. For the annotated bibliography, students select 8 to 10 academic or professional research sources and write summaries and evaluations of each source. Students also write an introduction to the bibliography, in which they identify trends or concepts that connect the sources to one another.

Areas to highlight: Students often struggle with selecting good sources, even though they have already had experience with the process with the exploratory essay. Some of the same issues are prevalent, including the use of popular/non-academic sources, as well as sources published in academic journals that aren't necessarily appropriate for a literature review (opinion pieces, book reviews, etc). Students also struggle with meaningful, detailed summary and specific evaluation of the sources, and sometimes tend to review the sources in very broad terms.

22.4.3 Literature Review

The literature review is a synthesis of secondary research on a student's topic. Students choose at least five of their secondary sources from the annotated bibliography to include in a literature review that describes the "state of research" in their major on their chosen topic. Emphasis is placed on identifying the gap in existing research, into which the student's proposed research project will eventually fit.

Areas to highlight: Students struggle with synthesis of sources and identifying gaps in research. Also, sometimes students have trouble seeing "the big picture" of research, and instead more through their sources in isolation. It's important to emphasize the balance between direct quotation, paraphrase, and original synthesis, as sometimes students rely too heavily on direct quotation.

22.4.4 Prospectus

The Prospectus is the culmination of the research project students have worked on for the entire semester. The prospectus serves as a formal proposal for an original primary research project in the student's major, based on the research question identified earlier in the semester. In the prospectus, the students combine a condensation of the literature review with a discussion of the results of their small-scale primary research project (mini-pilot or in-class survey), and outline an original study that they have designed to answer their research question.

Areas to highlight: It helps to describe the prospectus as a sales pitch. Students should think of it as an opportunity to "sell" their proposed research project to a group of skeptical colleagues. Ultimately, they have to prove that they have credibility as researchers in their field and that their project is valid enough to stand on its own. The effectiveness of this approach depends largely on how well students can show how their original student fits into the discourse community established in their review of literature.

22.4.5 Multimodal

Students work on the multimodal presentation concurrently with the prospectus. The presentation is the student's opportunity to "sell" the research project proposed in the prospectus. Students are required to use different modes of expression in assembling the presentation, including video, audio, and handouts. In a face-to-face class, presentations usually take place during the last week of the semester. In an online class, students create recorded versions of their presentation and share on a discussion board.

Areas to Highlight: Students often don't recognize that a change in mode or medium requires a change in technique, so students need help in understanding how electronic, visual, or spoken text is different from print text and, thus, how to think about audience. Students may also need help with unfamiliar technology. Students also struggle with making their presentation persuasive (selling their proposed research) instead of informative (reviewing existing research).

22.4.6 Research Toolbox

This project is undergoing some curricular revision. The files below are in a state of transition.

DWR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

See Also

- [DWR Bylaws](#)
 - [2018-2022 Strategic Plan](#)
-

Important: All DWR employees must [digitally acknowledge](#) the DWR Policies and Procedures annually.

Contents

- *Academic Advising*
- *Awards - Teaching and Writing*
- *Bulletin Boards and Digital Signage*
- *Building Directories*
- *Building Mayor*
- *Calendars*
- *Core Courses and Best Practices for Teaching*
- *DWR Events*
- *Event Planning*
- *Employee Recruitment*
- *Employee Terminations - Temporary & Permanent*
- *Employee Terminations - Student Workers*
- *Facilities Management (FM)*
- *Financials*
- *Graduate Assistants*
- *Information Security Controls*
- *Long Distance Calls*
- *Mailboxes for Instructors*
- *Payroll Process*
- *Performance Evaluations*
- *Property Management*
- *Registration - DWR Courses*
- *Software*
- *Teacher Resources*
- *Travel*
- *Website*
- *Annual Policy Acknowledgement*

Effective: July 1, 2021

These Policies and Procedures are to be updated every year in June/July in preparation for presentation to DWR faculty and staff at the annual DWR Opening Session in August. They are required to acknowledge receiving and reading every year of employment.

New Hires whose start date is outside the normal start of the fall semester are required to acknowledge receipt of and having reviewed this document during their first week of employment.

The term “core staff” is used throughout this document. It refers to the core staff of the Department of Writing and Rhetoric (DWR) and includes the chair, assistant chair, core lecturers & instructors, writing enrichedpa curriculum instructor, instructional design and training specialist, assessment coordinator, administrative coordinator II, and communications specialist. Additionally, there are two graduate assistants who provide support to the administrative staff, answer the main phone line, and greet visitors at the departmental entrance.

23.1 Academic Advising

Academic advising of students minoring in Professional Writing is handled by one of the core lecturers. Advising of students minoring in Digital Media Studies is done by the director of the interdisciplinary minor, who is also an associate professor of writing and rhetoric. And finally, the advising of students seeking a B.A. in Rhetoric is handled by the assistant chair.

Academic advising of English graduate students, who serve as graduate instructors within the DWR, is handled by the English Department.

23.2 Awards - Teaching and Writing

Each spring semester, the Cynthia Krieser Award for Outstanding Freshman Writing is chosen and announced. At the last DWR faculty meeting of the spring semester, the Kramer Outstanding Teacher Award is presented. And at the first Writing Center staff meeting of the fall semester, the Bae McGruder Award is presented to the Outstanding Writing Consultant for the previous academic year. In the spring of 2020, the DWR Award’s Committee established a speech award and the first winner of the JoAnn Edward’s Outstanding Speech Award was announced in April of 2021.

<https://rhetoric.olemiss.edu/awards/>

23.3 Bulletin Boards and Digital Signage

The **administrative coordinator** is responsible for maintaining the bulletin boards near the front and back entrances on the first floor of Lamar Hall.

The **communications specialist**, alongside the **assessment coordinator**, is responsible to keeping digital signage up and running. While the communications specialist’s main responsibility relates to design and upload of announcements, the assessment coordinator monitors the proper function of the digital signage and the hardware which supports the digital signage. The digital signage system is subject to information security controls as detailed below in that section.

23.4 Building Directories

The **administrative coordinator** is responsible for updating or having a graduate assistant update the Lamar Hall and Somerville Hall building directories. The directory should be updated at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters.

23.5 Building Mayor

The **administrative coordinator** serves as building mayor for Lamar Hall. He/She is expected to attend all building mayor meetings as his/her schedule allows. He/She is also responsible for relaying information to Lamar Hall building occupants as recommended by UM officials conducting building mayor meetings.

23.6 Calendars

The **administrative coordinator** schedules appointments on the department chair's calendar. The **communications specialist** schedules appointments in the absence of the administrative coordinator. Both the administrative coordinator, the communications specialist, and the two graduate assistants who cover the front desk schedule appointments on the conference room reservation calendars.

The two **graduate assistants** are primarily responsible for booking reservations for the DWR golf cart. They also monitor the battery life and cleanliness of the golf cart.

Room reservations in Lamar Hall are primarily handled by the administrative coordinator and are only allowed after classes have been scheduled. The type of events needing rooms may include student organization meetings, movie nights, and study sessions for particular student groups on campus. On some occasions, outside organizations are allowed to use available classrooms if the purpose of the meetings promotes the mission of the university.

23.7 Core Courses and Best Practices for Teaching

The Dept of Writing and Rhetoric administers the teaching of various Writ, Spch, and DMS courses. The core courses include Writ 100, Writ 101, Writ 102, Writ 250, and Liba 102. These core courses are taught by either lecturers, instructors, adjunct instructors, or graduate instructors. The DWR Opening Session, which is held in August, brings together both returning and new instructors to refresh them or introduce them to best practices in the teaching of Writ and Spch courses. Each year, an updated Best Practices Guide is provided to all instructors and teaching support is provided through the Teaching Hub. A full list of courses taught by the DWR can be found at <https://rhetoric.olemiss.edu/courses/>

23.8 DWR Events

The DWR hosts numerous events each year including, but not limited to, the DWR Opening Session, food-themed guest lecturers, webinars, and teacher development workshops. Dates for most events are usually planned one year in advance so that venues and schedules of speakers can be coordinated and reserved. The **communications specialist** is responsible for scheduling a venue, setting up the room space (including tables/chairs setup), and choosing a caterer when food is being provided. The **administrative coordinator** works closely with the **communications specialist** to provide support for large events such as the DWR Opening Session.

At the request of the **communications specialist**, the **instructional design and training specialist** is responsible for reserving and setting up equipment for DWR events.

23.9 Event Planning

The **department chair** and the **communications specialist** are responsible for event planning. The **communications specialist** is responsible for entering all DWR courses into SAP and communicating with the Registrar when changes are made after the event planning deadline.

23.10 Employee Recruitment

It is the responsibility of the **administrative coordinator** to assist DWR search committee chairs in executing paperwork to initiate searches for new employees. He/She utilizes the ConnectU recruitment program which collects applications, automatically qualifies or disqualifies candidates, moves candidates through the interview process, and finally moves candidates into a successful or failed hire.

<https://connectu.olemiss.edu>

The **administrative coordinator** and **communications specialist** schedule interviews, make hotel reservations, and creates schedules for campus visits. The administrative coordinator initiates Request for Payment paperwork to reimburse candidates for travel expenses after campus visits. The administrative coordinator is also responsible for processing moving expense stipends based on the amount approved by the Director, keeping in mind how much the Provost's Office will cover.

23.11 Employee Terminations - Temporary & Permanent

As DWR temporary and permanent employees are terminated from or transferred within the University, the **administrative coordinator** is responsible for completing the appropriate e-form as soon as possible and preferably before the person's last day of employment to allow ample time for the exit process. It is the responsibility of the administrative coordinator to incorporate calendar reminders in his/her system to ensure that employee terminations or transfers are handled correctly and timely. By the last day of employment, an employee exit interview must be completed by the person's supervisor so that all UM property including, but not limited to parking hang tags, building/office keys, and computers, laptops, and printers can be returned. The Employee Exit Checklist form must be completed and signed by both the employee who is leaving and their supervisor. This checklist can be found on the Human Resources website or using the following link:

<https://hr.olemiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/93/EmployeeExitChecklist.pdf>

For those faculty who teach online and do not commute to the Oxford campus because of distances exceeding 50 miles, the Employee Exit Interview will be conducted via Zoom or over the phone and all UM property, excluding Procurement Cards, which has been in their possession may be returned through the U.S. Postal System or other reputable carrier such as UPS or Fed Ex. Procurement Cards must be returned directly to the Office of Procurement Services, 148 Jeanette Phillips Drive, University, MS 38677-1848 via Registered Mail, signed receipt required.

Since the Employee Exit Checklist requires that any loaned equipment be returned to the DWR, passwords are reset and the **assessment coordinator** moves files from the machine(s) and into the cloud. The user account is closed and a new one created if/when another DWR employee is assigned the same piece of equipment. The original Employee Exit Checklist is sent to Human Resources with a copy maintained in DWR personnel files.

In addition to the completing the appropriate e-form, the Employee Exit Checklist, and the exit interview, the **administrative coordinator** is also responsible for completing the Online Separation Notification Form, which can be found at <https://hr.olemiss.edu/separation-of-employment/>

23.12 Employee Terminations - Student Workers

Supervisors of student workers, undergraduate and graduate, are required to complete Student Employee Exit Checklists so that keys, equipment, and/or any other UM property can be returned. These forms are to be completed by the supervisor indicated in the chart below no later than the student worker's last day of employment. E-form 18s, for undergraduate student workers, or e-form 3s, for graduate student workers paid by stipend, must be generated by the e-form generator indicated below.

Area	Worker Type	Supervisor	E-Form Generator
Ste. B Grad Assts	DWR Grad Admin Assts	DWR Admin Coord.	DWR Admin Coord.
Grad Writing Fellows	Grad Writing Fellows	WEC Core Lecturer	DWR Admin Coord.
Oxford WC	Wrt Consultants/Coord	Oxford WC Dir	Oxford WC Dir
DeSoto WC	Wrt Consultants/Coord	DeSoto WC Dir	DeSoto Admin Staff
Graduate WC	Wrt Consultants/Coord	Grad WC Dir	DWR Admin Coord.
Speaking Ctr	Spk Consultants/Coord	SC Dir	DWR Admin Coord.

The Student Employee Exit Checklist can be found at the following website.

Related Policies

- [Terminal Interviews](#)
 - [Student Employee Exit Checklist](#)
-

23.13 Facilities Management (FM)

As building mayor, the **administrative coordinator** is the first point of contact for building staff needing to report repairs or improvements in Lamar Hall. He/She must submit notifications within SAP to the FM for attention. In the absence of the administrative coordinator, the **communications specialist** may submit notifications to FM. All notifications are logged on a central file accessible to both the administrative coordinator and the communications specialist so either of them will have access to all notifications should any of them require further action.

23.14 Financials

23.14.1 Cash Receipting

The **communications specialist** receives the funds that come in and immediately writes a receipt using the official University receipt book. The white copy is given to person making the payment. The pink copy is the permanent record that stays in the receipt book. Any cash or checks are kept in a locked desk drawer.

After \$100 worth of payments have been collected, or at least once a week, the **administrative coordinator** will prepare the cash report for the deposit. The funds will be verified by the **communications specialist**. The **department chair** will approve the cash report before it is sent to the Bursar's office. After the deposit receipt is received from the Bursar, it is stapled to the DWR copy of the cash report, along with copies of the receipt(s) from the University receipt book. Any correspondence accompanying the payment will be stapled to the cash report.

23.14.2 Procurement

All purchases exceeding \$500 must be approved in writing (email) by the **department chair** prior to the **administrative coordinator** or **communications specialist** processing a purchase requisition or paying for commodities/equipment/memberships using the departmental procurement card. Once purchases are made, proper invoices/receipts are retained in the records of the administrative coordinator.

The **administrative coordinator** is responsible for creating all purchase requisitions. He/She will provide copies of quotes and invoices to Procurement as needed and is responsible for filing quotes and invoices relating to purchase requisitions. He/She is also responsible for returning equipment if the equipment is determined to be damaged or is different from what was ordered.

The **administrative coordinator** is responsible for safeguarding the procurement card, which is kept in a locked drawer. Both the administrative coordinator and the Communications Specialist, as a backup person, have access to the key to gain access to the drawer. The procurement card must be signed-out and returned with the accompanying itemized receipt and no sales tax charged. The sign-in/out sheet, maintained by the administrative coordinator, must contain the date, person receiving the card, date returned, and item purchased. If recent purchases have been made, weekly procurement card statements are received by the administrative coordinator. These statements are reconciled and submitted to Procurement within two weeks. After reconciliation, the procurement card statement and receipts are filed by the administrative coordinator in the Procurement Card binder.

23.14.3 Purchasing Notification Reports

All Purchasing Notification Reports (PNR's) are reviewed by the **department chair** and the **administrative coordinator**. These PNRs are reviewed for accuracy and then filed electronically in the administrative coordinator's email.

23.14.4 Electronic Forms

Electronic Forms relating to e-forms created by the **administrative coordinator** are received by the administrative coordinator and the department chair as they are approved. Electronic forms of this type fall into the categories of: Form 1's (hiring), Form 3's (making changes to employment status), Form 7's (Students Paid on Salaried Basis), Form 18's (student employment) and Form 40's (additional pay). These forms are reviewed by the administrative coordinator and filed electronically on his/her computer.

23.14.5 Other Expenses and Filing

All expenditure files, including Requests for Payment, transfer documents, moving expense forms, procurement card files, and travel documents are retained in the office of the **administrative coordinator** or archived. For expenditures **not** processed through Procurement Services, (e.g. Aramark) backup documents, including the stated business purpose and name of attendees, must be retained in the office of the administrative coordinator or archived. If the business purpose is not included on the invoice, the administrative coordinator is responsible for attaching appropriate documentation or notating the purpose on the invoice. All supporting documentation related to expenditures not processed through Procurement Services, such as Aramark, is retained within the department for seven (7) years.

Related Policies

- [Responsibilities of Signatory Officers](#)
 - [Documentation of Financial Transactions](#)
-

23.14.6 Reconciliation of Account Balances

The **administrative coordinator** is responsible for performing monthly reconciliations by generating monthly university budget reports, identifying each expense, and comparing to request for payments, transfer documents, travel documents and procurement card statements. He/She is also responsible for researching work orders to insure they match requests made using physical plant notifications. The review of monthly expenses takes place by the end of the month following the month being reconciled. An exception is the reconciliation of June expenses. Since June 30 is the end of the fiscal year, that month is reconciled by the end of August. Any errors detected during the reconciliation are to be immediately investigated and corrected. The **department chair** will review, sign, date, and return the documentation to the Administrative Coordinator to be filed for audit purposes. The Administrative Coordinator also serves as the signatory officer.

Related Policies

[Responsibilities of Signatory Officers](#)

23.15 Graduate Assistants

Two graduate assistants are chosen each fall and spring through a search using the UM's hiring system, ConnectU. The positions are advertised on the UM Student Employment website and a diverse search committee is formed to conduct the search. These searches are normally chaired by the **administrative coordinator**. These graduate students are hired as administrative assistants and they provide clerical support to the DWR. Their training and supervision is carried out by the **administrative coordinator**.

23.16 Information Security Controls

Writing and Rhetoric 2021-UM-009

23.16.1 Servers

At present, the department maintains four QNAP-brand NAS servers to support onsite backup of mission-critical administrator computers. Three of these units, designated `dwrstorage02.cwr.olemiss.edu`, `dwrstorage03.cwr.olemiss.edu`, and `dwrpool04.cwr.olemiss.edu` are housed in office B23 of Lamar Hall. 02 and 04 support LAN-based Time Machine backups of department administrators' computers which are running macOS, while 03 supports various LAN-based backup and document history modes of department administrators' computers which are running Windows 10. All three of these servers are backed up daily in bulk to the WAN-based fourth server, `dwrarchive06.cwr.olemiss.edu`, which is located across campus in the Data Center.

As they host file-level backups of administrators' computers, these servers are assumed to contain sensitive data on students and employees and are registered as such with IT. Accordingly, all four are all password-protected and access-restricted to the specific reserved IP address range of the department's dedicated wired subnet at `130.74.44.xxx/25`, plus the specific individual Cisco VPN IP addresses assigned to the assessment coordinator, the instructional designer, and the communications specialist for off-campus access by those employees specifically to facilitate remote management as needed.

In addition to the computer-supporting backup servers, the department maintains a dedicated QNAP-brand NAS server to support the in-classroom recording technology installed in Lamar Hall room 413, designated `dwr-multi09.cwr.olemiss.edu` and also physically located in office B23. This server contains local copies of student speech

deliveries recorded in the aforementioned classroom, and as such, is subject to FERPA considerations due to the enrollment information a video recording can incidentally contain. This system is therefore also registered, password-protected, and IP-address-restricted, as above. The recordings stored on this system are backed up to non-public folders on Google Drive for assessment purposes. Those folders are only shared with the relevant instructors engaged in assessment or grading activity.

Lastly, the department maintains a Linux-based server on an Intel box in office B22 to support the digital signage installed throughout in Lamar Hall as well as various other public-facing academic projects: dwrweb08.cwr.olemiss.edu. This server contains no sensitive information, but is password-protected and IP-address-restricted for good measure anyway.

The department has an annual contract with CampusPress to deploy and support that vendor's managed WordPress installation for education, Edublogs, at the remote-hosted, SSO-integrated domain edblogs.olemiss.edu. As part of the original RFP, the vendor certifies this system as being FERPA-compliant. This system is used by students (and increasing numbers of faculty) for building websites as part of coursework (or professional activities). Privacy settings and access control for student websites under this system are configured for non-public availability by default, and require permission of both the student and the instructor before content may be made public.

23.16.2 Cloud Storage Devices

All official departmental electronic records not kept exclusively in SAP or email are stored permanently in Box. This specifically includes records containing sensitive information. Access permissions to various parts of the relevant folder hierarchies are reviewed at least annually, and upon employment status changes of any department personnel who would need access to such files. Box is also widely used throughout the department for individual or collaborative storage of, and access to, non-sensitive files of various kinds.

Previously, some of the department official records material was stored in Google Drive. Although migration of department files to Box is complete, some faculty and staff are continuing to use Google Drive for other professional and personal purposes, both individually and collaboratively.

In addition, faculty and staff are using other cloud storage such as Dropbox or OneDrive for similar non-administrative purposes and in similar manner.

23.16.3 Information Security Training

Each year in August, the week before classes begin, the DWR holds an orientation session, also known as the DWR Opening Session. All returning and new instructors and staff attend the Opening Session to stay up to date on important policies and procedures as well as to help prepare (instructors) for teaching. A key component of this event is to remind everyone of best practices when handling confidential and sensitive information. An announcement will be made at the event advising everyone to check their email for an information security video. Each person in the DWR will be expected to watch and acknowledge watching the entire video. Their electronic acknowledgement will be saved in DWR files and the process will be repeated annually at the DWR Opening Session.

Annual training about the department's backup policy will also be offered to all members of the department at the DWR Opening session.

Additionally, training will be provided for all new hires during the year through one-on-one meetings, workshops, pre-recorded webinars, and online tutorials to ensure all DWR employees are informed on how to protect confidential and sensitive information.

23.16.4 Sensitive Data

Sensitive data stored on backup or production servers is secured via password-protected, limited-access accounts on those servers in configurations that meet security guidelines set by Telecommunications/Networking, which remotely inspects the access security of those servers monthly. All onsite servers operated by the DWR are physically secured either behind lockable office doors, or by locked security cables affixed to parts of the building infrastructure, or both.

Related Policies

- [Information Confidentiality/Security Plan](#)
 - [Right of Privacy – Personal Information](#)
 - [Privacy in the Electronic Environment](#)
 - [Access to Students' Educational Records](#)
-

23.16.5 Security Controls

DWR employees are informed of the importance of creating user accounts and passwords to gain access to their computers. Instructor computers should not contain confidential information other than student papers and grades.

Each Windows-based computer maintained by the DWR has anti-virus software installed on it, as do Mac computers.

Related Policies

- [Information Confidentiality/Security Plan](#)
 - [IT Appropriate Use](#)
-

23.17 Long Distance Calls

The **administrative coordinator** is responsible for circulating the department's monthly long distance report to all DWR employees who have incurred long distance calls on the department's behalf. Each employee with long distance calls reviews the report and replies by email with their approval or with any disputes. Email confirmations are saved by the administrative coordinator. After employees have reviewed and approved their call reports, the administrative coordinator reviews the document, adds his/her footer with name and date, and forwards the document by email to the department chair. The department chair then reviews and replies by email if he/she has any questions. If he/she approves, that response is saved in the administrative coordinator's email.

Related Policies

[Long Distance Authorization Codes](#)

23.18 Mailboxes for Instructors

The **administrative coordinator** is responsible for establishing mailboxes for staff and instructors in Lamar Hall and Somerville Hall. In mid-August, new adjunct instructors and other new instructors' names are added at the end of the mailboxes; alphabetizing and name removals do not take place until the semester has gotten underway due to the high chance of continuous changes (additions/deletions). Two weeks into the fall semester, the administrative coordinator asks one of the graduate assistants to reorganize the mailboxes by removing employees who have been terminated or transferred and notifying them that the DWR is holding their mail. The graduate assistant then alphabetizes the mailboxes after new hires are firmly in place.

23.19 Payroll Process

23.19.1 Compensatory Time Balances and Overtime Pay

Compensatory time balances and overtime must be recorded on timesheets in accordance with university policy. Compensatory time and overtime must be approved before worked. The **administrative coordinator** is responsible for accurate record keeping; the **department chair** approves all compensatory and over-time requests.

Related Policies

[Fair Labor Standards Act – Compensatory Leave – Overtime](#)

23.19.2 Hours Worked

Student workers and non-exempt, hourly employees must sign-in/out each day to record time worked. The sign-in/out sheets must be totaled each pay period and attached to the employee's timesheet. The sign-in/out sheets should be compared to the timesheets prior to entry into SAP. The sign-in/out sheets of student workers who work in Suite B, 3rd Floor, Lamar Hall are retained by the **administrative coordinator**. The sign-in/out sheets of writing center and speaking center student workers are retained by their respective center directors.

Related Policies

- [Employment of Students](#)
 - [Departmental Time Record](#)
-

23.19.3 Leave

All employees must request and obtain approval in advance from their supervisor before taking personal days. It is important that employees provide advance notice so their supervisor knows that the absence is not unexpected or unplanned.

All exempt employees must report leave time in compliance with university policy; this includes 9-month faculty reporting sick leave. "First Day Illness" must be used for the first eight (8) hours of an illness (other than by 9-month faculty).

Related Policies

- [Leave Guidelines](#)
-

- Personal Leave (Vacation) for Twelve-Month Employees
 - Major Medical (Sick) for Staff Employees
 - Major Medical (Sick) Leave for Nine-Month Faculty Members
 - Fair Labor Standards Act – Compensatory Leave – Overtime <<https://secure4.olemiss.edu/umpolicyopen/ShowDetails.jsp?istatPara>>
-

23.19.4 Timesheets

At the end of a pay period, each non-exempt employee and student employees must complete and sign his/her timesheet. Once timesheets have been approved by either the student worker's supervisor or the department chair, the **communications specialist** will review and enter hours into SAP. Then, either the department chair or the administrative coordinator will approve the time in SAP. If timesheets cannot be entered into SAP, the original copies are to be delivered to Human Resources before 12:00 Noon on the payroll entry date. A copy is retained in the DWR payroll files.

Absences for exempt employees are entered by the employee in MyOlemiss. After submitting the hours for approval, the **department chair** will approve them in MyOlemiss.

Timesheets are maintained within the department for a minimum of seven (7) years for all employees. They are retained by the **administrative coordinator**.

Related Policies

[Departmental Time Record](#)

23.20 Performance Evaluations

The **department chair** is responsible for conducting annual performance evaluations of staff and faculty within the DWR. Evaluations are conducted according to University protocol.

23.21 Property Management

23.21.1 Copy Machine and Toner Management

With regard to DWR copiers in Suite B/Lamar Hall, Somerville Hall, and Suite C/Lamar Hall, the **administrative coordinator** is responsible for renewing/negotiating annual maintenance contracts, reviewing monthly/annual charges, checking copier totals at the end of fall/spring semesters and year end, and charging other departments for non-DWR usage. The **administrative coordinator** is also responsible for ordering toner, staples, and copy paper (must be state contract pricing and purchased with the procurement card) used in the copy machines. However, the communications specialist can also handle these requests in the absence of the administrative coordinator. User Codes are assigned by both the administrative coordinator and the communications specialist and are created/cancelled as employees arrive and leave employment with the university. The **administrative coordinator** works with the **communications specialist** in reviewing bi-annual copier reports to determine codes, which have become inactive or are being used by unassigned users. After reviewing the report, they delete inactive or misused codes, as needed. The **communications specialist** and the **administrative coordinator** work together in assessing paper jams and error codes displayed by the copier. Either of them may contact the Vendor for service calls if they are part of a maintenance contract, which covers service calls. If no maintenance contract is in place and the service call requires a fee payment, the administrative coordinator determines when/if a service call is to be made.

23.21.2 Facilities Management-Keys

Keys are issued to all DWR employees, graduate students, adjunct instructors, visiting faculty, and professors of emeritus status who have offices in Lamar Hall and Somerville Hall. The **administrative coordinator** and **communications specialist** work together to maintain and keep an up-to-date inventory of keys. The communications specialist maintains the key inventory list which includes the key code, the room description, further description (if needed), the person to whom the key is issued, and a “check mark” next to any key, which has been checked out. All spare keys are kept in a lock box in the communication specialist’s office. The key to the lock box is kept in the communications specialist’s office which is locked when his/her office is not being used. Both the **administrative coordinator** and the **communications specialist** have access to the lock box.

23.21.3 Inventory Audit

The **communications specialist** performs the annual departmental inventory verification by comparing actual items to university records. This verification begins when the UM Property Control Officer contacts the DWR each year. The communications specialist prepares for the audit by checking the department’s in-house report and comparing the actual items within SAP (AS02). Missing items will be immediately reported to the department chair so that appropriate action can be taken. When the UM Property Control office conducts their annual audit, the final inventory report will include the **communication specialist’s** signature, the **administrative coordinator’s** signature, the department chair’s signature, and the date that the verification was performed. As a general rule, DWR employees who work with computer assignment and transfers, should email the Communications Specialist (with i.e. UM#123456 in the subject line) any time a equipment is moved from one office to another. This will provide a solid audit trail when looking for equipment, which has been assigned to a room incorrectly in SAP.

Loan Equipment Forms are prepared by the **communications specialist** prior to the removal of any university property from campus. These forms must be renewed annually and retained within the department. These forms should be kept up to date (signed annually for repetitive loans) and provided to UM Property Control auditors when their annual audit is conducted.

Related Policies

- [Inventory Requirements](#)
 - [Departmental Inventory](#)
 - [Temporary Loan - Inventory](#)
-

23.21.4 Paper Products & Office Supply Management

The **communications specialist** is responsible for ordering DWR stationary, envelopes, and note cards. The administrative coordinator is also responsible for maintaining office supplies by either purchasing them at competitive prices from the Ole Miss Bookstore or from a state contract vendor.

23.22 Registration - DWR Courses

The **administrative coordinator** and **communications specialist** are the DWR contacts for students needing help registering for DWR courses. If a student has transfer credit, which has not posted; AP credit, which has not posted; or if they want to take the CLEP test to “CLEP out” of Writ 101 and/or Writ 102, the administrative coordinator or the communications specialist will assist them and keep a log of any manual conditional bookings which he/she executes on behalf of students waiting to receive credit. The administrative coordinator will follow-up with these students and advise them of their responsibilities regarding adequate documentation for fulfilling prerequisites.

23.23 Software

The **administrative coordinator** is responsible for ordering software available in the Faculty Technology Development Center by using FTDC’s online ordering system. These purchases are logged onto a shared file entitled, “LOG Software Installation” and the following information is included for each license purchased: a) Property number of machine, b) Description of machine, c) user of machine at time of installation, d) software description, e) cost, f) account number charged, g) installation date, h) installer, i) software security number (key code) if applicable. In the absence of the Administrative Coordinator, the Communications Specialist may make these online purchases. Prices offered by the FTDC are generally the lowest available. However, in some instances, software must be purchased from outside vendors. Software from online sources is generally purchased by the **administrative coordinator** using the procurement card. In his/her absence, the software may be purchased by the **communications specialist** using the procurement card.

23.24 Teacher Resources

Various resources are available to instructors in the Teaching Hub, which can be found at <https://hub.cwr.olemiss.edu/> including, but not limited to, teaching guides, the assignment library, policies, and reporting procedures. This site stores and/or collects course syllabi, office hours, release forms, teaching observations, and other tools and resources.

23.25 Travel

When new, full-time DWR employees are hired and their job descriptions allow travel, the **administrative coordinator** is responsible for meeting with them and reviewing the university’s travel policies within their first 60 days of employment. Adjunct instructors who request and are granted travel support by the department chair of DWR are directed to the university’s travel web site and are assisted, as needed.

Copies of all travel authorizations and vouchers with the department chair’s signature are maintained in DWR files for seven years by the **administrative coordinator**.

Related Policies

- [Airline Travel Policy](#)
- [Lodging Policy](#)
- [International Travel Policy](#)
- [Meal Reimbursement Policy](#)
- [Private Vehicle Policy](#)
- [Rental Car Policy](#)
- [State Travel Agency Policy](#)

- Travel Advance Policy
 - Travel Authorization Policy
 - Travel Reimbursement Policy
-

23.26 Website

The **instructional design and training specialist** is responsible for the design and maintenance of the DWR website. Overall supervision of the website rests with the **department chair**.

23.27 Annual Policy Acknowledgement

Important: All current DWR employees must digitally acknowledge the DWR Policies and Procedures annually by August 31. New employees should acknowledge the policy upon beginning work for the DWR.

Note: If you have an @olemiss.edu email address, select “Faculty and Staff.” If you only have a @go.olemiss.edu email address, select “Student Employees.”

INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY & TRAINING

Important: All DWR employees must **digitally acknowledge** the DWR Information Security Policy annually.

Contents

- *Antivirus and Firewall*
- *Screen Locks and Session Timeouts*
- *Automatic Security Updates*
- *Monitoring of Sensitive Servers and Devices*
- *Mobile Device Encryption*
- *Cloud Storage*
- *Annual Policy Acknowledgement*

On an annual basis and in consultation with IT, up-to-date training and training documentation will be developed and provided to all faculty and staff who have access to physical and/or electronic versions of sensitive information at the DWR fall orientation session, which takes place in August each year. If a new employee's hire date begins after the orientation session, training will be provided within one month of their start date to ensure they comply with the university's information security policies. Upon completing security awareness training, DWR faculty and staff will be required to submit confirmation of training completion to the Administrative Coordinator. These training confirmations will be retained in DWR personnel files which are maintained in the department chair's office. In addition to in-house training, all employees will be encouraged to attend IT sponsored training throughout the year; which can be found at <https://ittraining.olemiss.edu/>. We have added the following section about Annual Security Awareness training to the department's IT Security Policy:

Any member of the department who has access to confidential student or employee information in digital or physical formats is required by the University to complete security awareness training annually.

Additionally, all faculty and staff should routinely complete training and attend workshops hosted by the department and IT.

UM Information Security Resources

- [IT Training Workshops](#)
 - [UM Security Awareness Policy](#)
 - [UM Information Confidentiality/Security Policy](#)
-

24.1 Antivirus and Firewall

Important Links

- [UM Antivirus Protection Policy](#)
- [Windows Instructions](#)
- [Macintosh Instructions](#)
- [Installing on Non-University Computers](#)

All employees within the department are required to install Anti-Virus software on their computer and maintain an active firewall. Please see the [IT Antivirus Instructions page](#) and follow tutorials for downloading and installing antivirus software. Employees can seek assistance from the IT Helpdesk or the designated local contact for departmental virus protection. Additionally, all employees should be aware of the following requirements/ responsibilities:

- Update virus protection software daily, and configure computer systems to perform frequent auto-scans for viruses (daily recommended).
- Exercise extreme caution when opening attachments. Never open an attachment unless it is expected even if it is from a trusted user.
- Report all virus incidents to the IT Helpdesk. Provide the following information if known: virus name or type, extent of infection (single PC, Server, Network, etc.), source of virus, and potential recipients of infected material.
- Perform regular backups of data on individual computer systems (daily recommended).
- If IT responds to a virus incident and finds that the infected computer system is not running virus protection software, then the individual must agree to purchase, install and properly use the software to prevent future incidents.

Designate a local contact for departmental virus protection. The contact will assist in installation of software, education of the user community, and incident response.

24.2 Screen Locks and Session Timeouts

A password protected session/screensaver lock should be used on all departmental computers to prevent viewing/access of data after a certain period. Session lock is required after 15 minutes of inactivity.

Video Tutorials

- [How to Lock your Mac with a Shortcut](#)
 - [Automatically Lock Windows 10 Screen](#)
-

24.3 Automatic Security Updates

Important Links

- [Manage Updates in Windows 10](#)
- [How to manage system updates on MacOS](#)

Desktop computers and personal devices should be configured to apply application updates and operating system (OS) patches daily. Patches should be applied to servers on a regular basis as frequently as is feasible.

24.4 Monitoring of Sensitive Servers and Devices

All UM owned computers or servers, which are used to store, process, or transmit sensitive UM data locally, must be entered into the UM System Registry. The associated department must provide an active contact for each machine and ensure that registered information is kept current.

The department is responsible for actively testing and monitoring its security practices and periodically evaluating and adjusting its information security program based on the results of testing and monitoring. In addition, all servers and storage devices that contain sensitive information must be registered so they can be periodically scanned for vulnerabilities. To register a server or workstation, login to myOleMiss and select UM System Registry under “Technology”.

24.5 Mobile Device Encryption

Mobile devices that will be used to store sensitive data locally must be approved by the IT Security Coordinator prior to use, and have disk-level encryption enabled. If disk-level encryption is not a viable option, the individual sensitive files may be encrypted with AES-256 encryption or equivalent instead.

Additionally, it is recommended that all UM owned mobile devices have disk-level encryption enabled by way of the operating system. Devices should also have a PIN or Password screen-lock configured.

24.6 Cloud Storage

Important Links

- [UM Enterprise Cloud Platforms](#)
- [Cloud Platform Security Chart](#)

As part of our responsibility to safeguard confidential information, all faculty, staff, and student workers will use only cloud storage approved by the University of Mississippi when conducting professional activities.

At present, only three cloud storage options are approved and supported by UM:

1. Box (@olemiss.edu accounts)
2. Microsoft OneDrive for Business (@olemiss.edu accounts)
3. Google Drive (@go.olemiss.edu accounts)

Danger: Mac Users: iCloud Drive should be disabled in the Apple ID section of System Preferences. If not, MacOS will automatically store information from Desktop, Documents, and maybe other folders directly on their cloud storage service. This is especially concerning for any devices that access/store sensitive or confidential information. Once disabled, information stored in the service may need to be retrieved and will definitely need to be deleted by logging in to <https://www.icloud.com/iclouddrive/> with the configured AppleID.

Windows Users: If you sign in to a Windows device with a personal Microsoft account, [make sure to *disable* backups](#) of work-related folders to your personal OneDrive Account. Instead, [*add* your @olemiss.edu Microsoft Account to Windows](#) and enable backups to your OneDrive for Business (@olemiss.edu) account.

24.7 Annual Policy Acknowledgement

Important: All current DWR employees must digitally acknowledge the Information Security Policy annually by August 31. New employees should acknowledge the policy upon beginning work for the DWR.

Note: If you have an @olemiss.edu email address, select “Faculty and Staff.” If you only have a @go.olemiss.edu email address, select “Student Employees.”

TEACHING POLICIES

Contents

- *Assessment*
- *Attendance Policy for First-Year Writing*
- *Class Cancelation*
- *Disabilities*
- *FERPA*
- *Grades*
- *Instructor Promotion Policy*
- *Observations*
- *Office Hours*
- *Open Door Policy*
- *Permission to Use Student Work*
- *Persons of Concern*
- *Plagiarism*
- *Religious Holidays*
- *Syllabi*
- *Teaching Development*
- *Teaching Hub*
- *Tenure-Track Promotion Policy*

The DWR Teaching Policy directory contains all policies related to teaching Writing and Speech classes at the University of Mississippi.

Some of these policies include passages that should be included verbatim in each syllabus; in other instances there are suggestions for how teachers should address particular issues.

In every case, these policies are supported by the Chair, Assistant Chair, and the Core Faculty, who are available to handle questions and provide further interpretations.

The purpose of these policies and procedures is to improve the teaching and learning of writing and speech, and in the event of any ambiguity, decisions should be made in light of this common goal.

The details box for each policy includes the type of policy, its audience, and the date of its last revision.

Non-teaching policies are located in *DWR Policies and Procedures*.

25.1 Assessment

Details

Policy Name

Assessment

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

WRIT Faculty

Revised

Aug 2016

We require all W&R teachers to collect major assignments from their classes in an electronic format for purposes of assessment. The QEP directs the W&R to collect materials from WRIT 100/101/102 and WRIT 250 courses and to assess annually whether curricular changes are meeting learning outcomes. In order to fulfill this directive, we need materials from all classes currently taught. The assessment is for course and assignment changes, not an assessment of individual instructors. All identifying marks (including the names of instructors) will be removed from student work. As an internal assessment, student permission need not be asked unless we publish or present specifics from this study. Such permission will be asked for if the need arises.

For instructions on how to download student essay files and transmit them to the W&R for program assessment, go to [Document Uploads](#)

25.2 Attendance Policy for First-Year Writing

Details

Policy Name

Attendance Policy for First-Year Writing

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

WRIT Faculty

Revised

May 2019

Instructors should regularly take attendance in all DWR courses.

In the case of first-year writing courses, instructors should follow the policy below:

Students are expected to attend all class meetings; improving writing skills takes time, and is a process unlike learning content alone. In acknowledgment of the fact that students may experience some circumstances which prevent complete attendance, the following policy is in effect:

MWF Courses

- 5 days missed: final course grade lowered by one letter grade.
- 6 days missed: final course grade lowered by two letter grades.

- 7 days missed: final course grade lowered by three letter grades.
- 8 days missed: failure.

T/TH and M W Courses

- 4 days missed: final course grade lowered by one letter grade.
- 5 days missed: final course grade lowered by two letter grades.
- 6 days missed: final course grade lowered by three letter grades.
- 7 days missed: failure.

There will be no excused or unexcused absences.

25.2.1 Scholarship Clause

If a student is attending UM with a scholarship requiring course absences (e.g, athletics, band), the following exception applies: students will not be penalized for required absences alone, as long as the student presents to the instructor by the end of the course drop/add period an official letter from the scholarship-issuing program declaring the required absences for the entire semester. If a scholarship student accrues absences beyond those designated by the letter, he or she will incur the penalty listed above. (For example: A scholarship student who documents a requirement to miss 5 T/Th course meetings for a scholarship and is absent 5 times will suffer no penalty; a student who documents a requirement to miss 5 T/Th course meetings for a scholarship and is absent 6 times will have the final course grade lowered by three letter grades). Students who miss 8 MWF or 7 T/Th classes for any reason will fail the course regardless of scholarships, and students who plan to miss 10% of the course should enroll in the course during another semester. Students whose scholarship-issuing programs cannot produce such a letter, or determine a schedule in advance, should take the course during another semester. Letters cannot be amended.

If a student is absent from a class, he or she must seek permission from the course instructor as to whether or not the missed work can be submitted for a grade. In general, students who notify an instructor of an absence in advance will be afforded the ability to submit their coursework.

Instructors of first-year writing courses should copy the attendance policy verbatim onto their syllabi. Questions, concerns, clarifications, thoughts, and appeals should be forwarded to the DWR chair (smonroe@olemiss.edu).

25.2.2 Additional Attendance Policy Considerations

First Day Absences: Students absent from the first day of class may be dropped from the course. Instructors who wish to drop a student who has missed the first meeting should email the DWR communications coordinator (js-mitch1@olemiss.edu) with the subject line: Drop Request: Student Name. In the body of the email, instructors should include the course name and section, the student's name, the student's ID number, and the student's email. Most drop requests are completed within 24 hours. Instructors will receive a confirmation email.

25.3 Class Cancellation

Details

Policy Name

Class Cancellation

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to
All Teachers

Revised
Aug 2018

Classes in the DWR should not be canceled if at all possible. In times of unavoidable absence, instructors should adhere to the following procedure.

- At the start of the semester, instructors should exchange phone numbers/email addresses with a few colleagues who would be willing to cover their classes in the event of an absence.
- If instructors know they will miss a class for a conference or other professional development, they should arrange for a colleague/guest lecturer or assign work students can complete independently or virtually.
- If instructors are ill or have an emergency, they should send an email to students letting them know class has been canceled and providing instructions for the students regarding work. Instructors should copy the DWR Chair (smonroe@olemiss.edu) and Administrative Coordinator (gschove@olemiss.edu) on the email.

25.4 Disabilities

Details

Policy Name
Disabilities

Policy Type
Teaching

Applies to
All Teachers

Revised
Sept 2018

25.4.1 SDS Syllabus Language

Instructors should copy the policy listed below onto their syllabi verbatim. Questions, concerns, clarifications, thoughts, and appeals should be forwarded to the Chair (smonroe@olemiss.edu).

Disability Access and Inclusion: The University of Mississippi is committed to the creation of inclusive learning environments for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your full inclusion and participation, or to accurate assessment of your achievement, please contact the course instructor as soon as possible. Barriers may include, but are not necessarily limited to, timed exams and in-class assignments, difficulty with the acquisition of lecture content, inaccessible web content, and the use of non-captioned or non-transcribed video and audio files. If you are approved through SDS, you must log in to your Rebel Access portal at <https://sds.olemiss.edu> to request approved accommodations. If you are NOT approved through SDS, you must contact Student Disability Services at 662-915-7128 so the office can: 1. determine your eligibility for accommodations, 2. disseminate to your instructors a Faculty Notification Letter, 3. facilitate the removal of barriers, and 4. ensure you have equal access to the same opportunities for success that are available to all students.

25.4.2 Required Communication with SDS

Because the timely provision of approved accommodations is a civil rights issue, it is necessary that faculty communicate closely with SDS. Upon receiving email notification from SDS that a student has requested accommodations, faculty should use the Rebel Access Faculty/Instructor Portal on the SDS website (<https://sds.olemiss.edu/faculty/>) to acknowledge that they have read the accommodations requests and communicated with the student. Additionally, faculty should answer emails and return telephone calls from SDS in a timely manner, as well as reaching out to SDS if there are questions or concerns about the provision of accommodations.

The full UM policy on Students with Disabilities can be accessed here: <https://policies.olemiss.edu/ShowDetails.jsp?istatPara=1&policyObjidPara=10881938..>

25.5 FERPA

Details

Policy Name

FERPA

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

All Teachers

RevisedSept 2018

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;

- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may use the Federal Relay Service.

For the UM policy statement on FERPA, visit the UM Office of General Counsel’s website (<https://legal.olemiss.edu/legal-issues/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act/>).

25.6 Grades

Details

Policy Name

Grades

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

All Teachers

Revised

Aug 2018

The University of Mississippi uses a plus/minus grading system. DWR instructors should use the following grade percentages and post the grade designations on their syllabi.

Letter	Percent
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	65-69
F	64-below

The Undergraduate Catalog defines grades as follows: A Excellent, B Good, C Satisfactory, D Lowest Passing Grade, F Failure. Please note that meeting assignment requirements is not equal to excellent work but rather equal to average work.

25.6.1 Incompletes

The “I” grade is assigned when “for unusual reasons acceptable to the instructor, course requirements cannot be completed before the end of the semester” (UM Undergraduate Catalog). In order to assign an Incomplete in all DWR courses, the student, instructor, and Chair must all three sign a grade contract which will detail what work is missing, why the work cannot be completed before the end of the semester, why the student could not foresee this event, when the work will be submitted, when it will be graded, who will grade it, what grade the student has earned without the missing component, and when the final grade will be submitted. Incompletes must be replaced by the 25th day of class (the drop deadline) in the next regular semester (skipping summer semesters) or the grade will convert to an “F.” (N.B. This is the deadline for the changed grade to be entered – not the deadline by which the student must submit the work to the instructor – meaning that students must submit work in time for instructors to assess it well in advance of the drop deadline of the next semester.) Incompletes may only be issued for one missing course assignment or for multiple missing assignments due to one discrete event. Incompletes may never be assigned after the submission of final grades. Incompletes may not be assigned as a method to circumvent attendance policies or course failure.

25.6.2 Midterm Grades

All DWR teachers must complete midterm grades in a timely manner. It is essential that the university intervene as early as possible when students are struggling academically.

25.6.3 Grade Appeals

Course grade appeals are addressed through ACA.AR.600.002. Please consult the M Book for procedures.

25.7 Instructor Promotion Policy

[View the DWR Instructor Promotion Policy](#)

25.8 Observations

Details

Policy Name
Observations

Policy Type
Teaching

Applies to
All Teachers

Revised
Aug 2018

The DWR maintains a teaching-centered culture and wants every teacher to be successful. As faculty, we learn from each other and share ideas. We value academic freedom, appropriate levels of standardization, research-based pedagogies, and deliberate innovation. We believe teaching can be improved through purposeful reflection. Regular classroom observations help to improve our teaching practices. We learn as much from observing others as we learn from being

observed. This ongoing exchange of ideas strengthens our culture by showcasing and improving the unique contributions we each bring to the profession. As a routine of support and collegiality, we expect that teaching observations will protect and enhance our high pedagogical standards.

All faculty, regardless of rank or position, must be observed during their first semester of teaching at UM. These formative observations (through which colleagues provide feedback to one another) should be conducted by a core faculty member, the assistant chair, or the chair.

All other faculty, regardless of rank or position, must be observed once per cycle of every three regular (fall/spring) semesters. These formative observations should be conducted by a full-time DWR faculty member, the assistant chair, or the chair.

All graduate instructors, regardless of experience, must be observed before midterm of their first semester of UM teaching and once more at any point during the remainder of their first year. In the second year of teaching and beyond, graduate instructors must be observed once per year. These formative observations should be conducted by a core faculty member.

All faculty seeking promotion should be observed in the year prior to promotion. These summative observations (through which instruction is evaluated) should be conducted by the chair, the assistant chair, or a core faculty member who is senior in rank.

Faculty who teach online should submit each distinct course taught for evaluation once every three regular (fall/spring) semesters. These holistic evaluations should be conducted by the DWR instructional designer and/or online faculty members designated by him or her in conjunction with the Division of Outreach Online Course Enrichment program. For teachers who also teach face-to-face classes, this evaluation is in addition to their regular observations.

Faculty members and graduate instructors schedule their own observations. After the observation, the observer will submit an observation report through the Teaching Hub. The report will be distributed to the observer, the observed faculty member, and optionally the core instructor the course observed. Online course evaluations, in addition to being shared with the above-referenced individuals, are shared with the Division of Outreach. The schedule for online course evaluation is maintained by the DWR instructional designer in coordination with the Division of Outreach.

The department recognizes that various methods of peer observation are effective. Faculty and observers work together to choose a method from the list below. Materials for these methods are available in the DWR document library.

1. DWR Observation Checklist
2. DWR Observation Short Narrative
3. Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID)
4. Online Course Evaluation
5. TPEG/Pro-Teach Model (pilot)

25.8.1 Best Practices

- To establish trust and reciprocity, create teaching observation partnerships or triads with colleagues.
- Build variety by partnering with different colleagues and using different methods over time.
- If you have trouble finding a partner or group, reach out to the communications specialist for names of faculty members who have not yet been observed.
- Keep the observation forms and their content private. Share the forms only with the faculty member observed, the DWR communications specialist, and, for online course evaluations, the appropriate curriculum committee chair.
- Keep in mind the distinction between formative observations (to provide feedback to a colleague) and summative observations (to evaluate instruction). Remember that summative observations only occur in the year prior to promotion.

- Pre-observation conversations via email or in person allow colleagues to pinpoint areas for focused observation.
- Post-observation conversations via email or in person allow colleagues to share ideas and learn from each other.
- Be mindful that teaching observations have limitations, including unforeseen circumstances, collegiality issues, and biases about pedagogy, subject matter, etc. They are a snapshot of one teacher in one class on one day.

25.9 Office Hours

Details

Policy Name
Office Hours
Policy Type
Teaching
Applies to
All Teachers
Revised
Aug 2018

Teachers in the DWR are expected to hold regular office hours for the purpose of supporting the teaching mission through student conferencing. All teachers are asked to hold a minimum of one weekly office hour per section taught, but no less than two hours per week. Please submit your office hours no later than three working days prior to the first day of classes each semester via the DWR Teaching Hub.

25.10 Open Door Policy

Details

Policy Name
Open Door Policy
Policy Type
HR
Applies to
All Teachers
Revised
Jan 2019

The DWR is committed to open communication, feedback, and discussion about any matter of importance to department members. Department members should feel free to contact core faculty, the assistant chair, and/or the chair at any time for instructional guidance. For urgent issues, sensitive matters, or conflicts, faculty should seek out the assistant chair or chair.

Campus-wide, the [UM Ombuds Office](#) and [Department of Human Resources](#) provide assistance to employees in the areas of workplace and interpersonal issues as well as family/life balance, wellness, and career development.

25.11 Permission to Use Student Work

Details

Policy Name

Permission to Use Student Work

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

All Teachers

Revised

Aug 2018

Instructors are required to obtain student consent to publish their work, including publishing student writing online, showcasing student work in future classes, or using student work in public instructional materials. A student work release is not required to submit work to the DWR assessment archive or to use in class or for departmental purposes.

A digital student work release is available.

25.12 Persons of Concern

Details

Policy Name

Person of Concern

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

All Teachers

Revised

Sept 2018

A person of concern may be a member of any UM constituency (faculty, staff, or student) dealing with an emotional, psychological, or physical crisis that may interfere with his or her ability to continue attending classes or working at UM.

Instructors who are concerned about the safety or health of a student or colleague should use the information and reporting portal found at: <http://umatter.olemiss.edu/>.

25.13 Plagiarism

Details

Policy Name

Plagiarism

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

All Teachers

RevisedSept 2018

According to the [UM Academic Catalog](#) “in the College of Liberal Arts ... faculty members handle cases of academic dishonesty in their classes by recommending an appropriate sanction after discussion with the student. Possible sanctions include: failure on the work in question, retake of an examination, extra work, grade reduction or failure in the course, disciplinary probation, or suspension or expulsion from the university. An appeals process is available to the student.”

When an instructor believes a student may have committed an act of academic dishonesty, he or she should discuss the alleged violation with the student as soon as possible and give the student a chance to explain. Whenever possible, an instructor should meet in person with the student. Instructors of first-year students should bear in mind that many students come to campus with little knowledge of appropriate citation and may be prone to sloppy citation rather than intentional plagiarism.

Following that discussion, if an instructor still believes the student committed an act of academic dishonesty, the instructor may recommend an appropriate sanction as listed in the Catalog statement above. It is a best practice to summarize the discussion and decisions in an email to the student. This practice creates clarity and a timestamped record. Note that if the student does not respond to communications from the faculty member after a reasonable period, the matter may still proceed.

If an instructor chooses to initiate a formal academic discipline case through the Academic Discipline Committee, the instructor must follow the procedure outlined in the [UM Student Academic Conduct and Discipline policy](#).

Instructors of writing courses should copy the policy listed below onto their syllabi verbatim. Questions, concerns, clarifications, thoughts, and appeals should be forwarded to the Chair (smonroe@olemiss.edu).

According to the University of Mississippi Academic Conduct and Discipline policy, “[t]he University is conducted on a basis of common honesty. Dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are regarded as particularly serious offenses.” The following language should clarify what academic dishonesty and plagiarism mean in the context of WRIT or LIBA courses. All work that you submit under your name for credit in Department of Writing and Rhetoric courses should be your original work. If you would like to use your original work in multiple courses, you must have permission from your writing course instructor before proceeding. Similarly, you may not turn in work previously submitted for credit, even if it is in the same course number, without first receiving permission from your teacher.

Plagiarism is using others’ words and/or ideas without properly crediting them. Instructors may ask you to incorporate outside source material in your composing, and you must credit others’ work when you use it. In your written assignments there are only three methods for properly importing the work of others: quotation, paraphrase, and summary, including proper attribution of outside

The penalty for academic misconduct or plagiarism in any WRIT or LIBA class may include an “F” on the assignment, an “F” in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or other sanctions

determined by the UM Academic Discipline Committee.

Upon determining academic misconduct or plagiarism, the instructor will notify the student and the Chair of the Department of Writing and Rhetoric in writing as part of the process of opening an Academic Discipline Case. The instructor will also make a recommendation for the penalty he/she finds most appropriate for the offense. Students may appeal this finding and/or penalty by notifying the UM Academic Discipline Committee within 14 days of the instructor's decision.

The applicable full UM policy is ACA.AR.600.001 and should be consulted by any student concerned with academic misconduct or plagiarism. In most cases, academic misconduct and/or plagiarism should be completely avoidable: if you are ever uncertain whether or not you are committing academic misconduct or plagiarism, ask your instructor before submitting work for grading.

Instructors of speech courses should copy the policy listed below onto their syllabi verbatim. Questions, concerns, clarifications, thoughts, and appeals should be forwarded to the Chair (smonroe@olemiss.edu).

All work that you submit under your name for credit at UM is assumed to be your original work. While you should incorporate the thinking of others in your work, you must credit others' work when you rely upon it, in writing and out loud. In your speeches, there are three methods for properly using the work of others: quotations, paraphrase and summary. No presentation should contain more than 10% quoted material. If you are adapting work or using research generated for a previous class or context, inform your instructor and discuss your options (if any).

The penalty for plagiarism in Speech 102 and 105 is considered by the instructor on a case-by-case basis and may result in failure of the assignment, failure of the course, and/or additional UM penalties. Upon determining plagiarism, the instructor will notify the student and the Chair of the Department for Writing and Rhetoric in writing, as well as open an Academic Discipline Case. Students may appeal this finding and/or penalty by notifying the UM Academic Discipline Committee within 14 days of the instructor's decision. The applicable full UM policy is ACA.AR.600.001 and should be consulted by any student concerned with plagiarism.

25.14 Religious Holidays

Details

Policy Name

Religious Holidays

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

All Teachers

Revised

Sept 2018

Instructors must accept a student's assertion of the need to be absent from class for religious reasons, but students are required to notify instructors in advance that they will miss class in order to observe a religious holiday. Students shall be temporarily excused from any academic work or examinations conducted during that class and will be provided an opportunity to make up such examination or work requirements which may have been missed because of such absence on any particular day. Unless otherwise stipulated, the work which would have been due during that class will be due during the next regular class meeting. It is the burden of the student to provide the instructor with notification that he or she will miss a class due to observance of any recognized religious holiday. A good resource to research the date(s) of a holiday is <https://www.timeanddate.com>.

25.15 Syllabi

Details

Policy Name

Syllabi

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

All Teachers

Revised

Aug 2018

Completed syllabi should be submitted electronically via the DWR Teaching Hub no later than three working days prior to the first day of classes each semester. Instructors can find syllabus templates posted in the DWR teaching guides on the Teaching Hub.

25.15.1 Mandatory Language

All course syllabi should contain the mandatory DWR policies regarding attendance, disabilities, grade percentages, and plagiarism. (See those policies and the required language above or below this policy in the DWR policy directory.) In addition, all syllabi must contain the Subject to Change statement below. Copy the statement verbatim. Questions, concerns, clarifications, thoughts, and appeals about mandatory language should be directed to the Department Chair (smonroe@olemiss.edu).

25.15.2 Policies Subject to Change

All information in this syllabus is subject to change at any time, especially during the first weeks of the semester. I will announce changes to our schedule during class time and also via [olemiss.edu email / BlackBoard]. You are responsible for changes to the schedule as they arise, regardless of whether or not you attend class.

25.15.3 Suggested Language

Below are some suggested statements for teachers to consider including in their syllabi.

Classroom Decorum

Please consider including a statement in your syllabus about the need to maintain classroom decorum. We challenge students to express and interrogate ideas, some of which can be dearly held and deeply defended, both spoken and written. At all times, however, we need to proceed from a basis of mutual respect. Below is one such statement:

The classroom is a place of learning; others are paying to be here too. Please make sure not to distract others from learning, and to respect the opinions of others. From time to time we will review each other's writing, either in peer review sessions or by workshopping an essay. Please follow the guideline of being a "critical friend" in all of your reviewing of classmates' work. Students who cannot adhere to these behavioral expectations are subject to discipline in accordance with the procedures described in the M Book.

Cell Phone Policies

Many instructors have developed policies prohibiting the use of cell phones and/or texting in class. Cell phones may distract from the goal of the class, but be wary of crafting harsh policies which leave little leeway for judgment when an inconsequential cell phone incident occurs. Consider that you always have the ability to address a student individually under a more general classroom decorum policy.

olemiss.edu e-mail

Designate the official communication channel as olemiss.edu e-mail.

Tardiness

Individual instructors will determine policies on encouraging students to attend class punctually and publish their policy in the course syllabus. Please do not create policies which conflate tardies with absences; find another method to encourage timely arrival to class. This often translates into penalties on course assignments or deductions from the course participation grade. Be sure to note that students who arrive to class late are responsible for verifying that they have been recorded as present.

Late Work Penalties

Individual instructors will decide what penalties are to be assessed to course work submitted late. Be sure to post this policy in your syllabus

Office Hours

Teachers in the DWR are expected to hold regular office hours for the purpose of supporting the teaching mission through student conferencing. All teachers are asked to hold a minimum of one weekly office hour per section taught, but no less than two hours per week. Please submit your office hours through the DWR Teaching Hub no later than three working days prior to the first day of classes each semester.

25.16 Teaching Development

Details

Policy Name

Syllabi

Policy Type

Teaching

Applies to

All Teachers

Revised

Aug 2019

The DWR is committed to supporting instructors. To that end, the following resources are available:

25.16.1 Instructional Technology

The DWR instructional designer, Andrew Davis, is happy to serve as a resource for all faculty technology concerns. Instructors should feel free to stop by his office, Lamar B22, to discuss any questions or concerns related to technology in the classroom, digital composition, or online pedagogy.

In addition to coordinating workshops throughout the year, the instructional designer provides support on any technology issues arising from using courseware and teaching multi-modal assignments. He can also come to classrooms as instructors try new assignments.

25.16.2 Teaching Circles, Communities of Practice, IAPs

Every faculty member participates in a self-selected development opportunity that is documented through the Teaching Hub each semester.

25.16.3 Faculty Activity Reporting System (FARS)

In the spring, DWR faculty complete an annual report through the Faculty Activity Reporting System (FARS), accessed through MyOleMiss, in preparation for an annual review with the Chair (or the Chair's designee). Graduate instructors email the Chair (or the designee) an updated version of the portfolio they prepared in English 617.

25.16.4 Timeline

Faculty activity reports or portfolios are submitted for the Chair's (or the designee's) review at least two weeks before an instructor's annual review meeting. Dates for the annual review meetings will be announced shortly after the beginning of the spring semester.

25.17 Teaching Hub

Details

Policy Name
Teaching Hub
Policy Type
Teaching
Applies to
All Teachers
Revised
Aug 2021

The DWR Teaching Hub includes assignments, rubrics, calendars, and related materials –including various exercises and handouts as well as sample student papers. New assignments are reviewed by the appropriate course committee prior to being added to the hub to ensure they are in accord with DWR learning outcomes and do not duplicate existing assignments. Please contact the appropriate course committee chair or core faculty member to contribute a new resource.

25.18 Tenure-Track Promotion Policy

[View the DWR Tenure-Track Promotion Policy](#)

DWR REPORTS AND INTERNAL RESEARCH

The DWR is committed to transparency and continuous improvement. As part of that commitment, we plan to share departmental reports, assessment results, and raw data on this part of the Teaching Hub for our faculty and other interested parties to freely access.

26.1 DWR Strategic Plan 2018-2022

Documents	Dates	Description
Strategic Plan Document	8/1/2018	In Spring 2018, the Strategic Planning Task force developed 32 action items for the department's strategic plan that will guide us through 2022.
18-19 Progress Report	8/1/2019	This report documents progress toward the strategic plan's four objectives in the 2018-2019 academic year, detailing specific actions and enrollment numbers from that time period.

UM WRITING CENTERS OER INSTITUTE

Note: This section is under construction and is not finalized.

Contents

- *Managing an OER Project*
- *Appendix*

The UM Oxford Writing Center hosted an open educational resources institute in January 2022 for graduate students. This program offered participating graduate students with experience or interest in writing center consultation and/or writing instruction the opportunity to learn how to develop, design, and publish open educational resources. Participants attended brief, daily professional development sessions where they learned principles of open access content development, document design, electronic document accessibility, creative commons licensing, and web publication.

Participants worked in groups to develop writing instructional topics, design learning resources, workshop their ideas, and carry their compositions through to publication. The culmination of the program was the production of a series of new open access educational resources published on the UMWC website and credited to the individual author or teams of authors.

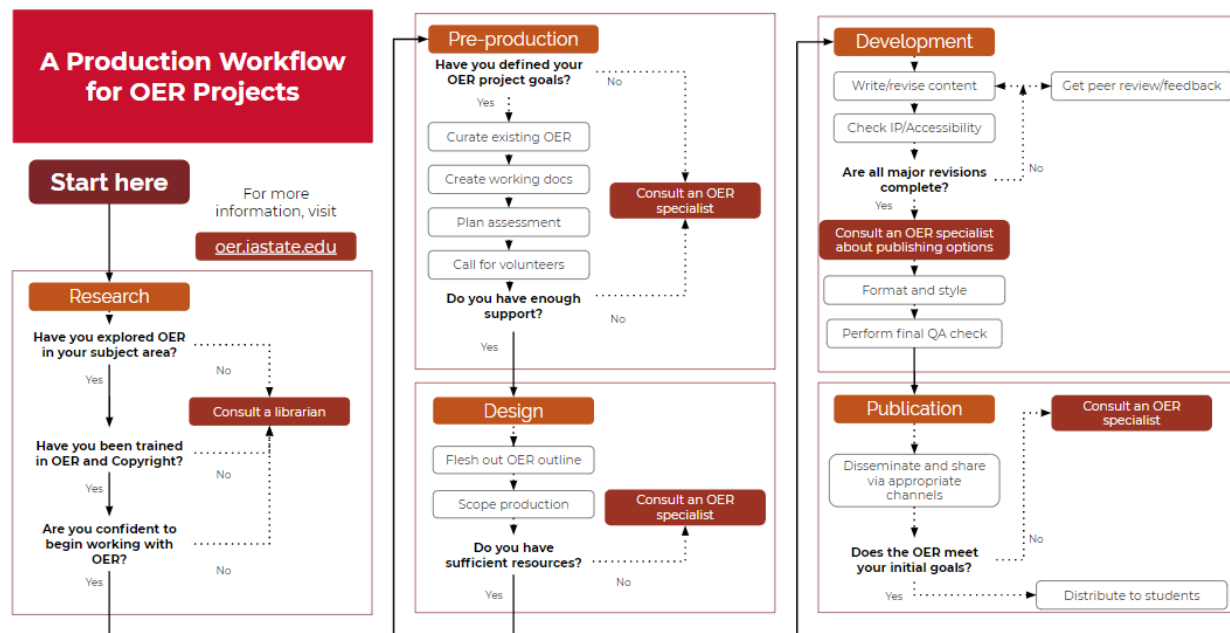
This section of the Teaching Hub is for OER Project Management documentation and resources, as well as archiving and indexing of non-course-affiliated OER content.

27.1 Managing an OER Project

The main challenge faced by faculty members (and other knowledge workers) in creating and sustaining an OER or a collection of OERs comes from the lack of long-term project modeling. Unlike commercial publishers, who have the workflows, experience, and funding to maintain multiple publication projects, most people who are interested in working on OER projects are not in the publishing industry: they're teachers, writing center tutors, undergraduate students, and even community members. That's why it is especially important for OER project leaders to build a sustainable model with simple, long-term infrastructure and a plan for maintaining the project once the initial group of developers have moved on.

27.1.1 OER Production Framework

The following OER production framework, based on an instructional design framework, depicts the major steps that OER adoptions typically go through:



Tip: You can see the full [Project Production Workflow](#) on Google Drawings.

Research Phase

At this step, you should ask yourself a few key questions to gauge your OER knowledge and skills before taking on a project. Have you explored OER content in your subject area? Have you been through any previous training for work with OER in the past? Contact support staff on campus to receive any training you might be lacking for working with open content.

Pre-production phase

This phase involves the curation of existing resources that may be applicable to the OER adoption and planning out the general design of the project. No new content should be adapted in this step, but a skeleton outline and other time-and-task-based project management documents should be prepared. Getting an OER consultation scheduled at this time is encouraged.

Design phase

This step is the last planning phase before work on the actual OER content begins. For projects adapting OER as-is, this may be the final step apart from preparing instructional documents. During this phase, project outlines and skeleton documents are fleshed out, and existing OER are fit into places where they are believed to be applicable. Any visual/graphic design work and processes that require assistance from an instructional designer are included here.

Development phase

This phase is where the most time is spent on OER projects that require building new materials. Existing OER that are being adapted or modified go through revision and review in a closed loop until they are in a place where they require only minor changes or copyedits. Checks for intellectual property (which CC license is on the content, and have we appropriately attributed everything?) are done, as well as checks for accessibility (is content formatted semantically, do images include alt-text, etc)?

Content here is typically drafted in Google Docs or another rich content editor (Word, OpenOffice) and are then ported into the publishing platform (the ISU Digital Press recommends Pressbooks for text-based content).

Publication phase

The final phase involves publishing and sharing the content that has been created. This includes creating export versions, archiving editable files for instructors who might wish to edit your work (.doc, .xml, etc), and depositing any ancillary materials such as syllabi or lesson plans in the institutional Digital Repository. The new adapted or original OER content is then disseminated to learners and shared with the open community.

27.2 Appendix

Resources

- [UH OER Handbook](#)
 - [ISU OER Starter Kit](#)
 - [OER Starter Kit](#)
 - [80 OER Tools and Platforms](#)
 - [OER Camp Global 2021](#)
 - [OER Commons Network Hubs](#)
-