

ENG 289-002: Intermediate Composition—Writing about Writing

MWF 8am—850am, 047 McMicken
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University of Cincinnati

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Course Description/Goals: English 289 (Intermediate Composition) reinforces and builds upon what you have learned in English 101 and 102, introduces higher-level learning and thinking about writing and reading practices, and focuses attention on how meaning is made, understood, and communicated across and within discourse communities. This course emphasizes critical reading and writing skills, advanced research and analytical skills, as well as rhetorical sensitivity to differences in academic, professional, and public writing. With an organizing focus on “writing about writing,” this section of ENG 289 will question, explore, and study first-hand the work writing does in the world, including how it helps constitute our senses of self, other, knowledge, and community.

Required Texts: 1) *Writing About Writing*, Downs & Wardle, Bedford/St. Martins, 2010

Available at the UC Bookstore & Dubois or through online booksellers

2) PRINTED COPIES of additional posted course readings and assignments

Available on Blackboard

3) Active UC email and Blackboard accounts, checked regularly—

This is very important especially as informal writing assignments and due dates will be posted here. You should consider our Blackboard site an extension of this syllabus and schedule.

Course Requirements & Expectations

Classroom Expectations—Please be courteous and respectful of everyone, particularly when we are sharing ideas, both written and verbal. Please keep cell phones, laptops, newspapers, work for other courses, and other distractions stowed away during class. Please be on time as habitual tardiness is disruptive. Be prepared everyday to be an active participant as it is your activity—writing, thinking, and speaking—that is the real content of this course. Finally, be sure to bring your book and/or printed readings *everyday*.

Attendance—*Attendance in this course is mandatory.* Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. **You will have up to five free absences to use at your discretion over the course of the term (these free days will include days you are ill, have an appointment, are taking a trip, are too tired to come to class, etc.).** Only in the case of a university-approved absence (observation of a religious holiday, participation in a university-approved sporting or other event) will you be able to make up missed in-class work, and only with proper and *prior* notification and/or documentation. Any deadline or assignment missed as a result of a free absence *cannot be made up*, unless prior arrangements have been made. Being habitually late can also affect your attendance. Habitual lateness three or more times will count as one absence. If you’re more than 25 minutes late, you’ll be counted absent. Because so much graded activity will happen during class time, it may be necessary to drop the course should your absences become excessive (6+). Each absence beyond your free five will result in a point deduction at the end of the term (3-5 points per absence).

Late and/or Missing Work Policy—Quite simply: **I don’t accept late work.** To keep things simple, if it’s late, it doesn’t earn credit. However, I am aware that “things happen,” things which might prevent you from meeting a deadline. In order to for me to consider accepting something late, you must notify me *prior* to the assignment’s deadline that it will be late and we will then negotiate an alternate due date. Generally I will not accept small assignments at all if they’re late; if a major essay is accepted late, it will incur a point penalty.

Conferences—I **strongly** urge you to take advantage of my regular office hours to discuss your work in the course. In addition to in-person meetings, I am always willing to answer questions/respond to concerns via email.

Formatting—Each assignment may require a different format for submission. You may need to bring a hard copy to class; you may need to submit through Blackboard. I will always make this clear in class, on assignment sheets, and/or on Blackboard. In general though for all assignments, please use MLA style documentation and formatting: e.g. 1-inch margins, reasonable font like Times New Roman, Garamond, Didot, etc., double-spaced, with proper MLA heading, formatting, and documentation.

Plagiarism—In the Composition Program, any case of plagiarism can result in an automatic grade of F for the course and a letter in your college file explaining the incident. It is ultimately your responsibility to be sure that you have cited all your work properly and to demonstrate academic honesty. The Composition program’s plagiarism statement is available in the English 101/102 *Student Guide*.

Students with Disabilities—Students with disabilities should present official documentation from the Disabilities Services office during the first two weeks of class so appropriate accommodations can be made.

Writing Center—Located in on the first floor of McMicken, the Writing Center is available to help with any aspect of a writing project, except editing. Take advantage of this resource for any of this course’s major assignments or for writing projects in your other courses. Appointments are recommended; call 513.556.3912.

Assignments/Grades:

Reading Quizzes & Informal Writing	Throughout the term, there will be short assignments, quizzes, or writing responses assigned. These short, handwritten or typed, 1-2 page written responses (or short answer quizzes) will be assigned for completion both in- and outside of class. The prompts, announcements, and/or due dates for these short assignments or quizzes, whether completed in class assigned for homework, <u>will be posted on our Blackboard announcement page</u> (if you miss a class, please be sure you’re checking Bb for any these assignments; these assignments are <i>not listed on our course schedule</i>). Writing responses and short quizzes will be graded for quality completion, each earning full (check-plus), half (check), or zero (O) credit.	50 points 10%
Essay Reviews	Over the course of the term, you will review each others’ essay drafts. Details of these reviews will be provided in class. The grades for peer reviews will be determined in part by the other members of your group (e.g. I will ask for feedback on how helpful your partner was and to suggest the points their partner(s) should be awarded). You will also complete self-reviews of your essay drafts (required with essays, but not graded).	25 points 5%
Drafts of Essays	A draft of each of the three major essays will be due for peer review on the dates listed in the course schedule (the level of development of the draft will vary for each essay). These review drafts will be graded for quality completion, each earning full (check-plus), half (check), or zero (O) credit. Details about drafting for each assignment is listed on each assignment description.	25 points 5%
Reading or Writing Profile	*** See assignment sheets for more details on each of these essay assignments *** Draft and Final Version due dates are listed in the Course Schedule A 3—4 pg. essay that describes and reflects on reading or writing practice(s) you engage in a given context. This personal essay will explore in-depth an aspect of your life, past or present, in which some kind of reading or writing practice was significant to you and will draw conclusions about the role of reading, writing, and/or literacy practices in our lives.	100 points 20%
University Writing Analysis & Genre Recast	A 4—5 pg. essay in which you analyze writing you’ve produced in a university course. This analysis will include a consideration of the assignment’s rhetorical situation, its status as a genre, an exploration of its context and conventions, your own ability to fulfill the assignment’s conventions using examples from your own writing, as well as conclusions about how the writing reveals something about the discourse community in which it was written. You will then recast what you’ve learned about the nature of writing for this academic discourse community into another genre—an instructional website or brochure—and write a reflection on how your content changes with a change in genre.	150 points (Essay 100 Recast 50) 30%
Ethnographic Research Project	This project asks you to conduct primary research in order to get an up-close view of writing, reading, and/or language practices in action within a discourse community. Through primary research tools of interview, text analysis, and observation, you will document and analyze how a discourse community works and how reading and writing are put to use within this community. This project includes a proposal step and requires you to turn in records of your research.	150 points 30%

TOTAL: 500 points

Grades follow university’s standard 10/100-point scale:

94-100=A; 93-90=A-; 87-89=B+; 86-83=B; 82-80=B-; 79-77=C+; 76-73=C; 72-70=C-;
69-67=D+; 66-63=D; 62-60=D-; 59 or below=F

Course Schedule—revised 1/5

ENG 289

- *****This schedule may change over the quarter; please be sure you are looking at the most recent version*****
- **Be sure also to check Blackboard for informal writing assignments and in-class quiz announcements.**
- Readings are due ON THE DAY they are listed; WAW = *Writing about Writing*; Bb = reading posted on Blackboard
- We will schedule REQUIRED CONFERENCES and cancel a day of class for them at some point in our schedule.

Week 1		Wed. Jan 4 Introductions	Fri. 6 <i>First Informal Writing assignment, due Monday 9—check Blackboard!</i>
Week 2	Mon. 9 Barton & Hamilton, “Literacy Practices” (Bb); WAW Alexie 362-365 <i>Bring WAW to class (each time you complete reading from it)</i>	Wed. 11	Fri. 13 WAW: Malcolm X 353-360; Diaz 319—320
Week 3	Mon. 16 No Class—MLK Day	Wed. 18	Fri. 20 <u>First Draft of R/W Profile, due in-class, hard copy</u> In-class Peer Review (<i>you must attend to earn points for this review</i>)
Week 4	Mon. 23 <u>Final Draft of R/W Profile due in-class, hardcopy for GRADE</u> (see assignment description for details)	Wed. 25 WAW: Keller 595—600	Fri. 27
Week 5	Mon. 30 WAW: McCarthy 667-695	Wed. Feb 1	Fri. 3
Week 6	Mon. 6 <u>First Draft of University Writing Analysis, due in-class, hardcopy</u> (see assignment sheet) In-class Peer Review (<i>you must attend to earn points for this review</i>)	Wed. 8	Fri. 10
Week 7	Mon. 13 <u>Final Draft of University Writing Analysis and Genre Recast,</u> due in-class, hardcopy (see assignment sheet)	Wed. 15 WAW: 463-465; Swales 466-478; Klass (Bb)	Fri. 17 Proposals for Ethnographic Project due to YOUR WIKI PAGE By 9pm (<i>counts towards informal writing grade</i>)
Week 8	Mon. 20 Gensuk (Bb)	Wed. 22	Fri. 24 WAW: Mirabelli 538-554
Week 9	Mon. 27	Wed. 29	Fri. March 2 Research Records due in-class, hard-copy (<i>counts towards informal writing grade</i>)
Week 10	Mon. 5	Wed. 7 Working Draft of Ethnographic Research Project due to Wiki (8am) Out-of-Class Peer Review (assigned in class)	Dec. 9 Peer Review due in-class, hardcopy

FINAL ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH ESSAY DUE TO WIKI, WED. MARCH 14TH, 10PM

We will NOT meet in class during Exam Week, March 12—16

The Task: This personal, descriptive, and reflective essay will explore how you practice reading or writing of some kind in a given context. First, you will identify some meaningful, difficult, or important aspect of your life in which reading or writing practice(s) featured and you will describe it (asking, for a start, who, what, where, when, why, how about this practice(s)). You will then reflect on this practice and draw some conclusions about what your experience can tell us about reading, writing, or literacy practices; relate the practice to writing/reading in other contexts; connect the practice(s) to a sense of yourself as a reader/writer.

This essay is personal, descriptive, and reflective. A strong essay will vividly describe the personal experience/practice and will use that experience as evidence for a view/conclusion about the nature of reading or writing practices in our lives.

Questions to Consider: *use these questions to help you generate ideas to work with in this essay; you do not have to answer these questions, nor should you attempt to answer them all in your essay.*

- What kind of reading and writing did you do when you were a child? A teenager? A freshman in college?
- How did you come to learn to read? To write?
- Who helped you gain reading skills?
- What kinds of self-sponsored reading or writing practices do you engage in?
- When was reading or writing a lot of fun for you? When was reading or writing hard for you?
- What kind of reading and writing might be required at your job?
- What memories do you have of reading or writing as a child?
- How do reading or writing practices figure in your personal life, work life, relationships, school life, mental health, religious practice, freetime, etc.?
- How do you think of yourself as a reader or a writer now? How might that self-conception relate or contradict with a reading or writing practice you engaged in past and/or in another context?

Format and Requirements:

3-4 pages, double-spaced. Standard MLA format and documentation (see syllabus for more details on format).

Due Dates:

First FINAL draft due for peer review, hardcopy:

Friday, Jan 20

("first final" means that the draft is complete, meets length requirement (3-4 p.), and represents your best effort)

Final Draft for GRADE, hardcopy + with completed self-review + peer review draft and review sheet:

Monday, Jan 23

The Essay: This assignment asks you to investigate how writing works in an academic disciplines. Towards this end, you should carefully analyze an assignment that features writing produced in a college class (any class besides an ENG COMP course). You should describe the goal of the assignment, and relevant aspects of its rhetorical situation—that is, the purpose, conventions, implied audience, context, voice, attitude toward readers, format, etc. Based on these goals and characteristics, incorporate examples and quotations from some of your writing and assess your efforts in fulfilling the conventions and expectations of the academic discourse community from which this assignment comes. Finally, drawing both on your consideration of your own writing in an academic genre, draw some conclusions about your study: how does this assignment reveal something about the values, beliefs, and attitudes and about what counts as knowledge in your given academic field? How does this genre, or typified written response, reveal something about its academic discourse community? In other words, what does this academic community value in writing?

This essay is analytical. This means that you need to demonstrate how aspects of the writing sample work, and moreover, use these identified aspects as evidence to draw conclusions about what your academic discipline values in writing.

Things to Consider in Developing your Essay:

- In addition to examining your completed assignment, if possible, seek out the original assignment description and any other documents from the course. These documents will likely reveal much about the academic community you were writing for and what that community expects in written responses.
- Take some time in choosing the assignment to study. It may be best to choose an assignment that comes from a class relevant to your major.
- Some questions to help you open up the rhetorical analysis of the assignment genre: What voice did you write in? Did you use the first person? What kind of vocabulary did you use? Did you cite other scholarship? If so, how did you bring these other voices into the text? How did you credit these other works? What might a reader who was not in the course have trouble understanding about this genre? What kind of specialized knowledge is required to read this genre? How does the assignment look on the page? Are there sections? Images? MLA format? What are the criteria for evaluation—on what basis did your instructor judge the assignment? What did the instructor expect you to demonstrate in the assignment? Etc. etc...
- In order to see the particularity of writing in a particular discipline, you might do some freewriting that compares the “rules” for writing in one class versus another.

Essay Format and Requirements:

4—5 pages, double-spaced. Standard MLA format and documentation (see syllabus for more information on format).

Due Date and Points:

First draft of essay (at least three pages of it), due in-class, hard copy, for peer review: Wed, Feb 8

**Final draft for GRADE, hardcopy + recast + reflection + short self-review + peer review + draft :
Due in class: Wed, Feb 15**

The essay will be graded out of 100 points; the recast and reflection worth 50.

A rubric for evaluation for the essay will be made available. The recast will be graded on thoughtfulness, effort, and depth of reflection on the recast process. Your recast text does not need to be “professional” but rather represent a thoughtful effort to understand the recast genre and create a coherent text that fulfills the genre conventions.

The Recast: Taking what you’ve discovered about writing in your academic community, you will *recast* the insights from your analytical essay into another genre: **an educational website or brochure**. The audience for your

website or brochure is your peers, writing for the same classes, and your purpose will be to provide that audience helpful insights into how writing is accomplished, what is valued in writing, and/or what writing is used for in your academic discourse community. After studying the conventions of the genre you've chosen, you will create your website brochure using the mediums suggested below. Finally you will write a short reflection on the process. You will have the option of collaborating on this project (we'll arrange this in class), or you may do it alone.

To create a free website: try Weebly.com (this site is really easy!)

To create a brochure: my version of Microsoft Word has a program to make a brochure, so you might start there. Paper, markers, stickers, magazine clippings, etc. will also work!

We'll spend time in class looking at examples and determining some conventions for these genres.

Once you've created your recast, you'll write a **short reflection** (1-2 pages) that answers the following questions:

(If you work with a partner or group of three, each of you should write your own reflection)

- What are some of the conventions of your genre (instructional website or brochure) that you attempted to fulfill? Or explain what choices you made in the design and writing of your text and why you did them.
- How is the nature of the writing in your recast similar to or different from the writing in your essay?
- What does the process of recasting reveal to you about how genre, purpose, audience affect how we write?

"Ethnography literally means 'a portrait of a people.' An ethnography is a written description of a particular culture - the customs, beliefs, and behavior - based on information collected through fieldwork." —Marvin Harris and Orna Johnson, 2000

An ethnography is a type of study conducted by anthropologists, communication specialists, and sociologists among other groups. It relies on primary and secondary data: conclusions are based on analysis of the information gathered. In addition, this project continues to expand on the concept of literacy and literacy practices that we have been exploring this term. We will read and study a couple of examples of this kind of writing and will extrapolate elements of this genre as a class to help you develop possible elements of your own ethnographic essay.

The Task: Write an **ethnographic essay of approximately 1700—2000 words (around 6-7 pages minimum)** that presents **detailed description and analysis of the reading, writing, and language practices of a particular discourse community that you belong to or one that is new to you.** Your research will involve collecting primary data through interviews, observation, and gathering and analyzing samples of writing in the genres the discourse community uses. **The focus should be on the composing practices and writing produced and/or used by the group and how language and writing practices work to form and sustain the community.** Rather than a traditional print essay, you will compose this project on a Wiki to take advantage of the virtues of online composing (like video, images, photos, slideshows, section titles, footnotes, etc.).

Proposal Requirement: *(due date listed in Course Schedule)*

Before you engage in this short-term study of a discourse community of your choosing, you will also need to prepare a **short proposal** for approval of around 500 words which answers the following questions:

- What specific group or community do you wish to study?
- In what ways does this group demonstrate itself as a discourse community? What sort of reading and writing practices, texts, or genres does this community use and/or produce?
- Why do you wish to study this discourse community?
- How will you go about data collection? How will you gain access to this community?
- What kind of secondary reading/research will be relevant to studying this community?

Primary Research Requirements: *(due date listed in Course Schedule)*

As you study your discourse community, you learn and implement three primary research methods: observation, textual analysis, and interviews. **You are required to complete and turn in the record of at least TWO of these research methods on the date listed in the course schedule.** If possible, you'll want to use all three methods in researching your chosen community. However, what methods you rely on most will depend upon what kind of community you're studying. For example, if you are studying an online gaming community, you will likely not be able to contact an individual member for an interview (unless you know a person who participates in this community). In this case, you'd have to focus on observation (how individuals interact and play the game; what the game is like) and "text" analysis (which might include rules of the game, characters, the conventions and language used in the "chat" feature, etc). More information on the format for this required research record will be delivered in class. The aim here is to demonstrate the extent and richness of your data collection.

Things to Keep in Mind:

- Direct quotations, analysis of documents, and your observations compose the evidence in your essay.
- **The primary focus is on the writing practices, written texts, and language the group uses.**
- Along with your primary data, your research should also include secondary sources to support or amplify your field research. Sources may come from popular magazines and newspapers, non-scholarly Internet sites, or other sources, but it may also include scholarly sources appropriate to an academic essay. If nothing else,

some of the course or outside readings about literacy and discourse communities will be relevant to everyone's project.

- You are playing the role of ethnographer, interested in careful and thick description and with the aim to conclude about how a community seems to use and produce written discourse, language, and genres towards constituting itself. You might hold the following core question in mind as you explore your discourse community: what does it take to be literate within this community? As you work, keep returning to the example articles for direction on the kind of data you might collect and how you might use those observations to draw conclusions about literacy, literacy practices, discourse community, etc.

Format and Requirements: around 1700 to 2000 words of written content (in my experience with projects like this, successful essays tend to hit or exceed the equivalent of 8 double spaced pages). You are encouraged to incorporate other medium, like photos, images, videos, etc if applicable. All primary and secondary material should be cited using MLA style. Every essay will need a works cited section. Criteria for evaluation will be developed in class.

Due Dates:

A working draft (700-1000 words) of this essay will be due **by classtime, to WIKI: Wed, March 7**

The final version of this essay will be due posted to the Wiki in exam week: **Wed, March 14th, 10 p**

ENG 289—Reading or Writing Profile SELF-REVIEW

Please take some time after you've completed your final draft to fill out this self-review. The purpose of this self-review is for you to practice critiquing your own writing, helping you to gain a real understanding how your writing succeeds or doesn't in specific writing contexts. While the self-review is not graded, it will impact how I read and evaluate your essay for a grade. *As I review and respond to your writing and your self-evaluation, I'm looking for you to demonstrate insight and reflection on the effectiveness of the essay, as well as the process you used to produce it.*

Rubric for Evaluation: Characteristics of a STRONG Reading or Writing Profile Essay:

- The essay **describes** in detail an important writing or reading practice—the writer gives us a clear picture of what constitutes writing/reading in this specific practice (answering: what is the nature of reading or writing in this context?)
- Drawing on insights from the description, the essay **reflects** on the practice described and makes a larger point about the nature of literacy, the relationship of the practice to reading/writing in other contexts, relates the practice to the writer's identity/sense of self as writer
- The essay draws on or is clearly thinking about reading and writing as informed by our course readings and discussions
- The writer establishes a clear focus—the essay is developed around a central idea
- The essay demonstrates typical essay conventions: has a central idea, thoughtful structure and paragraphing, transitions, etc.
- The essay is readable—clear, vivid, revised, relatively free of spelling and grammar errors

Please answer the following self-review questions on a separate sheet. Attach that sheet to the front of the final draft of your essay. You're welcome to write as much as you wish in response to these questions, but at minimum I'd think at least 150 words for each answer.

- 1) Read the above criteria for evaluation. Write a short evaluation of your work based on these criteria (you don't need to address every point here; you can choose just a few of the criteria to comment on). You should comment on your essay's accomplishments, its shortcomings, as well as your uncertainties.
- 2) Describe briefly how the *process* you used to compose this essay may have affected its final form: e.g. did you do anything differently when writing this essay? Where you pressed for time? Did you start early? Did you revise a great deal after the peer review? Is there anything you did in composing this essay this time that you might wish to do again, or *never* do again?
- 3) Describe in your own words what the purpose of your essay is and summarize its main point(s). In other words, what were you trying to do/achieve in this essay? Or, what do you want your readers to take away from your essay?

REVISION OPTION

Writing is a process; there is always something more we can do. Even essays that score high marks can be substantially improved. Thus, I am presenting you the **OPTION** to engage in a revision process on *either* the R/W profile or the University Writing analysis. You are not required to take part.

This revision process is focused on discussing your writing, creating and implementing a plan to revise, and reflection.

- 1) **CONFERENCE** with me about the comments and your insights into the essay you wish to revise. Set up a meeting with me (10 minutes or so) in office hours or by appointment. For this conference you will review the draft and my comments and prepare questions/observations. We will discuss some of the major areas of concern and on a list of things (3-4) you'll take on in the revision.
- 2) **REVISION**
After the conference, you will do the revision steps we talked about—e.g. revise/add a thesis and topic sentences, correct sentence level errors, craft transitions between each paragraph, develop analysis, provide and explain examples etc. You're not necessarily addressing *everything*, just the revision plan that we've decided you want to work on.
- 3) Write a 1-page **REVISION REFLECTION** (250 words):
In a reflection-letter format, you will discuss your experience in this revision process: what did you learn about yourself as a writer? What did you learn about your writing process? What are you going to do differently in your next piece of writing?
- 4) **HIGHLIGHT CHANGES**
In your revised essay, highlight (with pencil, pen, highlighter) areas where you revised. Feel free to use arrows or other attention-drawing marks if it makes more sense.

Turn in by: **Friday, March 9**

- 1) Revised and highlighted new essay, 2) reflection letter, 3) original graded essay

For this revision process, you can earn 10 extra credit points (or, raise your essay grade a full letter)