

# Introduction to Analytical Writing

Dr. Janelle Adsit

Course Information  
Contact Information

Office Hours: XX:XX – XX:XX  
Office Location: XXX

## Course Description

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This section of Introduction to Analytical Writing explores a variety of forms, techniques, and theories of writing. The course is designed to equip you with knowledge about writing, along with skills to help you negotiate a variety of writing contexts. You'll reflect on the place of writing in your current and future work as you develop your writing practice. In thinking about your own writing goals, you'll have the opportunity to research a genre that is most of interest to you – such as fiction, poetry, screenwriting, memoir, technical writing, lab reports, academic essays, editorials, magazine features, resumes, cover letters, marketing copy, or grant proposals.

Many of the course readings are studies of writing that come from the academic discipline called “composition and rhetoric.” We'll evaluate these studies for their methodological limitations and assumptions, and we'll read these studies against common notions about writers, writing, and literacy. In doing so, we'll hone our analytical abilities and gain ways of thinking about the communication we do every day, in and out of the classroom.

## Learning Objectives

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By the end of this course, you will be able...

- To analyze some of the constructs and controversies associated with literacy and writing.
- To assess your own educational experiences and writing strategies.
- To define and use key terms for discussing writing (e.g., rhetorical situation, ethos, genre, literacy, discourse community, code-switching, etc.).
- To articulate the difference between summary and analysis.
- To identify the rhetorical choices in your writing and to consider their effects.
- To become equipped to handle future writing tasks in and out of school; to identify genre conventions and the assumptions of different discourse communities.
- To conduct skillful research as a process of inquiry; to find, interpret, evaluate, summarize, synthesize, and document information ethically and effectively.
- To continue the habit of writing with the knowledge of a variety of methods, processes, and techniques.

## Required Textbooks

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1. Wardle, Elizabeth, and Douglas Downs. *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*. Bedford St. Martins, 2011. [ISBN: 978-0-312-53493-6]
2. Course packet (pdfs will be posted on Blackboard/Canvas/Moodle)

**\*\*Be sure to keep all feedback you receive throughout the semester, so you'll have access to the documents you need for your final project.**

## Course Policies and Expectations (Attendance, Plagiarism, Community Expectations, etc.)

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See separate sheet.

## Grading

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Your grade will be determined by the cumulative points earned on the following assignments.

Unit	Major Assignment / Project	% of Total Grade
1	Transcript of Informational Interview of a Practitioner in a Field of Interest	10%
2	Summary and Textual Analysis	10%
3	Open-Note Key-Concepts Essay Test	10%
4	Online Workshop of Analytical Argument	10%
5	Analytical Argument and Process Reflection	10%
6	Genre/Discourse Community Presentation	10%
7	Multigenre Project	10%
Daily	In-Class Writing Assignments and Exercises	30%

## Course Overview

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The following provides an overview of the organization of the course. A day-by-day schedule with assignment due-dates will be provided at the beginning of each unit. All assignments will include a detailed explanation, checklist, and rubric. Each major assignment/project will be due at the end of the unit.

**Note that daily in-class writing assignments and exercises will make up 30% of your final grade.** These assignments put into practice your knowledge of the assigned readings and ensure that you are a fully participative member of the course's community.

## UNIT 1: YOU, THE WRITER

### *Class Time: Exercises*

- Profile Assignment: Who Are You as a Writer?
- Reflection: What Are Your Writing Goals? What Are Your Goals for This Course?
- Agreements: What Kind of Writing Community Do You Want?
- Identifying Preconceptions about Writing
- Understanding the Orientation of the Course
- What Is a Rhetorical Situation?

### *Readings*

- "Introduction to the Conversation" (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 1-5).
- Robert Yagelski, Chapter 2 "Ten Core Concepts" (handout).
- "Discourse Communities & Rhetorical Situations" one-page handout.

### *Major Assignments*

- **Transcript of Informational Interview of a Practitioner in a Field of Interest (10% of the final grade):** Interview someone who has a career or hobby that you are interested in. Find out how this person uses writing in their day-to-day life. What writing projects have they taken on? How could they use writing to benefit their work?

## UNIT 2: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

### *Class Time: Exercises*

- Defining Analysis vs. Summary
- Practicing with Tools of Analysis
- Summarizing and Analyzing “Me Talk Pretty One Day”

### *Readings*

- Stephen King, “What Writing Is” (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 305-307) with Bianca Tedesco’s student paper (handout).
- “Tools of Analysis” handout
- David Sedaris, “Me Talk Pretty One Day” (in course packet).

### *Major Assignments*

- **Summary and Textual Analysis (10% of the final grade):** Choose one text to summarize and analyze. Using the tools of analysis that are introduced and practiced in class, through this assignment you’ll demonstrate that you understand the difference between summary and analysis.

## UNIT 3: DRAFTING A LONGER PAPER: ANALYTICAL ARGUMENTS

### *Class Time: Exercises*

- Common Conceptions About “the” Writing Process
- Researching as a Writer
- Reading as a Writer
- Other Techniques for Getting Ideas
- Rapid Round-Robin of Paper Proposals
- Thesis Workshop

### *Readings*

- Anne Lamott, “Shitty First Drafts” (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 301-304).
- Ken Macrorie, “from *Telling Writing*” (in course packet).
- Mike Rose, “Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer’s Block” (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 236-250).
- Donald M. Murray, “The Essential Delay: When Writer’s Block Isn’t” (in course packet).

### *Major Assignments*

- **Open-Note Key-Concepts Essay Test (10% of the final grade):** The test provides you the opportunity to review and use the key terms and concepts introduced in the course. The test will consist of several short-answer questions, and one extended essay question. As you complete the test, you’ll be asked to review, and demonstrate your understanding of, the readings that we have completed in class so far.

## UNIT 4: DEVELOPING OUR ANALYSES: CONSTRUCTS ABOUT WRITING AND LITERACY

### *Class Time: Exercises*

- Analyzing the Words We Use to Talk About Writing
- Constructs of Error and Correctness
- Diagramming “The Phenomenology of Error”
- Using Our Key Questions (What/who does this representation reinforce, what/who does it risk, and what/who does it limit or occlude?)

### *Readings*

- Joseph M. Williams, “The Phenomenology of Error” (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 37-55).
- Lisa Delpit, “The Silenced Dialogue” (in course packet)
- Gloria Anzaldúa, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” (in course packet)

### *Major Assignments*

- **Online Workshop of Analytical Argument (10% of the final grade):** In units 3 and 4, you have been working to develop an analytical argument. Now you will have the opportunity to receive additional feedback on your draft. In addition to the workshops we complete in class, you will have the opportunity to receive written feedback from three of your peers through an online forum. A tutorial on online workshopping will be offered in class. We will also discuss how to offer effective feedback, borrowing from research on online writing center consultations.

## UNIT 5: REVISION

### *Class Time: Exercises*

- Experimenting with Revision Techniques
- Translating Your Argument for Different Audiences and Genres

### *Readings*

- Nancy Sommers, “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers” (in course packet).
- Barbara Tomlinson, “Tuning, Tying, and Training Texts: Metaphors for Revision” (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 251-270).

### *Major Assignments*

- **Polished Analytical Argument and Process Reflection (10% of the final grade):** At the end of unit 5, you’ll submit for a grade your argumentative paper, which complicates or critiques a common conception or construction of literacy, writing, or writers. Accompanying this document, also include a process reflection (2-3 pages) that describes your writing process. Your process reflections should make connections with the course readings, linking your composing methods with our class discussions.

## UNIT 6: INFORMATIVE PRESENTATION: RESEARCHING GENRE AND DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES

### *Class Time: Exercises*

- Features of a Discourse Community
- What Discourse Communities Are You Part Of?

- Analyzing Disciplinary Differences: One Author, Three Discourse Communities
- Analyzing Disciplinary Differences: Citation Style
- Using Library Resources for Your Presentation
- What Makes for an Effective PowerPoint?
- Workshop of PowerPoint Presentation Slides

### *Readings*

- John Swales, "The Concept of Discourse Community" (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 466-480)
- James E. Porter, "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community" (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 86-100).
- Lucille P. McCarthy, "A Stranger in Strange Lands: A College Student Writing across the Curriculum" (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 667-699).
- Diane Dowdey, "Citation and Documentation across the Curriculum" (in course packet).
- Sean Branick, "Coaches Can Read, Too: An Ethnographic Study of a Football Coaching Discourse Community" (in *Writing About Writing*, pp. 557-573).

### *Major Assignments*

- **Genre/Discourse Community Presentation (10% of the final grade):** Inform the class about a genre of writing that's intended for a specific audience. With PowerPoint or Prezi slides and an oral presentation, you will identify the conventions of your chosen genre and analyze how these conventions reflect the assumptions and values of the discourse community that uses the genre. The purpose of your presentation is to help someone learn how to write your chosen genre and gain entrance into the discourse community you study.

## UNIT 7: MULTIGENRE PROJECT

### *Class Time: Exercises*

1. Understanding Genre: Interacting with Some Definitions
2. Self-Reflection Exercise: Your Genres, Your Discourse Communities
3. Self-Reflection Exercise: What Do You Care About?
4. Why a Multigenre Project?
5. Class Workshop and Resource Sharing: Vision and Action Steps for Your Multigenre Project
6. Tutorial: Using WordPress
7. Library Research Day

### *Readings*

- Selection from Tom Romano, *Blending Genre, Altering Style* (in course packet).
- Examples of genres that Dr. Sue Doe uses in her activism work (testimonials, organic theater/dramatic skits, "chalk-talks," letters, editorials, academic articles).

### *Major Assignments*

- **Multigenre Project (10% of the final grade):** Present your analytical argument in several different ways by building a WordPress website that employs multiple genres. Some examples of genres you might include in your WordPress website include: advertisements, biographies, reviews, brochures, cartoons, letters, mission statements, poetry, song lyrics, timelines, instructions, and podcasts. Use these genres together to advocate for a central argument or stance. Your multigenre project will ethically and effectively make use of print and electronic outside sources, and it must include a bibliography. This assignment is an opportunity to experiment with varying forms and to think about the ways different genres function in relation to audiences. This multigenre project also serves as the final portfolio for the course. It should demonstrate that you have learned techniques of global and local revision, as discussed in class.