

Program in Writing and Rhetoric Stony Brook University  
Fall 2015 Advanced Writing Courses

Grammar and Style for Writers  
WRT 200.01/02

Kevin Clouter/William Marderness  
MW 2:30-3:50 pm/TuTh 1:00-2:00 pm

Students will study the aspects of grammar that are most relevant to punctuation and to clear writing, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, phrases, clauses, gerunds, participles, infinitives, and complete sentences. Students will also study prose style as a way of achieving rhetorical effectiveness through arranging and rearranging sentence elements. Students, through frequent writing, will learn to apply principles of clarity, concision, and coherence with more consciousness. Sentence imitation, sentence combining, and sentence invention techniques will be used to help students become more flexible in their syntactic fluidity. Several tests and three short papers.

Honors Business Ethics Thesis Workshop  
WRT 301.01

Shyam Sharma  
TuTh 1:00-2:20 pm

This course is designed to aid students as they write a 30–50-page honors thesis on an ethical topic in their specialization. In addition to learning how to research and organize a document of this length, students will also work to improve the quality of their writing and ultimately develop their voices as writers. The finished thesis will be a document students can present to prospective employers or to graduate admissions boards as evidence they are prepared for graduate-level research. Students who successfully complete the Honors Ethics Program will earn an honors designation on their diplomas.

Living Through Texts  
WRT 302.01

Peter Khost  
TuTh 1:00-2:20 pm

Whatever your major may be, you can benefit from and enjoy exploring in this course why and how some expressive texts (e.g., books, movies, songs) have been especially important to you and how to repurpose that (kind of) significance for others in various contexts. It is well known that stories say things and can be analyzed for what they mean, but less recognized is the fact that they also do things and can be examined for other effects they have on our lives. Even rarer is consideration of what audiences can do with expressive texts: what uses they can be put to beyond entertainment and self-betterment. So this course examines stories less in terms of what they say and mean than what they do and what can be done with them. This focus on what we will call rhetorical “affordances” of texts signals not only a shift in emphasis from the work of art/artist to the audience, but also a reconception of reading from a receptive and abstract act to an active, applied, and even creative practice. As theorist Louise Rosenblatt puts it: “Literature provides a living through, not simply knowledge about [its subjects]: not information that lovers have died young and fair, but a living-through of Romeo and Juliet,” for example. Students in this course experiment with and reflect on living through their choices of expressive texts, achieving important ethical insights along the way. Once one comes to see oneself as a textual being who lives life narratively and rhetorically, one can learn to better connect with other textual beings and fruitfully intermingle one’s story with theirs, including fictional ones. Course readings tend to be theoretical and challenging but not lengthy, and there are no tests or quizzes on them or any other course material. Additional work includes frequent low-stakes reading responses, in-class discussions and group work, informal classroom presentations, a multimodal composition, database research, and essay writing and revising. This interactive workshop course expects active participation of students in nearly every class period.

Writing on Science and Society  
WRT 302.02

Safet Dabovic  
MW 5:30-6:50 pm

This course examines the intersection of science, technology, and public policy. Some topics to be discussed will be: pseudoscience; the evolutionary basis of ethics; the need for an armed defense of the environment; cloning and human genetics; the connection between science, funding, and the falsification of data. We will read the following authors: George Orwell, Carl Sagan, Stephen Jay Gould, Sharon Begley, Elizabeth Kolbert, Jared Diamond, Peter Singer, Aldo Leopold, and others.

Fiction Writing  
WRT 302.03

Kevin Clouter  
MW 4:00-5:20 pm

In this course we will concentrate on the reading and writing of fiction; you will have the opportunity to improve your own craft, discuss your peers’ short stories, and learn from contemporary masters such as Junot Díaz, Deborah Eisenberg, and George Saunders. In all of the work, we will examine together what makes a piece of writing worth reading—focusing on issues of voice, character, structure, conflict, rhythm, and syntax. You will be expected to participate actively, complete in-class writing assignments, and present your creative writing for workshop. Writing and thinking about writing is hard work, what Fitzgerald called “the moving about of great secret trunks.” Come to this course ready to move.

Program in Writing and Rhetoric Stony Brook University  
Fall 2015 Advanced Writing Courses

Rhetorical Traditions  
WRT 302.04

Roger Thompson  
TuTh 2:30-3:50 pm

This course is an introduction to the history of rhetoric that highlights its relationship to reading, writing, and speaking in modern contexts. Emphasis will be placed on defining rhetoric—its traditions, forms, and enduring realms of influence. The course provides a foundation in the principles of classical rhetoric that will be explored in order to understand their application to contemporary circumstances. Students will write and revise a series of short essays focused on the application of rhetorical theory to contemporary culture.

Creative Non-fiction  
WRT 302.05

Jennifer Albanese  
TuTh 11:30 am-12:50 pm

In this course we will explore a series of different Creative Non-Fiction sub-genres, including memoir, biography, travel writing, and science writing. In each unit, students will read and explore a series of short essays and excerpts from larger texts in order to analyze and cultivate strategies for their own writing projects. In addition to published work, students will also be exposed to blogs and other Creative Non-Fictional media to consider future opportunities for public writing. Students will be required to write three papers over the course of the semester.

The Personal Essay  
WRT 303.01

Kevin Clouther  
MW 5:30-6:50 pm

In this course we will concentrate on the reading and writing of narrative non-fiction; you will have the opportunity to improve your own craft, discuss your peers' personal essays, and learn from contemporary masters such as Joan Didion, John Jeremiah Sullivan, and David Foster Wallace. In all of the work, we will examine together what makes a piece of writing worth reading—focusing on issues of voice, structure, and language. You will be expected to participate actively, complete in-class writing assignments, and present your creative writing twice for workshop. You will submit at least twenty pages of writing—you may submit a personal statement for application for graduate school—and thoroughly revise one piece.

The Personal Essay  
WRT 303.02

Thomas Tousey  
MWF 11:00-11:53 am

The personal essay is a form that has recently come back into fashion. In this class we will engage the form by writing our own personal essays as well as reading and responding to the work of writers who have come to define the genre: examples include Michel de Montaigne, Charles Lamb and E.B. White, as well as more contemporary writers such as Joan Didion and Scott Russell Sanders. We will explore the differences between shaping experience as truth in a personal essay or memoir and as a work of fiction. As a definition of personal essay evolves, we will consider whether personal writing and essay writing (or "essaying") have a place in academic writing. Students in this class will also be able to prepare a personal statement for their application for graduate or professional school.

The Personal Essay  
WRT 303.03

Cathleen Rowley  
TuTh 11:30 am-12:50 pm

The personal essay has a long literary history and can take many different forms but always tells a story about its author in some way. This course will involve writing personal essays and examining the works of professional writers to use as examples and inspirations. We will read personal essays from the past from writers such as Virginia Woolf and Henry David Thoreau, and more recent examples from writers such as Joan Didion and Richard Rodriguez. We will also consider the new forms the genre of the personal essay has taken in the 21st century. Writing assignments will include journals, short essays, and a longer multimodal final project which will include a digital story. Students in this class will also have the opportunity to prepare a personal statement for their application for graduate or professional school.

The Personal Essay  
WRT 303.04

Jessica Karbowskiak  
TuTh 1:00-2:20 pm

What is the role of personal vision in the University and in your life? This course will explore how you express and define yourself through composing processes. Almost every child loves to write, because children feel the power of creating an identity through writing, but many of us lose that feeling in school. In this course, we will explore the composing of ourselves and our stories in a variety of genres and media, including a digital autobiography or argument suitable for sharing on the Internet. Readings and viewings will include powerful pieces by both known and emerging writers and artists, including Tom Bissell, Cynthia Ozick, Joyce Carol Oates, and Zora Neale Hurston. We will try to be eclectic and look beyond the expected resources for inspiration. Assignments will include several essays and a final project including a multimodal presentation.

Program in Writing and Rhetoric Stony Brook University  
Fall 2015 Advanced Writing Courses

The Personal Essay  
WRT 303.05

Cynthia Davidson  
TuTh 2:30-3:50 pm

In this course, students will study the art and practice of creative nonfiction—in particular, the personal essay. As a writing course, you can expect to do a lot of reading and a lot of writing because these are the two most surefire ways to become a better creative writer. This course will approach creative writing both analytically and aesthetically—that is to say this course will help you develop craft and style in your own writing. The course will roughly be broken up into three aspects: reading and analytical discussions of issues such as truth, memory, and technique; students' own writing of short essays and the revision process; and workshop critique and discussion of peers. Ultimately, students will learn how to begin to shape personal experiences into meaningful and deliberate narrative essays.

Writing for Your Profession  
WRT 304.01

Shyam Sharma  
TuTh 2:30-3:50 pm

Professionals of all kinds consistently attest to the significance of strong writing and communication skills in their field. In fact, a national study shows that about 70% of paid jobs involve writing. This is verified by data from a 2012 survey of over fifty employers of Stony Brook University graduates. So in this course students learn about types of documents, rhetorical principles, and composing practices necessary for writing effectively in and about professional contexts. Coursework emphasizes each student's career interests, but lessons also address a variety of general professional issues, including audience awareness, research methods, ethics, collaboration, and verbal and visual communication. Students complete the course with practical knowledge and experience in composing business letters, proposals, and various kinds of professional reports. A creative, self-reflexive assignment also contextualizes each individual's professional aspirations within a bigger picture of his/her life and culture.

Writing for the Health Professions  
WRT 305.01

Robert Kaplan  
MW 4:00-5:20 pm

This course will enable students interested in a health care career to strengthen their critical writing skills. While learning to gather information and to apply ethical principles in a logical, persuasive fashion, students will explore and write about various types of evidence concerning the health care needs of different populations: a field research project on a health issue affecting a local target population of their choice, a critique of government documents that contain data on that issue and population, and a review of scholarly research on the same issue as it affects the larger national population represented by that local one. Writing assignments will include drafts and final versions of a research proposal, field research results, numerical analysis, literature review final project incorporating all of the previous work conducted about that issue and population. Students will also write a reflective paper which can serve as the basis for a personal statement for medical or other health-related graduate school applications.

Advanced Research Writing  
WRT 380.01

Robert Kaplan  
MW 5:30-6:50 pm

Good research skills are critical to academic success. Most disciplines require writing based upon research, as arguments and explanations make little impact on audiences without effective supporting evidence, drawn from relevant scholarship on the subject. This involves knowing how to use appropriate databases, source materials, and composing processes, as well as negotiating the values, genres, and languages of the scholarly communities in which one is researching. In this course, students will learn fundamentals of research methods, practice these methods in a series of integrated research and writing assignments, and engage in critical reflection about research and writing. Students will focus on an area of disciplinary interest to them, and practice these essential research and writing skills through a series of projects: library assignments, research log, research proposal, annotated bibliography, literature review, abstract, research paper and reflection paper.

\*\*\*All 300 level courses will fulfill the second half of the Writing Pre-Med/Pre-Health prerequisite.

\*\*\*WRT 302 fulfills the University DEC G or SBC HFA+ requirement