

ENGL 1010 025: Seminar in Academic Writing
The Search for Meaningful Work and the Definition of Success
Spring 2018

“What could she do, what ought she to do?”
-George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

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Overview

This course is rooted in the lived practice of academic writing. In it, we will explore how reading and writing transform ways of thinking about and engaging with communities and the world. As a way of engaging in academic work, you will put your experiences and ideas into conversation with texts, your peers, and broader contexts through language. This course is a seminar—consequently, we will be spending the semester collaboratively inquiring about and discovering new locations for thinking, discussion, and writing. You will be contributing to the intellectual work of the university and, in doing so, you will have the opportunity to investigate your own interests through shared readings and materials.

Course Inquiry

What kind of work do we consider meaningful? What sacrifices (if any) are required to find it? How is compensation tied to our level of satisfaction?

The nineteenth century brought with it technological advances that created an unprecedented social mobility. A complication of this was the need to choose an appropriate and advantageous occupation. It is during this time that we began to define ourselves by what we “do” and the resulting anxiety from this shift is still with us today. Through our readings for this course – which will include a mixture of contemporary texts such as excerpts from the work of French philosopher Louis Althusser, Barbara Ehrenreich’s *Nickled and Dimed*, and the movie *Office Space*, among others – we will interrogate the idea of being defined by our chosen careers and explore different notions of “meaningful work.”

Along these lines, we will attempt to understand ideas of success across different cultures to situate ourselves in this discussion. What is “success”? Is it purely financial? Tied to societal expectations? How does our idea of success change as we age? As college students at the beginning your careers you are poised on the edge of these concerns. Through our reading and writing, you will have opportunities to explore the complexities of these issues and to further develop your thinking in this area.

By the end of this course you should have a beginning understanding of what “meaningful work” and “success” mean to you. In addition, as a class we will attempt to answer the question, What are some new ways of envisioning meaningful work and success in the 21st century?

Texts

- *The Academic Writer*, Lisa Ede (4th edition). Bedford/St. Martin’s (2017).
- Other course readings as assigned (available on Husky CT).

Course Rationale

All UConn First-Year Writing courses are a part of a larger curricular ecosystem. The FYW courses provide a key component of UConn’s general education requirements, preparing you for your writing-intensive (“W”) courses and other academic work, and reflect goals and practices common to national standards for college writing. You can learn more about UConn’s FYW courses at the program website and read the program’s letter on our HuskyCT page.

Habits of Mind

A publication called the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, written and adopted by three national organizations dedicated to the teaching of writing, suggests that the following habits of mind are “critical for college success”:

- Curiosity – the desire to know 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.

Our English 1010 course is designed to foster these habits of mind through what the document describes as “writing, reading, and critical analysis experiences.”

Course Outcomes

By the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- Practice writing as an act of inquiry and discovery.
- See yourself as a writer who can enter and contribute to an academic conversation.
- Discover, inhabit, and use the writing of others in ethical and enriching ways.
- Plan your writing as an act of communication to an anticipated reading audience.
- Reflect on and practice various writing processes (including drafting and revision) and genres.
- Demonstrate basic competency with Information Literacy.

Course Components

Participation: This is a seminar rather than a lecture course. Therefore, the class is driven by and centered on your work. Thoughtful discourse is an essential part of this class, and you will frequently work in groups of various sizes, which means you will need to be considerate of and attentive to others. It is your responsibility to keep up with the reading, to contribute to class conversation in the form of analytical comments or questions, to participate thoughtfully in peer review activities, and to attend class regularly and on time (see attendance policy below). You should also expect that your work, along with that of your peers, will be circulated and shared regularly in class.

Reading: Although English 1010 is a writing course, the writing you do here has a very close relationship to reading. In fact, the process of writing begins with careful reading of a situation, a written text, or other media. You will be reading to find ways into the conversation in which an author or text is participating. Many of these texts are multi-layered and complex. *You should expect to read most texts more than once.* You will need to read carefully, reread often, and take careful notes. Come to class prepared to share your thoughts and questions.

Writing: You will complete four major written projects (totaling 30 pages) in this course. In order to accomplish this, you will be doing ample writing along the way, including in-class writing, homework assignments, and drafts of these major projects. Only the final projects will be assigned individual grades, but all of your written work matters here. *Please note that you are not allowed to seek help with your writing outside the classroom, unless it is through the UConn Writing Center. Asking your roommates, friends, etc. for help with your work is not allowed.*

Revision: Each major writing project will go through a drafting process in which you shape your ideas and experiment with ways to best communicate this work. You should expect to put significant time and effort into the revision process and for projects to shift, change, and develop as you revise. **An essay must go through a drafting and revision process in order to be considered for a grade.**

Conferences and Peer Review: Conferences and peer review are integral to the goals of this course. Through the drafting process of each major writing project, we will use small group or individual conferences during, in addition to, or in place of regular class meetings. The quality of your involvement in these processes is a crucial factor in your participation, and thus final grade, in this course.

Information Literacy: English 1010 provides the first stage of the University's Information Literacy Competency, including attention to university research and digital literacy. You should expect to use outside sources and scholarly research to inform your work throughout the semester. While all assignments will provide opportunities for developing Information Literacy skills, we will have at least one assignment built with this specific purpose in mind.

Reflective Component: The reflective portion of the course includes any time spent on characterizing, reconsidering, or qualifying one's work. Often less evaluative than descriptive, reflective writing turns the critical, analytical activity that typifies academic writing back on the writing project itself, addressing questions such as:

- How does this project work?
- What characterizes the approach of this project and the “moves” that it makes?
- What work was entailed in getting to this point?

We will practice reflective writing (and reflective work more generally) throughout the semester, usually in ways that complement formal writing projects by providing opportunities for you to imagine alternatives or trace lines of thought or activity.

HuskyCT: HuskyCT is UConn's online platform for communication and the distribution of class materials. This class will make use of HuskyCT (or Google Docs) for sharing all types of writing and collaborating with each other. It is your responsibility to be familiar with and literate in HuskyCT. You can find support at <https://lms.uconn.edu/>; under "Students," click on "Chat with a Support Representative." This will bring you to a home page of HuskyCT support and contact information. **Please note that you are responsible for keeping up with your UCONN email account.**

Grading and Evaluation

Your final grade will depend on two things: your successful completion of the day-to-day work of the course (including drafts of all major writing assignments) and the quality of your work. The breakdown is as follows:

70% -- Final revisions of four major essays. You *must* complete all four essays to pass this course.

20% -- Class participation, including peer review work.

10% -- Scaffolding assignments, writing journal, special projects.

Because of the collaborative nature of this course, turning in assignments on time is essential. Please be aware that late papers will result in a letter grade being subtracted from your final grade for the assignment. This includes rough drafts as well as final drafts, which means that submitting both a rough draft and a final draft late for an assignment will result in the loss of two letter grades.

Extensions will be granted only in extreme circumstances and only with advanced notice. *Please note that essays submitted online must be in Microsoft Word format (.doc or.docx). This is a free download so no excuses! Essays submitted in other formats will be treated as late papers and will be docked accordingly.*

Course Policies

Integrity and Respect: In this class you may come into contact, and perhaps conflict, with communities whose ideals and perspectives differ radically from your own. This will be interesting and productive, but it may also be uncomfortable, and we will seek to find meaning in those uncomfortable moments. As a class, we will maintain a sympathetic and compassionate outlook and keep an open mind throughout the course.

In accordance with UConn policies and Title IX, this course is a designated safe space for all students, regardless of background, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. If you feel you have experienced discrimination or harassment at UConn, you can find support and resources at the UConn Office of Diversity and Equity. You may also contact Health Services, Counseling & Mental Health Services, and/or the Women's Center. Please note that I am a mandatory reporter to the Office of Diversity & Equity if I become aware of issues that may pose a danger to a student's health or safety. Our conversations can be private, but some information cannot be kept confidential.

Accommodations

It is important to me that all students have the tools and resources necessary to be successful in this course. I have worked to ensure that this class is as accessible as possible for all students, incorporating UDL, multimodal texts, accessible content, and flexible deadlines and schedules. I am

dedicated to meeting any accommodation requests, whether or not you are registered with UConn's Center for Students with Disabilities. I am also always learning, so I encourage you to approach me at any time with suggestions or requests for ways to make this class more accessible.

The Writing Center: The Writing Center employs tutors who work with students on their papers at any stage of the writing process—from brainstorming to reviewing final drafts to helping with specific difficulties. This service is free, and highly recommended for all students. You can sign up for an appointment on the Writing Center website.

Ethical Scholarship: While it is central to our work to study and make use of the ideas and texts of others, this must be done in an ethical and appropriate way. Please review and abide on the University's code on academic misconduct (including plagiarism and misuse of sources), which can be found on the UConn Community Standards website; you will be held responsible for understanding these materials. Plagiarizing the work of others—passing off someone else's work as your own—is a very serious offense, and anyone found plagiarizing will fail the essay or the course. Please let me know if you have questions about what constitutes appropriate use and citation of other people's work.

Multilingual Scholarship: This classroom is a multilingual and translingual space, and we speak and write across languages. I encourage you to speak to me about any concerns you have with language use (reading, speaking, and/or writing) in this course, and I encourage you to be respectful of your colleagues in this multilingual space.

Attendance, Tardiness: Class attendance is important and can affect your grade. You are responsible for work missed as a result of an absence (do not email me asking what you missed in class; I will not respond). Excessive or habitual lateness will be counted as absences. Allowances will be made for religious observances, medical or family emergencies, and mandatory athletic commitments with advanced notice.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Day	Date	Course Notes
1	Monday	01/15/18	No Class -- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
	Wednesday	01/17/18	SNOW DAY
2	Monday	01/22/18	
	Wednesday	01/24/18	Caplan, "The World Might Be Better Off Without College for Everyone" (Husky CT); <i>The Academic Writer</i> , pp. 6-14
3	Monday	01/29/18	
	Wednesday	01/31/18	Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (Husky CT)
4	Monday	02/05/18	Re-read Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (Husky CT)
	Wednesday	02/07/18	<i>Office Space</i> (on reserve in library); Assignment 1a; <i>The Academic Writer</i> , pp. 62-63 and pp. 120-125
5	Monday	02/12/18	Assignment 1b; <i>The Academic Writer</i> , pp. 111-116
	Wednesday	02/14/18	Assignment 1c; Journal Check #1; Rough Draft of Assignment 1 due Thursday, Feb. 15 at 11:59:59pm
6	Monday	02/19/18	<i>The Academic Writer</i> , pp. 287-291
	Wednesday	02/21/18	<i>The Academic Writer</i> , pp. 306-311; Final Draft of Assignment 1 due Friday, Feb. 23 at 11:59:59pm
7	Monday	02/26/18	Barbara Ehrenreich, "Serving in Florida" (Husky CT)
	Wednesday	02/28/18	Ruth Whippman, "Workaholics" (pp.70-100, Husky CT)
8	Monday	03/05/18	Assignment 2a
	Wednesday	03/07/18	Assignment 2b; <i>The Academic Writer</i> , pp. 135-137, pp. 185-186, and pp. 277-283
9	Monday	03/12/18	SPRING BREAK!
	Wednesday	03/14/18	
10	Monday	03/19/18	Assignment 2c
	Wednesday	03/21/18	<i>The Academic Writer</i> , pp. 277-283; Rough Draft for Assignment 2 due Thursday, March 22 at 11:59:59pm
11	Monday	03/26/18	Read and comment on peer papers
	Wednesday	03/28/18	Journal Check #2; Final Draft of Assignment 2 due Friday, March 30 at 11:59:59pm

12	Monday	04/02/18	
	Wednesday	04/04/18	Podcast presentations; <i>The Academic Writer</i> , pp. 67-78

11	Monday	03/26/18	Read and comment on peer papers
	Wednesday	03/28/18	Journal Check #2; Final Draft of Assignment 2 due Friday, March 30 at 11:59:59pm
12	Monday	04/02/18	
	Wednesday	04/04/18	Podcast choices; <i>The Academic Writer</i> , pp. 67-78
13	Monday	04/09/18	Assignment 3a
	Wednesday	04/11/18	Assignment 3b
14	Monday	04/16/18	Assignment 3c
	Wednesday	04/18/18	
15	Monday	04/23/18	Assignment 3 due Tuesday, April 24 at midnight
	Wednesday	04/25/18	

Assignment 4 due: TBA