

# WRITING AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE

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## **WRT 110 Writers on Writing: An Introduction to the Craft and Business of Writing Narratives (1 Credit)**

In a series of seven lectures, writers-creative nonfiction authors, playwrights, novelists, screenwriters, documentarians and short story writers-provide an overview of the practice of creating narratives from specific disciplinary perspectives. Editors, publishers, agents and producers reflect on the publication and production process. Speakers discuss researching, revising, publishing and producing texts and read from their work to provide examples. They also explore questions of style, voice and genre. S/U only. Only meets during the first half of the semester. {A}

**Spring**

## **WRT 118hm Colloquium: Topics in Writing-No, Seriously...What's So Funny? Writing about Humor (4 Credits)**

Nietzsche called maturity the rediscovered seriousness of a child at play. What is the meaning of comedy in light of this "seriousness of the child at play?" Why do people laugh, at what and in what way? How does one distinguish silly comedy from serious comedy? This course examines such questions on comic platforms including film, music, videos, short stories and cartoons. Students explore the "structure" of the comic moment as viewer or listener encounters surprise, transgression or enchantment, especially in 20th-century comedy, and the affectivity of the comic encounter from pure "clowning" to savage social commentary. Enrollment limited to 15. WI

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

## **WRT 118lf Colloquium in Writing: Liberating the Future (4 Credits)**

In the era of rapid climate change, global migration, enormous income disparities driven by capitalism's greed for profit and a pandemic that disproportionately affects Black, Brown and low-income people, the future has become an urgent concern. Although media reports can feel apocalyptic, this concern has also inspired visions of a world free from capitalism, police and injustice. This course delves into innovative, liberating responses to this moment of crisis, including Black feminist lessons from marine mammals and Indigenous peoples' restorative responses to climate change. Our readings foreground African American, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ voices in various nonfiction genres. Enrollment limited to 15. WI

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

## **WRT 118lg Colloquium: Topics in Writing-Language and Gender (4 Credits)**

How people speak – the words they choose, the way they structure their sentences, the pitch of their voices, even their gender while speaking – is constantly judged by those around them. Examining the interaction of gender and language leads to questions, such as how does gender shape the way people use language, how does gender affect others' perceptions of speech (both written and verbal), what variation occurs across cultures with regards to gender and language? This course uses the topic of language and gender to expand upon and improve rhetorical and writing skills. Enrollment limited to 15. WI

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

## **WRT 118nw Colloquium: Topics in Writing-Nature and Wilderness: Science, Meaning and Space (4 Credits)**

The human relationship with nature is one of the most important questions in the world. Are we part of nature? Are we destroying it? Can we save it? Can it save us? And what is nature, anyway? Is it the opposite of "human" or is it the truth at our core? This course delves into these philosophical and practical questions, entering into ongoing conversations in the humanities, science, literature, and activism on topics ranging from the value of "wilderness" to controversies around GMOs and the question of what harm humans may do by "colonizing" uninhabited planets. Enrollment limited to 15. (E) WI

**Fall**

## **WRT 118rw Colloquium: Topics in Writing-Riding the Wave (4 Credits)**

Reading and writing about the women's movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, often called Second Wave Feminism. Readings will include primary documents, secondary sources and statistical data. Writing will include scholarly essays, biography and mixed genres. Regular library research and oral presentations. Enrollment limited to 15. WI

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

## **WRT 118st Colloquium: Topics in Writing-The Art of the Steal: Remixing, Originality and Identity (4 Credits)**

This class explores the contemporary "remix culture" to ask pressing questions about creativity, originality and identity. Students explore the remix as a necessary tool for cultural transformation and look at their own experience of race, gender, sexual orientation, class and ability as an opportunity to reimagine and transform old ideas. Students make a case for the remix as a place for critical updates to the culture and discuss the possibilities of how remixing contributes to a richer production of cultural ideas. The work combines academic writing with multimedia "remix" projects and class discussion. Enrollment limited to 15. WI

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

## **WRT 118wt Colloquium: Topics in Writing-Water:Science & Politics (4 Credits)**

The management of global water resources presents a major challenge for the 21st century. Water defines the boundaries of the livable world. It's crucial for drinking, energy, travel, irrigation and food. But water can also transmit disease, flood homes and spread contamination. Students in this course hone their science-writing skills while exploring contemporary problems related to water. They focus on presenting scientific data, reasoning and controversies in accurate but lively language, while learning and writing about the politics surrounding water use. Sources include scientific research papers, government reports, newspaper articles, and op-ed pieces. May be repeated once for credit with a different instructor. Enrollment limited to 15. WI

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WRT 119Im Colloquium: Writing Roundtable Topics-Language Myths (4 Credits)**

People have all kinds of beliefs about language: Women talk more than men. Sign languages aren't real languages. Texting ruins people's spelling. Termed "linguistic folk beliefs" or "language myths," these beliefs are not informed by linguistic research yet are frequently and widely accepted. They even appear in the media and can perpetuate harmful cultural stereotypes. However, most of them are false. This course uses the writing process to investigate popular language myths. Students explore common language myths, examine past and current linguistic research on these myths and develop a stronger understanding of how language actually works. Restricted to multilingual students, students who are bilingual from childhood or speak/write a language other than English as their first language. Enrollment limited to 15. Instructor permission required. (E) WI

**Spring**

**WRT 119wf Colloquium: Topics Writing Roundtable-What's for Dinner? Writing about Food (4 Credits)**

Michael Pollan writes in *Omnivore's Dilemma* that the U.S. suffers from a "national eating disorder"—that essentially, we don't know what to eat. This course examines that confusion, considering which of the many diets available to us—vegan, slow food, locavore—is truly healthy; what roles ethnicity, gender and class play in our choices; and how pervasive hunger is in the United States. Students read from the spectrum of food writing and hone their own writing in a variety of genres ranging from academic essays to restaurant reviews. Prerequisite: One WI course or permission of the instructor. Enrollment limited to 15. WI

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WRT 135oi/ ENG 135oi Topics: Introduction to Writing Creative Nonfiction-Outside-In: Finding Story Through Shape (4 Credits)**

Offered as ENG 135oi and WRT 135oi. Inspiration is the first question any writer faces. What moves the writer to face the blank page and inspires them to make art out of language? Does a piece of creative nonfiction start with an idea, a question, a story, a sentence? It can be any of those things, but sometimes the most surprising writing comes when one approaches a project a bit sideways, starting not with language or feeling but with shape. This course explores various ways that nonfiction writing can begin with structure—in borrowed forms, as research containers and with deeper structural choices—with reading serving to expand ideas for the possibility of students' own work. This course is also an introduction to the tools and frameworks of the writing class, offering new approaches to generating and refining creative work and building creative community. Prerequisite: One WI course. Enrollment limited to 16. (E)

**Spring**

**WRT 135pt/ ENG 135pt Topics: Introduction to Writing Creative Nonfiction-Writing about Travel, Place and Time (4 Credits)**

Writing and reading assignments in this creative nonfiction course will draw from the linked themes of place and travel. You don't have to be a seasoned traveler to join the course; you can write about any place at all, including home. We'll also use the Smith campus and Northampton to create travel narratives, and will often work with images and creative walking exercises ("performance writing") in our assignments. You should be prepared to write frequently in class and out, read well, participate in class discussion, and be ready to explore your world with new eyes. Prerequisite: One WI course. Enrollment limited to 16.

**Spring, Variable**

**WRT 135wp/ ENG 135wp Topics: Introduction to Writing Creative Nonfiction-Writing in Words and Pictures (4 Credits)**

Offered as ENG 135wp and WRT 135wp. In the 20th century, as literacy rates rose, images disappeared from literature. Pictures were relegated to children's books; only words were fit for adults. But the situation is changing. The internet and new printing technologies have allowed serious stories to again be told with words and images. This course examines creative nonfiction in graphic novels, hybrid and artist's books, art labels, zines, digital platforms and more. Students need not be an artist to take this class! Students create word-image memoirs and research-based essays using photos, photocopies, digital images and hand-drawn art. This is a writing course with a visual twist. Prerequisite: One WI course. Enrollment limited to 16.

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WRT 135ws/ ENG 135ws Topics: Introduction to Writing Creative Nonfiction-Writing about the Senses (4 Credits)**

Offered as ENG 135ws and WRT 135ws. Sight, sound, touch, smell, taste: Everything humans know is reached through their senses. Humans share a world filtered through a million sensibilities - finding the words to convey what is heard, seen, smelled, tasted and felt is one of the most fundamental skills a writer can develop. In this class, students hone their descriptive powers to go beyond the obvious and uncover language that delights and surprises. Students learn to use one sense to write about another, combine them in powerful metaphors and explore how senses shape the narratives that drive us. Prerequisite: One WI course. Enrollment limited to 16.

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WRT 136/ ENG 136 Journalism: Principles and Practice (4 Credits)**

Offered as WRT 136 and ENG 136. In this intellectually rigorous writing class, students learn how to craft compelling "true stories" using the journalist's tools. They research, report, write, revise, source and share their work—and, through interviewing subjects firsthand, understand how other people see the world. The course considers multiple styles and mediums of journalism, including digital storytelling. Students should focus their attention and effort on academic exposition and argumentation before learning other forms of writing. Prerequisite: One WI course. Enrollment limited to 16.

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WRT 145 Process, Prose and Pedagogy (1 Credit)**

This class will help students become effective peer writing tutors. They will explore the theoretical and practical relationships among writing, learning and thinking by reading in the fields of composition studies, rhetoric, literacy studies, cognitive psychology and education. After completing the course, they will have gained the skills necessary for helping others with writing: they will learn to draw on pedagogical techniques; become aware of the diverse ways in which other students write, learn and think; and have a broader understanding of the conventions and expectations for writing in a range of disciplines. S/U only. Instructor permission required.

**Fall**

**WRT 291 Colloquium: Lakes Writing Workshop (4 Credits)**

Topics Course. An intermediate-level workshop in which writers develop their skills through intensive reading, writing, revising, and critique. Topic changes annually. Emphasis on narrative writing, broadly defined to include a variety of genres, depending on the interests of the current holder of the Lakes writing residency. Enrollment limited to 12. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WRT 291wb Topics: Lakes Writing Workshop- Writing, Because (4 Credits)**

The world we inhabit is volatile, contingent, unsettled. Many of the hegemonic certitudes and convictions we took for granted (or were resigned to accept) have been overturned or are under erasure. In the wake of such radical change, how do we process and write the present? How can we create vivid documents of contemporary life that will resonate across cultural, spatial and temporal limits? Participants will engage these questions in a series of think pieces and conversations organized around essays by paradigmatic and heterodox writers. A selection of these writers will also give talks either in person, or via Zoom. Enrollment limited to 12. Instructor permission required. {L}

**Spring**

**WRT 350/ JNX 350 Journalism in the Field (4 Credits)**

This course provides students an opportunity to produce an extended reported project while exploring and critiquing contemporary forces shaping the media landscape. Required for senior journalism concentrators and open to all juniors and seniors, this course allows students to synthesize their previous journalistic experience. Students investigate contemporary journalism and methods and how these themes might influence their rhetorical, practical and ethical choices for their work in progress. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required.

**Annually**