

WRITING AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE

WRT 101 Writing for Impact: Transforming Academic Writing for a Public Audience (1 Credit)

This course explores the transformative process of converting prior academic research papers into engaging articles tailored for a general audience. By analyzing nuances in structure, voice and rhetorical devices, students understand the art of making complex ideas accessible and compelling. With an emphasis on real-world application, students learn to strategically position their work for specific publications or contests. Interactive group workshops provide a platform for constructive feedback, allowing for iterative refinement and experimentation. The course culminates in students crafting professional cover letters and submitting their creative work. S/U only. Enrollment limited to 15. (E) Interterm

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 118ap Colloquium: Topics in Writing-Abolishing Prisons and Police (4 Credits)

As instruments of white supremacy, police and prisons disproportionately target Black and Brown people. The abolition movement, which gained more mainstream support after the 2020 George Floyd protests, demands to defund and ultimately abolish prisons and police, instead investing in communities to eliminate the conditions that lead to violence. But abolition is primarily about building, not just dismantling. It offers a vision of a liberated world in which everyone can thrive and justice does not equal punishment. Readings foreground the voices of Black and LGBTQ + writers and serve as a departure point for the students' own writing. Restrictions: WRT 118 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 15. (E) WI

Fall, Spring, Variable

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. Restrictions: WRT 118 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 15. WI

Fall, Spring, Variable

WRT 118lf Colloquium: Topics 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. Restrictions: WRT 118 may be repeated once with a different topic. 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. Restrictions: WRT 118 may be repeated once with a different topic. 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 humans part of nature? Are humans destroying it? Can humans save it? Can nature save humanity? And what is nature, anyway? Is it the opposite of "human" or is it the truth at the core of humanity? 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. Restrictions: WRT 118 may be repeated once with a different topic. 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 include primary documents, secondary sources and statistical data. Writing includes scholarly essays, biography and mixed genres. Regular library research and oral presentations. Restrictions: WRT 118 may be repeated once with a different topic. 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. Restrictions: WRT 118 may be repeated once with a different topic. 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. Restrictions: WRT 118 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 15. WI

Fall, Spring, Variable

WRT 119lm 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. Designed for multilingual students, students who are bilingual from childhood or speak/write a language other than English as their first language. Enrollment limited to 15. (E) WI

Spring

WRT 119lp Colloquium: Writing Roundtable Topics-Language and Power (4 Credits)

The power of language is evident everywhere in our lives. This course examines language and power in three areas: politics, media, and art. In this course, students write a variety of essays on these topics, read both academic and popular pieces, and visit the Smith College Museum of Art. Students hone the writing skills developed in a previous WI course, focusing on refining and developing personal style and voice; exploring other genres, especially those involving public discourse; and expanding upon and improving rhetorical and organizational skills. This course is designed for multilingual writers, including non-native speakers of English and bilinguals. Restrictions: First-years and sophomores only. Enrollment limited to 15. (E) WI

Spring, Variable

WRT 119rp Colloquium: Writing Roundtable Topics-Restoring the Planet (4 Credits)

Climate change affects everyone, but Black, Indigenous, and low-income populations are especially vulnerable to its impact. These populations have also led the efforts to combat climate change by protesting capitalist extraction, building food sovereignty and leading ecological restoration projects. This course centers Indigenous and Black climate action, especially efforts to restore traditional, anti-capitalist and decolonial practices of land and water stewardship, fishing and farming. This course includes visits to the Smith College Art Museum, the Botanic Garden, the Boutelle-Day Poetry Center and the MacLeish Field Station. Prerequisite: One writing intensive course. Enrollment limited to 15. (E) WI

Fall, Spring, Variable

WRT 119wf Colloquium: Writing Roundtable Topics-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.

Enrollment limited to 15. WI

Spring

WRT 132 Public Speaking: Presentation of Self, Rhetorical Choices and Agency (4 Credits)

History attests that powerful speeches can mobilize a generation, start and end wars, sway elections, elevate ideals—in other words, generally bring about social change. This course covers the process of oral argumentation: picking and researching a topic, staking a position, writing scripts and delivering speeches. Students develop their writing, verbal and nonverbal communications skills, ability to present to an audience and ability to adapt to different speaking contexts. The course aims to help students cultivate their unique voices in the public speaking challenges they face in their academic and professional careers.

Enrollment limited to 16.

Fall, Spring, Variable

WRT 135ar/ ENG 135ar Topics: Introduction to Writing Creative Nonfiction-Writing about the Arts (4 Credits)

Offered as ENG 135ar and WRT 135ar. Students write true stories about art, music, theater, film and dance that read like a novel. Writing assignments include a profile of an artist or performer, a review of a performance or an exhibit, and a personal essay exploring how a work of art, theater or music influenced the author. The essays read like fiction, relying on character, pacing, scenes, structure and sensory details. Unlike fiction, these stories are based on facts gathered through research, observation and interviews. The course offers tools and an approach to writing to help students develop a writing process that works for them. Restrictions: ENG 135/ WRT 135 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 16. (E)

Spring

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

Offered as ENG 135pt and WRT 135pt. Writing and reading assignments in this creative nonfiction course draw from the linked themes of place and travel. Students need not be a seasoned traveler to join the course; they can write about any place at all, including home. The class also uses the Smith campus and Northampton to create travel narratives and works with images and creative walking exercises ("performance writing"). Students should be prepared to write frequently in class and out, read well, participate in class discussion and be ready to explore the world with new eyes. Prerequisite: One WI course. Restrictions: ENG 135/ WRT 135 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 16. **Spring**

WRT 135ss/ ENG 135ss Topics: Introduction to Writing Creative Nonfiction-Writing about Scenes, Subcultures, and Antiheroes (4 Credits)

Offered as ENG 135ss and WRT 135ss. Take a deep-dive into the shadow worlds of subculture, from die-hard fandoms to underground punk scenes, sports leagues to subversive movements. One way or another, everyone participates in lesserknown corners of society where values, lexicons, and heroes diverge from the mainstream. Diverse readings and multimedia illuminate these subcultures through essays, zines, memoir, film, and classics of the creative nonfiction form. Students conduct creative research as they unearth the weird, wonderful details of subcultures and translate them to the page, culminating in a personal essay, a profile, and a researched essay on a subculture of each student's choosing. Prerequisites: one WI course. Restrictions: ENG 135/ WRT 135 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 16. (E) {A}

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. Restrictions: ENG 135/ WRT 135 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 16.

Spring

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. Restrictions: ENG 135/ WRT 135 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 16.

Spring

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. 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 212 Writing Reality: Journalism in the Age of Donald Trump and Fake News (4 Credits)

How should the media cover Donald Trump? How did the Internet, the 24-hour news cycle and polarization change the nature of journalism and lead to an era of "Fake News" accusations in which Americans exposed to different sources came away with different facts? This class studies the impact and consequences of today's digital and partisan media – how to consume it and how to write for it. What is truth? What happens to democracy when Americans can't agree on facts? Against the backdrop of the 2024 campaign, students examine how journalism arrived here and where it goes next. Enrollment limited to 25. (E) {S}

Fall

WRT 291 Colloquium: Topics: 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 350/ JNX 350 Seminar: Journalism in the Field (4 Credits)

Offered as JNX 350 and WRT 350. 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. This course serves as the Journalism concentration capstone. Restrictions: Juniors and seniors only. Enrollment limited to 12. Instructor permission required.

Spring

WRT 400 Special Studies (1-4 Credits)

Normally open to juniors and seniors only. Written project description required. Instructor permission required.

Fall, Spring