

**English 225: College Writing**  
Winter 2014  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-4:00

**Contact Information**

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**Overview**

**Course Description**

In this section of 225, we will use the basic principles of rhetoric to analyze and build arguments for a variety of academic audiences and/or disciplines. We will explore how arguments are shaped in a variety of disciplines, and we will create our own arguments in the disciplines and fields that matter most to us. We will consider how audience, language, and genre function in various rhetorical situations as we learn to analyze and create effective arguments in your academic concentration(s) in a variety of genres and media.

English 225 focuses on examining and employing effective academic argumentation, which refers to the presentation, explanation, and assessment of claims using audience-appropriate evidence and writing conventions. This course builds on and refines skills from introductory courses like English 124 and 125 and provides a basic introduction to finding and effectively incorporating research into your writing for a range of future contexts and purposes.

**Student Learning Goals**

In English 225, students will learn the following:

- To hone mechanics, attention to language and audience, style, and craft in students' academic writing.
- To develop a critical understanding of some key practices and examples of academic argumentation.
- To develop an awareness of different rhetorical approaches in academic writing and to practice these approaches.
- To develop a working set of skills and resources for academic research projects, including the distinction between primary and secondary sources, and an understanding of how to begin, carry out, and complete a (short) writing assignment incorporating research.
- To develop an awareness of the rigors and potential pleasures entailed in reading about, discussing, researching, and writing about pertinent issues in academic contexts.

**Required Text**

Course readings will be posted on CTools. You are expected to have access to the readings every class session, whether you choose to read them electronically or print them and bring a hard copy.

**Course Grading:**

English 225 is graded on an A through F scale:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	83-86.9%
B-	80-82.9%

C+	77-79.9%
C	73-76.9%
C-	70-72.9%
D	60-70%
F	Less than 60%

**Writing Assignments:**

\*You will receive a detailed written assignment for each major assignment, including the grading criteria, prior to the due date. All page requirements exclude Works Cited and graphs/figures/tables.

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Paper 1—Rhetorical Analysis (5-7 pgs)	175	2/7/14
Paper 2—Exploration of Academic Discourse Communities (5-6 pgs)	125	2/28/14
Paper 3—Lit Review (5-6 pgs)	150	3/21/14
Paper 4—Researched Academic Argument (8-10 pgs or new media equivalent)	200	4/11/14
What is Academic Argumentation Reflection (4 pgs)	50	4/21/14
Homework/Process Pieces	75	Ongoing
Workshops and peer reviews	75	Ongoing
Participation	100	Ongoing
Disciplinary Features Presentation (group project)	50	1/29/14
<b>Total Number of Points</b>	1000 points	

**Late work policy:** All work in this course must be turned in on time to receive credit. The drafts and assignments you complete are an important component of class meetings and group assignments, so it is crucial that you turn in your work promptly. Because I recognize that sometimes there are circumstances beyond our control, I allow one “life happens” extension on final drafts. This extension allows an additional five calendar days to complete the assignment. There’s no need to tell me why you are using it—it is your responsibility to use your extension wisely. As a courtesy, I would appreciate prior notice if you know in advance you will need to use this extension. You may not use this extension on the final assignment.

**\*\*It is your responsibility to ensure that assignments are submitted to me on time.\*\***

**Attendance and participation policy:** It is vital that you attend all course meetings, as the work we do in class will help you successfully complete your assignments. If you know in advance that you will miss class (e.g. religious holidays and officially representing the University in various events), please let me know so I can help you know what you need to complete your assignments for that class meeting. If you have an emergency or are ill, please let me know as soon as possible, so I can help you stay caught up with your assignments. *If you miss more than two classes this term, excluding documented illnesses, religious holidays, or representing the University in athletic or other events; your final grade will be lowered by one-third of a letter grade for each additional absence. Five absences can result in failing the course. Two tardies will count as one absence.*

**Participation:** We will engage in a variety of activities this term. Please come to class prepared to discuss all readings and drafts, and ready to participate as individuals, small groups, and as a

whole class in activities and discussions. Your participation grade will be based on your preparation for, and participation in, class and group activities.

I am here to help you, and there is nothing I want more than to see my students be successful. If you are struggling with an assignment, email me or come see me during my office hours. Don't drown!

### **Assignments:**

#### *Major Writing Assignments*

We will complete four major writing assignments this term, each of which will involve multiple drafts with lots of opportunity for feedback and revision. I will give out detailed assignment handouts for each of these projects.

#### *Disciplinary Writing Presentation*

To help yourself (and your classmates) better understand the specific features of writing in your discipline/concentration, you will give a 12-15 minute (plus time for your classmates to ask questions) group presentation in class. This needs to be a polished, prepared, researched presentation and you will be required to provide a handout for the class.

#### *Discourse Community Reflection*

This final assignment will be an opportunity for you to reflect on the kinds of arguments that are effective in your discourse community, and how you might take the information that we've gathered throughout the semester into your Upper-Level Writing Requirement course(s) and other academic and professional contexts. This assignment can be completed in a media appropriate for your discipline/discourse communities.

#### *Other Assignments*

Throughout the semester, you will be required to complete smaller writing assignments as part of the writing process. These small assignments are designed to "scaffold" the larger project, which means they form foundational knowledge and skills that will help you be successful in your major projects. Please remember that these assignments are important and will contribute to your final grade.

#### *Workshops and Conferences*

Writing workshops are an excellent way to refine your skills. We will workshop and peer review your drafts, both in small groups (in and out of class) and as a whole class. We will use these workshops as an opportunity to learn to give effective feedback—a skill you will use in both the academic and professional worlds. You will be assigned to a peer-editing group at the beginning of the semester, and your work with this group and in our workshops will be calculated as part of your final grade in the course. I will explain how the workshopping/peer editing process will work during the first week of class.

You will also be required to attend two mandatory conferences during the semester. Missing (or being late for) these conferences will count as an absence and will affect your grade.

### *Readings*

As my 7<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher once wisely told me, “Readers write, and writers read.” Readings for this course will be primarily found in the articles you research for your projects and in your classmates’ drafts. We will also have some common class readings. Regardless, you will be expected to come to class having completed the reading assignment and any companion tasks and ready to participate in class discussions. You will be asked to bring hard copies of your readings and/or drafts on occasion.

## **Other Notes**

### *Communication*

I will communicate with you using your University of Michigan email. Please check it often! I am here to be a resource for you, so please do not hesitate to contact me via email with specific questions or concerns about assignments or the class in general. Make sure you allot at least 24 hours for my response.

I do not give feedback on full drafts via email, but please do bring them to me in my office hours. If you have a specific question about a small section, or a mechanical issue you’re unsure about, I’m happy to address that in email. Please copy and paste no more than a paragraph into the body of your email, along with your *specific* question. I would advise you to make generous use of my office hours. Don’t wait until you have a problem—come see me early and often! Many times, a conversation with me can save you hours of work and frustration. If my regular office hours don’t work for you, send me an email and we can make an appointment.

### *Formatting*

The style and formatting for each of your assignments will be specified in the assignment prompt. You are expected to abide by these guidelines. Save a tree and print double-sided, if you can.

### *Revision*

The hallmark of a good writer is the willingness to revise, revise, revise! The time constraints of the semester do not allow us to revise as often as I think preferable, so I offer you a chance to revise any (and all) of your final drafts. If you would like to take advantage of this policy, email me within 24 hours of receiving back your graded final draft and I will send you the revision requirements and deadline for your revised draft. I will re-grade *complete* revision assignments.

### *Plagiarism*

The University of Michigan defines plagiarism as “Submitting a piece of work (for example, an essay, research paper, work of art, assignment, laboratory report) which in part or in whole is not entirely the student’s own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.”

Basically, all of the work you submit for this course must be your own, original work. If you use an idea from a source for a paper, great! Cite it. If you aren’t sure whether you need to cite a source, or if you think you may be relying too heavily on a source, come see me. I’ll help you figure it out. If you commit an act of academic dishonesty, you will fail the assignment and most

likely the entire course. I will report the infraction to the academic dean and the English Department.

For more on the Department of English's plagiarism policy, [click here](#).

#### *Classroom Conduct*

Your grades in this course will reflect your efforts, not any opinions you may express. While I encourage an open exchange of ideas, in accordance with the University of Michigan's policy and to foster a classroom culture of respect, I will not tolerate any discriminatory language or behavior in my classroom.

#### *Use of Technology*

In order to foster a present and engaged community, all cell phone, iPods, and other personal electronic devices need to be turned off and put away during class time. Laptops and tablets will be permissible during certain activities, but non-class related activities (i.e. checking email, Facebook, or doing work for other classes) are not acceptable. I will advise you in advance when laptops are permissible. They are certainly not required for class.

#### *Accommodations*

If you are entitled to disability accommodations, please contact me via email as soon as possible. I am eager to help you in any way I can, and I will protect your confidentiality. I work with the Office for Students with Disabilities (SSD), and if you have not already contacted them, I suggest you do so as quickly as possible. Please email me before the second week of class if you would like to schedule a confidential meeting with me to go over your letter of approved accommodations from SSD.

### **Resources and Helpful Hints**

#### *Sweetland Center for Writing*

The peer tutors and faculty at the Sweetland Center for Writing offer free tutoring and workshops. I would strongly recommend that you take advantage of this resource! Faculty workshops are limited to one 30-minute session per week, and peer tutoring is available as often as you need it.

#### *University of Michigan Library*

U-M's vast resources are an essential part of this course. I particularly recommend seeking the assistance of the librarians, either in person in the Shapiro Undergraduate Library at the Help Desk on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, or online through their instant message service. For this course, speaking with a subject area librarian on your topic of interest could be a very productive use of your time.

#### *OWL*

The Purdue OWL offers many free writing resources. Their style guides and citation examples are very helpful. (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/679/01/>)

## Project One: Rhetorical Analysis of Academic Writing

**Rough Draft due:** January 17, 2014

**Peer Review:** January 22, 2014

**Final draft due:** January 31, 2014

**Length:** 5-7 pages, 1.5 spaced

**Documentation style:** style appropriate for your discipline (see Style Analysis assignment)

**Possible Points:** 150

**Topic:** An article of your choice, from the natural sciences, the social sciences, or the humanities.

**Purpose:** The general goal of this assignment is two-fold:

- (1) to gain an understanding of the distinctive features of writing in the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities; and
- (2) to begin to develop the rhetorical analysis skills that will help you recognize the distinctive features of other kinds of writing as well – writing you’ll need to do in the university and in other contexts.

In other words, your goal is to help your audience understand what they might expect from writing in your discipline, and how your article represents that writing.

**Task:** You will research and select **one** article and perform a detailed analysis of its rhetorical features. Think of this rhetorical analysis as a readers’ guide to your article. In your analysis, you’ll describe **how** this article is constructed, and explain **why** it is constructed that way. Since you (most likely) are the “expert” in this discourse community, you will need to make a clear argument about which discipline your article represents, and which of its features lead you to your conclusions. Also, you’ll give a sense of the “Big Picture”—what are the important values of the discipline it represents?

Make sure you consider how these features differ from those of the other disciplines we discuss. As you address this last point, you may include information that we discuss in class; nonetheless, you will need to go beyond reiteration of your class notes in your paper – see what *you* can contribute to a full understanding of the discipline-specific rhetoric you are be analyzing.

**Audience:** Your analysis should be written for an academic audience of fellow undergraduate students, who, like you, are exploring the conventions of academic writing in the disciplines.

**Scope and Organization:** Your *introduction* can serve a couple of functions in this paper:

- summarizing the significant features of writing in the discipline and then move into your analysis of your article (as a specific example of the features that you have identified).  
OR
- you could begin by summarizing your article (which you would need to identify as a natural science, social science or humanities text) and then use your analysis of the article to identify the significant features of writing in the discipline.

**In either case, you will need to briefly summarize your article and specify its title, author, and year of publication when you first introduce it. Your *thesis* should identify your approach.**

In your supporting paragraphs, you'll compare:

- Way(s) your article's content fits with the general focus of the discipline
- The nature of the article's...
  - argument (claims and support)
  - organization
  - style
- Reasons your article is shaped the way that it is (what values of writing in the discipline shape this article?)
- And finally, how these values distinguish writing in the discipline from writing in the other disciplines

In your *conclusion*, reflect a bit on what you have found. What contribution could each discipline make to a full understanding of the topic your article addresses? Or, if you prefer, explain how analyzing the differences between writing in the disciplines has changed the way you view writing and how you feel the knowledge you acquired could benefit your own writing in the future. The conclusion is a good place to “step back” and discuss some of the important values of the discipline this article represents.

**Evaluative Criteria:** Your goal is to analyze your article – not to evaluate or respond to it, or to summarize excessively. An excellent analysis will move beyond the points we discuss in class, incorporating unique observations based on the article being analyzed. Each paragraph in the body of your paper must be designed to prove a specific point about your article or about writing in the discipline. **You will need to use specific examples from your article (whether quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) in order to support your claims.** Papers that fail to incorporate sufficient evidence will not receive a passing grade.

## **Project 2: Exploration of Academic Discourse Communities**

**Rough Draft due:** February 19, 2014

**Peer Review due:** February 24, 2014 (in class)

**Final Draft due:** February 28, 2014 (11:59 p.m.)

**Length:** 4-6 pages, 1.5 spaced

**Documentation style:** Style appropriate for your discipline

**Possible points:** 150

**Topic:** An academic discourse community of your choice

**Purpose:**

- To gain an understanding of the distinctive features of writing in the disciplines
- To understand the hallmarks of academic discourse communities and the kinds of knowledge and writings they produce
- To identify as a member of an academic discourse community, and to analyze what that identification means to your experiences as a student and as a writer.

In other words, your purpose is to make an argument that a particular community is an academic discourse community, analyze the kind of knowledge and texts that this discourse produces, and to explore how you “fit” as a member of this community.

**Audience:** You decide. Who would be an appropriate audience for a paper of this nature? Make sure you keep that audience at the forefront of your mind as you’re drafting. You should be able to clearly explain who your audience is and how your rhetorical choices appeal to that audience.

**Task (and evaluative criteria):** Choose an academic discourse community (we’ll talk more in class about what this means and what communities you might consider) and make a two-pronged argument—first, that this community is, in fact, a discourse community according to Swales’ six requirements; and second, that you are a member of this discourse community (also using Swales’ requirements). Support your assertions with specific evidence, which you may draw from scholarly articles, course documents, your own writing, conversations with scholars in the field (professors, GSIs, etc), or other appropriate evidence. You should use this argument to draw some conclusions about what this discourse community values and how that influences you as a student and novice within the discipline.

An excellent paper will move beyond the points we discuss in class, incorporating unique observations about the discourse communities we discuss in class and your roles in them. Each paragraph in the paper will be designed to prove a specific point about this discourse community. **You will need to use specific evidence to support your claim.**

**Short Assignments:** You will complete several short assignments for class. These assignments will prepared you to write this paper, so you need to do your best work on them.

### Project 3: Literature Review

**Rough Draft Due:** Wednesday, March 19, by class time

**Peer Review:** Monday, March 24

**Final Draft Due:** Friday, March 28 by midnight

**Length:** 5-6 pages, 1.5 spaced with 1" margins

**Documentation Style:** style appropriate for the discipline in which you are writing

**Possible Points:** 150

**Topic:** A topic of your choice, but one you are interested enough in to write on for the next two assignments. The review of literature you write for this assignment will provide critical background, allowing you to present a highly informed and relevant researched persuasive argument in your next assignment.

**Genre:** A review of literature (lit review), is one of the first stages of a significant research project. You may see this genre in the scholarly articles and books you read for class. In a lit review, the writer surveys the state of knowledge on a topic within an academic discourse community (or across multiple discourse communities). The lit review seeks to answer the question “What is the state of knowledge on this topic?”

**Purpose:** The goal of this assignment is to develop and deepen expertise on your chosen topic. You will accomplish this goal by surveying the conversations surrounding a topic by accredited scholars and researchers, and synthesizing and analyzing this conversation in such a way that the reader understands what research has already been undertaken and what answers have been established for your topic as a result of this research. Your further purpose is to identify what questions remain and what work still needs to be done.

In addition to deepening your knowledge of this topic, writing a lit review lets you develop and demonstrate three fundamental academic skills: **Research, Analysis, and Synthesis**.

- (1) **Research:** The ability to find existing knowledge by scanning the literature efficiently using the databases common to scholars in the university and the ability to identify a set of useful sources.
- (2) **Analysis:** The ability to identify significant findings or conclusions in the published literature on your topic.
- (3) **Synthesis:** The ability to articulate connections, patterns, common themes and areas of disagreement within a range of studies.

**Audience:** Your review should be written for an academic audience (students and professors) interested in seeing the broad trends in research on your topic.

**Scope and Organization:** Careful research, analysis and synthesis will help you construct a review article that does the following:

- Identifies overall trends in what has been published about your topic.
- Combines results into an explanation of what *is* and *is not* known about your topic.
- Identifies areas of controversy in the literature on your topic.

-Formulates questions that need further research by identifying a single problem or new perspective that emerges from your review.

**Evaluative Criteria:** You will be evaluated based on the level to which you fulfill the requirements of this assignment as stated on the assignment sheet. In addition, pay special attention to: identifying and analyzing relationships among the scholarly articles you review and maintaining an objective stance (make sure that you do not evaluate how good or bad your sources are, but instead focus on how similar or different they may be).

**Selecting Articles:** The articles you select for your review need to be academically reputable. We will discuss criteria for evaluating sources in class, and you should use these criteria to select each of your sources for this paper. In order to be reasonably comprehensive but still manageable, your review should draw on **no fewer than four sources, and no more than eight sources**. In addition, your sources should be fairly substantive and current; thus **you should not include among your sources any articles shorter than four pages or more than eight years old.**

Because the literature review is limited to academic sources, **web sites are not valid sources** for this assignment. Instead, you will have to rely on the databases available through the UM Libraries website.

If you have difficulty finding scholarly sources, you can meet with me during my office hours or consult a reference librarian for help. I *highly* recommend you visit a librarian, just make sure you take this assignment sheet with you!

## Project 4: Researched Persuasive Argument

**Rough Draft Due:** Friday, April 4 by noon

**Peer Review:** Monday, April 7

**Final Draft Due:** Friday, April 11, by midnight

**Length:** 8-10 pages, 1.5 spaced with 1" margins or the “new media equivalent” (which means that you can come talk to me about how to best make an argument of this depth in another medium)

**Documentation Style:** style appropriate for the discipline in which you are writing

**Possible Points:** 200

**Topic:** The same one you wrote about in your Lit Review (Project 3). Now that you have a clear sense of the research that has been done on this issue and the scholarly conversation surrounding it, you will take a stance that you believe is substantiated by what the research demonstrates about this issue/topic.

**Purpose:** This assignment asks you to draw on scholarly sources (and perhaps other sources/evidence) to make a persuasive argument about your topic from Project 3. Your goal in this assignment is to prod your audience into some kind of change—a change in their stance on the issue, a change in their behavior, or perhaps just a change in their willingness to entertain your perspective.

In order to successfully complete this assignment, you will need to draw on the skills and understandings you have developed throughout this course. We will discuss and reflect on this knowledge and these skills in class together.

Your main goal with this project is to go beyond a simple analysis of texts and contribute to the conversation around this issue in the discourse community you are choosing to enter. This may mean that your project is not a traditional “paper.” For this assignment, you need to think about how to successfully/effectively make your argument for this particular audience. You may find that your audience wouldn’t be persuaded by a formal academic paper, but a podcast/blog/video/news article/presentation would be more effective. Great! Let’s think about how you can use the research you’ve done to make your argument successful. We’ll be talking quite a bit about this in class.

**Audience:** Your audience for this project should be individuals within the discourse community whose conversation you are entering. This audience may include people with specialized and non-specialized knowledge who have either not made their minds up about this topic/issue, or who disagree with your stance. Think carefully about how to meet this audience’s needs using ethos and logos. We’ll discuss these issues in class in more detail.

**Scope and Organization:** The organization of this project will largely be determined by the rhetorical strategies you choose to employ. What presentation of information will be most persuasive for your specific audience? It will be up to you to determine the best way to present your argument to your readers (this is not a genre with a set organizational structure).

**Evaluative Criteria:** You will be evaluated based on the level to which you fulfill the requirements of this assignment as stated on the assignment sheet (especially including the helpful hint below).

**Helpful Hint from Sarah:** Though this assignment may be called a “research paper,” you need to make sure that the focus of your project is on your own ideas, not on the research itself. Remember, you’ve already demonstrated (in Project 3) that you know the research. This is your opportunity to make your own argument, to enter into the conversation within your discourse community—not to restate what conversation has already happened.