

WRITING STUDIES 1201: WRITING STUDIO

Instructor: Chelene Dorn, PhD

Email: dorn002@umn.edu (best contact for questions & appointments)

Phone: 612-624-6507

Office Hours: By appointment

Class sessions: 303 Lind Hall, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, 2:30 - 3:30

[Moodle site](#)

I believe unconditionally in the
ability of the people to respond
when they are told the truth.
We need to be taught to study
rather than to believe, to inquire
rather than affirm.

– Septima Clark



Photograph of Septima Clark, ca. 1960
Courtesy of the Avery Research Center.

Syllabus Table of Contents

[Course Overview](#)

[Student Learning Aims](#)

[Texts](#)

[Assignments](#)

[Grading](#)

[Basic Course Guidelines](#)

[Classroom Climate](#)

Course Overview

WRITING 1201 introduces students to general writing strategies encountered at the college level. Through frequent practice and feedback, students learn to see writing as a tool for learning and a vehicle for expression of ideas and informed views. Students also learn a working vocabulary for discussing writing.

As part of this process, you will compose a number of short papers asking you to reflect on learning and life, personal and public. Throughout the term, assignments will call for a combination of consistent individual work and interaction with peers. Assignments will emphasize writing as a process in which writers make use of readings, preliminary writings, and interpersonal communication strategies (peer responses, and student-teacher conferences) to develop and polish public essays and academic papers.

All of this means that the class is structured around writing activities, discussion of reading and writing, and group work of various kinds. Students need to be active participants in this course, and help insure the success of the course for all by making appreciative, inquiring contributions to activities, assignments, and discussion. Open hearts, open eyes, open minds and openness to delving into already written texts and into your own writing to discover what you actually do think about life and learning – these are core attitudes and elements of this writing course. At times, you'll find yourself struggling to understand, feeling the risk of learning and experiencing the "coming to understand ideas" process as uncomfortable. This is learning.

Student Learning Aims

At the successful conclusion of WRIT 1201, students will have learned to:

- Recognize the contexts and requirements of academic writing tasks:
- Develop a process of writing:
- Practice mindful habits of research and study
- Function as an ethical, appreciative writer and reader of writing

Texts

1. Anson, Chris, Robert Schwegler, and Marcia F. Muth. *The Longman Writer's Companion*. 4th edition. University of Minnesota edition. New York: Longman, 2007. (Available at the University Bookstore)
2. Strunk, William, and Elwyn Brooks White. "The elements of style." *Boston: Allyn & Bacon* (1979).

3. Elbow, Peter. *Writing with power: Techniques for mastering the writing process*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Assignments

1. Portfolio 1: Short writes: 10% / due Sep 29, 4-5 pages total
2. Portfolio 2: Personal essay: 15% / due Oct 24, 4 pages
3. Portfolio 3: Researched persuasion: 25% / due Nov 24, 4-5 pages
4. Portfolio 4: Documented essay: 20% / due Dec 10, 4 pages

Grading

Major Papers

Grades will be given only on final drafts and will be a letter grade (an A+ = 12 points, a C=5, and an F=0) based on the assessment grid or rubric for that assignment.

Short Writings and Peer Responses

Grades will be conveyed via a system of symbols: below average: (- / minus); average (~ / tilde); above average (+ / plus); and excellent (! / exclamation point). At the end of the term, an accumulation of mostly tilde/wavy lines for peer responding would become a C for that grading component; an accumulation of mostly exclamation points would become a basic A; an accumulation of minuses would be entered as a C-.

When I see a second or third minus, or a lack of participation, I'll be sure to talk with you so that we can figure out

- A. What might be "amiss" in your approach to these aspects of the course
- B. How to not have the C- turn to a D or F.

The following table lists the assignments and point values for all major graded activities in this course. The total points possible for this course is 1100.

Assignment	Point Value
Online work/exercises/peer reviews	150
Strategic Planning Exercise	25
Need Statement	75
Revised Need Statement and Key Words	50

Funding Sources Assignment	25
Literature Review and Methods	100
Advance Planning Exercise (Project Task Summary Chart)	25
Proposal Narrative: Revised Need Statement, Goal(s), Objectives, and Tasks	50
Monitoring and Reporting and Evaluation Exercise	25
Threshold Review/Eligibility Rubric	50
Draft Budget and Budget Narrative	25
Appendices	25
Organization Information Section	25
Cover letter and Abstract	50
Proposal Package	250
Review Panel Evaluations	50
Formal Written Summary of Proposal Review	50
Class Participation	50
TOTAL COURSE POINTS	1100

Basic Course Guidelines

Deadlines and Drafts

You must complete all of the assignments in order to earn course credit. I expect you to bring all written work – short writings as well as major assignments – to class on its due date. **This is important: do not ask for extensions at the last minute; instead, talk with me as you first notice a problem!** (Did I emphasize this enough?) A conversation about what you have on paper, an e-mail that shows me where the ideas aren't coming together, or a glimpse of that wastebasket wrinkled draft will let me know when & where you're at a writing standstill.

Read Arouns

As we've noted during Class #1, I expect you to attend these sessions **even if your preliminary draft is very preliminary** – you'll gain insights for your own writing/ paper as you read and respond to classmates' drafts. Careful treatment of deadlines will allow you to benefit from peer responses, and will make it possible for me to return your drafts to you with considered comments. On initial drafts, I will offer specific comments rather than a letter grade.

Working with Peers

Your classmates will be your first readers for each assignment, and for your essay exam. In this process, when I require you, for example, to comment on paragraph structure during a peer workshop, know that when I read and respond to drafts I'll be looking at sentence style or overall content or organization.

In other words, responses from peers and from the instructor will focus on different aspects of your paper. You'll need, therefore, to be responsible responders and attend to peers' comments on your papers. Ignore what your real readers have to say in their responses, or respond to others papers halfheartedly, and you'll find that the "A" you assumed becomes the "C" you earned.

Formatting Assignments

All work written outside the classroom must be word processed and printed for readability, or typewritten. Use 12 point, sans serif fonts, double spacing, and one-inch margins. (Talk with me individually if any of this will pose a problem.)

Include the following at the top of the first page for in- and out-of-class work:

- your name,
- the course title and section number,
- the date,
- a title for the assignment, and
- page numbers on all following pages.

Writing Support: One-to-one-consultations are available for any course paper or writing project via scheduled appointments at the Student Writing Support, which has several campus locations, including the main location in 15 Nicholson Hall. See the [Writing Center](#) page for information for details about locations, appointments, and online consultations.

Attendance and Participation

As a workshop class, cannot make up class or workshop time. You are expected to attend all class periods; when you must be absent, make arrangements ahead of time or contact classmates for updates. If you fail to engage the course work, your grade will suffer without my having to exact "extra penalties." Program policy dictates are outlined in the attached departmental memo; know that I add the following caveats: **Missing a conference, an in-class writing group meeting or an all class read around counts as two absences.**

Excused Absences

Broad categories here include illness, death in the family, jury duty, military service, religious observances, care for sick children or parents, and participation in officially scheduled university student organization events (e.g., inter-collegiate athletics, ROTC, school sports events; [CLA policy on excused absences](#)). Excused absences do not include vacations/visits, attendance at UMinn sporting events as an observer/fan. *In case of an excused absence*, the Writing Studies policy is that students notify instructors of the absence as soon as possible, preferably before missing a class, but no later than 24 hours after the absence. *Students involved in officially scheduled university organization events* are expected to notify the instructor of all anticipated, officially excused absence dates by the 4th class session.

A student who is absent for any reason remains responsible for completing major assignments and being fully prepared upon returning to class. Students should check with a peer as well as the instructor to prepare for returning to class.

Late Papers

Requests for these should be rare and each will be handled case by case. Also, I don't extract "extra penalties" for missing in-class writing activities, or for late or incomplete drafts, you incur these on your own by missing out on the in-class work and feedback.

Incompletes

Granted only in case of specific emergencies/exigencies; do talk with me if you find yourself facing an emergency, or having a hard go of managing course work here and elsewhere.

Classroom Climate

Academic Integrity

The Principles document notes: "Institutions of higher education are dedicated to the pursuit of truth. Faculty members need to affirm that the pursuit of truth is grounded in certain core values, including diligence, civility, and *honesty*." Drawing on this, I expect the work you submit for the course will be your own work, and when you do draw on other resources I expect that you will link these by a citation to their original sources (as I have done here). I recognize that expectations regarding Academic Integrity do vary in small and large ways across professional and cultural contexts, things we'll address in class as part of our on-going discussion about ethics and/in writing. *The bottom line: I*

expect you to present your own work, and to cite as fully as possible any sources drawn into its presentation.

The Writing Studies Department considers acts of academic dishonesty a major offense; therefore, by department policy, academic dishonesty or plagiarism in any form or in any portion of a participant's work may warrant a failing grade for the course and notification of a participant's advisor(s) and/or a department's Director of Undergraduate Studies. *For this class: Students who plagiarize will be expected to redo the assignment under the supervision of the course instructor and one additional faculty/staff member whom I will select.*

Diversity and Collegiality

The diversity of participants' academic experience, assumptions regarding learning, lived experiences, core beliefs and ways of approaching the world will enrich this course. The perspectives and values of participants who come from various ethnic, cultural, national and educational backgrounds also influence the course dynamics and speaking/listening to these differences will deepen course learning.

As an instructor, I strive to balance exploration of these perspectives with the need to meet our basic course goals within the semester. Because cognitive dissonance and engagement with points of disagreement lead to learning, I also strive to engage difficult discussion points and to move us through tense moments in discussions so that we gain deeper appreciation for the complexity of ideas. Participants are encouraged to continue discussions with the instructor and other participants outside of class if we cannot devote class time to fuller resolution of discussion points.

In the unfortunate event that participant behavior disrupts class or endangers participants, the instructor has the responsibility to ask that participant to moderate behaviors, and also has the right to ask uncooperative students to leave a class session. Participants whose behavior suggests the need for counseling or other assistance may be referred to their college office or University Counseling and Consulting Services. Participants whose behavior may violate the University Student Conduct Code may be referred to the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. Every attempt will be made to deal with interpersonal, behavioral conflicts in the most timely, direct, educative and respectful manner.

Accommodations for Students With Disabilities

University policy is to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disabilities (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic learning challenges). *If you have a documented disability* that may impact your learning and/or participation in this course, please talk with me as soon as possible. In talking together, we can effectively develop a plan to support your learning and participation. *If you have an undocumented disability you'd like me to*

know about, or if are opting to not register your disability with the university, or just want to talk about learning to learn, you are also welcomed to set up a conversation so we can plan for ways you can collaborate with me, peers, others on campus, and family members to maximize your learning. The Disability Resource Center has [information regarding student access, resources and support](#).