

WRIT 202: Introduction to Writing Studies

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:30 - 11:20 | Hodges Hall 307



Image courtesy of Julia Joppien via [Unsplash](#)

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Course Links: [Schedule](#) and [Classroom](#)

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30 - 12:30 p.m. or by appointment

Office Location: Colson Hall 227

Overview

Welcome to WRIT 202, Introduction to Writing Studies! 202 is the gateway course for both the BA in Professional Writing and Editing and the BS in Scientific and Technical Writing. Its role is to introduce you to writing as a field of study, and to help you explore what you want from the major by considering the many scenes and places of writing that we'll investigate during the course. We will examine writing in four main spheres: **personal**, **academic**, **industry**, and **community** through a range of activities and assignments.

Several times throughout the semester, we will have the opportunity to learn from working professionals who studied writing in their undergraduate education. Folks working in a range of fields now will be available to share their journeys, provide advice, and answer questions.

As we'll learn, writing makes things happen, and this class will help us trace how that actually works. I hope you will think of this course as a place where you will learn to ask questions about writing. For example: Why do we write what we write? Why does it sometimes work and sometimes fail? How is writing rhetorical—and what does "rhetorical" mean? How do we learn more about the nature of writing? How can writing be used to change our fields and our communities? What kinds of career paths can I pursue with a strong writing background?

Course goals

By the end of the semester, students who earn a passing grade in the course (C- or above) will have demonstrated their ability to:

- **Define** and **describe** writing processes as explained by researchers and fellow writers;
- **Apply** strategies for improving your writing in multiple genres and mediums;
- **Research** and **explain** issues of professionalization and career preparation for writers;
- **Develop** disciplinary terminology to describe and evaluate writing and communicating;

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- **Evaluate** how rhetorical concepts such as purpose, audience, conventions, genre, and more inform communication practices in and beyond our discipline.

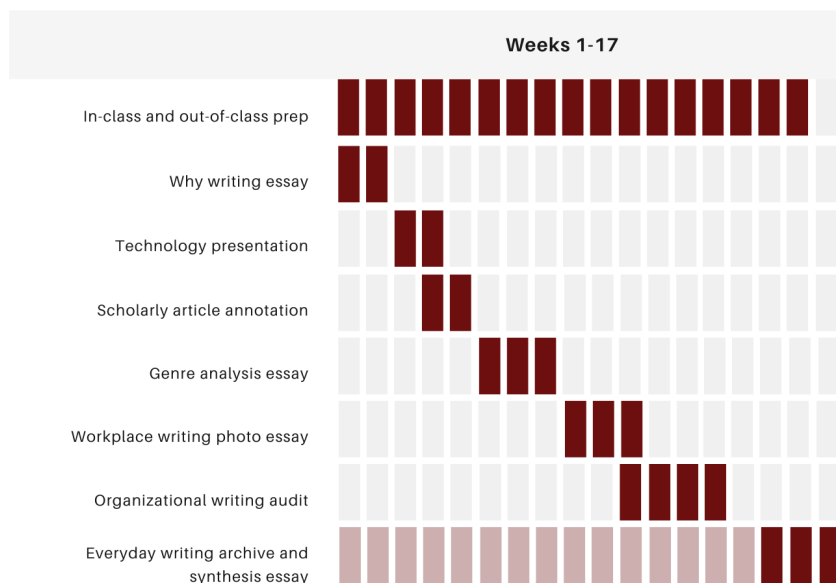
Required texts and course tools

All of our readings will be from open source educational materials (so, they're free!). These will be linked in our schedule and through Google Classroom.

If you have access to a mobile device (laptop or tablet, ideally) that you can access Classroom through, please bring that to class. We will be using Google Classroom as a headquarters for our class ([click this link](#) or enter this code to join: [diolkmd](#)). In addition to online platforms, we will also use pen and paper fairly often, so come prepared! Writing is a multimodal activity; we're going to get into it.

Assignment overviews

Below are overviews of each major assignment. I will provide more in-depth instructions in class. Your grade will be based on the categories below.



This Gantt chart shows how the projects are distributed throughout the course. You'll see that 1) the organizational writing audit (weighted as heavily as the in and out of class prep) falls toward the middle-end of the semester; and 2) the everyday writing archive is a project we'll work on throughout the class.

Why study writing? reflection essay (5%)

You will write a brief reflection (500 - 750 words) on what led you to major in writing, what you think will be valuable about the major, and where you think it might take you (or where you would like it to take you). During your studies, I hope you will keep asking yourself why you are here, what you care about right now, and where you want to go. The answers may change as you work through courses and semesters. I ask you to write an early reflection as a baseline statement; you'll come back to it at the end of the class.

Writing tool, technique, or technology (T³)presentation (5%)

Writing is a process. There are many tools, techniques, and technologies that help us as writers. You will identify a tool, technique, or technology—this can be really just about anything and doesn't have to be about digital technology—that helps you or might help you write and give a

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5-7 minute presentation with a visual aid on what you've chosen, sharing its value and suggesting possible uses to the class.

Scholarly article annotation (5%)

Just like other subjects you might be taking coursework in, Writing Studies is a field of study—that means that researchers conduct research on writing and publish their findings. You will find a scholarly article about writing (with my help!) and practice your reading and reflection skills by doing an engaged annotation (including a summative response) that will help you consider the breadth of Writing Studies as a discipline.

Rhetorical analysis essay (15%)

One of the major outcomes of this course is a deeper understanding of foundations of writing, which include rhetoric and genre, and how they shape our understanding of writing. You will pick a text of your choice (and you will have a wide range to choose from), identify the important aspects of that text, and analyze the relationships between those aspects and the overall purpose/effectiveness/etc. of the text. You will write an essay (750-1000 words) that shares what you have learned.

Workplace writing photo essay (15%)

So much writing happens in professional spaces, and depending on the workplace, that writing can look quite different. You will pick a workplace and do some observations of that space, paying special attention to writing and communication practices. To provide you with an opportunity to think about course topics a bit differently, you will compose a photo essay with at least 8 photographs and accompanying text (750-1000 words) that documents writing and communication in one particular workplace.

Organizational writing audit (20%)

As a way to further dive into questions of how writing functions in real spaces, you will complete a writing audit. For this major assignment, you will pick an organization, assemble a portfolio of 10-15 examples of writing and communication put out by this organization, and write an audit (1000-1250 words) that documents the strengths and weaknesses, purposes and possibilities, genres and audiences, and so on, of this portfolio.

Everyday writing archive and synthesis essay (15%)

Our final project in the semester will be a collaborative effort as we build a public-facing archive of everyday writing that we've witnessed throughout the semester in personal, professional, public, and community settings. You will contribute a number of artifacts, complete with metadata and annotations and help to build out the structure of the archive. You will also write a synthesis essay (750-1000 words) that analyzes the contents of the archive, brings together what you've learned this semester, and provides ideas of where you might go next. Note: You will be collecting artifacts throughout the semester, which will make this project a lot easier as we approach the end of class.

In-class activities and homework (20%)

Class engagement (more than just attendance) is key to your success in this class, which contains a lot of content. You will earn points for homework as well as in-class activities. Homework assignments will vary in structure but will always help you build toward the current project; we'll try different ways of engaging with the readings. **In-class activities cannot**

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be made up if you miss class. There are plenty throughout the semester so your grade will not be significantly affected unless you are missing class frequently.

Grading

Specific criteria and rubrics for each major assignment will be provided; however, all of the writing you produce in this course should meet the requirements of the specific project, be well-informed and thoughtful, be respectful of audience, be grammatically and stylistically sound, and be rhetorically effective for its intended purpose.

If you are dissatisfied with your grade on a major assignment, you may revise it for a higher grade; but, you must correspond with me about those revisions and write a brief rationale that explains your changes. (After all, this is what would happen in a professional environment.)

In compliance with relevant privacy laws (FERPA), I must discuss grades with you in confidence. This means I cannot email grades to you; please set up a meeting where we can discuss virtually. I post grades on Classroom regularly, so you can keep track of them there.

letter grade	range	letter grade	range	letter grade	range
A+	100-99%	B-	82-80%	D	67-63%
A	98-93%	C+	79-78%	D-	62-60%
A-	92-90%	C	77-73%	F	59-0%
B+	89-88%	C-	72-70%		
B	87-83%	D+	69-68%		

Course policies

I follow all of [WVU's standard policies](#), but there are a few (below) that I'd call your attention to.

Attendance and engagement

WVU's [full attendance policy](#) covers a wide range of circumstances (extended illness, military deployment, official university events, etc.). Just as you would if you were going to miss a shift at work, it is good practice to notify your instructor that you won't be in class. If you must be absent from class for any reason, I expect you to take full responsibility for your academic work and to submit any missed major assignments that were due during the class period. (Note: You will not be able to make up activities missed in class.)

Attendance is especially important in this course, since this is the foundation for all of your future Writing Studies courses; that being said, **if you miss more than six classes, I will advise you to drop the course.** Once you miss four classes, you will need to meet with me to discuss a plan of action to avoid further disruptions in your learning.

This classroom will be run like a work environment, meaning that you will have a fair amount of freedom. With that freedom comes the expectation that you will be not only physically present, but mentally present, and ready to work in class. I also expect you to use technology (computers, phones, etc.) with care and consideration for others.

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Communication

I will use Google Classroom for class-wide communication. I will post any important announcements, updates, or changes on the Stream for our class, which will automatically email you as well.

The best way to contact me is through email at erin.carlson@mail.wvu.edu or ebc00001@mix.wvu.edu (they go to the same account). I check my email regularly between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and usually respond pretty quickly. If you email me outside of those hours or over the weekend, I'll respond the next business day. My request for you is that you check the syllabus and other course materials for answers to any questions before you email me. Of course, please feel free to email for clarification if you do find the answer, but need more explanation.

I am always happy to meet with you to talk about your work, your life, and your plans for the future. My office hours are noted at the top of the syllabus, and I do my best to be available and present during those times in my office; however, I sometimes have to schedule meetings during that period, so if you'd like to speak with me, it is always best to set up an appointment with me ahead of time.

Community health

If you are sick, do not come to class. If you don't feel well or have been around other folks you know are ill and attend class, **please wear a mask** and respect others' personal space. There are folks in class (including me!) that are high risk or live with high risk individuals, and this is an act of community care that we should all value.

Intellectual property and academic honesty

Intellectual property is an increasingly relevant concern in both academic and professional spaces given the impact of digital technology. I expect that the work you submit in this course will be your original intellectual contribution. Any academic dishonesty (including, according to [WVU's standards](#), plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication/falsification) will result in a failing grade of 1% for the assignment. In regards to AI-generated content: AI platforms may be used in assignments, but you must disclose any use of an AI tool and proper citations must be given. You must clearly identify writing, text, or media generated by AI and explain how AI tools were used in the process of creating a final product. Not acknowledging AI-generated work will be treated as academic dishonesty.

Late work

I set deadlines for a reason – to help you be better students and to help me be a better teacher. This class is modeled after real work environments, where deadlines matter. Writers at all levels improve by writing, by receiving timely feedback, and by writing some more. Late work interrupts that process. I do understand that life happens, though. In professional environments, you may ask for an extension, so you may do so in this class. An approved extension will **not** affect your grade, but you will not receive detailed written feedback as per usual; however, if you do not ask for and receive an extension, I will not accept late work and you will receive a zero for that assignment. Finally, please remember that the end of the semester imposes a final deadline on all of us. I do not give incompletes except in extraordinary circumstances.

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Accessibility

I strive to make my courses as accessible and accommodating to all persons as I can. If you require any specific accommodations, please send me an email within the first week of the term in order to discuss any necessary adjustments. I want you to succeed and I will work with you to ensure that you do! For more information, consult the [Office of Accessibility Services](#).

Respect

I take seriously the need to provide a respectful and supportive environment in our classroom. You are expected to behave professionally in class and out of class (this includes while corresponding through email), and to treat everyone in our community with kindness and respect. I have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment in all forms. If you engage in disruptive behavior in class, the Office of Student Conduct will be notified immediately.

Student success, basic needs, and mental health

WVU has a number of resources and offices dedicated to student success. Of special note, when it comes to writing, is the [Eberly Writing Studio](#) where you can receive personalized help for your projects at any stage: brainstorming, drafting, revising, or editing. (I can't recommend this space enough—I both worked at writing centers as a student and used them **constantly** as a student.)

I also understand that student success involves more than just succeeding in classes. Any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, mental health, or other elements of wellbeing, and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the [Student Advocacy Center](#) for support. Also, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess and to try and connect you to others who can help, too.

I know that college students face many stressful issues that affect one's ability to remember, learn, and perform, and interact socially in and out of the classroom. According to a [2019 survey conducted by the American College Health Association](#), 66.4% of college students felt "overwhelming" anxiety, while 46.2% experienced depression so severe they had difficulty functioning. With the increased stress and isolation of living in a COVID-19 environment, these difficulties have been amplified: [60% of college students surveyed](#) stated that the pandemic has made it more difficult to access mental healthcare.

If you (or a friend) are struggling, I strongly encourage you to seek support. I take your mental health seriously and can help you navigate the resources available to you as a WVU student. Supportive resources are available on campus, and most are at no-charge. [The Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services](#) (CCPPS) offers consultations, short-term individual therapy, group therapy, and various mental health-related workshops. Virtual and in-person services are available. You can text "WVU" to 741741 for support 24/7 from a trained Crisis Counselor or call 304-293-4431. If you're experiencing mental distress, need immediate attention, and would prefer to use a non-university support service, you can call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255.

I am really looking forward to working with y'all this semester; I'm ready to learn with you!