

Course Description

WRIT 102, Composition and Literature, is a writing course focused on writing critically and analytically about texts — “texts” broadly defined as including literary, disciplinary, public, and popular texts (both print and digital). Through four overlapping units, called “inquiries,” WRIT 102 teaches you various tools for textual analysis and critical reading with the aim of producing a new text — your own critical response to what you have read.

WRIT 102 will help expand your understanding of what constitutes a text; will teach you techniques for responding to, interpreting, critiquing, and evaluating texts; and will help you write research-based arguments about texts for academic, disciplinary audiences. The course draws on the fields of composition to help you develop rhetorical knowledge about writing contexts and composing processes, on literary studies to help you develop critically aware strategies for reading and interpretation, and on creative writing to help you explore and use alternative modes of exploration and expression. WRIT 102 meets the broad goals of a liberal education: to nurture your intellectual capabilities to think critically, to understand diverse contexts, to engage with other learners, and to apply knowledge and skills learned through effective reflection and action.

Course Goals

By the end of WRIT 102, you should be able to do the following:

- Write with a sophisticated understanding of how texts work — how texts hold multiple meanings and have multiple effects depending on audience, context, and methodological perspective.
- Engage in critical, close reading, making arguments using textual citation as evidence.
- Understand the complexity of texts — how texts hold multiple meanings and produce multiple effects depending on audience, context, and methodological approach or perspective.
- Conduct research-based inquiries into the rhetorical, literary, historical, and/or cultural contexts of a particular text or group of texts, employing various literary and rhetorical methods for invention, analysis, and argument.
- Write effectively for specific audiences, purposes, and contexts, especially for academic contexts and disciplinary audiences.
- Locate, evaluate, integrate, and cite sources effectively and ethically.
- Practice close, critical editing of your writing according to audience, purpose, and context.
- Articulate and reflect critically on your own reading and composing practices, including your rhetorical decisions about the production and delivery of writing.

Course Theme

Writing Worlds: Utopian and Dystopian Fiction



The course pursues these critical reading and writing goals through the overarching theme of utopian and dystopian fiction. Considering fictionalized worlds that are both ideal and pessimistically dark, the course questions how world-making is fundamentally an act of writing. We will also ask how fictional subjects use writing as a way to acquire agency and negotiate a position in society. My hope is that you will consider “composition” as not only an activity confined to your writing courses, but also as an overarching activity through which you write your place in the world and, to some degree, the world itself. In addition to writing analytical essays about utopian and dystopian texts, the course asks you to work collaboratively in small groups to design either a utopian or a dystopian world.

Required Texts and Materials

- Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*. New York: Bedford St. Martin's, 2011
- Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2010.
- Orwell, George. *1984*. New York: Signet, 1977.
- Cameron, J., (2009) *Avatar*.
- Niccol, A., (1997) *Gattaca*.

- A laptop computer with wireless access — bring to class, fully charged every class period.

Major Projects and Course Requirements

Writing 102 will be centered on four major writing inquiries — as listed in the table below. Each inquiry is comprised of a number of components, including class activities, shorter writing assignments, drafts, peer responses, proposals, research notes, reflective cover letter, and a major final essay (or the multimodal equivalent). For each major inquiry, you can expect to compose approximately 1000 – 2000 words (roughly 4 – 8 pages) of formal revised writing (or multimedia equivalent), including a reflective cover letter in which you discuss the rhetorical choices you made in composing your essay. You also will compose approximately 1000 – 2000 words (roughly 4 – 8 pages) of informal writing during each inquiry (e.g. invention and revision exercises, rough drafts, research notes, proposals, peer response comments, mid-process reflections).

Participation in class discussion is extremely important and constitutes a large part of the learning process. There is a saying that people learn by doing, not simply by listening. By participating in class discussion, you are “doing,” and therefore learning more than if you only listened. Therefore, participation will account for at least 20% of your final grade. This participation is counted, however, in two ways.

1. Quizzes: These will not only cover the material for that day’s reading, but will also cover reading and discussions from the previous class. What this means is that **those who listen attentively and take notes will get credit for this kind of participation.** These quizzes will be worth 10% of your final grade and CANNOT be made up.

2. In-class Participation: Leading class discussion during presentations, responding to your classmates’ comments, **being present for peer reviews, workshop activities and generally being an active member of the classroom community constitutes in-class participation** and is worth 10% of your final grade. However, disruptive behavior or failure to engage with the assigned reading will mean that you forfeit your participation grade.

1. Close/critical reading	Critical/analytic essay demonstrating use of close/critical reading inquiry. Focused on one major work (or a set of related shorter works).	20%
2. Cultural/historical interrogation	(a) Research essay or report, annotated bibliography with introduction, or literature review. (b) Critical/analytic essay demonstrating use of historical and/or cultural inquiry. Focused on multiple shorter works + secondary research.	20%

3. Creative and critical application	Students design their own creative project within broad parameters set by instructor, experimenting with creative forms, multiple media, or alternative genres. Written for audience outside the academy.	20%
4. Engaged Reflection	E-portfolio of works produced in WRIT 102, including a significant revision of several works and an extended analytical reflection on the corpus.	15%
5. Informal writing	Daily informal writing homework designed to help you practice critical reading, generate ideas for your major projects, and reflect upon your writing process.	5%
6. Participation	Active participation in peer response, collaborative group work activities, quizzes, and in-class writing.	20%
TOTAL		100%

Policies

1) Access / Accommodations

If you have a disability, please speak to me early in the semester so we can discuss your learning style. I am willing to work with you to establish a plan for academic success and life learning. You can also obtain additional information and support from the Office of Learning Disabilities Services XXX-XXX-XXXX or The Office of Disability Resources XXX-XXX-XXXX.

2) Attendance

It is university policy that every student is expected to attend every class meeting. Attendance is of utmost importance to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. Much of the learning in Writing 101 happens via in-class inquiry activities, in-class writing assignments, class discussion, and group interaction that cannot be easily made up or replicated outside of class. Class time will be highly interactive — requiring frequent participation, discussion, teamwork, in-class writing, and responding to writing. For this reason, attendance at all class sessions is expected. You are allowed a maximum of three unexcused absences in this course. Having more than three unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your final grade for the course (by one tier, for example from B to B-).

3) Tardiness. Two late arrivals equal an absence.

4) Late Work. All assignments must be turned in on time. Final grades on papers will be downgraded one whole grade for each day late (for example A to B) unless you have made prior arrangements for an extension with me (in exceptional circumstances).

5) Academic Integrity / Plagiarism

The writing produced for Writing 102 must be your own original writing — that is, produced originally for this class. To copy someone else's writing without acknowledging that use is an act of academic as well as professional dishonesty, whether you borrow an entire report or a single sentence. The most serious forms of academic dishonesty are to "buy" an entire paper; or to have someone else write an assignment for you; or to turn in someone else's entire paper (or significant portions of an existing piece of writing) and call it your own. These forms of dishonesty constitute serious breaches of academic integrity. If you have doubts about whether or not you are using your own or others' writing ethically, please ask me. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action by the University, as described in the Student Handbook.

6) Distractions

Please silence your cell phone and refrain from texting. While we will regularly use laptops for in-class writing, research, and collaboration, please refrain from using your laptop for non-class activities.

7) Backing up Work

Please make sure to have a plan for backing up all of your digital work in multiple places in case of computer failure. Please also make sure to save all of the writing you complete for class.

8) Respect / Community

While we will often engage in vigorous and lively debate in this class, personal insults or attacks on an individual person's race, class, gender, sexuality, or disability will not be tolerated.

9) Course site / Daily Schedule. The daily course schedule and more detailed assignment prompts will be available on the course site. The course schedule is subject to change based on the needs and interests of the class. You are responsible for regularly checking Niihka for updates.

10) Grading Scale.

A 100-94%

A- 93-90%

B+ 89-87%

B 86-84%

B- 83-80%

C+ 79-77%

C 76-74%

C- 73-70%

D+ 69-67%

D 66-64%

D- 63-60%

F 59% and below

Resources

- *Your classmates.* Rely on one another for the questions you have regarding the readings, the work we're doing in class, software we may be using, etc. You all, both individually and as a collective, embody a vast bank of knowledge and experiences.
- *Your Instructor.* I will do all I can to assist you in succeeding in this course. Feel free to meet with me during my office hours or another scheduled time. Email is a reliable way to contact me and I will try my best to respond in a timely manner.
- *IT Support (XXX-XXX-XXXX)* The IT support desk is the main point of contact for technology questions at XXXXXXXX, including issues with connecting to wireless.
- *Writing Centers.* The Writing Center is located on the main floor of XXXXXXXX. The Center is staffed with writing consultants from many different academic areas. In a one-on-one workshop, a staff member will consult with you concerning work-in-progress, final drafts, research style, and many other aspects of writing. It is best to schedule an appointment ahead of time, but you may also walk in on days when they have consultants available.
- *The Student Counseling Service.* Located in the Health Services Center, this office provides a wide range of counseling services. For more information, call XXX-XXX-XXXX.