

Advanced Exposition
ENC 3310, Section 006E
MTWTF Period 2 (9:30-10:45)
Rinker Hall (RNK), Room 0215

Instructor: Andrew Wilson
Email: andrewwilson@ufl.edu
Office: TUR 4413

Course Description

Advanced Exposition covers modes of expository writing. Emphasizing analytical writing, this course addresses modes of informing, defining, describing and identifying. We will also attend to principles of written style and effective methods of conveying meaning in writing. While this course requires students to experiment with a variety of expository modes, students will have the option of focusing on the modes that best suit the types of writing appropriate to their individual studies or interests.

Students will write five essays, together totaling at least 6000 words. While students can write on almost any topic, this course encourages students to focus on one topic throughout the course.

We will meet Monday to discuss terms and principals of style and research. The rest of the week, students will conference with me individually. Conferences will be 15-minutes and focus on reviewing drafts of up-coming assignments.

Course Texts

Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace (11th Edition)
Joseph M. Williams and Gregory G. Colomb

The Craft of Research (3rd Edition)
Wayne C. Booth

Assignments

All assignments will be double-spaced in 12-point font. Submit them to me electronically at andrewwilson@ufl.edu before midnight the day they are due.

Each assignment builds on the next in both structural and topical terms. Structurally, each essay is manipulating features of the previous essay, often approaching that information from a new angle. Topically, with each essay you will be more immersed in the subject you're writing about. Each new essay will therefore be "more informed," so to speak, than the previous essays.

Writing to Inform (1,200 Words)

The basic tenet of writing to inform is telling your readers about something, delivering information. Expository writing is, at its core, informative. For this assignment, identify a topic that interests you—this can be a social topic, a political topic, an academic topic or a personal topic (keep in mind that you'll write about any "personal topic" analytically, so don't pick something you're not comfortable analyzing academically). Begin researching this topic. We'll discuss what it means to "research" and what count as "academic sources," but the main point, here, is that *how you inform the reader of your topic depends on how you situate that topic in the context of other writings*. "Informing," in this sense, means setting the parameters of your topic—its implications, relevance and scope. In argumentative writing, this would be the "basis" or "grounds" for your point. While you're not exactly arguing something, here, how you set-up your topic is, itself, an argument, as you are always *strategically arranging your information* in a way that suits *how you want to discuss your topic*.

Things to remember:

- The objective here is to be informative, not analytical or evaluative
- Because you are working with original informative sources, be very careful not to simply reproduce the documents you have read. Do not verge into plagiarism. Think about your audience and the form of an essay as particular contexts that should alter how your document is written versus the original documents.

Writing to Define (1,200 words)

After you've researched and documented (written informatively about) your topic, you'll want to identify certain key terms or concepts pervading your subject. There may be several, but your task here is to select *one key term* and contextualize that term among others. You're not expected to find the "biggest" term or assume that certain terms are always more or less important than others. *The most important term* is really your decision. And because there is no *one way* to define any term, your task, here, is explaining *how other writers and researchers have discussed the term you're defining*. Pay careful attention to discrepancies between definitions. Like the "Writing to Inform" assignment, you're *contextualizing* your term in other texts.

Things to remember:

- Definitions do not "speak for themselves"; they are always synthesized across texts and traditions.
- There is no "correct" definition; there are only "best" or "most accurate" definitions, and "best" or "most accurate" depends on how carefully you analyze your source materials and how clearly you situate the definition in your context (topic).

(Pick One): *Writing to Classify* OR *Writing to Compare and Contrast* (1,200 words)

Now that you've navigated both the "context" of your topic and the "terms" that pervade it, your task here is to organize your materials and the discussions they're

having. You can do this in one of two ways, depending on *how you want to approach your subject*.

Writing to Classify involves identifying and categorizing texts or arguments according to terms and parameters you decide upon. You may find, for example, that your topic tends to be discussed in three different ways. Your task, then, is *defining* those “ways,” implicating texts or authors in those categories, justifying your reason for doing so and explaining, in the end, why *understanding your topic in these ways matters*.

Writing to Compare and Contrast relies on many of the same facets of Writing to Classify, except here you’re focusing your attention on *what differentiates* the categories you’re working with. This iteration of the assignment is best if you can identify *two different conversations* surrounding your topic. You’ll still classify your texts or authors according to categories you select and define. But because you’re dealing with fewer categories, your attention will focus on how these categories relate to and depart from one another. Here, you’ll take more liberties with *prioritizing or evaluating* the strength of one side versus another. Just keep in mind that how your comparison *evaluates* one side versus another depends on *what you think is most important about your topic*.

Things to remember:

- You’re verging, here, on argumentative writing, insofar as you now required to justify your classifications and make statements about the relative strengths and weaknesses of those categories. That said, classifying or comparative writing is strongest when it assumes neutrality. In other words, you’ll want the tone of your piece to seem distant—not *disengaged*, but disinterested in making a point.
- Sometimes “comparing” is just as argumentative as contrasting. For example, you may find that two seemingly different texts or authors—texts or authors perhaps antithetical to one another—operate in similar ways. The same is true for contrasting: texts and authors that seem to be doing exactly the same thing are often actually involved in very different conversations. Strong classifying or comparative writing is able to effectively reveal counterintuitive differences and similarities.

Writing to Describe (1,200 words)

Descriptive writing resembles informative writing insofar as both privilege objective explanation rather than categorization or comparison. Unlike informative writing, however, descriptive writing can be profoundly argumentative. In descriptive expository writing, you may take liberties in the language you use to portray a text, argument or idea. Descriptive writing can resemble a narrative, wherein you’re telling the story of an idea as it passes through history or between writers. Where informative writing delivers information, descriptive writing draws the reader into that information, engaging the reader with the dynamics of your topic. For this assignment, you are going to structure a context for your topic and present that topic in the setting you choose. While you are not explicitly saying “here is my point” or “this is why my topic matters,” it should be fairly obvious as to what your point is and why you’re writing about it.

Things to remember:

- The verbs and adjectives that accompany your subjects will significantly affect how your reader interprets them. Generally, you should peruse subtle descriptions and only use direct language when it serves you the best. But always avoid tepid or overly technical language in descriptive writing (that language is best for informative writing).

Writing to Analyze (1,200 words)

Analytical writing revolves around a clear thesis or “point.” While you will contextualize your thesis in a much larger conversation, contextualization is a small portion of an analytical essay (here, maybe only the first paragraph). The rest of your essay will draw on traits from the previous essays but will focus on explicating your thesis. The “context” of this paper is only to validate the relevance of your thesis. The rest of the essay will engage specific texts in order to expound on your argument, explore its implications and fashion it into a distinct object for further study. This essay will more-or-less be the culmination of the previous essays.

Participation

I expect every student to come prepared for class. Being prepared means completing the required readings, contributing to class activities and being actively involved in the dynamics of the class. I do not have “participation” points, but frequent lack-luster participation may detract from your final grade.

Grade Points

Writing to Inform	200
Writing to Define	200
Writing to Classify	200
Writing to Describe	200
Writing to Analyze	200

Total: 1000

Grading Scale

A	930-1000	C	730-760
A-	900-920	C-	700-720
B+	870-890	D+	670-690
B	830-860	D	630-660
B-	800-820	D-	600-620
C+	770-790	E	0-590

Grade Meanings & How I Grade

I don't agree with the institution of grading, and I'll happily go into detail as to why. But the short of it is, I find that grades impair a student's ability to take risks and develop as critical thinkers, reader and writers. On the one hand, grades are always a reason to do as little work as possible; they incentivize short cuts and “safe” ideas.

On the other hand, there's a tyranny to "the grade" that always overshadows individual achievement and oppresses development. This is especially true with writing, and I therefore do not assign grades to individual assignments.

In place of grades, I give detailed feedback on every assignment along with concrete advice as to how I'd like to see you improve. I track your improvement closely and on an individual basis. Consistent conferencing is a crucial facet to how I evaluate your work (I elaborate on conferencing expectations below). So long as you meet the core requirements of each assignment, *I evaluate how hard you work toward achieving what you set out to achieve*. You may not actually achieve it, but I won't punish you for trying.

The following "grade meanings" therefore reflect your *final grade*. Below is essentially a list of the possible ways that you may earn *less* than an "A" grade in this class.

A You did what the assignments ask for at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. You clearly articulate, in class and in conferences, what your work is attempting to achieve. In each assignment, it's clear that you took pains to make your work meaningful.

You attended class regularly (no more than two absences). You consistently participated in class discussions by asking questions, expressing ideas/opinions and by responding to the questions and opinions of your classmates. You kept up with all note taking and non-Gordon rule writing assignments.

An A- grade will reflect all of these qualities, but likely means that you missed too many classes, had to re-write several assignments, were inconsistent with class participation, or were otherwise less-than-regular with abiding by class standards.

B You did what the assignments asked of you, but you did not always take strides to optimize your work. You would heed some of my advice, but applied it inconsistently. You did not always come prepared to conferences with clear ideas or completed drafts. You were inconsistent with attendance, participation and note taking.

C You did what the assignments asked of you but hardly ever took strides to develop your work. You missed several classes and rarely ever participated in class. You completed most of your work but never seemed to take it that seriously.

D You rarely did what the assignments asked of you. You missed several classes and hardly ever participated.

E An E is usually reserved for people who don't do the work or don't come to class. This grade also applies to students who turn in work that fails to meet the basic requirements of multiple assignments.

In my experience, most students fall short of an A grade because they missed too much class or were lackluster about participation. I hardly ever accept assignments that I'm not prepared to see as "A" work. I give my students multiple opportunities for rewrites, and failing to make good on those opportunities will also regularly

result in a lower grade.

Conferences

Conferences are an excellent opportunity for you to receive direct feedback on your writing. The drafts you bring to conference should be complete—notes and outlines are not acceptable. My feedback is most helpful when it pertains to work that you see as finished.

Conference attendance is mandatory on class days specifically set aside for that purpose. Each student will sign up for one 15-20 min meeting during conference weeks. I will treat missed appointments as absences.

If you do not have a complete draft ready for conference, I may not grade the final version, and you will therefore receive zero points for that assignment.

Policies

Writing Requirement (WR)

This course can satisfy the UF requirement for Writing. For more information, see: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggordon.html>

Statement on Student Disability Services

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>

Statement on Academic Dishonesty

All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Attendance Policies

Because summer classes are restricted by time, and because I provide a number of days in which we will not meet as a class, I expect you to attend and participate in class discussion everyday of the session. However, I also realize that sometimes absences cannot be avoided. Thus, one unexcused absence is tolerated and left unquestioned. Any absence beyond that one, though, will result in a reduction of your final course average by 5 points.

Final Grade Appeals

If you have concerns about your **final** grade in the course and have met with me to discuss your final grade, you may pursue an appeal process by contacting the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of English. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade. Grade appeals should only be pursued if you and I have an irresolvable dispute regarding your final grade. The English Department will not intervene in disputes over individual assignment grades.

(Tentative) Schedule

Note: readings are to be completed the day listed in the schedule; we will discuss those readings in class on that day.

Week 1

Monday, May 12

Introduction

Tuesday, May 13

Read: *Craft of Research*: Chapters 3 & 4

Read: *Style*: Lesson 3 & 4

Wednesday, May 14

CONFERENCE

Thursday, May 15

CONFERENCE

Friday, May 16:

CONFERENCE

Week 2

Monday, May 19

Read: *Craft of Research*: Chapters 5 & 6

Discuss expectations for *Writing to Inform* assignment.

Prepare for *Writing to Define* assignment (which develops quite immediately from *Writing to Inform*). During your conference, be prepared to tell me which key terms you'll try defining

READ: *Style*, Lesson 7

Tuesday, May 20
CONFERENCES

Wednesday, May 21
CONFERENCES

Thursday, May 22
CONFERENCES

Friday, May 23
CONFERENCES

Week 3

Monday, May 26: NO CLASS
DUE: *Writing to Inform* assignment

Tuesday, May 27
Introduce *Writing to Define* assignment
READ: *Style* Lesson 8 & 9

Wednesday, May 28
CONFERENCE

Thursday, May 29
CONFERENCES

Friday, May 30
CONFERENCES

Week 4

Monday, June 2
Introduce *Writing to Classify* or *Writing to Compare and Contrast* assignment.
We'll try figuring out which is best for your topic. If you already have your choice in mind, please share your choice and reason for choosing it. It's often helpful hearing how others arrive at these decisions.

DUE: *Writing to Define* assignment

READ: *Style* Lesson 10
Review a page of your last assignment or draft of your next assignment. Apply principals from Lesson 10 to your document. Come prepared to share before-and-after samples with the class.

READ: *Craft of Research*, Chapter 8

Look over some of your research and try to figure out how it specifies its argument. Identify (quote) the argument and explain the language it uses to determine and contextualize itself.

Tuesday, June 3
CONFERENCES

Wednesday, June 4
CONFERENCES

Thursday, June 5
CONFERENCES

Friday, June 6
CONFERENCES

Week 5

Monday, June 9

Introduce: *Writing to Describe* assignment

DUE: *Writing to Classify* or *Writing to Compare and Contrast* assignment

READ: *Style*, Chapter 11

Volunteer samples of *descriptive writing* from your research materials

Tuesday, June 10
CONFERENCES

Wednesday, June 11
CONFERENCES

Thursday, June 12
CONFERENCES

Friday, June 13
CONFERENCE

Week 6

Monday, June 16

Introduce *Writing to Analyze* Assignment

Tuesday, June 17

READ: *Style*, Lesson 12

Talk about the politics and tactics of arguing with experts.

Wednesday, June 18

WRITING DAY

Thursday, June 19

WRITING DAY

Friday, June 20

DUE: *Writing to Analyze* assignment