EXPO E-15: FUNDAMENTALS OF ACADEMIC WRITING
Fall 2015, Harvard University Extension School

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Class Hours: Wednesday 7:40 – 9:40 P.M.
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Course Overview

Expo E-15 is designed to prepare students for EXPO E-25, “Introduction to Academic Writing and Critical Reading,” and, more generally, to introduce you to the kinds of writing assignments you will encounter as college students so that you will be able to write academic essays with confidence and skill. You’ll do short writing assignments that will help you learn to work with the fundamental concepts of academic writing that all students and scholars use: reading closely to analyze texts and question sources; reasoning with evidence; organizing persuasive and well-structured arguments; and communicating your ideas in clear and effective prose. Key concepts of academic argument—such as thesis, motive, evidence, and structure—will be introduced and reviewed; you will also learn strategies for reading and analyzing complex texts.

This course is divided into two units in which you will write short exercises, then drafts of essays, and then full revisions of those essays. Together as a class, we will explore specific writing issues and challenges common to college writing assignments.

Bear in mind that your writing grows strongest when you treat it as a process. You will develop and write preliminary response papers and drafts, for which you will receive feedback. You will then revise those early papers into a full draft, giving your analysis time to evolve and grow more interesting and complex.

Good essays don’t appear spontaneously. They emerge, usually, from many time-consuming drafts: with each draft, the writer moves closer to what she or he wants to say. The first draft or two is always more like a conversation a writer has with him- or herself than it is a communication with readers. After exploring and developing their ideas through successive drafts, writers can then turn their drafts to “face” an audience, anticipating and shaping readers’ responses to the essay’s ideas. In other words, your preliminary exercises and drafts help you explore your ideas in writer-based prose; your final draft turns those ideas into reader-based prose—an essay that readers will find clear and persuasive.

This is a seminar class in which everyone’s active participation is not only encouraged, but expected. I hope that even if you are generally reserved, you will make an effort to participate in discussions. Sharing ideas—especially those you may feel tentative about—is a mark of intellectual generosity. And bear in mind that the willingness to revise both thinking and writing when a new idea “swims into [your] ken” may be the mark of a confident member of an academic community—not an insecure one.
COURSE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

No cell phone or other electronic device use is permitted during class time. You’ll be reminded at the beginning of every class to turn off your electronic devices (except the computer by which you’re participating in class, of course). Your fellow students as well as the subject matter deserve the respect of your undivided attention.

Communication: You may phone me or email me. Be aware that I am not on email 24/7, so your message may not receive an immediate response. I don’t text. I don’t receive texts. Don’t text me.

Electronic resources

While you are registered for a course, you have access to approximately 3,000 databases and journals through the Harvard Libraries Portal. Licensed electronic resources are accessible from most computers within Harvard libraries or remotely by using a Harvard ID number and PIN. The use of electronic resources for nonscholarly or commercial purposes is prohibited.

Required Texts

For you to buy:

A Short Guide to College Writing, 5th edition, by Barnet, Bellanca, and Stubbs. We will use this text throughout the semester. Please be sure to get the right edition (5th): the pagination will be consistent for everyone.

40 Short Stories: A Portable Anthology, 4th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012. Please be sure to get the right edition (4th); the pagination will be consistent for everyone.

For you to download:


You will need to copy and paste the link above into your browser. Please print one copy for yourself from this site. Because the text is densely printed, I recommend printing on one side of the page only.

You will find Chapters 6, 7, and 8 in this excerpt. Please read all three chapters—they’re worth reading in any case—but pay particular attention to Chapter 7.


For you to Access frequently:


Available on Course Canvas website:

Angelou, Maya. (1969). “Graduation” from I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.


Course Expectations
You’ll write 2 (two) 4- to 5-page essays. The first essay will ask you to write on one essay to do with an educational issue, loosely termed; the second will be a close reading of a short story. We’ll break down each essay into steps; to prepare a draft, you’ll complete and hand in brief “pre-draft” assignments that ask you to brainstorm ideas and flesh out important parts of your argument. You’ll submit at least one draft and a revision for each essay assignment. To get the most you can out of the course, you need to make each draft a complete, full-length essay (that is, a piece of writing with a beginning, a middle, and an end) with a controlling thesis, solid structure, and supporting evidence. You’ll receive feedback on your draft and, after substantial re-working of that draft, you’ll submit a revision.

Writing courses at Harvard are rigorous and move along at a quick and steady pace. This means that we must make the most of the time we have together each week. Class begins at 7:40. Any student who is more than 15 minutes late in joining class will be counted as absent. A missed conference appointment (see below) also counts as an absence from class. Student attendance and participation are required and essential. If you are absent from class without valid excuse more than twice, you risk being excluded from and failing the course. If you must miss a class, please notify me by email in advance, and consult our class website for any missed materials.

You are expected to be fully prepared to participate when class begins—that is, to have read and thought about whatever readings were assigned and to have the required writing with you. Lateness of any sort—in joining class or turning in work—will be penalized. Such lateness is extremely disruptive to our schedule and discussions, and is unfair to the other students who do participate and hand in work on time. Please note that excuses related to computer mishaps won’t be accepted. Be sure your technology is in good working order and that you keep your work backed up on a thumbdrive or such. Should any equipment-related tragedy befall you, contact Media Services for Extension School, or Mike Kilmurray, our tech support: mkilmurray@g.harvard.edu

Before each essay is due, we will meet for a one-on-one conference about your draft. These conferences will be devoted (1) to discussing how to revise your essay to make it express more effectively what you want the essay to say and (2) to setting goals for the assignments to come. Please prepare for these conferences by rereading your draft and making some notes for yourself regarding the possible ways you might go about revising.
Writing Center

Be sure to take advantage of the resources available to you through the Extension School’s Writing Center. You can learn how the Writing Center works and how to set up a tutorial through the link on the HES website:
http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/writing-center

Procedures for Submitting Work

All exercises, drafts, and final versions of essays should be submitted through the course Canvas website in either Word (preferred) or pdf. You will receive a handout showing essay format in more detail. Please proofread your work before you submit it. Error-ridden essays—whether the errors are due to mechanical or formatting errors—will be marked down. For this course, please use the MLA in-text citation style. We will discuss how to cite sources in this course; please refer also to A Short Guide chapter 13 (pp. 294–330).

Note: Canvas maintains all submissions which will make up a portfolio of your work for this course. Your portfolio will reveal your growth as a writer over the course of the semester. You’ll also want to be able to consult this material when you write your drafts and revisions, and you’ll want to acknowledge accurately the advice you’ve received when you prepare your final revisions.

Grading

I will grade only the final version of each essay, but I will comment on each first draft. Unlike your essays, your writing exercises will be evaluated only with a check plus (√+) , check ( √ ), or check minus ( ×− ). In grading each of your revised essays, I will check to see that you’ve addressed comments I have made and things we have discussed in conference. I adhere to the following criteria: “A” means exceptional, “B” means good, “C” means adequate, “D” means deficient, and “E” means unacceptable. Bear in mind that mechanics and content cannot be separated: poor mechanics of spelling, punctuation, or word choice interfere greatly with any reader’s understanding of content. Always submit your written work on time; late work is marked down. You must complete all written assignments to pass the course.

Final Grade

Essay 1 (40%)
Essay 2 (50%)
Writing exercises and drafts (10%)
Academic Integrity
Harvard Extension School expects students to understand and maintain high standards of academic integrity. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to review and disciplinary action by the Administrative Board for University Extension. Students are expected to be fully familiar with Harvard Extension School’s policy on Academic Integrity, which you will find here: <http://www.extension.harvard.edu/exams-grades-policies/student-responsibilities>

More specifically, here (below) are the relevant paragraphs on Harvard Extension School’s policies on academic honesty in written work as they appear on the web at <http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/career-academic-resource-center/plagiarism-proper-use-sources>:

Overview

Harvard Extension School advocates the active exchange of ideas, including course content and independent research, among faculty and students. When submitting assignments for credit all work submitted must be your own and created specifically for each course. The only exceptions are instructor-assigned group projects and preapproved dual submissions. In either of these cases, you must follow explicit procedures (see the policies on inappropriate collaboration and duplicate assignments).

When crafting written assignments you are required to follow standard academic guidelines for proper citation (e.g., APA, MLA, or Chicago Manual of Style). You must distinguish your own ideas and language from information derived from sources. Do not, intentionally or unintentionally, incorporate facts, ideas, or specific language taken from another source without citation.

Student responsibility

You are responsible for understanding Harvard Extension School policies on academic integrity and how to use sources responsibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting “the wrong draft,” or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. There are no excuses for failure to uphold academic integrity.

Consequences of plagiarism and cheating

The consequences for academic dishonesty (cheating and plagiarism) are severe, but appropriate given that it constitutes stealing others’ ideas and attempting to earn college credit for their work. Sanctions may include an RQ grade for the course—a permanent failing grade on your transcript—and suspension for 1 academic year. Intention is not considered when adjudicating cases. The penalty can be the same if you intentionally or unintentionally plagiarize, if it is your first offense, or if it was a final paper, small assignment, or draft.

We will devote some class time to what constitutes plagiarism and steps to avoid dishonest use of sources, and you will be required early in the semester to take the two online tutorials offered by the Extension School on the subject: 1) Using Sources, Five Scenarios, and 2) Using Sources, Five Examples.
**Weekly Class Schedule**

**Week 1**
- Introduction
- **9/2/15** Read and Write: Diagnostic Writing Test (in class)

**Week 2**
  - Harvey, “Elements of the Academic Essay”
- **9/9/15** Write: Exercise 1.1: Using academic terms
- Additional Assignment: Borzoi chapter and exercises on Plurals and Possessives

**Week 3**
- **9/16/15** Write: Exercise 1.2: Compare 2 versions of Rodriguez
- Additional Assignment: Forward to me at any time before class begins the confirmation emails that you will receive from HES upon your successful completion of the two online tutorials in how to avoid plagiarism. You will find both under “Online Tutorials” at <www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/career-academic-resource-center/plagiarism-proper-use-sources>

**Week 4**
- **9/23/15** Write: Exercise 1.3: Compare Wolf–X or Angelou–Woodson

**Week 5**
- Read: *Short Guide*: Chapter 2 “Drafting and Revising” and Chapter 3 “Shaping Paragraphs.” In-class work on grammar and expression.
- **9/30/15** Write: Exercise 1.4: Talking back: 2 pages creating your questions and arguments.

**Week 6**
- Read: Dillard, “Living Like Weasels” and Lin, “A Mix of Blood and Consciousness” (both on Canvas).
- **10/7/15** Write: Exercise 1.5: Introductory paragraph, including thesis, for your first essay draft. Outline as well if you want.

**Week 7**
- Read: *Short Guide*: Chapter 4 “Revising for Conciseness.” Lane, “The Sound of Music”
- **10/14/15** Write: Essay 1 DRAFT due.
  - Conferences this week and next.

**Week 8**
- Read: *Short Guide*: Chapter 5 “Revising for Clarity.” Conferences this week.
- **10/21/15** Assignment: Structure: Arrange “Who Killed King Kong” essay paragraphs into order, and be prepared to explain/defend that order—pay attention to signal phrases, stitching, hierarchy of ideas in paragraphs.
Week 9  Begin in Class: Poe, “The Cask of Amontillado”
10/28/15  Write: Essay 1 FINAL DRAFT.

Week 10  Read: Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener”; Welty, “Why I Live at the P.O.”


Week 12  Read: Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”; O’Brien, “The Things They Carried”
11/18/15  Write: Exercise 2.3 (close reading relationship between 2 characters) due in class

Week 13  Thanksgiving Break – no class
11/25/15

Week 14  Read: Short Guide: Chapter 3 “Shaping Paragraphs”
12/2/15  Write: Exercise 2.4: Thesis-intro-outline

Week 15  Read: TBD. In-class work on structuring paragraphs and close reading.
12/9/15  Writing Assignment: Essay 2 DRAFT due by / before 7:30 PM. Conferences this week and next.

Week 16  In-class work TBD.
12/16/15  Write: Essay 2 FINAL DRAFT.