

Composition/English 327: Advanced Exposition

Course Description and Overview: The goal of Advanced Exposition is to provide students upper level study of academic and creative expository writing. This course builds on students' previous composition experience so that they may strengthen their abilities to critically read and produce written essays, paying close attention to purpose and audience. Revision as part of the writing process will be a major focus in producing written assignments. This course encourages each student to find a writerly voice and write with style, grace, and clarity. Beginning with the idea that one becomes a better writer by immersing oneself in language, we will spend a great deal of time reading and responding to a variety of kinds of expository writing. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussion of readings and topics, and to give and receive feedback on works-in-progress, take drafts of work to the Writing Center, and to revise substantially. Our classroom is an open learning environment where everyone should feel safe to express ideas and opinions, and for this reason all ideas and opinions should be respected in class discussion.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students should have advanced experience with academic and creative expository writing. They should:

- identify the elements of argument and rhetorical strategies of essays written for an academic audience
- identify elements of argument and rhetorical context and audience in creative expository writing
- utilize the appropriate vocabulary when identifying these strategies in different kinds of writing
- practice analysis of form, content, rhetorical strategy, and writing style in different kinds of writing
- use these strategies to write essays directed toward different kinds of educated audiences
- focus on revision as an essential part of the writing process

Program Goals

Students completing a concentration in English are exposed to texts and conversations about texts so that they may understand how the literary imagination works. Students should emerge with (1) a set of technical skills and (2) an understanding of a variety of critical frameworks and contexts for communicating insights about texts.

Specifically, students successfully completing the English major will be able to demonstrate:

Skills: Reading, Writing, Conducting Research, Informed Criticism

- Facility at "close reading"--the ability to read texts for both denotative and connotative meaning, and to use appropriate literary concepts and terminology.
- The ability to use writing to analyze, interpret, and make arguments about texts
- The ability to conduct and incorporate research into writing about texts, providing appropriate documentation
- The ability to apply critical theories and methodologies to texts

Understandings: Cultural, Historical, and Diverse Contexts

- Understanding of the relationship between works of literature and the cultures in which they are embedded
- Understanding of literary genres and traditions
- Understanding of the presence and role of diverse voices within the traditional Anglo-American literary canon

Required Books

Paul Loeb **The Impossible Will Take a Little While** (2004)

Diane Ackerman **The Moon By Whale Light** (1991)

Nazir Afisi **Reading Lolita in Tehran** (2008)

Jonathan Kozol **Amazing Grace** (2012)

Email Availability: Please check your UMD email account regularly. I will regularly send email messages to the whole class regarding assignments, updates, and other class information. You may contact me via email (address above) though be advised that I may not respond immediately to messages received. It is preferable that, when possible, you come talk to me during office hours with any questions and concerns. Also, most assignments and course information will be available on Canvas. Make sure you know how to navigate this site and find all relevant course materials.

Attendance: Because this class depends so much on your **active** engagement, attendance is essential. If you miss more than two classes, I will lower your final grade by one-third (a B+ will become a B, a B will become a C+). UM-Dearborn's official attendance policy states that, "a student is expected to attend every class and laboratory for which he or she has registered ... An instructor is entitled to give a failing grade (E) for excessive absences or an Unofficial Drop (UE) for a student who stops attending class at some point during the semester."

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Writing students are required to cite sources according to academic conventions and to understand the institutional definition of plagiarism. Academic misconduct, including plagiarism, is subject to disciplinary action, according to the UM-D Statement of Student Rights and Code of Student Conduct. The University considers plagiarism a violation of policy and a serious ethical breach. Plagiarism is defined as "submitting as one's own any work which, in part or whole, is not entirely one's own work without properly attributing it to its correct source." Sanctions may include failing the course and possible expulsion. Plagiarism encompasses both deliberate cheating as well as failure to cite sources properly. In this and other classes, never download a paper from an online paper mill, have someone else do work for you, copy and paste passages from articles into your own writing, or use anybody else's words or ideas without attribution.

The Writing Center: provides support for all UM-Dearborn students wishing to improve their writing. Students needing regular one-on-one help in developing basic writing skills, as well as more advanced students wishing to improve their writing, will find the center useful. The center is located in 3035 CB (Mon-Thurs 8:30-7:00 and Fri 8:30-1:00) with smaller satellites on the first floor of Mardigian Library (Mon-Thurs 10:00-1:00) and Fairlane Center North 138 (Mon-Thurs 2:00-8:00). The center tries to accommodate walk-ins but prefers students make appointments online at http://casl.umd.umich.edu/writ_center/

Disability Resources: The University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students need to register with Disability Resource Services (DRS) **every semester** they are enrolled for classes. DRS is located in Counseling & Support Services, 2157 UC. To be assured of having services when they are needed, students should register **no later than the end of the add/drop deadline of each term.**

Workload and Assignments:

Homework, quizzes, in-class writing	50
Personal Narrative Assignment	50
Flash nonfiction 5 piece portfolio	100
Personal Narrative with an argument or message	100
Final Essay Project Draft	50
Final Essay Project	100
Total	450

Quizzes occur at the beginning of class and can't be made up. Papers must be handed in on their due dates; late papers will receive a one-letter grade drop (a "B" becomes a "C"). For emergencies or extenuating circumstances please talk to me about getting an extension **before** the due date.

All sources used in any writing should be cited according to MLA style, and essays that include cited sources should include a properly formatted MLA Bibliography page.

General Notes on Evaluation of Papers:

High scoring papers (A and B range) are well above average in their sophistication, focus, development,

and organization of ideas and in their effective use of language and style of writing. Papers that receive a mid-range grade are functioning at a basic level

and often show less clear focus, may include some undeveloped ideas, and may utilize awkward language and grammatical or mechanical problems that distract from the flow of the essay. Failing papers may not meet the requirements of the assignment, have seriously underdeveloped ideas, or include an excessive accumulation of language errors that may make the paper generally unintelligible.

A+	100 – 97
A	96 – 93
A-	92 – 90
B+	89 – 87
B	86 – 83
B-	82 – 80
C+	79 – 77
C	76 – 73
C-	72 – 70
D+	69 – 67
D	66 – 63
D-	62 – 60
F	Below 60

Grading Scale (calculate points earned out of points possible to see your percent grade, and translate that into the corresponding letter grade)

An important note on reading for class: When you have a particular reading due, that means you should read carefully, take notes, and create “talking points” you can use for class discussion, and BRING THE TEXT WITH YOU TO CLASS. Mark down questions, points of disagreement, points of interest, and notable moments where the writer’s voice is especially audible. Mark passages where the writer uses effective rhetorical techniques (the artful use of sentence fragments, the allusions, etc.). This active reading is a crucial part of preparation for class and a useful intellectual habit too.

Schedule

September

4 Introduction to course + reading selection (Dillard, “Lenses”; handout) and in-class writing

11 Henry Miller “Reflections on Writing” (PDF); Joan Didion “On Keeping a Notebook” (PDF); Eloquent Essay and Two Offices (PDF)

18 Reading from *Impossible*: Ackerman 22, Mandela 73, Sanders 99, Waskow 106, Berger 111
Personal Essay Draft Workshop (bring a paper copy of your draft to class)

25 Reading from Lamott Bird by Bird (PDF); Dillard, “Total Eclipse”(PDF); Letham on *plagiarism* <http://harpers.org/archive/2007/02/the-ecstasy-of-influence/>

***Friday 9/26 Personal Essay Due on Canvas**

October

2 Reading from *Impossible*: Neruda 132, Bateson 207, Loeb 288, West 293

Personal Narrative with Argument Draft Due (workshop; bring a paper copy of your draft to class)

9 Readings and Assignments TBA

(Ai Wei Wei Documentary: <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/category/art-artists/page/2/>)

16 Reading from Ackerman *The Moon by Whale Light* (chapters TBA)

***Friday 10/17 Personal Narrative with Argument Due on Canvas**

23 Readings from Purpua, Dillard, and others on short short nonfiction (PDF)

30 **Flash Nonfiction drafts** (workshop; bring paper copies to class)
Nazir Afisi *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (chapters: Lolita and Gatsby)

November

6 Nazir Afisi *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (chapters: James and Austin)

***Friday 11/7 Flash Nonfiction Portfolio Due on Canvas**

13 ***Class starts at 6:30pm**
Film: *Manufactured Landscapes*

20 Jonathan Kozol *Amazing Grace*

23 Final Essay Project Draft Workshop (bring a paper copy to class)

27 Thanksgiving No Class

December

4 Readings from *Impossible*: Zinn 63, Mandela 73, Nouwen 114, Kushner 169, Loeb 288, Walker 361, Starhawk 378, Tutu 390 (choose four to read/present/share with the class)

Film: *I Am*

Final Exam time: Thur Dec 11 6:30-9:30pm

***Final Essay Project Due**, presentations and discussion in class