

Analytical Reading, Writing, and Inquiry: Conflicts of Culture and Capitalism



Course Description

In this course, we will be developing skills of analytical thinking, reading, and writing that are key to your success as a university student. To meet that goal, we will examine essays, films, music videos, and a range of other cultural objects. We will consider in our study the inquiry question, how does late-stage capitalism affect the ability to maintain and express cultural identities?

The course is divided into 3 Units. In each Unit, you will learn new analytical skills and practice exercising those skills in various minor assignments and “skill focuses.” Each Unit then culminates in a final essay that allows you develop your own analytical claim about how a text works. Because the tools of analysis can be used across a range of media, each Unit will have a different type of cultural object as the subject of our analysis: written texts (Unit 1), films (Unit 2), and music videos (Unit 3).

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- employ strategies of pre-writing, drafting, and revising, taking into consideration rhetorical purpose, the knowledge and needs of different audiences, and the feedback of instructors and peers;
- produce substantial revisions of drafts, as distinguished from editing and proofreading;
- read critically, summarize, apply, analyze, and synthesize information and concepts in written and visual sources as the basis for developing their own ideas and claims;
- conduct inquiry-driven research, using appropriate data repositories and properly attributing and citing the language and ideas of others to avoid plagiarism;
- develop a focused thesis and link it to appropriate reasons and adequate evidence;
- use genre conventions and structure (e.g., introductions, paragraphing, transitions) in ways that serve the development and communication of information and ideas; and
- edit such that choices in style, grammar, and voice contribute rhetorically to the effective communication of information and ideas.

Required Texts and Materials

- Rosenwasser, David and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*. Eighth Edition. Stamford, CT: Cengage, 2018.
- *Spirited Away* (2001) and *In the Heights* (2021). Copies of these films will be made available through library course reserve, but you may want to secure other means of viewing them on your own.

Assignments

We will complete two types of written assignments this semester. **Skill Focuses** are shorter opportunities for practicing the strategies of analytical reading and writing that we will be studying in class. **Essays** give you the chance to practice those strategies by making and developing claims about cultural texts that we will consider in class. Multiple smaller assignments (in-class activities, peer engagements, reading annotations, etc.) throughout the semester will provide additional opportunities for us to enhance the skills we are learning. **You must complete and hand in all Skill Focuses and Essays in order to qualify for a passing grade for the course.**

Assignments are weighted as follows:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| ESSAYS | 40% |
| Essay 1: Comparative Analysis | |
| Essay 2: Lens-Driven Analysis | |
| Essay 3: Research-Based Analysis | |
| SKILL FOCUS ASSIGNMENTS | 20% |
| Skill Focus 1: Summary & Analysis | |
| Skill Focus 2: Analysis of a Film Scene | |
| Skill Focus 3: Research Proposal | |
| DRAFTING | 20% |
| Essay Drafts and Peer Review | |
| Drafting Assignments and Activities | |
| ENGAGEMENT | 20% |
| Peer Engagements: Discussion and Collaborative Annotations | |
| Weekly Friday Assignments | |
| In-Class Participation | |
| Total | 100% |

Schedule of Readings

Unit 1: Cultivating Analytical Habits of Mind

Week 1

- Course Syllabus
- *Writing Analytically* 2-5, “Writing as a Tool of Thought”
- WA 10-16, “Counterproductive Habits of Mind”
- Wilhoit, “Summary” (Canvas)
- WA 39-40, “Becoming Conversant Instead of Reading for the Gist”
- WA 45-47, “Paraphrase x3”
- **Complete: Canvas Week 0 Getting Started (the four acknowledgements/surveys)**

Week 2

Sylvie Kim, “The End of Spam Shame”

- WA 17-21, “Notice & Focus”
- “Tools for Textual Analysis” (Canvas)
- WA 25-32, “Move 4 . . . (The Method)”
- **Submit Week 2 | Friday Assignment // Revising a Summary**

Week 3

Nadine Gordimer, “The Poor Are Always with Us”

- WA 21-23, “Move 3... Asking ‘So What?’”
- WA 56-58, “Uncovering Assumptions”
- WA 109-11, “Strategies for Making Comparison/Contrast More Analytical, Including Difference within Similarity”
- WA 271-72, “Comparison/Contrast: Two Formats”
- **Submit Skill Focus 1: Summary and Analysis**

Week 4

- Example Essay 1
- WA 231-33, “Integrating Quotations into Your Paper”
- Losh et al., “The Paragraph as a Sandwich” (Canvas)
- Thesis Statement Guide
- WA 168-71, “Larger Organizational Skills”
- **Submit Essay 1 Thesis Statement Draft and Essay Plan**

Week 5

- Read “Asking, Giving, Taking Feedback” (Canvas)
- WA 207-11, “Recognizing and Fixing Weak Thesis Statements”
- WA 281-88, “Introductions and Conclusions Across the Curriculum”
- Read Straub, “Responding – Really Responding – to Other Students’ Writing” (Canvas)
- Review WA 281-88, “Introductions and Conclusions Across the Curriculum”
- **Peer Review of Essay 1**
- **Submit Essay 1: Comparative Analysis**

Unit Two: Using Sources as Lenses

Week 6

Watch *Spirited Away* (2001) and *In the Heights* (2021)

- “Tools for Analyzing Visual Media” (Canvas)
- WA 162-65, “Doing 10 on 1: Saying More About Less”
- **Submit Course Film Reflection**

Week 7

Jeffrey Rosen “Identity Crisis”

- WA 63-68, “Apply a Reading as a Lens”
- WA 222-25, “Strategy 4: Use Your Sources to Ask Questions, Not Just to Provide Answers”
- **Submit Skill Focus 2: Analysis of a Film Scene**

Week 8

Jonathan Crary, “24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep”

- WA 21-23, “Move 3 . . . Asking ‘So What?’”
- **Submit Week 8 | Friday Assignment // Keystone as a Lens**

Week 9

- WA 225-27, “Strategy 5: Put Your Sources into Conversation with One Another”
- WA 82-83, “Seems to Be about X, but Could Also Be... about Y”
- WA 207-12, “Recognizing and Fixing Weak Thesis Statements”

- **Submit Essay 2 Proposal**

Week 10

- WA 231-33, “Integrating Quotations into Your Paper”
- **Peer Review of Essay 2**
- **Submit Essay 2: Lens-Based Analysis**

Unit 3: Advancing Analysis through Scholarly Research

Week 11

Nan Enstad, “Toxicity and the Consuming Subject”

- WA 63-68, “Apply a Reading as a Lens”
- WA 283-84, “Putting an Issue or Question in Context”
- Review Tools for Textual Analysis and Tools for Visual Analysis
- Spencer Kornhaber, “Taylor Swift, ‘Wildest Dreams,’ and the Perils of Nostalgia”
- Max Fisher, “Gangnam Style Dissected: The Subversive Message Within South Korea’s Music Video Sensation”
- **Submit Music Video Selection and Reflection on Course Themes**

Week 12

- WA 99, “Find the Analytical Potential: Locate an Area of Uncertainty”
- Evaluating Source Purpose & Use; Evaluating Sources Video
- WA 235-38, “What Does Plagiarism Do to the Conversation?” and “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Plagiarism”
- Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Avoiding Plagiarism
- **Submit Research Journal**

Week 13

- How Can I Create Stronger Analysis?; How to Write an Effective Thesis Statement for Research Papers Video
- WA 182-87, “Making a Thesis Evolve”
- WA 326-32, “Expletives: Beginning with ‘It Is’ or ‘There Is’” through “The Politics of Language”
- **Submit Skill Focus 3: Analytical Proposal and Bibliography**

Week 14

- Review Worksheets on Textual Analysis and Visual Analysis
- Review WA 16-32, “Move 2” through “Move 4”
- Example Essay 3
- Read WA 219-230, “Six Strategies for Analyzing Sources” (portions are review)
- Review WA 182-99, “Making a Thesis Evolve”
- **Submit Thesis Progression sheet**

Week 15

- Essay 3 Peer Review and workshopping
- **Submit Essay 3: Research-Based Analysis of a Music Video**