

# WRPG 101.01: U.S. RESEARCH WRITING FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**WRPG 100.01**  
**M/W 9:30-10:20**  
**ALTHOUSE 109**

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

One of the most important skills in a successful academic career is the ability to write effectively for a variety of audiences. This course will assist students, particularly nonnative speakers, in their courses by practicing the components and conventions of academic writing. Through lectures, discussion, writing assignments, and peer-review workshops, students will learn how to create thesis statements, make logical arguments, use clear and concise language, and understand their audience. In addition, students will learn how to evaluate, acquire, and cite academic sources. A workshop atmosphere is encouraged in the classroom, and students will review, edit, and revise their writing and make suggestions for improvement in other students' writing.

## **COURSE GOALS**

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- create a thought-provoking thesis statement and develop a well-organized argument to support it
- analyze ideas and facts to support an argument
- understand the writing conventions for different audiences and be able to adapt to those conventions
- write a formal research paper using appropriate materials
- edit their writing for improvements in grammar, organization, clarity, and tone
- work independently as writers, seeking out help as they need it

## **COURSE TEXTS**

*Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide, 11<sup>th</sup> ed.*, Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell

*A Writer's Reference, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.*, Diana Hacker

Writing handouts

## GRADING

All assignments will be evaluated on a point scale; these points will be weighted and converted into letter grades, according to the following distribution:

Class participation/attendance/peer editing	20%
Homework/writing assignments	40%
Annotated bibliography for research essay	5%
First draft of research essay	10%
Revision of research essay	25%

On Wednesday, October 20, I will submit roll call grades which will give you feedback about your progress in the course. However, you should ask me immediately if you have any questions about your grade. Remember that grades are not negotiable, and if you're concerned about a particular assignment, you need to talk to me before the assignment is due.

## ASSIGNMENTS

- **Class participation:** This segment of your grade covers your constructive involvement in class discussions, active participation in in-class writing, attendance in class, contribution in peer-review workshops, and willingness to seek additional help through office hours. Note: Although I expect and welcome differing and disagreeing opinions, I do not tolerate insults or contempt for others' ideas.
- **Homework:** I will select texts for reading which demonstrate the learning point or genre we are covering in class. You will be able to use these texts as a reference for your writing assignments, in which you will practice the form of writing we are studying. In addition, I may assign readings which we will use for class discussion or practicing a writing skill.

Writing assignments may be awarded 5, 10, or 20 points depending on the difficulty of the assignment. Some assignments will require formal writing, and others will require a less traditional approach. You will be evaluated on the clarity, structure, analysis, and attempt at complexity in your writing. Other homework assignments may be announced throughout the semester.

- **Research essay:** For this paper, you will create a thesis, conduct research, and construct an essay that implements what you have read, written, and discussed in class. This paper will require a significant amount of research from academic sources and should display your best writing skills as you develop your topic (about 6-8 pages).

The research essay will have three components: the annotated bibliography, the first draft, and the final draft. The annotated bibliography will measure your ability to find appropriate sources and analyze them. I will grade the first draft of your research essay based on the complexity of the thesis and the logical reasoning of the argument. I will return your essays with suggestions for revision and meet with you to discuss your plans. I will evaluate your final draft based on the points above, as well as the clarity of language, audience awareness, and other factors.

## **REVISION**

An important part of the writing process is revision. We will devote class time to critically reading and revising your writing and the writing of other students through peer-review workshops. You will also practice revision through your research essay, which will have two graded stages. If you are unhappy with a grade on one of your shorter writing assignments, you may revise the essay. You must let me know your plan to revise and hand in the revised essay within two weeks of when it was passed back to you. Note: Revision is much more than simply “fixing” the sentence-level errors, moving a few paragraphs, or adding some sentences; it involves significant reworking of the essay.

## **FORMAT FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

All writing assignments, including homework, must be labeled with your name, course section, date, and assignment name; in addition, your essays should have a title. Please don't use a title page. All pages after the first page should have your last name and a page number. Assignments must be typed and double-spaced. Selected writing assignments may be accompanied by an “end page” that analyzes your essay and writing process. This is an informal discussion that can focus on the difficulties you had, things you attempted to do in the essay, things you think you did well, what you learned from this essay, etc. The purpose of this end page is to encourage you to be a more reflective writer.

## **DUE DATES AND LATE WORK**

All work is due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. I will deduct ten percent of the assignment's value for each calendar day (note: not each class day) that the assignment is late. If you are absent, send your work to class with a classmate, or submit it through Blackboard's digital drop box before the start of class. Work that is submitted in person or through Blackboard after class has started will be considered a day late. Failure to complete work on time due to computer problems is usually the result of procrastination; therefore, computer malfunctions are not a sufficient excuse for late work.

## **WEATHER DELAYS AND CLOSURES**

In the event that school is delayed or closed due to weather, check your e-mail and Blackboard announcements that day for information on make-up work and classes.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is required for this course, and I take attendance at the beginning of every class. Being absent or late to class will result in a lower participation grade. Absences are excused only if I am notified in advance and given appropriate written documentation: proof of participation in a school-sponsored activity, religious holiday, or doctor's note. More than two unexcused absences will negatively affect your participation grade, and two tardies (more than five minutes late) will equal one absence.

If you must be absent, note the policy for work that is due: all work is due at the beginning of class, whether you're in class or not. You are also responsible for finding out if any work is due for the next class; you can find the homework assignments posted on Blackboard.

## **MOODLE**

All course information, homework assignments, and writing assignments are posted on the Moodle site. Be sure that you can access the Moodle site for our class, and check your e-mail regularly. You are responsible for getting any information e-mailed or posted to the Moodle site.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Since the purpose of this class to improve your writing and to train you in the practices of academic writing, I consider plagiarism a serious issue. It is necessary for you to give proper credit to all of the resources you use in your research papers. Plagiarism is a violation of Dickinson's Student Code of Conduct, and is a specific form of cheating defined in the code as follows:

- 1) To plagiarize is to use without proper citation or acknowledgment the words, ideas, or work of another. Whenever one relies on someone else for phraseology, even for only two or three words, one must acknowledge indebtedness by using quotation marks and giving the source, either in the text or in a footnote.
- 2) When one borrows facts which are not matters of general knowledge, including all statistics and translations, one must indicate one's indebtedness in the text or footnote. When one borrows an idea or the logic of an argument, one must acknowledge indebtedness either in a footnote or in the text. When in doubt, footnote. (Academic Standards Committee, November, 1965)

If you have any uncertainty about whether you have relied too much on another person's ideas or writing, please see me before a paper is due.

## **IF YOU NEED HELP**

Please see me during my office hours or make an appointment with me if you don't understand an assignment's requirements or purpose, if you don't understand my comments or grading, if you're having problems with the reading or other work, or if you're simply "stuck" while trying to write an essay. You can also contact me via e-mail or phone with questions, but remember that some writing problems are best solved through discussion. In addition, the Writing Center can help you at any stage of the writing process. You can make an appointment with me or with other trained writing consultants at the Writing Center by calling x1620.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES**

In compliance with the Dickinson College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss requests made by students with disabilities for academic accommodations. Such requests must be verified in advance this semester by Marni Jones, Coordinator of Disability Services, who will provide a signed copy of an accommodation letter. This must be presented in a scheduled meeting with me prior to any accommodations being offered. Requests for academic accommodations should be made during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so that timely and appropriate arrangements can be made. Students requesting accommodations are required to register with Disability Services, located in Academic Advising, first floor of Biddle House (contact ext. 1080 or [jonesmar@dickinson.edu](mailto:jonesmar@dickinson.edu)) to verify their eligibility for reasonable and appropriate accommodations.