

## SAMPLE COURSE SYLLABUS

The aim of ancient rhetorics was to **distribute the power that resides in language** among all of its students. This power is available **to anyone who is willing to study** the principles of rhetoric. People who know about rhetoric know **how to persuade** others to their point of view **without resorting to coercion or violence.**

–Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee

**English 125: College Writing  
Course Syllabus  
TuTh 2:30-4 p.m.; Section 048  
Winter Semester**

**Instructor:** Jill Lamberton

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 12:30-2:30 p.m., and by appointment

**Office Location:** Tisch Hall 0000

**\*Email Address:** email@umich.edu

**English Department Mailroom:** Angell Hall 0000, Hours: M-F, 7a.m.-4:30 p.m.

*Please be sure that anything you leave for me in the mailroom has my name on it.*

\*FYI: Email is the best way to contact me outside of class.

### WELCOME!

Let's be honest. You're an experienced writer. That's part of why you were accepted to the University of Michigan. You may wonder if you actually "need" this course. You're probably enrolled in "College Writing" because it fulfills the University of Michigan's first-year writing requirement, and you're registered for this particular section because it fits your schedule. Still, I'm glad you're here and that I'll have the chance to work with you this term. I really enjoy teaching college writing, partly because I've found my students at Michigan are experienced writers who are invested in their own writing. One of the assumptions that will guide my teaching practices in this course is that writing can always, always be improved, so I'm committed to make sure this course isn't simply a review of the things you learned about writing in high school, but rather builds on what you already know about writing to help you become an even more fluent writer, especially in the particular genre of writing for college. One of the things I'll ask you to do right away is assess your own writing and set some specific personal learning goals for the semester; that way, you and I can tailor this course to your specific interests and goals as a writer.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

According to the LS&A course guide, students in a first-year writing course will learn to:

- summarize and characterize essays and state their claims in their own words.
- evaluate an argument.
- develop an argument, taking a position on an issue or proposing a solution to a problem.
- support arguments using course readings and materials gathered through research.
- learn proper methods to attribute ideas to their authors and to cite sources.
- use group resources to work collaboratively and to revise extensively (LS&A Course Guide, First-Year Composition, Sec. 1).

Notice how many of the goals talk about "argument"? One of the central features of the genre of academic writing is that this writing states a claim (a thesis, an argument) and then moves to support that argument through methods that an academic community deems credible. Because much of the writing you'll do in the next few years will be for an academic audience (your professors and peers), we will spend a lot of time in this course focusing on the "rules of the academic writing game." At the same time, you and I both know that academic writing isn't the *only* writing you do, nor is it always the most rewarding. You write when you chat online, when you send emails, when you inscribe a birthday card, etc. Often in

these other forms of writing, however, you are also making arguments, though you may not think of your writing in this way. A second goal of this course, then, is that you will come to recognize arguments in everyday conversations and written exchanges. Whether or not we think of our interactions in argumentative terms, the fact remains that we are often working to convince other people to see other points of view, and they, in turn, are working to convince us to think or act differently.

Simply stated, then, my goal in English 125 is to help you become a better thinker and a better writer. Since I believe that writing and thinking are two aspects of the same process, you will be asked continually to write what you think and then think about what you have written.

In class, our conversations about writing will not be limited to what you and I have to say to each other. I have specifically designed this course so that you spend as much time talking and listening to your peers' ideas about writing as you do talking or listening to me or to the authors we read. What that means is that you will come to see your classmates as valuable resources in the process of writing and thinking more clearly. This is important because one of the first things to recognize about writing is that readers and writers exist in communities. We come to the university with our ways of knowing—our ways of reading and writing—and, ideally, we sit down to converse with each other, to learn from one another.

### COURSE GOALS

English 125, you will have the opportunity to:

- write 20-30 pages of revised, polished prose;
- reflect on your own processes of reading, writing, and thinking;
- set appropriate goals for improving writing and devise effective plans for achieving those goals;
- contribute your voice to critical conversations already in progress;
- use textual sources correctly and effectively in developing ideas;
- learn how to give and take constructive critique of writing in progress;
- collaborate with peers to define revision strategies for particular pieces of writing;
- focus on revision as a creative and intellectual process.

TEXTS, *available at Shaman Drum*

- Everything's An Argument*, 2nd edition, by Andrea A. Lunsford and John J. Ruskiewicz
- Easy Writer: A Pocket Guide*, 2nd edition, by Andrea A. Lunsford

### COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance and Participation:** I take attendance. The success of workshops and discussions depends upon your active participation, so your contributions are important to me. Please note, then, that your attendance isn't enough to make this course successful; I expect that you will also participate regularly in class by sharing your own observations and ideas. You can miss up to 3 classes without penalty. After that, your grade will be lowered one-third of a grade for each additional absence (A- becomes B+; B becomes B-, etc.).

**Conferences:** I will schedule two individual conferences with you throughout the term to discuss your writing. These meetings will last about 15-20 minutes each. Please note: a missed conference counts as an absence.

Please don't think, however, that you have to wait until your conference to talk with me about your writing; I have regularly scheduled office hours and you are welcome to drop in any time. If you can't meet during my scheduled office hours, please email me we can set up a scheduled appointment.

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. I will allow you to take one extension during the term if you discuss doing so with me *in advance* of the due date. Please plan carefully how (if) you will use that extension.

**Polished Written Work:** All written work (with the exception of occasional informal, in-class writing assignments) should be double-spaced and typed, in an easy-to-read font, 12 point typeface or smaller. (By the way, don't quadruple space between paragraphs. Simply indent to show a new paragraph begins.) You will be forever in my good graces if you staple the pages of your papers together before you turn them in.

**Evaluation:** Your final grade will be calculated according to the following percentages (and adjusted for absences and/or missed work):

Class/Workshop Participation	10%
Discussion Groups and Assignments (Peer Letters, Drafts, Summaries)	15%
Revised Essay #1	15%
Revised Essay #2	15%
Revised Essay #3	15%
Final Portfolio	30%

We will discuss evaluation frequently in this course so that you will better understand how you are being graded, and also so that you begin to develop more sophisticated forms of self-evaluation. The better you can read and evaluate your own work, the better writer you will become. As we get closer to each assignment, I will give you the specific criteria I'll use to evaluate it.

### **A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM**

The University of Michigan defines plagiarism as “Submitting a piece of work (for example, an essay, research paper, work of art, assignment, laboratory report) which in part or in whole is not entirely the student’s own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.” Plagiarism is when you knowingly submit someone else’s ideas or words as your own. Plagiarism is an act of intentional deception that not only is dishonest, it robs you of the most important product of education—the actual learning. You need to be familiar with the university’s academic dishonesty policy. If you are found guilty of academic dishonesty either by plagiarizing someone’s work or allowing your own work to be misused by another, your grade will reflect that choice; you will fail the assignment and possibly the entire course. In addition, I will report the incident to the LS&A Academic Dean’s office.

Sometimes students plagiarize out of ignorance of the conventions, carelessness, or laziness. I will talk about plagiarism at length in class to ensure that you are aware of conventions for proper attribution of your sources. But be advised that in the “real” world, ignorance is no excuse.

Finally, you should know that it is possible to plagiarize yourself! If you submit work already completed for one course as original work for another course, you are violating university policies.

### **FINALLY**

Finally, I look forward to working with you this semester. Don’t hesitate to let me know if you have questions—that’s often the only way I know that I need to be more clear. Please see me or email me if you require special accommodations due to learning disabilities, religious practices, physical requirements, medical needs, or any other reasons.

*As a culture, we learn more about how to repress or ignore conflict  
than how to live with and transform it.*

–Catherine E. Lamb

## Schedule of Reading and Writing Assignments

### English 125.048, Jill Lamberton, Instructor

*All readings are found in Everything's an Argument unless otherwise indicated.*

#### Week 1

##### SIGN UP FOR CONFERENCES

- 01.07 Course Introduction  
In-Class: Writing Sample
- 01.09 Read: Chapter 1, "Everything's an Argument," pp. 3-21  
Write: Writer's Survey (2 pages)  
In-Class: Syllabus Quiz  
"Everything's an Argument" Introduction to Discussion Groups

#### Week 2

- 01.14 Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
Read: Chapter 2, "Reading and Writing Arguments" pp. 22-36  
Bring: Any example of a written or visual argument (1 page max. length)  
In-class: Receive and Discuss Writing Assignment #1
- 01.16 Read: Chapter 9, "Arguments of Definition" pp. 109-134  
Read: Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (handout)  
Bring: An example of an enthymeme you've seen/heard in the last week  
In Class: Bigger, Better Thesis Statements

#### Week 3

- 01.21 **Write: Drafts of Essay #1 Due (Bring 3 Copies)**  
Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
In-class: Receive and Discuss Peer Letter Assignment  
Workshop 1
- 01.23 Write: Peer Letters Due  
Read: Chapter 3, "Readers and Contexts Count," pp. 37-46  
In-Class: Audience Analysis  
Workshop 2

#### Week 4

- 01.28 Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
Read: Chapter 20, "Intellectual Property," pp. 326-333 & English Department Memo to Undergraduate Students on Plagiarism  
< <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp> >  
Workshop 3 & 4
- 01.30 **Write: Revised Essay #1 Due in Class**  
In-Class: "Fallacies of Argument," pp. 312-325

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**Week 5**

02.04 Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
Read: Chapter 4, "Arguments from the Heart," pp. 49-56

02.06 Read: Chapter 10, "Evaluations," pp. 135-160  
In-Class: Receive and Discuss Essay Assignment #2

**Week 6**

02.11 Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
Read: Chapter 6, "Arguments Based on Character," pp. 64-72

02.13 **Write: Rough Drafts of Essay #2 Due (Bring 3 Copies)**  
Workshops 5 & 6

**Week 7**

SIGN UP FOR CONFERENCES

02.18 Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
Write: Peer Letters Due  
In-Class: Artistic and Inartistic Proofs  
Workshop 7

02.20 Read: Chapter 7, "Arguments Based on Facts and Reason," pp. 73-88  
In-Class: Mid-Term Evaluations  
Workshop 8

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8**

03.04 **Write: Revised Essay #2 Due in Class**  
Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
In-Class: Receive and Discuss Essay Assignment #3  
In-Class: Documenting Sources, MLA Style

03.06 **Library Tour; Today's Class meets in UGL**  
Read: Chapter 21, "Assessing and Using Sources," pp. 334-341

**Week 9**

03.11 Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
Read: Chapter 12, "Proposals," pp. 190-214

03.13 NO CLASS (Conferences)

**Week 10**

03.18 **Write: Rough Drafts of Essay #3 Due (Bring 3 Copies)**  
Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
Workshop 9

03.20 Write: Peer Letters Due  
Read: Virginia Woolf, from "A Room of One's Own" (handout)  
Workshops 10

**Week 11**

03.25 Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
 Read: Chapter 14, "Figurative Language and Argument," pp. 239-250  
 Workshop 11

03.27 **Write: Revised Essay #3 Due in Class**

**Week 12**

04.01 Write: Discussion Group Posting Due  
 Read: Alice Walker, "Everyday Use" (handout)

04.03 In-Class: Receive and Discuss Final Portfolio Assignment

**Week 13**

## OPTIONAL PORTFOLIO CONFERENCES

04.08 Write: Final! Discussion Group Posting Due (Make an argument for why the email is or is not a valuable assignment for a future English 225 class)  
 Workshop 12

04.10 Workshops 13

**Week 14**

04.15 Workshop 14

**Exam Week**

04.21 **Portfolios Due in My Mailbox (3161 Angell Hall) by 4:30 p.m.**