

# Interdisciplinary Composition

*ENGL 215—Fall 2016*

**Instructor:** Jacob Craig  
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**Meeting Times:** Monday, Wednesday, and  
Friday 12:00-12:50  
**Meeting Place:** Maybank 104  
**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday,  
2PM-4PM



## Course Description

How do writers in my major or discipline write? What are the common features of academic writing in my discipline and why does it look this way? How does the writing in my discipline compare to writing in other disciplines? What do the writing practices used by members of my discipline reveal about what this discipline values?

To address these central questions of the course, we will read research on *rhetoric*, the study and practice of communication within specific contexts. Some of this research deals with broader issues such as what rhetoric is and how to read rhetorically. Most importantly, you will draw from these readings to produce your own knowledge about how writers in your chosen discipline write, research, make knowledge, and share knowledge. The ultimate goal of this course is for you to research and rhetorically analyze writing from your own major so you can incorporate these rhetorical strategies into your own writing and better understand how your discipline works.

## Course Outcomes

This course is designed to satisfy the following program and General Education Student Learning outcomes:

**General Education Student Learning Outcomes** As a course that fulfills the general education first-year writing requirement, ENGL 215 has the following learning outcomes:

- Students articulate clear analytical theses
- Students effectively situate their ideas in relation to sources
- Students select and correctly document relevant credible sources

These outcomes will be assessed using the **Source-Based Article**.

**Program Outcomes** By the end of ENGL 215, you will be able to compose texts for scholarly and non-scholarly audiences by attending to rhetorical concerns like purpose, audience, and genre. This goal is informed by Outcomes articulated by the Council of Writing Program Administrators.

### Process

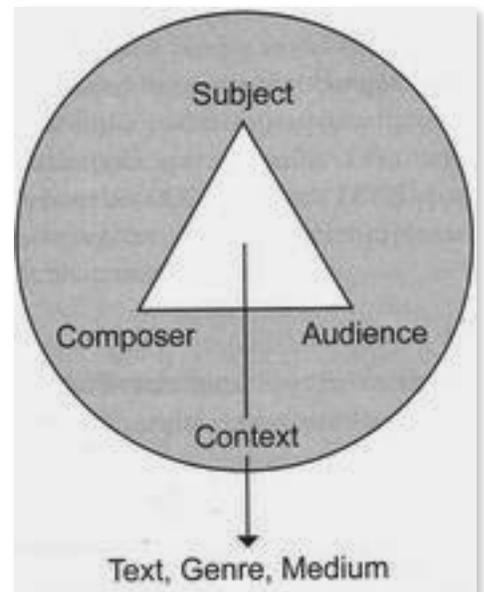
- Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including invention, drafting, revising, and editing
- Shape a work according to the requirements of purpose, genre, occasion, and audience
- Construct an effective argument using appropriate evidence
- Understand the conventions of academic writing
- Document work appropriately

### Reading and Research

- Develop skills for studying college-level essays and academic articles
- Develop skills for summarizing and paraphrasing college-level essays and academic articles
- Evaluate, analyze, and synthesize appropriate primary and secondary sources
- Integrate their ideas with the ideas of others effectively

### Rhetorical Analysis

- Understand how a text is shaped according to the requirements of purpose, genre, occasion, and audience
- Understand the difference between summary and analysis



### Required Reading

All of the materials read in this course will be provided via PDF through OAKS.

As indicated above, your projects and our discussions will be based solely on our required reading. Thus, you are expected to come to class ready to discuss the assigned reading. In other words, you should be ready to answer the questions, “What was last night’s reading about?” and “What did you think was interesting/important about last night’s reading?”

### Required Technology

Given the nature of the course, you will be asked to use digital technologies to read and compose both in-class and out-of-class. I will not ask you to use a platform that is not freely available on any machine – including those in the library.

That said, the use of digital technologies to complete our coursework does not give you license to check-out during class by checking your social media feeds or by texting. When I see it happening during class meetings, I'm more than happy to interrupt myself to let you know it's inappropriate. If it happens often, I'm more than happy to have a different kind of conversation with you after class.

### Presence Policy

I will take attendance at each class meeting. Chronic failure to attend class will affect your grade. Because all of our projects draw on information from in-class lectures, poor attendance will also have a negative impact on any one of your project grades. More than three absences (excused or unexcused) may result in your grade being lowered by 1/3 (B+ becomes a B, etc.). More than six absences may result in failing the course.

Accommodations will be made for students with valid and documented absences (illness, death in the family, military duty, jury duty, religious holidays, official university activities). I will also work with students who experience issues with dependent care. Please see me as soon as possible if you foresee any of these issues so that we can plan on how best to keep you up-to-date with the course. Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are responsible for getting class notes for the days they miss and for keeping up with assignments.

### Grade Scale

Final Grades			
A	93 – 100	C	73 – 76
A-	90 – 92	C-	70 – 72
B+	87 – 89	D+	67 – 69
B	83 – 86	D	63 – 66
B-	80 – 82	D-	60 – 62
C+	77 – 79	F	0 – 59

### Grading Contract

You are guaranteed a B if you:

1. attend class regularly – not missing more than a week's worth of classes;
2. meet due dates and writing criteria for all major assignments;
3. participate in all in-class exercises and activities;
4. complete all **but one** informal, low stakes writing assignments (e.g. blog posts, proposals, and project updates);
5. give thoughtful peer feedback during class workshops and work faithfully with your group on other collaborative tasks (e.g., sharing papers, commenting on drafts, and peer editing);
6. sustain effort and investment on each draft of all papers;

7. make substantive revisions when the assignment is to revise – extending or changing the thinking or organization – not just editing or touching up;
8. copy-edit all final revisions of main assignments until they conform to the conventions of edited, revised English (unless otherwise appropriate given the genre you’re composing);
9. attend conferences with me to discuss drafts

Thus you earn the grade of B entirely on the basis of what you do – on your conscientious effort and participation. The grade of B does not derive from my judgment about the quality of your writing. Grades higher than B, however, do rest on my judgment of writing quality. To earn higher grades you must produce writing that I judge to be exceptionally high quality.

To earn the grade of A, you must produce **three** projects of exceptionally high quality. This can happen either as the result of revision after your grade has been assigned or upon the assessment of your project after the usual process of drafting, responding, and revising in-class. Exceptional quality varies from project to project, but overall, exceptional projects do more than meet the criteria of the assignment by bringing ideas together in novel ways; developing and explaining complex ideas; and providing sustained and systematic attention to writing concepts.

## Projects

**Source-based Article on Genre, Audience, and Rhetorical Situation** – For this assignment, you will write a 6–8 page source-based article, in which you will go beyond summarizing to analyze and make connections between the concepts of genre, audience, and rhetorical situation, and begin to develop a theory of writing.

Selecting any genre (those we’ve mentioned and others; academic and not), you will incorporate evidence from your selected genre and from our reading about these concepts – Bitzer, Flower and Hayes, Anzaldúa, Collins, Devitt, Malik, and Marro – to support your ideas about how genre, audience, and rhetorical situation work in the text you’ve selected.

First, you must first define the key terms audience, genre, and rhetorical situation and investigate their relationships by drawing on our course readings in



order to determine the connections between them. Second, you will closely analyze the genre you choose to write about in your article, looking at how the writer (or writers) uses genre, handles the rhetorical situation, and reaches an audience. As you develop your article you will incorporate both the rhetorical strategies we will explore in class and your understanding of audience, genre, and rhetorical situation.

At the same time you are developing your article, you will also create a 2-3 page reflection piece in which you begin to develop your theory of writing, considering the concepts of genre, audience, and rhetorical situation and how they connect.

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**Journal Article Review** For this assignment, you will select a peer-reviewed article and review in 4-5 pages. When reviewing your article, do so in the context of the journal it comes from and the discipline it serves and provide ample evidence from the article itself to evidence your thinking. This article should be part of the discipline that you plan to study throughout our semester. In reviewing the article, attend to the following issues:

- What new knowledge is shared through the article you've selected?
- What larger disciplinary conversation is the article you've selected contributing to?
- Based on the article you've selected, what counts as acceptable knowledge in the larger disciplinary community?
- How do scholars and researchers make knowledge in the disciplinary community you've selected?

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**Composition-in-Three Genres** The third project for our class asks you to use the research and analysis conducted within your first and second projects to create a composition that uses three different genres to communicate to specific audiences. In other words, you need to create three new texts that relate to the information you uncovered and shared in your interview and rhetorical analysis projects. You will use your previous research to inform your strategy and help you make the rhetorical choices necessary to create an effective composition.

In this assignment, you will be communicating the knowledge you collected in the journal articles you analyzed in the third project. Your goal will be to take an article or two related articles and compose three genres that effectively communicate that scholarly research to an audience outside of the academy—a non-scholarly audience.

These three genres are up to you to decide upon, based on your analysis of the rhetorical situation and the way in which you respond to it. In this assignment, you will be relating your topic to audience even further, incorporating additional evidence, presenting new arguments, and considering audience expectations.

You will first strategically target a specific audience(s), then develop key messages to communicate to that audience and finally create three genres designed to communicate those messages to your audience(s). You will also write a rationale to communicate the connections between genres and your strategies for choosing them, and you will write a reflection that will consider the effect of these choices on your audience. This assignment requires you to engage your critical thinking, rhetorical awareness, and reflection capabilities in order to most effectively communicate with your specified audience. Your strategy will determine the choices you make in communicating to your audience, how you present the research, and what you create to convey your message. The composition will include:

- Three genres of communication created for your audience(s)
- A rationale for your composition (3–4 pages) that orients your reader to the purpose of your work and its significance to your audience
- A reflection (3–4 pages) that outlines the process from audience strategy to final composition, exploring the rhetorical choices you made in creating this project.

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**Interview with Faculty Member in the Disciplines** You will interview a tenured or tenure-stream faculty member of CofC about writing in their discipline with specific focuses on the rhetorical situations commonly addressed in your target discipline and the genres used to address those situations. To complete the project, you will submit a transcript of your interview and a 2–3 page reflection on what you learned about writing and writing in the discipline having completed the interview.

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**Reflection-in-Presentation** Reflection allows us the opportunity to process knowledge and then apply that knowledge. Through reflection, we can come to an understanding and interpret what we have learned. This semester, on several occasions, we have used reflection in this way; in this final assignment you will return to this definition of reflection. You have also been developing your theory of writing and what your theory of writing means in terms of its relationship to your writing—i.e., you have been exploring whether you enact your theory of writing in your own composition. As a result of this, you have had the opportunity to create a knowledge base of writing and its practices. In this final reflection, you will be returning to your theory to discuss several questions, including (but not limited to):

- Define your theory of writing.
- What was your theory of writing coming into this class? How has your theory of writing evolved with each piece of composing?

- What has contributed to your theory of writing the most? What is the relationship between your theory of writing and how you create(d) knowledge?
- How might your theory of writing be applied to other writing situations both inside and outside the classroom?

For each of these questions you will need to support your ideas with your previous writing in this course and, through these examples, interpret what you have learned. You will create a compelling argument for whatever you decide to write for this, supported by evidence and analysis of the work completed in class this semester.

You will choose a genre to work in – letter, email, essay, journal entry, or any genre you may desire that is approved by me – that you feel best represents your goals for your reflection and then explain why you chose that genre. In turn, you will also describe how your chosen genre affects the outcome (the final product) of your reflection.

This final reflection is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your increased knowledge in writing – the practices of writing, the key terms, and any specific skills you’ve acquired. Think of this piece as another move in the evolution of your theory of writing, and a chance for you to fully explore yourself as a writer and maker of knowledge.

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**Course Blog** To help explore ideas presented in the course readings, you will write and publish posts to our class blog. All blog posts are prompted; see the course calendar. In addressing these prompts, I am looking for three ways of engaging the material.

*\*\*Note: These criteria are adapted from Nathaniel Rivers’ and Kathleen Blake Yancey’s thinking about what blogs should do*

- a focused response on the reading and its elements
- connections that relate your response to recent discussions, your current coursework, something you might have read elsewhere, and/or previous experiences engaging with material of this nature in other contexts [as long as you help others see the relevance]
- commentary rather than summary to make particular aspects of the reading and making concrete through specific connections to your own experience inside and outside of class and previous readings

To engage the material in these ways, you’ll need to write at least 1 screen’s worth of content about 200 words.

## **Writing Lab**

I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, please call 843.953.5635 or visit <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>.

## **College of Charleston Honor Code and Academic Integrity**

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration – working together without permission – is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor. Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at (<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>)

**Center for Disability Services/SNAP**

This College abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center of Disability Services/SNAP, (843) 953-1431 or me so that such accommodation may be arranged.