

ENC 2305: Analytical Thinking and Writing

The University of Florida

Spring 2025

Zea Miller, PhD

Theme

Truth and Understanding



Two Peasants Digging

Vincent van Gogh

Saint-Rémy: October, 1889

Analytical Thinking and Writing

Truth and Understanding

Course	Days	Time	Location
ENC 2305	TR	T Period 8 - 9 R Period 9	Flint Hall Room 0113

Instructor	Email	Office	Office Hours
Zea Miller, PhD	zea.miller@ufl.edu	2215 Turlington Hall	TBA

Course Fulfillment

General Education: Composition

Writing Requirement Eligibility

Course Description

The Analytical Writing and Thinking Seminar is designed to advance students' critical thinking and writing skills beyond first-year composition. To achieve those goals, students will learn advanced analytical techniques and communication strategies that professors in all disciplines expect them to know. The texts and assignments in the course will expose students to challenging ideas. The subject matter of the course will be developed in accordance with the instructors' own studies, with wide-ranging themes in areas such as Languages, Political Science, Anthropology, or Biology. By examining humanistic or scientific theories or principles, students will learn how to read deeply and think critically. As such, the students will be introduced to seminal ideas in specific disciplines and will be asked to engage in debates important to our time and our culture. In this course, students will hone their reasoning skills through engagement with a specific topic and sharpen their writing skills through multiple drafts of papers with substantial feedback from their peers and their instructor. The culmination of the course will be a portfolio that demonstrates the individual student's growth as a thinker and as a writer.

Course Theme

In recent years, truth and understanding have been interwoven into a nexus of beliefs, conspiracies, news media, social media, misinformation, disinformation, and death. How could truth be dismissed or suppressed? Where does misunderstanding start? Worse, how can it be weaponized? Some have suggested that we are in a post-truth era. Is that even possible? We will be exploring the concept of truth and the work of understanding through lectures, discussions, readings, and viewings. While we will be exploring and examining these themes partially in narratives, this is not a literature course. Instead, texts will inspire conversations to enable us to fully examine

reality. While we will be exploring truth and understanding in light of current events, this is neither a political science nor medical science course. We will neither glorify nor demonize. As a writing course, the theme and content are structured to foster a space for you to grow as a writer while developing critical and creative thinking skills. As follows, this course will not teach you what to think. Rather, it will show you how to think differently, laterally, abstractly, and multiaxially, to improve your writing and vice versa.

Course Objectives

The following goals, means, and outcomes share a common cause: that students might establish precise analytical parameters for any reasoned discourse, compose content thereunder, and evaluate compliance thereto.

Goals	Means	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To demonstrate awareness of the standards, practices, and conventions of academic discussion, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation • To practice logical reasoning • To reinforce rhetorical awareness • To reinforce effective visual rhetoric • To practice peer editing • To examine truth and understanding in transdisciplinary contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating representative texts • Applying representative theories • Crafting multimodal persuasive solutions • Peer editing • Individual projects • Conducting original research 	<p>By the end of ENC 2305, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze specific influential research, theories, or philosophies • Recognize writing as an open process that permits writers to use reinvention and rethinking to revise their work • Understand the collaborative nature of writing processes by critiquing their own and others' work • Demonstrate critical thinking skills • Incorporate the ideas of published scholars in their own work • Produce a scholarly writing style, including clear, coherent, efficient, and well-organized prose as well as logical argumentation

Required Materials

Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus by Ludwig Wittgenstein. 9781324092438.

Digital texts and exhibits will be provided. Some films and television episodes will need to be either rented or accessed through streaming services. Since the availability of streaming and rental options changes by the month, adjustments to digital material requirements may be necessary.

Assignments and Grading

Students will compose essays in response to quiz prompts, participate in numerous group-writing exercises, and write and revise major papers. Rubrics that list evaluation criteria and point values will be provided for each major assignment on their assignment pages on Canvas.

Assignment	Word Count	Points
Classwork and Homework Quizzes and Activities	Variable	50
Paper 1 Critical Definition of Truth	1500 words	150
Paper 2 Critical Analysis of Understanding in a Text	1500 words	150
Paper 3 Deconstruction of Truth or Understanding across Texts	3000 words	300

Grading for this course will be rigorous. Successful assignments will illustrate a careful regard for spelling, grammar, and citation guidelines. Do not rely on your instructor for copy-editing, even on drafts. The writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the minimum requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit. To satisfy this requirement, every assignment's word count must be fulfilled. Submitted assignments short of the minimum word count will receive zero credit.

Grading Scale

A	100% to 94%	A-	< 94% to 90%
B+	< 90% to 87%	B	< 87% to 84%
B-	< 84% to 80%	C+	< 80% to 77%
C	< 77% to 74%	C-	< 74% to 70%
D+	< 70% to 67%	D	< 67% to 64%
D-	< 64% to 61%	E	< 61% to 0%

Course Credit Policies

General Education Learning Outcomes. Course grades now have two components: To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of "C" or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the

course to satisfy the CLAS requirement for Composition (C) and to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6). You must turn in all papers totaling 6,000 words to receive credit for writing 6,000 words. The writing requirement ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. PLEASE NOTE: a grade of "C-" will not confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition (C) requirement. The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Conferring credit for the University Writing Requirement, this course requires that papers conform to the following assessment rubric. More specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments may be delivered during the course of the semester.

General Education Writing Assessment Rubric

Aspect	Satisfactory (Y)	Unsatisfactory (N)
Content	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
Organization and Coherence	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
Argument and Support	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
Style	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.

Mechanics	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.
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Course Schedule

Throughout the term, we will meet several times per week. Typically, the first session will be dedicated to theory and discussion. Later sessions will be reserved for applying what we learned to activities and deliverables to advance and enhance student learning outcomes. Course matters are subject to change depending upon internal and external conditions.

Unit 1: Truth			
<p>All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident. —Arthur Schopenhauer</p>			
Weeks	Lectures, Discussions, and Activities	Readings and Viewings	Assignments
1	Syllabus Review, The False	Logical Fallacies	Quiz
2	Truth and Beliefs	<p>“Allegory of the Cave” by Plato</p> <p>“The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” by Le Guin</p>	Quiz
3	Ancient Languages. The Greek <i>Aletheia</i> and the Latin <i>Verum</i>	Extracts from <i>Parmenides</i> by Heidegger	Quiz
4	Necessity, Sufficiency, and Reasoning	<i>Gattaca</i> (1997) by Niccol	Quiz
5	Theory, Verification, Falsification, and Paradigms	<i>Denial</i> (2016) by Jackson	Quiz
6	Occam’s Razor and Simplicity	<p>“In the Pale Moonlight” (1998) from <i>Star Trek: Deep Space Nine</i> (S6/E19)</p> <p><i>Contact</i> (1997) by Zemeckis</p>	Paper 1 Critical Definition of Truth
Unit 2: Understanding			

Understanding is a three-edged sword: your side, their side, and the truth.
—J. Michael Straczynski

Weeks	Lectures, Discussions, and Activities	Readings and Viewings	Assignments
7	The Case and Clarity	Extracts from the <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> by Wittgenstein	Quiz
8	Semantics and Semiotics	“Darmok” (1991) from <i>Star Trek: The Next Generation</i> (S5/E2). <i>Arrival</i> (2016) by Villeneuve	Quiz
9	Argumentation and Evidence	“Measure of a Man” (1989) from <i>Star Trek: The Next Generation</i> (S2/E9)	Quiz
10	Spring Break		
11	Research Strategies		Paper 2 Critical Analysis of Understanding in a Text

Unit 3: Term Paper

There is a cult of ignorance in the United States, and there has always been. The strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge.
—Isaac Asimov

Weeks	Lectures, Discussions, and Activities	Readings and Viewings	Assignments
12	Introductions and Discussions		Compose Introduction and Discussion for Paper 3
13	Evidence		Analyze Evidence for Paper 3
14	Conclusions		Compose Conclusion for Paper 3

15	Present Findings to Class, End of Term Recap		Paper 3 Deconstruction of Truth or Understanding across Texts
Exams	No Final Exam		

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is required. The policy of the University Writing Program is that if students miss more than six periods during the term, they will fail the entire course. Double periods count as two absences. The UWP exempts from this policy only those absences due to university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, religious holidays, quarantine, illness, or serious family emergencies. For absences due to quarantine or illness, your instructor may require a signed doctor's note or confirmation from UF Screen, Test, & Protect. Students are responsible for updating their UF-required Screen, Test, & Protect status. *Please Note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.* Tardiness: If students enter class after roll has been called, they are late, which disrupts the entire class. Two instances of tardiness count as one absence.

Make-Up Work and Late Papers

Homework and papers will be due by the next class period for a student with a valid **excused** absence. **Without an excused absence, 10% of the grade will be deducted for EACH day an assignment is late.**

Honor Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Student Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another.

Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007 <<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>>)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire [Student Honor Code](#).

Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the internet without providing the exact location from which it came.

Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio>

Classroom Behavior

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

In-Class Work

Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class or on-line at the assigned deadline. Papers and drafts will be due before the next class period for students with a valid excused absence.

Participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in *socially distanced or virtual* small groups and participate in group discussions and other in-class activities. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up. Writing workshops require that students provide constructive feedback about their peers' writing.

Reading is a necessary part of this class. Each of the readings has been selected to provide examples of the theme so we can examine the rhetorical choices of the author(s) and discuss *how* a reading is successful or unsuccessful. Therefore, reading is a central element of learning to write. As such, by completing all of the assigned reading, students will be able to and will be expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

Paper Maintenance Responsibilities

So that work cannot be lost, students are required to compose content in Word documents stored on the GatorCloud OneDrive.

Mode of Submission

All assigned papers will be submitted as Word documents to Canvas as links to the file stored on the GatorCloud OneDrive. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Subject to Adjustments

Course material and dates are subject to change depending on internal and external factors.