

Writing 121, Spring 2016 Community Literacy

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Office Hours: T/R, 12:00-2:00 p.m.
Office Location: Ansin 12th Floor

Section 37
TR 2:00-3:45 p.m.
Ansin Building 201

Section 40
TR 10:00-11:45 a.m.
Walker Building 529

“Community Literacy”

What does it mean to be literate as a person, as an academic and student, and as a member of our community? Over the course of this semester, we will explore issues of literacy and access through these lenses and by working directly with members of the greater Boston community. In writing projects, students will work in various genres, such as literacy narratives, research guides, letter writing, proposals, and media campaigns, to address an array of rhetorical situations. In community literacy projects, you might find yourself creating a media campaign for a literacy organization, tutoring local students in writing and reading, or working with seniors to record their stories, among other things. An interest in civic engagement is suggested and willingness to engage with and travel to the community is a must, but experience is not required.

Service Learning

From Emerson’s Office of Service Learning and Community Action: Academic service learning, like internships, volunteerism, and community service, falls under the umbrella of experientially-based learning, and has its foundations in the works of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and David Kolb. But service learning is unique in a number of ways. Whereas students can intern or volunteer at both corporate or nonprofit settings, service learning, a form of civic engagement, is always done at a nonprofit organization or school. Interning and volunteering typically benefit the organization and the volunteer, respectively, but through service learning, both server and served are mutual beneficiaries: the student applies information in a real-world context and thus advances her/his/their understanding of issues, and the nonprofit has specific needs met by the student. And only service learning entails a component of reflection that promotes a student’s understanding of and connection to civic responsibility.

In this course, you will work with one of three community partners—826 Boston, Hale House, or Writers Without Margins—in the second half of the semester. All projects will be focused on issues of literacy and reaching out to the community. *As per the College’s policy on service learning, each student will devote a total of 20 hours on their service learning project. For this class, 10-12 hours will be spent working directly with community partners or on projects and 8-10 hours will be focused on research in preparation for these projects and completing them.* To accommodate this, Thursdays in the second half of the semester will be “flex Thursdays” meaning that you will be working with community partners during class hours. But, please recognize that this is an additional commitment for this course. Service learning requires that you put in extra time and effort to work with the community, but the rewards for both you and your community partner are exponential.

First-Year Writing Program

The mission of the First-Year Writing Program (FYWP) is to provide the foundation of an education in writing for Emerson undergraduates through the two-course sequence, WR 101: Introduction to College Writing and WR 121: Research Writing.

As General Education requirements, WR 101 and WR 121 have the goals of helping students develop an awareness of situation, purpose, audience, and genre so that they can approach writing tasks with confidence, a flexible repertoire of rhetorical strategies, and an understanding of how forms of writing are produced and take on consequence.

WR 121 Course Purpose

The purpose of WR121 “Research Writing” is to conduct an investigation of the rhetorical situations that call on writers to do research and of the means of representation they draw on—in written genres and other media—to disseminate the results. The course is a genre-based research writing course that emphasizes civic engagement, public writing, and activist rhetorics. The course is divided into four writing projects that call on students to write in multiple genres and often to design multimodal compositions in a variety of media. Many sections emphasize the rhetorical transformations across genres, featuring, for example, assignments to translate a scholarly study into a news report, a magazine article, a slide presentation, a museum exhibit, or a comic. Some sections include an advocacy project where students design a campaign, in a range of genres and media, to publicize an issue or call for change.

WR 121 Learning Objectives By the end of the term, you will be able to

- analyze rhetorical situations and the choices writers make about appropriate genres,
- identify the type of research called for in different writing projects and use research to establish your credibility as a writer,
- create an appropriate writing persona depending on rhetorical situation and genre choice,
- understand how audiences are invoked as much as addressed depending on rhetorical situation and genre choice, and
- identify and compare conventions across genres and media; use this knowledge to design texts appropriate to the rhetorical situation and genre choice.

General Course Requirements

Unit and Title	Assignment Description	% of Final Grade
Unit 1: Personal Literacy (Weeks 1-3)	Response to the literacy narratives. The response can take one of two forms: (1) your own literacy narrative or (2) a commentary on literacy narratives or practices.	20%
Unit 2: Academic Literacy (Weeks 4-7)	Entries for a research guide about literacy and working with the community. These entries will follow the conventions of the annotated bibliography and will be posted on the course website.	20%
Unit 3: Genre Literacy (Weeks 8-14)	Group presentations on genres pertaining to your community literacy projects. Presentations will take the form of class lecture and activity. Groups will introduce the genre, provide an example, develop a class activity, and create a guide for the course website. Will run concurrently with unit four.	20%
Unit 4: Community Literacy (Weeks 8-14)	Community literacy projects. You will be paired with one of three community partners and complete a project with that organization. The final product will be determined by you and the organization. Will run concurrently with unit three.	20%
Blogs and Service Learning Hours	<p>Blogs will be completed weekly. This is a space to track your thinking about course content as well as your service learning work.</p> <p>You must complete 20 hours on your service learning project, which will be tracked by you and the community partner.</p>	10%
Participation	Participation in classroom activities, such as discussions, group work, exploratory writing, peer review, etc., is crucial to your success. Participation also includes completing readings, discussion questions, and blogs prior to coming to class—you can't participate in class if you haven't completed outside work.	10%

Grading: A=93-100, A-=90-92, B+=87-89, B=83-86, B-=80-82, C+=77-79, C=73-76, C-=70-72, D=60-69, F=0-60 (failing)

A Note on Course Design The course assignments and schedule (see last page of syllabus) is subject to change throughout the course of the semester, especially during the winter months when there may be snow days. I will do my very best to communicate any changes to the schedule with you as soon as possible. Correspondence of these changes will generally be through Canvas. Also, assignment descriptions may shift based on the needs of and feedback from the class. Percentage of final grade will be fixed.

Required Texts *A Call to Write*, John Trimbur (available in the campus bookstore). Additional readings will be made available online through Canvas.

Canvas Canvas will be the homebase for this course—you will submit assignments here, find your homework, readings, and reminders here; and you should look here before asking any questions. Canvas will also be my main way of contacting the class as a whole through the announcements feature. You can find Canvas by going to canvas.emerson.edu and using your Emerson username and password to login. I recommend bookmarking this site and checking here frequently!

Course Website and Blogs This semester you will be keeping a weekly blog at word.emerson.edu. Like Canvas, you access this using your Emerson username and password. I will provide additional guidance on the site and in class about how to use Wordpress.

Blog posts (these should be between 500 and 1,000 words) must be posted before class every Tuesday. Some posts will have specific prompts, others will just ask you to reflect on your work in this class and as a student at Emerson. Don't think this blog is busy work! This is a place to express yourself and track your growth as a writer and intellectual as well as start work in a new medium and genre. Many students say this is their favorite part of the course.

This website will also serve as a space to communicate with your peers about your experiences and share information—your research guide, genre guide, and community literacy project will also be posted here as well as other important information about this course. Both sections will post here and be able to read and comment on (this will be required at various times throughout the semester) each other's work. Please consider this a public space and be thoughtful about what you post here, particularly about the organizations you work with.

Office Hours and Conferences I am available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00-2:00 p.m. in Ansin or by appointment. Please do not hesitate to come by during office hours or set up an appointment. Office hours are an excellent opportunity for you to work with me before, during, and after your writing projects. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity, especially prior to completing assignments. Talking through ideas is often integral to the writing process and is often likely to generate more complex and developed analysis. During the semester, I will require conferences outside of class-time. I will always work with you to set up these appointments so they will not conflict with your other academic responsibilities.

First-Year Writing Program Annual Showcase of Student Work The First-Year Writing Program Annual Showcase serves as a platform for students to publicly share and celebrate their intellectual inquiry through the collaborations, research, and multimodal projects produced during their time in the FYWP courses. While Showcase exhibits and presentations vary from year to year, forms include exhibits, panel discussions, group readings, and TED-like Talks. In addition, while some courses choose to display their projects as a whole group, individual students or student groups may present as class representatives. Many students choose to exhibit research posters, interactive displays, multimedia work, or present selections from their writing projects.

The Showcase offers a unique opportunity for inspiring conversation between the audience and authors about what they come to value in writing and research projects. Ultimately, each individual student or course project contributes to the larger conversations at work within the FYWP and the year-long study of writing across all majors.

This year, the Showcase will take place on Thursday, April 21st from 4:00–6:00 p.m, in the Bordy Theatre. While this is not a mandatory event, we will consider if and how to participate as a class. I hope you will support the Emerson community by attending and participating in this culminating representation of work completed by your friends and peers.

Classroom Policies

Attendance Regular attendance and participation are crucial to success in this course. Classes will be held at the appointed time (seriously, at the actual time class is supposed to start—you are late if you are walking in *at* the stroke of the clock) and attendance is mandatory. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked absent and it will be unexcused.

Per First Year Writing Program policy, more than three unexcused absences in a twice-weekly class will result in your grade being lowered by one half letter grade (e.g., B+ becomes B), and more than five absences will result in further reduction of your grade and possible failure of the course. It is your responsibility to be familiar with college policies regarding what is and isn't counted as an excused absence (as explained in your handbook). If you know you will miss an upcoming meeting, it is your responsibility to notify me in advance (though notification does not necessarily mean the absence is excused). Please note that being tardy twice will count as an absence.

Participation Writing workshops, peer review, in-class writing, and discussion are the main components for your success in this course, and you will benefit from regular and enthusiastic participation in and out of the classroom. I will alert you if I feel as though you are not adequately participating. Inadequate participation could include failure to bring appropriate texts to class, insufficient or incomplete preparation for participation in peer review, failure to participate in in-class writing exercises, or inappropriate behavior during class discussion. As affirmed by WLP Department policy, failure to participate actively in these activities could lead to a significant reduction of the final course grade.

Late Work Don't be late! Turning in late work hinders my and your peers' abilities to give you feedback and it compromises your ability to complete the next assignment. A late working draft will exclude you from participating in workshops or peer review. Likewise, absence on peer review days will exclude you from peer review. This is unfortunate, but since peer review takes place during class periods and reciprocal participation is necessary, your presence is necessary for peer review to occur. On the day an essay or assignment is due, it should be submitted to Canvas before class time. For each day that an assignment is late, your grade will be reduced by a half letter grade (5%). Students should not expect comments on late work. Any variance in this policy will be at my discretion.

Cell Phones and Computers Cell phones must be turned to silent prior to coming into the room and remain in backpacks/purses until the conclusion of class. Computers are a necessary evil of WR 121. Since many of your readings will be on Canvas and you should bring readings to class, many of you will want to use your laptops throughout class. Indeed, laptops can often facilitate unique learning opportunities, and I welcome these. However, computers can also be a large source of distraction. During lectures and discussions, I will ask you to close laptops; at other times, laptops can be used to access readings and participate in group activities. This ensures that we are all present for the duration of the class—it's disrespectful to you, your peers, and me if someone is distracted with a computer.

Writing for a Safe and Inclusive Classroom Our class is a learning community and a space for intellectual exploration and expression. Many of the topics we discuss may be emotionally charged. In addition, as we explore various genres of nonfiction, you may find yourself reading or writing about difficult or disturbing personal experiences. Please be sensitive to yourself and your classmates. A diversity of opinions contributes to an environment for intellectual expression and exploration. However, I will challenge opinions that discriminate or work in opposition to diversity and inclusivity and will encourage you to explore and develop your understandings of power-and-privilege dynamics in the classroom and within larger society. The success of the class as a whole depends on each one of us supporting, encouraging, and respecting other people in the class. Continuing discussion on these larger topics outside of class is highly encouraged, but please be mindful of the privacy of your peers.

Writing Projects, Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

As you read and write this semester, I hope you find that our class community allows you explore topics that are important to you. Please see me if you have questions or concerns involving writing about sensitive topics. I am happy to discuss your ideas and writing projects throughout term.

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am *required* to share information regarding sexual misconduct on or off campus and information about a crime that may have occurred on Emerson's campus with the college Title IX Coordinator. Should you ever have questions about these issues or need someone to talk to, please see the confidential resources below.

Confidential Resources

- Emerson College Violence Prevention and Response: 617-824-8857
- Emerson College Counseling and Psychological Services: 617-824-8595
- Boston Area Rape Crisis Center 24-hour helpline: 800-841-8371
- Safelink 24-hour helpline (abusive relationships/stalking): 877-785-2020
- The Network/La Red: www.tnlr.org; 617-742-4911
- GLBTQ Domestic Violence Project: www.glbtqdv.org; 800-832-1901
- Additional on/off-campus resources at www.emerson.edu/vpr

Diversity and Inclusion Every student in this class will be honored and respected as an individual with distinct experiences, talents, and backgrounds. Students will be treated fairly regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, socio-economic status, or national identity. Issues of diversity may be a part of class discussion, assigned material, and projects. The instructor will make every effort to ensure that an inclusive environment exists for all students. If you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the classroom climate, please do not hesitate to speak with the course instructor or to contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 617-824-8528 or by email at diversity_inclusion@emerson.edu.

Academic Misconduct Academic misconduct will not be tolerated, and includes traditional textual plagiarism and its manifestations, including self-plagiarism, falsifying work or academic records, cheating, substitution of work or the work of another, actively participating in or condoning these activities with others, and appropriating creative works of art in whole or part (images, sounds, lighting designs, audio tracks, scripts, etc). Please refer to the Student Handbook, Rules and Regulations section, and the Emerson College Policy on Plagiarism.

It is important to understand how plagiarism takes different forms:

1. Fraud. Borrowing, purchasing, downloading or otherwise obtaining work composed by someone else and submitting it under one's own name.
2. Insufficient citation. Writing one's own paper but including passages copied from the work of another (regardless of whether that work is published or unpublished or whether it comes from a printed or electronic source) without providing (a) footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical notes that cite the source *and* (b) quotation marks or block indentation to indicate precisely what has been copied from the source.
3. Patchwriting. Writing passages that are not copied exactly but that have nevertheless been borrowed from another source, with some changes, by paraphrasing another writer too closely, whether or not the source is cited properly.

Fraud is academic misconduct and will be dealt with according to the procedures established at Emerson.

Insufficient citation and patchwriting may be an intentional attempt to deceive but they may also be unintentional and will be dealt with according to the circumstances.

Resources and Services

Academic Assistance The Lacerte Writing and Academic Resource Center aims to support Emerson students and faculty by developing personalized strategies for academic success. Writing Consultants are available for projects related to writing, research, and communication, while Academic Success Consultants work with students on time management, study approaches, academic problem solving, and English Language Learning development. Professional staff members advise and coach students who would like additional support. Content-specific peer tutors are also available by request. The WARC's mission is to develop confident and independent writers and learners. All appointments are free and you can schedule them through the Writing Center's website: <https://emerson.mywconline.com/>.

Disabilities Emerson College is committed to providing equal access to its academic programs and social activities for all qualified students with disabilities. While upholding this commitment, we require all Emerson students to meet the high standards of achievement that are essential to the College's programs and services. To advance these dual aims, the College will provide reasonable accommodations to disabled students who request accommodations through the College's Disability Services Office (DSO), if the DSO determines that accommodations are both medically necessary and reasonable. Please note that a requested accommodation will only be approved as 'reasonable' if it does not compromise any essential requirements of a course. Students who wish to request a disability accommodation must submit their request to the DSO, and not to faculty, since only the DSO is authorized to approve or deny any requests for accommodations. College employees and student's family members cannot request accommodations on a student's behalf. Rather, students who wish to request accommodations must themselves contact the DSO since Emerson's philosophy is that its students are independent and self determined and students with disabilities—like non-disabled students—have control over their lives here at Emerson and are ultimately responsible for making their own decisions. Students who know at the start of a semester that they will need accommodations must submit their accommodation requests to the DSO within the first two weeks of the semester. If a student becomes ill or disabled during the course of a semester, or discovers after the start of a semester that he or she needs a disability accommodation, he or she is encouraged to submit his or her request to the DSO as soon as possible since the process of approving accommodations takes time, and approved accommodations will not be granted retroactively. The Associate Director for Disability Services can be reached at: 617-824-8592, dso@emerson.edu, 5th Floor 216 Tremont Street.

Emerson College, Iwasaki Library We have a great staff of librarians who can help you with research. You should take time to become familiar with the resources and organization of the library. You can access library services online at www.emerson.edu/library as well as in person the the 3rd floor of the Walker building.

Counseling Center Beginning your first year of college can be a turbulent time, and it is important to have a safe and separate venue to air any emotional concerns you have. The Emerson Counseling Center is located at 216 Tremont, 6th floor, x8595.

The Elma Lewis Center for Civic Engagement and Office of Diversity and Inclusion Both of these centers are located on the 10th floor of the Walker Building. Not only do they have resources for students, but there is a common area for studying, talking, or just taking a break (there's a good chance there will be free food too!) The establishment of the Elma Lewis Center for Civic Engagement, Learning, and Research affirms Emerson's ongoing commitment to civic and community engagement in its most robust form: as a commitment to partnership between Emerson College and the communities in which it participates, in ways that strengthen both. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion leads Inclusive Excellence at Emerson College. Our primary goal is to ensure access and success for everyone at Emerson. We provide resources and support to faculty, staff, and students using Inclusive Excellence as the foundation for all other goals at Emerson. We believe Inclusive Excellence leads to academic excellence.

Important Due Dates

This is the general course calendar for major assignments, all of which should be submitted to Canvas. These dates will be posted on the "Calendar" in Canvas. Daily homework assignments can be found on Canvas, but will not be part of calendar. As mentioned above under "Course Design," these dates are subject to change based on scheduling and the needs of the class.

- **Thursday, February 4:** Response to Literacy Narratives due
- **Thursday, February 25:** Research Guide Entries due
- **Tuesdays from March 22-April 12:** Genre Presentations
- **Thursdays from March 17-April 14:** Flex Thursdays for Community Literacy Projects
- **Tuesday, April 19:** Final, Reflective Blog Post due
- **Thursday, April 21 from 4:00-6:00 p.m.:** Annual Showcase of Student Work

Finals period: Section 40: Wednesday, April 27 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Section 37: Thursday, April 28 from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

A Note on Formatting Your Work We will follow standard practice for academic writing; therefore, all papers should be submitted utilizing the following guidelines (unless otherwise stated):

- Typed, using 12pt font, double-spaced with 1" margins. Font must be legible to instructor & peer critics.
- Submitted to Canvas. I will give you typed critiques of your writing and send to you through Canvas.
- Work-in-progress and final papers should use citation format appropriate to the assignment. Most assignments will be formatted according to MLA guidelines.
- Instructions for some citation formats can be found here:
 - owl.english.purdue.edu
 - Noodlebib at www.noodletools.com
 - Emerson's knowledgeable and friendly WARC staff and librarians
- Work-in-progress and final papers must meet the minimum page requirement. Those that do not will be considered incomplete and may be returned for completion.
- Final revision of writing assignments should be proofread carefully.