

WRITING 111.06: Life Writing

Fall 2017

MWF 2:00-3:00

Patterson Hall 106

There is no way of writing well and also of writing easily.

~Anthony Trollope

The art of writing has for backbone some fierce attachment to an idea.

~Virginia Woolf

Instructor: Dr. Kristianne Kalata
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Office Hours: Mon. 12:45-1:45;
Tues. 10:00–11:00, 2:00–3:00;
& by appointment

Required Texts:

1. Cohen, Samuel, ed. *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017.
2. Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 2014.
3. The OWL (Online Writing Lab) at Purdue University, available through our course site @ D2L.

Course Description:

Writing 111 develops a primary skill—the ability to write clearly and interestingly. Moreover, this course develops and refines your critical thinking and reading skills, both of which are essential to good writing. Together we will explore the functions of writer, audience, and purpose and will come to understand writing as an ongoing, organic process of reading, re-reading, thinking, re-thinking, drafting, and revising. We will focus on developing and supporting interesting claims in analytical and evaluative essays. Throughout the semester, these and other varied assignments will help you gain confidence, independence, and sophistication as a writer.

Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of Writing 111, students should be able to

1. know and consistently apply the rules of English grammar and usage;
2. write clear, concise, logical sentences;
3. recognize and write effective thesis statements;
4. construct unified, well-developed paragraphs with specific evidence to support the thesis;
5. demonstrate an understanding of audience & purpose by choosing appropriate style and diction;
6. demonstrate critical reading and thinking skills;
7. understand what constitutes plagiarism and how to locate, incorporate, and document source material according to standard rules of academic citation; and
8. construct engaging, cohesive essays that include fully developed introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions.

We will pursue course outcomes through the following assignments.

Course Requirements:

70% Course Papers

I will distribute detailed instructions for each of these assignments.

- ✓ **Paper 1:** Rhetorical Analysis (3 pp.), worth **10%** of overall course grade, due Sep 13
- ✓ **Paper 2:** Mini-Memoir (3 pp.) accompanied by rhetorical analysis (2 pp.), worth **10%**, due Oct 1
- ✓ **Paper 3:** Social Media Analysis (4 pp.), worth **10%**, due Oct 20
- ✓ **Paper 4:** Compare & Contrast (5 pp.), worth **15%**, due Nov 12
- ✓ **Paper 5:** Evaluation Argument (6 pp.) with partially-annotated bibliography (3-4 pp.), together worth **25%**, due Dec 4
- ✓ **Final Grade Proposal, in the form of a Letter to Dr. K:** At the end of the term, you will write a 1-2 page letter to me in which you cite specific evidence to justify the grade you think you deserve in WRI 111. This essay counts toward your participation grade, and it's the last thing I read before submitting course grades. Do your best to impress!

15% In-Class Writing Assignments

Good writers must first be good readers. As such, there will be six unannounced In-Class Writes throughout the semester, each of which will require you to summarize and respond to one of the readings assigned for that day. Each In-Class Write will be worth 3% of the overall course grade. I will drop your lowest score. These assignments will take place during the first 15 minutes of class, and students who are late will not be given extra time to finish. Absent students automatically earn a score of zero.

5% Error Log

This assignment, which falls between Papers 2 & 3, asks you to identify and correct errors in your graded assignments. It aims to help you learn to recognize your problem areas and understand how to revise them independently.

5% Final Presentation

At the end of the semester, you will describe your Paper 5 topic and writing process and read an excerpt from your work to the class. Details forthcoming.

5% Participation

Your active participation is central to the learning process in any college course. "Active participation" means that you arrive to class on time with the assignment thoroughly completed. It also means that you remain engaged and make a concerted effort to contribute to class discussions and activities. While I will do *some* lecturing, we will spend much of our class time in writing workshops and large or small group discussions. The basis for your participation grade will thus be your attendance percentage, which will then either be enhanced or reduced by your level and consistency of **thoughtful speaking** (2.5%) **and engaged listening** (2.5%). Please note that inappropriately chatty students, cell phone users, and sleepers cannot earn full credit in this category.

GRADING SCALE

100% - 94% = A	89% - 88% = B+	79% - 78% = C+	69% - 60% = D
93% - 90% = A-	87% - 84% = B	77% - 74% = C	59% - 0% = F
	83% - 80% = B-	73% - 70% = C-	

IMPORTANT:

- All papers must follow MLA style and format. They should be typed in 12-pt. font and double-spaced. Points will be deducted from papers not meeting these standards.
- ***You must earn at least a C- in Writing 111 to meet the College's writing requirement. You must meet the writing requirement to graduate.***

Policies & Expectations:

- ✓ **Attendance.** Come to class. Every day. Excessive absences will directly affect your grade. You may miss three classes. After these three, you may lose 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional class you miss (e.g., an A- course grade will change to a B; a B+ course grade will change to a B-). Absences will be excused only in emergency situations, with appropriate documentation. Please be aware that "self-reported sick in room" notices from the Student Health Center will not change an absence from unexcused to excused. I reserve the right to mark text-messagers and sleepers absent.
- ✓ **Preparedness.** Come to class prepared and ready to discuss the day's reading assignments. All readings should be completed before the class during which they will be discussed. Similarly, all writing assignments should be submitted on time. Late papers will be penalized 10% per day late, including the first day and weekends. Computer issues do not justify late or shoddy work. Know that technology tends to fail us at the most inconvenient of times. Be prepared, backup your work, and you will have no problems.
- ✓ **Honesty.** The lasting reward of academic integrity is a good character and the ability to learn on your own. See the Academic Integrity Policy available online and in the Undergraduate Catalog. Note that failure to demonstrate academic integrity has serious consequences in the short term (grades) as well as for the rest of your life.
- ✓ **Respect.** Maintain a respectful attitude toward the course, your fellow students, and me; in turn, I will do the same for you. Know that disrespectful behavior—online or in class—can negatively affect your participation grade.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- **ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT:** Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all students. Students with disabilities who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Faith Craig, Director of Disability Resources, located in 209 Thompson-Clark Hall. Phone: 724.946.7192; e-mail: craigfa@westminster.edu.
- **ATHLETICS & EXTRACURRICULARS:** If you are involved in College athletics or other extracurricular activities and will miss class meetings because of games or performances, please notify me in advance of any class sessions you will miss. All work is to be submitted prior to the excused absence.
- **CELL PHONES** generally should be kept out of sight and out of mind. If you are texting, facebooking, tweeting, etc., I count you absent because you're not really here, are you? Please let me know if you are using your phone to access course materials.
- **LEARNING & WRITING SERVICES @ MCGILL LIBRARY** is located in Room 206 of the library and is staffed by upper-class undergraduate tutors who offer help with writing assignments. While tutors will not proofread your paper(s) for you, they *can* help you with thesis statements, organization, textual support, grammar, etc. Visit this website to learn more and schedule an appointment: <http://www.westminster.edu/academics/learning-writing-services.cfm>
- **PAPER DRAFTS:** I encourage you to visit me during office hours so that we can discuss your writing. You may also e-mail me specific questions about an assignment. In each case, though, please allow sufficient time for the drafting process ("sufficient time" = one week before paper is due).

Schedule of Assignments:

*Schedule is subject to change at any time. Page numbers for reading assignments appear in parentheses after text titles and are to be read before class, by the date listed to the left of each entry. "Cohen" stands for *50 Essays*, ed. Samuel Cohen, just as "OWL" stands for Purdue University's **Online Writing Lab**, which I will link to our course site at D2L.

M 28 Aug Welcome to Writing 111: Course overview and in-class exercises. What is "Life Writing"? What is "good" writing? We'll practice both today as we get to know one another. I'll provide guiding questions for Friday's assignment and instructions for In-Class Writes.

UNIT ONE: MEMOIR & RHETORIC

W 30 Aug **Cohen:** "Introduction for Students" (pp. 1-14) and **Graff & Birkenstein**, "Introduction" (1-14). We'll practice annotating an excerpt from Graff & Birkenstein. On **OWL** (see link in D2L / Content), read The Rhetorical Situation. I'll distribute your Paper 1 assignment.

F 1 Sep **Cohen:** Alexie, "The Joy of Reading and Writing" (pp. 22-26) and King, "Reading to Write" (pp. 210-15). Also read **OWL** (link in D2L / Content): Thesis statements. We'll review thesis statements and practice drafting a rhetorical analysis.

M 4 Sep **Cohen:** Tan, "Mother Tongue" (362-68) and **OWL** (see link on D2L): Paragraphs and transitions. We'll practice crafting strong thesis statements and paragraphs.

W 6 Sep **Cohen:** Sedaris, "Me Talk Pretty One Day" (333-37) and **in D2L / Content**, read model student paper. We'll discuss next week's workshops.

F 8 Sep **In-class workshop on Paper 1:** Half of the class reports to our classroom **with laptops (see Paper 1 assignment for instructions)**. The other half of the class studies the model student paper posted to D2L / Content.

M 11 Sep **In-class workshop on Paper 1:** We switch halves—see F 8 Sep above for instructions.

W 13 Sep **Graff & Birkenstein:** Chapters 1-2, "They Say" and "Her Point Is" (pp. 19-41). We'll practice the art of summary. **Paper 1 due to D2L by midnight**

F 15 Sep **Cohen:** Adichie, "To My One Love" (pp. 17-21) and **OWL:** Descriptive writing; word choice (see link in D2L / Content). I'll distribute the Paper 2 assignment.

M 18 Sep **Cohen:** Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son" (pp. 44-64) and **OWL:** selections from Sentence Accuracy, Clarity, and Variety.

W 20 Sep **Cohen:** Henríquez, "Lunch" and Hughes, "Salvation" (182-87). In class, we'll look at some of Hughes's autobiographical poetry and study the craft of these texts. We'll assign experts for Friday's readings.

F 22 Sep **Cohen:** Didion, "On Keeping a Notebook" (116-23) and White, "Once More to the Lake" (404-10). **OWL:** Verbs, adjectives, and avoiding cliché (see D2L / Content). I'll let you know what to expect on Monday.

M 25 Sep **In D2L / Content**, please read the model student papers. We'll work on Paper 2 in class.

W 27 Sep **Graff & Birkenstein:** Chapter 3, “The Art of Quoting” (42-50). We’ll discuss how to quote ourselves and others in Paper 2, and we’ll also practice some sentence-level revision in class. I’ll do a film studies overview.

UNIT TWO: LIFE WRITING AND THE MEDIA

F 29 Sep FILM: Biopic, TBA
 ****Paper 2 due to D2L by midnight on Sunday, Oct 1****

M 2 Oct FILM: Biopic, TBA

W 4 Oct FILM: finish. We’ll do an in-class writing assignment and discuss the film, if we have time.

F 6 Oct **Cohen:** Gladwell, “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted” (169-180) and **Graff & Birkenstein:** Chapters 4 & 5, “Three Ways to Respond” and “Distinguishing What You Say...” (pp. 55-75). I’ll distribute the Paper 3 assignment.

M 9 Oct **OWL:** Avoiding Plagiarism (see link on D2L). We’ll do an in-class activity on recognizing and avoiding plagiarism and will practice setting up an argument for Paper 3.

W 11 Oct **Cohen:** Whitehead, “The Loser Edit” (412-16) and Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” (87-97). **Graff & Birkenstein:** Chapter 6, “Planting a Naysayer” (78-91). I’ll provide instructions for Friday’s class.

F 13 Oct **In-class Error Log workshop:** Bring laptops. Read **OWL:** Punctuation (link on D2L). We’ll discuss commas and semicolons, and we’ll practice sentence-level revision.
 ****Error Log due to D2L by midnight on Sunday, Oct 15****

M 16 Oct **In-class workshop on Paper 3:** Half of the class reports to our classroom **with laptops** (see Paper 3 assignment for instructions). The other half studies the model student paper posted to D2L / Content.

W 18 Oct **In-class workshop on Paper 3:** We switch halves—see 16 Oct. above.

F 20 Oct **Paper 3 due to D2L by 3:00 p.m.** See D2L for the Paper 4 assignment; I’ll distribute a print copy after break.

M 23 Mar **NO CLASS: FALL BREAK**

UNIT THREE: AUTO/BIOGRAPHY & ARGUMENT

W 25 Oct **Cohen:** Lorde, “The Fourth of July” (221-25) and Coates, “The Paranoid Style of American Policing” (99-102). I’ll distribute the Paper 4 assignment.

F 27 Oct **Cohen:** Defoe, “The Education of Women” (111-14) and Woolf, “Professions for Women” (417-22)

M 30 Oct **Cohen:** Mairs, “On Being A Cripple” (226-38) & Sacks, “My Periodic Table” (328-31)

- W 1 Nov** **Graff and Birkenstein:** Chapters 9 & 10, “Academic Writing...” and “The Art of Metacommentary” (121-37). We’ll do in-class exercises on *voice* and metacommentary.
- F 3 Nov** **In-class workshop on Paper 4:** Half of the class reports to our classroom with laptops (see Paper 4 assignment). The other half studies the model student paper posted to D2L.
- M 6 Nov** **In-class workshop on Paper 4:** See 3 Nov. above. You know the drill.
- W 8 Nov** We’ll practice sentence-level revision; bring laptops. I will post the Paper 5 assignment.
- F 10 Nov** **NO CLASS:** I will be in Atlanta at a conference. **Paper 4 due to D2L by midnight on Sunday, Nov 12.** Please read the Paper 5 assignment on D2L.
- M 13 Nov** **Cohen:** Ericsson, “The Ways We Lie” (159-68). I’ll distribute a print copy of the Paper 5 assignment, and we’ll discuss sample topics.
- W 15 Nov** **Cohen:** Ehrenreich, “Serving in Florida” (136-45). **Graff and Birkenstein:** Chapters 7-8, “Saying Why It Matters” and “Connecting the Parts” (pp. 92-118).
- F 17 Nov** **On D2L,** read the model student papers. Email me your tentative topic and thesis for Paper 5 by 3:00 to get credit for today’s class.
- M 20 Nov** **MEET IN MCGILL LIBRARY,** where we’ll work on Paper 5.
- W 22 Nov** **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK!**
- M 27 Nov** **In-class annotation workshop:** bring to class two potential sources for Paper 5. I’ll distribute the final presentation assignment.
- W 29 Nov** **In-class workshop on Paper 5:** This time, everyone comes to class. We’ll work in small groups, evaluating your revised thesis statements, sources, and outlines for Paper 5.
- F 1 Dec** **Graff & Birkenstein:** Read chapter 11, “Using the Templates to Revise” and skim Part 4. **Bring laptops.** We’ll practice sentence-level revision, and I’ll circulate to answer specific questions you may have about Paper 5.
- M 4 Dec** No formal class; **Paper 5 due to D2L by 4:00 p.m. today.** Please read the Final Grade Proposal Assignment, posted to D2L.
- W-F, Dec 6-8** Final presentations. I’ll distribute the Final Grade Proposal assignment on Weds.
- W 13 Dec** **FINAL PERIOD: 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.** We’ll finish presentations. Grade Proposal assignment due at the beginning of class (print copy, please).