

Advanced College Writing

Fall 2017

Instructor Info:

Ashley Squires, PhD

Email: asquires@nes.ru

Office: Skolkovo 2.07

Office Hours: Mondays 14:00-16:00 or by appointment

Course Info:

Course Description:

On television, in the newspaper, and on the internet, arguments are all around us. We make arguments when we speak to our instructors, our parents, our friends. We encounter them when we read signs on the highway or consult our favorite popular culture blog. Arguments—speech acts designed to persuade—are at the core of human communication, though many of us never think about understanding how to interpret and produce them as essential skills for developing literacy and fluency.

Advanced College Writing is designed for students at an advanced level of English language study who wish to have a firmer grounding in writing before proceeding to content courses where more highly developed writing skills are required. Though continuing to build English language fluency is a goal for this course, at its heart, this is a course in argumentation grounded in both classical and modern rhetorical theory. The aim of the course is to help you develop the skills necessary to understand, break down, and critique someone else's argument while also helping you develop a process for constructing and presenting your own ideas in a persuasive form.

Every year, the content of this course centers on a chosen text or topic. This year, the theme will be immigration, and we will be reading selections from David Miller's *Strangers in Our Midst*. All reading and writing assignments will therefore address issues and controversies related to that central theme.

Required Texts:

Provided on my.nes.ru

Assessment:

Class Participation – 10%

Journal Entries – 10%

Short Assignments – 30%

Major Essays – 40%

Final Presentation – 10%

Attendance:

Regular and timely attendance is essential to doing well in this class. You are counted absent if you miss more than twenty minutes of any given class period. You are allowed 4 “free” absences for the entire semester. Each subsequent absence will result in the deduction of 1 point from your final grade. The only absences that are excused are those that have been documented and approved by the Joint Program office.

Deadlines and Extensions:

All assignments are due at 23:59 on the date listed on the schedule. Assignments can only be submitted late with prior approval from the instructor. Requests for assignment extensions *must* be made via email and not in person.

Make-up Work:

If a student receives a failing grade in the course, he/she must complete any major assignments that resulted in the failing grade. These assignments must be completed during the designated make-up period and will be assessed by a three-member panel, including the course instructor. To determine the student's final grade, the make-up assignments will be plugged into the regular assessment formula with all grades previously earned in the class. Some assignments (participation, peer reviews, proposals, and select short assignments) cannot be made up and will stay recorded as zeros for the purpose of final assessment.

Electronics:

Unless use is authorized during group activities, laptops must be put away during class. Phones and tablets may be used as dictionaries, to access assigned readings, and to record lectures but must be kept silent. Suspected inappropriate use of electronics will result in points deducted from your participation grade.

Classroom Etiquette:

Students are expected to observe the following basic rules of classroom decorum:

- You must come to class on time.
- When the instructor or another student is talking in front of the class, you should not be talking.
- If discussion is happening in class, you should not be conducting side conversations with your friends.
- If you find yourself becoming sleepy during class, you are permitted to leave the room for a few minutes to collect yourself. Under no circumstances should your head be on your desk.

Blatant violations of these rules (talking during student presentations, excessive lateness, sleeping during class) may result in an unexcused absence or deductions from your participation grade.

Academic Honesty:

This course seeks to uphold the Joint Program's commitment to ensuring academic honesty. All work submitted in this class must be the student's own. Assignments calling for the use of outside sources must contain both a Reference page and in-text citations or footnotes. APA and MLA are the standard citation formats for this course. Suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Joint Program administration.

Communication:

Students should check their nes.ru email accounts regularly, as important information about the course (emergency cancellations, deadline changes) may be communicated in that way. Email is also the best way to reach me, though you should understand that I generally do not respond to email after 22:00 or before 9:00. If you have a question about an assignment, you should not wait until the night before it is due to ask.

The Writing and Communication Center

The WCC is a free student support service designed to assist you with all your writing needs during your time in the program (and even after you graduate). Consultants (both English and Russian speakers) are available to meet with you for 45-minute sessions. You may sign up for a consultation using the “WCC” tab on my.nes.ru. Limited walk-in hours are also available. For further information, see the WCC’s website at writingpedagogy.org and follow the WCC’s Facebook page (www.facebook.com/neswcc).

Schedule (*subject to change*):

Homework assignments and required readings are listed on the date they are due. All written assignments are due online by 23:59 pm on the date listed.

Unit I – Recognizing and Understanding Arguments

Week 1 (*September 4-8*)

Day 1 – Introduction

Day 2 – Introduction to Rhetoric and Persuasion

Week 2 (*September 11 – 15*)

Day 1 – Naïve Realism and Other Cognitive Biases

Day 2 – The Argumentative Theory of Reason

Read: Hugo Mercier, Dan Sperber, “Why do humans reason? Arguments for an Argumentative Theory.” (This is a challenging article. Do your best.)

Listen: You Are Not So Smart—Arguing (podcast episode – distills a lot of what is in the article in a more understandable form)

Week 3 (*September 18 – 22*)

Day 1 – Controversy Selection, Explanation of Research Summaries

Read: Chapter One from *Strangers in Our Midst*; Paul Collier, “The New Exodus”

Day 2 – Evaluating Sources

Write: Research Summary 1

Week 4 (*September 25 – 29*)

Day 1 – Documenting Sources

Write: Research Summary 2

Day 2 – Explanation of Major Essay I; Outlining and Paragraphing Strategies

Write: Research Summary 3

Week 5 (*October 2 – 6*)

Day 1 – Student-led Discussion 1

Read: Chapter Two from *Strangers in Our Midst*; Ian Gordon, “Why Are More and More Children Walking Across the Border?”

Day 2 – Peer Review and Conferencing Day

Write: Rough Draft of Major Essay I

Week 6 (October 9 – 13)

Day 1 – Breaking Down an Argument (Toulmin)

Day 2 – Introduction to Logical Fallacies

Write: First Draft of Major Essay I

Unit II – Analyzing Arguments

Week 7 (October 16 – 20)

Day 1 – Rhetorical Analysis

Day 2 – Student-led Discussion 2

Read: Chapter Five from *Strangers in Our Midst*

Write: Short Analysis I

Week 8 (October 22 – 27)

Consultation Week – no classes

Write: Second Draft of Major Essay I (Due 27/10)

Week 9 (October 30 – November 3)

Day 1 – Analyzing a Creative Work

Watch: TBD

Day 2 – Student-led Discussion 3

Write: Short Analysis II

Week 10 (November 6 - 10)

Day 1 – Analyzing a Creative Work

Read: Zadie Smith, “The Embassy of Cambodia

Day 2 – Peer Review Day

Write: Rough Draft of Major Essay II

Week 11 (November 13 – 17)

Day 1 – Arguments in Culture

Watch: Film TBA

Day 2 – Student-led Discussion 4

Write: First Draft of Major Essay II

Unit III – Making Arguments

Week 12 (November 20 – 24)

Day 1 – Audience Game

Day 2 – Student-led Discussion 5

Read: Chapter Eight from *Strangers in Our Midst*; Krishnadev Calamur, “The Immigration Battle at the Heart of Brexit”

Week 13 (November 27 – December 1)

Day 1 – Introduction to Major Essay III

Day 2 – Structuring an Argument (Return to Toulmin)

Write: Second Draft of Major Essay II

Week 14 (December 4 – 8)

Day 1 – Wrap-Up Discussion

Read: Conclusion and Post-Script from *Strangers in Our Midst*

Day 2 – Peer Review Day

Write: Rough Draft of Major Essay III

Week 15 (December 11 – 15)

Day 1 – Final Presentations

Day 2 – Final Presentations

Write: First Draft of Major Essay III

Week 16 (December 18 – 22)

Day 1 – Final Presentations

Day 2 – Final Presentations

Week 17 (December 25 – 29)

Exam week – no class

December 30 – **Second Draft of Major Essay III**