

E122 Course Overview

Unit I: Exploring Language and Discourse

Effective communication whether verbal, physical or written is heavily dependent on *context*. You don't talk or act the same way in the E122 classroom as you do in your dorm. And you don't act or speak the same way in your dorm as you would at a dance club or where you work. In other words, to become part of an "in" crowd in a particular situation, or social context, you must learn, practice, and ultimately master the verbal, physical and written *conventions* at Company X, on Dorm Floor X, at Sorority Z, or in Classroom Y.

Mastery of context-specific spoken and written conventions is crucial to achieving success and/or acceptance within a particular *discourse community*. In this specific educational context -- the E122 classroom -- we will spend much of the semester focusing on language and discourse and the role they play in our *perception* of *self*, others, and "reality." This focus will help you learn how to become a more effective, confident, perceptive and critical/analytical writer, reader and thinker. These skills will help you achieve greater success in the academic discourse community at UNC -- and beyond.

In Unit I, you will be introduced to key connections between language and writing as well as important concepts such as context, discourse, and discourse community. You will be exposed to strategies that will help you develop and hone critical/analytical reading and thinking skills needed to explore those connections. Ultimately, you will be given an opportunity to develop your own ideas on the relationship between language and the way we "see" ourselves -- and our world.

A logical progression for this unit begins with writing about yourself for others, moves to writing about another piece of writing and developing and incorporating your responses, and concludes with the *synthesis* of your own voice with the voices of several other writers on a specific language/discourse issue.

Personal Discourse Narrative, 10%

In this personal narrative, you'll explore an experience within (or outside of) a particular social or cultural group or *discourse community* (some examples: computer hackers, car mechanics, soap opera addicts, the "cool" crowd at your high school). Some of the questions you'll attempt to answer in this narrative: What are some of the verbal, physical (meaning what clothes do you have to wear, what way do you need to cut your hair, what way do you have to walk, etc.), or perhaps written or spoken conventions that make a you an accepted member (or keep you out) of this discourse community? How do these conventions include, or exclude, certain people? In what ways do you have to adapt your language and behavior whenever you (try to) enter this social or cultural group or *discourse community*

Length: 2-3 pages, typed and double spaced.

Tentative Due Dates:

Workshop version: Monday, Sept. 13

Final Draft: Friday, Sept. 17

Revised Final Draft: Wednesday, Sept. 29

Summary Response Essay, 15%

In the Summary Response Essay, an academic style essay, you'll take some of the ideas you developed about language and discourse in the first essay and compare them to ideas from established authors outside the class. You'll also learn better ways to understand a written argument and some strategies for communicating that knowledge to others. This essay is typical of the kind of writing you will be expected to do within the academic discourse community of UNC.

Length: 3-5 pages, typed and double spaced.

Tentative Due Dates:

Workshop version: Wednesday, Oct. 6

Final Draft: Monday, Oct. 11

Synthesis Response Essay, 25%

In the Synthesis Essay you'll take several sets of ideas from class readings, class members and yourself and *synthesize* them or, in layman's terms, ***put them together***. Ultimately, you'll come up with a clear statement of your own ideas and/or your own take on what three other authors have to say about how language and discourse function (or don't function) in forming, establishing and maintaining a particular discourse community. You'll also examine how a specific discourse (a combination of verbal, written and physical "language") impacts your own and others' ability to operate within that community and the world as a whole.

Length: 4-6 pages, typed and double spaced.

Tentative Due Dates:

Workshop version: Wednesday, Oct. 27

Final Draft: Monday, Nov. 1

Unit II: Argumentative Writing.

In this unit, you will be challenged to improve your ability to support a stand on an issue. In order to successfully defend and advocate your position, you'll need to understand a topic in detail, be able to anticipate and respond to the arguments of your opposition, exhibit a clear understanding of multiple and, quite possibly, seemingly unconventional perspectives on an issue, and be able to use language effectively to persuade your audience of the validity of your argument. You will incorporate research into your argument as well, using MLA form.

Arguing Essay Brief, 5%

Among other things, in the Arguing Essay Brief, you'll establish a position, work toward crafting a specific thesis, examine, analyze and work toward understand the specific audience at which you'll be aiming your Arguing Essay, briefly outline what kinds of persuasive appeals you might use, and anticipate what kind of research you'll need to do.

Length: 2-3 pages, typed and single spaced.

Tentative Due Date:

Final draft: Monday, Nov. 22

Arguing Essay, 25%

In the *Arguing Essay*, you'll begin with a specific, debatable claim and attempt to persuade a *specific*, real-life audience of the validity of that claim. In the past, many students have chosen to pursue a topic that is closely related to their field of study or major for this essay.

Length: 5-7 pages, typed and double spaced.

Tentative Due Dates:

Workshop version: Wednesday, Dec. 1

Final draft: Tuesday, Dec. 7

In-class/Homework Journal, 10%

The best way to become a better writer is to write -- a lot. The goal of the In-Class/Homework Journal is to give students as much practice writing as possible. Journal assignments are designed to work hand-in-hand with other longer written assignments. For instance, throughout the semester you will be asked to write short, one-page responses to a variety of essays. You may incorporate these responses into some of your formal essays. Students will also be expected to compile all dailies written during class and hand them in each time journals are due.

Journals will be collected twice during the semester. The first and second journal grades will be averaged together to form your final journal grade. Be forewarned that I will collect some homework assignments BEFORE each installment of your journal is due just to keep you on your toes. I will note whether or not you satisfactorily completed the assignment in my journal grade book at that time. Assignments collected in this “surprise” fashion will count toward your overall journal grade. Thus, if it happens that you’ve failed to do the homework on a day I collect it, you will receive a big fat zero for that journal entry. You WILL NOT be able to turn it in later with your journal.

Tentative Due Dates:

First Journal Collection: Monday, Oct. 18

Second Journal Collection: Wednesday, Nov. 24

Class Participation, 10%

The final 10% of your semester grade will be determined through workshop participation and in-class discussions. Simply showing up to class is **NOT** enough to earn the full 10% class participation percentage. You must consistently contribute to class discussions and workshops in a constructive manner. Students who exhibit consistently disruptive behavior (talk in class, fail to respect the instructor’s classroom preparation efforts, annoy or harass other students or the instructor, etc.) will be severely penalized on this portion of their grade.