Instructor: Dr. Joseph Creamer  
Email: jcreamer@albany.edu  
Office: Business Administration 335  
Office Hours: W, 12:30-2:30, or email me for an appointment.

**Course Description and Course Theme**

Writing is thinking! That’s why writing is so hard! Writing is a process of discovering what you think and what is true. You’ll be required to read, write, and re-write extensively throughout this class. You’ll work collaboratively and individually toward effective contextualization, description, and style. We’ll work hard, and we’ll have fun. Ultimately, your success in this class is up to you. While our in-class activities, discussions, and writing assignments will directly inform your efforts, you are responsible for your own engagement and resolve.

Throughout this semester, we will be talking, reading, and writing about our choices, our beliefs, and our questions—particularly as they relate to your transition to college. We will be thinking about how we see the world and what values influence our decisions and our language. We will be asking why college matters—to us as individuals and to us as a society.

Students will be introduced to historical thinking in this course. The purpose of history is not simply to understand the past, but also to begin the life-long process of reflection on what we should value and how we should live as a human community. It is my genuine hope that through your reflection on your individual experiences as well as through your analysis issues in college education, you will be able to intervene meaningfully in public debates about education and democracy.

**Course Goals**

After completing WCI students will be able to

(a) approach writing as an individual process of textual production, a form of inquiry, and a social practice;

(b) apply rhetorical principles to assess various rhetorical situations and complete varied discipline-based writing tasks;

(c) write effectively for a variety of purposes, to different audiences, and in different media (including traditional, digital, and multi-media formats); and

(d) develop a lexicon for discussing and analyzing writing and writing situations.
General Education Requirements

WCI (UUNI 110) is a required course in the University’s General Education program that must be completed with a grade of C or better.

Required Materials

For the best price, I recommend renting the textbook from the bookstore.

Course pack: The readings are included in the course pack. Please bring the course pack to class whenever we have a reading due that day from the course pack. It is available at the Rapid Copy Center, BA-B26A, in the basement of Business Administration. They accept cash, credit, debit or SUNY Podium account. Price: $10.80.

Notebook for notes and in-class writing.

MS Word: Microsoft Office is available free to all UAlbany students. All Blackboard assignments for this course must be uploaded as Word documents (.doc or .docx). To download office for free, go to: https://wiki.albany.edu/display/public/askit/Office+365+ProPlus+Subscription+License

Course Requirements

Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs): At the beginning of each course sequence, you will take a short test to assess your comprehension of the first readings of the sequence. You will take each RAT twice: once as an individual and once as a team. Because the process of completing the RAT as a team is essential to the experience of the course, there will be no opportunities for make-up RATs.

Essays: Students will complete three major essay assignments:

- Essay #1: Writing to explore or inquire into one’s experience of a problem, idea, concept, question, phenomenon, or issue (What is my experience of this issue?) (1000-1200 Words)
- Essay #2: Writing to analyze a text, idea, experience, event, or phenomenon for an academic audience (What have others written about this issue?) (1000-1200 Words)
- Essay #3: Writing to participate in a conversation about a relevant question or problem (What can I contribute to the conversations about this issue?) (2000-2200 Words)

Letter to future students of this course: The final course assignment is a letter which students write to future students of this course, offering advice on how to succeed in this course and improve as a writer. The best letters will be printed in the course pack for future classes.

All Essay assignments and drafts must be both uploaded to Blackboard AND submitted in hard copy to the instructor unless otherwise noted on the course.
schedule. Essays will be checked for plagiarism through Safe Assign on Blackboard.

In-class Activities: A major component of your participation in the course will be involvement in class activities and discussions. You will complete many tasks on an individual basis, but you will also be involved in many team activities. Team activities are crucial to your learning of class material, so no make-up opportunities will be offered for these activities. You will receive a team grade on in-class activities of 5, 8 or 10 points. 5 points for the wrong answer, 8 points for the wrong answer with a good rationale and 10 points for the right answer.

Reading Journals: You are required to write a reading journal for many of the readings in this class. These must be uploaded to Blackboard under Assignments by the beginning of the class in which this reading is to be discussed. (Posts are time-stamped, so I can see anytime if you’ve posted it on time or not--late posts will not receive any credit.) I will generally give you a brief prompt on Blackboard for the reading, on which you will be expected to write approximately 200 words on the topic. This isn’t much—one long paragraph or two medium-length paragraphs.

Reading Journals will be graded 1, 3, 5 or 7 points:
7 = A “strong” journal effectively meets these criteria: (1) read carefully and analyze the text(s), (2) to defend your reading by referring to specific parts of the text(s), and (3) to explain your thoughts clearly and effectively to a reader.
5 = A “competent” writing adequately meets the assignment and the three criteria laid out above. It is reasonable, supported, and clear, but reveals less insight or diligence than a 7.
1 = A “weak” writing is incomplete, simplistic, or unengaged, demonstrating that it is “just something to turn in.” The writing may be noticeably weak in two of the three areas of criteria or somewhat weak in all three.

Collaborative Oral Presentation: Teams will make a formal presentation to the class and as part of the WCI Honors Symposium on Saturday, May 6. These presentations, which can take a variety of forms and will incorporate various media, will represent the teams’ analysis of primary source documents related to an issue in higher education of the team’s choosing. All Honors WCI students are required to present at the Symposium, and the final grade for the Collaborative Oral presentation will be determined at that time.

Workshops: In the final weeks of the semester, students will workshop each others’ draft Essay #3 in class. This will give everyone a chance to read everyone else’s draft essay. Essays will be posted to a Blackboard Discussion board the night before and students will comment on the drafts on the Discussion board.

Course Policies

Attendance
There is simply no way to reproduce in-class activities and discussions, which are central to the learning you will do in this course. Equally as important is the community we
create in this course, which requires everyone’s participation. Keeping a passing average in this course is not possible without consistent attendance. Missing class means earning an automatic “0” for the activities and assignments missed. Missing an assignment or activities that happened at the beginning of class before you arrive or at the end of class after you leave will also earn a “0.” Although there are no make up opportunities, students may be excused with documentation from the health center, their physician, or the dean’s office.

Additional Course Policies

1. As you join the intellectual community known as college, you will need to learn how we practice academic integrity. Please familiarize yourself with the University policies on plagiarism, which are available on the University’s website at http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html. If you are caught plagiarizing, you may fail the course and be subject to University disciplinary procedures.

2. You will need regular access to a printer. If you plan do all of your printing in the library, you should budget at least $10 for this course.

3. Please show respect for your fellow students by turning off and putting away your cell phones during class. If you must use your phone, please go outside our classroom and return when you are done.

4. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

Final Grade Breakdown:

Final Grade is simply the division of points possible by points earned. The total number of possible points is approximately 1000 points. The possible points for assignments are listed below.

- RATs—Individual and Team: (20 points each, total 160 points)
- Short In-class activities and in-class writing assignments: (10 points, total 200)
- Essay 1: (75 points)
- Essay 2: (100 points)
- Essay 3: (150 points)
- Collaborative Project: (100 points per student)
- Team Member Performance: (100 points) (Helping behavior—peer graded)
- Drafts, Letter to future students, Online Workshop Comments, and miscellaneous short writing assignments: (10 points, total 110 points)
- Reading Journals: (7 points, total 63 points)
- Mini-presentations: (5 points, total 15 points)
### Grade Conversion Scale for this course:

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<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<td>87-89</td>
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<td>67-69</td>
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<td>84-86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>64-66</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>80-83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Grade &lt; 60</td>
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### Course Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Introduction to Writing and Critical Inquiry</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Jan 24</td>
<td>College: Past and Present</td>
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<td>Team Formation</td>
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<td>Practice RAT</td>
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<td>Why we Write</td>
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<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Writing Professional Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, Jan 26</td>
<td>Readings: Yagelski, Chapter 16, “Writing Personal Narratives,” pp. 501-509; Yagelski, Chapter 1, “Why We Write,” pp. 3-19; Graff, “Hidden Intellectualism” (course pack); “Letters to Future Students” (course pack)</td>
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<td>RAT 1</td>
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<td>Class 3</td>
<td>Compelling Interpretation</td>
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<td>Tuesday, Jan 31</td>
<td>Rhetorical Situation</td>
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<td>Important to the Reader</td>
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<td>Readings: Yagelski, Chapter 2, “Ten Core Concepts for Effective Writing” (Core Concepts #1 and #2), pp. 22-31; Narrative Student Essays (course pack)</td>
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<td>Reading Journal 1 (Attached as MS Word document only)</td>
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<td>Experience Draft (Blackboard only) See Step #1 of Yagelski, pp. 523-525</td>
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<td>1 minute presentation of your Experience</td>
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<td>Class 4</td>
<td>Exploring Experience Through Narrative Writing</td>
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<td>Thursday, Feb 2</td>
<td>Drawing the Reader in</td>
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<td>Preparing for RATs</td>
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<td>Readings: Yagelski, Chapter 2, “Ten Core Concepts for Effective Writing” (Core Concepts #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, and #8), pp. 31-49; Yagelski, Chapter 15, “Understanding Narrative Writing,” pp. 469-490; Kirn, “Lost in the Meritocracy” (course pack)</td>
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<td>Reading Journal 2</td>
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| Class 5 | Tuesday, February 7 | Why College?  
Readings: Murray, “Are Too Many People Going to College?” (course pack)  
RAT 2 |
|--------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Class 6 | Thursday, February 9 | Revising for voice, style and grammar  
Compelling Interpretation, continued  
Peer feedback 1  
Reading Journal 3 (Student Sample Essays)  
Draft of Essay #1 |
| Tuesday, February 14 | Conferences | NO CLASS |
| Thursday, February 16 | Conferences | NO CLASS |
| Tuesday, February 21 | Conferences | NO CLASS |
| Class 7 | Thursday, February 23 | Introduction to Analysis  
What is analysis?  
Readings: Yagelski, Chapter 5, “Understanding Analytical Writing,” pp. 115-123, pp. 133-139; Gareau, “College or High School?” (course pack)  
Final Draft Essay #1 |
| Class 8 | Tuesday, February 28 | College Past  
Teams: Choosing your documentary for presentation  
Essay 2 Assignment Guidelines  
Readings: Newman, “Knowledge Its Own End” (course pack)  
RAT 3 |
| Class 9 | Thursday, March 2 | Textual Interpretation and Analysis  
Analysis vs. Interpretation activity  
Readings: Yagelski, Chapter 9, “Analyzing Literary Texts,” pp. 264-279; Analysis Student Essays (course pack)  
Reading Journal 4  
RAT Question on your Essay #2 passage  
Mini-presentation on your passage |
| Class 10 | Tuesday, March 7 | Making Claims and Using Evidence  
Guidelines for Oral Presentation  
Textual Analysis Activity  
**Team Proposal for oral presentation due 11:59pm** (email) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class 11 | Thursday, March 9 | Introduction to Research  
Peer Review of Essay #2  
Mid-Semester Student Evaluations  
**Draft of Essay #2**  
**Search Queries Worksheet** (Blackboard)  
**Reading Journal 5** |
| Tuesday, March 14 | SPRING BREAK  
NO CLASS |
| Thursday, March 16 | SPRING BREAK  
NO CLASS |
| Class 12 | Tuesday, March 21 | Evaluating Sources  
Work on your group projects (BRING LAPTOP)  
Strengthening Analysis Activity  
**Reading Journal 6**  
**Draft Slides for Team Presentation due 11:59pm** (Blackboard) |
| Class 13 | Thursday, March 23 | Introduction to Argument  
Peer feedback 2  
Mid-Semester Evaluation Response  
**Final Draft of Essay #2**  
**(Optional Resubmission of Search Queries Worksheet Due)** |
| Class 14 | Tuesday, March 28 | College Present  
**RAT 4** |
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<th>Class 15</th>
<th>Thursday, March 30</th>
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<td>Please arrive early to set up your presentations. <strong>Team Presentations</strong></td>
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<th>Class 16</th>
<th>Tuesday, April 4</th>
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| **Team Presentations**  
Essay #3 Proposal Guidelines  
Synthesis and Voice |

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<th>Class 17</th>
<th>Thursday, April 6</th>
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| Developing an Academic Style  
Citing Sources  
Proposal for Essay #3  
Mini-presentation on your proposal  
Reading Journal 7 |

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<th>Tuesday, April 11</th>
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| NO CLASS  
PASSEOVER |

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<th>Class 18</th>
<th>Thursday, April 13</th>
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| Developing an Academic Style  
How to avoid Patchwriting  
Using quotations  
Workshop Guidelines  
**Reading Journal 8**  
**Source Synthesis Graphic** (Blackboard) |

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<th>Class 19</th>
<th>Tuesday, April 18</th>
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| Working Thesis  
Coherence and Cohesion  
Writing Introductions  
Peer Review of Source Synthesis Paper  
**Source Synthesis Paper** (Blackboard) |

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<th>Class 20</th>
<th>Thursday, April 20</th>
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| Practice Workshop  
Complexity  
Guidelines and Rubric Essay #3  
**Working Thesis** (Blackboard)  
**Reading Journal 9** |
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<th>Class 21</th>
<th>Tuesday, April 25</th>
<th>Workshop (BRING LAPTOP)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class 22</td>
<td>Thursday, April 27</td>
<td>Workshop (BRING LAPTOP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 23</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 2</td>
<td>Workshop (BRING LAPTOP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 24</td>
<td>Thursday, May 4</td>
<td>Workshop (BRING LAPTOP)</td>
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<td>Saturday, May 6</td>
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<td>WCI Honors Symposium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 25</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 9</td>
<td>Course Evaluations (BRING LAPTOP) Workshop</td>
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<td>Monday, May 15</td>
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<td>Final Draft Essay #3 due 11:59pm (Upload to Blackboard Under Assignments and Discussion Board as MS Word File) and Hard Copy at my office, BA 335) Save file to Blackboard as your “lastname.doc.” Letter to Future students Due (Blackboard only) 11:59pm</td>
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The course schedule is approximate and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.