Dr. Eileen Sperry
esperry@albany.edu
Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-2:30PM or by appointment
HUM 391

TUNI 110—Writing and Critical Inquiry
T/Th 2:45-4:05PM, BB 129

Course description:
TUNI 110 is a required course that meets the University at Albany’s General Education requirement for writing and critical inquiry. TUNI 110 must be completed with a grade of C or better to fulfill the WCI requirement. (Students can also fulfill the WCI requirement by taking an approved UUNI 110 equivalent course; at present, the only such approved course is AENG 110Z.)

TUNI 110 meets the learning objectives for SUNY’s Basic Communication general education category as well as the SUNY “Competencies” in Critical Thinking and Information Management (which is referred to as “Information Literacy” at UAlbany.)

Course objectives:
Students will:
(a) learn to approach writing as an individual process of textual production, a form of inquiry, and a social practice;
(b) learn to apply rhetorical principles to assess various rhetorical situations and complete varied discipline-based writing tasks;
(c) develop competence in writing effectively for a variety of purposes, to different audiences, and in different media (including traditional, digital, and multi-media formats); and
(d) learn appropriate concepts and develop a lexicon for discussing and analyzing writing and writing situations.

Required textbooks:

Note: Students will also regularly be required to print multiple copies of their own writing to bring to class for peer-review, and should allocate a personal printing budget accordingly.
Course policies

Attendance:
Your success in this course depends on your presence in class. Each student will be allowed three absences; this includes classes missed for illness or emergencies. Beyond that, each absence will result in a loss of one grade level (A- to B+, C to C-, and so on). Students who miss more than 20 minutes of a class will be assessed one half absence.

Participation:
Your grade will include a participation component. This reflects the following:
- Class discussions: Did you come to class with all required materials? Did you come prepared with questions or comments about that day’s reading or projects?
- Peer engagement: Did you actively listen and respond to your peers when they spoke in class? Did you provide them with thorough, clear, and constructive feedback?
- Conferences and other meetings: Did you attend both assigned conferences as scheduled? Did you come prepared with questions and concerns about the assignments?

At the end of the semester, you will be asked to evaluate your own participation; this will contribute to, though will not entirely determine, your final grade.

Projects

Blackboard responses:
Each week, you will complete a writing assignment on Blackboard. The discussion prompts for each week are posted in the discussion board descriptions, along with the requirements for that post. These will each be scored out of five points. To receive full credit, a post must address all parts of the prompt, show evidence of careful composition and critical thought (which includes but not limited to: critical engagement with any readings assigned, an absence of stylistic, grammatical, or orthographic errors, and an approach that strives to achieve analytical depth rather than surface observation), and must meet the length requirements (if present). Students grades will be averaged over the term; the lowest weekly grade will be dropped from the final average. Discussion boards will open Monday at midnight; posts are due by 11:59PM each Friday. No late submissions will be accepted.

Portfolio:
- Personal statement—choosing a field of study (1100-1300 words). This project will describe when and why you chose to go into the area of study that you’ve chosen at UAlbany. You’ll discuss important personal experiences that led you to make this choice, and link them to the major issues or concerns in your field of study or intended career path.

- Analytical essay (1100-1300 words). In this project, you will analyze others’ arguments about the value of higher education, considering the arguments in favor and against.

- Researched argument (1300-1500 words). In this project, you will develop your own position on an issue concerning higher education. This may be about subjects such as: the role of the public university or community college in the 21st century, about the relative values of liberal arts education or trade schools; or about a specific issue in your field of study, such as: the role of different courses of study in preparing for a specific career or the value of a specific course of study in the 21st century.
These above three projects will comprise your final course portfolio. For each you will go through phases of brainstorming, drafting, editing, and rewriting; these steps will be collected into one final portfolio. This will include the following assignments (figures in parentheses denote that assignment’s portion of the total portfolio grade):

- Personal reflection marked draft (12%), revised final edition (20%).
- Profile essay marked draft (12%), revised final edition (20%).
- Research essay marked draft (12%), revised final edition (20%).

These assignments will all be combined into a single comprehensive file (.doc, .docx, or .pdf) in that order. Students must also include as their first page a cover letter (4%) that addresses the following: an introductory paragraph explaining their field of study or career path and naming some of the topics or issues they explored over the semester, a substantial paragraph or paragraphs detailing what revisions they made to each assignment, and a concluding paragraph explaining how their writing practices changed or evolved over the semester.

**Collaborative group presentation:** In groups of 4-5 students, you will be responsible for creating a 15-20 minute presentation to be given at the WC1 Honors Symposium on Saturday, May 6th. For this project, you and your group will propose a change to the UAlbany undergraduate curriculum based on the reading and research you have done over the course of the semester on the role of higher education. You can propose a change to existing requirements or suggest a new aspect of the curriculum. Your proposal must engage directly with the existing college requirements and be supported by external research. Your group must also conduct at least one interview with a UAlbany administrator.

**Assignment formatting and submission:**
All assignments should be formatted according to MLA style guidelines, which we will review in class and which are available to students in *A Pocket Style Manual*; grades will be reduced for those assignments not meeting formatting guidelines. All assignments will be submitted and graded through Blackboard. Assignments must be uploaded to Blackboard as .doc, .docx, or .pdf files; Pages, Google docs, or .rtf files cannot be processed by Blackboard, and therefore cannot be graded. File naming protocol is as follows:

Last name Assignment title draft #
So, for example: Sperry analytical essay 1.docx. This procedure is meant to ensure that you maintain separate records of the individual drafts for the final portfolio collection. Please see me for questions about converting file formats.

**Late policy:** All due dates and times are noted on the syllabus. Assignments submitted up to 24 hours following the due date will be accepted with a grade reduction of the equivalent of one full letter grade. No submissions will be accepted after 24 hours except in the case of emergencies; in such cases, documentation will be required and permission must be granted before the due date if possible. **Campus wifi outages, which occur periodically, are not an accepted excuse for late submission; familiarize yourself with the on-campus computer centers or, for commuter students, with your local public library’s resources, which provide a reliable alternative.**

**Final grades:**
- Portfolio = 50%
- Blackboard writing = 25%
- Presentation = 15%
- Participation = 10%
**Academic integrity**
Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and uphold the UAlbany Standards of Academic Integrity. Violations of this policy include but are not limited to plagiarism, cheating on quizzes or exams, multiple submissions, and forgery. Penalties will be assessed for each violation based on its severity, and may range from the need to revise and resubmit an assignment to a failing grade on the assignment in question. Per the UAlbany Standards of Academic Integrity, “student claims of ignorance, unintentional error, or personal or academic pressures cannot be excuses for violation of academic integrity. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the standards and behaving accordingly, and UAlbany faculty are responsible for teaching, modeling and upholding them. Anything less undermines the worth and value of our intellectual work, and the reputation and credibility of the University at Albany degree.”

**Reasonable accommodation**
From UAlbany’s Disability Resource Center: “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.”
Note: Readings are listed by when we will be discussing them in class; this means you should have read all works in their entirety before arriving in class that day.

Jan 24 Read: syllabus, course goals.
Discuss: writing emails
**Do:** send two emails—one to me, one to a classmate CCing me

Jan 26 **Why do we write?**
Read: *They Say, I Say (TSIS)* 173-184
Discuss: rhetorical situation, rhetorical appeals.

Jan 31 Read: “Closing the Racial Discipline Gap…” (pgs 171-174) (Bb)
Scott, “America's schools are still segregated…” (link on Bb)
Watch: Simmons, “How Students of Color Confront Imposter Syndrome” (link on Bb)
Discuss: Recognizing shifts in tone, language and style along genre lines
**Do:** Mapping academic modes, genres, and styles

Feb 2 **Writing to communicate: personal statement**
Read: Safran Foer, “Against Meat” (Bb [Blackboard])
*TSIS* 121-129
Listen: “Alpha Gal,” *Radiolab* (link on Bb)
Discuss: Tone and language; what makes an effective personal reflection?

Feb 7 Read: Gay, “Peculiar Benefits” (Bb)
Sedaris, “Dentists Without Borders” (Bb)
Discuss: What makes an effective personal reflection?
**Do:** Free-writing/brainstorming personal anecdote.

Feb 9 Read: *TSIS* 105-119
Discuss: Details, structure, and organization
**Do:** Start mapping out your personal reflection

Feb 14 Workshop day

Feb 16 **Writing to explore: analytical essay**
Read: *TSIS* 19-54
Owen and Sawhill, “Should Everyone Go to College?” (Bb)
Graff, “Hidden Intellectualism” (Bb)
Discuss: Analyzing what others are saying

Feb 17 **Personal statement due 11:59PM (Blackboard)**

Feb 21 Read: Rose, “Blue-Collar Brilliance” (Bb)
M. Obama, “Bowie State University Commencement Speech” (Bb)
**Do:** Practice signal phrases and writing about other’s viewpoints
Feb 23 Read: Ungar, “The New Liberal Arts” (Bb)  
    UAlbany Academic Integrity Policy (link on Bb)  
    Listen: “Freakonomics Goes to College,” Freakonomics (link on Bb)  
    Discuss: Plagiarism, documentation

Feb 28 Do: Practice differentiating between summary and analysis  
    Begin brainstorming and mapping for analytical paper

Mar 2 Workshop day

Mar 7 Individual meetings to discuss personal reflection, analytical essay

Mar 9 Individual meetings to discuss personal reflection, analytical essay

Mar 10 **Analytical essay due 11:59PM (Blackboard)**

Mar 14 — No class (spring break)

Mar 16 — No class (spring break)

Mar 21 **Writing to engage: argumentative essay**  
    Read: Freedman “How Junk Food Can End Obesity” (Bb)  
    Krugman “Confronting Inequality” (Bb)  
    Discuss: research questions and thesis statements

Mar 23 Read: Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All” (Bb)  
    Do: Developing your own research question

Mar 28 Read: Delingpole, “Britain’s Stupid Climate Policy…” (Bb)  
    Spenser, “My Global Warming Skepticism for Dummies” (Bb)  
    Parmesan and Yohe, “A Globally Coherent Fingerprint of Climate…” (Bb)  
    Discuss: finding and evaluating sources

Mar 30 Do: Research activity

Apr 4 Read: TSIS 55-77  
    Discuss: developing a conversation  
    Do: Bring in two sources for your research essay, practice responding

Apr 6 Read: TSIS 78-101, 129-138  
    Discuss: Argumentative fallacies  
    Do: Practice constructing good and bad arguments, anticipating objections

Apr 11—No class (Passover)
Apr 13 Workshop day

Apr 14 **Researched argument due by 11:59PM (Bb)**

Apr 18 Watch: Hari, “Everything You Know About Addiction Is Wrong” (link on Bb)
Gilbert, “The Surprising Science of Happiness” (link on Bb)
Discuss: speaking and presentation
Do: form presentation groups, begin work

Apr 20 Do: Begin work in class on group presentations

Apr 25 Read: *TSIS* 139-159
Discuss: revising and editing strategies, reverse outlining
Do: Bring one essay to class to work on revisions.

Apr 27 Discuss: Revising and editing strategies.
Do: Bring one essay to class to work on revisions.

May 2 Individual meetings to discuss portfolios, revisions.

May 4 Individual meetings to discuss portfolios, revisions.

May 6 WCI Honors Symposium (time TBA)

May 9 Discuss: portfolio and revisions, final questions, evaluations.

May 12 **Portfolios due.**