



Composition: The Art of Expression

Welcome to “Composition: The Art of Expression.” This course is designed to help you develop essential writing skills that will form the basis for your long-term development as a writer. As with most important things in life, learning to write is a journey rather than a destination. That is to say, becoming a writer is a lifelong endeavor that will improve and change as you grow and learn to perceive the world with an increasingly complex appreciation of meaning and purpose.

At the heart of this journey, and all good writing, is the need to know yourself. The questions, “Who am I?” and, “What does it mean to be me?” must be answered in order for you to be able to place yourself into the context of the world you inhabit and the one you would like to build. They are also the essential questions that help you relate to the meaning and purpose of other human beings and the challenges, uncertainties, concepts, and ideas that form the core of their reality. In turn, once you develop the tools for understanding self and other, you have the basic ingredients needed to describe the things you understand or to argue a specific viewpoint - both key components of academic writing. For these reasons, this course is designed to give you multiple different ways of exploring who you are and how you come to be the way you are.

COURSE STRUCTURE

It is VERY important to note that this course is likely organized differently from other courses you have taken. In most courses, a student works on a lesson, hands it in, and then starts another lesson - one lesson leading to another. This course, however, is designed to have you working on many interrelated assignments at the same time. Think of it this way: there are 9 (nine) modules in this course. You will start with Module 1 and move consecutively on to Module 2, and then Module 3, etc. etc. Please refer to the master schedule below to see when projects begin, when rough drafts are due, and when your final products are due. Also note that at the end, Module 9 asks you to hand in everything you have

completed in this course as a portfolio. Please take the time to input this master schedule into your own work calendar so that you know what assignments are due when. Week 1 here is the first week of your course and week 18 is the last week.

Module 1 (Weeks 1 & 2): Personal Connections to Essential Questions

GOALS and OBJECTIVES:

Develop skills in multimodal methods of composition; reflective reading; note-taking; and writing.

Week 1:

- Write a one-two page letter to yourself, responding to the Essential Questions of the course: Who am I? What do I know?
- Read “To the Reader,” by Montaigne - an essay that served as the introduction to his book of essays, published in 1580.
http://essays.quotidiana.org/montaigne/to_the_reader/ and his essay, “Of quick or slow speech” http://essays.quotidiana.org/montaigne/quick_or_slow_speech/. Take active notes on your reading. Which is to say, use notes to help you understand what you read. Write down any ideas the reading sparks in your mind, even half-thoughts. Underline, ponder, disagree. Look up words you don't know and write down their definition in your own words. Taking notes about a text is your chance to interrogate it as much as enjoy and learn from it. Active note-taking helps you translate for yourself what the text means to you.
- Write Reading Narrative #1: one-page response to Montaigne’s essays. Half of your response should engage directly with Montaigne’s essays. The other half should reflect on your individual reading process, strengths, challenges, and approaches. **Find further guidelines on the Reading Narratives on the Reading Profile page.**

Week 2:

- Select at least five objects or belongings (as tiny as a pendant or as large as a painting on the wall) that are meaningful to you and represent who you feel yourself to be as a person. Take photographs of each object and compile the photos in one place. Write a short paragraph (3-5 sentences) about the meaning of each object, and how you feel it represents who you are as a person. Pair each piece of writing with the photograph. Create a cohesive project using these photos and paragraphs. It could be a collage, a Prezi, a handmade book, a short video, etc. Come up with a creative title for the project. Include a photo of the final product, or a link to view it, in your Course Doc.

Module 2 (Weeks 3 & 4): Designing a Plan for a Meaningful Challenge

GOALS and OBJECTIVES:

Develop individual approach to planning and organization; strengthen critical thinking skills.

Week 3:

- Read “Contra” and “On Contra” (both in one document) by Brian Oliu. After you’ve read “On Contra” and learned more about how Oliu approached writing the essay, read "Contra" a second time. Take notes on both essays each time you read them. PDF below.
- Complete Reading Narrative #2.
- Craft and submit a question you have about your learning and your educational history / background that you would like to explore with more research, writing, discussion with your family, peers, teacher, and people in the community. Your instructor will provide feedback and guidance to help you refine this question. Your instructor will also help you seek resources for the research portion of this project.

Week 4:

Submit Draft #1 of your Reflective Essay for comment. This draft should be at least 2 pages. See full assignment guidelines for details.