

WS 496W
Writing Interdisciplinary Research
Spring 2002/SDSU
Prof. Kathleen B. Jones

Writing changes with and through the interaction among reader, writer and subject framed by the writing context. By "context," we mean the "situation" or "purpose" for the writing. Whether you are writing a letter to complain about service at an auto mechanic shop, an entry in your personal journal or an academic essay for a women's history course, the basic elements of writing are at play.

We will explore a variety of genres of interdisciplinary writing, including journaling, formal (critical) and informal (personal) essays, interactive web writing, as well as the traditional academic research essay. We will use materials from feminist critical and theoretical literatures for the study and practice of these genres.

By interdisciplinary we mean research that engages a subject through methods of investigation and argument drawn simultaneously from several disciplines of knowledge. An interdisciplinary project uses multiple strategies interactively, that is, considers the ways that they deepen our knowledge of a subject by working with and against one another.

Required Texts:

Nathalie Goldberg, *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*, (Shambala, 1986)
Kathleen B. Jones, edit, *Writing Interdisciplinary Research Reader* (KB Books).
William Strunk and E.B. White, *Elements of Style*, 4th edition (Allyn and Bacon, 2000)

Required Tools (Bring to Class):

Dictionary
A Blank Journal for Daily Writing (Three-Ring Loose-leaf Binder)
Assigned Readings for the Week

Format:

This course is an advanced writing workshop and fulfills the upper division writing requirement. Your active, prepared participation is essential to the success of the class. If you have not completed the assignment for the day, your presence in class will not be sufficient to the task.

In order to practice and critique writing you will complete a variety of in-class and out-of-class (homework) writing and reading assignments. These assignments include reading and analyzing selected texts, journal writing, drafting, critiquing and re-writing grade assignments, group writing experiments. In-class writing, such as free writing, will allow

students to practice strategies to quick-start writing. Other in-class assignments will enable students to develop successful strategies for writing situations where time and the opportunity to revise are limited.

The content/subject of the writing will be determined both by the instructor and the students.

Required Assignments and Grading Standards:

Students will complete **one** long academic research essay (10 pages) and **two** short essays (3-5 pages each) one for each of two genres other than the academic essay. These other genres include memoir, personal essay, speech or editorial. Students will complete each of these three essays outside of class. Students will also complete **four** one-page critiques of assigned essays, including each other's work. In addition, students will complete other in-class and outside class reading and writing, such as quick writes, and journaling. These will be graded for fulfillment of task and effort rather than formal style.

Academic Essay	(30%)
Short Essays	(20%--10% each)
Journal	(20%)
Critiques	(20%)
Participation	(10%)

PLEASE NOTE: For all topics, students must consult with the instructor in advance. For the research paper, students must select a topic assigned in one of their other courses and must inform the other instructor that this research essay will be workshopped in WS 496W for a grade. There is no guarantee that the grade you receive in WS 496W on the research paper will be the same as the grade you receive in your other class as the evaluation of the writing process depends upon the application of different criteria.

Since this is a writing class, you will have ample opportunity to revise. Revision is an essential part of writing but not a guarantee of an improved grade. I assign grades as follows:

- A (outstanding; highest accomplishment)
- B (praiseworthy; definitely above average)
- C (average; satisfactory)
- D (minimally passing; less than average)
- F (failing; unsatisfactory)

I assign pluses and minuses as appropriate.

Plagiarism: This is the willful misrepresentation of work as original; it is the knowing use of another's published or unpublished work for gain (including grades) by representing it as one's own. Plagiarism includes failure to attribute information to a source, including and internet or web source, literal or evasive appropriation of

substantial or material parts of a source, and direct copying or paraphrasing without attribution. See General Catalog for details. Consult me if you have questions.

Office Hours: Tues, 2-4 pm, AH 4111
kjones@mail.sdsu.edu
 594-5239

Outline of Topics:

Interdisciplinary? (Week 1)

Tapestries, Symphonies, and Collages

Getting Prepared to Write (Week 1)

Creating Space and Time

Developing Habits

Sharpening the Senses

Class Exercise:

Senses and Writing: Create

Senses and Writing: Critique

Homework:

Read Goldberg, pp. 1-60. Expand your in-class essay into two page essay using techniques discussed in class. Bring to Class to share. Read Aptheker and write a one-page summary in your journal exploring the ways her essay illustrates principles of interdisciplinary writing. Also write your responses to first class in your journal.

The Writer's Tool Box: Language, Grammar and Style (Week 2)

Digging for Gold

Subject, Audience, Voice

Journaling: The Bennett Technique (Week 2)

Observations/Questions/Aphorisms: Using Several Memory Devices to Enhance Recall and Expression

Class Exercise:

Recreate the day in detailed collage.

Homework:

Read Goldberg, pp. 61-141. Strunk and White, pp. 1-65. Expand your day collage. Write one paragraph from your day collage that includes a topical sentence, several expository sentences and a concluding sentence to share in class critique session in Week 3.

Informal Essay: life narratives, memoir, and personal essay (Weeks 3, 4, 5)

Time: Remembering and Reshaping the Past
 Found Objects and Claimed Territories
 Geographies of Spirit and Space

Class Exercises:

In week 3, you will critique each other's writing in pairs; in week 4, you will participate in a group critique of one or two students' essays. In week 5, you will write a brief summary of your proposed academic essay's focus and sources.

Homework:

Separate Homework sheets will be distributed each week as appropriate to class exercises and required revisions. During these weeks, you will read Lopate (class handout), Hampl (class handout) Boland (reader), Angier (reader) and Jones (reader).

Formal Essay: expository and analytic academic prose (the critical essay; book review; etc.) (Weeks 7, 8, 9)

Subject, audience, voice

Hypothesis and Method

Sources

Structure and Style

Conclusions

Class Exercises:

In week 7, you will begin to write a short essay based on several sources; in week 8, you will participate in a group critique of one or two students' essay topics. In week 9, you will write a brief summary of your proposed academic essay's focus, sub-headings, describe and explain and justify your sources.

Homework:

Separate Homework sheets will be distributed each week as appropriate to class exercises and required revisions. During these weeks, you will read Villenas (reader), Young (reader), and Williams (reader).

TOPIC AND SOURCES DUE: WEEK 8

DRAFT RESEARCH PAPER DUE: Week 10

FINAL VERSION DUE: Week 12

Persuasive Writing: speeches and editorials (Weeks 10, 11)

Using Current Events

Rhetorical Devices

Taking a Stand; Communicating a Vision

Class Exercises:

In week 10, you will critique each other's drafts in pairs; in week 11, you will begin to write a short speech or editorial based on several sources. You will be given several editorials and speeches to analyze.

Homework:

Separate Homework sheets will be distributed each week as appropriate to class exercises and required revisions.

Mixed Media (Week 12)**Building an Integrated Project****Homework:**

Separate Homework sheets will be distributed each week as appropriate to class exercises and required revisions. You will read Dillon (Reader)

FINAL VERSION ACADEMIC ESSAY DUE: Week 12

Interactive Web Work (Week 13)**How to Find What's Out There and How to Use It****Class Exercises:**

In week 13, you will explore the web for its interactive potential. You will write a short outline of your imagined site.

Homework:

Separate Homework sheets will be distributed each week as appropriate to class exercises and required revisions.

Developing a Portfolio of Work and Critiques (Weeks 14 and 15)**Class Exercises:**

In weeks 14 and 15, you will write about themes and detours in your collected portfolio. You will present your work to the group.