



Teaching & Assessing Writing in Non-English Courses

Why should I bother incorporating a writing assignment into my course?

No matter where your students go after they leave Durham Tech they will need to be able to write proficiently. If they are transferring to a four-year college, that school will expect them to write at the college level. When your students enter the workforce, writing can be limited to memos or extended as far as reports or even articles. No matter how much knowledge we give our students during their time here, it will all be wasted unless they can find a way to express what they have learned and share it with other people.

What can I reasonably expect from my students in terms of writing?

Before registering for your course, all students should have completed (or tested out of) the corresponding prerequisites listed in the college's credit schedule. Therefore, you can expect your students to have skills consistent with the course objectives of those prerequisite courses. Many courses, for example, list ENG 090 as a prerequisite. To see what students who have completed ENG 090 should be capable of doing, or to see course outlines and descriptions for other credit courses offered at Durham Tech, visit

<http://www.durhamtech.edu/html/prospective/coursedescriptions/coursedescriptions.htm>).

Conversely, if there are no prerequisites for your course, your students may or may not have learned how to write a research paper. Therefore, if you assign a writing project, your students will need much more specific guidance as they complete the project.

What if I don't feel comfortable critiquing students' grammar?

You don't need to be a grammarian to grade your students' writing effectively. Because your course is a non-English course, you need not worry about identifying specific grammatical errors. Instead focus on critiquing the readability and clarity of a student's ideas. Overall, it is your student's responsibility to edit and proofread his or her writing and seek out help from writing experts (like reading & writing tutors) when necessary.

What can I do to help my students produce better writing for my course?

- ✓ Provide an assignment sheet detailing the purpose of the assignment and your expectations.
- ✓ Determine your grading criteria in advance and share them with students, preferably with a rubric.

- ✓ Offer students the opportunity to engage in peer revision. (This can be completed outside of class!)

What resources can I recommend to my students?

- ✓ Sample outlines, papers, or other materials you have posted on Blackboard or placed on reserve in the library or the Campus Learning Center.
- ✓ “Research Paper: MLA Documentation” (Student Success Workshop offered every semester)
- ✓ The Durham Tech Library’s quick guides to citing sources in MLA & APA formats (available online at www.durhamtech.edu/library.htm)
- ✓ Tutors in the Campus Learning Center (CLC)

Are there sample writing assignments and rubrics I can follow?

Several Durham Tech instructors from varying disciplines have volunteered their materials as samples (see accompanying handouts). Use these models as guides but remember to make them your own. Here are some other hints:

- ✓ Ask your peers for ideas; more people are assigning papers than you might believe.
- ✓ If a student has submitted a paper that you believe to be “A” quality, systematically go through it and decide what made it so exceptional.
- ✓ Think about the assignment handout you are distributing. If someone gave it to you, could you write an “A” paper? What guidance is needed to generate the output you are looking for?

Lastly, remember that no matter how good we think we are, we always have room to improve our teaching. "Only a mediocre person is always at his best."—Somerset Maugham

How can I be sure my writing assignment is ready to be distributed to students?

Ask yourself the following questions: Is the assignment sheet clearly worded? Are the goals of the paper clear? Is the format and desired content apparent? Do the students have the knowledge necessary to write the paper? Have I made models or outlines available? Will the students know where and how they can get help?

When it comes to assigning a grade for a writing assignment, how tough should I be?

It is your assignment, and you are the teacher. (Say that a few times to yourself. “I AM the teacher.”) Overall, you want to make this paper a learning experience, so you should grade it in the way you think will most benefit the students. You should also consider what students have been required to do in order to pass prerequisite courses; hold students accountable to similar standards. The important thing is to be consistent and fair in your

grading. Your students shouldn't feel surprised or frustrated by any point deductions you have made. (This is where a grading rubric can be helpful for everyone involved.) Ultimately, you should be as tough as you need to be to ensure that your students are well prepared to meet expectations in subsequent courses and in the workplace.

Type of Paper

DRAFT OF ESSAY DUE BY: _____

FINAL PAPER DUE ON: _____

WEIGHT: what percent % of your final grade

ASSIGNMENT: Write a how many? -page essay in which you do what? Give a simple description of what you are asking the student to do. For example, "respond to an article in the text" or "show the connection between Incan art and the economy of Japan".

Please reference Is there a similar assignment in the text that will help students? for directions and a student sample paper.

More Information on This Paper

Sources required: Do students need to use outside sources or sources from their texts? If not, be sure to say so.

Documentation: Will they be expected to use MLA, APA, Turabian, Chicago style, etc.?

Purpose: Explain the goal of this assignment

Audience: Is the audience their classmates, experts in the field, you?

Assignment: Give the specifics of the assignment. What follows is a sample from an English 112 assignment. In this critique, you will choose and explain a particular claim in a social science theory that appears in an academic article we select as a class from our Wood reader. You will then apply and refute this theory to your own experience(s). You will need to give your reader a summary of the theory and the individual claim within the theory by summarizing the selected source article. You will explore, in depth, an explanation of your experiences, and an analysis of the connections between them. In doing so, you will observe how a theory does or does not apply to your experiences and reach a conclusion regarding how helpful or accurate the author's theory/claim is in understanding social behavior.

Structure:

If possible, direct students to a place in their text that lists points about the structure of this paper.

Introduction— Tell students what you want in the introduction. An example follows. Describe the broader issue. Why is it important? Identify terms? major players? theories?, as well as the claim you will address. Your thesis should logically follow your description of the main idea and claim. Your thesis should be an original claim that addresses what?.

Body— Describe the content of the body. How do you want it arranged? Chronologically, point-by-point, step-by-step, etc.?

Conclusion—

Reflect on your thesis and main points. Remind your readers what it was you just covered so they have all of your ideas right in the forefront of their minds. Do not repeat the info word-for-word. Also, include a wrap-up. This part of the conclusion brings everything together and leaves your reader with something to think about. It should be more than one sentence, but be sure not to introduce any new information or support for your thesis. Use these sentences to make your essay applicable to the world at large. Show the readers why they have just spent their own valuable time reading your essay.

Evaluation:

I will look to see how thoroughly you do what?. Organize your ideas in a logical progression, reinforce them with supporting textual evidence, and connect them using smooth transitions. Your writing must be clear, concise, and grammatically correct. Your project will also need to meet the standard expectations of good academic writing. Your purpose and focus will need to be clear and well explained. You will need to provide your reader with sufficient detail and textual evidence throughout your analysis. Finally, your prose will need to be well written both stylistically and grammatically.

Your papers will be evaluated according to what pre-determined standards? Consider developing a rubric for grading this assignment. As explained by these guidelines, each paper will receive a letter grade based on What areas? For example, Eng 112 looks at focus, development, organization, style, and grammar/mechanics. To see these handouts, look where on Blackboard or at the library?

Drafts:

You are required to submit a preliminary draft for this paper. There are no re-writes in this class. Because the process approach to writing is based on revising BEFORE turning in papers for grades, rewrite BEFORE your paper is graded. Consider reviewing your draft with a tutor in the Campus Learning Center before completing your final draft. It is your responsibility to come to me if you have problems or questions before you turn in the paper for a final grade. Insert information here about peer review if you choose.

Please see the student sample where? We will also refer to our drafts for further information about how to construct this paper.

PAPER EVALUATION

NAME _____

(Course)

(Instructor)

Focus = 15 points

Clarity of idea, including clearly worded and purposeful thesis statement (5 pts.) = _____

Quality of the idea (insight, originality, significance) (5 pts.) = _____

Depth of discussion and analysis (5 pts.) = _____

Organization = 15 points

Follows appropriate paragraphing conventions (topic, supporting, and concluding sentences) (5 pts.) = _____

Supporting points are logically arranged (5 pts.) = _____

Makes good use of transitional words or phrases to connect ideas and examples to one another (5 pts.) = _____

Development = 30 points

Includes an introduction that successfully captures the reader's attention and supplies necessary background information (5 pts.) = _____

Provides concrete, specific support (details, examples, facts, statistics) (5 pts.) = _____

Effectively explains/analyzes supporting evidence (5 pts.) = _____

Avoids careless generalizations and broad assumptions (5 pts.) = _____

Purposefully and effectively integrates source material, including explanation of significance (5 pts.) = _____

Successfully wraps up essay by commenting on significance of topics developed, moving beyond simply restating the thesis (5 pts.) = _____

Style & Appropriateness = 10 points

The paper addresses the question asked (2 pts.) = _____

The style and language are appropriate for an academic audience (2 pts.) = _____

Sentences are clearly expressed using a variety of sentence structures (2 pts.) = _____

Material from sources is incorporated smoothly (2 pts.) = _____

Word selection is concrete and specific (no slang, clichés, "good," "bad," "you," "I") and avoids wordiness (2 pts.) = _____

Grammar, Punctuation, & Spelling = 20 points

This paper uses Standard Written English and avoids major grammatical errors (such as run-ons, fragments, subject-verb agreement) as well as errors in punctuation and spelling = _____

Format = 10 points

Paper follows specified formatting guidelines (structure, spacing, pagination, and fonts) (3 pts.) = _____

Quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material is cited according to specified guidelines (3 pts.) = _____

Reference list is accurate, complete, and formatted according to specified guidelines (4 pts.) = _____

Additional comments:

Final grade = _____

Ethics

Homework Assignment—Hurricane Katrina

This assignment is due on September 15.

From now until September 14, keep a list of ethical questions you see or have seen generated by the Hurricane Katrina disaster. I expect that you will have at least 10 questions listed, but you may well have many, many more. Please indicate whether you got the question from TV, radio, newspaper, Internet or from a friend/relative.

After you have created your list, write a one-page paper about what you learn from creating your list. You should not be rewriting ideas from your list again. Apply critical thinking techniques—what do you learn from thinking about these questions?

On Sept 15 you will be turning in at least two pages—one for the list of questions and one for the paper you write. Your list and paper can be longer. You are not graded down for writing more than is required, you must turn in the minimum of what is required. You will not be graded on grammar or spelling on the list sheet; you will be graded on grammar and spelling on the one-page paper about what you learn. And you will be graded on your ability to apply critical thinking skills. See the critical thinking standards handed out on the syllabus and on Blackboard.

You must type both pages, using 12-point type. The list can be single-or double-spaced; the paper must be double-spaced. Remember that late papers carry a 20-point deduction.

How to Write an Article Review Paper for Philosophy

See your syllabus for further details.

Your essay assignment consists of writing a three-page paper analyzing and evaluating one of the readings in the text. Your paper must include a brief synopsis of the readings (containing at least three points the author makes in the reading); your philosophical position on the issues (what you think); and three reasons that support your philosophical position. Your paper must be written in clear essay form, and it must be typed in double-spaced copy, 12-point type.

Therefore, your paper should consist of three basic parts. The first part of the paper should be a synopsis and analysis of the article, followed by you stating your position on the issues the author addresses in the article and then followed by analysis and support for your position. The following questions should help you write the paper. Your paper does not have to answer each and every question.

Preparing a synopsis and analysis of the article—address the following questions:

1. What is the subject of the article?
2. What are the main points (the major issues) addressed in the article?
3. What problems or questions are presented?
4. What problems or questions does the author pose and leave unanswered?
5. What is the author's position on the issues?
6. How does the author support or defend his/her position?
 - a. Is historical background adequately considered?
 - b. What examples (facts, statistics or analogies) does the author use to support positions?
 - c. Do the examples work/are they relevant and convincing/do they explain the problem?
 - d. Are alternative positions stated and considered?
 - e. What reasons does the author use to support his positions?
 - f. Do the reasons make sense? Do they follow logically?
 - g. What other support does the author offer?
 - h. What fallacies/errors/problems do you see with the author's thinking?

State your position on the issue.

1. Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why?
2. Did you like or dislike the articles? Why?
3. Why did you choose to write about this article?

Why do you think the way you do about the issues addressed in the articles? Analyze and support your position by asking yourself the following questions:

1. What do I think about this issue? Why do I think this way?
2. What problems do I see with the issue that the authors do not address?

3. What problems do the authors pose but not provide convincing support for?
4. What solutions can I offer to the problem?
5. How do I support my position on the issue?
 - a. What evidence do I use?
 - b. What examples do I use?
 - c. What analogies/metaphors/ comparisons do I offer?
 - d. What reasons support my thinking?
 - e. Do my reasons and my evidence and examples make sense?

You are required to give textual references for any quoted material and attach a works cited page for this paper. Follow MLA style.

NOTE: Attach to your final typed paper an additional sheet of paper briefly listing (one sentence for each reason is adequate) the three points you discuss from the author's article and the three reasons you use to support your position. This is a fourth page in your paper.

PROOFREAD. Remember to read and reread your essay before you turn it in. Have someone else read it to see if it is understandable to them. Ask them to point out mistakes. Proofreading is critically important to the art of learning to write well. Your paper will be graded on the quality of your writing as well as your ability to think. If your paper reads as if it were not proofread (this is obvious when there are three or more typos on a page), you will receive a top grade of a D on this assignment.

American Women's Studies Papers and Presentations

You may choose a topic to write a paper about and then give an oral presentation on the topic. Your topic must be approved before you begin your project. No more than three students will be working on the same topic so that we have diversity during presentations.

Topic Ideas—to create a topic idea look at the textbook Table of Contents and Index and skim through the text questions at the end of the chapters. You may also peruse the chapter questions on Blackboard. Think about which topic is the most interesting to you, but realize that in a large class one may not be able to work on her/his most favorite topic.

Some suggested topic ideas:

- Development of Women's Studies—changes in women's lives b/c of women's studies.
- Women of color and feminism—contributions from women of color to the feminist movement and contributions that the women's movement offers women of color.
- Gender neutral language—changing language to be more gender inclusive.
- Gender and the media—how the media creates gender images and perpetuates gender inequality. How it portrays gender inequality and gender equality.
- How heteronormativity affects women's lives.
- Reproductive rights and the women's movement.
- How norms about family affect women.
- Sexual harassment and the women's movement.
- Women's work—both inside and outside the home.
- Literature changes because of the women's movement.
- Art and the women's movement.
- Changes in state and federal laws b/c of the women's movement.
- Women and religion—how have women's voices changed religion?
- The origins of women's rights activism in the United States.
- Myths about women and the myths affect women.
- The feminism backlash (Susan Faludi).
- The Beauty Myth (Naomi Wolf).
- The Equal Rights Amendment.
- Regionalism and feminism—regional differences among women and how expectations of regional differences affect women's lives.
- Politics of sexuality.
- How the women's movement has affected the way we see/deal with rape in society.
- Women's movement and pornography.
- Goals and tasks of the Third Wave of the feminism movement.

While these topics are addressed in the textbook, your paper and presentation must go well beyond the information presented in the text. You are not using the text as your paper/presentation resource, but rather as a guide to ideas to research. This class acknowledges that the structures of oppression (sexism, classism, racism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and lookism) are all interconnected and affect women differently. Your papers may address this fact.

Women Who Contribute—If you wish to write about a woman who has made significant contributions to the status of women in America, you may choose from the following list: Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Harris (Mother) Jones, Margaret Sanger, Bella Abzug, Ella Baker, Maya Angelou, Oprah Winfrey, Shirley Chisholm, Judy Chicago, Germaine Greer, Sarah Grimke, bell hooks, Adrienne Rich, Gloria Steinem, Sojourner Truth, Alice Walker, Mary Wollstonecraft, Zora Neale Hurston, Naomi Woolf, Betty Friedan, Susan Faludi.

To write about a woman who has made a significant contribution to improving the lives of women is not to write a biography about the person. After writing a short biographical introduction of the person, you should focus on the major contributions the woman has made and how those contributions have changed women's lives.

Guidelines for writing and presenting your topic

You do not need to answer each of these questions. These are guidelines to help you think about how to research and write about your topic.

- A. Introduce your topic/conceptualize your topic:
 - Define the issue and any terms specific to the topic.
 - Give background/historical information that explains your topic.
 - Explain why the issue has been important in American history. Are there laws that relate to this issue?
- B. Why is this issue important?
 - How has the issue affected women's lives?
 - What are the major problems this issue has created for women?
 - How have women attempted to resolve the problems and what has society's response been to their attempts?
- C. Explain your position of the issues.
 - What do you think about the issue and how it has affected women?
 - What still needs to be resolved to help improve women's lives because of this issue?
 - What solutions might you offer, if any?
 - Have your ideas changed during the research and writing on this issue? Why or why not?

Presentations—

For the presentation you will have approximately 5 minutes total at the podium to deliver your topic. You will not necessarily present everything you developed for your paper. You will need to focus your presentation on the major issues. Carefully focus your presentation so as to lay out the major issues.

You will be expected to present your topic the day you are assigned. If you are late to class the day you are to present, you will have 10 points automatically deducted from your presentation grade. If you are not ready when it is your turn to present, you will receive a zero for this assignment and it cannot be made up.

HUM 115: Critical Thinking

Portfolio Paper Prompts

Paper 1: Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses in being a fair-minded thinker. Give at least one specific example when you used weak-sense critical thinking and one specific example when you used strong-sense critical thinking.

Paper 2: What does critical thinking mean to you? What stage of critical thinking do you think you practice most of the time? (Chapter 2) How does thinking more critically help control your thinking, feeling and wanting? (Chapter 3)

Paper 3: Compare and connect the eight (8) parts or elements of thought and the fourteen (14) questions asked at the end of each case study.

Paper 4: Analyze the logic of chapter 1 or 4 of your textbook. Use the *Template for Analyzing a Chapter* to complete the paper.

1st Portfolio Assessment completed week of February 13th.

Paper 5: Discuss the nine (9) intellectual standards presented in chapter 5 of our textbook. Among these most fundamental standards which standards do you think are the most important and why?

Paper 6: First, evaluate and rank your learning/ study habits. (How effective are you at reading, writing, speaking, and thinking). Does it vary among disciplines? Why or why not? Second, evaluate and give yourself a letter grade for how effectively you think you are at being a life long learner. (Critique the quality of your learning).

Paper 7: Describe a situation where you made a poor decision. Discuss how you could have used information in chapter 10 to improve your decision-making. Conclude by evaluating what you have learned about better decision making techniques and what elements you believe you will practice in the future when making a major decision.

Paper 8: Compare and contrast decision making and problem solving techniques. What is similar and what is different between the two.

Optional: We have just completed eight weeks (16 classes) in Critical Thinking (Hum 115). Analyze and assess the course content, class format, and the grading criteria. You may also include any other additional feedback that you think is important in your assessment of the course to this point.

Three Alternative Paper 8 Prompt(s):

- Identify and discuss any egocentric beliefs you think you have and why?
- Compare and contrast egocentric and sociocentric thinking. (Discussed in chapters 12 & 13)
- How do your egocentric beliefs affect your decision-making and/or problem-solving.

2nd Portfolio Assessment Due March 15/16 (Must include stamped papers 5-8)

HUM 115 - Portfolio Paper Rubric

CATEGORY	2 Pts - Exemplary	1.5 Pts - Strong	1 Pt - Adequate	0.5 Pts - In Progress
Introduction/Clarity (Understandable)	Introduction is clear, logical and addresses the prompt. Position and ownership strongly evident.	Introduction is generally clear, logical and addresses the prompt. Some evidence of position and ownership.	Introduction is not clear, logical and position is not easy to discern.	Introduction is absent or unclear and does not address the prompt. No evidence of position and/or ownership.
Knowledge/Precision (Understandable)	Is able to accurately and completely identify and restate information with clarity, using examples and details.	Is able to accurately identify and restate most information. Some details and examples included.	Is able to identify and restate some information. Limited details or examples included.	Is not able to identify or restate information or does so incorrectly. No details or examples are included.
Comprehension/Depth (Understandable)	Organizes and selects facts and ideas. Is able to put these into own words to demonstrate clear and insightful understanding.	Selects some facts and ideas in an organized fashion. Demonstrates basic understanding of content.	Selects basic facts and ideas. Paper disorganized and understanding is limited.	Paper appears completely disorganized. Does not provide any evidence of comprehension of prompt and related content.
Mechanics/Organization (Understandable)	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. Organized and well-constructed paragraphs and transitional statements connecting ideas together in a seamless manner.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. Fairly well organized. Most thoughts connected.	Some grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. Paragraphs not well-constructed. Ideas not well connected.	Many grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. Information appears to be disorganized. Thoughts and ideas not connected.
Analysis/Fairness (Reasonable)	Clearly identifies the components of the material/prompt. Is able to interpret information with insight. Thoughtfully analyzes major alternate points of view and identifies salient arguments.	Identifies some of the components of the material. Is able to interpret information and concepts in a basic way. Identifies most arguments correctly.	Is able to identify some arguments and information but misinterprets ideas, concepts and/or the prompt.	Cannot identify arguments or concepts. Offers biased interpretations of the evidence and/or prompt.
Sources/Breadth (Reasonable)	Multiple view points and/or sources are presented and accurately discussed.	Some view points and/or sources are presented and discussed.	Few, if any opposing view points are presented or discussed.	Only egocentric view is presented and discussed.

Application/ Accuracy (Reasonable)	Uses facts, ideas, and principles in a creative and insightful way which demonstrates the ability to apply concepts appropriately and consistently to make a valid point.	Uses some basic facts, ideas and principles in an appropriate way to communicate a valid point.	Uses some basic facts, ideas and principles but does not apply them consistently or appropriately to make a valid point.	Does not apply the material or is unable to show justification or present reasonable or valid thoughts.
Conclusion/Relevance (Valuable)	Conclusion restates the main points of the prompt and provides a clear and pertinent summary of facts and position.	Conclusion restates the main points of the prompt and provides a generally clear and/or pertinent summary of facts and position.	Conclusion may restate the main points of the prompt but fails to provide a clear or pertinent summary of facts and position.	Conclusion fails to restate the main points of the prompt and/or fails to provide a clear and/or pertinent summary.
Evaluation/Logical (Valuable)	Draws thoughtful, creative, warranted, non-fallacious evaluations. Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reason leads. Conclusion is clear, reasonable, and insightful.	Draws warranted, evaluations. Follows where evidence and reason leads with some open mindedness. Conclusion is reasonable.	Draws opinions or judgments based on unwarranted or fallacious information. Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions.	Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view. Exhibits close-mindedness or hostility to reason.
Synthesis/Significance (Valuable)	Is able to creatively and insightfully predict or infer alternative information to form a new whole. Adds original ideas/designs to create solutions and/or arguments justifying key results or procedures.	Is able to predict, infer, or add some information to create a solution or argument, justifying a few results or procedures.	Is able to predict, infer, or add some information, but fails to identify strong counter arguments. May not justify results or procedures correctly.	Does not identify information or evidence correctly. Fails to justify results or procedures regardless of evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions.

Hum 115
Critical Thinking

Portfolio Paper Rubric

Name: _____

_____ 1. 4 Stamped Papers included in Portfolio (4 points)

Portfolio Paper Assessed _____

_____ 2. **Understandable:** What are you saying? (2 points)

- **Clarity**- Clear about meaning and position. Takes ownership
- **Precise**-Details
- **Depth**- specifics, significant factors

(Grammatically correct)

_____ 3. **Reasonable:** Would others agree? Will it hold up? (2 points)

- **Fairness**- justified
- **Breadth**-multiple viewpoints
- **Accurate**- is it really “true” are we assessing our own views, valid

_____ 4. **Valuable:** Why is it important? (2 points)

- **Significance**-future consideration, positive and negative outcomes
- **Relevant**- answers the question, helps us understand
- **Logical**-Does this really make sense, thoughts fit together

_____ **Total**

Recap of attendance and punctuality

_____ Number of Absences

_____ Number of Times Tardy