

**WRITING MATERIAL:**  
**A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO ARTFUL COMMUNICATION**  
*ENWR 1510 (Writing and Critical Inquiry)*  
*Section 77 (11 a.m. / New Cabell 283)*

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*I will only receive/respond to texts M-F, 9-5 pm*  
*Please include your full name and course section*  
*number in your first message.*

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## ABOUT THE COURSE

### Questions to Ask:

- What does writing look like in a research university? Why?
- How can a scientific approach help me write with more precision and beauty?
- How can writing with effective style more accurately reflect content?
- How can I use writing to think, to ask questions that matter and pursue answers?
- How can I be more effective at communicating and persuading others to care about my ideas?
- What am I leaving behind when I “put down” a writing project?

### Course Description:

This first-year writing course serves as an entry point to *begin* preparing you for academic writing throughout and beyond your university careers at UVA. In particular, you should take on new strategies for researching, reading, and engaging ideas, so that you can effectively contribute to ongoing academic conversations and initiate new topics you believe warrant consideration. By the semester’s end, you should see the whole of the writing process—from researching and brainstorming through drafting, workshopping, revising, and presenting polished work—as a dynamic, social activity.

In this Spring 2023 section, we will pursue these course goals through a few specific approaches:

1. We will focus on scientific research and writing projects, studying the research/writing processes of published scientists and conducting original research/writing projects of our own.
2. We will prioritize physical materials (over digital materials or inchoate ideas), which means:
  - a. working with hard copy sources/artifacts as often as possible and
  - b. creating physical archives of our own work (supplemented by digital versions).

This scientific emphasis will equip you to be a stronger writer regardless of your ultimate major or career. While we will consider certain field-specific conventions (what authors normally include in scientific articles, for example, and how scientists prepare research posters for presenting their work), your major assignments allow for wide latitude in format.

Key advantages of our science focus, however, include:

- an introduction to a wider range of research methods than often included in first-year writing (including traditional library research, but also the use of special collections, field work, and empirical testing),
- concrete examples of authors who wrote both technical and artful publications, to demonstrate writing for different purposes/audiences, and
- solid, grounding criteria for evaluating our writing/ideas (a gift, when writing can often be subjective and difficult to evaluate).

This is a process-based course, which means you will be required to submit multiple drafts of each project and demonstrate substantial revision based on peer and instructor feedback, as well as on your own authorial judgment.

This is a writing-intensive course and will feature lecture, discussion, peer collaboration, and of course, plenty of independent writing and revision. While we will work primarily in hard-copy forms, you will need to use digital media as assigned, and you will also complete oral presentations.

### What You Should Expect from This Course

#### (i.e., “Course Outcomes”)

If you truly engage this course (i.e., don’t just try to skate through it), you should come of it with:

- more energy and excitement about ALL of your courses,
- confidence in conducting your own research,
- a stronger sense of your own mind and voice, and
- a toolkit for approaching unknowns with curiosity, joy, and care.

## Required Materials

- Mystery Envelopes (available directly from professor)
- Field notebook (your choice; you probably need about 40 pages total, so a small one will be just fine—you'll need to write sentences and do sketches)
- Multicolored index cards (1 pack; 3-5 colors)
- Some kind of string (about 6-10 feet long)
- Paperclips or mini-binder clips (1 pack)
- Some form of archival box

## Recommended-Not-Required Materials

*These are resources you may or may not find helpful. Explore them and see if you think they're worth purchasing.*

- **MLA Handbook, 8<sup>th</sup> edition**, ISBN-13: 978-1603292627
- **Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace**, any edition, though go for the most recent edition that's affordable on used book sites. Older editions of this title are usually much cheaper! In our coursepack, excerpts are from the 12<sup>th</sup> ed., ISBN-13: 978-0134080413.
- *Elements of Style*, Classic Edition, 2018, ISBN-13: 978-1643990002
- **How to Write a Sentence, and How to Read One**, ISBN-13: 978-0061840531
- **Online Style Apps** (use with a grain of salt; these can all be helpful, but none will make your writing "correct"; they'll give you advice based on algorithmic analysis that you can consider on your own):
  - **Hemingway Editor**, [hemingwayapp.com](http://hemingwayapp.com)
  - **Writer's Diet**, [writersdiet.com/test.php](http://writersdiet.com/test.php)
  - **Grammarly**, [grammarly.com](http://grammarly.com)
  - **Ginger**, [gingersoftware.com](http://gingersoftware.com)
  - **ProWritingAid**, [prowritingaid.com](http://prowritingaid.com)

## UVA WRITING CENTER

The UVA Writing Center is a writing resource staffed by graduate and undergraduate student tutors and available to all UVA students. Tutors work one on one with students in 50-minute appointments and can help with drafting, revision, argument structure, and other special concerns. Several Writing Center tutors are trained to work with non-native speakers of English. Do note that although they can offer help at every stage of the writing process, they do not offer proofreading or editing services. Their concern is not to "clean up" your specific paper, but to help you become a better writer overall. During Fall 2020, you can sign up for synchronous or asynchronous online consultation. You can learn more at <https://writingcenteratuva.wordpress.com/>.

## OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Please feel free to drop by during my office hours or to make an appointment for other times. I will not be on Zoom by default, but I am happy to log on upon request.

For short notes, the best way to reach me is by text message. I check these regularly during business hours (M-F, 9-5) and can usually respond within a few hours. For longer communications, I also check email regularly during business hours and will do my best to respond to your emails within 24 hours. You may drop hard-copy mail at the English office (Bryan Hall 326), and the staff there will see that it gets to my mailbox.

I will release course announcements/updates via Collab. You will need to configure your Collab account to make sure you receive announcements quickly.

## COURSE POLICIES

### **!! Note on Technology !!**

**PLEASE DO NOT GOOGLE (OR OTHERWISE SEARCH) FOR ANSWERS ONLINE** unless directed to do so. Yes; there is a time for online research. However, we particularly want to know what YOU think and how you came to your own preliminary conclusions; we do not want to consider the short-cut of what someone else put online. If you turn to online searches for information outside of targeted assignments, you WILL lose some of the key benefits from taking this course.

### **Attendance**

Attendance and active participation is required throughout the semester. You will need to participate in class prepared (having completed all reading/writing assignments in advance) and ready to engage the day's activities, which may be solo or collaborative.

In most cases, the standard attendance policy will apply as follows:

- Any student is allowed one week of absences for any reason, which in this class means three class sessions.
  - You should use these for typical illness or personal leave.
- If you miss more than 3 class periods:
  - Each additional missed class will result in a course grade reduction of 1/3 of a letter grade (for example, from B+ to B).
- You must be both mentally and physically in the room during class to be considered present. If you miss more than 10 minutes (either by arriving late or departing early), or if you are distracted during class (examples included but are not limited to sleeping, studying for other classes, or using technology without being explicitly directed to do so), you will incur  $\frac{1}{2}$  an absence.
- If at all possible, you should notify me before missing class and attempt to complete assignments in advance. This practice is an act of professionalism and will help you stay on track with your course work.
- If you miss more than 3 class periods without contacting me, I will refer you to the Office of the Dean of Students out of concern for your safety.

\*Exceptions:

If you have outstanding circumstances that you believe warrants attendance accommodations, please see me as early as possible to discuss whether those are appropriate. These usually arise connected to the following:

- serious illness
- varsity sports travel or other travel in which you officially represent the University
  - \*\*Varsity athletes must, at the beginning of the semester, present the professor with a document making clear how many classes they will miss.
- religious observances
- conflicts, crises, or obligations beyond the student's control, including medical, personal, or financial crises
  - \*\*NOTE: I do not need or accept medical notes; please do not provide them.

**Late Work**

Work will be due at the beginning of class and will be considered late thereafter. If you know you will be missing a class, you must submit the assignment ahead of time to receive credit. During investigative and collaborative projects, much late work will be unusable and will therefore receive a grade of “zero.” In most other situations, extensions are available; work submitted late without an extension will receive a one-time, flat penalty of 10%. You must arrange extensions PRIOR to the assignment due date in order to avoid late penalties.

**Class Conduct**

Our classroom is a place for the free exchange of ideas in an environment of mutual respect. Students whose behavior distracts or disrespects others will be asked to leave and will be counted absent.

**Disclosure Statement:**

Please be advised that I, as with most UVA employees, am considered a “responsible employee”—that is, if you disclose to me information that falls under Title IX, I am legally required to report that information. Primarily, this means I have to report harassment and interpersonal violence; I am also responsible for reporting many forms of self-harm and criminal activity. If you still want to talk with me, I am happy to be a resource, but if you want to talk to someone who does *not* have the same obligation to share your information, I can also refer you to others who are designated “confidential employees.” You can find a list of these confidential resources at <https://eocr.virginia.edu/chart-confidential-resources>.

**Accommodations Statement:**

It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. I am happy to consider creative solutions as long as they do not compromise the intent of the assessment or learning activity. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may also want to meet with the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC), to request an official accommodation. You can find more information about SDAC, including how to apply online, through their website at [sdac.studenthealth.virginia.edu](http://sdac.studenthealth.virginia.edu). If you have already been approved for accommodations through SDAC, please make sure to send me your accommodation letter and meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

**Collaboration and Potential Academic Misconduct:**

I trust every student in this course to fully comply with all of the provisions of the University’s Honor code (<https://honor.virginia.edu/overview>). By enrolling in this course, you have agreed to abide by and uphold the Honor System of the University of Virginia, as well as the following policies specific to this course:

Collaboration is an essential part of this course and a key component of any writing activity. That said:

- You must disclose collaboration for each major assignment in an accompanying cover memo (instructions will be provided). You should, through these memos, acknowledge the influence of others on your work and not misrepresent others’ work as your own.
- Working with AI-assisted tools (including but not limited to ChatGPT) counts as collaboration with outside sources.
- You must fully cite all outside sources in your work. We will use MLA 8 citation in this course.
- If you submit an assignment that properly discloses outside sources but does not demonstrate adequate independent work, you will be given an opportunity to revise for regrading.
- If you submit an assignment in which you fail to acknowledge outside sources or in which you include little to no original work (i.e. in which you copied someone else’s work and presented it as your own), you will not be given the opportunity to revise. Such suspected violations will be forwarded to the Honor Committee, and you may, at my discretion, receive an immediate zero on that assignment regardless of any action taken by the Honor Committee.

## Assignments and Grading

### 1) Notebook Assignments (15%)

You will keep active journals all semester, based on part on prompts that I will provide in class. You are always welcome to write more, but not less, than assigned. For each assigned prompt, you should write about 2 pages (handwritten, single-sided). You should also take notes on the course, on your ideas outside of class, on general observations and reflections; drawings and “off-topic” notes are encouraged, as well. I will evaluate notebooks twice: first, during individual student-professor conferences, and again at the semester’s end. These are graded based on completion, with minimal completion of all prompts warranting a C+ to B; notebooks that go “above and beyond” will receive grades of B+ to A.

### 2) Peer Responses (15%)

You will respond to your peers’ work throughout the semester in various forms. The bulk of your “peer response” grade will come in Unit 3, during Whole Class Workshop, but you may be marked up or down based on the quantity and quality of the responses you provide all semester. More details will come with each assignment.

### 3) Major Writing/Presentation Assignments (60%)

#### a) Analysis and Synthesis (20%)

You will submit process assignments, research notes, drafts, reflection statements, and a revised/polished essay considering the research and writing work of one assigned scientist-author.

#### b) Discovery Essay and Presentation (20%)

You will submit a series of process assignments and a final presentation—both visual and oral—detailing your guided research process.

#### c) Research Essay and Presentation (20%)

You will draw on thoughtful bibliographic research as well as original research (field and empirical) to create an archive of material artifacts, working notes and drafts, a final research essay, and a distilled visual representation of your work (i.e., a presentation poster, a robust infographic, or a short video). You will submit all physical and digital materials in an archival box for grading; you will present your work in a live, open-to-the-public session.

### 4) Final—Curated Archive/Oral Presentation (10%)

For your final, you will present your own curated archive, complete with an archival guide to your own papers, including a Table of Contents, an explanation of your organizational decisions, and reflective notes on what themes have emerged in your work. In a final exam session, you will discuss your work orally and respond to questions about your research process and final products (possibly including questions about your methods, findings, interpretations, rhetorical presentation, audience reception, and implications of your work for the future).

## Grading Rubrics

Specific rubrics will vary based on assignment and will be handed out with the assignments themselves.

## Grading Scale

Coming to class every day and completing assignments is a basic expectation for coursework; simply fulfilling the minimum requirements of the course warrants an average grade (i.e., C). A higher-than-average grade will be based on: 1) the distinctive quality and development of your work; 2) consistently demonstrating critical and creative thinking in your writing; 3) your ability to guide a piece of writing through the various stages of revision; and 4) a willingness to take risks by exploring new subjects, genres, and techniques. Below is a breakdown of how final grades are calculated; as we move into the semester, you will receive more detailed descriptions and we’ll talk more about how your writing is evaluated. I grade on a 100-point scale, as illustrated below.

Letter Grade	100-Point Scale	Quality of Work
<b>A</b>	93–100	Outstanding
<b>A-</b>	90–92.99	
<b>B+</b>	87–89.99	
<b>B</b>	83–86.99	Exceeds Expectations
<b>B-</b>	80–82.99	
<b>C+</b>	77–79.99	
<b>C</b>	73–76.99	Meets Expectations/Average
<b>C-</b>	70–72.99	
<b>D+</b>	67–69.99	
<b>D</b>	63–66.99	Below average/needs work
<b>D-</b>	60–62.99	
<b>F</b>	59.99 or below	Unacceptable/Incomplete