

WR 2101F (652): Introduction to Expository Writing

Fall 2023, Online

Course Description and Objectives

“An introduction to the basic principles and techniques of good writing. The course will emphasize practical work and the development of writing skills for a variety of subjects and disciplines.” By “practical work,” this course description from the calendar means to indicate that you will spend much of your time in this course writing, responding to the writing of others, and revising your work in light of the responses you receive to it. Consequently, in this course you will not only produce written texts, but also develop a critical eye for examining the written texts of others, both professionally-written and written by others in your class.

The calendar course description also points to the development of writing skills in “a variety of subjects and disciplines.” While it would simply not be possible to study and write in all the genres that are used across a complex university such as Western, you will be asked to write in more than one genre. When you do so, pay attention to the rules/constraints of that genre and study how those rules give you clues to what is regarded as “good writing” for the genre you are writing in. Try to develop a conscious awareness (metaknowledge) about the rules for writing well and how they shift depending on the context for writing.

More generally, the course aims to contribute to your development of an “ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences” (Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents’ statement on ‘University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations,’ 24 October 2005).

Required Text

Messenger, William E., Jan de Bruyn, Judy Brown, and Ramona Montagnes. *The Canadian Writer’s Handbook*. Third Essentials Edition. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, 2023.

Course Requirements

Quizzes (2 x 2.5%, 1 x 5%)	10%
Essay 1: Rhetorical Analysis	20%
Essay 2: Informative Essay	30%
Essay 3: Researched Argument	40%

Assignment Format

You must submit an electronic version of the final draft of each essay, in a doc or docx format. Essays must be double-spaced in a standard serif font (e.g., Times New Roman), and they must follow MLA format. When using sources in an essay, you will be expected to follow MLA standards for documentation, detailed in chapter 36a of *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due on the date specified on the schedule. Weekly class sessions will run from Monday to Sunday, so writing assignments for a particular week are due by Sunday night at 11:55 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Late essays will be penalized 5% per day and will not receive comments unless your instructor has emailed you to grant an extension. You must apply for extensions ahead of the due date; they are not automatic.

In this course, you will be required to submit the final version of each of your essays electronically, through OWL, to turnitin.com (the submission to turnitin is automatic when you upload your assignment to OWL). You are responsible for ensuring that turnitin has processed your assignment. Shortly after uploading your assignment, you should check your turnitin report. I will not grade any essay until I see the report.

Emailed assignments are not acceptable. You must also keep copies of all assignments submitted.

In addition to submitting final drafts on the due date for each assignment, you are required to submit a rough draft of each assignment for the scheduled peer-review sessions. Failure to submit a sufficiently complete (in your instructor's opinion) assignment or to participate in a scheduled peer-review session **will** result in a 10% penalty being applied to the earned grade for that assignment. In other words, an assignment that would have earned a 78, for example, will receive instead a recorded grade of 70. This penalty will be applied in addition to any other penalties incurred (e.g., for late submission). If you review the draft of another student but do not submit your own draft, the deduction is 5%. Adequate participation in the peer-review session involves the thoughtful completion of a form supplied in each peer-review forum.

Attendance/Participation Policy

Obviously, we do not meet formally as a class in an online course. Therefore, attendance and participation on the Discussion Board are intertwined. While online classes are generally asynchronous, they are not self-paced. You must attend class (defined as logging into our OWL section) and participate by introducing yourself and posting questions and thoughts during the first week and by posting (by participating in a given week's set discussion topic) in subsequent weeks where a Discussion topic is indicated on this syllabus. During such weeks (a week is defined for this purpose as running from Monday to Sunday), you must contribute at least three separate posts, at least one of which must be a response to another student, and at least one of which must be a new post. Extended absences, defined as a failure to post into the OWL

classroom for more than five consecutive days, must be coordinated with the instructor. Postings on the Discussion Board must have the following characteristics:

- They must contribute something meaningful to the Board.
- They must support your opinion with sufficient reasons or evidence.
- They must display good grammar and organization.

Postings should not

- contain disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language;
- be excessively long or excessively short (three to six well-developed sentences is an appropriate range, unless instructions specify otherwise);
- be unrelated to the week's topic; or
- say things that do not contribute anything (e.g. "I agree with you" or "nice comment").

Note that attendance as defined in this section is mandatory in this course. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements as defined above for any week where there is Discussion will result in your earned final grade in this course being reduced by 3%. That penalty is cumulative to a maximum of five weeks. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements for five or more weeks where there is Discussion will result in your earned final grade being reduced by 15%.

Email Policy

When you contact me using OWL Messages, you can expect a response within twenty-four hours. If you email me using Outlook/Western email, you can expect a response within one week. If you email me using a non-UWO account, you will not receive a response. If I foresee that I cannot respond to emails within times listed above, I will post an announcement on OWL.

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

"Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, which can be found here: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

"Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently Western and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>."

“In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools for information gathering and preliminary research purposes only (unless otherwise indicated in the assignment instructions). These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. It is essential, however, that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize, develop, and articulate their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, but students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism in any form. Note that for all assignments completed outside of class, the instructor can require you to attend an in-person interview to discuss your work before a mark is finalized. Assignments should always reflect students’ own thoughts and constitute independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, supports independent inquiry, and encourages original written contributions.”

Academic Accommodation

Senate language requires all requests for accommodation for a grade component of 10% or more to go to academic counselling. That same section, however, allows for (and encourages) instructors to deal directly with accommodation requests for grade components less than 10%. Here’s the relevant Senate language:

“Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course:

Instructors are encouraged, in the first instance, to arrange participation requirements and multiple small assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility. A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor or follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline.

“In arranging accommodation, instructors will use good judgement and ensure fair treatment for all students. Instructors must indicate on the course outline how they will be dealing with work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. In particular, instructors must indicate whether medical documentation will be required for absences, late assignments or essays, missed tests, laboratory experiments or tutorials, etc. Where medical documentation is required, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Academic Counselling/Dean’s office, who will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University’s Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy (https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/privacy.pdf), **instructors may not collect medical documentation.**”

Medical Accommodation Policy

“The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that

medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration, and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.”

Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics

A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Documentation from Student Health Services

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner.

Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that their ability to meet their academic responsibilities was seriously

affected.”

Please note that individual instructors **will not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All medical documentation must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling or Undergraduate office of a student’s home Faculty.

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Other Student Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Intellectual Property and Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g., PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students’ personal use within the course and remain the instructor’s intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the

course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.