

**Fall 2018 – WRA 1004/102 – Sect 15**  
**Preparation for College Writing:**  
**Crossing Cultures, Crossing Languages**  
**TTh 12:40 -2 PM – 314 Bessey**  
**F 10:20-12:10 F – 141 Akers**

Dr. Joyce Meier  
884-7693 (office) OR 488-2768 (cell)  
[meierjo@msu.edu](mailto:meierjo@msu.edu)

239 Bessey (517)  
Hrs: 2-3 & 11-12 Th  
& by appointment

**Course Description**

This is a course about your writing and learning in the context of languages and cultures. It emphasizes how our languages and cultural practices shape and are shaped by wider social, cultural, and global contexts. Each of you has moved across cultures and languages: from high school to MSU; from another city or country to East Lansing; from cell-phone texting or tweeting to more academic “language.” While this course will help you write in standard English in preparation for your next-level writing course, it will also question what it means to learn a “standard” language, especially in academic settings. At the same time, we will discuss other communicative forms such as body language, visual language, and social media. The class will involve ample drafting, peer reviewing, and revising of your papers-in-progress.

Major course goals include:

- an increased awareness of the influence of cultures and languages in our lives;
- an understanding of writing, broadly defined, as a way to discover and to learn;
- an enhanced awareness of the importance of audience, purpose, revision, and reflection as tools in the writing process;
- a deeper understanding of the types of writing and cultural practices that you use now and may use in the future, both at MSU and beyond.

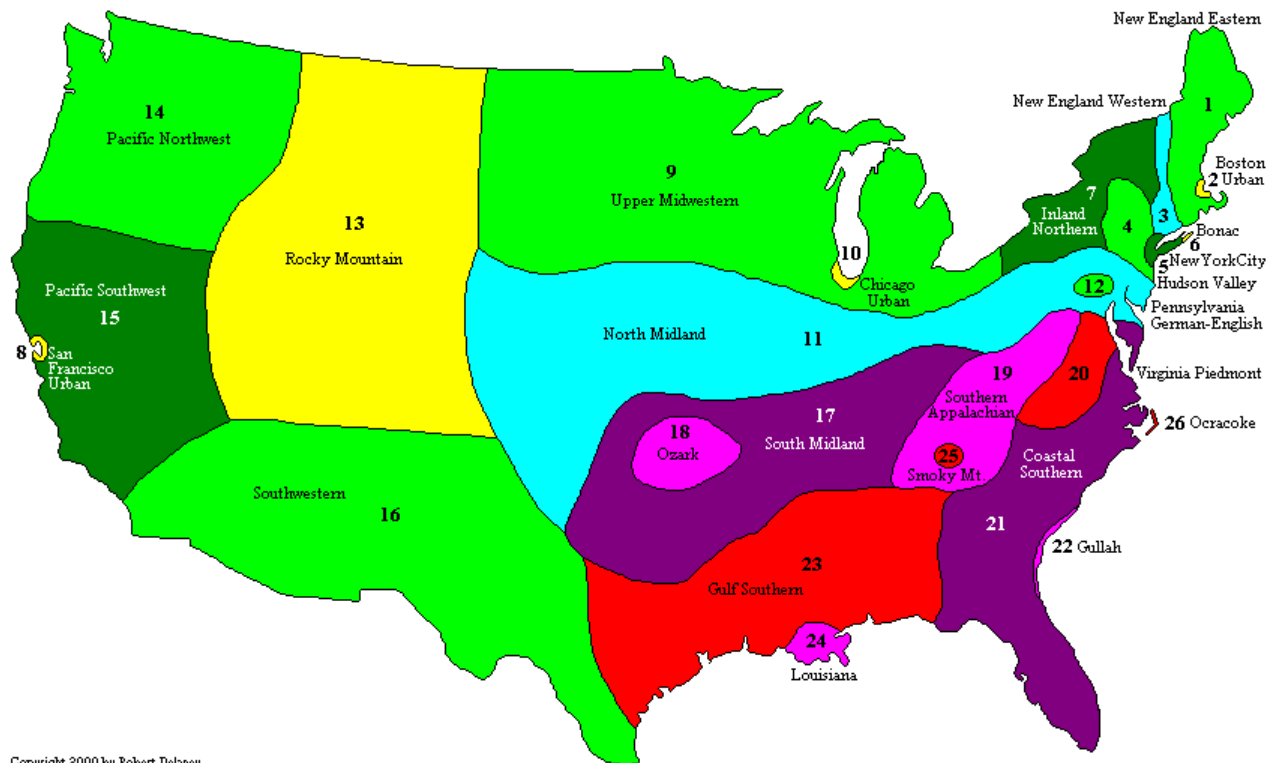
*“The majority think language is mostly grammar. Teach people the grammar, give them a dictionary, and they’ll communicate. But anyone who’s studied a second language in the classroom and then tried to use it in the real world knows better than that...meaning travels well beyond the dictionary.”*

*- Michael Agar*

### What if English “ain’t” my first language?

Throughout the semester, I will invite you to bring in stories, examples, and “artifacts” from your own communities, cultures, and countries. In this course, speaking other languages or having lived in other parts of the country and world is seen as enriching your contributions.

If you are from the United States or grew up speaking English, you too bring a unique perspective. You are members of various subcultures and traditions with their own forms of speaking, dress, body language, and dialects (Mid-Western, Southern, Appalachian, African-American Vernacular English, etc.). I invite you to bring these into this class and your writing.



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## **Practices**

This class focuses on writing for different purposes, including:

- to learn new ideas (writing them out helps you understand them)
- to practice new skills and writing “moves” (like writing to think)
- to coach another writer (by reflecting their ideas back to them, and by asking them questions, which in turn helps you become a better writer yourself)

So expect to write a lot: peer reviews, responses to class discussion and readings, reflections on your writing and learning processes, *and* revisions of each of the major course projects. Everything we do in this class works to help you do well on “bigger” projects, especially the final one that has you “looking back” and evaluating all of the term’s work. The point is not the assignment, but rather the learning and writing tools that you will take with you as you go forward to WRA:101 and beyond.

Because writing is linked to reading, speaking, and listening, there will be many opportunities to develop these other skills too. You will be frequently asked to share your writing with others, and to talk about your ideas in class. You will also be asked to participate in the annual First-Year Writing Conference, which should take place from **9-3 on Friday, Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>** this term (more information will be forthcoming!) Depending on what can be arranged, we also might visit a local school at some point in the term, for you to share aspects of your cultures and languages with the third-graders there.

## **Policies:**

Our class sessions are activity-based. Everything we do in class leads to something else—a final project, a presentation. Because the class is interactive, and we share so much of our writing with each other, attendance is important and expected. You are allowed up to three absences before your grade is affected (lowered by as much as .2 for each day past the three permitted). Since coming late and leaving early take from class time, three tardies equal one absence. So be here—and on time!

Assignments and readings are due at the start of the class date indicated on the schedule. If for some reason you are unable to turn in an assignment on time, let me know immediately. For the peer reviews and the final drafts of the primary projects, no late work is allowed.

That being said, things happen. If for any reason you start to find yourself falling behind in this class, or are having difficulties with any project, please come talk with me, so that together we can work on solutions.

Finally, it can be disruptive to other students when you leave class early or arrive late, read or write outside material; talk or check your cell phone while another classmate is speaking. Please be respectful of your peers.

## **Electronic Communication**

Depending on the nature of our peer review in relationship to our learning goals, you may be asked to submit both paper copies and on-line drafts of your paper.

MSU is an e-mail / D2L culture. As part of that culture, I use MSU's e-mail system to send out reminders about due dates and assignments, and to make other announcements. So check your MSU e-mail / D2L regularly. I will respond quickly to e-mail questions. Make sure you include your name and course number; otherwise, I may not recognize that the e-mail's from you!

**Academic Honesty:** Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states: "the student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore:

- You may not submit course work you have completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course.
- You may not submit work in which you have used someone else's ideas without proper acknowledgement.
- You are not authorized to use [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) or any other such source to complete work in this course.

Students who violate MSU's academic integrity rules may receive a failing grade on the assignment and even in the course. This course will give you ample opportunity to learn and practice properly including and acknowledging others' ideas into your own work.

You can read more about MSU's policy on academic honesty at [www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/dishonestyFAQ.html](http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/dishonestyFAQ.html).

## **Confidentiality of Student Writing and Mandatory Reporting:**

Michigan State University is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free of relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and to ensuring that all affected individuals have access to services. For information on reporting options, confidential advocacy and support resources, university policies and procedures, or how to make a difference on campus, visit the Title IX website at [www.titleix.msu.edu](http://www.titleix.msu.edu).

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues based on external legal obligations or that relate to the health and safety of MSU community members and others.

As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may set into motion contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

## **Resources**

- Writing Center: <http://writing.msu.edu> - 300 Bessey, & in the neighborhood engagement centers
- ESL Lab (<https://elc.msu.edu/esl-lab/>) - for international students
- Library: <http://www.lib.msu.edu/> - for reference & research help
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: <https://caps.msu.edu> - to talk about anything!)
- Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities: <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu>.

RCPD (and university) is committed to maximizing ability and opportunity for full participation by persons with disabilities. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations.

## **Course Materials (required)**

- Access to printing
- Folder/ binder to hold all handouts, along with paper copies and rough drafts of work
- Readings posted on D2L. But please print paper copies and bring them to class for discussion.

## Major Project Assignments

While this is not a course on grammar, I do expect your papers to be clear and understandable. Generally, we will build together the criteria by which we will assess your projects.

The five major course projects are:

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|---|-----|
| (1) a personal story of “crossing cultures”<br>(incorporates interview of classmate’s experience, & reflection)   | 10% |
| (2) a Translation/ Reflection Project<br>(includes translation, comparative notes, & reflection)                  | 20% |
| (3) an analysis of an aspect of MSU Culture<br>(includes surveys, interview, questions, research log, reflection) | 20% |
| (4) a Remix Project<br>(plus FYW conference presentation & reflection)  | 20% |
| (5) a reflective analysis of your course learning   | 20% |

You must complete all five projects to pass this course (due dates below). Also, all assignments, except for #5, will involve writing a reflection about your writing process.

Finally, your participation and daily course work (reading discussion, etc.) will be assessed a grade (10% of the course total). This includes any in-class writing such as free writing, note taking, and group work (peer review, class activities, etc.).

## Schedule

- Assignments and readings are due on the day indicated.
- In-class writings may happen at any time.
- Some days are TBA (To Be Arranged)
- The schedule may change slightly—but only to benefit you, by giving you more time, as needed, for a given assignment.

	<b>Homework/Readings</b>
Thur 8/29	(In-class – Introductions, Where I Come From & Intro to Project1)
Fri 8/30	<b>Proposal Project #1 due by class end</b>
Tues 9/3	<b>Read “Mother Tongue” (on D2L). Bring print copy to class.</b>
Thurs 9/5	
Fri 9/6	<b>Draft 1 of Project #1 due –submit to D2L Revision plan due by class end</b>
Tues 9/10	<b>Final draft Project #1 due Bring cultural object to class.</b>
Thurs 9/12	<b>Read “This is Water” (on D2L). Bring print copy to class.</b>
Fri 9/13	<b>Draft 2 of Proj #1, due Revision plan due by class end</b>

<b>Unit 2 – Crossing Languages &amp; Cultures</b>	
Tues 9/17	<b>Final Draft, Project #1 due</b> (In-class – reflect on project 1) <b>Reflection due by class end</b>
Thurs 9/19	<b>Bring Cultural Artifact to class</b> (in-class – share & introduce Proj 2) Reflect / pre-write on “How I translate, in my day-to-day life”
Fri 9/20	Select teams for Project 2 Select topic for Project 2 ( <b>proposal due by class end</b> )

9/23 – last day to drop a class, with refund (by 8 pm)	
Tues 9/24	<b>Read “Dreaming Chinese”</b> Discuss poems & cultural contexts, how language is culture
Thurs 9/26	<b>Translations due</b> Groups discuss translations, take notes on differences & similarities
Fri 9/27	<b>Bring Thurs notes to class.</b> Write 1 page similarities & differences <b>Read Bliss, “Time and Distance Overcome”</b> Music Ex, & how the non-verbal can represent cultures
<b>Conferences in here!</b>	
Tues 10/1	<b>Read Young’s “Writers Use They Own English” / excerpt from Anzaldua.</b> Ex on dying languages; role of ‘public languages’
Thurs 10/3	Watch clip from “The Story of English” Etymology exercise – How words come to be; relationship b/t words & power
Fri 10/4	<b>Rough draft – Project #2 due</b> Peer review
<b>Conferences in here!</b>	
Tues 10/8	<b>Read “Story of a Shoe”</b>
Tues 10/10	Watch “The Danger of One Story” Stereotype exercise Introduce Project 3
Fri 10/11	<b>Final draft – Project #2 due</b> <b>Write reflection on Project 2 in class.</b> Class brainstorm on “MSU language and cultures” Proposal for #3 due by class end.

<b>Unit 3 – MSU Cultures</b>	
Tues 10/15	<b>Read Xia, on culture shock</b> Affordances of survey, interviews, observation, sources My survey (on student use of library), & how to make a survey
Thurs 10/17	<b>Survey draft due</b> (peer review) Discuss: Who might I interview? (Practice-write e-mail) Share charts / visuals from library survey
Fri 10/18	<b>Revised surveys due.</b> Pass out in class. Peer review e-mail requests; research on Who to Ask. <b>Send out, cc: Meier</b> (Ex: is a practice cultural? Personal?) Discuss field research, note-taking
Tues 10/22	<b>Notes on field research due</b> <b>Meet in library</b>



Thurs 10/24	<b>Dialogic notes on library research due</b> <b>Bring all materials gathered so far to class</b>
Fri 10/25	<b>Rough draft of Project 3 due</b> Peer review in class
<b>Conferences in here</b>	
Tues 10/29	<b>Bring research materials from Project 3 to class.</b> Analysis exercise: What does the data show? What is the “So What?”
Thurs 10/31	Arrangement exercise: how to order your ideas
Fri 11/1	<b>Rough draft #2 of Project #3 due</b> Peer review in class – focus on analysis & arrangement
<b>Conferences in here</b>	
Tues 11/5	Introduction to Project #4 Show videos of prior students. Get into groups; <b>Proposal due by class end.</b>
Thurs 11/7	Work-day, for Project #4
Fri 11/8	<b>Final draft of Project #3 due</b> In-class reflection: What of my ‘data’ was most / least useful, & why? What does this tell you about challenges / affordances of ‘research’ writing?

<b>Conferences in here</b>	
Tues 11/12	<b>Rough draft#1 Project #4 due</b> Peer review in class
Thurs 11/14	Intro to CRAP principles Work-day, for Project #4
Fri 11/15	<b>Read Giles, Reflective Writing (D2L)</b> What makes a good presentation? (& info on FYW Conference)
<b>Conferences in here</b>	
Tues 11/19	<b>Rough draft Project #4 due</b> (in-class practice session)
Thurs 11/21	<b>Bring Projects 1-3 to class, along with prior drafts &amp; reflections</b> Workshop / treasure hunt / speed-dating, on What I Have Learned Introduction to Project #5
Fri 11/22	<b>First-Year Writing Conference!</b>
<b>Conferences in here</b>	
Tues 11/26	<b>Final draft Project #4 due, including reflection on FYW Conference</b>
Thurs 11/28	<b>No class – Thanksgiving!</b>
Fri 11/30	

<b>Looking Back, Looking Forward</b>	
Mon 12/3	<b>Draft #1, Project #5 due</b>
Wed 12/5	Claims & Evidence ex. – apply to papers
Fri 12/7	<b>Final Draft Project #5 due.</b>

**Final class meeting / celebration – Thursday, Dec. 1**