WRA 101: Writing as Inquiry

Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and Cultures
Michigan State University
[SEMESTER], section ###

Course and Instructor Information

Course Dates: [INSERT DATES]
In-person class DAY AND TIME in LOCATION

Professor: NAME
Office Address: LOCATION
Office Hours: DAY AND TIME, LOCATION, LINK
Email: ADDRESS

What is WRA 101?: Course Description and Overview

WRA 101's goal is to **help you learn how to be a better learner of writing**: how to use what you know, recognize what you don't yet know, and find ways to adapt to new writing situations.

To do this, you'll practice strategies for composing for specific purposes. Being a writer demands knowledge that is both conceptual and practical: as a writer, you *know* certain things, and you *do* certain things:

- knowledge of writing as *rhetorical, that uses the art of rhetoric*—how writing matters in specific situations, how it makes knowledge, and how it impacts the world.
- knowledge of available strategies for inventing and organizing ideas, evaluating purposes and audiences, and developing ideas and language through revision.
- practices and routines (drafting, reviewing, reflecting, revising) that writers sustain in order to make writing happen.

MSU First-Year Writing Program's Learning Goals and Guiding Principles
Students in this class will participate in the following learning actions:

- **Inquiry**: a recursive process of posing, following, and answering questions.
- **Discovery**: making new knowledge through an inquiry process.
- **Communication**: purposeful engagement of others through the products of inquiry and discovery.

The following **principles** are foundational to our work in First-Year Writing:

- For writers, inquiry, discovery, and communication are **related and recursive** acts.
- Learners of writing have **useful prior knowledge** and capacities.
- **Experience is central** in learning to write: it is both a source of knowledge and a subject for inquiry.
- Writers benefit from **working with others.**

- The practices, values, and effects of writing are variously **situated in communities and cultures.**
- **Culture**—your understanding of what that means as a concept, and what it means to you in your own experience—is important both in learning to write and in assessing how writing works in the world.

The Subject of WRA 101: You

WRA 101 is not the kind of course that delivers a stable body of knowledge or information. In fact, you could say that **the subject of the course is you**—your knowledge, experiences, stories, and plans.

Our job will be to find value in these, and to put them in relation to the work ahead of you as a writer, language user, student, and professional. WRA 101 puts your past and present selves in relation to your future self (as a student, professional, and ethical member of society), and seeks to supply you with writing, reflection, and learning opportunities that help you to understand and articulate your own educational project.

WRA 101 is not only a **place to learn writing**. It's also a **place to learn college.** College should be an opportunity to learn *how to learn* about ourselves in relation to others, and college is not the end of our education; it's really just the beginning. First-Year Writing is the beginning of this beginning. It makes sense, then, to start with questions like, **What is writing? What does it mean to learn? How is it possible to learn *through* writing?**

Learn more about [First-Year Writing at MSU](#)—including the learning goals, curriculum, and frequently asked questions.

Class Format

In WRA 101, you can expect that **you'll spend time *doing* things in class,** that your learning will happen by means of
- **problem solving**,
- frequent opportunities for **practice,**
- witnessing and participating in the **decisions** other writers make,
- **collaborating** with other writers,
- and **reflection on your own process** and growth as a learner and writer.

Our instructional formats will include discussion, peer review, working in groups on reading and writing tasks, (student) presentations, and one-on-one conferencing. With this in mind, we'll spend our time in this class questioning, planning, drafting, assessing, revising, reviewing, sharing, documenting, reflecting, speaking—and more!

Course Materials

[INSERT COURSE MATERIALS HERE]

Peer Review

One central activity of the course will be workshopping writing through **peer review.** We'll spend much of our time in class reading and reviewing the writing of others. This means that a good deal of the writing you'll do in this class will be in the form of structured feedback—and that **your role as a reviewer is important.** Of course, spending so much time reviewing the work of others and giving feedback to your classmates has the following benefits:

1. You'll **get feedback** as well as give it.
2. You'll **learn what to do with your own writing** from the advice you receive and the advice you give to others.
3. You'll **learn about writing and composition** through observing and commenting on others' work.
4. You'll **generate content** for your reflections.

In this class, workshop is the **primary means for developing pieces of writing and learning transferrable writing strategies.** Our approach to peer review will likely be different from how you may have experienced this activity in the past: you won't serve as an editors for each others' work, but rather, *as fellow travelers who are engaged in the work of thinking through specific writing tasks, and who can serve as resources for each other in doing those tasks.*

[INSERT PEER REVIEW PROCEDURES HERE]

Classroom and University Policies

Attendance

Courses in the First-Year Writing Program are (inter)active and practice-based, and much of your learning as a writer will happen in collaboration with other writers. For this reason, you've got to be here—it'll be hard for you to do most of the learning this class entails on your own.

[INSERT ATTENDANCE POLICY HERE]

Student and Professor Expectations

Students are expected to:
 ● **[INSERT STUDENT EXPECTATIONS HERE]**

The professor will:
 ● **[INSERT PROFESSOR EXPECTATIONS HERE]**

Fair Use, Plagiarism, and Academic Integrity

[INSERT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY] In this class, you will often compose your own original work using the work of others, citing, remixing, and redesigning as you go. When you use others' work, it is important that you do so fairly and legally.

You commit plagiarism in an academic environment when you use the work of others outside of the boundaries of fair use or fail to give proper citation and/or attribution, and it can be considered plagiarism when you knowingly or unknowingly submit someone else's ideas, images, music, video, or words as your own. Please also note that you are violating university policies if you submit work already completed for one course as original work for another course. Please read MSU's statement about plagiarism for more details.

Along with plagiarism, cheating on assignments and examinations, cheating on lab reports, falsifying records, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, and the resubmission of original work are considered serious breaches of academic conduct. Please read MSU's statement about academic integrity for more details. Procedures for responding to cases of academic honesty and possible repercussions are outlined on the Office of the University Ombudsperson's page on Academic Integrity.

ChatGPT and Generative AI technologies

[INSERT GENERATIVE AI POLICY] In keeping with our course's focus on discovery and inquiry, we must ethically and carefully choose our response to emergent technologies that are changing the way humans write, think, and learn, such as Generative AI (tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, Dall-e, and others).

*The use of generative AI tools is **permitted** in this course for the following activities:*
- Brainstorming and refining your ideas;
- Fine tuning your research questions;
- Finding information on your topic;
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts; and
- Checking grammar and style

*The use of generative AI tools is **not permitted** in this course for the following activities;*
- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts assigned to you or content that you put into a Zoom chat.
- Completing group work that has been assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed within your group and in alignment with course policy that you may utilize the tool.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic integrity and the Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge. You must also cite any use of generative AI according to the proper MLA / APA standards. Any assignment that is found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways *[insert the penalty here*].*

Generative AI Ethics
Choosing whether to use a generative AI system or tool is up to the individual, and there are many ethical concerns surrounding its use, listed below. We will have conversations about some of these ethical issues in class:

- unreliability in source evaluation,
- misrepresentation of marginalized groups,
- economic costs,
- inequality of accessibility,
- environmental impacts,
- effects on copyright and intellectual ownership, and
- potential privacy concerns.

Due to these concerns, you will not be *required* to input your information into any generative AI system in this course. If we are doing a class activity that requires AI use, you have the right to participate as an observer and not engage directly with the AI.

Preferred Name/Pronoun

If you do not identify with the name that is listed with the registrar, please notify me so that I may appropriately amend my records. In addition, if you prefer to go by a different pronoun, please inform me.

Americans with Disabilities Act

MSU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability that may affect your performance in the class, please register with the [Resource Center for Persons With Disabilities (RCPD)](#) to receive assistance.

Mandatory Reporting and Limits to Confidentiality

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 [Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance](#) website.

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 your instructor, I am required to 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 trigger 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.

For more information, go to the [Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance's Policies](#) page.

Campus Resources

- [WRAC's First-Year Writing Program](#)
- [The Writing Center](#)
- [Neighborhood Student Success Center](#)
- [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#)
- [MSU Libraries](#)
- [Computer Labs](#)
- [Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities](#)

Assignments and Grades

[INSERT ASSIGNMENTS, GOALS, GRADE WEIGHTS, AND GRADING METHODS]

ASSIGNMENT	LEARNING GOAL	GRADE WEIGHT
Reflections		
P1: Learning Narrative		
P2: Cultural Object Inquiry		
P3: Disciplinary and Professional Literacies		
P4: Remix		
P5: Final Reflection		
[INSERT OTHER ASSIGNMENTS]		

You should complete all five major projects to fulfill the Tier I Writing requirement and receive a passing grade in this course.

Your final grade for the course depends heavily on reflection, which depends on writing generated via process pieces (such as proposals or revision plans) and on participation–both as a reader and as a writer–in peer review workshop sessions.

The rewards for your work in this course follow from risk-taking and experimentation, things that can earn credit via written reflections. The weight given to *acts and practices of reflection*

in your overall grade is an expression of what the course most values: not necessarily excellent written products, but rather, *your learning.*

Grading scale

All work will be assigned a grade consistent with MSU's 4-point grading system:

- 4.0: 94-100%
- 3.5: 86-93%
- 3.0: 78-85%
- 2.5: 73-78%
- 2.0: 66-73%
- 1.5: 56-65%
- 1.0: 55%
- 0.0: < 55%

Late Work Policy

[INSERT LATE WORK POLICY]

Revision

[INSERT REVISION POLICY]

Asking for an Extension or Help via Email

Please discuss any unusual circumstances or emergencies that will affect your work with me via email, preferably before an assignment due date if possible, and request an extension if you need one. Asking for help can be hard, so please feel free to use any of the letters below. Just fill in the blanks and send it off.

Need your prof to know you're having a tough time and need help but don't know what kind?

Dear Professor __(professor name)__,
I am in your __(class name)__ and I am struggling right now for personal reasons (you can specify here but you don't have to). Can we meet to discuss my options and how I can move forward? I can meet in your scheduled office hours / I need to make an appointment outside your regular office hours.
Sincerely, __(your name)__

Need an extension?

Dear Professor __(professor name)___,
I am in your __(class name)__ class and I am writing to request an extension on ___(assignment)____. I have been unable to complete the assignment due to __(reasons that you can specify here if you want: COVID; caring responsibilities; increased time at work; illness, mental health; adjusting to college; lost access to resources on campus)__. I plan to submit my assignment on __(date)__. Thank you for considering this request.
Sincerely, __(your name)__

Course Calendar

This calendar is subject to change. Please check D2L and the announcements for the most updated version.

Assignments are due DAY and TIME.

[INSERT YOUR SCHEDULE HERE]

WEEK	DATES	ACTIVITIES	WORK DUE
1	M or T date		
	W or R date		
2	M or T date		
	W or R date		
3	M or T date		
	W or R date		
4	M or T date		
	W or R date		
5	M or T date		
	W or R date		
6	M or T date		
	W or R date		
7	M or T date		
	W or R date		

WEEK	DATES	ACTIVITIES	WORK DUE
8	M or T date		
	W or R date		
9	M or T date		
	W or R date		
10	M or T date		
	W or R date		
11	M or T date		
	W or R date		
12	M or T date		
	W or R date		
13	M or T date		
	W or R date		
14	M or T date		
	W or R date		
15	M or T date		
	W or R date		
Finals Week	Date	The professor will be available for consultations in the office or on Zoom on [INSERT DATE AND TIME].	