

E201 Maymester 2017
Prof. Kate Vieira
kevieira@wisc.edu

MTWRF, 10:20-12:50, May 30-June 16
7105 Helen C White Hall

Fast Writing in Fast Times

Research has shown that new college grads are having to use writing more—and more entrepreneurially—to get a return on their investment in their college educations. But how? This course answers this question. It first introduces students to crucial theories about writing. Then, it trains students to do what is needed to meet demands for their writing: summarize a wide range of research in understandable ways, speak persuasively to get to their point, put together written documents with others, and to write, well, fast. Unlike other Comm. B courses, this course will train students in the theories and practice of writing in the expressive and commercial realm, where, as recent research has shown, writing is on the rise, and where students will live out most of their writing lives.

This course has three main goals:

- To synthesize, analyze, and develop theories, based on reading and our own empirical research, about fast writing in fast times
- To develop strategies for writing successfully—and writing fast—to meet these demands
- To produce a peer-reviewed publishable portfolio of writing

Materials:

Readings, available via dropbox link

Money for printing papers for peer review

Laptops for writing (can be checked out in library)

To meet our course goals, we will engage in five main activities:

Reading: Because this course requires extensive writing and responding, I have limited the reading to articles and book chapters that are generally short and, I hope, engaging (though some texts are more challenging than others). For this reason, I expect the reading to be done promptly and thoroughly. *We will often open class with a short quiz based on our reading, so that I can assess your engagement with the assigned texts.* Moreover, each text has been chosen to help you develop your larger formal assignments, so that you can incorporate the reading into your emerging drafts.

Writing: We will write, workshop, and revise five assignments: (1) a personal essay; (2) a blog post; (3) a grant; (4) a research paper (this project will be broken up into sections) that will be transformed into short talking points; (5) a presentation

Peer Review: We will engage in peer review regularly with an assigned group. Peer

review creates a community of writers, allowing us to see how our work interacts with a real audience. Specifically, our peers will think critically about our writing and, in turn, offer an opportunity for us to think critically about their emerging ideas.

Conferences: We will meet for a conference once with your peer review group. The purpose of is conferences is to assess your goals and progress as writers and thinkers about writing and develop strategies to help with any issues of concern.

Class Discussion: Class discussion will revolve around the assigned reading and theme for the week, with the goal of elucidating the reading's relevance for our writing. Each member of the class is expected to be prepared, thoughtful, engaged. Every day.

Other Requirements:

Attendance: Attendance in this class is important. We lose valuable voices, thoughts, and ideas when people are not in class. However, if you must be absent, please let me know ahead of time so we know not to wait for you to begin. Also, please keep in mind the following policy: Each class member has 1 “free” days that you can miss before penalties begin to accrue. Please choose this day wisely! For each absence over 1 day, your grade will likely be lowered one half of a letter grade. After 4 absences, you will likely fail the course. In addition, in the unlikely case you come to peer review day unprepared, you will be marked absent for that day. Finally, arriving to class late 3 times counts as an absence.

Students' achievement in this class will be graded by the following criteria

For an A

- Drafts of 4 papers in the late stage of revision, including the final research paper, with 1 paper in the middle stage of revision
- *All* drafts of *all* papers turned in on time (with one free exception).
- Attendance and participation at one conference, with questions prepared.
- Evidence of having *read all assigned readings* (with one free pass) when reading is assigned, as shown by quizzes and class participation.
- Enthusiastic and thoughtful participation in peer review and large class discussion each day

For a B

- Drafts of 3 papers in the late stage of revision, with 2 papers in the middle stage of revision.
- *All* drafts of *all* papers turned in on time (with two free exceptions).
- Attendance at a one-on-one conference, with questions ready for discussion.
- Evidence of having *read all assigned readings* (with two free passes)
- Enthusiastic and thoughtful participation in peer review and large class discussion on most days

For a C

- Drafts of 2 papers in the late stage of revision, and at least 2 papers in the middle stage of revision
- *All* drafts of *all* papers turned in on time (with 3 free exceptions)
- Attendance at a one-on-one conference.
- Evidence of having read the assigned readings (with three free passes) as shown by quizzes and class participation
- Participation in peer review and large class discussion on most days

COURSE CALENDAR

Week One: Writing fast from the I

Tuesday: Introductions

- 1) free writing
- 2) peer review
- 3) achievement based grading

Wednesday: Writing in School

- 1) Reading: The Poison Fish, Inventing the University, Shitty First Drafts, M'ijo Goes to College, Elbow reader based and criterion based questions,
- 2) Personal Essay: Write
- 3) Model peer review

HW: Finish personal essay for peer review and watch one of these TED talks https://www.ted.com/playlists/62/how_to_tell_a_story

Thursday: Why Writers need Readers

- 1) Reading: Poetry is not a Luxury, Writing Groups, Dialogism in the Classroom; Share TED
- 2) Peer Review
- 3) Revise Personal Essays

HW: Complete personal essays to turn in at conference (hard copies).

Friday: Conferences

Meetings in peer review groups with prof Vieira

HW: Choose blog to share

Week Two: Writing from the Ether and Writing from the We

Monday: Social Media

- 1) Reading: Yancey, Haas and Takayoshi, Brandt intro
- 2) Sharing blog favorites, come up with blog assignment
- 3) Blog: Write one, share it, write another

HW: Finish blogs for peer review

Tuesday: How the Social Matters in Social Media

- 1) Reading: Delpit, Gee, Canagarajah
- 2) Peer review of blogs
- 3) Revise blogs

HW: Complete revision of blogs and cover letter; find grant to apply for

Wednesday: Writing and Money

- 1) Reading, Sponsors of Literacy, sample grant
- 2) Writing grant in groups

3) Peer review grant with other group

HW: Complete grant to turn in

Thursday: Researching other writers

1) Reading: Szwed, Royster

2) Library session

3) Begin primary and secondary research

HW: Research plan

Friday: When writing takes time

Do your research

HW: Complete research

Week Three: Writing Long, Writing Short, Speaking Loud

Monday: Writing Long

1) Read: Chiseri Strater, a Boy and his Wall

2) Analyzing interviews in groups

3) Write research paper incorporating analysis of primary source and secondary sources

HW: Complete research paper for peer review

Tuesday: Writing Short

1) Peer review research papers

2) Why write short? Sample Talking Points

3) Write short!

HW: Complete long and short research papers to turn in

Wednesday: Speaking Loud

1) Read: A Voice Conjures the Human who Utters It; Watch one of these ted talks: https://www.ted.com/playlists/226/before_public_speaking

2) Write your talk

3) Rehearse your talk

Thursday: Speaking Loud: Telling a story

1) Presentations

Friday: Revision Day, including cover letter, Portfolios due by 1pm.

Assignments:

1) Personal Essay: Writing Fast for Yourself

Objectives: Examine our own histories of writing fast
Develop strategies for writing fast
Tell a story

Task: In a double spaced essay of no more than pages, please answer these questions: When have you had to write fast? What do these events say about your writing and writing fast today?

Successful essays will:

- a) Offer two detailed anecdotes, complete with rising and falling action, making use of at least three narrative techniques gleaned from TED talks
- b) Offer a final paragraph that analyzes these anecdotes to theorize about writing in your life and writing fast
- c) Have an author's note describing in no more than two sentences how your essay met these requirements or where it may have fallen short.

2) Blog: Writing Fast on Social media

Objectives: Transfer the "essay" skills to a blog platform
Develop an understanding of writing for social media
Incorporate images and other affordances of new media

Task: Adapt your personal essay to two short blog posts, no more than 200 words each

Successful blog posts will:

- a) Be skimmable and engaging, and include one image
- b) Have a "take away" point
- c) Incorporate at least four of the elements of successful blogs we developed in class
- d) Have an author's note describing in no more than two sentences how your blog met these requirements

3) Grant: Writing Fast with Others

Objectives: Develop skills for writing for money
Practice writing collaboratively
Understand the genre of the grant

Task: In no more than two double spaced pages, write a grant requesting money for a project your group would like to carry out

Successful grants will:

- a) Fit the goals of the grant call for proposals
- b) Offer an overview
- c) Develop a clear, direct project narrative
- d) Demonstrate urgency and persuasion
- e) Offer clear deliverables
- f) Provide an authors' note demonstrating how the grants met these requirements.

4) Research Paper: Writing long and writing short from primary and secondary sources

Objectives: Write convincing analyses from research

Develop skills in adapting research for different audiences

Task: 1) In no more than four pages, develop a research paper based on one primary source and three secondary sources (one of which from outside of class), that convincingly answers the question: Why does writing fast matter today?

2) THEN, in no more than 1/2 page, double spaced, develop talking points to present to the Chancellor on curricular recommendations based on your research.

Successful long research papers will:

- a) Demonstrate careful and thorough data collection
- b) Provide a convincing analysis based on evidence
- c) Integrate primary research into secondary research to offer a context
- d) Offer implications of the research

Successful short research papers will:

- a) Provide clear evidence-based talking points
- b) Develop a specific research-based recommendation

Please provide an author's note for both papers describing how the papers have met these goals.

5) Presentations: Speaking Loud, Speaking Fast

Objectives: Develop oral presentation skills

Tell a moving narrative

Task: Develop a four-minute oral presentation for an audience of classmates based on any of the assignments you have already completed

Successful presentations will:

- a) Have a clear purpose
- b) Make use of four aspects of successful presentations gleaned from the Ted talks
- c) Include, in some way, a story (think back to the first assignment) to make a point
- d) Be accompanied by an author's note describing how the presentation has met these goals.