

English 3110: Writing and Rhetoric in the Humanities

Fall 2025 | Section 2 | 9-9:50 AM, MWF | LANG 209

Instructor Information:

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Office Hours: Mondays 2-3 PM, Tuesdays 11 AM-1 PM, Fridays 10-11 AM

Course Overview

On the broadest level, writers in the humanities discuss and analyze what it means to be human. Humanists explore big questions about how and why we communicate, create art, find meaning, and make sense of the world we live in. Those pursuits can sound momentous and even mysterious, but they hinge on a very practical set of skills, habits, and knowledge—and those building blocks are the focus of this course.

Throughout the semester, we will strengthen our skills of analysis and composition; work out the knots in our sentences and paragraphs; and build our repertoire of advanced research, writing, and revision techniques. Along the way, we will steadily nurture our written voices, studying and experimenting with various styles and textures with the goal of significantly expanding our writers' toolkit. Finally, to aid us in knowing how to use that deluxe toolkit most effectively, we will study and practice rhetoric, which is the art of selecting communication strategies that best fit a given audience in a particular set of circumstances.

While all of these skills—analysis, writing, revising, and rhetorical awareness—are crucial for writers in the humanities, they are also invaluable resources for humans in general. Therefore, it is my hope that you will not only advance your writing this semester, but that you will also develop and refine habits of analytical thinking and strategic communication that will permanently upgrade and enhance your experience of being human as you navigate everyday life in this complex world.

Readings

The two required textbooks are listed below. You must purchase or rent a hard copy—do not buy or rent an e-book. (If you have disability accommodations that affect this rule, please talk to me.)

These books are available in the campus Barnes & Noble, in Voertman's Bookstore, and through online retailers such as Amazon.

To aid students in the challenge of securing more affordable textbooks (i.e. ordering used books online), I will provide a PDF of the first week's readings. Make sure to obtain your hard copy of your books in time to prepare for class on the dates listed in bold print below.

Writing Analytically, 8th edition, by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen

ISBN: 1337559466 - this book **will be needed in time to prepare for class on Friday, 8/29** (students who are buying used books must have them delivered before this date)

Spunk & Bite: A Writer's Guide to Bold, Contemporary Style, by Arthur Plotnik

ISBN: 0375722270 - this book **will be needed in time to prepare for class on Wednesday, 8/27**

Other readings will be provided free of charge through the course website and/or in class.

Materials

For every class, you should bring

1. a notebook and/or looseleaf paper
2. a pen or pencil
3. your copy of our course readings for the day

You should also familiarize yourself with our Canvas site, where you can find digital copies of the syllabus and schedule; submission portals for weekly exercises and major assignments; and when applicable, PDFs or links to readings.

Course Structure

Final Grade Components

Informal Weekly Contributions – 55% of your final grade

In-Class Writing (Canvas Journal): 20%

Quizzes and Reading Responses: 10%

Participation and Engagement: 15%

Rough Drafts and Peer Review Workshops: 10%

Formal Essay Portfolios – 45% of your final grade

Analysis Essay Portfolio: 20%

Researched Essay Portfolio: 25%

Note: Each final draft (uploaded on Canvas as a Word doc) will be accompanied by a portfolio showing your journey as the writer of the essay, from brainstorming to rough drafts to revision. These materials will make up a significant portion of your grade on the final draft to reflect the fact that the final paper is the product of immense and intensive behind-the-scenes work, much of which is the focus of this class. Detailed requirements for each portfolio will be available with the assignment instructions—please also see additional information in the syllabus section, “Overview of Expectations and Policies for Formal Writing.”

More Information about Informal Course Components

In-Class Writing

Because writing requires lots of practice, we will write informally in class almost every day. Often, in-class writing will involve activities and exercises designed to give you regular practice in the skills we are focusing on that week through the textbook readings and lectures.

In-class writing is considered *informal writing*, which means that you are graded on the labor you put into the exercises; you are NOT graded on your spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization, etc. (The only exception might be when we are practicing a focused skill such as using particular punctuation marks or sentence structures—but even then, your grade is primarily based on labor and engagement with the spirit of the activity.

Most informal writing will be conducted by hand (either on paper or on provided mini-whiteboards/chalkboards for group work). Then, **at the end of each class, you will take a picture of all your in-class work for the day and upload it to your Canvas Journal.** During some class periods, you will complete multiple exercises or activities; it is your responsibility to take pictures of ALL your work for the day. Please note that **your Canvas Journal is private, and only you and I can see the work you post there.**

If you have a disability that may require accommodations for in-class writing (i.e. handwritten work), please email me or come to my office hours during the first week of class.

Quizzes and Reading Responses

To encourage timely attendance and preparation (completing assigned readings before class to enable lively discussions and useful activities), I will have regular informal open-book/open-note quizzes at the beginning of class, usually at least once per week. [Note: “open-book and open-note” applies ONLY to handwritten notes and hard copies of books—no computers or tablets should be open during quizzes unless you have disability accommodations.] The open-book/open-note policy is designed to encourage you to take notes in class, annotate your readings, and jot down questions/observations while reading. Because I recognize that different people are struck by different aspects of readings, questions will often be open-ended, allowing you to demonstrate that you have read and thought about the readings. For textbook/technique-based readings, I expect you to be able to summarize key concepts and identify/practice techniques.

Quizzes cannot be made up when you miss class unless you have a university-approved, excused absence (in which case it is your responsibility to contact me and make arrangements for the make-up quiz ASAP but no later than 10 days after missing class).

If you have any concerns or questions about these quizzes, or if you have accessibility/disability accommodations to arrange, please email me or come to my office hours.

Participation and Engagement

You will receive regular grades for your participation and engagement throughout the semester. See the following table for behaviors that raise or lower your participation score.

| Ways to Boost and Maintain Your Participation and Engagement Score | Ways to Lower Your Participation and Engagement Score |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attending class• Giving your complete attention to class lectures, discussions, and activities.• Keeping your phone put away and on "silent" or "do not disturb" for the entire class period until you need to take pictures of your work at the end of class.• Listening actively to your classmates and me and responding verbally or nonverbally (nodding your head, using facial expressions, looking at the person who is talking, etc.)• Contributing to discussions• Being courteous and respectful to your classmates and me• Asking questions• Answering questions when I call on you• Participating fully in group activities• Being on time, prepared, and professional | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Missing class• Using your phone during class (except for times when you are specifically directed to do so)• Wearing headphones or earbuds during class• Using your laptop, tablet, or watch for things unrelated to class• Not paying attention (i.e. not being engaged)• Having side conversations outside of group work• Not participating in group work, doing the bare minimum for group work, allowing your group to do the bulk of the work for you, etc.• Leaving the room (unless you have disability accommodations to do so)• Arriving late• Being unprepared for class• Sleeping• Being disrespectful to your classmates |

Rough Drafts and Peer Review Workshops

For both major essays in this class, we will have in-class peer workshops that take place approximately two weeks before the final essay deadline. During these workshops, you will see how others have approached the assignment, give feedback, and receive feedback.

For these workshops, your grade is based on the following components:

- uploading a digital rough draft that meets minimum requirements (word count, topic, etc.)
- uploading the draft by the deadline on Canvas
- composing your draft on Google Docs and sharing your revision history by providing a link in the Canvas submission portal's notes/comments section (on Google Docs, click on the blue "Share" button, then go to the "General access" section, and use the drop-down menu to select "anyone with the link can EDIT")
- bringing three printed, double-spaced copies of your draft to class
- arriving on time to the peer workshop
- participating actively and thoughtfully in the review of your classmates' work.

Peer workshops, by their nature, require you to be present and prepared. There are no for-credit extensions or partial credit for late drafts, and unless you have an excused/documented absence, you cannot make up for peer workshops that you miss.

The continuity of your journey is important. Therefore, you cannot change your essay's main topic after you turn in your rough draft. However, you can (and are encouraged to) adjust your scope, depth of analysis, techniques, organization, etc. If, after your peer workshop and draft, you feel like you have written yourself into a corner and don't know how to improve, it is important to come talk with me about strategies for moving forward effectively.

Overview of Expectations and Policies for Formal Writing

Portfolios

Each formal essay's final draft (uploaded on Canvas as a Word doc) will be accompanied by a portfolio showing your journey as the writer of the essay. The

portfolio materials include all prewriting materials, the rough draft, peer workshop materials, your rough draft revision plan, a shared digital revision history (through Google Docs), and a reflective cover letter addressed to Dr. Hensch. These materials will make up a significant portion of your grade on the final draft to reflect the fact that the final paper is the product of immense and intensive behind-the-scenes work, much of which is the focus of this class. Detailed requirements for each portfolio will be available with the assignment instructions.

The best rule of thumb is to keep *everything* you write for this class. For handwritten work, it is a good idea to take pictures as you go (or use the free scanners at Willis Library) and keep them backed up on the cloud (i.e. Microsoft OneDrive), organized in a folder specifically for your portfolio. While a lot of your pictures of your prewriting materials will be uploaded in your Canvas Journal due to in-class writing procedures, it is your responsibility to keep track of all of your materials and ensure there is a backup of some kind.

Cover Letters

Each portfolio will open with a reflective letter addressed to me (Dr. Hensch). The letter should be in business letter format. The letter should include answers to the following questions:

- What were the hardest and easiest parts of this assignment for you?
- How did you brainstorm, prewrite, and find your focus early in the writing process?
- What was the most useful feedback you received about your rough draft?
- What changes did you make to the final draft of the essay, and why?
- How do you feel about the final draft, and why? What do you see as its strengths? What are the areas that you think could still use improvement?
- Optional: Is there anything else you would like me to know about your writing journey for this assignment?

Saving Revision Histories for Rough and Formal Drafts of Essays

Use Google Docs to compose your rough and final drafts. Google Docs keeps track of your revision history, which is an important part of your portfolio. In addition, revision histories are an essential way to help protect yourself in the AI era: if your work is flagged as potentially AI-created (and we all know that AI detectors can be wrong!),

your revision history can help you quickly clear up the situation by showing your work and process.

If you do not want to use Google Docs, you may use write.processfeedback.org and download your work. HOWEVER, if you choose to use write.processfeedback.org, you must be careful to save and download all your work (in contrast, Google Docs saves your work even on untitled documents). If you are using write.processfeedback.org, I suggest trying a practice document (write, save, download, and get a share link) to make sure you are saving your work properly.

Rubric and Grading Criteria

For each essay, you will receive an assignment description and a grading rubric to ensure that my grading criteria are transparent. You should read these materials carefully and repeatedly—before, during, and after your drafting and revising process. If you have any questions, please raise them in class or send an email.

Rewrites

I do not accept final paper rewrites. If you ever have questions or concerns about your grade or my evaluation, please email me and make an appointment.

Formatting

All formal essays should be formatted in MLA style and use MLA citation. We will review MLA citation in class. You can see the requirements for MLA formatting (i.e. 1" margins, 12-point font, correct headers, etc.) here:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html.

Submission

Final Drafts: Submit all final drafts of essays on Canvas as an uploaded Word Doc file (.docx). You can download a Word Doc from Google Docs by going to File > Download > Microsoft Word (docx).

When submitting, add my access to your revision history by providing a link in the Canvas submission portal's notes/comments section (to create a link: on Google Docs, click on the blue "Share" button, then go to the "General access" section, and use the drop-down menu to select "anyone with the link can EDIT")

Portfolio Materials: You can upload pictures of all your portfolio materials in the "Portfolio" section of each assignment portal. Alternatively, you can submit a hard

copy by turning in a folder containing all the necessary materials. Please note that the hard copy submission option will only work if you use loose-leaf notebook paper for in-class writing. In addition, even if you submit a hard copy, you should still take pictures of all the components of your portfolio and keep a copy on the cloud so that you'll have access in case you misplace your materials.

Deadlines, Extensions, and Late Work

All formal essay deadlines can be found in the class schedule (on the course Canvas site).

Rough Drafts: Due to the time-sensitive nature of in-class rough draft workshops, I do NOT give extensions for ROUGH drafts.

Final Draft and Portfolio Extensions: If you need a short extension (2 days maximum) on a FINAL draft and/or the portfolio of a formal assignment, you must email me (laura.hensch@unt.edu) BEFORE the deadline passes and let me know when you will be able to complete the assignment. You do not need to provide detailed excuses—it is enough to say that you are taking the extension option and that you will have your essay completed by the date you list (again, 2 days maximum).

I rarely give extensions longer than two days; if, in extreme circumstances, you believe you need a longer extension, you must make an appointment with me (office hours or Zoom) to discuss your options and come up with a plan to prevent yourself from falling behind.

Course Policies

Attendance

I will take attendance daily, sometimes aloud and sometimes while the class is working. These records are mostly for my own record-keeping and for my reference when determining your participation/engagement grade. **There are no specific penalties for missing classes. However, you cannot succeed in this course if you miss class regularly:** unexcused absences will directly and significantly affect your grades for informal weekly work (quizzes, participation/engagement, in-class writing, and rough draft workshops), which together make up 55% of your final grade in this course. Your attendance record can also affect my decision making when you are straddling the line between two grade categories, i.e. an "A" and a "B."

Of course, when you miss class, you will also miss important lessons and practice for techniques that I will expect to see you using in your weekly assignments and formal assignments, as well as content that may appear on future quizzes or in-class activities. Because each day's classwork builds upon previously discussed and practiced ideas, you are also fully responsible for completing the reading for any days you missed.

Therefore, when you cannot avoid missing class, it is important to be proactive: get notes from a classmate, complete the assigned reading, and check the Canvas site for announcements or notes. It is YOUR responsibility to use these methods to discover the work and material you missed—it is not MY responsibility to “catch you up” or tell you what you missed. If you are struggling with techniques or content from class days you missed, please come to my office hours.

If you have an absence lasting longer than 5 days due to an extenuating circumstance (not related to the excused absence items below), I will request that you receive documentation through the Dean of Students.

Excused Absences: According to UNT's [Policy 06.039, Student Attendance and Authorized Absences](#), an absence will be considered “excused” for:

- a. religious holy day, including travel for that purpose;
- b. participation in an official university function;
- c. required military service, including travel for that purpose;
- d. pregnancy and parenting under Title IX;
- e. when the University is officially closed.

In addition, a student is responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing, providing satisfactory evidence to the faculty member to substantiate excused absence, and delivering the request personally to the faculty member assigned to the course for which the student will be absent.

Students are permitted to make up work for excused absences. They must contact the professor to request an excused absence and complete any missed work within 10 calendar days of the beginning of the absence.

Use of Text-Generating AI

In this class, generative AI use is NOT permitted for any portion of your classwork. That's because this course is designed to build your own skills in brainstorming, analysis, reading, writing, choosing words, varying your sentence structures, thinking

critically, developing essays, polishing your writing, and more. The only exception to the no-gen-AI policy will be for occasional focused in-class activities that involve AI exploration and discussion.

Because these tools are increasingly built into everyday technology, they are not always obvious. Please note that generative AI includes not just chatbots like ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, and Bard (etc), but also resources like Grammarly, Quillbot, and anything that says it will “help you write” or that it will polish your writing, paraphrase your writing, reduce or increase your word count, or correct a large number of errors for you all at once. If you are ever unsure about whether a resource constitutes an unauthorized use of AI, you should contact me to ask.

If I suspect that you used generative AI in an unauthorized way, I will contact you via email to invite you to meet with me to discuss the situation. I may also ask you to demonstrate your writing process in my office. If, after a multi-pronged investigation, I conclude that it is likely that you did use generative AI, I will make a report to the Academic Integrity Office; you will receive a grade of zero on the first instance. Any further instances of AI use will result in a grade of “F” for the course.

Communication Expectations

Communication is key to your success. Connect with me through email and/or by attending office hours. During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

Important: **Check your UNT email at least once per day.** Class cancelations and other announcements will be sent via email (sometimes through Canvas—sometimes not). If I need to communicate with you about your grade, missing work, or other concerns, I will also use UNT email, and it is often vital for you to respond in a timely manner.

When you need to reach me follow these practices:

- Communicate with me formally through my UNT email address: laura.hensch@unt.edu.
- Send emails only from your own UNT email account. Legally, I cannot respond or provide information to you if you write from a personal account because I cannot verify it is really you.
- Include the course and section number in your email.

- Use appropriate salutations and grammatical language: "Dear Dr. H," or "Dear Dr. Hensch."
- Treat all emails as professional communication.
- Respect the personal identities and privacy of yourself, of me, and others.
- Think carefully about what you reveal and do not reveal, particularly if this information involves your health and/or classroom performance. If your emails contain any information that causes me to be concerned for your safety, or the safety of others, I am required to report it.
- Refrain from making personal attacks or using language that discriminates based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture.

Note | I am not able to discuss any information relating to academic records through email.

Disruptions

Respect the class environment by using your time effectively and helping your classmates do the same. Like you, your classmates are financially invested in this course, and they have the right to a non-disruptive environment that is conducive to learning. Disruptive behavior includes

- Using your phone (except for activities that use your phone in class and disability accommodations that you have set up with me)
- Eating a full meal—small snacks are okay as long as they are not disruptive through sound (i.e. loud wrappers or slurping soup), sight, or smell.
- Holding side conversations
- Entering late, especially when done in a noisy or distracting way
- Leaving the room during class (exceptions will be made for occasional emergencies and for those with accommodations)
- Being disrespectful – see "Participation and Civility" below

If any student is behaving in a disruptive manner, I have the right to remove that student from class with zero credit for attendance or participation for the day.

Participation and Civility

We are all members of an academic community where it is our shared responsibility to cultivate a climate where all students/individuals are valued and where both they and their ideas are treated with respect. I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

Syllabus Change Policy

I have made every attempt to provide your syllabus as an accurate overview of the course. However, unanticipated circumstances may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester. These circumstances may arise in response to the progress, needs, and experiences of students. Advance notice will be given for any changes made to the syllabus, and announcements of changes will be made both in class and on Canvas Announcements.

University Policies

All students and faculty are required to follow the policies below.

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, [Student Academic Integrity](#), academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to:

- Cheating--submitting work that is not your own (this includes using generative AI)
- Fabrication--i.e. making up sources/passages/citations; pretending you are writing about a real interview when you really made it up; etc.
- Facilitating academic dishonesty--helping someone else cheat
- Forgery--pretending your work is someone else's

- Plagiarism--using someone else's published work without citing it correctly
- Sabotage--setting someone else up to fail
- Submitting previously submitted work--you may not "re-use" any work from another class.

A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. I am obligated to report any academic dishonesty.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT.

Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the [Code of Student Conduct](#). The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

The [Dean of Students Office \(opens in a new window\)](#) enforces the [Code of Student Conduct \(opens in a new window\)](#). The Code explains:

- What conduct is prohibited
- The process the DOS uses to review reports of alleged misconduct by students
- The sanctions that can be assigned

When students may have violated the Code, they meet with a representative from the Dean of Students Office to discuss the alleged misconduct in an educational process.

ADA Accommodation

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. To receive accommodation, follow these steps:

1. Register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility.
2. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs.

3. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation.
4. Students must obtain a new letter of accommodation every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the [ODA website](#). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance.

The Survivor Advocates can be reached at:

- SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu
- Dean of Students Office: 940-565-2648

Visit [Title IX Student Information \(opens in a new window\)](#) for more resources.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called [Eagle Alert](#) to quickly provide students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.