

ENGL 4210: ADVANCED STUDIES IN WRITING

University of North Texas | Prof. Matthew Heard |
Spring 2018 | MW 2-3:20 PM

OFFICE HOURS: MW 3:30 - 4:30 pm

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: (3 hrs) Intensive study of writing theory, philosophy, history and practice in dialogue with emerging research in humanities, the sciences and the arts. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 3210.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Like a bluebonnet planted in the hot Texas sun, any object of writing picks up characteristics of the environment in which it is "grown." If you've ever had

to change locations because your surroundings suddenly became too raucous to concentrate, you are aware of this fact. The study and practice of writing is "rooted in place," says Jenny Rice. The more we are aware of the spaces and places in which we write, the more likely we are to become **writers who can write with our environments.**

Yet, Rice reminds us that places, too, want something from us as writers. In Texas, both our climate and our state laws create the conditions for bluebonnets to thrive alongside roadways and spread in open fields. In writing, says Rice, we are always asking "**what a place wants from writing,**" a question which requires us to try and perceive our places beyond the usual noises that fill our eyes, noses, and ears.

In this course, which is focused on the study of writing, we will take time to ask about the spaces that we occupy and the ways that these spaces shape

our habits (*ethos*) as writers. We will begin by theorizing what space means, noting Henri Lefebvre's definition that **any space is a "social product"** limited by its political and strategic opportunities. From this broader definition, we will go on to ask more specific and detailed questions about the spaces of writing we occupy- how they sound; how they look; what is in them; how they position us to be in community with others.

Along the way, we will experiment with "pieces" of writing that give us the opportunity to attend to the spaces around us more keenly. Our goal is not to master these spaces, but to be **open to the interruptions** and opportunities they bring us.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

All assigned readings for this course will be provided either in a course reader or on our course Blackboard Learn site. Please make sure that you check our course site frequently for any updates or changes to our schedule. Please also print out copies of any materials that are not in the course reader.

ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS

MAJOR PROJECT: WRITING IN PIECES

PORTFOLIO:

The final project for this course is a portfolio of your writing, collected from the "pieces" of writing you will produce over the course of the semester. The broadest objective of the portfolio is to track and explain how writing takes shape through interruptions of spaces, things, and everyday life.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

- 50% Piecemeal Portfolio
- 40% Drafts and Comments on Pieces of Writing, including work in Writing Communities and Jottings
- 10% Quizzes and In-Class Assignments

WRITING INTERRUPTED

SPACE, THINGS, AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN WRITING STUDIES



Your final portfolio will be curated, meaning that you will display your best writings from the semester and write a short explanation of the decisions that went in to each piece. You will present your portfolio to the class in the final weeks of the semester.

Length: 4 pieces of 1000 words each; curated explanation of 750-1000 words

Due: 4/30

PIECES OF WRITING: Over the course of the semester, you will contribute 4 (four) assignments that we will call “pieces of writing.” Each piece will consist of at least two short essays, spanning different genres, that focus on one of the

“The map is not the land, my father often said”

Jon Snow, *Game of Thrones*

questions listed below. Each piece should be 1000 words, divided among the different essays.

Piece 1: My Space

- How do the spaces and places that you occupy affect your identity as a writer? How are you “summoned by writing?”

Piece 2: Other(’s) Spaces

Genres: history; description; research essay

- What **histories** are significant/unusual in the spaces you occupy?
- What are the dominant **preexisting narratives** that shape writing in your space(s)?

Piece 3: Things

Genres: observation; analysis; multimodal composing

- What **buildings / structures / natural resources / maps** give meaning to your space(s) ?
- How do things in your space affect your **senses**; what do you hear, see, smell, touch?

Piece 4: Everyday Life

Genres: profile; narrative; feature writing

- What common practices shape communities of writing in your space(s)? What counts as “everyday” writing or composing?

- What seem to be the stable centers of practice? What practices “betray” the instability of the center?

QUIZZES AND IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS: We will have frequent quizzes and in-class assignments throughout the semester as part of a check-up on your reading and preparation for class. These assignments will usually be given **immediately at the beginning of class** and they cannot be made-up if missed. Please come to class on time and prepared to discuss/respond to the course readings for the day.

WRITING COMMUNITIES

For each of your writing assignments, you will share your writing with a small community of 4-5 other classmates, who will each be responsible for tracking a different quality in your writing. The following roles will be assigned to one or more members.

- **Clarity and Conciseness:** looks specifically for ways that you can amplify or condense your writing, depending on your message and the audience you want to reach.
- **Conventions:** addresses conventions such as appropriate grammar, style, and tone in your writing
- **Creativity:** comments on rhetorical strategies such as narration, detail, dialogue, and description, suggesting places where creative conventions might/not be appropriate
- **Content:** a final community member will help you think about the function and scope of your writing, including details you might expand on or further directions you might pursue

You will submit each piece of writing to your community on the “PreFlight” days for review. Communities will be responsible for reading and responding to one another’s drafts by the following class period. One revised essay from each group will be discussed during the “Launch” day at the end of each unit.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AND EXPECTATIONS

This course has a demanding reading and writing load commensurate with a senior-level class. Students will be expected to read each text carefully and to come to class prepared to discuss the texts analytically and critically. Much of our class time will be spent discussing the course readings and our responses to them: if you do not understand or need help, please make arrangements to talk to me right away.

Please also keep up with all writing assignments. On days when writing is due, come to class with your drafts prepared and several copies for your other writing community members. Evaluating our writing together is a vital part of this class.

Sometimes we will also engage in collaborative or individual assignments or activities during class. When we talk as a class, I encourage you to move beyond simply talking about what parts of the texts that you “like.” Work hard to think about how the texts support and contradict one another. Bring experiences and ideas from your own life into the discussion where appropriate. Look for ways that class readings and discussions are relevant in the world around you. Pay attention to what your classmates say and build off of their ideas when you can. Encourage, support, and learn from each other—this is the path of rhetorical studies.

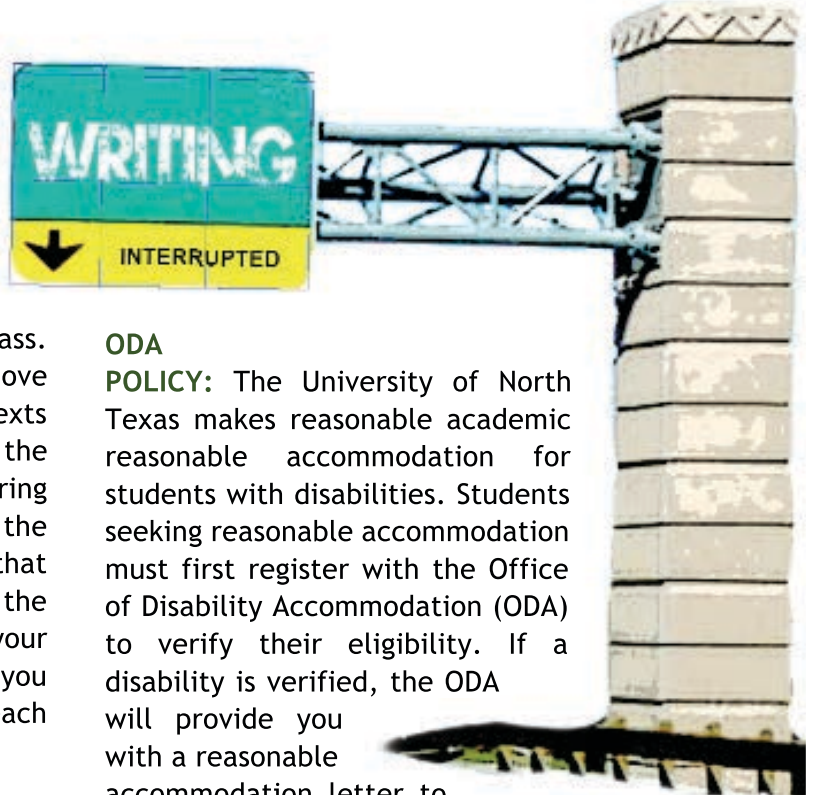
COURSE POLICIES

ABSENCES: You have five free absences. Upon missing six classes, you will be dropped from the course. Coming late to class or not participating in class may result in you being counted as absent.

DISRUPTIONS: Excessive disruptions of our class time—including talking, sleeping, texting, cell phone usage, and doing work for other classes—hurt the class atmosphere and will hurt your grade should you engage in them. Please respect the class environment by giving your classmates and me your full attention at all appropriate times. Frequent tardiness or disruptions will affect your quiz/assignment grades.

Secret syllabus Keyword: **Norway**

ASSIGNMENT POLICY: All written work needs to be typed and submitted online to our Blackboard site, with a paper copy brought to class. For all essays, include your name and the page number on the top right of each page (i.e. : Heard 1). Please also include a date and the course number (ENGL 4210). Use a text font for all essays (Times Roman or Garamond for example) at 12 points, with all one-inch (1”) margins, and double-spacing. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated by the assignment prompt.



ODA

POLICY: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

BLACKBOARD AND EMAIL: Our course will have a Blackboard site. Please check this site and your university email regularly for messages. Note that if

you do not use your UNT email address, you need to have your UNT email forwarded to the address that you prefer. All emails that you send me should identify you clearly as a student in this class in the subject heading (i.e. “ENGL 4210–Matthew Heard”). Remember that when you write an email to other professionals, you should assume a professional tone and style. I want to hear from you, but please communicate as clearly and professionally as possible.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES. UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify 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 Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

DROP, FAIL, WITHDRAW

- **4-2** Last day to drop with either W or WF.
- Last day for a student to drop a course with consent of the instructor.
- **4-18** Last day to Withdraw (drop all classes).
- Last day for an instructor to drop a student with a grade of WF for nonattendance.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. I expect your writing in this course to be original and every use of someone else’s work in your writing to be

marked clearly. The consequences for plagiarism both at UNT and in this course are severe, and may include automatic failure and in some cases dismissal from the university. Don’t risk it—come and talk to me about any questionable material before turning in your assignment. I am happy to help you decide how to cite materials that might otherwise be counted as plagiarism.

RUBRICS AND SCORING SYSTEMS

For the purposes of this course,

“A” WORK will constitute a final score of 90-100% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is impressively sophisticated and illuminating: inventive, balanced, justified, effective, mature, and expertly-situated in time and context

““When I am thinking and writing well, I feel I have escaped to the real”
Yi-fu Tuan

“B” WORK will constitute a final score of 80-89.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is thorough and systematic: skilled, revealing, developed, perceptive, but not unusually or surprisingly original

“C” WORK will constitute a final score of 70-79.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is acceptable but limited: coherent, significant, and perhaps even insightful in places, but ultimately insufficient in organization, articulation, perception, and/or effectiveness

“D” WORK will constitute a final score of 60-69.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is incomplete and severely lacking: incoherent, limited, uncritical, immature, undeveloped, and overall not reflective of the performance expected of UNT undergraduates

“F” WORK will constitute a final score of 0-59.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is unacceptable.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Note: schedule subject to change; all assignments due by beginning of class on date indicated

<u>WK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>CLASS FOCUS</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>
1	1/17	Course Introduction		
2	1/22	Introduction to Interruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jenny Rice, "A Method for Getting Carried Away" Craig Lancaster, "Motel Living and Slowly Dying" 	Invention - Pieces of Writing 1: My Spaces
	1/24	Writing MySpace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lauren Slater, "A Raccoon of My Own" 	DUE: Pieces 1: My Spaces
		UNIT 1: Interruptions of SPACE	Pressing Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is space? How is space relevant to writing? 	Learning Objectives: Know that space is politically and ideologically created. Be able to write with a more conscious awareness of the spaces you occupy as a writer.
3	1/29	Theories of space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henri Lefebvre, Production of Space (selection). John Ackerman, "The Space for Rhetoric in Everyday Life" 	
	1/31	Relationships between spaces and writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charles Lesh, "The Geographies of History" 	Invention - Pieces of Writing 2
4	2/5	Spaces and <i>ethos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yi Fi Tuan, "Space, Place, and Nature: The Farewell Lecture" Yi Fi Tuan, "Escapism" 	
	2/7	Spaces and Writing Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidney Dobrin, "The Occupation of Composition" 	Pieces 2 Jottings
5	2/12	Writing with space: history; description; research essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rachael Williams, "The Inside Story Behind the Bitter Fight For Dallas' Pacific Plaza Park" Denton County Historical Markers (http://apps.dentoncounty.com/website/historicalmarkers/historical-markers.htm) 	
	2/14	Writing with space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jane Jacobs, "Downtown is for People" 	Pieces 2 PreFlight Drafts
6	2/19	PreFlight Day		Comment: Pieces 2 Drafts
	2/21	Launch Day: Pieces of Writing 2		Read others' Launch pieces
		UNIT 2: Interruptions of THINGS	Pressing Questions: How do spaces affect what we hear and sense? How does writing reflect the sights and sounds through which it is constructed? How does writing reflect its own obligations to the objects through which it is formed?	Learning Objectives:: Know that writing is a practice of listening and sensing the world. Be able to compose with keen attention to the material objects around you.
7	2/26	Theories of materiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jane Bennet, "Edible Matter." Jodie Nicotra, "Assemblage Rhetorics" 	Pieces 2 Revision Notes
	2/28	Materiality and composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeff Rice, "Urban Mappings" 	Invention - Pieces of Writing 3
8	3/5	Place and Sensory Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barry Blesser, "Spaces Speak" Stephanie Ceraso, "(Re)Educating the Senses" 	
	3/7	Place and Sensory Composing		Pieces 3 Jottings

SB	3/12	Spring Break!	***	***
	3/14	Spring Break!	***	***
9	3/19	Writing With Things: observation; analysis; multimodal composing;	Marc Santos and Ella Browning, "Maira Kalman and/as Choric Invention" Maira Kalman blog: https://kalman.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/24/for-goodness-sake/	
	3/21	Writing With Things:	Steph Ceraso, SoundBox project http://soundboxproject.com/project-soundscapes.html	Pieces 3 PreFlight Drafts
10	3/26	PreFlight Day		Comment: Pieces 3 Drafts
	3/28	Launch Day: Pieces of Writing 3		
		UNIT 3: Interruptions of EVERYDAY LIFE	Pressing Questions: How does writing fit and push against other "everyday" actions that we use in our communities? How do writers notice and use what is "everyday" around them?	Learning Objectives:: Know that almost all communities practice writing in one way or another. Be able to write make connections in writing between the "everyday" and the theoretical/academic.
11	4/2	Theories of everyday life, culture, rhetoric	Michel de Certeau, from <i>The Practice of Everyday Life</i> Malea Powell et al. "Our Story Begins Here"	Pieces 3 Revision Notes
	4/4	Everyday life and composing	Kathleen Stewart, "Weak Theory in an Unfinished World" Cris Carter, "Writing with Light"	Invention - Pieces of Writing 4
12	4/9	Writing with the Everyday: profile; narrative; feature writing	Christian Mcphate, "A North Texas Father Ends Up in Jail" Matthew Desmond, "The Eviction Economy"	Pieces 4 Jottings
	4/11	Writing with the Everyday	Samantha Irby, "How I Spent My Summer Vacation" http://bitchesgottaeat.blogspot.com/2017/10/how-i-spent-my-summer-vacation.html	Pieces 4 PreFlight Drafts
13	4/16	PreFlight Day		Comment: Pieces 4 Drafts
	4/18	Launch Day: Pieces of Writing 4		
14	4/23	Preflight: Piecemeal Portfolio	No reading: Writing workshops	
	4/25	Preflight: Piecemeal Portfolio	No reading: Writing workshops	
15	4/30	Piecemeal portfolio: Presentations	No reading: Portfolio Presentations	Due: Piecemeal Portfolio
	5/2	Piecemeal portfolio: Presentations	No reading: Portfolio Presentations	
F	5/7	Piecemeal portfolio: Presentations	No reading: Portfolio Presentations	