

Academic Writing Workshop

Fall and Spring semesters, 2023-24

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Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics

Class Hours: Group I: Thursday, 08:30-10:00 / Group II: Thursday, 10:15-11:45

Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Assistants (TAs)

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Course Description

4 Credit Points, Required Course

In this course, students will learn the rules and conventions of academic writing for the purposes of literary studies. We will learn to produce clear arguments, structure paragraphs effectively, and organize a paper in a way that develops one overarching claim.

In the first semester, we will learn the basic guidelines of academic writing for literature by answering the following questions: how do we read literary texts? What are the differences between description and argumentation? What is a thesis statement and why does an analytical paper need one? What are the functions of introductions and conclusions? What is the structure of an academic paper, and how can writing an outline help us improve our writing? We will also occasionally work on grammar and sentence structure, but this will not be the focus of our work in this course.

In the second semester, we will practice more complex methods of literary analysis and variations of essay structures. We will also learn how to read secondary sources effectively and interact with scholarship on the literary texts and topics about which we write. Finally, we will practice revisions and learn how to engage productively with feedback.

The course is taught in tandem with *Introduction to Prose Fiction*, and some assignments and lessons will be devoted to the topics and texts discussed there.

Keywords: English; analysis; academic writing; argumentation; grammar.

Requirements and Grade Distribution

- Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed to miss a total of 5 lessons throughout the year. You will not be able to finish the course if you miss more than 5 lessons.

You are also required to attend classes **on time**. Note that every two late attendances will count as an absence. If you have an issue with attendance (on time or otherwise), contact Priel or one of the TAs as soon as possible.

From time to time, we will hold in-class *writing sessions*. The TAs will not hold office hours on weeks when writing sessions are held.

- Participation:

Participation in class is crucial. This is a "workshop" course, which means we work intensively in class and in various forums (individually, in groups, with the TAs, etc.). Your work will improve the more you participate in class, ask questions, help and learn from each other, and attend meetings with the team.

- Asking for Help:

Asking for help is a requirement in this course. You **MUST** learn how to ask for help from the team. Set up office hour meetings, email us with questions if something is unclear, and work with us during writing sessions to make sure you get the support you need. Being able to ask for help is one of the key differences between students who succeed in their academic studies and those who unfortunately do not.

- Reading Material:

Throughout the course you will be asked to read and annotate short articles and literary works for us to work on in class and at home. Some of our work will be connected to texts you read in *Introduction to Prose Fiction*.

- Assignments:

Students are required to submit two types of writing exercises called "blogs":

1. Minor blogs – mostly short, simple, and (at times) informal responses to specific prompts or texts. They function as a personal space for you to make mistakes while practicing class material and receiving valuable feedback from the course team that is tailored specifically to you and the challenges you face. Minor blogs will receive feedback from the course team, but will not be graded.
2. Major blogs – more complex tasks that require an understanding of several elements from the course material, like writing full papers, engaging with secondary sources, practicing close reading on texts, etc. These blogs evaluate the quality of your work, the application of course material, and the progress your work has made over the year. They will receive feedback from the course team and a **PASS** or **NP** (No Pass) grade.

Remember: blogs are not about *perfection* – no writing is perfect! These assignments are about *progress*: make sure that you learn something new with every exercise you submit or that you improve existing skills by practicing your writing.

All due dates are detailed in the syllabus and on Moodle. It is your responsibility to follow them and make sure you submit your work on time. The submissions boxes on Moodle lock automatically, so you won't be able to submit an assignment late. We also do not accept assignments sent by email. If, for any reason, you cannot submit an assignment on time or on Moodle, contact Priel in advance of the due date.

- Grades:

The course's final grade is PASS/FAIL. To pass the course, you must fulfill the following conditions:

1. Miss no more than 5 lessons throughout the year.
2. Attend at least 1 office hours meeting with Priel or the TAs.
3. Submit all blogs—minor and major alike—on time.
4. Receive a PASS grade in at least 3 out of 4 major blogs. If you pass the first 3 major blogs, you must still submit the last one to pass the course.

Student Support

This is a challenging year for all of us, and we acknowledge that meeting deadlines and completing assignments may pose difficulties for students who have lost family members, whose relatives are held captive, those who are currently displaced, serving in the military reserves, or have recently returned from duty.

In specific cases, we will grant extensions for assignments and exemptions from attendance and/or certain minor blogs, based on individual circumstances. If you require assistance, please reach out to Priel as soon as possible.

Plagiarism

The team and I absolutely do not tolerate plagiarism. If you plagiarize any of your works, we might file an official complaint with the university's disciplinary committee, potentially resulting in you failing the course, failing your studies in the Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics, or even getting expelled.

It's also important to know that from our experience, work that relies on unapproved outside sources (websites, AI-powered models like ChatGPT, friends and family members, etc.) is oftentimes not productive, not analytical, and does not comply with the course requirements. Papers like these always receive failing grades. In other words, nothing you find online will be better than your own original work.

If you're struggling to submit an assignment, turn to the TAs or to Priel and ask for help. We will be able to guide you and help you make productive choices in your writing that will not only improve your work in the long run, but will also make sure you avoid any immoral implications and risks involved with plagiarism.

Fall Semester Schedule:

Lesson 1 Introduction: Syllabus and Requirements

04 January Course introduction and defining academic writing.

Homework:

1. Minor Blog #1: Introductions and Expectations
DUE: Sunday 07/01/24, 23:59.
 2. Read "What Makes College Writing Different?" and Kurt Vonnegut's "How to Write with Style"
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Lesson 2 Plagiarism, MLA, and Quoting

11 January What is a paragraph? How to quote clearly, effectively, and responsibly?
Plagiarism vs. summaries, MLA, and rules of citation.

Homework:

Minor Blog #2: Quote Integration
DUE: Sunday 14/01/24, 23:59.

Lesson 3 Argumentation, Part 1

18 January What is an argument? What is the difference between description and argumentation? What are the phases of academic writing?

Homework:

Minor Blog #3: Working with a Sentence
DUE: Wednesday 24/01/24, 23:59.

Lesson 4 Argumentation, Part 2

25 January Arguments in literature and sandwich paragraphs: moving from phase 1 of academic writing to phase 2, and instructions for close reading.

Homework:

Minor Blog #4: Sandwich Paragraph
DUE: Wednesday 31/01/24, 23:59.

Lesson 5 Argumentation, Part 3

01 February Phase 3 of academic writing and workshopping student paragraphs.

Homework:

1. Minor Blog #4: Sandwich Paragraph, Revised
DUE: Sunday 04/02/24, 23:59.
 2. Read and annotate John Chu's "The Water That Falls on You from Nowhere" (available on Moodle). Come to class with a phase 1.
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Lesson 6 Close Reading: Themes and Language

08 February Class practice of close reading.

Homework:

Minor Blog #5: Two Sandwich Paragraphs – John Chu
DUE: Wednesday 14/02/24, 23:59.

Lesson 7 Close Reading: Themes and Language

15 February Workshopping student paragraphs, explaining textual evidence.

Homework:

1. Minor Blog #5: Two Sandwich Paragraphs – John Chu, Revised
DUE: Sunday 18/02/24, 23:59.
 2. Read and annotate both parts of Ken Liu's "Good Hunting" (available on Moodle). Come to class with a phase 1.
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Lesson 8 Outlines and Thesis Statements

22 February What are thesis statements and outlines, and why do we use them?

Homework:

1. Minor Blog #6: Thesis Statement and Outline for a paper about "Good Hunting"
DUE: Tuesday 27/02/24, 23:59.
2. Continue working on your draft, meet the TAs for help, and come to the next class with at least 1 body paragraph, developed from your work today.

Lesson 9 Introductions, Conclusions, and Transitions

29 February The hourglass structure of a paper, the functions of introductions and conclusions, and transitions between body paragraphs.

Homework:

Continue working on your paper and come to the next class with a full draft (introduction with a thesis statement, 3 body paragraphs, and a conclusion).

You may also start working on phase 3.

Lesson 10 Writing a Full Paper – Writing Session

07 March Writing session: full paper on Ken Liu's "Good Hunting."

Homework:

Major Blog #1: Full Academic Paper

DUE: Wednesday 13/03/24, 23:59.

Lesson 11 Prose Fiction Paper – Writing Session

14 March Writing session: full paper on texts from *Introduction to Prose Fiction*.

Homework:

Submit your work to *Introduction to Prose Fiction*.

Note that this assignment does not count towards your grade in Workshop but is part of your grade in *Introduction to Prose Fiction*.

Spring Semester Schedule:

* This schedule is subject to change. Lesson and submission dates will be added later. *

Lesson 12 Review – **Special Exercise**

The phases of writing, sandwich paragraphs, introductions, conclusions, thesis statements, topic sentences, outlines, explaining textual evidence.

Homework:

Read and annotate Carmen Maria Machado's "Help Me Follow My Sister into the Land of the Dead" (available on Moodle).

Lesson 13 Structural Analysis, Part 1

Analyzing structure in prose fiction.

Homework:

Major Blog #2: Sandwich Paragraph – Machado

Due: TBD.

Lesson 14 Structural Analysis, Part 2

Workshopping student paragraphs, explaining textual evidence, and analyzing structure in prose fiction.

Homework:

Major Blog #2: Sandwich Paragraph – Machado, Revised

Due: TBD.

Lesson 15 Secondary Sources, Part 1 – Summary and Annotation

The function of summaries and descriptive paragraphs in analytical papers, primary vs. secondary sources, and annotating secondary sources.

Homework:

Read and annotate Megan L. Birch's article, "Schooling Harry Potter: Teachers and Learning, Power and Knowledge."

If you've never read *Harry Potter* or watched the films, please read a plot summary online to acquaint yourself with the storyworld and its characters.

Lesson 16 Secondary Sources, Part 2 – Reading Secondary Sources

Reading secondary sources, paper structure, key terms.

Homework:

Watch Tal's videos about secondary sources on Moodle by next week's class.

Lesson 17 Secondary Sources, Part 3 – Responding to Secondary Sources

Engaging with and responding to secondary sources productively, incorporating sources into our papers.

Homework:

Major Blog #3: Working with a Secondary Source

DUE: TBD.

Lesson 18 Peer-Review

Understanding the TAs' comments, grading papers, peer-review work.

Homework:

Minor Blog #7: Peer-review of a Peer's Work

DUE: TBD.

Minor Blog #8: Video Assignment

DUE: TBD.

Lesson 19 Revisions, Part 1

Revising your own work, reverse-outlining, secondary sources.

Homework:

Minor Blog #9: Revision Plan

DUE: TBD.

Lesson 20 Revisions, Part 2 – **Writing Session**

Writing Session: Blog #14.

Homework:

Major Blog #4: Revision & Memo

DUE: TBD.

Lesson 21 Surprise Exercise

Homework: None.

Lesson 22 Course Conclusion and Goodbyes

Review and course conclusion.

Homework: None.