

FYW 115: Introduction to College Writing
Deniz Perin-Coombs, Fall 2020



Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe, *Maya Angelou* (1993)

"The idea is to write it so that people hear it and it slides through the brain and goes straight to the heart."

- Maya Angelou

- **Class Times:** MWF 9:05 - 10:00
 - Synchronous classes all three days about half the weeks; and synchronous on MW with asynchronous class assignments on Fridays another
 - See class schedule for details (note: this is subject to change as semester develops)
- **Office Hours:** By appointment on MW 2-4 pm PST.
 - Schedule appointment here (if link doesn't work, copy & paste to your browser): [Deniz P. Office Hours](#)
 - Link to office hours (by appt.): <https://sandiego.zoom.us/j/3066784381>
- **Instructor Email:** denizp@sandiego.edu



Introduction & Course Description

Welcome to First Year Writing! “Introduction to College Writing” introduces the writing standards and strategies you’ll encounter in many of your college courses, helping you to succeed at USD. It provides you with writing and editing strategies so you can continue to improve these skills in other academic courses. It also prepares you for the writing standards that will be required of you when you enter the professional community after graduation, since many employers test the writing skills of potential employees before hiring them.

Reading, listening to, and watching various ‘texts,’ and creating our own texts as part of the conversation, is particularly important now as we navigate our way through a global pandemic and the national reckoning that emerged after George Floyd’s murder. In light of these collective experiences, class this semester will focus on: 1) accounts of living through a pandemic / quarantine; and 2) Black Lives Matter-inspired materials that address racial inequities in our country, particularly in regards to policing, and protests that followed. Each unit will include written, spoken, visual, and multi-media texts, and as we explore these topics, I’ll assign various activities and assignments with a view to strengthening your critical reading and writing skills.

Class will meet synchronously all three days about half the weeks, and the other half or so, expect to meet synchronously twice a week (Mon. and Wed.) and do asynchronous work on Fridays. While class sessions will be recorded for those who must join asynchronously, synchronous attendance on days we meet is expected.



“There is no rule on how to write. Sometimes it comes easily and perfectly: sometimes it’s like drilling rock and then blasting it out with charges.” ~ Ernest Hemingway

Required Reading List

There is no required textbook for this course. Readings & resources will be provided on Blackboard (“Bb”), either as documents or links. In some cases, you will also be asked to provide and share materials.

Course Learning Outcomes – by the end of the course, students will:

1. Practice writing clearly and fluently, with attention to sentence and paragraph structure, organization, and development.
2. Demonstrate reading comprehension, with attention to audiences, purposes, and contexts.
3. Show ability, through class discussions and written exercises, to think critically and rhetorically about texts, multimedia sources, and ideas.
4. Develop a basic understanding of the ways that genre conventions structure writing in academic and popular contexts.
5. Synthesize ideas and arguments in writing.

Grading Breakdown

Essays (two)	40 % (20% each)
Participation	15 %
Final Reflection	15 %
Remix	10%
Short Assignments/Activities	10 %
Pocket-Presentations (two)	10% (5% each)
TOTAL	100 %

Notes on Grading Elements

* **Essays:** Essays (two) should follow MLA standards (double-spaced with 1” margins and a standard 12-pt font) and will be within the range of 3-5 pages. The topics and prompts will be announced in advance and based on the readings & writings you do in class and as homework. Because we will focus on the process of writing and revising, elements of the process itself, not just the final product (peer review, teacher conference, short reflection on process), will be counted as part of the assignment. In addition to reviewing with classmates and myself, I encourage you to check in with a peer consultant at the USD Writing Center for guidance as you write and revise your essays.

* **Final Reflection:** In the final reflection, you will turn in a short reflective piece, using details and an honest expression of your feelings, on your writing throughout the semester: choices you’ve made & why; changes you see in your writing (or don’t); your feelings of readiness in regards to college writing & beyond; thoughts on genre & the power of rhetoric; etc. You may choose among a variety of formats for this assignment.

* **Remix:** At the end of the semester, you’ll be asked to take one of your essays and “remix” it, i.e. re-imagine it completely. For example, you might turn it into a one-page piece, a poem, a letter, a series of tweets, or a dialogue. Details / Options to follow.

* **Short Assignments/Activities:** Again, writing is a process. Many class days will begin with freewrites or prompted writing activities, and each unit will include some pre-writing, drafting, editing/revising activities, in addition to more technical writing practice to cover grammar, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and so on. These receive a Pass/Fail mark. While I don’t plan to give quizzes or tests, I reserve the right to do so; if I do, those grades will be incorporated into this category.

* **Pocket-Presentations:** For each unit, you will do a “pocket-presentation,” in other words, a short presentation ‘small enough to fit in your pocket.’ About 5 minutes long, each pocket presentation should end with one relevant, thought-provoking question.

* **Participation:** Some weeks, expect to meet all three days, and others, synchronously twice a week (Mon. and Wed.) and do asynchronous work Fridays. See schedule below. This set-up might change, as needed, as the semester unfolds.

Attendance on days we meet is expected—that said, if you anticipate that synchronous attendance will be an issue for you, contact me so we can arrange accommodations. This is primarily a discussion-based, rather than lecture-based, class (though I do sometimes give lectures/presentations to introduce a concept), and active participation is essential to your learning and success. Participation will be assessed on:

- *Active oral participation* in synchronous class discussions. I’ll be keeping track of your class contributions. This includes responding to my questions in class, as well as to classmates’ questions following their ‘pocket presentations’, and engaging actively, honestly, and respectfully in classroom conversations and activities;
- *Active written participation*, via Blackboard, if you *must* attend class asynchronously: this includes watching class recording; responding in detail; doing any activities/exercises that were given that day; and adding written contributions to the conversation (again, I’ll be keeping track).
- *Friday Contributions*, submitted as the asynchronous portion of our class. These will be due on ‘asynchronous Fridays’. I will post the assignment in Bb (and/or email it to you). Some weeks, these will be Discussion Board-style activities, wherein you will also be asked to respond to two classmates’ posts to receive full participation credit.



Grading Scale for Essays

A	100
A-	91
B+	88
B	85
B-	81
C+	78
C	75
C-	71
D+	68
D	65
D-	61
F	0

Grading Scale for Class

95-100 = A
91-94 = A-
88-90 = B+
84-87 = B
80-83 = B-
78-79 = C+
74-77 = C
70-73 = C-
68-69 = D+
64-67 = D
60-63 = D-
59-0 = F

Suggestions for Participants

Online conversations

Suggestions for participants 😊

-  **1 Join early**
-  **2 Offer extra warmth** with comments
-  **3 Turn ON your video,** optional but encouraged
-  **4 Stay on mute,** except when speaking
-  **5 Raise your hand**
-  **6 Say your name** when you speak
-  **7 You can use the chat function**
-  **8 Keep questions and comments short**

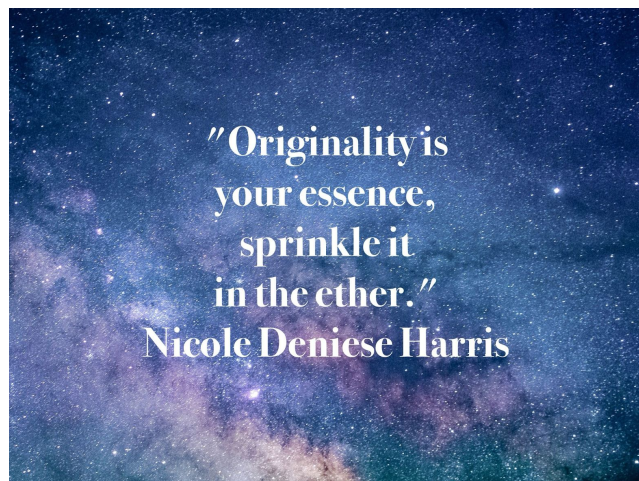
Source: *Remote teaching: a practical guide with tools, tips, and techniques* by Alison Flynn and Jeremy Kerr, Open Library Press Books.

Additional Suggestions, & Notes, Policies, and Resources

- Remove distractions as much as possible: silence and put away your cell phones and/or any devices that you aren't using specifically for class.
- Get out of bed and out of your pyjamas ☺.
- You are strongly encouraged to turn on your video. If you really can't / aren't comfortable, please add a photo/image to personalize your 'box.'
- As stated above, synchronous attendance is expected (on days we're meeting). I understand some exceptions/accommodations might have to be made. Please communicate with me. Classes will be recorded for those who can't attend synchronously. Do not share recordings with anyone outside the class.
- The material in this course is meant for mature audiences and adult discussion. Difficult topics and language will come up. Please be respectful of varying views.
- USD's Disability and Learning Difference Resource Center (DLDRC) is available for support and consultation to students: [Disability and Learning Difference Resource Center](#). Let me know if you require accommodations.
- USD's Wellness Services are also available. They have counseling and other resources: [Connect with Wellness Services during COVID-19](#).
- You're not alone! Many student organizations and USD / community resources remain open to students and are holding remote events and activities. These include the LGBTQ+ & Allies Commons, the Black Student Resource Commons, the United Front Multicultural Commons, the Women's Commons, and many more: [Clubs and Organizations - Campus Life](#).
- The Writing Center is open and available for online appointments. They are an excellent resource for help with writing in all fields: [The USD Writing Center](#)

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a serious offense and isn't tolerated in my classes. Plagiarized work receives an F, and further disciplinary action, including course failure, may ensue. Put simply, all the work you submit in this class must be fully your own. Any time you rely on another source, including the work you discuss, you must give credit where it is due. The analysis of any given work should be fully your own—there is no 'wrong answer' except for one that is not actually yours. If you are ever in doubt about how to avoid plagiarism, feel free to come see me and/or a writing consultant via the Writing Center.



Class Schedule

- Expect there to be some changes as the class develops its own pace.
- Detailed reading / assignment schedules will be posted on a weekly basis.

*** Week 1: Aug 17-21: FULL WEEK OF SYNCHRONOUS CLASSES (MWF)**

Class Introductions: Syllabus; Class Format; Ourselves

Storytelling: TedTalk (David JP Phillips) and Writing Activity

*** Week 2: Aug 24-28: Synchronous Aug 24–26; Asynchronous Aug 28**

Quarantine stories: various forms

Week 3: Synchronous Aug 31 – Sep 2; Asynchronous Sep 4

Quarantine stories, cont.

*** Week 4: Sep 9-11: Sep 7 is Labor Day—Synchronous Classes both Wed. AND Fri.**

Wed. Quarantine stories – pre-writing activities

Essay 1 draft 1 due Fri. – Peer Review

*** Week 5: Sep 14 - 18: FULL WEEK OF SYNCHRONOUS CLASSES (MWF)**

Peer Review Follow-Up; Troubleshooting; Questions

Pocket-Presentations: Outlines due Monday, present throughout week

Essay 1 draft 2 due Fri.

*** Week 6: Sep 21 - 25: *Teacher Conferences - Synchronous Class Mon Sep 21 only this week (+ Conf Time you signed up for)***

Monday: Writing Questions and Activity

At home: Black Lives Matter & American Policing: Reading Assignment & Freewrite

Week 7: Synchronous Sep 28 – 30; Asynchronous Oct 2

Essay 1 draft 3 due Mon.

Documentary Movie: *The 13th*

- **Trigger Warning:** *The 13th* contains images of graphic violence, including sexual violence and racially motivated violence. Contact me privately if this will trigger you, and we will come up with an alternative assignment/movie for you.

Week 8: Synchronous Oct 5-7; Asynchronous Oct 9

Black Lives Matter & American Policing, cont.

Week 9: Synchronous Oct 12-14; Asynchronous Oct 16

Black Lives Matter, cont.

Essay 2 draft 1 due Fri. – Peer Review

Week 10: Oct 19-23: FULL WEEK OF SYNCHRONOUS CLASSES (MWF)

Peer Review Follow-Up; Troubleshooting; Questions

Pocket-Presentations: Outlines due Monday, present throughout week

Essay 2 draft 2 due Fri.

*** Week 11: Oct 26- 30: *Teacher Conferences - Synchronous Class Mon Sep 21 only this week (+ Conf Time you signed up for)***

Monday: Writing Questions and Activity

At home: Reading / Writing Assignment (TBD)

Week 12: Nov 2-6: FULL WEEK OF SYNCHRONOUS CLASSES (MWF)

Essay 2 draft 3 due Mon. Nov. 2

Reflections & Remixes

Week 13: Nov 9-13: FULL WEEK OF SYNCHRONOUS CLASSES (MWF)

Reflections & Remixes, cont.

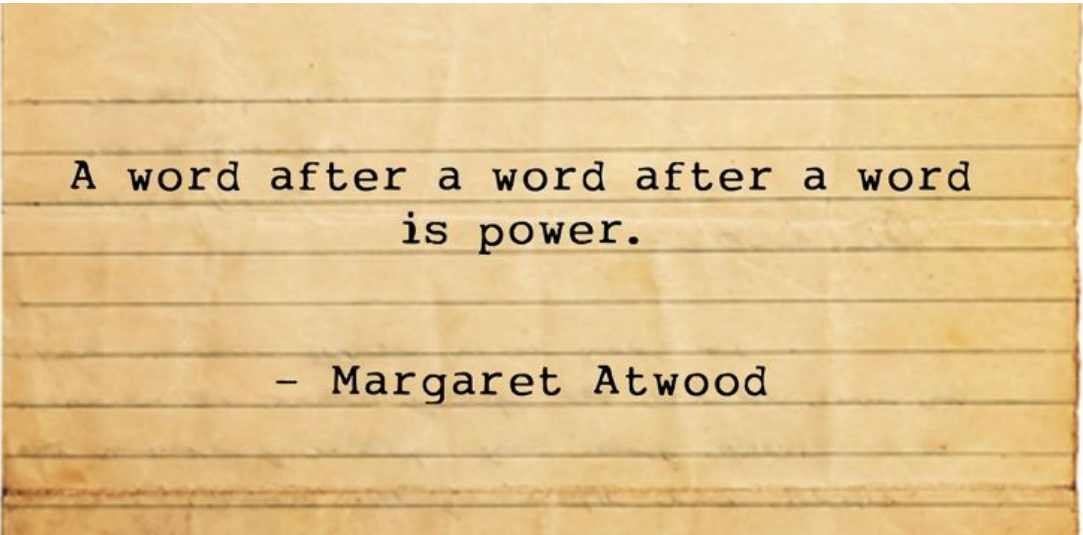
TedTalk: Storytelling (Chimamande Ngozi Adichie)

Remix due Fri. Nov. 13th

Final Reflection due on day of “final”: Wed. Nov 18th.

A Final Note...

As we all know, these are seriously crazy times. While I would have loved for us to meet in person—I’m sure many of you feel the same—it’s important to me to build a community where students feel comfortable talking, sharing, and engaging, in spite of today’s chaos. My hope is to have a meaningful, productive--and hopefully, at times, fun!--time in class. I will work hard to make this happen and expect that you will, too. To this end, I encourage you to bring your own ideas, knowledge, and experiences to the platform. We’re riding this wave together; let’s see where it takes us.



A word after a word after a word
is power.

- Margaret Atwood