

REL 580: Academic Writing in REL
Monday 1:30-3:20, Presidents Hall 210
Spring 2020

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Our errors are surely not such awfully solemn things. In a world where we are so certain to incur them in spite of all our caution, a certain lightness of heart seems healthier than this excessive nervousness on their behalf.

—William James, “The Will to Believe”

Course Overview/Description:

The purpose of this required seminar, is to shape a piece of each student’s critical prose into publishable form. To this end the class will be run as a workshop, with the students’ own writing (as well as examples of successful moments in published articles) as our primary material. Each student will be assigned a peer whose work they’ll pay particular attention to and whose drafts they’ll be able to comment on along the way. will be assigned to present that essay to the class, by identifying its thesis, describing its situation in a larger critical field, and outlining its argument. At other times students will be asked to bring in pieces of their essays for more intense focus. At the end of the class each student will submit their essay to a refereed journal.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students in REL 580 will:

- 1) Gain experience with the academic publishing process
- 2) Learn and apply academic editing skills
- 3) Demonstrate knowledge of and include the critical components of an academic essay
- 4) Identify relevant/appropriate refereed journals for essay submission
- 5) Identify elements of successful and unsuccessful introductions, thesis statements, field situations, and conclusions

Texts/Web Resources:

*Google Drive: All course material (including drafts of your own work) will be in a shared on Google Drive.

*UA Writing Center resources: <https://writingcenter.ua.edu/resources/>

Statement on COVID-19:

All University faculty, staff, and students are expected to maintain a commitment to the health and safety of our campus community. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, specific health and safety standards are in place to minimize exposure and community spread on campus. In the interest of your health and safety and that of all UA students, faculty and staff, the University reserves the right to change the mode of instruction or schedule of instruction at any time, based upon prevailing public health and other guidance. While the method of delivery may change, educational instruction and opportunities will continue. As such, the University will not provide a refund of tuition, in whole or in-part, based on any such changes. Detailed information on changes in format or schedule can be found at <https://studentaccounts.ua.edu/> and <https://financialaid.ua.edu/>.

All students must be familiar with and abide by the requirements outlined in the UA Return Plan | UA System Comprehensive Health and Safety Plan. Students must (1) wear a mask or face covering at all times while participating in face-to-face class; (2) adhere to social distancing standards; and (3) comply with all other health and safety restrictions. If a student refuses to comply with the requirements, the student will be asked to leave the class and reported for a conduct violation. Unless a student has an exemption from the requirement to wear a face covering, (more information can be found at <http://ods.ua.edu/covid-19-disability/>), the student will be reported to Student Life for further disciplinary action. More information on these requirements and UA Healthcheck system and screening can be found at healthinfo.ua.edu/returnplan. You are expected to visit the site and comply with all noted requirements related to in-person class attendance.

****how this affects REL:** See [this blog post](#) by Department Chair Russell McCutcheon, outlining REL's approach and response to UA policy and safety measures.

****how this affects our class:** For as long as the numbers of COVID-19 cases in Alabama remain a concern (and since UA's mandated social distancing guidelines limit the amount of students who can meet in our reserved classroom), we will begin the semester by meeting together synchronously on Zoom during class time each Monday. If/When possible (with close attention to what the numbers of cases are doing), we will hopefully move to in-person meetings for our full synchronous class time (even if not necessarily in the classroom), using Zoom as backup when needed. Regardless and for the time being, there will also be an in-person, socially distant component of the course in the following ways:

- I will have an office hour each week before our class begins (so, from 12-1). During this time, students can visit with me face-to-face (with 6 feet distance and with masks).
- I will meet with the whole class in person (outside, distanced, and masked) at least once each month (as stated above, this can happen more frequently if students wish and weather permitting).

To this end, all students must have a mask ready for use with any in-person meeting, as well as the technology that allows full participation in online settings. Details will be discussed on the first day of class. Meanwhile, I am happy to meet with any student individually

outside my regular office hour as needed. If you wish to set up an in-person meeting at a different time, just let me know, and we'll make arrangements.

Assessments and Course Policies:

- **Attendance and Participation:** Each student is expected to attend every class meeting, to be on time, to have read completely and with care all assignments, and to engage actively and intelligently in our discussions. After one absence, the student's final grade will be reduced by one letter for each additional absence. In other words, if your grade average was A at the end of the semester but you had three absences, your final grade for the course would be C. If the absences are beyond your control due to health or family reasons, let me know as soon as possible. You remain responsible for anything that you miss in class, including announcements. Your positive participation in the class is also vital. *I expect everyone to complete/submit assignments on time, review each other's work, and speak up during classes.* Be prepared to ask questions about the readings and class material and/or contribute your own ideas. Often, you will be asked to locate and bring in an example of a writing element (thesis, field situation, etc.) that you think is particularly effective.
- **Peer Editing Assignment:** Each student will be responsible for a close reading of a peer's draft near the end of the semester (there will be guidelines to direct the process).
- **Final Essay:** Each student will demonstrate effective graduate-level writing and argumentation in the final term paper. The writing process (of drafting/revising) will be evident in the work.
- **Submission to Academic Journal:** At the end of the semester, students will submit their final essay drafts for peer review at an academic journal. We will discuss strategies for locating/selecting a relevant journal.

*Everyone must go to the UA Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.ua.edu/>) at least once during the semester for a consultation: 322 Lloyd Hall; 348-5049; writingcenter@ua.edu

Grading:

This course has a total of 1000 possible points, broken down as follows:

Attendance and Participation	100 points (10%)
• Locating/bringing outside material to workshop	
Peer Editing Assignment	100 points (10%)
Final Essay (including drafts)	700 points (70%)
• Thesis	
• Introduction	
• Field Situation	
• Body	
• Conclusion	
Submission to academic journal	100 points (10%)

Statement on Academic Misconduct:

All academic work must be the product of the student submitting it. Plagiarizing the work of someone else (quoting or summarizing another person's ideas or intellectual labor without giving them credit through proper quotations, citations, and acknowledgment) is a serious offense. Suspected cases of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic misconduct will be referred to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. You are bound by UA's Honor Code in this class.

Consultations/Safe Zone:

All students are encouraged to come by during my office hours, set up an appointment, and/or contact me by phone or email for assistance or with any questions. Please speak with me well in advance if you are having difficulties satisfactorily completing the course's requirements on time or if you anticipate routine absences. Although I cannot guarantee that accommodations can be made, speaking with me before a problem arises will greatly enhance my ability to address the situation in a way that is both fair to your classmates and beneficial to you. Keep in mind that I have set aside my office hour specifically for meeting with students, so feel free to show up during that time or make an appointment via email for a different time slot. Also, please note that I am a Safe Zone Ally, one of many resource people on campus who provide an open door for individuals seeking information or assistance regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, harassment, and/or discrimination. Feel free to talk to me any time if you or someone you know has questions or concerns.

- The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website (www.ua.edu/uact) provides a list of reporting channels that can be used to report incidences of illegal discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence, retaliation, threat assessment or fraud.

Classroom Environment:

In this small group setting, students are responsible for contributing to both their own learning experiences and the learning experiences of others. Because the contribution of ideas from each student is critical to the learning process, any behavior that creates an uncomfortable learning environment will not be tolerated. This includes interrupting others while they are talking, carrying on conversations separate from the class discussion, or making comments that could be perceived as offensive in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, nationality, disability, etc. Please make every effort to maintain an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable sharing and responding to ideas.

Disability Accommodation:

If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability, but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call 348-4285 or visit Houser Hall, Suite 1000, to register for services.

UA Severe Weather Protocol:

UA's primary communication tool for sending out information is through its web site at www.ua.edu. In the event of an emergency, students should consult this site for further directions. In the event of an emergency, I will provide additional course information via

email. If you have not done so already, please set up your weather advisory through Connect-ED--faculty, staff and students (sign up on myBama). Alternatively, you can listen to weather advisory broadcasts over WVUA 90.7 FM, Alabama Public Radio 91.5 FM or use WVUA 7 Storm Watch, which provides a free service you can subscribe to that allows you to receive weather warnings for Tuscaloosa via e-mail, pager or cell phone.

Calendar

*note: Each asterisked assignment is due *no later than Sunday at 5pm before Monday's class*. This is subject to minor change, should moving the time earlier become necessary to give ample time for everyone to read and have comments prior to class. There is a subfolder for each assignment/draft in the main REL 580 Google Drive folder.

January

18 MLK, Jr. Day, no class
*submit abstract of essay

25 Introduction to writing/revising process and elements of academic essay; Discuss basic article outline template; Discuss overview of needs/questions/directions for individual papers
*submit one-sentence summary of essay draft

February

1 Discuss essay summaries; Discuss questions/directions for individual papers, contd.
*submit new abstract of prospective essay

8 Discuss outlines and steps for identifying possible journals
*submit outline for essay

15 Bring in example of successful thesis statement from a journal article; Discuss thesis drafts and journal lists; Introduce elements of literature review (field situation)
*submit list of 5 possible journals and draft of thesis statement (*no more than 2-3 sentences*)

22 Discuss lit review strategies and annotated bibliographies
*submit example of successful lit review from a journal article and your own annotated bibliography (~10 sources)

March

1 Discuss lit review drafts; Discuss elements of Introduction
*submit draft of lit review (*3-5 pages*)

- 8 Discuss Intro examples; Thesis lightning round
*submit example of successful Introduction from a journal article and revised thesis statement
- 15 Discuss Intro drafts; Introduce elements of Conclusion
* submit draft of Introduction (1-3 pages)
- 22 Discuss conclusion examples and outlines; Discuss body section of essay
*submit example of successful conclusion from a journal article and revised outline of essay
- 29 Discuss conclusion drafts; Introduce peer editing exercise
*submit draft of Conclusion (2-3 pages)

April

- 5 Discuss 5 drafts; Discuss elements of submission process
*submit body section draft (~10-15 pages)
**make appointment with UA Writing Center between now-April 19*
- 12 Discuss 4 drafts; Discuss journal lists
*Bring in annotated and prioritized list of 3-5 journals for possible submission (give overview, editorial info, and submission guidelines, and address, if relevant)
* Peer editing assignment due
- 19 Discussion to end writing process
*submit revised complete essay draft
- 26 Bring in ready-to-go manuscript, cover letter, and either a) a laptop or b) an addressed, stamped envelope (depending on journal submission requirements).
**We will submit articles to journals in class (or, if journal requires hardcopy, KMS will collect and drop them in the mailbox)*