

## Writing 2101F: Introduction to Expository Writing

### Winter 2024

Section: 652

### Course Description and Objectives

“An introduction to the basic principles and techniques of good writing. The course will emphasize practical work and the development of writing skills for a variety of subjects and disciplines.” By “practical work,” this course description from the calendar means to indicate that you will spend much of your time in this course writing, responding to the writing of others, and revising your work in light of the responses you receive to it. Consequently, in this course you will not only produce written texts, but also develop a critical eye for examining the written texts of others, both professionally-written and written by others in your class.

The calendar course description also points to the development of writing skills in “a variety of subjects and disciplines.” While it would simply not be possible to study and write in all the genres that are used across a complex university such as Western, you will be asked to write in more than one genre. When you do so, pay attention to the rules/constraints of that genre and study how those rules give you clues to what is regarded as “good writing” for the genre you are writing in. Try to develop a conscious awareness (metaknowledge) about the rules for writing well and how they shift depending on the context for writing.

More generally, the course aims to contribute to your development of an “ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences” (Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents’ statement on ‘University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations,’ 24 October 2005).

### Required Texts and Course Materials

Messenger, William E., Jan de Bruyn, and Judy Brown. *The Canadian Writer’s Handbook*. Third Essentials Edition. Oxford University Press, 2023.

### Course Requirements

Quizzes (2 x 2.5%, 1 x 5%)	10%
Essay 1: Rhetorical Analysis	20%
Essay 2: Informative Essay	30%
Essay 3: Researched Argument	40%
Weekly Forums: See Attendance Policies below	

## OWL and Tech Support

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to the class (*be sure to set notifications on your devices*). If you need assistance with the course OWL site, you can seek support on the OWL Brightspace Help page. Alternatively, you can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

## Assignment Format

You must submit an electronic version of the final draft of each essay, in a .doc or .docx format. Essays must be paginated and double-spaced in a standard serif font (e.g., Times New Roman), and they must follow MLA format; an example of this kind of formatting can be found in *The Canadian Writer's Handbook* and under Research Guides and Citations on the course Homepage. *\*Note: PDF or other read-only formats and compressed/zipped files are not acceptable. Please note also that Turnitin will not accept more than a single file submission.* In other words, do not try to submit an assignment twice or in parts as two or more files.

## Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates specified on the schedule. Since weekly class sessions run from Monday to Sunday, essays for a particular week are due by Sunday night at 11:55 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Late essays will be penalized 2.5% per day and will not receive comments unless your instructor has granted an extension. You must apply for extensions ahead of the due date; they are not automatic. Final versions of essays must be submitted electronically, through OWL, to turnitin.com. I will not grade essays without a report. *Emailed assignments are not acceptable.* You must also keep copies of all submissions.

In addition to submitting final drafts on the due date, you are required to submit rough drafts of each assignment for the scheduled peer-review sessions under Discussions Weeks 3, 7, and 11. Failure to submit a sufficiently complete (in your instructor's opinion) assignment or to participate in a scheduled peer-review session *will result in a 10% penalty being applied to the earned grade for that assignment.* In other words, an assignment that would have earned a 78, for example, will receive instead a recorded grade of 70. This penalty will be applied in addition to other penalties incurred (e.g., for late submission). If you review the draft of another student but do not submit your own draft, the deduction is 5%.

## Attendance Policies

We do not meet formally as a class in a Distance Studies course. Therefore, attendance and participation on the Discussion Board are intertwined. While Distance Studies classes are generally asynchronous, they are not self-paced. Attendance is defined as joining Discussions under Communications. In Week 1, participants introduce themselves. In Weeks 2-11 (a week is defined for this purpose as running from Monday to Sunday), you must contribute *at least three separate posts; at least one must be a response to another student, and at least one must be a new post.* Extended absences, defined as a failure to post for more than five consecutive days, must be coordinated with the instructor ahead of time. Since this component of the course has some flexibility structured into dues dates, and other members of the class cannot respond after a forum closes, extensions are given only in very rare circumstances.

Postings on the Discussion Board must have the following characteristics:

- They must contribute something meaningful to the Board.
- They must support your opinion with sufficient reasons or evidence.
- They must display good grammar and organization.

Postings should not

- contain disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language;
- be excessively long or excessively short (three to six well-developed sentences is an appropriate range, unless instructions specify otherwise);
- be unrelated to the week's topic; or
- say things that do not contribute anything (e.g. "I agree with you" or "nice comment").

**Note** that attendance is **mandatory** in this course. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements as defined above for **any week where there is Discussion** *will* result in your earned final grade being reduced by 3%. That penalty is cumulative to a maximum of five weeks. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements for **five or more weeks when there is Discussion** *will* result in your earned final grade being reduced by 15%.

This policy will be waived only for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving **Note**: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of ‘make-up class’ in another course *will* count as non-attendance, and *will* attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario *shall not require* a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student’s other scheduled class times. If you are asked or ‘required’ to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean’s office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is *your* choice; your absence will not be excused.

### **Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism**

“Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, which can be found here:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently Western and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.”

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools for information gathering and preliminary research purposes only (unless otherwise indicated in the assignment instructions). These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. It is essential, however, that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize, develop, and articulate their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, but students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism in any form. Note that for all assignments completed outside of class, the instructor can require you to attend an in-person interview to discuss your work and/or to review research notes, rough drafts, outlines and other materials used in preparing the assignment before a mark is finalized. Assignments should always reflect students’ own thoughts and constitute independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, supports independent inquiry, and encourages original written contributions.

### **Academic Accommodation**

University policy on academic considerations is described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation.

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests through the Student Absence Portal, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar’s webpage:

[https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic\\_considerations/index.html](https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html)

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation, which may include a Student Medical Certificate. Recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

**Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD)** which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:  
[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf)

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress** should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.

### **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

### **Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence**

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

### **Other Student Support Services**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>  
Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>  
Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>  
Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

### **Intellectual Property and Copyright**

All instructor-written materials (e.g., PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.