



Department of English and Writing Studies

WRITING 4998F/650 – Distance Studies
RE-VISIONING SELF: CREATING YOUR PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO
Fall 2024

Required Text: **There are no textbooks required for this course.**

Course Objective and Description

In this course you will create a ‘**Professional Writing Portfolio**,’ which will include both revised and polished versions of work you have previously done in Writing and other courses, and at least one piece of new work written specifically during and for this course. We will spend considerable time on the principles of good writing generally, and of revision in particular, and you will apply these principles to your work.

Your aim is to create a Portfolio which, suitably modified to target specific audiences, will effectively represent, and potentially ‘market’, your abilities as a writer.

Access to Brightspace

This course is fully online, therefore access to and familiarity with Owl (Brightspace) is essential. Further: 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 all students in the class. 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. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Evaluation

Your final grade in Writing 4998F will be arrived at as follows.

New Material: 30% of your final grade will be based on an evaluation of a single new essay (or equivalent project, e.g. a creative writing piece), approximately 2000 words or equivalent that you will write during the term and submit (final version) as part of your Portfolio.

This portion of your grade is allocated across three different pieces of work:

Assignment 1

Proposal for your New Work project: write a brief (around 500 words) proposal in which you propose the general subject, specific topic, and thesis/plan of research (if applicable) for your new project. **(5%)**

Assignment 2

Interim Draft of your New Work project: write a provisional but complete draft of your new project. You'll discuss each others' drafts during Week 7 ***Peer reviewed.** **(10%)**

Assignment 3

Final Draft of New Work project: submit the final version of your project in your Portfolio, at the end of term. The project will be graded both on its own merits and as part of the final version of your Portfolio. **(15%)**

Assignment 4

Revised piece of Discursive/Expository Prose (e.g. academic essay): select one of your academic essays, or some other piece of discursive (i.e. **expository, not 'creative writing'**) writing, and revise/improve it for inclusion in your final Portfolio (this exercise will incorporate **peer review – a comparative analysis of the original and revised versions*): **15% (grade will be based on the piece as included in your final Portfolio).**

Assignment 5

The Writing Portfolio itself: **55%** of your final grade will be based on an evaluation of this set of materials. That evaluation will take into account the overall effectiveness of the portfolio (given its intended purpose), the design and presentation of the portfolio, and improvements made to specific items of content throughout the term as a result of revision. Your provisional complete portfolio will be **peer reviewed*.

(**Peer Review:* Participation in peer review [as instructed] in each assignment for which a 'peer review' component is specified is mandatory. Students who do not submit a complete draft for peer review as scheduled **and** participate in peer review may lose 10% from the earned grade for that assignment or assignment component. '**Completeness**' here means that the draft you submit is 'complete' enough to allow meaningful comment by other students. By participating in peer review you gain other readers' comments and have an opportunity to offer comments ['criticism', in the best sense of that term] to others.)

Assignment Format

Assignments 1, 2, 3, and 4 must be typed, double-spaced, and submitted online (see 'Submitting Assignments' below) as Word files. All assignments must have your name, course name, section number and instructor's name on the first page. When using sources in a paper, you will be expected to follow MLA, CMS, or APA standards for documentation

Submitting Assignments

Assignments 1, 2, 3 and 4 are due on the dates specified on the syllabus Schedule. In the absence of formal academic consideration, **late papers for these Assignments** will be penalized at 2.5% per day unless I have permitted an informal short extension of the due date. You must contact me ahead of the due date for an extension and provide a reason for the request acceptable to me. If you do so, please keep in mind that without formal academic consideration any informal extension for **Assignments 2 and 4** will necessarily be brief, given that each has an associated peer review component.

Assignment 5 – the final version of your complete portfolio – is due on the last day of classes. That date is a university deadline and will be extended only with formal academic consideration. Important: you are responsible for keeping an electronic copy of all assignments you submit. See also ‘Academic Consideration and Accommodation’ below, following the ‘Schedule’.

NOTE: In this course all assignments will be in, and submitted in, electronic format. ‘Working’ documents (i.e. everything below other than your final, complete Portfolio) must be in Word (either .doc or .docx extension), to allow comments/editing etc. Pdfs, zipped/compressed files, other formats are not acceptable. Submission links will be provided on the ‘Assignments’ tab. Your final complete Portfolio may be in any accessible electronic format (Word, pdf, web-based) you choose.

Attendance/Participation

Obviously, we do not meet formally as a ‘class’ in a Distance Studies course. Therefore, ‘attendance’ and participation on the Discussion Forum are intertwined. While Distance Studies classes are generally asynchronous, they are not correspondence or self-paced. You must attend class (defined as logging into our Owl course section) and participate by introducing yourself, and posting questions and thoughts during the first week, and by posting (by participating in a given week’s set discussion topic) **at least three times in subsequent weeks**. This means at least three separate posts per week (a week is defined as running from Monday to Sunday) during weeks that have required Discussion, **at least one of which must be a reply/response to another student and at least one of which must be a ‘new’ post starting a new conversation.**

Postings on the Discussion Forum must have the following characteristics:

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

Postings should not:

- Contain disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language;
- Be excessively long or excessively short;
- Be unrelated to the week's topic;
- Say things that do not contribute anything, e.g. "I agree with you" or "nice comment".

Note that 'attendance' as defined in this section is mandatory in this course. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements for **any week in which there is graded Discussion** may result in your final grade in this course being reduced by 2.5%, cumulative to a maximum reduction of 10%.

Prerequisites

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

The prerequisite for registration in this course is successful completion of at least two (2) half-courses in Writing at the 2200-level or above, or Special Permission of the department.

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

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 (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

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 between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

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.

Writing Studies' Policy on the Use of AI Tools

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 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.

Further Course and University Policies

Academic Consideration and Accommodation

General Note: Instructors are **not permitted to request, receive, or review documentation** – including but not limited to medical documentation – directly from you. All such documentation, if required, ***must*** be submitted ***directly*** to the Academic Counselling Office of your Faculty of Registration.

University policy on academic considerations is described [here](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf):
https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf 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://www.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.

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

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

(<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>).

Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact 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&languageCd=ENG&>

provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>