

**Special A Summer 2017  
Professor Daniel Cohen  
Rice University  
Houston TX**

**English Language, Composition and Academic Writing**



**Purpose**

The course has two primary goals. The first is to assist you in improving your academic writing. We assume that writing is a skill and that, like any skill, it can be improved through guided practice. The class is designed to give you that guidance and practice so that, no matter what level of skill you start with, you can improve the writing skills you have already acquired, and, over the course of the class become a better, more confident writer. The course has the additional goal of helping you to prepare for the kinds of writing you will be asked to do in your college application, but also your college and professional careers.

The course syllabus will take you through a series of assignments, each of which will focus on a different rhetorical and/or linguistic skill.

In addition to the general goals mentioned above, English 101 has the following specific goals:

- **to teach you the fundamentals of persuasion and suggest how these are adapted to a variety of special situations in academic writing;**
- **to make you aware of word and sentence level stylistic options;**
- **to teach you techniques for making your writing more coherent;**

- to help you develop strategies and techniques for revision that you will carry into other classes and contexts;
- to increase your awareness of and ability to use research sources;
- **AND ABOVE ALL; TO IMPROVE YOUR ABILITY TO WRITE EXCELLENT ESSAYS!**

**Assessment: 3 short papers ( 2 pages each): 30%, a mid-term (20%) , a class presentation (20%), and a Final Exam (30%)**

**Required Texts: NONE**

**I WILL PROVIDE ALL MATERIALS (SCANS) FROM THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:**

Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. 4th ed. New York:

Pearson, 2009. [ISBN: 978-0-205-57443-8]

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. 2nd

ed. New York: Norton, 2010. [ISBN: 978-0-393-93361-1]

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. [ISBN: 978-0-312-

59324-7]

Kristof, Nicholas, and Sheryl WuDunn. *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. New York: Vintage, 2009. [ISBN: 978-0-307-38709-7]

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*. 3rd ed. New York: Pearson, 2009. [ISBN: 978-0-205-60535-4]

ABBREVIATIONS: (M) = Monday                      (Th) = Thursday                      *ARCS* = *Ancient Rhetorics*  
 (T) = Tuesday                                      (F) = Friday                              (BB) = Blackboard  
 (W) = Wednesday                                      *TSIS* = *They Say/I Say*

**WEEK 1:**

Introduction to the Course

Syllabus and Course Policies, to be distributed  
 Information Sheet (distributed in class)

Academic Writing: Argument and Rhetoric

Writing Self-Assessment (handout)

“Ancient Rhetorics” (*ARCS* 1-43)

“Introduction: Entering the Conversation” (*TSIS* 1-14)

Academic Writing: Conversation and Commentary (continued)

Assignment Sheet for Commentary Paper (handout)

Introduction to *Half the Sky* (xi-xxii)

“‘I Take Your Point’: Entering Class Discussions” (*TSIS* 141-144)

“‘What’s Motivating This Writer?’: Reading for the Conversation” (*TSIS* 145-55)

## **WEEK 2:**

### The Rhetorical Situation: Writing for an Audience

Starter Essay

“Kairos and the Rhetorical Situation” (*ARCS* 44-70)

*Half the Sky*, chapters 1 and 2 (3-45)

“‘So What? Who Cares?’: Saying Why It Matters” (*TSIS* 92-100)

### Summary and Commentary

*Half the Sky*, chapter 3 (47-60)

“‘They Say’: Starting with What Others are Saying” (*TSIS* 19-28)

“‘Her Point Is’: The Art of Summarizing” (*TSIS* 30-40)

### Style and Grammar Workshop

Williams, Lessons 1, 3, and 4 (1-7 and 26-54)

### Draft Workshop: Style and Formatting

## **WEEK 3:**

### Rhetorical Analysis

Assignment Sheet for Rhetorical Analysis Wiki (BB)

“Logical Proof” (*ARCS* 158-194)

### Rhetorical Analysis (continued)

“Ethical Proof” (*ARCS* 195-245)

“The Ethics of Style” (Williams 132-151)

### Rhetorical Analysis (continued)

“Pathetic Proof” (*ARCS* 246-266)

*ARCS* 419-427

### Inquiry and Evidence

Invention materials for Rhetorical Analysis Wiki (posted to

## **WEEK 4:**

### **College Personal Statement Workshop**

General Writing Advice, Personal Expression and College Essays

Students will complete draft personal statements or a private college personal essay and participate in peer editing, teacher editing, rewriting and revising.

Students will read and critique sample personal statements, with a focus on introductions and practice writing effective openings individually and in groups.

### Style Work: Voice and Ethos in Academic Writing

“Ain’t So/Is Not” (*TSIS* 121-128)  
Williams, Lesson 2 (8-25)  
*ARCS* 405-419

## **MID TERM EXAM AT THE END OF WEEK 4!!!**

### **WEEK 5:**

From Inquiring to Arguing a Position  
Assignment Sheet for “Considering Another Side” Paper (BB)

Developing Logical Support for a Position  
“The Common Topics and the Commonplaces” (*ARCS* 117-157)  
“Lines of Argument” (BB)

Developing Argument Paragraphs  
“As A Result’: Connecting the Parts” (*TSIS* 105-118)  
Williams, Lessons 5 and 6 (55-78)

Style: Sentence Emphasis and Figures of Speech  
“Style: Composition and Ornament” (*ARCS* 327-373)

### **WEEK 6:**

Style Workshop: Arguing a Position in a Full Research Paper; Responding to Opposing Views  
Assignment Sheet for Final Position Paper (BB)  
‘Skeptics May Object’: Planting a Naysayer in Your Text” (*TSIS* 78-90)

Responding to Opposing Views (continued)

Organizing a Position Paper  
“Arrangement: Getting it Together” (*ARCS* 292-326)

Metadiscourse and Metacommentary  
“‘In Other Words’: The Art of Metacommentary” (*TSIS* 129-137)  
Williams, Lesson 7 (79-90)

### **WEEK 7:**

Style: Sentence Structure  
Williams, Lessons 8 and 9 (91-131)

Honing Rhetorical Skills Throughout Your Academic Career  
Final Wrap-up

Final tips for student application dossier: how to improve your statement and the way you present yourself in writing!!

WEEK 8: **STUDENT PRESENTATIONS and FINAL EXAM!**

**Note on Class Scoring**

The Students final grade will be based on their scores on all tests, quizzes and homework.  
The scores will break down as follows:

15 percent Daily Work

40 percent Quizzes

45 percent Test

**Grading Scale**

94 -100= A

90 -93.9= A -

87 -89.9= B+

84 -86.9= B

80 -83.9= B -

77 -79.9= C+

74 -76.9= C

70 -73.9= C -