

Writing about Politics

Code:	W-124
Term:	Spring 2023
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Tor Lindbloom, MA
Form of study:	seminar/lecture

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Office Hours: TBA (as needed)

Prerequisites

Academic Writing I, or the instructor's approval.

Course Description

This continuation of the compulsory first-year writing course aims to support students in writing for their other courses and forms the first training for their bachelor's thesis. The basics of English writing structure will have been introduced in Academic Writing I (W-114), and Writing about Politics will help students practice and improve upon the skills taught in that course, especially with regards to paraphrasing, summarising and using APA properly.

In addition, students will develop abilities to read and think critically about academic as well as media texts on political topics. Since politics are a controversial topic and since writing in political science often requires objectivity (or at least the appearance of objectivity), students will also learn to master the difficult skill of writing with an objective tone on non-objective sources and data. To do this, they will complete two major assignments: a report on the political socialisation of a person they interview and an analysis of a news website.

Writing in this course is considered a process as much as, if not more than, the completion of a finished product. Students should expect to produce drafts, revise, edit and proofread. In addition, students will share their writing with others in the class, both giving and receiving important feedback on each other's work.

Students will work as individuals, but also in groups. Thus, it is important that students be active participants in this course, making positive contributions to activities, assignments and discussions.

Course Objectives

- Continue to develop critical reading and critical thinking skills.
- Become more adept in the techniques of argumentation and persuasive writing so that ideas are fully explained, assertions are supported and claims are credible.
- Develop the ability to write with an objective tone on controversial subjects.
- Maintain and improve upon the following skills introduced in W-114: paragraphing, transitions, research question/thesis, introductions and conclusions. paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as citing sources in APA.
- Consistently follow standards of written, edited English at a proper level of formality.

Required Readings

All readings will be provided to students through Google Classroom or given in class. Readings will come from academic publications and appropriate news sources on current events. Students will continue to refer to extracts from the following textbook

Graff, G., & Birkenstein, C. (2018). *They Say/I Say*. New York: W. W. Norton.

as well as the OWL Purdue website.

Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n. d.). Retrieved from https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Additional helpful information can be found at:

The Writing Center: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Tips & Tools. (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/>

Contents

A tentative list of the topics and skills covered in the course follows. It is, of course, subject to change.

Week	Dates	Topics/Skills/Assignments
1	20/2 + 22/2	Introduction and concession essay topics
2	27/2 + 1/3	Concession essays
3	6/3 + 8/3	Readings in political socialisation
4	13/3 + 15/3	Readings in political socialisation
5	20/3 + 22/3	Interview preparations
6	27/3 + 29/3	In class essay prep and in class essays
7	3/4 + 5/4	Introduction to website assignment
8	10/4 + 12/4	READING WEEK
9	17/4 + 19/4	Reading for political bias
10	24/4 + 26/4	Political socialisation assignment
11	1/3 + 3/3	Political socialisation assignment
12	8/3 + 10/3	Website assignment
13	15/4 + 17/4	Political socialisation assignment

14	22/4 + 24/4	Website assignment
15	29/4 + 31/5	Website presentations

Evaluation Criteria

20% of the student's grade is based on participation (including attendance, preparation, being active in class, small in-class assignments and peer reviews)

80% is based on the written assignments (but may also include presentations), using a total point system.

All written assignments (including various drafts) are required. Late assignments will be treated as follows (unless otherwise stated):

For all assignments turned in to me, a 10% deduction of points will be made for the first two days late. 20% for days 3-5. 50% for days 5-10. Assignments turned in more than 10 days late will no longer be accepted. The following special rules also apply.

First drafts: Not bringing a first draft on the day it will be reviewed by your classmates will cost you participation points, as well as negatively affecting the dynamics of your group. It will also deprive you of the valuable feedback of your peers, which will (more than likely) negatively affect your grade on further drafts.

Revised drafts: I cannot guarantee that I will have the time (or energy or willingness) to comment on late revised drafts. If you submit a revised draft late, you may not get feedback from me before the final draft of your paper is due.

In-class assignments: Small in-class assignments cannot be made up later, even if you have a good excuse for your absence. For larger assignments (I plan an in-class essay and a presentation), the absence must be excused and arrangements made with me the lesson before the day of the absence (if it is planned), or immediately upon arrival back in school if it was unplanned (such as in the case of illness).

Course Evaluation (%)

A – excellent: 100-90%,
 B – very good: 89-80%,
 C – good: 79-70%,
 D – satisfactory: 69-60%,
 E – sufficient: 59-51%,
 Fx – fail: 50-0%.

Passing a course assumes that student was not absent at more than 4 lessons.