

ENGLISH 111 N – COMPOSITION: LITERATURE
Winter 2007

Monday 12:30-2:20pm in Mary Gates Hall 074 (classroom)

Wednesday 12:30-2:20pm in Mary Gates Hall 076 (computer lab)

Course website: http://staff.washington.edu/mjvechin/engl111n_wi07/

Class email list: engl111n_wi07@u.washington.edu

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COURSE OVERVIEW

In English 111, you will write non-fiction argumentative essays. You could say that you will learn how to write such essays in that I will teach you about certain conventions, practices, and strategies you can use when composing your assignments. However, there is no one formula for writing an essay. Writing is situational, and you will need to approach each writing task differently. This course will expose you to various writing situations, and I intend to help you to become aware of the particulars of each situation so that you will be able to write appropriately for the task at hand. Rather than thinking of the course as adapting to a new style of writing, think of the course as an exploration of how writing is situational because you will need to reconsider what you write as well as how you write.

In this course, we will focus on writers and readers (those involved in the act of communication through writing) and justified arguments (the message of the writing). Though writing and reading resembles an exchange involving give and take between writers and readers, it is not like a conversation. Writing and reading are not face-to-face interactions in real time; there is a distance involved.

How do we communicate our ideas effectively despite this distance between writers and readers? In the setting of this class, your principal responsibility as a reader or writer is justifying yourself. As a writer, you will learn how to address your readers, and this involves more than making your writing clear and understandable. You will need to explain yourself fully in your argumentative essays, providing the necessary evidence for your ideas and relying on logic and organizational strategies to fulfill your readers' expectations and predispositions. In addition, your writing must convey a sense of purpose that seems significant for your readers.

As a reader, you will learn how to analyze texts and how to engage with them when writing your own work. In English 111 you will be using literary texts and essays as the basis of your argumentative essays. So, although this is a composition class, we must first begin with learning how to be a competent reader of these sorts of texts. Knowing the plot of a text or identifying the point a literary critic makes in an essay is not enough.

Your readings will have to result in observations that you can draw conclusions from. These observations and conclusions will then serve as the primary material in your original arguments. (This course is first and foremost a composition course, not a literature appreciation course.)

The non-fiction argumentative essay and the relationship between readers and writers described above constitute the topic of my section of English 111. I selected the principal literary text in this course, Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, simply because I know the novel well and it has given rise to an incredibly diverse and rich body of criticism over the years. As the quarter advances, when building arguments out of your interpretations of *To the Lighthouse*, you will be asked to refer to scholars' readings of the novel and position yourself in relation to these scholars to present new insights on Woolf's work, thereby entering and extending an ongoing critical conversation. Becoming a knowing participant in this conversation, even if you do not intend to study literature or major in humanities courses, will provide you with valuable experience writing for a specific audience of specialized readers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The official course description states that English 111 entails the "study and practice of good writing." Though it is difficult to define what "good writing" is, I expect that, through your study and practice of non-fiction argumentative essays, you will be able to:

- Produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts
- Read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts purposefully in order to generate and support writing
- Demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different rhetorical situations
- Develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading arguments

These four expectations are the four main "outcomes" established by the Expository Writing program for all 100-level writing courses (see "Outcomes and Rubric for 100-Level Composition Courses" in the course reader). Though they probably seem a little vague at the moment, these expectations will become apparent as you progress through the course. These goals will be the principal measure of your achievement in the course: I have patterned evaluation criteria after these six objectives (see the evaluation rubric in the course reader).

In this course, you will complete two major assignment sequences, each of which is designed to help you fulfill the course outcomes, and a third sequence centered on rethinking and revision. The first two assignment sequences require you to complete a variety of shorter assignments leading up to a major paper, an argumentative essay five to six pages in length. These shorter assignments will target one or more of the course outcomes at a time, help you practice these outcomes, and allow you to build toward a major paper at the end of each sequence. You will revise one of your two major papers during the third assignment sequence; like in the previous two sequences, your revisions

will be spread over several shorter assignments. At the end of the course, having completed the three sequences, you will be asked to compile and submit a portfolio of your work. The portfolio will include the following: one of the two major papers you revised during the third sequence, a selection of the sequence-related work you were assigned in the course, some homework assignments, and a cover letter that demonstrates the four outcomes for the course. A portfolio that does not include all the above will be considered incomplete. Save all your work for this course. The portfolio will be worth 70% of your final grade.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Required

- *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf (1989 Harvest Books edition)
- *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein
- Course reader available at Ave Copy Center (4141 University Way NE)
- An active email account and access to the World Wide Web
- A simple pocket folder
- A simple report cover

Recommended

- *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* by Lynne Truss (if you do not purchase this, you will need to print out assigned readings from this text that will be made available online)
- A writing handbook that includes a MLA style guide
- Access to a computer with Microsoft Word
- A college-level dictionary
- A means of backing up your computer files
- An expanding file folder, binder, or other means of organizing your work

Materials on reserve at Odegaard Library

- *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (2 hour loan)
- *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym (24 hour loan)
- *To the Lighthouse*, CBC radio play on audio CD (24 hour loan)
- *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* (Audio CD), Lynne Truss (24 hour loan)

The Virginia Woolf novel, *They Say/I Say*, and *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* are available at the University Bookstore. You may purchase these books elsewhere, but please be certain that you buy the proper edition (check the ISBNs given on the texts page). You must bring *To the Lighthouse* and the course reader to every class. Additional readings and research may be required.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All essay assignments in the three assignment sequences must be:

- Typed using 12-point Times New Roman font
- Formatted according to MLA style conventions
- Double-spaced
- Set with one-inch margins at top and bottom, 1.25" margins on left and right sides
- Stapled and put in a pocket folder if a hard copy must be turned in
- In MS Word format if an electronic file must be turned in

To fully explore the relationship between writers and readers, this course will provide you with opportunities to obtain feedback from readers of your writing, which will likely encourage you to rethink the written presentation of your ideas. More specifically, you will attend two conferences with me when together we will discuss your work and consider composition and revision strategies. These two 20-minute sessions will be scheduled outside of class time. In addition to conferences with me, there will be occasions in class where you will hold similar conferences with students in the class—peer reviews or peer collaborations—after you have read and commented on each other's work.

You may also earn up to 10 points of extra credit towards your participation grade for one conference with a writing tutor at the English Department Writing Center in Padelford. After discussing one of your assignments with the tutor, you must answer a series of questions about what you covered during your appointment and how you intend to revise your paper using your tutor's feedback. (See "Extra Credit: Visit to the English Department Writing Center" in your course reader.)

CLASS PARTICIPATION

I understand how difficult it is to credit each student's class participation. Some of your participation grade necessarily will be determined by my judgment of the quality of your participation in class and on our class blog. (Meaningful participation isn't possible without being adequately prepared for class, which includes keeping up with the readings.) Yet I've tried to integrate many more precise means of evaluating participation, such as in-class pop quizzes, blog entries, and in-class activities and group work. In addition some of these do not require speaking in front of the whole class, which I realize creates anxiety for some students despite my best efforts to create a welcoming atmosphere.

Blog entries, in-class activities, and group work will ask you to reflect on the readings or on course concepts, and as such it's not a matter of giving a right or wrong response. If you don't follow the instructions or you give inadequate responses, or obviously if you don't complete the assignment at all or are absent for in-class assignments, your participation grade will be adversely affected. Quizzes, on the other hand, will have specific point values, and answers will be considered correct or incorrect.

Any homework that is not part of the assignment sequence may be counted towards the participation grade. To give you an idea of the relative weights of the smaller evaluations that make up your participation grade, you may receive a maximum of:

5-10 points for each homework assignment, in-class activity, blog entry, in-class pop quiz, group work activity, and each sequence assignment turned in on time
15 points for each peer review, peer collaboration activity, and conference with instructor

Any extra credit opportunity will be framed as a contribution to the class and will count towards your participation grade.

GRADES

Your final grade for the course will consist of your participation grade (30% of the total) and the grades you receive for your portfolio (70% of the total).

When you turn in a sequence assignment, I will return it to you with comments that are intended to help you improve your writing in future assignments. You will receive a hypothetical grade (on the 4.0 scale) for each assignment sequence as a whole after I have read the last essay of the sequence. You will need to turn in all your work from that sequence on the day that the last essay is due. You must place your materials in a pocket folder or I will not accept them. My grading will conform to the outcomes set by the Expository Writing program and the rubric I have designed for the course. The hypothetical sequence grades are designed to serve as an indication of your progress in the course, which will be useful references when it comes time to revise one of your two major papers and compile the materials for your portfolio.

Note that a 2.0 or higher is considered a passing grade for this course. Any grade below a 2.0 will not satisfy the university's composition requirement.

MISSING CLASS AND LATE WORK

It is in your best interest to attend every class because much of the course instruction consists of discussions and in-class presentations and activities. If you miss class, you cannot "make up" in-class activities, group work, and peer reviews or collaborations that count toward your participation grade. Late homework—the work that counts towards your participation grade—will simply not be accepted. I will ask you to turn in homework at the beginning or the end of class; you must turn it in then or it will be considered late.

Difficulties with technology do not excuse late work. You are expected to save your files to different locations for safekeeping, backup your files, and make and keep hard copies

for your reference. You should anticipate problems technology may create and have alternate strategies ready for times that technology fails.

Since I usually begin the class by making announcements, if you arrive late to class, you may miss important assignments, in-class pop quizzes, in-class activities, descriptions of homework assignments, requests to turn in homework, important handouts, and the like.

If you miss a conference with the instructor, you will only be able to receive a maximum of 5 points for a rescheduled conference. It is the responsibility of the student to reschedule a conference.

A portion of your participation grade is devoted to how well you “follow” each assignment sequence: turning in sequence assignments late or incomplete will result in an automatic deduction from that portion of your grade. You will receive a full 5 points for each complete sequence assignment turned in on time, none of the 5 points will be given for late sequence assignments, and partial credit will be given to incomplete sequence assignments. If I have not received the previous assignment in the sequence, the subsequent assignment—even if that assignment is turned in on time—will be considered late and you will not receive any points for it. Note that these 5 points per assignment are not extra; they are factored into the total number of participation points possible. The rationale behind this policy is that you cannot fully participate in the course as it was intended to proceed if your work is late or unfinished.

The course schedule is sufficiently detailed to allow you to plan ahead. If you need to miss a class the day a sequence assignment is due, I expect you to contact me to work out arrangements to turn your paper in before the deadline and therefore avoid late penalties.

I will read but not comment on late assignments that are a part of the three assignment sequences and I may return late assignments to you later than the date that I hand the same assignments back to the other students. Not having feedback on your work will make writing subsequent assignments in the sequence and revising more difficult. I must have read all of your sequence assignments by the last day of class.

Late sequence assignments must be printed out and handed to me in person: before or after a class, during office hours, or by appointment. I do not have a mailbox that is accessible to students, I do not come to my office every day to pick up papers left for me, and I do not accept assignments turned in via email (see below).

Given my late policies I do not excuse absences in person or over email. If you contact me to explain the reasons behind an absence and I acknowledge the receipt of your email or say thank you for letting me know, that does not mean that I consider your absence legitimate or that late penalties do not apply to you. A documented medical excuse is the only way to be exempted from these late policies. That is not to say I expect perfect attendance, as absences can and do happen without warning. But, since

all late penalties affect your participation grade, you are expected to take advantage of the extra credit opportunities to compensate for the occasional missed class.

EMAIL AND INTERNET POLICY

Firstly, the online resources for this class are only meant to supplement regular class attendance.

The course syllabus and schedule will be exclusively available online. From the first day of class on, the syllabus will remain a static document. I will periodically update the course schedule to correspond with our actual progress as a class. Students are responsible for taking note of schedule changes.

I intend to use the class email list (engl111n_wi07@u.washington.edu) to contact you periodically, but I will limit my emailing to crucial announcements. To ensure that you do not miss information sent out to this list, please check your UW email account regularly.

I will use the course blog to provide you with additional information and suggestions to help you as you progress through the course. If I give you a homework assignment verbally in class without giving you a printed handout, I will post a description on the blog. It is your responsibility to check the blog; I will not remind you to do so.

I will reply to messages you send directly to me (mjvechin@u.washington.edu) within 24 hours, excluding weekends. I usually only check my email two to three discrete times a day. I do not accept assignments or drafts sent to me via email, but you are encouraged to use email to ask me questions or ask for clarifications. (Emails with attachments will be deleted without being opened.)

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own. In your work for this class, it is essential that you properly cite the outside sources that you use in your writing. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the Office of Student Affairs. Please understand that plagiarism is a serious violation and is punished severely by the university.

Plagiarism is one form of academic dishonesty but not its only form. Misrepresenting group collaborations is another, just to give one example. Potentially dishonest and unethical practices will be acknowledged and investigated on a case by case basis.

OUR CLASS AS A COMMUNITY

I'd like to think of our class as a community exploring composition and literature together. You will learn from and inform your peers through actively participating in class. Being involved in our community will help you to know how to create blog entries and essays that are original and relevant to our knowledge community. Merely parroting the texts we read or the instructor is not intrinsically rewarded because it does not extend collective practices of knowledge making.

Our class discussions will involve interpretations and applications of texts we read, and so usually we are not looking for specific, right or wrong answers. Yet our discussions should be grounded in evidence and critical thinking, and students themselves, being familiar with the texts we read, should be aware when this is lacking and demand further justification. Students ultimately will need to make up their own minds on certain issues and ways of seeing, that is, they must use their knowledge and the knowledge they have gained to decide which interpretations to accept and which to reject.

I appreciate all contributions to class discussion. Often I ask students to explain the ideas they share or ask them to push those ideas further. In those cases I am hoping that students can share the thinking behind their ideas or extend their ideas, since in your writing for this course you will need to do just that. I know that this is a challenge to do on the spot; at any time during a discussion, feel free to pass or take some time to reflect. By questioning or pushing students in class discussion, I am not rejecting student ideas. As students, you are entitled to question my ideas or ask for further explanations during class discussions, and I will try my best to justify my methods and point of view.

Keep in mind also that much of your work will be shared with your classmates and sometimes, particularly in the case of your blog posts, available to those outside our class. If group situations or the public nature of this course pose problems for you, please contact me.

Respect for diversity of all kinds is vital to creating a safe and stimulating intellectual environment. In discussion and when writing, treat others with respect despite our differences—in race, religion, age, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, class, ability and disability, political beliefs, and so on.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS

Please let me know if you need accommodation of any sort. You can come directly to me, or I can work in conjunction with UW Disabled Student Services (DSS) to provide what you require. I am also willing to take suggestions specific to this class to meet your needs. This syllabus is available immediately in large print, as are other materials.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI CLOSE READING

WHAT IS CLOSE READING FOR? A close reading focuses attention on the language and meaning of a text. It should magnify an aspect of the text that otherwise would not be noticed by the average reader reading the text once through. But there should be an apparent value in the close reading. A significant close reading is not just “new” and “interesting” but something that can affect how we view or understand a text.

WHO IS A CLOSE READING DIRECTED AT? Since when doing a close reading you need to think about what the average reader would see in a text and how a text is viewed and understood, you must size up your audience to make such judgments. Assume your reader has read the text and taken note of its obvious surface meaning. Consequently, this frees you from having to explain the plot, describe the characters, and so on, leaving you to concentrate on the very language of the text.

THE SCOPE OF A CLOSE READING. To perform a close reading, you must choose a limited amount text to work with. Even though you’re assuming your audience has read the full text, you still need to give a sense of the context of the passage you’re working with, if only to remind your audience where the passage is located in the text. Your reflections on your reading’s significance should not be limited to the passage but make a statement about the understanding of the text as a whole. For example, if we come to see one passage in a certain light, how do we now regard the full text in relation to that passage? Sometimes by looking closely at a passage, a way of understanding it in relation to the full text becomes clear. Sometimes you form an understanding the full text while reading and then need to go back and find evidence in the form of a close reading to recreate what lead you to that understanding. (If you choose the latter route, be certain that you’re picking the best possible passage for scrutiny. It should be clear to the reader why you picked the bit of text that you did.)

A CLOSE READING BY DEFINITION LOOKS AT THE LANGUAGE OF A PASSAGE—at how the words chosen express a certain thought and emotion. Think of the words’ references, their connotations and denotations. Language implies grammar, which reveals logic. Since you and your audience share knowledge of the English language, *the goal is to situate the audience in your shoes so they can see what you see*. That means you have to call attention to the objective elements (e.g., the given words and how they’re used, which is known to all users of a language) and show how they *give rise* to a certain meaning, your interpretation. So think of close reading as looking at a detail of a larger structure from a certain vantage point. Someone else could occupy the same vantage point and see what you see. You’re not revealing anything that wasn’t already there, you’re simply calling attention to a feature. Also, think about *how meaning is made*. Meanings may be intended but through the processes of writing and reading they are actualized. Therefore, just listing observations about the language of a passage doesn’t necessarily say anything about its meaning. You need to show how your observations are not discrete but actually coeval in an emergent meaning. (A close reading doesn’t concern itself with evaluation. In explaining how a passage makes meaning, you’re not determining the quality of that making or that meaning.)

IS THERE ONLY ONE CLOSE READING FOR A GIVEN TEXT? Absolutely not. However, all close readings of the same passage need to start from the given language and its obvious surface meaning. And because there's more than one way to read a passage, it would be impossible to prove that your reading is the only correct one. Concern yourself with showing that your reading is valid, that is, your audience can understand your reading, can see what you see in the passage from the same vantage point you occupy, despite whatever reading the audience prefers.

MULTIPLE CLOSE READINGS. Each close reading should provide a specific insight to a way of understanding a text. It's possible that two (or more) close readings could be evidence of the same way of understanding the full text. But don't treat them as two instances of the exact same case. Since a close reading by nature emphasizes what is unique about the language of a passage, the only way to have identical close readings is to have identical passages. If you're treating the passages as merely examples of a general instance, you're not acknowledging their uniqueness. You're not really doing a close reading but instead multiplying the number of examples. Certainly there may be times when you'll want more than one example to make your way of understanding a text seem more convincing to your audience, but in so doing you don't want to deny how each unique passage makes meaning.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI

WHAT IS ARGUMENT?

An argument is simply the author's attempt to convey a certain **perspective** on an **issue**. A perspective on an issue can be characterized as the way the author defines and approaches the subject matter.

Arguments are traditionally associated with "proving" and "persuasion." This is misleading because it's nearly impossible to prove an idea beyond any doubt. Also, the goal of writing an argument is not to make your reader agree with you. (Instead, in this class, we will look at an argument as contributing an original perspective on an issue to your audience's preexisting understanding of the subject matter.)

I prefer to talk about argument as a **demonstration**. That is, in an argument, you must *show* that your perspective could be valid. Validity is a matter of being able to justify your ideas. So demonstration as argument is a justification of the author's perspective on an issue.



So let's start with what an argument is not: it is *not* a statement that cannot be justified.

An **opinion** is not an argument because it is essentially the writer's observation. It depends upon personal taste rather than justifications that the readers can find valid or not valid.

I like country music.

Public middle school libraries shouldn't ban books.

An argument is not a **fact** or a **descriptive statement**. In that case, the writer would not have to demonstrate something; the statement is self-evident, and so there is no distinct point of view.

The majority of public middle schools have removed books from their shelves in response to complaints from parents.



Opinions and facts/descriptive statements answer the question of **what**, **where**, **when**, or **who**. These statements are considered self-evident: you don't need to demonstrate them; they're givens or you give them. In contrast, the bulk of an argument deals with **how** and **why** questions, aspects of the issue that you can't merely define or refer to but must demonstrate and justify.

Books are removed from the shelves in public middle school libraries on the basis of unfounded complaints from parents. Because of their fear of a community backlash,

middle school libraries ban books outright rather than consider the actual content of questionable books.

Obviously, there is an element of *what*, *where*, *when*, or *who* in any argument, and that lies in *defining* the issue and the approach to the issue (the perspective). The *how* and *why* comprises the demonstration in the essay: the justification of the perspective on an issue.



An argument must have **support**. The support is what justifies the author's perspective.

To justify the above argument, we could offer evidence that the complaints are "unfounded" (they do not relate to the content of the questionable books), that the libraries fear a community backlash, and that banning books outright prevents community backlashes.

However, the writer cannot merely present the support; she or he must explain how the support relates to and justifies her or his ideas. Often, when writing about non-fiction essays, the support consists not of facts (evidence) but of interpretation and analysis.

We might prove that the libraries fear a community backlash by *interpreting* the statements of middle school librarians, references to previous cases involving banned books in other schools, or the relationship between middle school libraries and the community.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT

Let's go back to our argument about banned books:

Books are removed from the shelves in public middle school libraries on the basis of unfounded complaints from parents. Because of their fear of a community backlash, middle school libraries ban books outright rather than consider the actual content of questionable books.

How would we demonstrate this argument? We need **support**, or something that justifies our perspective on this issue.

As we said last class, if we interviewed a librarian and she said, "I ban books because I fear a backlash," that is "*direct*" support for our argument. Unfortunately, it's not always that easy. It's more possible that she would say, "Many times we simply ban books to make certain parents happy. Because the parents who are concerned enough to approach us about books are also concerned enough to tell other parents if we don't respond to their demands. The last thing we need is a mob of angry parents upset with the library system. We're here to help the kids, not to take sides."

Her statements *imply* that she fears a community backlash. If we were to use these statements as support for our argument, we'd have to interpret them and then draw conclusions in order to demonstrate *how* they justify our perspective. For our reader to see how we regard these statements, we have to share our **interpretation** of the statements and the conclusions we drew from our interpretation—our **deductions** and **assertions**.

- Interpretation: What about these statements is relevant to our argument?
 - Interpretations derive from our reading, either reading for restatement or close reading.
- Deduction: What conclusions can we draw from our interpretation?
- Assertion: What do these conclusions demonstrate?

But clearly the librarian's statements do not address the point of view in its entirety. She seems to be talking about the fear of a backlash but does not talk about the nature of the complaints, whether they are founded or unfounded. Such is the nature of support: usually it only addresses a part of our complex point of view. It follows that one piece of support will be insufficient, and it's not prudent to search for support that typifies the entire argument (e.g., an extended example).



Examples are but one form of more or less "direct" support, with limited use. Usually, we use examples to *illustrate*. "Electronic items sold well this holiday season. For example, more people bought DVD players in the month of December than in the six previous months combined." DVD players are a type of electronic item, but they're certainly not the only

electronic item. It's possible that not all electronic items sold well, even though DVD players did. We could note the "objective" sales figures, and DVD player sales are an instance that conforms to the observation we made.

We said before that arguments *demonstrate* and deal with the *why* and the *how*. In the above example, we simply have the *what*. DVD player sales don't explain why or how electronic items sold well.

To return to our argument about banned books: "Because of their fear of a community backlash, middle school libraries ban books outright rather than consider the actual content of questionable books. For example, Elm Grove Middle School and Three Lakes Middle School did just that." This is not an argument because the issue at hand is that the fear informed the schools' decision to ban books rather than the nature of the books themselves. If we want to use the schools as support for our argument, we have to *show* that they acted out of fear. And then we're not using *the schools* as support but instead *what occurred at these schools*. What occurred at each school is unique, though perhaps we can fit them under a pattern. Fitting them under the pattern involves *interpretation* rather than illustration, then we must determine what the situation implies (*deduction*) before we can declare it is an instance of banning books out of fear (*assertion*). We move from interpretation to deduction to assertion, rather than from assertion to illustration to interpretation.

Since we can't demonstrate that all middle schools banned books because of fear, what is at stake in our argument is the validity of our assertion is that fear rather than investigating the books' content often informs the decision to ban books. The fact that this indeed happened at many schools does help our argument, but really the *validity* of our argument depends upon demonstrating the presence and consequences of fear in the context of decisions to ban books.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI LINES OF INQUIRY AND CLAIMS

One last look at the argument about banned books:

Books are removed from the shelves in public middle school libraries on the basis of unfounded complaints from parents. Because of their fear of a community backlash, middle school libraries ban books outright rather than consider the actual content of questionable books.

We have already hinted that this is argument would consist of a number of smaller demonstrations, which we will call **assertions**:

- The complaints from parents are unfounded.
- The complaints from parents lead to banned books.
- The libraries do not follow up complaints by reevaluating the books in question.
- The libraries want to maintain good relations with the community...

So, because the demonstration in an argument is made up of establishing smaller, interrelated assertions, we can say that overall demonstration follows a consistent **line of inquiry**. In this course you will write complex arguments, that is, arguments with multiple assertions to demonstrate. It will be necessary to establish how your assertions interrelate and form one line of inquiry.



Note that our argumentative statement above encapsulates our perspective for the entire argument. It also encompasses the four smaller assertions and suggests how the assertions relate to one another and form one line of inquiry. Though the statement nicely summarizes the issue and our approach to it, it needs to be demonstrated by smaller assertions. It could be said to be a claim.

A **claim** encapsulates our definition of the issue at hand and our perspective on it (or approach to demonstrating validity of the perspective on the issue). At the same time, it sets the focus of the essay, implying what assertions will be made over the course of the essay. In essence, a claim sets up expectations for your reader. The reason why we stress claims in this class is that we focus on the writer's intent. The claim sums up the overall project you will undertake in your argumentative essay, and having a claim helps your reader to recognize from the very start of the essay how your argument will follow one line of inquiry.

With a claim, it's easy to not see the forest for the trees. The claim is the forest, and the trees are the smaller assertions. Which is more important? Without trees, there is no forest. More specifically, students often get obsessed over claims and focus on the wording of their claims so intently that they don't really have much substance to their essay—that is, their argument is not continuous because there aren't multiple assertions to make. Or, students won't begin writing until they have some perfectly formulated

claim. Once they have written their claim, they often think that the claim speaks for itself, and they put little effort into the demonstration in their argument.

The fact of the matter is that claims only provide a summary and a preview for your argument; *you cannot directly support claims but can only support the smaller assertions that make up the claims. In other words, support justifies individual assertions and not entire claims.*

Returning to our previous example of the librarian's statement about fearing a backlash, her statements only serve as support for one assertion. Remember that her statements say nothing about the nature of the parents' complaints, and that is another assertion that is part of our argument's line of inquiry. We would need a different piece of evidence to support the assertion about the nature of the parents' complaints. The claim establishes how those two assertions interrelate so the reader knows that by demonstrating both assertions we're in turn making a larger argument.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI QUOTATIONS AND PARAPHRASES

WHEN SHOULD YOU USE QUOTATIONS?

Use quotations to integrate the *actual words* of the author of another source in your writing.

Quotations should relate to your argument, and often you must explicitly establish how the quotation connects to your argument.

Quotations usually serve as a starting point from which to build off or diverge from—you engage with these pieces of text. They come from an outside source whose point of view on an issue was credible or authoritative enough to merit publishing.

When you use quotations, you use only a piece of an outside source, but you must give a sense of how that piece functions in the source taken as a whole to avoid quoting “out of context.”

Insert relevant quotations in your own writing when the author’s ideas are well formulated in language or when you wish to refer to specific words or terms used by the author. In fact, by using a quotation, you convey the notion that the quotation—the phrase in its entirety as it is stated in another source—expresses an idea that cannot be accurately restated.

Sometimes a summary or paraphrase of the author’s key ideas is more effective, particularly when:

- The quotation you wish to use is not succinct.
- The main idea of the quotation is not apparent.
- You want to combine various ideas. In many cases, paraphrasing is often simpler than dealing with multiple quotations.

To paraphrase is to restate. If you use any of the author’s language in your restatement—and it is often useful to use the author’s key terms—you must put those words in quotation marks.

Remember that summaries and paraphrases must be documented, just like quotations.



THREE RULES OF THUMB FOR USING QUOTATIONS

1. Quotations from essays are not self-evident facts. They come from arguments: they are intended to demonstrate an idea and are intended to be read in the context of their respective arguments.
2. Quotations should not be appropriated, that is, you should not use another author's words as your own. If you're simply repeating the author, you can point out an idea but you cannot engage with—build off or diverge from—the texts from which the quotations come.
3. Consider how the quotation fits with your argument.
 - a. Why are you using this quotation?
 - b. What are the implications of this quotation for your own argument?



USING QUOTATIONS

First step: Introduce the quotation.

(Write down and cite quotation after your introduction.)

For many Americans, the decade of the 1950s represents an ideal time for families; those years bring to mind a carefree suburban lifestyle that fostered family closeness. Nevertheless, Stephanie Coontz warns that “[n]ostalgia for the 1950’s is real and deserves to be taken seriously, but it is usually shouldn’t be taken literally” (57).

Second step: Explain what the author is arguing in the quotation.

(The author should agree with how you sum up the quotation: this helps you establish credibility by demonstrating that you do know what the author is saying even if you don't agree.)

For many Americans, the decade of the 1950s represents an ideal time for families; those years bring to mind a carefree suburban lifestyle that fostered family closeness. Nevertheless, Stephanie Coontz warns that “[n]ostalgia for the 1950’s is real and deserves to be taken seriously, but it is usually shouldn’t be taken literally” (57). Coontz has spent many years researching and exploring the realities of the 1950s, and suggests that the nostalgia we feel for the decade is a real force in our current lives, but that such nostalgia cannot be taken as a literal interpretation of the era itself.

Third step: State the implications of the quotation for your own argument.

(What do you make of the author's argument?)

For many Americans, the decade of the 1950s represents an ideal time for families; those years bring to mind a carefree suburban lifestyle that fostered family closeness.

Nevertheless, Stephanie Coontz warns that “[n]ostalgia for the 1950’s is real and deserves to be taken seriously, but it is usually shouldn’t be taken literally” (57). Coontz has spent many years researching and exploring the realities of the 1950s, and suggests that the nostalgia we feel for the decade is a real force in our current lives, but that such nostalgia cannot be taken as a literal interpretation of the era itself. Instead, as Coontz suggests, we should recognize that our nostalgia for the 1950s is more a creation of the 1990s than it is an accurate portrayal of the decade.

[Here, my own claim—that nostalgia for the 1950s is a creation of the 1990s—must be supported by further evidence.]



DOCUMENTATION OF QUOTATIONS AND PARAPHRASES

For the MLA documentation style (used in the examples above), you must mention:

- the author of the source
- the name of the source
- the page number or location in the work where the quotation comes from

The parenthetical citation only includes the information you have not already given in the body of your writing. Often the name of the source does not need to be mentioned in the body of your writing or parenthetical citation since it is also listed on your Works Cited page.

For your readers, it should be clear that you attribute the quotation to its author. Remember that quotations serve to establish your credibility through reference to others’ work. Take care in instances where you quote or paraphrase multiple authors.

Consult a writing handbook for complete information on MLA documentation.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI INTEGRATING QUOTATIONS

No quotation should be a separate sentence unto itself.

Disembodied quotation: At dinner, when Paul discusses his esteem for Tolstoy, he is more honest and direct in his assertions in comparison to Charles Tansley. “No, Charles Tansley would put them both right in a second about books, but it was all so mixed up with, Am I saying the right thing? Am I making the right impression? that, after all, one knew more about him than about Tolstoi, whereas, what Paul said was about the thing simply, not himself, nothing else” (108).

Integrated quotation: At dinner, when Paul discusses his esteem for Tolstoy, he is more honest and direct in his assertions: “what Paul said was about the thing simply, not himself” (108).

Integrated quotation: At dinner, when Paul discusses his esteem for Tolstoy, he is more honest and direct in his assertions, talking “about the thing simply, not himself” (108).

Quotations must be presented in complete and grammatically correct sentences.

Disembodied quotation: Charles Tansley wanted his statements about literature to reflect his intelligence “that, after all, one knew more about him than about Tolstoi” (108).

Integrated quotation: Mrs. Ramsay thinks that, from Tansley’s statements about literature, “one knew more about him than about Tolstoi” (108). In other words, Tansley is concerned with how his statements reflect his intelligence.

Alterations in quotations must be put in brackets.

Example: Mrs. Ramsay and Paul Rayley “knew more about [Charles Tansley] than about Tolstoi” after hearing Tansley speak. Not only do Tansley’s statements reflect his intelligence, but they also seem to chastise others, as if he was “put[ting] them both right in a second about books” (108).

Truncations (shortening) of quotations must be noted with bracketed ellipses.

Example: Charles Tansley’s statements show a preoccupation with “saying the right thing [...] whereas, what Paul said was about the thing simply, not himself, nothing else” (108).

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI LEVELS OF ARGUMENTATION

Level 1: Ads use images and color to catch the consumer's attention.

This is a broad generalization. We don't know how this point relates to the discussion at hand. In addition, this assertion doesn't really demonstrate anything—it's more of an observation.

Level 2: This ad uses bright colors to promote its product, Bacardi Rum.

This statement moves a little closer to a specific assertion but still doesn't say much about any underlying messages in the ad. What is the significance of the bright colors? How does this influence how the product is promoted?

Level 3: In this ad, Bacardi Rum promises to spice up our lives.

This assertion is more specific but still focuses on the product being sold rather than the significance of the ad. What does it mean to "spice up our lives"? What is being "promised" in the ad?

Level 4: This ad suggests that a peaceful suburban night is undesirable and that the glitz of a "city that never sleeps" should be our destination Friday.

This assertion is specific—it suggests that the paper will argue that the ad targets a suburban insecurity about "dullness."



In the examples above, the obvious movement is from the least specific assertion to the most specific assertion. But other movements may be seen:

From least demonstrable assertion to most demonstrable assertion

Level 1 is so general that it hardly needs demonstration. How could we support such a general statement except to say that ads are by definition designed to attract attention? In that case, we'd be discussing advertising and not our specific subject, the Bacardi rum ad.

By the time we reach Level 4, not only can we back up the assertion with support, but we can see what kind of support might be presented and what other issues the paper might subsequently address.

From universal to unique

We've already said that Level 1 is rather general; it is what anyone would say about advertising. Since it refers more to the definition of advertising, the point is more like an underlying assertion that readers are likely to accept.

Level 4 suggests what the writer's original argument entails. We clearly see how the writer interprets an artifact (the ad) and makes deductions from it.

We also see that the different levels constitute different reader-writer relationships:

Level 1 is so general so as to be an assumption. It's safe to assume that all readers will have a general idea of the goals of advertising.

Level 2 does bring something specific to the reader's attention, the bright colors, but it does not follow up that observation with an assertion.

We detect a clear assertion in Level 3; unfortunately, readers may not know what the author is getting at. What does "spice up our lives" mean? (It sounds more like an advertising slogan than an explanation.)

Level 4 is the most specific assertion, but that isn't to say that it doesn't rely on the reader's knowledge: a reader must know that the suburbs are often characterized as dull and contrast this with the city life—"a city that never sleeps" (note the quotation marks). All readers will likely possess this generalized knowledge; if not, the rhetoric of the statement ("peaceful" versus "never sleeps," "undesirable" versus "glitz") helps to make the contrast evident.



When you write an argument, you want your argument to matter to your readers. Of course, you can explain to your readers explicitly why each assertion matters, but before that, consider two basic questions that are related to each other:

IS YOUR ARGUMENT ORIGINAL? Original *does not* mean absolutely new or completely unexpected. Your papers won't be either of those things because you're engaging with other texts in your writing. Originality usually comes with how you define your issue and perspective—what you choose to focus on and the kinds of conclusions that you draw from your interpretations.

IS YOUR ARGUMENT A DEMONSTRATION? Your argument may not be considered valid by your readers if you're merely providing evidence and not sharing your interpretations and making deductions for your reader. Since the purpose of an argument is to demonstrate, you need to fulfill your reader's expectations.

So if your argument is original and demonstrative, your reader will already begin to see that your argument matters. In certain cases, you will need to explicitly explain

why your argument matters, especially when the originality of your argument is less pronounced.

Why your argument matters is the what we will call the **stakes** of your argument. Stakes is a particularly good term because it implies the outcome of your argument. It also relates to risk and gain, which in our case could correspond to the risk writers take in trying to demonstrate their perspective is valid and what readers gain when they consider an original, justified perspective on an issue.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI INTRODUCTIONS

Your introduction should introduce your reader to *your argument*. It should not be simply an introduction to *your issue*.

Avoid generalities. The reader wants to get a sense of *how your perspective informs the approach to your issue*, not what “everyone” knows or thinks about an issue.

Keep in mind that any “background” information you include should serve your argument. If your “background” information is not contributing to any point you’re making, readers will likely find your information irrelevant, useless, and misleading.

Consider the following example: The death penalty is a highly charged issue. Polls show that the opinion of the American public on this issue is divided. But the death penalty is not truly a national issue because currently individual states decide whether or not to allow the death penalty in sentencing. Oddly enough, the death penalty has become more associated with issues of states’ rights rather than human rights. [...]

Since your claim should encompass all of the assertions you’re demonstrating in the body of your paper, your claim is also a preview for your reader. There’s no need to include any other “roadmap” in your first paragraph. This is also why it makes sense that your claim appears early in your paper.

Readers have little to judge while reading your first paragraph, allowing you to define your issue and point of view and save your justifications for the body of the paper. Your set-up creates expectations in terms of *how* you will go on to justify your point of view, though. Some of your reader’s judgments will relate to how well you follow and fulfill the project you initially created for yourself.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI ENGAGEMENT

THE PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT is to use ideas from a nonfiction essay in your own argument. Your argument should not repeat the argument of the nonfiction essay but build off or diverge from it. Think of it as “engaging with” the author in a give-and-take conversation about a similar topic. The conversation doesn’t go anywhere if you both have the same thing to say. If you’re simply going to repeat another author, that only shows you understand her ideas; it doesn’t show your own thinking and it doesn’t further the discussion on the topic. (Obviously you can still further the discussion and agree with another author: here agreement is not the same thing as repetition.)

With engagement, **YOU ASSUME THAT YOUR READER IS FAMILIAR WITH THE BASIC TOPIC IMPLIED IN YOUR ARGUMENT.** In our case, one of our principal topics is metafiction. Imagine your reader to have read something basic, like Patricia Waugh’s essay, because you don’t want to take the time to completely explain what metafiction is. But don’t assume that your reader is familiar with the specific nonfiction essay you’re engaging with. That means that you need to start out with some restatement of that essay before you can build off or diverge from it. Restatement also helps your audience see exactly how you differ from another author, even if you by and large agree.

Engagement, like close reading, relies on working with a portion of a text. We can think of the essays we’ve been reading as arguments. Although there may be an overall argument for the essay, that overall argument is built and substantiated by smaller sub-arguments. Though it’s important to have a general sense of the essay’s overall argument and be able to describe it in your restatement, **YOU ACTUALLY BUILD OFF OR DIVERGE FROM INDIVIDUAL POINTS IN THE ESSAY.** These individual points need to be specific enough so that you can point to them in the text, not general notions of a passage. They should be sub-arguments that could be readily detected by any reader of the argument. If you use generalities you run the risk of neglecting the specificity of the essayist’s points. “This essay is about realism” or “he doesn’t like metafiction” doesn’t clue the reader in to the actual argument in its particulars. In addition, with generalities your engagement also becomes less specific. Your audience will have a harder time seeing your stance and why it’s original and significant.

In “*They Say/I Say*” Graff and Birkenstein have a fine model for the actual building off and diverging from: disagree—and explain why; agree—but with a difference; and agree and disagree simultaneously. It should be clear that you’re not simply agreeing or disagreeing for the sake of it. **BY EXPLAINING WHY YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE, YOU’RE ESSENTIALLY SHOWING HOW YOU’RE EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT A TOPIC.** The production of new knowledge begins with acknowledging what has been said before and recognizing that another author has a different but meaningful take on the same topic. You have to be careful when you disagree, then, because you don’t want to completely discredit your source because then it can no longer serve as a starting point. Remember validity: what makes the points in the essay valid regardless of your belief? You can disagree without invalidating an argument just as you can agree without simply repeating an argument. Invalidating an argument implies destroying the argument’s grounds, and I’d rather you scrutinize those very grounds and see their

limitations—and every argument is by nature limited. Language is often one limitation. An author may use terms to describe something that perhaps you don't agree with. But you need to think about *why* you disagree for this to serve as a point for engagement because there's more to an argument than just its terms.

Recognizing the validity of arguments keeps you aware of the author's overall argument, which in turn helps you to consider individual points as parts of a larger whole. Like close reading, you don't want to lose sight of the full text when concentrating on only a portion.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI

CONCLUSIONS

By the time you've reached the conclusions of your essay, you should have already demonstrated what you set out to demonstrate. You probably want to refer back to your claim and briefly describe the intent of your argument again (your issue and point of view), but do so without simply repeating yourself. So, while some would say that your conclusion basically restates your introduction, keep in mind that the purpose of such a restatement is not to be redundant but to show that your argument achieved what it set out to achieve.

Because you have demonstrated your framed argument, in your conclusions you can take a small step back from your frame and comment on the argument itself. Usually you situate your argument in the "larger picture," that is, you discuss your argument's **significance** or **place your argument into a broader context**. These two are not really two distinct options, since one involves the other, and vice versa.

SIGNIFICANCE is the "so what?" of your argument: why your argument matters, or what new understanding your argument arrives at. Significance usually entails showing how your argument is original and relevant, or how it is a valid and meaningful contribution to your readers' preexisting knowledge. Ideally, your argument should be hinting at its significance all along, but your conclusions serve as a convenient place to state the significance of your argument more explicitly, to make sure your readers conclude by noting your argument's importance.

PLACING YOUR ARGUMENT INTO A BROADER CONTEXT means to position your argument among other arguments or points of view. In other words, what does the understanding you arrive at imply for issues outside of your argument's frame? A solid conclusion avoids bringing up new material, so if you zoom out from your frame, you must be careful not to bring up unrelated topics. In a sense, placing your argument into a broader context *is* transitioning to generalities, and all generalities must be warranted by previous specific statements. What you've proven in the body of your essay becomes what backs up your generalities in the conclusions, so any general statements must seem *plausible* to your reader after having read your argument.

Any conclusion should give your reader a sense that the paper is at its end. You should have accomplished what you set out to do and covered the issues that the reader expected you to cover based on the framing of your argument. Your final statements should signal that you've reached the end of *your argument* and not that you've exhausted the topic.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION

E=Excellent; VG=Very Good; G=Good; F=Fair; P=Poor; VP=Very Poor

	Respondents	PERCENTAGES ¹						MEDIAN	Adjusted Median
		E (5)	VG (4)	G (3)	F (2)	P (1)	VP (0)		
1. The course as a whole was:	16	6	44	25	25			3.5	3.8
2. The course content was:	16	19	12	69				3.2	3.6
3. The instructor's contribution to the course was:	16	44	25	25	6			4.3	4.4
4. The instructor's effectiveness in teaching the subj. matter was:	16	38	31	12	19			4.1	4.3
COMBINED ITEMS 1-4	64	27	28	33	12			3.7	3.9
Relative Rank									
5. Opportunity for practicing what was learned was:	16	19	31	50				3.5	8
6. Sequential development of skills was:	16	31	25	31	12			3.8	2
7. Explanation of underlying rationales for new techniques or skills were:	16	19	25	38	19			3.3	12
8. Demonstrations of expected skills were:	15	20	27	33	20			3.4	11
9. Instructor's confidence in students' ability was:	16	25	31	19	19	6		3.7	8
10. Recognition of student progress by instructor was:	16	12	50	19	19			3.8	4
11. Student confidence in instructor's knowledge was:	16	27	38	12	6			4.3	6
12. Freedom allowed students to develop own skills and ideas was:	14	21	29	29	14	7		3.5	10
13. Instructor's ability to deal with student difficulties was:	16	27	40	20	13			3.9	7
14. Tailoring of instruction to varying student skill levels was:	15	13	27	27	27	7		3.1	14
15. Availability of extra help when needed was:	15	13	60	20	7			3.9	7
16. Use of class time was:	16	12	31	56				3.4	13
17. Instructor's interest in whether students learned was:	15	33	40	27				4.1	5
18. Amount you learned in the course was:	15	27	40	27	7			3.9	3
19. Relevance and usefulness of course content were:	16	19	19	50	12			3.3	18
20. Evaluative and grading techniques (tests, papers, etc.) were:	16	12	25	44	19			3.2	16
21. Reasonableness of assigned work was:	16	6	38	25	25	6		3.3	15
22. Clarity of student responsibilities and requirements was:	16	19	25	31	19	6		3.3	17
Relative to other college courses you have taken:									
		Much Higher (7)	Average (6)	Average (5)	Average (4)	Average (3)	Much Lower (2) (1)		
23. Do you expect your grade in this course to be:	16		25	25	50			4.5	
24. The intellectual challenge presented was:	16		38	25	31	6		5.0	
25. The amount of effort you put into this course was:	16		12	25	31	25	6	5.1	
26. The amount of effort to succeed in this course was:	16		12	25	38	19	6	5.2	
27. Your involvement in course (assignments, attendance, etc.) was:	16		25	31	19	25		5.7	

28. On average, how many hours per week have you spent on this course?

Percent

Under 2	
2-3	12
4-5	19
6-7	31
8-9	12
10-11	12
12-13	12
14-15	12
16-17	12
18-19	
20-21	
22 or more	
Respondents:	16
Class median:	8.7
Hours per credit:	1.74

29. From the total average hours spent, how many do you consider were valuable in advancing your education?

Percent

Under 2	
2-3	25
4-5	12
6-7	38
8-9	
10-11	12
12-13	6
14-15	
16-17	6
18-19	
20-21	
22 or more	
Respondents:	16
Class median:	6.2
Hours per credit:	1.23

30. What grade do you expect in this course?

Percent

6 A (3.9-4.0)	
56 A- (3.5-3.8)	
25 B+ (3.2-3.4)	
6 B (2.9-3.1)	
6 B- (2.5-2.8)	
C+ (2.2-2.4)	
C (1.9-2.1)	
C- (1.5-2.1)	
D+ (1.2-1.4)	
D (0.9-1.1)	
D- (0.7-0.8)	
E (0.0)	
Pass	
Credit	
No Credit	
Respondents:	16
Class median:	3.5

31. In regard to your academic program, is this course best described as:

Percent

7 In your major	
27 A distribution requirement	
An elective	
In your minor	
67 A program requirement	
Other	

Challenge and Engagement Index

CEI = 4 (decile rank)

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI
COURSE EVALUATION: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

What is your intended major?

Business School - either Finance or accounting

Why did you take this particular class and section?

I took Engl 111 because it is a required pre req. I took this section because I liked the 2 hr. Block and its close to where I stay.

Did you find that the course expectations were adequately and accurately outlined at the start of the course? Why/why not?

Yes. It is apparent that Vechinski is very organized and prepared. The reason it was accurately and adequately outlined is because he had a class website!

↳ Cool feature

How successfully did this class teach you skills (e.g., close reading) and concepts (e.g., authority) that you can use in the future regardless of your intended field of study?

Very successful. I found this once-dreaded course to become my favorite because it exposed the monster that is writing to be manageable.

Were the expectations for each essay assignment adequately explained? Did the comments I provided help you to assess your writing skills? Explain your answer.

yes. one of my fav. things about this course was how everything was organized clearly and laid out to be available for us all.

You could explain better by having Legible handwriting.

I tried to integrate different forms of discussion and instruction throughout the quarter. Which forms were effective? Which didn't work so well? Why?

Some students did not participate much in class or online. Why have you participated or chosen not to participate? What can I do to increase the sense of community in the classroom?

Ran out of time.
Just keep up the good
work and continue to treat
us as peers - it is
respectful.

Did you find group work beneficial? Was it an asset or a detriment to work with the same group most of the quarter? Why/why not?

What did you think of the online resources used in this class, namely the computer classroom and blogs? Explain why they were/weren't useful to you.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI

COURSE EVALUATION: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

What is your intended major? Honestly, I am unsure.

Why did you take this particular class and section?

I had to take a engl. class, yet I read your course description, & chose this class because of it. (More lit, less

Did you find that the course expectations were adequately and accurately outlined at the start of the course? Why/why not? ^{like/dislike}

Yes, you are very, very good at making everything clear, & easily outlined.

How successfully did this class teach you skills (e.g., close reading) and concepts (e.g., authority) that you can use in the future regardless of your intended field of study?

Really well actually. They say / I say is great. Course book helped a lot too. PPT's are a must.

Were the expectations for each essay assignment adequately explained? Did the comments I provided help you to assess your writing skills? Explain your answer.

Yes, ~~if~~ I have no complaints

I tried to integrate different forms of discussion and instruction throughout the quarter

Which forms were effective? Which didn't work so well? Why?

The best was when you went off of blog posts.
As students we "had" to talk, & also, knew
what to say in response to questions.

BAD - random discussions (silly I'm ~~was~~ being vague.

Some students did not participate much in class or online. Why have you participated or chosen not to participate? What can I do to increase the sense of community in the classroom?

Nothing, it seemed that you did your best, ?
Maybe more blogs, but then what if they don't blog.

Did you find group work beneficial? Was it an asset or a detriment to work with the same group most of the quarter? Why/why not?

Yes, the group work was perfect. For myself
I needed the help & other ideas to
get a great paper.

What did you think of the online resources used in this class, namely the computer classroom and blogs? Explain why they were/weren't useful to you.

A way of the future, & great combination
for engl.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI

COURSE EVALUATION: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

What is your intended major?

Political Science / English

Why did you take this particular class and section?

I needed a composition class, and this worked w/ my schedule.

Did you find that the course expectations were adequately and accurately outlined at the start of the course? Why/why not?

Yes, the course reader did a good job at doing that.

How successfully did this class teach you skills (e.g., close reading) and concepts (e.g., authority) that you can use in the future regardless of your intended field of study?

Close reading is the biggest idea that I will take away and use in the future. I have a firm grasp on the idea and I think it will help greatly in my future.

Were the expectations for each essay assignment adequately explained? Did the comments I provided help you to assess your writing skills? Explain your answer.

yes, the expectations were clear most of the time.

However, sometimes I had no idea what to do because I didn't have an example to work with, or any idea of what was expected.

I tried to integrate different forms of discussion and instruction throughout the quarter. Which forms were effective? Which didn't work so well? Why?

The effective forms of discussion were when we blogged, and then talked about them in class. The ineffective types were just discussions in class on the book, because they became dominated by just a few people.

Some students did not participate much in class or online. Why have you participated or chosen not to participate? What can I do to increase the sense of community in the classroom?

I chose to participate because it affected my grade.

I think that is incentive enough.

Did you find group work beneficial? Was it an asset or a detriment to work with the same group most of the quarter? Why/why not?

I really liked the group work, however ~~it didn't~~ the same group becomes too repetitive. No one really contributed anything new, so it was the same over and over again.

What did you think of the online resources used in this class, namely the computer classroom and blogs? Explain why they were/weren't useful to you.

I really liked the blogs, just keep on giving reminders if we have to post or not.

COURSE EVALUATION: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

What is your intended major? Business Administration / Marketing

Why did you take this particular class and section?

My roommate took a computer integrated III course and recommended it to me, and this one fit my schedule.

Did you find that the course expectations were adequately and accurately outlined at the start of the course? Why/why not?

Yes They were, from the beginning the instructor outlined what we would be doing and would be expected to do in the course.

How successfully did this class teach you skills (e.g., close reading) and concepts (e.g., authority) that you can use in the future regardless of your intended field of study?

It taught me good skills and concepts, especially the concepts of validity and authority, which I was previously unfamiliar with. These will help in any course because they are necessary in arguments and they relate well to other topics.

Were the expectations for each essay assignment adequately explained? Did the comments I provided help you to assess your writing skills? Explain your answer.

Yes, because comments were helpful in showing what we needed to fix.

I tried to integrate different forms of discussion and instruction throughout the quarter. Which forms were effective? Which didn't work so well? Why?

Some students did not participate much in class or online. Why have you participated or chosen not to participate? What can I do to increase the sense of community in the classroom? To be honest I participated because I want to be successful in the class and get a good grade, and because the participation I did led to giving me a better understanding of the course. I thought there was a pretty good sense of community, so I don't think you need to work on that at all.

Did you find group work beneficial? Was it an asset or a detriment to work with the same group most of the quarter? Why/why not?

I thought it was beneficial because it allowed us to see how people would write and that helped us be able to give them better feedback.

What did you think of the online resources used in this class, namely the computer classroom and blogs? Explain why they were/weren't useful to you.

The computer classroom was helpful because it gave us easy access to outside resources.

ENGLISH 111 N: VECHINSKI

COURSE EVALUATION: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

What is your intended major?

molecular + cellular Biology

Why did you take this particular class and section?

I needed english comp. credit, it worked with my schedule and I liked the description

Did you find that the course expectations were adequately and accurately outlined at the start of the course? Why/why not?

Yes, the expectations and assignments for the entire 10 weeks are posted day one

How successfully did this class teach you skills (e.g., close reading) and concepts (e.g., authority) that you can use in the future regardless of your intended field of study?

It helped me with authority and originality a lot.

Were the expectations for each essay assignment adequately explained? Did the comments I provided help you to assess your writing skills? Explain your answer.

Yes and yes, comments were greatly helpful in revising and usually about things I was struggling with.

I tried to integrate different forms of discussion and instruction throughout the quarter. Which forms were effective? Which didn't work so well? Why?

I think discussion is effective when people have done all the reading, sometimes it felt like none really had read and it was frustrating.

Some students did not participate much in class or online. Why have you participated or chosen not to participate? What can I do to increase the sense of community in the classroom?

I feel discussion and participation help further understand material, discussing and thinking about a book from different angles has always helped me understand it more. I think you do a fine job some people are just not doing the reading or don't want to speak up.

Did you find group work beneficial? Was it an asset or a detriment to work with the same group most of the quarter? Why/why not?

Group work helped, my comments on a paper help to revise it good or bad because you have to decide if the comment is true.

What did you think of the online resources used in this class, namely the computer classroom and blogs? Explain why they were/weren't useful to you.

Blogs were helpful but at first I didn't realize assignments would be announced there and almost missed one.