

## **University Studies 110: Critical Writing**

**Fall 2009**

**Instructor; Office**

**Email; Office Hours**

### **Required Texts**

Alfano, Christine L. and Alyssa J. O'Brien. *Envision in Depth: Reading, Writing, and Researching Arguments*. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2008.

Faigley, Lester. *The Little Penguin Handbook*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2009.

### **University Studies Program Overview**

University Studies is a bold, new approach to general education. Until now, general education utilized distribution requirements, which asked students to choose fairly randomly among a list of introductory courses in the humanities, social and natural sciences. Exposing students to a wide variety of subject matter and critical approaches was the primary objective of this educational tradition. Thus, little attention was paid to the ways students might synthesize or profit from the learning objectives and outcomes of different disciplines. As a result, students proceeded into their major studies with few identifiable skills and abilities gleaned from their general education experience. University Studies was conceived to redress these problems.

The rationale for an interdisciplinary approach to general education stems from the acknowledged complexities of the contemporary world. The problems facing modern humanity are rarely if ever understood using the perspectives and tools of a single discipline. Given that, University Studies maintains that critical thinking, logic, writing, humanistic and artistic inquiry, as well as the social and natural sciences are best understood via interdisciplinary methods. Indeed many interdisciplinary fields, such as African American Studies, Science and Technology Studies, Cultural Studies, and Women's Studies developed due to either the unwillingness or the inability of the traditional disciplines to address the issues posed in these bodies of scholarship.

All University Studies [UNST] courses are interdisciplinary. This means that they combine the intellectual methods and subject matter from a variety of disciplines in order to help students learn critical thinking and problem solving. UNST courses are interconnected in such a manner that they can guarantee that a student will be exposed to specified learning objectives that address real-life concerns. During the first year, students will learn skills for critical engagement; during the second and third years, students will apply these newly honed skills in theme-based courses; in the senior year, students will exercise the skills and knowledge they have gained in a capstone experience and service-learning activity. If undertaken seriously and with intentionality, UNST students can expect to emerge with a set of useful intellectual tools that will allow them to engage effectively a dynamic and complex world.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic honesty is absolutely essential. Cheating, plagiarism, sharing of clickers or other academic misconduct will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating, you will not pass this course and will be subject to any and all penalties specified in the student honor code.

### **University Studies Attendance Policy**

University Studies strives to professionalize its students; therefore, regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in all UNST courses. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Tardiness will not be tolerated. Absent or tardy students are responsible for any missed class work, including changes to the syllabus or assignments announced in class. In short, absences and tardiness can/will diminish your grade. If you suffer prolonged illness or misfortune, you should consider dropping the course. Persistent

tardiness and failure to observe established classroom etiquette will lead to failure of the course. Student athletes must submit a schedule of days they will be absent within the first week of classes.

Students will automatically receive an “F” for missing beyond the equivalent of two weeks of class:

- M, W, F Schedule: Six (6) unexcused absences
- T, R Schedule: Four (4) unexcused absences
- 1-Class Per Week Schedule: Two (2) unexcused absences

At half the allotted absences (three [3] absences for M, W, F schedule; two [2] for T, R schedule; and one [1] for 1-class per week schedule), students are required to meet with their instructor(s) for a mandatory one-on-one conference concerning his/her performance in class.

Absence or tardiness is only excused for emergency situations. Students are responsible for submitting acceptable documentation for the excused absence within one week of the absence. Examples of acceptable documentation include the following:

- Written doctor’s note specifically requesting an excused absence (with the specific time and date on the notification)
- Obituary or service notice
- An official written summons to court

### Course Materials

**Books:** Serious scholarship requires procurement of essential course materials. Students will purchase all books and materials required for UNST courses within the first two weeks of the semester. Sharing of books thereafter is prohibited.

**Stapler :** All students should own one. They are not expensive. Most can be purchased for around six dollars and should last you for your entire college career.

### Educational Etiquette

Students will demonstrate collegial respect for their professors and peers. Any behavior that distracts or is disrespectful – eating, talking while others are talking, inattention, personal attacks, or studying for other courses during class – is unacceptable. Differences of opinion should be met with curiosity and intellectual rigor rather than insult. There will be no eating or drinking in class (other than bottled water).

**All cell phones, pagers, and personal communication devices must be turned off for the duration of the class period. Bluetooth cell phones must be removed from the ear during class. Students who fail to comply with this rule will be asked to leave the class and will be marked absent. If students refuse to leave when requested, campus security will be asked to escort them from the classroom.**

Success in this course depends on the development of scholarly and collegial habits. Active participation in discussion and group work is mandatory. Collegial responsibility and respect are also expected.

### Email Policy

Instructors will reply to student email within 48 hours, Monday through Friday. In order to insure a reply, students must use NCAT email accounts and include student name (no nicknames, please), course number and section in the subject line. All messages must be conveyed using standard English.

### Turnitin.com

**All written assignments in UNST courses will be turned in electronically via Turnitin.com.** Access to this web site will be given to you by the instructor. Turnitin.com compares your writing with virtually

every reference that exists on the internet as well as a bank of student papers that has been submitted from all over the world. Its purpose is to help students learn the difference between proper citation and quotation of other authors' work and plagiarism (copying others writing without citation.) Students who do not own a PC will submit their work via one of the computer labs on campus. The URL for Turnitin.com is: <http://www.turnitin.com>. Create a user profile using the following information:

<b>class ID:</b>	
<b>password</b>	

### **Timely Submission of Work**

All assignments are due on the dates indicated in the syllabus. **No late work will be accepted.** Exceptions will be made only in cases of documented medical or family emergency or religious observance. Please notify your professor by email *before an assignment is due* should an acceptable absence occur. Employment, child care or other academic pressures do not constitute valid excuses for late work. There is no provision for additional papers or extra credit to make up for missed work.

### **Disabilities and Differences**

Students with documented learning disabilities or differences should identify themselves to their professor and present appropriate documentation during the first week of classes. No accommodations will be made later in the semester for students who do not self-identify at the beginning of the course.

Students who need developmental support should ask their professors for extra help or referral. All students should seek the support services of the Writing Center (A-309 GCB; 334-7764) and the Center for Student Success (312 Hodgin Hall; 334-7855).

### **Student-athletes (and other school group participants)**

Students participating in school athletics are held to the same attendance and performance expectations as non-athletes. Hence, they should coordinate their course schedules so that team practices and games do not conflict with class meetings and group work. Student-athletes should identify themselves to their instructors, submit a schedule of days they will miss class, and provide the name and contact information for their coach within the first week of classes. The University Studies Department will follow the Department of Athletics Class attendance policy:

1<sup>st</sup> Unexcused Absence: The student-athlete's coach will be notified.

2<sup>nd</sup> Unexcused Absence: Ms. Dee Todd, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics will be notified. The student athlete will be required to have a conference with Ms. Todd or her designee.

3<sup>rd</sup> Unexcused Absence: The student athlete will be suspended for one contest. If the student athlete is not currently in season, the suspension will apply to the following season.

4<sup>th</sup> Unexcused Absence: The student athlete's scholarship is subject to non-renewal.



## **UNST 110: Critical Writing Course Overview**

This course is designed to introduce students to critical thinking skills, including strategies for reading comprehension, writing processes, and writing strategies adaptable to multiple disciplines. Students will explore a course theme, problem, or issue from an interdisciplinary perspective in order to form intellectual skills required for dealing with complex, contemporary problems. Over the course of the semester, they will learn to find, evaluate, and use appropriate learning resources; demonstrate effective verbal and written communication skills; develop habits of self-assessment; work collaboratively in teams and small groups; and use knowledge and skills that foster an appreciation for life-long learning.

Students will produce both formal and informal writing assignments, some of which will be submitted electronically. Each student will complete a range of assignments that demonstrate intellectual development, skills acquisition, and habits of self-assessment.

### **UNST Learning Goals**

Critical Writing meets UNST goals 1,2,3,4, and 5.

#### **Communication**

- 1 Effectively use information technology to find, interpret, and evaluate, and use information discerningly
- 2 Effectively communicate in diverse settings and groups using written, oral, and visual means
- 3 Effectively employ critical thinking skills in written and oral communication
- 4 Effectively relate ideas and concepts, as well as modes of inquiry, across disciplines

#### **Analytical Reasoning**

- 5 Use analytical thinking skills to evaluate information critically

### **Critical Writing Course Objectives**

- **Critical Writing Skills:** Students will demonstrate proficiency in critical writing in various modes (description, analysis, argument, synthesis, reflection, etc.)
- **Critical Reading Skills:** Students will develop reading comprehension and demonstrate active reading skills
- **Communication:** Students will demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively and informatively (in writing, orally, and through visual materials)
- **Research:** Students will identify, evaluate, and secure information for course assignments
- **Technology:** Students will demonstrate competency in information technologies (Blackboard, Turnitin.com; Track Changes, Criterion, etc.)
- **Assessment:** Students will use revision, peer-editing, and the reflective essay to demonstrate habits of both self-assessment and summative assessment
- **Collaboration:** Students will demonstrate their ability to work collaboratively

### **Course Plagiarism and Revision Policy**

This course has a “three-strike” plagiarism policy:

- 1) In a first incident, the student will be properly notified and allowed to revise for a passing grade
- 2) A second incident will result in automatic failure of the assignment
- 3) A third incident will lead to automatic failure for course and possibly expulsion from the university

Plagiarism can take several forms, including failure to place direct quotations (i.e., three or more consecutive borrowed words) in quotation marks; failure to provide in-text citation of sources for quotations, summaries, or paraphrases; failure to document sources in a properly formatted Works Cited list; unacknowledged borrowing of any kind. In short, any use of another person’s writing or ideas under your name without proper acknowledgement, whether deliberate or accidental, is plagiarism. Recycling a paper – turning in work completed for another assignment or class – is also academic dishonesty.

*You are responsible for knowing and observing these rules.* If you have questions, consult a reliable authority, *not a fellow student*. Our textbook (CTRW) includes a guide for MLA documentation. You may also find MLA guidelines at most university Online Writing Labs (OWL’s), at *A Writer’s Reference* online, or through the NCA&T Writing Center. And you are always welcome to ask me for help.

All students have the option to revise any graded written assignment, with the exception of second- and third-strike plagiarism cases. A one-on-one conference with me is required before completing a revision; revisions from students who have not met with me will not be accepted.

### **Grade Distribution**

[Note: 30% of the Final Average in each section is left to the instructor's discretion. The items in brackets are examples from one instructor's syllabus of how that percentage may be distributed.]

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Basic Requirement</b>	<b>% of grade</b>
Reading Quizzes	5 quizzes	10
Analysis	3 pages	15
Presentation	5 minutes	10
Synthesis	5 pp. + Works Cited	20
Reflection	3	10
Peer Review Drafts (Analysis and Synthesis)	3 pp. and 5 pp.	5
[Source Annotations]	[3 sources]	[5]
[Informal Writing]	[TBA]	[15]
[Pre-/Post-Tests (No letter grade)]	[Complete Tests]	[5]
[Attendance, Participation, and Technology]	[n/a]	[5]

### **Course Schedule**

Schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Readings and writing assignments are due in class *on the dates where they appear*. Page numbers are in parentheses. Reading quizzes may be given on any day when reading assignments are due. CTRW= *Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing*; OPCC=*Oral Presentations in the Composition Course*; Bb=Blackboard; AWR=*A Writer's Reference*.

### **Monday-Wednesday-Friday Template**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Activities and Reading Assignments</b>	<b>Writing Assignments, Peer Reviews, &amp; Due Dates</b>
<b>Unit I: Learning Tools (17.5%)</b>		<b>[Cognitive Processes: Remember, Understand]</b>	
Week 1	M 8/17	<b>Course Introduction.</b>	
	W 8/19	<b>Critical Thinking Pre-Test (in class, scantron)</b>	<b>Critical Thinking Pre-Test</b>
	F 8/21		
Week 2	M 8/24		
	W 8/26		
	F 8/28	<b>Summary Peer Review</b>	<b>Summary Peer Review</b>
Week 3	M 8/31	<b>Summary Due</b>	<b>Summary Due</b>
	W 9/2		
	F 9/4		
Week 4	M 9/7	<b>Labor Day—No Classes</b>	
	W 9/9		
	F 9/11	<b>Analysis Peer Review</b>	<b>Analysis Peer Review</b>
Week 5	M 9/14	<b>Analysis Due</b>	<b>Analysis Due</b>

<b>Unit II: Practicing, Using, and Applying Tools (5%)</b>			
	W 9/16		
	F 9/18		
Week 6	M 9/21	<b>Presentation Topic/Research Question Due</b>	<b>Presentation Topic/Research Question Due</b>
	W 9/23	<b>Research Question-Prospectus Peer Review</b>	<b>Research Question-Prospectus Peer Review</b>
	F 9/25		
Week 7	M 9/28	<b>List of Sources Due</b>	<b>List of Sources Due</b>
	W 9/30	<b>Peer Review, Ranked List of Sources</b>	<b>Ranked List of Sources Peer Review</b>
	F 10/2	<b>Begin Annotations</b>	<b>Begin Annotations</b>
Week 8	M 10/5		
	W 10/7	<b>Annotations Peer Review</b>	<b>Annotations Peer Review</b>
	F 10/9	<b>Annotations Due</b>	<b>Annotations Due</b>
<b>Unit III: Demonstrating Skills with Tools (32.5%)</b>		<b>[Cognitive Processes: <i>Evaluate, Create</i>]</b>	
Week 9	M 10/12		
	W 10/14		
	F 10/16		
Week 10	M 10/19	<b>Fall Break – No Classes</b>	
	W 10/21		
	F 10/23		
Week 11	M 10/26		
	W 10/28		
	F 10/30		
Week 12	M 11/2		
	W 11/4	<b>Synthesis Peer Review</b>	<b>Synthesis Peer Review</b>
Week 13	M 11/9	<b>Synthesis Due</b>	<b>Synthesis Due</b>
	W 11/11	<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Start Presentations</b>
	F 11/13	<b>Presentations</b>	
Week 14	M 11/16	<b>Presentations</b>	
	W 11/18	<b>Presentations</b>	
<b>Unit IV: Reflection (10%)</b>			
	F 11/20	<b>Introduce Reflection Assignment</b>	
Week 15	M 11/23		
	W 11/25	<b>Thanksgiving Break – No Classes</b>	
	F 11/27	<b>Thanksgiving Break – No Classes</b>	
Week 16	M 11/30	<b>Critical Thinking Post-Test</b>	<b>Critical Thinking Post-Test</b>
	W 12/2	<b>Reflection Peer Review</b>	<b>Reflection Peer Review</b>
	F 12/4	<b>Last Day of Class - Reflection Due</b>	<b>Reflection Due</b>

## Tuesday-Thursday Template

Week	Date	Class Activities and Reading Assignments	Writing Assignments, Peer Reviews, & Due Dates
<b>Unit I: Learning Tools (17.5%)</b>		[Cognitive Processes: <i>Remember, Understand</i> ]	
Week 1	T 8/18	<b>Course Introduction.</b>	
	R 8/20	<b>Critical Thinking Pre-Test (in class, scantron)</b>	<b>Critical Thinking Pre-Test</b>
Week 2	T 8/25		
	R 8/27	<b>Summary Peer Review</b>	<b>Summary Peer Review</b>
Week 3	T 9/1	<b>Summary Due</b>	<b>Summary Due</b>
	R 9/3		
Week 4	T 9/8		
	R 9/10	<b>Analysis Peer Review</b>	<b>Analysis Peer Review</b>
<b>Unit II: Practicing, Using, and Applying Tools (5%)</b>		[Cognitive Processes: <i>Apply, Analyze</i> ]	
Week 5	T 9/15	<b>Analysis Due</b>	<b>Analysis Due</b>
	R 9/17		
Week 6	T 9/22	<b>Presentation Topic/Research Question Due</b>	<b>Presentation Topic/Research Question Due</b>
	R 9/24	<b>Research Question-Prospectus Peer Review</b>	<b>Research Question-Prospectus Peer Review</b>
Week 7	T 9/29	<b>List of Sources Due</b>	<b>List of Sources Due</b>
	R 10/1	<b>Peer Review, Ranked List of Sources; Begin Annotations</b>	<b>Ranked List of Sources Peer Review; Begin Annotations</b>
Week 8	T 10/6	<b>Annotations Peer Review</b>	<b>Annotations Peer Review</b>
	R 10/8	<b>Annotations Due</b>	<b>Annotations Due</b>
<b>Unit III: Demonstrating Skills with Tools (32.5%)</b>		[Cognitive Processes: <i>Evaluate, Create</i> ]	
Week 9	T 10/13		
	R 10/15		
Week 10	T 10/20	<b>Fall Break – No Classes</b>	
	R 10/22		
Week 11	T 10/27		
	R 10/29		
Week 12	T 11/3		
	R 11/5	<b>Synthesis Peer Review</b>	<b>Synthesis Peer Review</b>
Week 13	T 11/10	<b>Synthesis Due</b>	<b>Synthesis Due</b>
	R 11/12	<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Start Presentations</b>
Week 14	T 11/17	<b>Presentations</b>	
	R 11/19	<b>Presentations</b>	
<b>Unit IV: Reflection (10%)</b>			
Week 15	T 11/24	<b>Introduce Reflection Assignment</b>	
	R 11/26	<b>Thanksgiving Break – No Classes</b>	
Week 16	T 12/1	<b>Critical Thinking Post-Test; Reflection Peer Review</b>	<b>Critical Thinking Post-Test; Reflection Peer Review</b>
	R 12/3	<b>Last Day of Class - Reflection Due</b>	<b>Reflection Due</b>