FIRST-YEAR WRITING II

WRS 106
Cox Science 217
Mon./Wed. 3:35 –4:50 pm
Fall 2026
adamabraham.info

Dr. Adam Abraham
Office: Ferre Building 121
Hours: Tue./Thu. 5:00–6:00 pm
or by appointment
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"Words, English words, are full of echoes, of memories, of associations—naturally. They have been out and about, on people's lips, in their houses, in the streets, in the fields, for so many centuries."

—Virginia Woolf

"In many ways, writing is the act of saying I, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying *listen to me, see it my way, change your mind.*"

—Joan Didion

"Writing makes you more alive to your surroundings and, since the main ingredient of living, though you might not think so to look at most human beings, is to be alive, this is quite a worthwhile by-product of writing …."

—Ian Fleming

"A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking."

—Martin H. Fischer

The university says:

WRS 106 advances students' inquiry skills, guiding them in posing meaningful questions that intersect with their academic, professional, and/or personal interests. This course emphasizes the formation and exploration of research questions, the synthesis of multiple secondary sources, and the composition of research-based arguments. Building on humanist perspectives explored in WRS 105, the course challenges students to critically reflect on the cultural contexts of their research processes and findings. Students will continue to develop their rhetorical knowledge and learn to integrate multimodal composition and presentation skills.

REQUIRED READING:

All readings will be made available online. You will find them on the website adamabraham.info.

Each student will be required to purchase a Roaring Spring one-subject notebook (available at the Campus Store) for in-class writing exercises.

COURSE AIMS:

Rather than teach "how to write" (which may or may not be possible), the course will ask you to *study, learn, and think about* writing. These activities will occur in three forms:

WRITING as object
practice
reflection

Writing as object refers to the reading assignments that will comprise some of your homework. In all cases, read the texts carefully and critically. Be prepared to discuss in class. Writing as practice is, of course, the central aim of First-Year Writing II. You will develop strategies for planning, drafting, revising, and editing your work. Finally, writing as reflection asks that you comment on the work that you have completed and demonstrate awareness of the writing process.

RESEARCH ESSAY:

Over the semester, each student will choose one topic and write a substantial research essay, deploying a range of secondary sources. In the opening weeks of the semester, the student will devise a Difficult Question, which will become the semester-long project. This question must meet three criteria:

1. A question with no easy answer.
2. A topic for which academic research could provide possible answers.
3. A project that one undergraduate could reasonably undertake while completing other academic courses and engaging in other activities.

Topics may be drawn from the arts, business, economics, health, history, humanities, politics, social science, urban planning, etc. The topic may be related or unrelated to your major; it may be an area of long-standing interest; it may simply be something you want to learn more about.

Three topics are off the table—not because they are unworthy of study—but because the instructor of this course has read *too many essays* on these topics. Therefore, DO NOT write about the following:

- Is the Internet/technology/social media having a positive or negative impact?
- Should abortion be legal/illegal?
- What can or should humans do about the environment/climate change/global warming/carbon emissions/and so on?

The Research Essay will develop in three stages. First, students will brainstorm and pitch ideas, resulting in a Proposal. The instructor must approve the Proposal before the student can move forward. Second, students will engage in research (using print and online sources) to develop an understanding of current academic knowledge of the selected topic. This research will culminate in a Literature Review. Last, students will write the Research Essay, in multiple drafts, and reflect upon the work of the semester.

ASSESSMENT:

I. Attendance: 10 points
II. Preparation and participation: 10 points
III. Unannounced quizzes: 10 points
IV. One-paragraph essay: 10 points
V. Proposal: 10 points
VI. Literature review: 10 points
VII. Poster presentation: 10 points
VIII. Research essay: 30 points

TOTAL = 100 points

EXPECTATIONS:

Attendance

Marshall Brickman once told a reporter that 80 percent of success is showing up. In this course, attendance will count for 10 percent of your final grade. But attendance means more than just showing up. You must be fully *present*: awake, alert, attentive, engaged. Each student is permitted up to three *unexcused* absences. It's three for free, no questions asked. However, if you miss four classes, you will earn zero points for attendance. An *excused* absence is a university-sponsored event, a religious holiday, or a medical illness (not a routine doctor's visit). In these cases only, email the instructor with documentation. Any student who misses the equivalent of *three weeks of classes* (excused or unexcused) will be reported to the Director of First-Year Writing.

Preparation

One goal of this course is to get students to read and think critically. You should read each assigned text in its entirety before the class session listed. Be an *active* reader: underline words, scribble in the margins, write down questions, and make note of passages that you want to discuss.

Participation

We learn by articulating ideas and refining those ideas in conversation with others. Try to be a lively participant in each class discussion. Raise points, ask questions. Listen carefully and respectfully to what others are saying. It is okay to disagree with one another: disagreement does not mean disrespect. An important part this course will be a series of peer-review workshops in which you will exchange ideas with a fellow student. Your writing will be evaluated by the other student, and you will offer your insights in return.

Electronic Devices

Because paying attention is one of the goals of this course, I ask that all phones and electronic devices are turned off and placed out of sight. Students texting in class will be marked absent for that class meeting. If there is a genuine life crisis, please pretend that it is 1977 and that you have to go outside to use a payphone *before* texting or making that urgent call.

Quizzes

In order to assess that you are reading the assigned material and listening in class, there will be four unannounced quizzes over the semester. These will be rather easy if you have completed the assignments. I will drop the lowest score. Because the element of surprise is essential, you will *not* be able make up these quizzes under any circumstances.

In-Class Writing

Writing requires practice. To that end, there will be several in-class writing exercises. You will be asked to write these with a pen or pencil, in your Roaring Spring one-subject notebook (or its paper equivalent). *Do not* write these assignments in electronic form. From time to time, I may collect the pages. They will not be evaluated, scored, or annotated in any fashion.

Essay Submission

Students should be prepared to submit writing assignments electronically or in hard copy, as required. Rough drafts will need to be printed in *hard copy* for the process of in-class peer review. Handwritten essays are difficult to read. Please type all your drafts. Make plans to access a printer this semester.

Late Work

Because the assignments are scaffolded—one building toward another—late submission for one assignment may negatively impact the next. Rough drafts and first drafts will be accepted late *at the discretion of the instructor*. Ten percent of total available points will be deducted for each draft that is late. Any work submitted more than one week after the deadline may be marked without the benefit of comments and corrections. Final drafts will be accepted until the end of the semester. Note that any work submitted after 4 December will receive a score of zero.

Conferences

During two weeks, classes will be canceled so that we can hold one-on-one instructor-student conferences. These sessions will be held via Zoom. Each student will arrange a fifteen-minute meeting. The scheduled meeting time becomes the deadline for that draft. Any student who misses his or her session without sufficient notice will lose points on that assignment.

Learning Needs

You are welcome to schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss anything related to the course. If you require accommodation for a diagnosed disability, please notify me privately at the beginning of the semester.

Generative AI

Although this is a writing course, our primary goal is *thinking*. Therefore, do not use ChatGPT or similar tools to generate ideas, essays, or other outputs. For the most part, you will be graded on your process—not the final product. Because of this holistic grading system (to be explained), there is no reason to use AI. If you do what is asked, you will win *all available points*. Do not rob yourself of the experience of creating something new and letting your ideas flow.

Academic Integrity

It is the assumption that the work you present in this course will be your own. If you incorporate the words or ideas of any other source, then you must cite that person, text, or source. If you do not know how to cite sources, read chapter 14 of *The Chicago Manual of Style* or ask me for guidance. If you submit someone else's work as your own, you may be in violation of the Undergraduate Honor Code.

SCHEDULE:

Reading assignments must be completed by the start of the class period mentioned. Items marked with an infinity sign (∞) will be found on the website adamabraham.info.

AUGUST

Mon. 17 Introduction to the Course

Wed. 19 Writing Sentences

- Maddalena article ∞
- Lepore article ∞

Mon. 24 Writing Paragraphs

- Paragraphs (good) ∞

Wed. 26

- Paragraphs (bad) ∞

I. PROPOSING THE IDEA

Mon. 31 The One-Paragraph Essay

- Graff and Birkenstein, *"They Say/I Say,"* introduction ∞

SEPTEMBER

Wed. 2 Reading Analytically & Stylistics

- Reading Analytically ∞

Fri. 4 ••• **ONE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY** via email by 4:30 pm

Mon. 7 NO CLASS (Labor Day)

Wed. 9

- Wodehouse, "Jeeves and the Hard-Boiled Egg" ∞
- Awad, "The Chartreuse" ∞
- Spenser, Sonnet 75 ∞
- Wallace, "Ticket to the Fair" ∞

Mon. 14 Brainstorming & Planning

Wed. 16 Drafting in Class

- Bring Proposal work-in-progress

[SEPTEMBER cont'd]

Fri. 18 ••• **PROPOSAL** via email by 4:30 pm

II. RESEARCHING THE TOPIC

Mon. 21 Introduction to the Literature Review *&* The Art of Quotation
- Turan, "Garbo" ∞
- Graff and Birkenstein, *"They Say/I Say,"* chs. 1–3 ∞

Wed. 23 The History of Plagiarism

Mon. 28 Library Day (NOTE: Meet in Richter Library, take stairs or escalator to the third floor, go to the Digital Scholars' Lab, room 344)

Wed. 30 Online Databases
- Graff and Birkenstein, *"They Say/I Say,"* chs. 4–5 ∞

OCTOBER

Mon. 5 Citing Sources

Wed. 7 Note-Taking
- Graff and Birkenstein, *"They Say/I Say,"* chs. 6–7 ∞

Mon. 12 NO CLASS (Fall Break)

Wed. 14 NO CLASS (Fall Break)

Mon. 19 NO CLASS (Scheduled conferences)

Tue. 20 (Scheduled conferences)

Wed. 21 NO CLASS (Scheduled conferences)

Thu. 22 (Scheduled conferences)

[OCTOBER cont'd]

III. WRITING THE ESSAY

Mon. 26 Introduction to Poster Presentations & Commonly Mistaken Terms

Wed. 28 Finding Fault

- Feest, "Informal Fallacies" ∞

NOVEMBER

Mon. 2 ••• **POSTER PRESENTATIONS** Nos. 1–10

Wed. 4 ••• **POSTER PRESENTATIONS** Nos. 11–20

Mon. 9 The Semester in Retrospect & Drafting in Class

- Graff and Birkenstein, *"They Say/I Say,"* chs. 8, 10 ∞
- Bring Research Essay work-in-progress

Wed. 11 Peer Review

••• **RESEARCH ESSAY** ROUGH DRAFT in hard copy

Mon. 16 NO CLASS (Scheduled conferences)

Tue. 17 (Scheduled conferences)

Wed. 18 NO CLASS (Scheduled conferences)

Thu. 19 (Scheduled conferences)

Mon. 23 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Wed. 25 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Mon. 30 Reflecting on Writing (Final Class Meeting on ZOOM)

- Edmundson, "Who Are You and What Are You Doing Here?" ∞

DECEMBER

Fri. 4 ••• **RESEARCH ESSAY** FINAL DRAFT via email by 4:30 pm

UNIVERSITY BOILERPLATE:

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The University of Miami community recognizes integrity as a core institutional value. The Undergraduate Honor Code is based upon the Academic Integrity Policy which was approved by the Faculty Senate, the President of the University, and the Board of Trustees in 2019. To learn more and to access the honor code, visit the Student Affairs website: https://doso.studentaffairs.miami.edu/honor-council/honor-code/index.html.

DISABILITY SERVICES
The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is the primary university office responsible for the coordination of auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities. Please visit the website: https://camnercenter.miami.edu.

GRIEVANCES
If at any point in the semester you have questions or concerns about your grade or your standing in class, please speak to the instructor. However, according to the guidelines set by FERPA, the instructor cannot discuss grades via email, phone, or with parents or other parties. If you want to discuss grades or related concerns, please do so during office hours or schedule an appointment.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
Pursuant to the University's Policy on Inventions, Intellectual Property, and Technology Transfer, the instructor is the copyright owner of the courseware, including course syllabi, assignments, assessments, and/or other materials that are first created and made available to students as part of the educational curriculum at the University. Students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Students are expressly prohibited from entering any course materials into data harvesters, such as ChatGPT or other AI programs.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES
It is expected that First-Year Writing Students will be able to demonstrate effective written communication skills in relation to specific rhetorical tasks; construct original, well-reasoned arguments using a range of materials; integrate and synthesize appropriate and relevant primary and secondary sources in their writing.

WRITING CENTER
The Writing Center offers one-on-one assistance with all types of writing and reading tasks. The tutors can help at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to final revisions. They can also help clients rhetorically approach multimodal projects and navigate Generative Artificial Intelligence use ethically and appropriately. They serve the entire University of Miami community, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff. To make an appointment, please visit the Writing Center's website: https://miami.mywconline.com.