

Academic Year	AY2022/23
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Academic Units	2AUs
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Tutorial Hours	24
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COURSE AIMS

Writing is a tool for thinking. Through the process of organising our thoughts into words, we often stumble upon ideas and figure out what we mean. At its best, this process yields new insights. One of the aims of this course is to give you this experience of discovering ideas through the process of writing.

While you will have the opportunity to practise the genre conventions of your discipline later in your studies, this first common communication course is designed to help you form habits of thinking that will serve you across the university and even in the world outside the university. Taken by all first-year undergraduates, this foundational course will develop your written and oral communication skills, as well as your ability to read and analyse texts. It will help you to understand revision as integral to the process of composition, to convey your interpretations and ideas with confidence and clarity, and to consider audience and purpose when you communicate.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. closely observe and analyse texts and phenomena;
2. design questions or puzzles from engagement with a text that can motivate further exploration;
3. summarise, paraphrase, and quote from sources accurately and ethically;
4. compose complex arguments that build on the ideas of published authors as well as their own analysis and thinking;
5. express their ideas orally through both informal and formal presentations;
6. discover writing as a tool for thinking;
7. use peer and teacher feedback to revise their thinking and communication;
8. recognize audience and rhetorical situation as significant factors in communication.

COURSE CONTENT

In this course, students will be asked to explore a topic for their own research. The choices are:

1. a place in Singapore;
2. a community within Singapore;
3. their own writing practices.

Students will investigate their chosen topic by close observation, recording their observations, and finding interesting patterns or puzzles in what they observe. In class, students will practice how to come to a question to which they do not have an answer, and, after a review of presentation skills, students will present their discoveries to the class. Eventually, students will be asked to find two sources that can help them compose an argument that responds to their question. The final goal is to draft an op-ed (short for “opposite the editorial page”), a piece of writing usually found in a newspaper or magazine that expresses the author’s argument on a current topic. Students’ op-eds will be peer workshopped and revised substantially over two to three weeks. Students will also consult with their teacher and receive individual feedback on their draft. By the end of the semester, students will consider how to send their op-ed to a newspaper or online platform.

REFERENCES

1. Klein, P.D., & Boscolo, P. (2016). Trends in research on writing as a learning activity. *Journal of Writing Research*, 7(3), 311–350. doi: 10.17239/jowr-2016.07.03.01
2. Menary, R. (2007). Writing as thinking. *Language Sciences*, 29 (5), 621–632. doi:10.1016/j.langsci.2007.01.005
3. Miller, R. E., & Jurecic, A. (2016). *Habits of the Creative Mind*. Bedford/St. Martin's.
4. Reis, R. (n.d.). Developing students' thinking by writing [Website]. Retrieved March 30, 2020 from <https://tomprof.stanford.edu/posting/1472>

