

HW0111

Communication: A Journey of Inquiry through Writing and Speech

Academic year : Year 1, Sem 1 and 2

Academic units : 2 AUs

Pre-requisite : Nil

Tutorial hours : 24

COURSE AIMS

Researchers agree that writing is a tool for thinking (Menary, 2007; Klein & Boscolo, 2016; Miller and Jurecic, 2016; Reis, n.d.). As Reis explains, “The bodily act of writing externalizes our thoughts, and the imposed structure (the written word) provides a vehicle by which those thoughts may be reorganized into new thinking, a new way of seeing the thoughts or a new way of organizing thoughts.” Miller and Jurecic similarly argue that “writers discover what they think not before they write but in the act of writing” (2016, p. 60). One of the main aims of this course is to allow students to experience writing as a tool for thinking and to practice expressing ideas in formal writing and oral communication.

While students will have the opportunity to understand and practice the genre conventions that are specific to their discipline later in their studies, this first common communication course is designed to help students form habits of mind that will serve them across the university and in the world outside of the university. Taken by all first-year undergraduates, this foundational course will develop students’ written and oral communication skills, as well as their ability to read and analyze texts. It will help students to understand revision as integral to the process of composition, to convey their ideas with confidence and clarity, and to consider audience and purpose when communicating.

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. your 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. This question will become the motivation for students’ later writing in the course. Eventually, students will be asked to find two sources that can help them compose a response to their question. The final goal will be 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-ed 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 send their op-ed to a newspaper or online platform.

In addition to the above, weekly readings will expose students to ideas in a variety of disciplines. With a partner, students will present on one of these course readings and lead class discussion once during the semester. In their presentation and discussion, students will be asked to convey the essential arguments and ideas of the text

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and to explain HOW this writer writes. In other words, how does this writer persuade you or get you thinking? Does she or he use anecdotes or a powerful metaphor? Is the writer too one-sided and thus lose credibility?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Tutorial topics	Reading/Activities
1	No tutorial	-
2	Practice how to close read and respond to texts; Introduce goals of course	-
3	Practice how to gather data and analyze <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a place in Singapore; 2. a community in Singapore; 3. your own writing practices. 	Choose your topic and conduct your research <i>Pair Presentation 1</i>
4	Peer workshop of blog; practice moving from observations to a question, problem or puzzle worth researching	Blog Due: Write up of your observations and analysis of your chosen primary text (place, community, self as writer) <i>Pair Presentation 2</i>
5	Presentations Skills	<i>Pair Presentation 3</i>
6	Individual Presentations, 5 minutes with Q&A	Assignment 1 Due: Upload presentations slides
7	Individual Presentations, 5 minutes with Q&A How to find reputable sources	Assignment 2 Due: Observation to a Question

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Week	Tutorial topics	Reading/Activities
8	Practicing how to summarize, paraphrase, quote, and cite ethically; lesson on APA	Blog Due: Summarize the arguments of 2 sources that can help you respond to your research question; explain how each relates to your question <i>Pair Presentation 4</i>
9	Practice putting texts into conversation and forming an argument	<i>Pair Presentation 5</i>
10	Peer workshop	First Draft Due *consultations <i>Pair Presentation 6</i>
11	Face to face consultations; no tutorial	Second Draft Due *consultations
12	3 Minute Thesis Contest	*consultations <i>Pair Presentations 7 & 8</i>
13	Find a newspaper/website to send your op-ed to. What edits need to be done to Assignment 3 to fit this audience?	Assignment 3 Due: Op-ed Length: 1000-1200 words <i>Pair Presentations 9 & 10</i>

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

There is no end-of-semester examination for this course, students will be assessed by 100% continuous assessment based on the following components.

Assessment	Weighting
Assignment 1 Students will present a 5-minute presentation with slides that explain Assignment 2.	20%
Assignment 2 500-word observation and analysis that leads to a question. Students will pick a place, community, or their own writing practices as an object of study and write up their close observations and analysis. This analysis will lead to a question or puzzle that needs to be researched.	20%

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Assessment

Weighting

Assignment 3

40%

1000-1200 word op-ed that cites from at least 2 sources and uses a multi-model element. Students will build on Assignment 1, explaining their observations and analysis, puzzle or question, and then argument that responds to their question. This argument should be capacious and multifaceted, building on the ideas of cited sources and the student's analysis and thinking on the topic. Ideally, texts should be put into conversation and connected to form new threads of thought.

Class participation

20%

Teachers will note the quality of peer workshopping, 2 blogs, three-minute thesis, weekly class discussion and preparedness, and editing of Assignment 2 for publication. Students will also be assessed on their paired presentation, where they critique a text and lead class discussion. Students will be given a partner at the start of the semester and assigned a specific text and date.

TEXTBOOKS/REFERENCES

A coursebook will be provided through NTULearn Course Mainsite.

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. *Habits of the Creative Mind*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016.
4. Reis, R. (n.d.). Developing Students' Thinking by Writing [Website]. Retrieved March 30, 2020 from <https://tomprof.stanford.edu/posting/1472>