Chapter 3

**DESIGNING THE ASSIGNMENTS &**

**DESIGNING THE COURSE**

Designing Assignment Sequences 57

Principles of Sequence Design 59

Designing the Course 61

Sample Course Descriptions 61

Sample Assignment Sequences 63

Potential Assignments 93

Activities, Outcomes, & the Textbook 97

As discussed in the previous chapter, the English 131 curriculum is focused around the course outcomes, which articulate the goals of the course and the expectations for the final portfolio submitted by the students. These outcomes are also designed to help you generate and evaluate student writing. As discussed in Chapter 2, a driving principle of these outcomes is an approach to writing as situated, inquiry-based and generative. In other words, the course learning goals foster writing that helps students develop and hone thinking as well as writing that leads to new and increasingly complex discoveries that emerge from ongoing conversations and pressing exigencies in various contexts. We believe these writing and thinking habits are integral to our students’ success at the University of Washington and beyond; our 131 assignments and course design deliberately support this trajectory.

This chapter will focus on assignment and course design based on the educational principle of **scaffolding**, which views successful learning as a breakdown of tasks or skills into manageable yet increasingly complex stages that build on one another. Another way to understand the concept of scaffolding is as the skeletal structure that imparts and supports the learning objectives you have for your course. If you ultimately want students to write a complex claim that has emerged from a line of inquiry, for example, there will need to have been a number of preceding assignments guiding students through the inquiry process in a way that continually complicates and adds new dimensions to their previous understanding of a topic. Or, if you want students to synthesize complex texts, they will need first to understand those texts in isolation—through summary and rhetorical analysis—before bringing them together to form an intertextual argument.

Scaffolding is built into 131 through the basic structure of assignment sequencing and portfolio assessment (please see Chapter 9 of this manual for more on portfolios and Chapter 6 for more on the pathways, which offer two different approaches to sequencing). 131 consists of three assignment sequences. The first two longer sequences, typically four weeks each, consist of two to four short assignments and one longer assignment each, with each sequence generally drawing on a reading or a cluster of readings from the course textbook. Both the short and the long assignments in each sequence target the learning expectations outlined in the outcomes, and each should provide students with an opportunity to practice one or more of these traits in a way that builds as the quarter progresses. Throughout the quarter, instructors are also encouraged to highlight which trait(s) of the outcomes are accomplished by particular assignments. This transparency will allow students to take a more active role in scaffolding their own skills while also preparing them to think metacognitively about the work they are doing.

During approximately the last two weeks of the quarter, having completed two sequences, students will work on a final portfolio sequence. Here, students select three to five of their shorter assignments and one of their major assignments that they will use collectively to demonstrate their ability to meet the course outcomes. The selection process that guides this final sequence teaches students to self-assess their writing (one of the learning goals listed in Outcome 1). Along with selecting and revising papers, the portfolio also requires students to write a critical reflection, which is at the heart of the final two-week sequence. This reflection, generally three single-spaced pages of text, should argue for how the selected assignments demonstrate the four main learning outcomes for the course. This metacognitive practice—demonstrating one’s own writing awareness—can only happen if students have consistently worked with the outcomes throughout the quarter and are then asked to focus attention on their own writing practices now they have their own “evidence” to work with. Although students will need to have sufficient exposure to and practice with the course goals, there is no set way to incorporate these outcomes into your assignments and sequences. You might consider targeting a few outcomes per assignment, or you might want to designate a set of outcomes for each sequence. No matter how you decide to scaffold the learning goals, experience has shown that students’ success in the course (ultimately marked by their ability to knowledgably and critically discuss their own writing habits and strategies) heavily depends on their being given opportunities to practice and reflect on these outcomes as they work through stages of your assignment sequences.

When scaffolding each sequence, it’s often a good idea to work backwards. Start with what you want students to learn and accomplish in the final longer assignment of the sequence and then design a series of steps or stages that simultaneously ask students to perform tasks that build toward the final project while practicing various traits from the course outcomes. Although working backwards may seem counterintuitive, it allows you to identify all the reading and writing tasks that are embedded in the end assignment so that you can explicitly teach those tasks throughout the sequence. It is common for instructors to feel frustrated with students who can’t seem to write the major assignments that their prompts call for, but this is often the result of the student having not recognized the hidden literacy tasks they must have already accomplished in order to successfully complete the assignment. As an instructor, you can never fully teach all the reading and writing skills that all students need in order to successfully complete the assignment, but there are a number of key literacy tasks that you can usually count on most students not being familiar with. **Students are likely to need explicit instruction in some or all of the following areas (note that these are only some of the areas in which students will need instruction):**

* building and complicating their claims, and differentiating those claims from the traditional high school thesis statement (Specifically, students are usually much more adept at describing or comparing and contrasting than they are at developing an argument. In the next chapter, strategies for teaching argument will be discussed in much greater detail.)
* analyzing, synthesizing, and arguing
* applying key terms from one context to another less familiar one
* close/critical/rhetorical reading that connects texts to historical, cultural, or situational context
* recognizing and evaluating assumptions
* reasoning in college contexts—for example, what “counts” as evidence
* returning to their claims throughout their papers, rather than just at the beginning and end
* organizing beyond the limited two-page papers most of them have written
* recognizing where explicit organizational structures are desirable and where they are not
* becoming attentive to the differences in disciplinary approaches (i.e., the disciplinary assumptions of one article may not be the same as another article)
* sustaining focus on the complex dynamics of rhetorical situation—particular audience expectations and genre conventions—as they write increasingly difficult arguments
* revising beyond surface level error correction
* identifying the stakes for why writing matters in a given context—particularly an academic context
* critical reflection on their own writing (Specifically, students often need substantial practice talking about why and how they employed certain strategies and conventions in a given situation.)

Most often, the tasks for which students need explicit instruction are the same tasks that make up the learning objectives in the EWP Outcomes: rhetorical awareness, analysis of primary and secondary evidence, synthesizing readings, creating an intertextual “conversation” between readings and their own ideas, understanding when and why writing matters in a given context, developing claims that emerge through inquiry and take counterarguments into consideration, and developing transferable revision strategies. For a more detailed explanation of specific types of assignments that target these goals while helping students practice various literacy tasks, please refer to the final pages of this chapter.

Because the ultimate goal of our course is to help students develop an awareness of when and how to deploy certain writing strategies, it is important to be as deliberate as possible when designing assignments. Assignment sequencing not only allows you to scaffold learning objectives for your students so that they learn new skills in stages, but it also allows for explicit explanation and practice of tasks, thereby breaking down expectations as assignments build towards a longer project. Clearly, this is helpful for students as they can know what is required of them, but the explicit breakdown of assignments is also quite helpful for you as an instructor. For example, assignment prompts that explicitly describe such things as the genre, audience, source expectations, and outcomes targeted not only guide what you will teach the students prior to the assignment, but they also direct how you comment on and evaluate your students’ work. Explicit prompts can ease anxiety over lesson planning by setting boundaries for skills that need to be taught, and they can ease frustration when commenting on student papers by providing a rubric for what to comment on in the limited time you have set aside for doing so. **The following questions can be used to guide your assignment design:**

1. Why am I asking students to do this, and what do I hope they accomplish?
2. What are the various skills, information, and capacities students will need to complete the assignment? Which, among these, will I need to teach and introduce to students in the sequence and what might students already know?
3. What prior experiences do students need to have to prepare them for this task?
4. What will students do with these skills next, either in this course or in future professional and academic contexts?

# Designing Assignment Sequences

As you read in the previous section, each assignment within a sequence can be made to build on the tasks practiced in the preceding assignment. This type of sequence is sometimes called the *cumulative sequence design*, and these types of assignments generally move from simple to increasingly complex tasks. Generally, we encourage instructors of 131 to use the cumulative sequence because it provides the clearest (most explicit) trajectory for students and teachers to follow, though it is not the only way to scaffold assignments.

Another common type of sequence design is *the serial arrangement*; here, the short assignments all practice the various tasks that are called for in the longer assignment but they do not lead to the major assignment in a vertical or hierarchical way. Although the serial sequence can be successful (and may be attractive in that, in some ways, it allows for more “creative” assignments), it is much more difficult to negotiate how learning will build from assignment to assignment. Often, instructors who choose to construct serial sequences need to pay even more attention to explicitly teaching the needed skills during class. No matter what type of design you choose, you will still need to consider how each stage of your sequence will target one or more of the course outcomes while helping students practice the skills they will need to succeed in writing the major paper. It can be helpful to imagine your assignments broken down into stages; this may make the sequence more manageable during the design phase.

Sequence design can be tricky because while you are encouraged to work backwards from the major assignment in order to identify the literacy tasks that students will need to successfully complete the assignment, there are also useful tips for what to include/do in the early and intermediate phases of the sequence. We will briefly describe one process that previous 131 instructors have found helpful when designing a sequence. Please note that there are many ways to approach scaffolding and sequence design, but this general trajectory has proven helpful for instructors in the past:

1. Identify your main goal for the sequence, which will be accomplished in the final assignment of that sequence. That goal might be any of the following:
* researching using primary and secondary evidence and/or fieldwork
* analyzing a cultural artifact through a theoretical lens;
* producing a genre (children’s books, concert flyer, cookbook) and writing an argument paper that analyzes the ideologies supportive of that genre;
* composing a photo essay that combines images and text to create a coherent argument about identity, space, or other social constructs;
* understanding how a concept or theme changes depending on context, discipline, or line of inquiry; or
* using one’s own writing as evidence to argue for the successful completion of 131.
1. Most often, instructors identify a sequence’s learning goals while choosing their course readings. Working through these at the same time allows you to both settle on themes you find engaging while remaining mindful of the course outcomes. It also ensures that you are having students read materials to practice a specific literacy skill rather than just gaining content.
2. Begin to craft a major assignment that combines the desired readings with the desired learning goals you have for your sequence. Be sure to highlight all the outcomes that the paper calls for. If the students are writing an argument essay, it is guaranteed that they will be engaging in aspects of every outcome.
3. Close read your major assignment prompt and imagine what a successful student paper will actually look like. From there, identify the skills that are required to write it well. List these and relate them to the course outcomes.
4. Begin to craft the shorter assignments that will lead up to this longer one in relation to the list that resulted from your close read of the end assignment, and try to scaffold the tasks done in each assignment with ones practiced previously; the following guidelines for initial and intermediate design can help you come up with assignment types.
5. Be attentive to the amount of time you schedule in between each assignment. Perhaps the most common dilemma for first time TAs is time management. The quarter goes by quickly, and students’ lack of experience with these complex writing tasks may surprise you. Make sure to leave time for students to learn and practice the skills they need to fulfill your assignment. **Therefore, we recommend the “less is more” approach.** If, as the quarter progresses, you find that you haven’t planned enough, it’s easy to add elements to assignments or daily lessons.

Of course, this is only one process for developing effective sequences, and, like other writing you do, sequence design is a recursive process in which proficiency emerges from practice. We hope, however, that these steps will help you begin to develop a method for design that works best for you.

As you work backwards from your major assignment prompt, it is helpful to consider some general principles of sequence design. We will now provide some suggestions for working with early, middle, and later stages of a sequence. The key is that throughout the sequence you need to provide opportunities for students to learn the essential skills (rhetorical, argumentative, stylistic) necessary to complete each assignment in a way that builds on previous homework or in-class writings. For example, it isn’t enough to tell a student that he or she needs appropriate details in a reader response paper; you’ll need to provide explicit instruction demonstrating what that means.

# Principles of Sequence Design

Although there are no cut and dry ways to develop a sequence, there are a few principles that tend to help students as they move through their writing. We will now describe some general suggestions to consider during different times in the sequence. These have been broken down into early, middle, and later stages, and although they do not cover all the possible ways students tend to learn best, we have included some core practices that have long been used by successful writing teachers.

The **early stages** of an assignment sequence should allow ample time for introducing students to the designated course texts. They will need guidance and practice in reading and engaging with “texts,” which may include academic articles, literary pieces, public or academic spaces, rhetorical situations, visual imagery, everyday cultural artifacts, and so on. The strategies for critical reading described in *Writer/Thinker/Maker* are applicable to a number of reading occasions; here, the key is to explicitly teach the kinds of reading practices students will need to perform for this or later assignments. For example, asking a student to perform a rhetorical reading of an academic essay is much different than asking them to read and observe a public scene where texts circulate and organize people’s activity within that space. In both instances, a specific kind of reading is required, and this type of reading practice should both target one or more of the outcome traits *and* lay the groundwork for the work you want students to do in the intermediate stages.

While a number of assignments in the early stages of the writing sequence ask students to read and then react to or analyze a reading from the textbook, many teachers also like to begin sequences by engaging students’ personal beliefs and histories or by preceding abstract concepts from the reading with concrete, commonplace examples that the students can relate to. Both of these methods have proven useful and have a long history in the teaching of writing. Regardless of how you decide to start the sequence, by beginning with “reading” or by starting with your students’ experiences, the following questions may help as you design assignments for this beginning stage:

* What are your expectations about students’ prior reading experiences?
* How are you imagining those experiences as being situated both socially and culturally?
* How will you accommodate their relative lack of experience with academic reading, reading rhetorical situations, reading cultural artifacts, or reading images through a critical and analytical lens?
* How will you help students to advance their readings of the text before the intermediate writing assignments?
* How will you use the readings to support the goals of writing in the course?

Initial assignments can take a number of forms, as they provide an opportunity for students to practice skills necessary for later work. For example, if students are ultimately going to analyze the University Ave through the analytic of Mary Louise Pratt’s “contact zone,” they will need to have spent early assignments summarizing her essay and fleshing out this term in particular before using it as the theoretical framework for analyzing a new context.

During the **intermediate stages** of the sequence, students typically begin composing texts that will help them to develop an argument for their major assignment or to practice some of the more complicated thinking necessary for a successful academic paper. These middle parts of your sequence can be thought of as points of enrichment, moments at which the writing being done applies one concept to another, begins to examine multiple points of view, analyzes and evaluates evidence, etc. Enrichment here means making a complex claim as well as analyzing, synthesizing, and integrating new materials into short pieces of writing, which may include elements of primary and secondary research. It also means learning the key task of taking an idea from a text and applying it to a new situation—the single most common assignment type that students will be asked to complete in college classes, from the sciences and social sciences and in parts of the humanities. Students should be using the readings in this intermediate stage as well, not just extracting information from the texts, but distinguishing and evaluating the arguments made and then applying them to new texts, new materials, different audiences, and perhaps using different genres.

In addition to creating intersections between texts and helping students deepen the inquiry process, assignments in this intermediate stage might also ask students to think about the context in which texts are produced, ones they are reading or ones they are producing. You can provide students with guided experience in developing arguments, or analyzing evidence in a contextually bound way. For example, examining how a similar issue gets represented in different genres and for different audiences teaches students about the situatedness of writing and knowledge making, and ultimately helps them to understand their own writing as also existing with and being the product of cultural, historical, and rhetorical constraints.

In the **later stages** of the sequence, as you approach the major assignment, your shorter assignments can help students begin to develop complex arguments and articulate stakes. During this stage you might also turn your focus to self-editing, peer responses, and style and grammar. After there is a substantiated argument in place, and students have a solid grasp on their argument, it is useful to focus on rhetorical grammar and some error correction, as described in the EWP Pathways for Providing Feedback on Grammar Correctness (see Chapter 6 of the *Manual*). Putting too much emphasis on these elements before students have a complex argument that matters in academic contexts may stymie the thinking and writing process. Therefore, when and how we cue our students to error is important, and depends in part on our students’ needs, the number of drafts we have assigned, the degree to which the error interferes with our ability to assess our assignment’s targeted outcomes, and our philosophy as instructors. The two pathways described in Chapter 6 can help you decide how to handle grammar correction in the later stages of the sequences.

During this latter part of the sequence, you may also want to encourage students to revisit earlier assignments in order to reflect on what they’ve learned and what will be valuable for the major paper. This is also the point at which students are often asked to consider their peers’ and instructors’ responses to their work and to decide what needs to be addressed from their feedback. Many instructors build in-class time for discussing revision strategies and make revision an explicit part of the assignment. Most of our students have had some experience with “revising” papers, but their revisions may have amounted to nothing more than “fixing” spelling and grammatical errors while leaving substantive changes in reasoning, understanding of the issues, and structural change out of the process altogether. Research in revision suggests effective revision requires altering the task so that the writer “re-sees” the work. Therefore, during the later stages, you should continue to spend time teaching students how to read your comments (in the form of Writer’s Memos or Revision Plans—for more on evaluating and responding to student writing, see Chapter Eight of the *Manual*) and how to comment on their peers’ papers, both of which will ultimately lead to portfolio revisions that rethink the content of the paper rather than merely focusing on surface errors.

Hopefully, you will be able to make use of some or all of these suggestions as you design your sequence. But, even if these nuances are not integrated for you until later teaching quarters, one thing to remember when creating a sequence is that **if you want to see a particular aspect of writing appear in the student work, you will need to devote class time to teaching them how to produce it and a chance to practice it**  The following questions may help you as you think about connecting papers with daily lesson plans:

* What activities have I planned that directly support the students’ preparation of drafts?
* How have I coordinated the timing of peer readings with submission dates for drafts?
* What writing will students do in response to drafts that will help them, as the outcomes state, to “demonstrate substantial and successful revision” within their final copy? What flexible strategies will I help students develop for revising, editing, and proofreading writing?
* How will I maintain the focus on writing on days when the class works with the reading or research? Specifically, what in-class writing activities will I assign?
* How will I emphasize the ultimate importance of each of these activities?
* What activities will I include that involve student participation?

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# Designing the Course

Discussing the design of the entire course at this point may seem as if it comes in the wrong order, but typically instructors often find it easier to articulate their course design after working through some of the types of assignments they wish to employ. The most important question for you to answer is how your short assignments and two longer assignments are related and why they are ordered the way they are. Many instructors design their courses around a unifying theme. Others have chosen to work from accessible texts to more difficult texts, to use history as the organizing principle, or to choose writers and tasks from a variety of disciplines. Whatever organizing principle you choose, *all versions of the course should gradually increase the complexity of the writing tasks, with the most demanding tasks later in the quarter.* For example, given how many skills need to be both taught and practiced in order to conduct successful research, an academic research project might work much better in the second sequence than in the first.

## Making the Outcomes a Part of Your Course Design

It’s important to remember that your students need to hear, read, and respond to the language of the outcomes in some form throughout the quarter if they are to be expected to demonstrate and reflect on them in their final portfolios. There are two interrelated issues that make it tremendously helpful to introduce these goals early in the quarter: 1) students often feel frustrated that what has worked for them in high school doesn’t guarantee success here, 2) students often note that they “don’t know what you want” and interpret your responses to their writing as idiosyncratic, and 3) students are not getting letter grades throughout the quarter, so they are anxious about what to focus on in their writing. You can use discussions of the learning outcomes in a number of ways to avert and respond to these concerns:

* **As a means of communicating to your students what they might consider in approaching a particular assignment and what you’ll be looking at when you’re responding to their writing**. Because of the prevalence of the idea that “good writing” is a clearly defined and stable descriptor, it can take patience and perseverance to help students become aware of issues of context, audience, and genre in ways that help them to become successfully flexible writers. By making sure that students understand the outcomes and keep them in mind while writing, you can save both your students and yourself a great deal of frustration. In order to make sure students understand the learning goals for English 131, it is important to create opportunities for students to see what questions they may have about them (as most, when asked for questions, will claim to understand all of the outcomes perfectly). *For this reason, we strongly recommend that you explicitly identify the outcomes/traits you are targeting in your assignments*. You may want to ask what questions students have about the outcomes in relation to particular assignments, as part of peer review activities, or in discussing a sample student essay. This should clarify your expectations, but you may also want to emphasize that these criteria represent the goals of the Expository Writing Program for students in all 100-level English courses—in other words, that they are not just “yours.”
* **As guidelines for you to use in evaluating and responding to your students’ writing**. Sometimes it’s hard to identify just why a paper—or a whole group of papers— isn’t working. These outcomes should help you remember things about constructing arguments that have probably become second nature to you as a writer. Some instructors even use these outcomes to create a rubric used to organize their end comments categorically, writing separate comments in response to student performance in each area. Whatever approach you take, be sure to use the language of these outcomes (especially ones you have targeted in your assignments) when responding and evaluating. This way, you reinforce and circulate the outcomes, keeping them active in students’ minds.
* **As guidelines for structuring the content of your class**. You will want to spend class time talking about academic inquiry and argumentation, academic conversations, rhetorical strategies, and the importance of presentation. Every issue addressed by the outcomes is worthy of some class time.
* **As an entryway into in-class analysis of student writing**. You will want to structure some class time to examine a few of these criteria as they are (or are not) manifest in the papers students are writing.
* **As guidelines for structuring peer review. Students often come to a greater understanding of these ideas by the comparative examination that occurs during peer review**. If they can identify a problem in other students’ writing, they will be that much better equipped to see that problem in their own writing. It will help, then, to make these outcomes part of peer review worksheets so students can talk to each other about their writing using the language of the outcomes.

## Other Considerations in Designing the Course

* How to accommodate differences in students’ past writing instruction
* What knowledge about writing and the writing process students bring to the course
* How students’ writing will be different at the end of the course
* What your students’ prior reading and researching experiences are and how you will accommodate those experiences
* How the readings support the course goals for the students’ writing as detailed in the outcomes for English 131
* How to integrate issues of stylistic choice and grammatical conventions into the course
* How closely what you evaluate of students’ work matches what you spend time on in class
* How you evaluate students’ participation

One final consideration for designing the course is how you will provide opportunities for students to gather information for the final portfolio critical reflection and what opportunities students will have to practice the rhetorical strategies necessary for an effective critical reflection. In the final critical reflection, students will need to be able to argue for how particular selections from their work over the quarter accomplish and demonstrate fulfillment of the course outcomes. That means they will need to be given time and opportunities to reflect on what their intentions were in each assignment and how successfully they think they were in meeting the goals of the assignment. Some instructors ask students to write journal entries reflecting on their work as they go. Others ask students to write a particular response to a single assignment. Some specific class time needs to be devoted to explaining the portfolio critical reflection, whether a cover letter or a web-based essay (if you are choosing to have students compose an electronic portfolio), as most students have little or no experience with these genres. It can be helpful to supply students with examples of both effective and ineffective reflections so that students can ask specific questions. These examples also supply students with models to reference when they are trying to compose their own versions.

# Sample Course Descriptions

Your course description should introduce the course goals and expectations in language that is accessible and clear. The EWP outcomes can help you develop and articulate course descriptions that give students a clear sense of how you will be defining, approaching, and teaching rhetoric/composition/writing in the context of your classroom. Using the specific language of the outcomes (stakes, assumptions, rhetorical analysis, and so forth) in your course description can help you set student expectations, as well as push against or disrupt students’ preconceived notions of what “good” college-level writing looks like. The outcomes can also help you ground your own philosophies in the EWP course goals.

As one example, if you wanted to challenge the assumption that form and content are separable, you could do so in your course description by articulating writing as “understanding and accounting for the stakes and consequences of various arguments for diverse audiences and within ongoing conversations and contexts” (Outcome 3). This highlights that writing doesn’t occur in a vacuum; it is always mediated and shaped by the material conditions out of which it is emerging; and it produces material impacts that are distributed and felt unevenly.

Your course description can also serve as a place to set the tone for the course, begin to establish your teaching persona, and introduce a course theme (if you choose one) through which you will teach writing (e.g., citizenship, environmental issues, public writing, exploring Seattle politics, etc.), among other things.

**Example 1:** Belle Kim

Writing is a deeply political act. The production of discourse has never been divorced from entrenched structures of power and oppression that have historically guaranteed death and devaluation to targeted and marginalized groups deemed expendable, disposable, and exploitable. Given this premise, I will expect you to ask of each text that you read: what are the stakes and urgencies motivating this particular project? For whom are they writing and to what end? What is the specific historical context in which they are writing and how does that inform my reading of the text? The insights you gain from being critical readers who practice such strategies of rhetorical and critical analyses will help you generate complex, stake-drivenarguments of your own that can contribute to ongoing academic conversations. As you do so, you will be expected to be accountable critical writers who consciously reflect upon the assumptions undergirding the argument you’re making, as well as the ethical and political implications of your argument and the material impact your argument might have on those whose social locations and access to privilege look different from your own. Ultimately, the writing skills that we develop in this class will be useful across academic disciplines no matter where you end up. After all, the courses that you take from now on will have varying expectations and requirements when it comes to the style, tone, structure, and organization of your writing, but the core components of successful academic writing will remain the same. That’s where this class comes in. English 131 will equip you with the necessary tools to…

* write for different audiences and contexts using conventions appropriate to each situation
* carefully analyze the writing of others in ways that allow you to build off of their thinking
* enter into academic conversations with a purpose-driven and persuasive argument that displays an understanding of relevant conceptual frameworks
* revise your writing successfully.

This section of English 131 will read a variety of academic and non-academic texts that are centered very broadly around the theme of “citizenship.” We will read texts on immigration, policing, the prison industrial complex, US imperialism, and how the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality affects those who are excluded from the privileged status of citizenship. As you will come to find, citizenship is a complex concept that, in its uneven distribution of wealth, resources, and power, profoundly impacts how our society is constructed—from how we organize communities to how we think about our culture, legal system, and ways of life. Part of your challenge in this course will be to discover ways in which you can become personally invested in this theme: you will be asked to think critically about your own ideologies and assumptions and you will begin to articulate to yourself and others why it is important for us to develop a deeper understanding of this subject matter.

Please come to class prepared to carefully examine and unpack the readings, which will at times be challenging and difficult. I expect you to be ready to participate in respectful, informed conversations and, of course, to write. In return, you will leave the class armed with a host of skills and strategies that will help you to be a successful, analytical, and critically engaged writer capable of entering into ongoing conversations about citizenship and the complex political realities of which it is a significant part.

**Example 2:** Denise Grollmus

The goal of English 131 is deceptively simple. Ostensibly, this course is designed to help you become a better writer. But what does “better writer” *even mean*? And a writer of what? Of poetry? Of instruction manuals? And what does “better” writing look like? Is it a matter of making fewer grammatical mistakes (answer: in part)? Employing fancier language and academic jargon (answer: NO)? Even more mystifying: how exactly does one become this so-called “better writer?”

I swear: the point of asking all these questions is not to induce an anxiety attack. It is to illustrate the crucial first step one must take in order to improve one’s writing. That step is what we call **inquiry**. By being curious, skeptical, and critical—by asking questions—we open ourselves up to receiving the necessary information we need in order to better form our ideas, our beliefs, and our arguments in all contexts and **rhetorical situations**.

Now, to answer a few of the questions I posed above. What sort of writing will we be doing in this class? As you know, writing takes on various forms that we often refer to as **genres**, which can be as broad as poetry or prose and as narrow as black feminist science fiction or legal briefs. Because we are working in the context of a college-level English class, we will largely focus on **expository writing** in the humanities. When we hear “expository writing” we usually think of tediously dry research reports. But exposition is something we actually do everyday, and it is *always* a creative process. It appears in novels, newspapers articles, movies, and business plans. We sometimes use exposition when we post to Facebook or tell someone about how our day went. In fact, many of the tools we’ll be learning aren’t applicable only to academic exposition. They are crucial to all genres of verbal expression and are tools you will continue using and sharpening even after you leave this class. In fact, a big part of this class is about learning how to transfer the skills you learn here to tasks beyond this classroom.

The question of how you will improve as writers is probably the easiest to answer. We become better writers by writing. And then revising. And then writing some more. And then revising again. We also become stronger writers by becoming stronger readers. And in this class, we’ll be doing a lot of reading, writing, and revising. The class is structured into two modules that each includes two short assignments and one major project. As we write, we’ll also read from a variety of texts that we will carefully dissect and which we can model (or not) in our own work.

Most importantly, we’ll have a very clear guide for our course in the form of specific **course** **outcomes** (see below). These outcomes will help us stay on task and focus on developing those skills that are crucial to our success. As we read, write, and revise, we’ll frequently reflect on which outcomes (or goals) we’ve mastered and on which we can still improve and how. These outcomes will also help determine our overall performance in this course, which will be represented in our final portfolios.

Though I’m aware that no one has chosen to take English 131 (and that many of you might now see it as little more than an annoying requirement), it is my hope that you will come to see this class as one of the most productive, useful, and enriching of your college experience. But mostly, I hope that this course will help you to become a stronger and more confident writer, reader, and thinker.

**Example 3:** A.J. Burgin

English 131 is designed to prepare you for your academic career. Regardless of the path you are considering, be it Political Science, Engineering, Biology, or Pre-Law, you will require the ability to think critically about the world around you and to articulate that thinking in writing. Your coursework, both now and in the years to come, will require you to produce writing that varies greatly in tone, style, research methods, complexity, and organization. The ability to clearly articulate your ideas, however, will always be necessary regardless of framework. To that end, this class seeks to prepare you with the tools necessary for a successful academic life:

·         the ability to thoughtfully analyze texts, materials, and the arguments of others

·         the techniques of successful research and how to incorporate that research into  your arguments

·         an understanding of how to articulate your own complex claims

·         the ability to successfully revise

This section of 131 will use popular culture as a vehicle to engage with the specific strategies of **rhetorical analysis** and writing discussed above. Non-traditional literary **texts** such as television shows and movies can serve as accessible mediums for discussion and **critical analysis**, as well as the ability to create **complex, stake-driven claims** of your own. In addition to giving you the opportunity to choose texts that interest you, popular culture allows us to use a topic that you are already thinking about critically to explore strategies of articulating that critical thinking on paper. Popular culture shapes our thinking in overt and subtle ways, and by using writing strategies to break down how that shaping occurs, we can become more astute and engaged citizens as well as writers.

As fun as popular culture can be to work with, it is important to remain **critically engaged** as much as possible. You should come to class ready to carefully unpack complex meanings as well as the strategies that produce them. It is important that you be prepared to examine texts, engage in respectful and informed conversations, and, of course, write, write, and then write some more. If you are willing to put in the effort, you will leave this class with the tools to be a successful academic writer and critically engaged member of society.

This course is also a **computer-integrated course**, which means we will use technology on a daily basis to develop rhetoric, analysis, and writing skills. It is your responsibility to use that technology responsibly, which means staying on task at all times, not typing while your peers or your instructor are talking (the keyboards are not at all quiet), and following general lab rules.

**Example 4:** Kelsey Fanning

In this course we will center the writing and perspectives of those people who have been historically marginalized and oppressed in the United States. Taken with our course theme—topics in university studies—this means that we will investigate writings that engage with issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion and the ways in which these categories intersect with the U.S. university as an institution. We are beginning with the premise that the university functions as a core gatekeeping institution to participation in public and economic life in the contemporary U.S. and will investigate together materials that reveal how uneven access to universities maintains entrenched forms of power, privilege, and oppression in our lives and communities. Histories of violence, dispossession, exploitation, and exclusion cannot be overcome through tokenistic engagement with the work of minoritized people. Therefore, please understand that the decision to limit readings by white male authors does not reflect “reverse discrimination,” but is in fact informed by a scholarly and ethical commitment to resist tokenizing, fetishizing, stereotyping, or otherwise uncritically incorporating texts written by individuals experiencing myriad forms of violence and marginalization within our society.

Keep in mind throughout the quarter that the argument of an individual cannot stand in for an entire group but that these arguments do have something to teach us about the systemic and institutionalized nature of inequality. The writing we investigate in this class reflects various authors’ sophisticated rhetorical strategies. If you find yourself reacting defensively to a text, recall that it is very likely the author’s purpose to evoke just such an emotional response. Remember to stop and analyze WHY the writer would use this kind of rhetorical strategy in order to execute an argument and HOW such a strategy creates a rhetorical experience for the author’s readership.

The purpose of this course is to help you develop your skills as an academic thinker, reader, and especially writer. As a university student, you will find that the questions, problems, and concerns raised at the university level become increasingly complex—so much so that they often do not have

a single, straightforward answer. In fact, one of the hallmarks of academic inquiry is that the best questions inspire many thinkers and writers to respond in order to reveal the complexity and nuance of an issue. In this course you will continue develop your critical thinking abilities in order to recognize and formulate the kinds of questions that fuel academic conversations. You will also hone a variety of strategies that writers use for developing purposeful, stakes-driven texts that matter to readers. In assignments for this course, students will learn to compose robust and complex claims and persuasive arguments informed by your sensitivity to and awareness of the various genres and rhetorical situations required by a unique writing context. Furthermore, you will utilize revision and reflection to strategically improve your texts based on the specific contexts to which you are writing.

 61

# Sample Assignment Sequences

Generally, instructors have designed their 131 sequences around a particular thematic focus, such as cultural inquiry, rhetorical inquiry, or genre inquiry. These foci are all based on the overall premise that academic argument develops through close and critical analysis. All three of these foci culminate in a 5-7 page argument paper for each major sequence, based in a claim that has emerged from a line of inquiry. Any number of readings from *Writer/Thinker/Maker* can function equally well in any of these foci, and we encourage you to be as creative as you want when combining readings with other readings or with outside fieldwork and research. In the past, some 131 instructors have found it useful to vary the types of sequences between the first and second half of the quarter. Because 131 aims to teach rhetorical awareness for entering different writing situations, the hallmarks of academic writing across disciplines, as well as flexible strategies for revision, varying the assignment types ensures that students work both on the meta-awareness of the relationship between writing and context (genre and/or rhetorical analysis) *and* the specific hallmarks of academic writing such as analysis, synthesis, research, and development of arguments that emerge from a line of inquiry (cultural/textual analysis).

Below are five sample assignment sequences. As you read through them, it may be useful to note the kind of scaffolding each instructor employs and how. Following the explanation above of different kinds of scaffolding, Jeff Johnson’s sequence is serial in nature, Chelsea Jennings’ and Xuan Zheng’s are examples of cumulative courses, and Belle Kim’s and Ashley Alford’s sequences are primarily serial (though it contains some cumulative aspects as well). The first sequence, which includes teacher commentary, is designed for one four-week chunk of time, and drew its readings—rhetorical and otherwise—from both an older edition of the EWP textbook called *Context for Inquiry* and outside sources.

These sample assignment sequences begin with the instructor’s description of the rationale behind the sequence, followed by the assignment prompts that were distributed to students.

**Example 1:** Belle Kim

 Throughout the quarter, I define writing as a deeply political act and stress to my students that they are expected to be accountable critical writers who consciously reflect upon the assumptions undergirding the claims they’re making, as well as the ethical and political implications of their writing and the material impact their arguments might have on those whose social locations and access to privilege look different from their own. I try to get my students to think about writing as an ongoing conversation with multiple stakeholders that is motivated by urgencies and informed by the specific context in which it is occurring. The organizing keyword and theme for my class is citizenship because I believe that it offers numerous possibilities for critical engagement: citizenship is a complex concept (both prevalent and invisible) that, in its uneven distribution of wealth, resources, and power, profoundly impacts how US society is constructed—from how we organize communities to how we think about our culture, legal system, and ways of life. The discourse around citizenship offers students many different possibilities for critical engagement because it encompasses a variety of complex, interrelated issues and ideas (ranging from immigration and policing to the prison industrial complex to US imperialism to how the intersection of race, class, and gender affects those who are excluded from the privileged status of citizenship) that can be articulated in vastly different ways depending on the context. As such, it is a provocative place from which to begin thinking about questioning assumptions and establishing stakes for writing.

On the first day of class, I ask my students to do a free-write reflecting on their understanding of citizenship--what it means to them, how much time they have spent thinking about this concept, and why it might be important to critically engage with the concept. In the following weeks, as students read and rhetorically analyze a variety of academic and non-academic texts that take up the question of citizenship in some way, they are encouraged to revisit the initial definition they developed on the first day. My first assignment sequence is comprised of two short assignments and a major paper designed to build both their critical thinking and their rhetorical awareness/sensitivity.

**Short Assignment 1**

My students’ first short paper was a genre translation assignment, in which they were asked to translate one course text (Lauren Berlant’s keywords entry “Citizenship,” Juana Medina’s graphic essay “A Decade in Immigration Purgatory,” Bill Ong Hing’s “Two Contrasting Schemes: Understanding Immigration Polices Affecting Asians Before and After 1965,” or NPS’s “An Overview of the Role of the US in the World Community”) into a different genre for a different audience. This assignment heavily targeted Outcome 1 and was designed to help students think about the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts, articulate and assess the effects of their own writing choices, and write for different audiences in ways that supported the goals of their writing. They were also required to produce a writer’s memo in which they engaged in a critical reflection of the rhetorical choices they made in their genre translation. The writer’s memo gave students the opportunity to think really critically about their targeted audience and how their awareness of audience informs what kinds of rhetorical decisions they choose to make, thus targeting and fostering my students’ metacognitive abilities.

**Short Assignment 2**

The genre translation familiarized students with the practice of thinking critically about the rhetorical situation of a given text (in order to translate a text into another genre, one must think about its original purpose, targeted audience, meaning, and medium and then figure out a way to rethink these for a different context). The second assignment built upon these skills by asking students to engage in a careful and strategic rhetorical analysis of two texts—The Black Panther Party’s “Ten Point Plan” and the Combahee River Collective’s “A Black Feminist Statement,” which they read along with Angela Davis’ “Slavery, Civil Rights, and Abolitionist Perspectives Toward Prisons” for historical context—in order to put those texts in conversation with each other and evaluate the rhetorical effectiveness of each. This assignment was designed to help students understand writing as an intentional and purposeful act that is never divorced from the material conditions out of which it emerges. As they analyzed the texts, my class could see that the rhetorical choices made in each were guided by the agenda of the writers, as well as their potential intended audience; there were clear stakes and urgencies motivating the writing of each; and an understanding of the specific context in which these were produced necessarily impacted students’ understanding and engagement with the texts.

**Major Paper 1**

The skills and knowledges built in the two short assignments culminated in their first major paper. The assignment prompt for Major Paper 1 instructs students to think about how the texts they have encountered throughout the quarter (the previous texts plus George Lipsitz’s “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness,” Leigh Patel’s “Nationalist Narratives, Immigration and Coloniality,” *Fast Food Women,* and Barbara Ehrenreich’s “Nickeled and Dimed”) have challenged, complicated, or expanded their understanding of what it means to be a citizen, how citizenship as a category operates in the US, and who does or does not have access to this privileged status. In establishing the parameters of the assignment, my goal was to encourage students to launch a critical line of inquiry that emerges from their own lived experiences, explicitly name and question the various assumptions they have held about the concept “citizenship,” and think about the act of setting definitions and engaging in discourse/knowledge production as a critical form of power that has long been contested. Many of the texts we’d read in class leading up to this assignment had been written by those who rejected certain definitions that had been forced upon them by others and strove to reclaim their identity and agency by defining according to their own terms who they were and why they were here. By opening a space for them to join in the ongoing academic conversation about citizenship, I told my students that I was hoping they, too, would feel a similar sense of agency and feel empowered as both learners and writers.

This assignment encouraged students to think back to course texts and the ideas they had encountered in new and different ways. In working through this assignment, my hope was that students would be able to develop a deeper understanding of identity politics—a concept they had encountered when they first read the Combahee River Collective’s “A Black Feminist Statement”—as using one’s own lived experiences to identify and critique structural forms of oppression and violence, build solidarity and community, and demand radical change. Drawing from this concept, my students found that they could approach Major Paper 1 by starting from their own lived experiences and asking themselves what their initial understanding of the concept of citizenship had been. This assignment also allowed students to explore writing concepts in ways that helped bridge any perceived gaps between composition and the theme of the course. Earlier on in the quarter, they had been introduced to Toulmin’s model, in which warrants are described as links from the claim to reasons and evidence that take the form of assumptions and beliefs. We’d discussed in class that such warrants are taken to be self-evident by the writer and may or may not be explicitly stated—that they can be beliefs, ethics, and convictions that a writer holds implicitly. In their initial engagement with this concept, students had been focused primarily on identifying other writers’ assumptions and the ways in which those affect the effectiveness of the arguments being advanced. In the context of this particular assignment, though, my students had the opportunity to think about and apply their understanding of warrants in a new way: they were encouraged to think about what assumptions they had been holding that had shaped their original understanding of citizenship and to identify where these came from (“What cultural forces helped you shape and develop such assumptions? School, family, media, state of origin, country of origin, a personal experience that had a profound impact on you?). After reflecting upon their own personal background and experiences, then, students could go on to think about how course texts had pushed against and disrupted the assumptions they were holding to reshape their understanding of the concept to redefine what citizenship means to them now.

**Short Assignment 1: GENRE TRANSLATION**

**Outcomes Targeted:** 1, 2

So far, we have discussed the relationship between **genre** and **audience** and learned how to analyze the rhetorical situation of a given text in order to make sense of the author’s rhetorical choices (tone, style, mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, etc.)

**Your Task:**

In this short assignment, you will choose one of the readings we’ve done for class and **translate** **it into another genre**. The possibilities are endless: you could turn "A Decade in Immigration Purgatory" into a letter to the president or to the director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; you could translate Bill Ong Hing’s “Understanding Immigration Policies Affecting Asians Before and After 1965” into a blog post or poster or a How-To magazine article; you could rethink NPS's "An Overview of the Role of the U.S. in the World Community" into a short story; you could even reimagine Lauren Berlant’s “Citizenship” keyword entry into a political cartoon of some sort (that is, if you can figure out a way to clearly depict the original author’s arguments, claims, and stakes).

You will then submit a **writer’s memo** (1-2 pages) that describes your writing process and shows you tried to make **conscious rhetorical choices** with regard to audience and genre. Some questions to consider for the writer’s memo: Why and how did you choose the audience and genre you did? What rhetorical choices did you make to translate from one genre to another? What genre conventions did you use and why? How did your choices change between the two genres/audiences and why did you make these changes? What do you think you did well on in this assignment and where do you feel you could improve?

A successful SA1 paper will demonstrate to me that you can….

* Compose strategically for a variety of audiences and contexts, both within and outside the university *(Outcome 1)*
* Recognize how different elements of a rhetorical situation matter for the task at hand and affect the options for composing and distributing texts (*Outcome 1)*
* Coordinate, negotiate, and experiment with various aspects of composing—such as genre, content, conventions, style, language, organization, appeals, media, timing, and design—for diverse rhetorical effects tailored to the given audience, purpose, and situation (*Outcome 1)*
* Assess and articulate the rationale for and effects of composition choices (*Outcome 1)*

**Formatting:** 500-750 words total, including the writer’s memo (2-3 pages), MLA heading, page numbers, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins

**DUE DATE: Post to canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Monday, April 3.**

**Short Assignment 2: SYNTHESIS PAPER**

**Outcomes Targeted:** 1, 2, 3

In class, we have spent some time reading and discussing The Black Panther Party’s “Ten Point Plan” and The Combahee River Collective’s “A Black Feminist Statement.” We’ve been working on breaking down the rhetorical choices made by these writers by performing a careful **rhetorical analysis.** We’ve also been talking about **intertextuality** and putting texts in conversation with one another.

**Your Task:**

I want you to write a short paper in which you compare the rhetorical choices made by **two** of the authors in the form of a **synthesis** essay. Out of the two texts, which do you find more compelling and effective? I want you to make an **arguable claim** that **anticipates counterarguments and concessions** and is supported by concrete **evidence** from the texts. In order to effectively answer this question, you will need to **summarize** and **paraphrase** the authors’ arguments. Identify their stakes, claims, targeted audience, and rhetorical strategies. Discuss what you think is and is not working in the text by **rhetorically analyzing** how their arguments are articulated and supported. And of course, provide your own evaluation of whether their texts are working and why. Think about how and why might others disagree with your argument, and how you would respond to them.

Your paper should have a clear introduction and a conclusion and cohere together as a piece of writing. Be sure to think about how you are structuring your paper and use effective transitions.

A successful SA2 paper will demonstrate to me that you can…

* Recognize how different elements of a rhetorical situation matter for the task at hand and affect the options for composing and distributing texts (Outcome 1)
* Work strategically with complex information in order to generate and support inquiry (Outcome 2)
* Read, analyze, and synthesize a diverse range of texts and understand the situations in which those texts are participating (Outcome 2)
* Gather, evaluate, and make purposeful use of primary and secondary materials appropriate for the writing goals, audience, genre, and context (Outcome 2)
* Create a "conversation" by identifying and engaging with meaningful patterns across ideas, texts, experiences, and situations (Outcome 2)
* Craft persuasive, complex, inquiry-driven arguments that matter by considering, incorporating, and responding to different points of view while developing one’s own position (Outcome 3)

**Formatting:** 500-750 words (2-3 pages), MLA heading, page numbers, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins

**DUE DATE: Post to canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Sunday, April 9.**

**Major Paper 1: DEFINING CITIZENSHIP**

**Outcomes Targeted:** 1, 2, 3

This assignment provides you with the opportunity to build upon the ideas and skills that we have been discussing and developing in class. On our first day of class, you drew from your personal experiences and anecdotes to critically reflect on what citizenship means and identified social issues and conflicts relevant to this theme that matter to you. In SA1, you demonstrated an understanding of the rhetorical situations in which texts are produced by translating a piece of writing into another genre. In SA2, you engaged in a rhetorical analysis of two texts that were both centered around the inequalities experienced by second-class citizens in the US. These three assignments developed your ability to generate a productive line of inquiry, make sense of authors’ rhetorical strategies, and synthesize complex texts.

**Your Task:**

The goal of this Major Paper 1 is to help you enter into ongoing academic conversations on citizenship by providing you with the space to **rethink** and **redefine** your understanding of this complex concept. Drawing from the readings we’ve done in class, I want you to ask yourself: How have the texts we’ve read so far challenged, complicated, or expanded your understanding of (1) what it means to be a citizen, (2) how citizenship as a category operates in the US, and (3) who does or does not have access to this privileged status? You will explain why this kind of conversation **matters in academic contexts**. Remember, you are writing for an academic audience.

A successful MP1 will demonstrate to me that you can…

* Read, analyze, and synthesize a diverse range of texts and understanding the situations in which those texts are participating *(Outcome 2)*
* Use reading and writing strategies to craft research questions that explore and respond to complex ideas and situations *(Outcome 2)*
* Gather, evaluate, and make purposeful use of primary and secondary materials appropriate for the writing goals, audience, genre, and context *(Outcome 2)*
* Create a "conversation"—identifying and engaging with meaningful patterns across ideas, texts, experiences, and situations *(Outcome 2)*
* Consider, incorporate, and respond to different points of view while developing one’s own position *(Outcome 3)*
* Engage in analysis—the close scrutiny and examination of evidence, claims, and assumptions—to explore and support a line of inquiry *(Outcome 3)*
* Understand and accounting for the stakes and consequences of various arguments for diverse audiences and within ongoing conversations and contexts *(Outcome 3)*

 Here are **some** **questions** **to consider** as you begin formulating your ideas:

* Which texts did you find the most compelling and why? Which texts elicited the strongest responses from you?
* What new insights have you developed after engaging with these texts? Which texts pushed you to think about citizenship in a different way? What assumptions of yours did the texts disrupt?
* What are the stakes of this conversation? Why is it important for us to think critically about citizenship?

**Length and Format**

5-7 pages (1250-1750 words), double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, MLA formatting and Works Cited Page.

**DUE DATE: Post your first draft to canvas by class time on Tuesday, April 18. Your second draft is due by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 23.**

**Example 2:** Jeff Johnson

I chose to present the following writing assignment sequence to students as the first sequence of the quarter. Tying in with the course theme of revolution, the sequence allows (and challenges) students to reassess their concept of a volatile and often violent term by making them think of it in more personal terms. My goal with this sequence is to get students to think about their own lives as objects of critical inquiry while simultaneously demonstrating to them that critical inquiry is *not* something that occurs in a vacuum, but rather, that it can and *should* be applied to their own lives. I make these goals explicit to the class during our discussions of the assignments, especially as they relate to the course texts (“The Revolution Will Not Be Televised,” “The Veil,” Dr. King’s “Letter From Birmingham Jail,”—all from *Situating Inquiry*—and Al Gore’s film, *An Inconvenient Truth*).

Because of the personal nature of the assignments, I am able to begin building a personal rapport with students from the first Short Paper, where they are to begin considering “what examples of revolution [they] see in [their] own life” as they concurrently interact with Satrapi’s revolution in “The Veil.” These “personal revolutions” are brought into sharper focus in Short Paper 1.3 and Major Paper 1 where students construct PowerPoint pamphlets of the revolutionary figures that they will make claims about in Major Paper 1. SP 1.3 additionally asks students to write a reflection paper identifying and explaining the choices they have made in creating their PowerPoint slides. SP 1.2 is a slight anomaly (in the sense that it does not obviously lead from SP 1.1 to 1.3). I will explain its place more fully below.

**Short Paper 1.1**

As the assignment sheet indicates, the purpose of the assignment is to get students “to consider a term with which [they] are familiar in a new light and to get to know [their] classmates on a more personal level by sharing response papers with them.” By getting students to engage with *Situating Inquiry* right away, the assignment sets a particular tone for the course. However, the genre of the graphic novel is (often) one that they do not readily associate with “serious” academic work. Moreover, taking a very loaded term like “revolution” and showing an example of a very personal revolution, from a child’s point of view, makes students more comfortable using the term in their own critical vocabulary. In terms of the overall sequence, this assignment scaffolds not only critical inquiry into their own lives, but the process of pursuing and discussing that line of inquiry in small groups and then reporting back out to the class as a whole once the first draft of the assignment has been completed.

**Short Paper 1.2**

Between SP 1.1 and 1.2, I show the class Al Gore’s movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*. There is an obvious connection to the 2007 UW Common Book (*Fieldnotes from a Catastrophe*), but more importantly I used the experience of watching and critically analyzing the film to tie in directly with the course outcomes and to introduce the concept of academic, argumentative writing to my students. After I scaffolded the activity by introducing some key terms (like inquiry, claim, evidence, analysis), we all watched the film together in class. Students were instructed to take notes in such a way that they would be prepared to discuss Gore’s major claim and the evidence he used to support it. Moreover, they were invited to critique his claims, evidence, and analysis.

I allowed our discussion of the argument made in the film to grow naturally. That is, I had some questions to get the discussion started, but I made a conscious effort not to force any of the points on my agenda. Rather, I asked questions like “what was a piece of evidence that you found unconvincing?” As I had hoped, this generated a large number of responses which led to a discussion around another question: “Well, what is his claim, then?” Again, this led to more discussion and more gentle steering on my part to questions of warrants, audience awareness (that is, what is the film’s target audience?), and stakes.

In fashioning this assignment, my goal was to create a space for the class to address issues of critical inquiry and to take apart an argument and then put it back together, all the while showing students which outcomes we were discussing. Near the end of the discussion, I offered the students an analogy of a tailor—if I handed them a jacket and asked them to take it apart, they could undo the stitching and put all the zippers in one pile, all the blue fabric in another, red fabric in another, all the buttons in another pile, etc. Then, if I asked them to reassemble the jacket the next day and they could do so, they would have demonstrated to me that they were becoming proficient tailors. Here, it is the same with argument construction.

The follow-up assignment was SP 1.2, which asked them to take Dr. King’s argument apart in “A Letter From Birmingham Jail” and show me how everything was functioning. They were asked to determine if “one piece of evidence [was] more compelling than another? Why?” When this assignment was due, we again took the argument apart—this time in small groups and then as a class. Later that week, I held my conferences and followed up with students to see where they were (on an individual basis) on the spectrum of understanding argument analysis. These conferences were also used as a bridge to the next assignment (SP 1.3), which was their PowerPoint presentation. And again the film was helpful because it set up a model for them to see how PowerPoint could be used as a tool for communication.

**Short Paper 1.3 and Major Paper 1**

 SP 1.3 and MP 1 go hand in hand in this sequence, which helps students a great deal and allows (and encourages) them to invest more effort in the project because they can almost kill two birds with one stone. For SP 1.3, there are two parts: the PowerPoint presentation and the reflection paper. When I assign the presentation, I also hand out MP1 and suggest to them that their presentation *should* look a lot like MP 1, but that the reflection paper should be quite different. That is to say, getting up in front of the class and discussing their own personal revolution (and their evidence thereunto) can be considered to be a “trial run” of the evidence they think they will want to use in their MP1. The reflection paper, however, should comment *only* upon the choices that were made when constructing their presentation, not the content itself. This is slightly tricky because they may not immediately see the difference, but any difficulties in comprehension of the assignment can generally be helped by extra explanation in the classroom, conferences, or office hours. I urge students to invest more time up front on SP 1.3 because nearly all of the hard work they put into creating their presentation can be integrated into MP 1 (assuming, of course, that they have selected a strong topic, etc.; but, again, these issues can be ironed out quite successfully during conferences).

**Conclusion**

 I used this sequence for three quarters in a row and it grew more successful every time I did it. I recommend this type of sequence to teachers who are looking for a way to get students to make a personal investment in the material because, as I found, the more I could show students that their lives were fertile ground for inquiry, the more they tended to invest in the assignment. And my initial fears that every student would talk about the same sort of thing (i.e. winning the basketball championship, etc.) were unfounded as students talked about a range of topics (moving to America, divorce, saving lives, friends committing suicide, sexual promiscuity, etc.). I was stunned by their candor and ability to take the assignment seriously. And their ability to execute the assignment successfully improved as my ability to explain the assignment improved (from quarter to quarter).

**A Very Personal Revolution**

Short Paper 1.1

Assignment Due: Tuesday, January 15th

*Putting all the clothes you’ve washed away
And as you’re folding up the shirts you hesitate
Then it goes fast
You think of the past
And suddenly everything has changed*

 – The Flaming Lips, from *The Soft Bulletin*

We will begin our exploration into the course theme by considering what the term revolution means and how we might unpack some meanings that we had not previously considered. Because the term “revolution” is so loaded with images of violence and radicalism, it is important to consider other applications that the term might have (especially in relation to our own lives).

With that in mind, consider Marjane Satrapi’s graphic novel “The Veil,” which is presented in *Situating Inquiry* as a story of a child whose experiences lead her to revolt against her community’s culture. And her revolution is brought about by influences surrounding her (especially her family).

For this assignment, write a response to this story and begin to identify similar revolutions in your own life by considering the following questions:

1. What factors lead this character (and not the other girls in the story) to revolt?
2. In what ways does the genre of graphic novel aid in the emotional message?
3. Who is the audience for the story?
4. After reading the story, how has your concept of “revolution” changed?
5. What examples of revolution do you see in your own life? (These may be very similar to the narrator’s story, or they may be quite different – **the important thing is that they are personal**).

The purpose of this assignment is to get you to consider a term with which you are familiar in a new light and to get to know your classmates on a more personal level by sharing your response paper with them. You should consider them your audience.

The Format:

Your reflection paper should be **2-3 double-spaced pages** with 1-inch margins in 12-point, Times New Roman font. Be sure to use MLA format for your in-text citations and your works cited page. Please bring **2 copies** of your assignment to class. Refer to the syllabus for the late paper policy.

The Outcomes:

**Locking Up**

**The Evidence**

Short Paper 1.2

Assignment Due: Tuesday, January 29th

In order to understand the concept of a revolution that is impacting on a personal level and the evidence which is used to describe/justify certain actions, we will critically examine and respond to a “Letter From Birmingham Jail,” written by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In his letter, which he addresses to his “Fellow Clergymen,” Dr. King draws upon a great deal of evidence to support his claim(s), which are answers to written criticisms of his revolutionary practices which label his behavior “unwise and untimely.”

For this second writing assignment, you will compose a response letter which will consider the evidence which King has used to support his claims. You will be writing this from the point of view of a first-year UW student in April of 1963 and your audience will be Dr. King himself (who we will assume is still in the Birmingham Jail).

Your paper should include the following:

1. **An analysis of his evidence** (including concrete facts, stories, opinions). Is one piece more compelling than another? Why?
2. **Suggestions** on how to make the less-compelling pieces of evidence more persuasive to his readers.
3. **An understanding of the style and tone** used in this particular writing situation.
4. **An articulation of the stakes** of King’s argument.

Remember:

1. He was locked up at the time he was writing this piece and was quoting several pieces of evidence from memory.
2. You are not supporting or condemning Dr. King’s principles. Rather, you are critically examining the evidence with which he makes his arguments and supports his claims.

The Format:

Your reflection paper should be **2-3 double-spaced pages** with 1-inch margins in 12-point, Times New Roman font. Be sure to use MLA format for your in-text citations and your works cited page. Please bring **2 copies** of your assignment to class. Refer to the syllabus for the late paper policy.

The Outcomes:



**Revolutionary Pamphlets in PowerPoint**

Short Paper 1.3

Assignment Due: Tuesday, February 5th

For this short paper, you will have the opportunity to think and write about the topic of your major paper using the composing tool PowerPoint. In class, we have been studying different revolutionaries and considering the ways in which their activities have been recorded. Historically, a very common medium for revolutionary writing has been in the form of a pamphlet which can be widely distributed for a small cost. Recently, revolutionary ideas have been communicated through other media (consider chants at a political rally, a poster, or a film).

This assignment has two parts. The first asks you to combine these forms of communication by creating a **PowerPoint presentation** (of approximately 5 minutes) that will **document the behavior of the revolutionary figure** you are exploring for your first major paper. Your presentation should include text, illustrations, sound, and anything else you think will help you document and communicate the impact of your revolutionary figure. Think of this pamphlet as a way for you to collect and examine evidence for your major paper and an opportunity to get feedback from your classmates on the way in which you present that evidence.

The second part of the assignment will be to write a reflection on the process by which you created your PowerPoint pamphlet. This reflection should not just be a restatement of your presentation. Rather, it should describe the creative and critical choices you made in documenting the revolution in which you are interested. Consider the following questions: How did you choose what to include/exclude? How did you select what we will see in your presentation (text, pictures, sound, etc.)? In what ways did PowerPoint help/hurt your ability to communicate your thoughts to us?

The Format:

Your reflection paper should be **2-3 double-spaced pages** with 1-inch margins in 12-point, Times New Roman font. Turn in **1 copy of your** paper and **1 copy of the slides** from your presentation. Be sure to use MLA format for your in-text citations and your works cited page. Refer to the syllabus for the late paper policy.

The Outcomes:

**Our Revolutions**

**Of Culture**

Major Paper 1

Draft Due: Tuesday, February 12th

Revision Due: Thursday, February 14th

*“You say you want a revolution, well you know, we all want to change the world.”*

* John Lennon

For your first major assignment, you will engage with a revolution that has materially impacted your life in some way. With the advent of the internet, more expressive music, movies, and other art, and the changing political climate of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, many components of our lives are in a state of dramatic change that is often the result of ideas suggested by a definable entity. To begin this assignment, you will need to choose an element from your own life that has impacted your life in a profound way. This can be a person, a place, an idea, an article of clothing (in Marjane Satrapi’s case) – anything so long as it is personally impacting. This should not be a figure whose revolutionary reputation is already established. Once you have chosen your revolutionary figure, you will begin a line of inquiry by exploring and compiling evidence of revolutionary behavior.

In the texts that we have discussed about revolution (King’s “Letter From Birmingham Jail,” Satrapi’s “The Veil,” and Scott-Heron’s “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”), **those who record the events of a revolution are often people who are involved with carrying out the revolution or are directly and profoundly affected by the outcome of the changes that have occurred in their societies**. What compels these people to record the changes that take place in their lives? The purpose of this assignment is twofold:

1. To get you to examine and make a claim about a revolutionary figure that has had an impact upon your life while demonstrating an understanding of the models of revolution from *Situating Inquiry*.
2. From there, you should assess why you felt compelled to act as the documentarian for this particular figure. And, because you are arguing for their relevance and inclusion in a text like *Situating Inquiry*, you should consider the audience for this paper to be the editorial staff of that textbook (the staff includes instructors and administrators of English 131).

Ideas to Consider:

1. What makes an idea, an action, or a place revolutionary?
2. What is the relationship between the revolutionary figure and those who document the revolution?
3. Who or what are the sources of your evidence? Can they be trusted to be objective? (If not, is their subjectivity lending itself to the revolutionary behavior of the figure you are researching?)
4. In what ways does the revolutionary figure appeal for support? Does this public appeal actually make them more or less revolutionary?
5. In what ways does the presentation of information through different genres affect the message of change?

Your paper should include:

1. A **complex claim** about the revolutionary status of your figure
2. **Evidence that supports your claim** (which must include at least one of the readings from *Situating Inquiry* as well as personal reflective evidence). Remember you **must have evidence** in both halves of your paper
3. An explanation of how the evidence supports your claim – it is up to you to **make the connections** between the evidence and your claim
4. A discussion of **why you chose this figure** (when you could have chosen anybody/anything)

The Format:

Your paper should be **5-7 double-spaced pages** with 1-inch margins in 12-point, Times New Roman font. Be sure to use MLA format for your in-text citations and your works cited page. Please bring **2 copies** of your paper to class for peer review. Refer to the syllabus for the late paper policy.

The Outcomes:

**Example 3:** Ashley Alford

At the beginning of the quarter, I try to allow my students to focus less on difficult and dense academic essays or on traditional academic research and more on persuasive and critical writing skills. As such, my first assignment sequence is designed around a topic with which students are generally familiar and comfortable engaging: socially constructed gender roles. This topic provides a space for students to utilize their personal experience and examine artifacts from their culture. This capitalizes on and strengthens knowledge and research skills students already possess in a lower stakes environment than the demands of their second sequence. This first sequence itself is arranged so that each assignment builds from previous ones while simultaneously requiring a more complicated use of previous tasks. The selected readings utilized here are Anandi Ramamurthy’s “Constructions of Illusion: Photography and Commodity Culture,” Emily Martin’s “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles” and Beverley Gross’ “Bitch.” Each text supports students’ critical examination of culture and also offers various insights into strategic, persuasive writing. The three shorter assignments that involve the readings allow students to practice skills they have collaborated on in class: work with complex claims, stakes, quotation use and integration, persuasive appeals, audience and genre awareness, grammar, intertextuality: all skills necessary for succeeding in their longer essay.

**Short Paper 1.1**

Short Paper 1.1 is assigned on the first day of class and asks students to choose and explicate a song that suggests a definition or direction for gender. I like that this assignment asks students to critically read an artifact from their culture as this allows students to write about something they already know. Ultimately students complete two challenging tasks: they analyze social constructions of gender and they compare genre effects. By becoming attuned to audiences of a song, their peers as audience of their informal presentation, and their instructor as audience of their essay, students begin considering the social impacts of their writing, as well as the importance of strategic genre choice to persuasive rhetoric. In addition, important goals of this first course assignment are community building and collaborative work. By asking students to engage with songs in their community for the purpose of sharing their analysis with their peers, they become adept at using the classroom as a sounding board and a collaborative writing workshop.

**Short Paper 1.2**

Short Paper 1.2, “Gender Genre,” continues the work of SP 1.1 in targeting genre awareness. In addition to genres of music and essays, students must consider photography (specifically as advertisements and art) as an important genre in gender construction. Further, students choose artifacts they find in their own immediate culture that make directives of some kind about gender. These artifacts are often used later in their first Major Paper, so preliminary work with these artifacts is very helpful to students as they tackle their first long essay. Choosing artifacts scaffolds for further field research performed throughout the quarter. One of the main goals of SP 1.2 is to familiarize students with utilizing a course reading as a theoretical lens, which requires close reading of an academic essay. Students must negotiate a conversation between Ramamurthy’s text and the artifacts they chose from their culture, thus scaffolding for later and more complicated intertextuality.

The survey assignment is very short, and although not one of the formal short writing assignments, works well as a follow-up to SP 1.2 and is very useful as a scaffolding technique for Major Paper 1. The survey is incredibly basic, but encourages students to consider the importance of primary research to cultural analysis. By choosing two artifacts from their own lives, students are able to consider how dense messages about myriad topics, but especially gender and sexuality, are in seemingly innocuous objects. In addition, the survey gives students the opportunity to uncover the effects of their artifacts on members of their peer group while practicing the collection and use of primary data. Finally, the survey allows students to engage with their artifacts from different perspectives, which is very useful to building a complex claim for their Major Paper assignment.

Something I learned last year is that certain classes take to certain concepts faster than others. By the time I hit Spring Quarter, I had only five freshmen, a couple of seniors, and largely sophomores and juniors. They did not need as much practice with reading artifacts as my Fall quarter did. As such, I skipped the Ramamurthy written assignment (we still did all of the in-class work and discussions, as well as the survey) and instead offered a written assignment on Gross’ “Bitch.” Although I handed it out as SP 1.3 and it worked very well, I think it is more conducive to a second short paper assignment as it involves fewer new tasks than the Martin assignment. The Gross assignment asks students to consider Gross’ claim and stakes and then locate and interrogate a moment in their culture wherein “Bitch” was infamously used. This assignment introduces research, although the research is not usually what is termed “academic.” Still, scaffolding for the research required in SP 1.3 and then again in MP 1 is a really useful aspect of this assignment.

**Short Paper 1.3**

The third short assignment continues to engage with genre awareness not only by asking students to write in a new genre (a formal letter) but also by encouraging students to consider, through Martin’s essay, what is appropriate to scientific publications. At this juncture, we are practicing claims, stakes, counter-claims and qualifiers in class. As such, Martin’s essay offers a method to identify a claim and its related stakes in an academic essay, and also allows students to experience for themselves, as Martin’s audience, the importance that qualified statements in their own writing will make to their own audiences. The practice of considering each piece of writing as a strategic choice is something most students are not accustomed to at the start of 131 and is one of the main goals of my course. Dissecting Martin’s argument and writing choices in class is useful prior to this assignment. It makes students more comfortable with applying Martin’s argument to a current biological publication and with creating their own argument about the effects of their application. That said, this assignment asks students to take on a few difficult tasks simultaneously. Firstly, students must do outside academic research. I think this is an important moment since performing this type of research task at this point in the quarter not only scaffolds for a later library visit, but also prepares students to use research when and where needed in later essays. Next, students must practice putting two texts into conversation with one another. This necessitates an ability to summarize Martin (as students must first explain to their audience, the editor of their researched text, why they are writing in the first place) and an ability to effectively integrate quotes. All the while, they must advance their claim about whether the editor should or should not revise their text based on the students’ take on Martin’s argument.

**Major Paper 1**

Ultimately SP 1.3 complicates the previous (and more basic) work students have performed with audience, genre, and intertexuality while also familiarizing them with claim generation.

In their first Major Paper, “(De)Constructing Gender Identity,” students take on the challenge of drafting a 5-7 page persuasive essay about social constructions of gender. At this point, students have a solid grasp of claim building, stakes identification, and use of sources. Importantly, while the sequence theme, texts, and writing tasks of the course act as links between the three shorter papers and Major Paper 1, MP 1’s complication and especially compilation of the previous writing tasks serve to “raise the stakes” of student writing. Thus MP 1 is an ideal place to hone all of the previous writing tasks contained within the shorter papers while also giving students a chance to practice a complete works cited page. In my experience, it is a large challenge for students to successfully apply everything they have learned thus far in the course. The general trend is for “simpler” writing skills (like grammar, topic and transition sentences, and successful introductions and conclusions) to fall away as students attempt to generate a narrow, complex claim with cogent stakes. As such, peer review is vital at this juncture. For MP 1, we spend at least one class period on peer review (I had two hour classes!). Students form groups and read at least two other students’ rough drafts out loud, have an oral conversation about these drafts, and then go through and make written comments on each. Peer review is not only a way to see what others are doing, but also, through revision of a peer’s paper, is a good reminder to students about some nitty gritty aspects of writing that they have skipped in an effort to concentrate on the content of their argument. In this sense, peer review is yet another (and closer to home) example of examining another person’s work to reflect on what writing choices are successful, and what choices detract from an essay. An important part of this assignment is the attached claims journal, which I borrowed from another TA. It is incredibly useful as it ensures that students begin considering the topic and claim for their essay long before actually sitting down to write it. In addition, it encourages reflection on the movement of a line of inquiry and the growth of a claim—something I do not believe my students would undertake on their own that only helps them as the quarter progresses.

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| SHORT PAPER 1.1 “PUT YOUR RECORDS ON”DUE:  |  |

In class today we discussed some of our ideas, or our culture’s ideas, of what it means to “be male” or “be female.” To explore the theme of gender more fully, we are going to discover how music as a *genre* can act as a medium by which gender is directed or socially constructed. Just as the catchy songs in commercials can get messages about products stuck in our heads, so too can messages about gender identity become a part of our minds via song.

For your first short assignment, pick a song that in your opinion suggests a definition of or direction for gender and print out a copy of the lyrics (these are generally very easy to find online). First, read the words of the song out loud and reflect on its impact. Next, listen to the song itself, and make note of any differences you experienced in hearing the song as music, and reading the song as words.

Now, in a short paper, briefly describe how this song might function as a social construction of gender, or how it might comment upon such constructions. Include specific references to the title, lyrics, and even rhythm (if applicable). Next, discuss how the message of the song was altered by changing its medium. Did hearing the song spoken aloud make the message stronger or weaker than hearing it to music? Did hearing the song spoken aloud change your opinion of the song?

One purpose for this assignment is to continue the acquaintances we have made in class. As such, you will be sharing your responses in small groups. Keep this in mind when you decide on the song you choose.

**Formatting:**

Your written assignment should be 1-2 double-spaced pages in length with 1-inch margins and 12-point, Times New Roman (or similar) font. Please attach the copy of your lyrics to your written assignment.

**Outcomes:**

\*Please review the course syllabus for the “Late Assignment Policy.”

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| SHORT PAPER 1.2 “GENDER GENRE”DUE: | antique-first-edition-book-collection-~-u11503919 |

So far in class we have seen how two distinct genres (music in SP 1.1 and photography in Ramamurthy’s text) can make claims about or suggest directions for gender performance. For this assignment we will engage in field research of our own and discover what, if any, messages about gender identity exist in the artifacts around us.

For this short paper assignment, you will collect two artifacts that you believe make claims about gender. [You may be using these artifacts for your Major Paper 1, so choose something you are excited about working with.] Please note that only one of these genres can be an advertisement or piece of music, as we have covered these in class. After collecting your artifacts, write a 2-3 page paper answering the following questions:

1. How did you come to choose these artifacts?
2. What are the denoted messages of each genre?
3. What are the connoted messages?
4. What are the dominant or preferred readings of the artifacts’ connoted claim? (one for each artifact)
5. What are possible negotiated readings of the connoted claim? (one for each artifact)
6. What are possible oppositional readings of the connoted claim? (one for each artifact)

**Formatting:**

Your written assignment should be 2-3 double-spaced pages in length with 1-inch margins and 12-point, Times New Romans font. Please remember to bring a copy of your artifacts to class to be attached with your SP 1.2. (See me if making a copy is not feasible.)

**Outcomes:**

\*Please review the course syllabus for the “Late Assignment Policy.”

SURVEY:

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|  “FIELD WORK: SURVEY”DUE:  | Human Head |

1. Conduct the attached survey on 10 randomly selected males aged 18-24. (No one from our class will count as randomly selected.) Then, conduct the attached survey with the same two artifacts on 10 randomly selected females aged 18-24. To properly perform this survey, you will need to present to the surveyed individuals both of your collected artifacts and ask them the questions on the following sheet, making note of their responses.
2. Use the primary data you have gathered, write a paragraph summarizing the findings of your survey. These findings may be useful for your MP 1.

**Formatting:**

Your written assignment should be no more than one double-page in length with 1-inch margins and 12-point, Times New Romans font.

**Outcomes:**

1. In your opinion, what are the purposes of these artifacts?
2. Do you see any “hidden” messages or agendas?
3. Does this artifact say anything to you about gender?
4. If so, what?
5. What are the positive aspects of the artifact’s “messages?”
6. What are the negative aspects of the artifact’s “messages?”

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| SHORT PAPER 1.2“BITCH: AN INTERROGATION”DUE:  |  |

In class today we discussed Beverly Gross’ “Bitch” and the impact of common language (words and phrases) on perceptions of gender. Interestingly, “bitch” is a word used to describe both men and women in our current culture (though the term has different connotations with these usages). On pages 418-421, Gross interrogates ways in which this word has been infamously used between individuals in politics, literature, music, athletics, and more.

For this short paper assignment, you will find either a conversation in the media in which the term “bitch” was used, or find some person in the media labeled a “bitch.” Next, you will interrogate this usage to discover:

What does “bitch” mean in this context/for this person?

Is sexuality linked to this usage? How so/not?

Is there a male equivalent of this usage? (Note: this question is still relevant if “bitch” in your example already refers to a specific male). Does the male equivalent have the same impact?

Be sure to quote from Gross’ piece and from your outside source (and INTEGRATE your quotes!)

**Formatting:**

Your written assignment should be 2-3 double-spaced pages in length with 1-inch margins and 12-point, Times New Romans font.

**Outcomes:**

\*Please review the course syllabus for the “Late Assignment Policy.”

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| SHORT PAPER 1.3“GENDER RESEARCH”DUE:  |  |

According to Emily Martin, “culture shapes how biological scientists describe what they discover about the natural world” leading to a classroom situation wherein students learn “about cultural beliefs and practices as if they were part of nature” (Martin 479). We have discussed in class our initial reactions to Martin’s work. For this assignment, each of you will now examine at least one textbook (or another educational text dealing with human reproduction) and see for yourself if Martin’s claims seem legitimate.

After locating and examining your text, consider Martin’s claims. Now write a letter to the editor of the text persuading the editor to either:

1. Revise the text given its male/female stereotypes (or potentially, lack thereof, if that is your stance)
2. Keep the text as it is (either because there are no stereotypes, or because they are not damaging, etc.)

\*Either way, you should use at least two quotes from Martin to support your position.

This assignment requires persuasion, a skill we discussed in class on Tuesday. Consider the best methods to persuade: perhaps you quote Martin for ethos, or appeal to how a student might feel either empowered or disempowered by a text for pathos. There are also many ways to employ logos in your letter. Whatever persuasive tactics you choose, please include quotes (at least two) from your researched text that exemplify why/why not the text needs revision.

On a separate sheet of paper, please provide the title of the text, its author/editor, publication company, place of publication, date, and page numbers you are referencing (for instance, if you are looking at a particular chapter, the page number corresponding with that chapter).

**Formatting:**

Your written assignment should be one to two **single-spaced** pages in length with 1-inch margins and 12-point, Times New Romans font. This should be in the format of a formal letter. Consider your audience when writing.

**Outcomes:**

\*Please review the course syllabus for the “Late Assignment Policy.”

 ♂ / ♀ **(DE)CONSTRUCTING**

 **GENDER IDENTITY**

DRAFT DUE: APRIL 29th MAJOR PAPER 1

REVISION DUE: MAY 1st

In class we have read and explored three texts: Anandi Ramamurthy’s “Constructions of Illusion: Photography and Commodity Culture,” Emily Martin’s “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles,” and Beverley Gross’ “Bitch.” These texts involve distinct genres (photography in Ramamurthy, biological publications in Martin, and definitions/slang in language in Gross) that seek a similar end: unmasking or demystifying social constructions of gender identity.

Using the ideas in these texts as a theoretical lens as well as scholarly sources of your choosing (we will discuss what “scholarly source” means in your library workshop), you will choose one of the two assignment prompts below:

**Option 1:** This prompt requires that you utilize the two artifacts you chose for your survey assignment and **at least one** outside scholarly source. Keeping in mind the implications about gender each artifact constructs, how the artifacts work together/distinctly to perpetuate social constructions of gender, and what is at stake for the audiences of these artifacts, please respond to one (or more) of the following questions. Remember that you want a narrow claim—try not to respond to all of the questions below if that jeopardizes your ability to generate a debatable, narrow claim.

* What does your own analysis and survey tell us about how your artifacts are interpreted by individuals in your general age group? In what ways might the messages of the artifacts work to direct or affect gender identity construction?
* Are the directions for gender contained within your two artifacts useful? How? How are they not? (consider your survey)
* How do (or don’t) the distinct genre forms of your artifacts further complicate the issue of social constructions of gender? (consider your survey)

**Option 2:** This option requires that you reflect on the topic of social constructions of gender and generate your own line of inquiry exploring any of the following topics, which are very broad (and thus, you will need to narrow them). Since you will likely not be using your artifacts or survey, this option requires that you utilize **at least two** outside sources in addition to the course readings. Possible topics include relationships between social constructions of gender and:

 --The Workplace --Women’s / Men’s Health --Education

 --Domestic Violence --Globalization

 --Sexual Violence --Athletics

 --Property Ownership --Politics

 --A different topic of your choice (discuss with me prior to writing)

For all of these topics, keep in mind that you can argue for the utility, harm, benefit, etc. of such constructions, so long as you present a cogent argument with sufficient and persuasive evidence.

**Targeting our outcomes:**

For this paper assignment, your instructor and peers are your **audience**. Be sure to clearly articulate your **complex claim** and the **stakes** of your paper. Finally, consider how you will employ **persuasive strategies** in your essay most effectively.

**Formatting:**

Your paper should be 5-7 pages in length (page limit does NOT include your works cited page) with 1-inch margins and 12-point, Times New Romans font. You should use **MLA format** for both

your in-text citations and your **works cited** page. Please bring **2 copies** of your paper to class for peer review.

**Outcomes:**

**CULTIVATING COMPLEX CLAIMS JOURNAL:**

One aspect of your Major Paper 1 Assignment is based around understanding complex claims as a process of continual questioning and revision. This assignment has been structured to require your claim to go through several stages of development. In addition to the 5-7 page paper, I will be requiring an additional “Claims Journal” that documents the growth and progress of your claim as it develops over the course of your writing process. This will occur in 4 stages. **Each of these stages represents a short write up that will be turned in to me for Participation points and will count as a part of the portfolio.**

1. **Topic and Research Proposal: 2 paragraphs –** This is the most initial stage of your thinking. In the **first paragraph**, tell me what your topic is and why you think it will yield an appropriate and interesting claim (you are not required to know exactly what that claim is yet). Tell me any preliminary ideas or opinions you may have about your topic. In the **second paragraph**, tell me how you intend to research your topic: what places you intend to visit, what fields you intend to search under at the library, and what other materials you might think would be interesting.

**DUE:**

1. **Claim Draft: 2 paragraphs –** **After you have gathered and looked at your sources**, write two informal paragraphs 1) detailing your claim, and 2) a short list of the evidence that you have found that supports this claim. Your claim can still be rather descriptive at this time.

**DUE:**

1. **Rough Draft: 1 paragraph – After you have worked some of your ideas out onto paper**, go back and try to complicate your claim by looking at your evidence again. What you are arguing? What are the stakes of what you are saying? Look at your individual points. Do any of them make claims that are more complicated than the one you are concluding on? Look at your conclusion. Is it ambivalent? How can you make it stronger?

**DUE:**

1. **Final Draft: 1 paragraph – After your paper has reached its final stage,** write me a separate paragraph detailing the evolution of your claim. What have you learned? Here is the trick: if your claim has not changed/gotten more specific/gained stakes/gained complexity over the course of your writing process; if you haven’t learned anything in the process of researching, reading, and writing, than your claim is probably not interesting or complex. Tell me how your claim is argumentative and why it represents several layers of thought and development.

**DUE :**

**To facilitate your success in this process, I will be making myself as available as possible to you over the next few weeks. PLEASE, come and discuss your topics and claims with me. I understand how difficult this process can be. Email, make appointments—whatever it takes!!**

**Example 4:** Chelsea Jennings

Two of my primary goals in designing this course on genre were to capitalize on students’ prior knowledge and to give students transferrable skills that they could use in other academic or work situations. The first sequence of assignments asks students to analyze the contexts and texts surrounding them, leading them toward arguments about how genres work, and how certain texts manipulate genre. The second sequence asks students to use this awareness to create a text in a genre of their choice, and then analyze their own text.

I have been consistently surprised by how difficult the concept of “genre” is for students to grasp, but I have been equally as surprised at how, with the right support, students are able to leverage previous knowledge to make meaningful observations and arguments. The quality of students’ “genre projects” never ceases to amaze me; students who struggle to write academic prose can be deft writers in other genres (children’s books, screenplays, promotional pamphlets, instruction manuals, magazine articles, etc.) when given the chance.

I borrowed a lot of ideas from *Scenes of Writing* (which I would recommend to anyone interested in teaching genre), and the texts in various genres included in *Acts of Inquiry* are excellent resources for in-class activities and as possible texts for writing assignments. One of the main advantages of this type of class is that it always keeps writing in the foreground, and the reflective component of the portfolio is built over the course of the quarter.

**Short Assignment 1**

This assignment asks students to observe a place, and determine which written genres are used in this place and how. I like starting with this assignment because it catches students off guard—they are used to writing about texts (often literary texts), but not necessarily accustomed to writing about contexts, or thinking about texts as performing functions in the “real world”. It is also less intimidating than other assignments, but can still be used in the portfolio to demonstrate analysis and awareness.

**Short Assignment 2**

In the first weeks, we spend a lot of class time looking at examples of different genres and analyzing them, which prepares students to do a formal analysis of a genre of their choice. The genre analysis assignment requires students to look at the specifics of particular texts in the context of the conventions that they’re operating within; in other words, students have to negotiate the big picture and the details at the same time. This assignment gives lots of opportunities, too, for talking about rhetorical grammar, since this knowledge will help students analyze how the texts they read are operating on the sentence level.

**Short Assignment 3**

This paper asks students to move from analysis to argument by asking them to critique a genre. This requires choosing a genre that might be open to meaningful critique, analyzing the genre, and considering how this genre might participate in real-world forms of power. *Scenes of Writing* has an example of a student genre critique of wedding invitations, and my students have worked on genres that include credit card offers, medical forms, state of the union addresses, beauty product advertisements, and course syllabi. Writing this paper shows students that there are real stakes for the ways that texts are written and used, and requires them to engage with social issues.

**Major Assignment 1**

In this paper, students look at texts that are bending or breaking genre conventions in order to create particular arguments and effects. In doing so, students can see the kinds of critiques they made in their last paper in action, and they will have built the vocabulary to talk about how and why and author might critique a particular genre. “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” is a great example text to work on as a class to lead up to this assignment, and although I allowed students to choose any text that they felt was critiquing genre in some way, I also provided several texts that they could write about if they wanted.

**Final Genre Project (Short Assignments 3 & 4, Major Assignment 2)**

This project has three parts: a proposal for a piece of writing in a genre, the piece of writing itself, and a self-analysis of that piece of writing. The proposal asks students to think about their genre piece before creating it, and it also introduces them to the genre of the proposal. I use this document as a way of peer-reviewing the genre pieces before they are produced, and I think this step results in more sophisticated and polished genre pieces. After executing the plan for the genre piece, students then complete the second Major Assignment, which involves analyzing their own writing choices. This paper serves as a bridge between the skills developed in the course and the self-reflection required in the portfolio.

**Sequence 1:**

**Short Assignment 1: Scene Observation**

Background

Today in class, we discussed the relationships between scenes, situations, and genres. In this context, we also discussed how a scene might be observed, and how observing a scene can give us clues about the genres that appear in that scene. Now it’s time to jump in, and practice examining some of the many scenes that surround us.

Your Task

**Your task is to observe a scene and write a 2-3 page description of that scene.** This means that your paper should describe 1) the scene in general, 2) the situations in the scene, 3) the genres present in the scene, and 4) how those genres are used.

The scene you choose could be a different class as UW, a student group meeting, a coffee shop, a restaurant, a workplace, or any scene that’s readily accessible where your presence wouldn’t be an intrusion.

Be sure to bring a notebook, and take plenty of notes about the scene (you will need to turn these in with your paper). If there are pieces of writing in any genre that you can take away from the scene (a flyer, a menu, a syllabus, a business card, etc.), please do so. These “artifacts” will help you when you go to write your paper, because it will give you a text you can directly refer to. **When you turn in your paper, please attach your observation notes and any artifacts that you found (photocopies are fine).**

**Short Assignment 2: Genre Analysis**

Background

In class yesterday, you were asked to examine a piece of writing for its rhetorical strategies, and draw conclusions about the scene surrounding that piece of writing. Today we expanded the scope of our analysis, looking at multiple examples of a particular genre to consider what the primary features of that genre are.

Your Task

For this assignment, you’ll be doing a formal version of the activity we did in class today. Instead of looking at a specific piece of writing, **you will find three examples in a genre, and use these examples to draw conclusions about the primary features of the genre**. Your paper will be a 3-5 page analysis of the genre at hand, including the following pieces:

* An introduction that concisely describes the scene and situation in which the genre occurs.
* Several pages of organized analysis of the genre’s main features. A conclusion that describes what the genre’s patterns reveal about the scene and situation.

You should use the “Guidelines for Analyzing Genres” as a starting point, and focus on the questions that are most significant for your genre.

Although you will be analyzing the genre more generally, the evidence for your generalizations will be the specific examples you’ve chosen, so you should quote from your examples wherever you think is appropriate.

**Short Assignment 3: Genre Critique**

Background

In your most recent paper, you analyzed three examples of a genre to determine what the expectations and constraints of that genre might be, and how the examples you chose are working with (or against) those constraints. In doing so, you most likely began to think about the genre critically, considering what problems the genre might pose, and for whom.

We have also been discussing arguments, including evidence, claims, and stakes. This paper is your first opportunity to take the analytical skills you’ve been developing and use them to produce a full-fledged argument.

Your Task
**For this paper, you will choose a genre and perform a 5-7 page critique of that genre**, using the questions on page 161 of Scenes of Writing as a starting point. You will need to find three examples from your genre to serve as textual evidence for your paper, and create an arguable claim about the possibilities and limits of that genre.

Choosing Your Genre

Because any genre can be analyzed for its important features, your choice of genre was wide open for your last paper. For this paper, you’ll need to think about the possible stakes of your paper before deciding on a genre. While cookbooks may present opportunities and limits for their users, it will be hard to say why these limits or opportunities should matter to your reader—especially if your reader is not a world-class chef. On the other hand, looking at the fine print in credit card offers would give you the chance to say something meaningful about who is best equipped to read and understand these terms of agreement, and who might be at a disadvantage for doing so. Please visit my office hours if you’d like to talk through the question of stakes in relation to a genre you’re thinking of writing about.

**Major Assignment 1**

Background

One way of critiquing a genre is to write the kind of academic argument that you made in your last paper. Another way is to bend or break the rules of a genre to make an argument about the genre itself. We looked at how Anzaldua’s “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” critiques the conventions of “academic argument” through the use of personal anecdotes and multiple languages, and we analyzed several shorter texts (such as Cortazar’s “Instructions for How to Cry” and Mayer’s “Sonnet”) that defy the expectations of a genre in order to create particular rhetorical effects.

Your Task

Choose a text that breaks the rules of a genre in order to make an argument and/or create particular rhetorical effects. Then, write a 5-7 page paper that makes an argument about how the text in question works.

Your paper will need to answer the following questions:

* What genre or genres is this text participating in?
* How does the text bend or break the conventions of a genre, and why?
* What argument is the text making about genre?

**Sequence 2:**

**Final Genre Project**

Your final project is to do an in-depth study of a particular scene, genre, and topic, in order to produce a piece (or pieces) of writing in your chosen genre that will target a specific audience. You will also be required to determine what “publishing” venue will be appropriate to reach your audience using your genre. After your genre piece is produced, you will write a paper analyzing the purpose and effectiveness of the rhetorical strategies that you have used.

The project consists of four parts, completed in the following order:

* A proposal detailing the scope of your final project
* A piece of writing in a genre of your choice
* A 5-7 page paper analyzing your piece of writing
* An informal presentation explaining your project to your classmates

Each of these elements will be explained in greater detail in separate assignment sheets in this packet.

1. Brainstorm possible scenes, topics, and genres. At this point, they do not need to relate to each other.

2. Look at the scenes, topics, and genres you’ve developed, and pick a few that seem the most interesting and “do-able” to you. If you’ve chosen a topic, brainstorm particular scenes and genres. If you’ve chosen a scene, brainstorm possible genres and topics. If you’ve chosen a genre (you’ve guessed it!), brainstorm possible topics and scenes. This may require some research or informal interviewing.

3. Decide on a genre, topic, and scene. Then do some “research” into the audiences that are associated with this genre, topic, and scene.

4. Determine what “publishing” venues are available to target this audience.

Keep in mind that there are a variety of media that incorporate written texts: Music scenes, for example, involve song lyrics, album notes, concert flyers, etc. Visual art exhibits in galleries or museums often include artist statements, descriptions of individual pieces of art, promotional materials, and coffee-table books about the exhibit. Business letters often appear on letterhead, and may be accompanied by brochures and/or business cards. Poetry submitted to a literary magazine is often accompanied by a cover letter, but also may be read aloud at an open mic. Think outside the box!

**Short Assignment 4: Project Proposal**

In order to frame your thinking about this project, you will first be required to submit a proposal. **For this part of the project, I will be your audience, and your overall goal is to convince me that your project presents an effective way of reaching your chosen audience through a particular genre and publishing venue.**

Your proposal will involve the following:

Statement of objective (1-2 pages)

Audience analysis (1-2 pages)

Publishing venue analysis (1-2 pages)

**STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE**

What are you trying to achieve through this project? This section presents an overview of your scene, topic, genre, audience, and publishing venue. It should give a comprehensive context for your piece, and include the stakes (why this project matters), and why it is important for **you** to undertake the project.

**This sections of your proposal should make a convincing argument about why this project is important for you to complete.**

**AUDIENCE ANALYSIS**

Once you’ve determined what scene you’d like to respond to, you’ll need to get to know the audience you’re targeting. What age group are they in? What are their interests? How do they typically get their information? Once you’ve determined what your audience is like, what rhetorical strategies will you use to target them?

**This section of your proposal should make an argument about why those rhetorical strategies are appropriate for your audience.**

**PUBLISHING VENUE ANALYSIS**

In order to make the link between your genre piece and your audience more literal, you’ll need to determine what “publishing” venues are appropriate to reach your audience. How do the authors of different genres in your scene reach their audience? Through the newspaper? Putting up flyers? Word of mouth? Speeches? Song lyrics? The radio? Film screenings? Leaving brochures in an office or a coffee shop? Posting a web page? Sending a message out on a listserv?

**This section of your proposal should make an argument about why this publishing venue is the best way to reach your chosen audience through your chosen genre.**

**Paper #6: Genre Piece**

For this portion of the final project, you will be carrying out what you’ve outlined in your proposal. The goal here is to produce an effective piece of writing that can reach your audience through your chosen publishing venue.

Genres, as we’ve often discussed, are more than just textual—they involve visual and tactile elements, too. As the sample projects did, your project will need to replicate the genre in its entirety (so keep this in mind when you choose your genre).

**Paper #7: Genre Piece Analysis**

Now that you have completed your genre piece, your task is to **make a 5-7 page argument about how your piece is using rhetorical strategies to effectively reach your audience.**

Perhaps the hardest part of this assignment will be to go beyond describing your rhetorical choices to sincerely analyzing them. The following questions are a good place to start in terms of engaging with your genre piece:

What opportunities did this genre provide you with? How did you capitalize on these?

What limitations did you discover while working? How did you address those limitations in the final product?

What factors influenced your choice of audience and/or publishing venue?

What rhetorical strategies did you consciously make in order to reach your audience?

What rhetorical strategies did you make unconsciously, and realize later? How do these choices relate to our study of genre?

Feel free to use the first person (“I”) in your paper when necessary, but keep in mind that using the first person is sometimes a shortcut and shuts down deeper analysis. Although you may include information about how you made choices or executed them, the paper should do more than tell the story of how you produced the genre piece.

**Example 5:** Xuan Zheng

I use the following assignments as the first sequence for students to explore the complex relationship between language, identity and culture. The issue of language varieties and identities engages students from all backgrounds, and in particular students who speak multiple languages or have had cross-cultural experiences. Students start this line of inquiry by a personal engagement, and then as they read and discuss more about the role of English and its relationship to other languages, they take on their own questions and collect data by conducting interviews. By the end of the sequence the students are able to analyze and synthesize the evidence they have collected and form their arguments on multilingualism.

**Short Paper 1.1**

The main purpose of this assignment is to get students to apply an author’s argument in analyzing their own lives. It also serves as a starting point for students to look at the issue of language and identity in more depth. Students not only practice the skill of summarizing and quoting, but also engage in observing and reflecting on their experiences in relation to Amy Tan’s arguments. The assignment is given after students have written a Go-post reflection and a class discussion on multiple “Englishes,” code-switching, and cultural conflicts. This short paper usually generates topics that students are invested in and want to pursue further.

**Short Paper 1.2**

The rhetorical analysis paper plays several roles in this sequence: First, in analyzing the effectiveness of two texts that have contrasting views on the English Only debate, students are able to provide reasons beyond their personal opinions of why certain arguments are more convincing than the others. That is to say, when they are asked to form arguments about multilingualism later, they are able to think critically, choose evidence selectively, and make stronger arguments. Second, it is the first time students are introduced to the idea of looking at a text rhetorically. It provides a set of vocabulary for them to talk about their own writing choices: e.g., audience, situation, ethos, pathos and logos. Later in the sequence I occasionally ask students to write a short rhetorical analysis of their own papers. In this way students also become more aware of the rhetorical situations and their own writing choices.

**Short Paper 1.3 and MP1**

Before this assignment, students have had extensive discussion on the English Only debate and multilingual speakers’ challenges. They have also read two articles from educational scholars (Cummins and Morita) that provide academic evidence of how best to support multilingual speakers. Some of the evidence in the two articles challenges and complicates students’ previous viewpoints on multilingualism, and they have been discussing how best to support multilingual speakers in class. Therefore, I have chosen a central question for the major paper, i.e., “*how to support multilingual speakers in the United States while still valuing their native language and identity?”* My experience teaching this assignment is that students may sometimes question the assumption behind this research question (e.g. “multilingual speakers’ identity is only associated with their native language”) and they may have a slightly different focus in approaching this research question. I welcome their critical thinking and I am open to their change in focus as long as they are still making an informed argument.

In order for students to explore the research question, I designed short paper 1.3 as a field research project, where students form groups that share the same research angle/interests (e.g. some may focus on the perspectives from parents while others focus on policy makers) and interview people that are central to this issue. The goal is to have students gather first-hand evidence from multiple perspectives in order to pursue their research question. The interview project often proves to be the most fruitful experience for the students: they need to agree on a research question to explore together, find appropriate interviewees, design a set of interview questions, conduct interviews, and write up their report in a power-point format with their collected multi-media evidence: pictures and transcribed quotes from the interviewees, and video or audio recordings of the interviews. The presentation of their SP1.3 has also contributed to our collaborative understanding on the issues.

The major paper is an integration of the multiple evidence and thinking they have done up to this point. I usually have conferences with them when they bring me an idea draft or an outline for their MP. Since SP1.3 is a group project, the conferences can be done in groups as well. The challenging part is to help students apply what they have learned about argument into forming and articulating their own.

**Conclusion**

Apart from having an in-depth and first hand understanding of the issue on multilingualism, the other merit of this sequence is that it empowers students, in particular multilingual students, to become insiders of their communities. It may, however, pose challenges or resistance from monolingual students who see themselves as speakers of privileged language varieties; but if scaffold well, the challenges can become fruitful teaching moments where students form more complex arguments by learning from others’ perspectives.

**Selected Readings**

Cummins, J. (June 01, 2009). Multilingualism in the English-language classroom: Pedagogical considerations. *Tesol Quarterly, 43,* 2, 317-321. (SP1.3 and MP1)

Lewis, Greg. (2005). An Open Letter to Diversity’s Victims. In Eschholz, Paul A et al. (Ed.) Language Awareness. New York: St. Martin's Press. 196-199. (SP1.2)

Morita, N. (2004) Negotiating participation and identity in second language academic communities.*TESOL Quarterly, 38*(4), 573-603. (SP1.3 and MP1)

Patricia Ryan. (March, 2011). “Don’t insist on English”. TED. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/patricia\_ryan\_ideas\_in\_all\_languages\_not\_just\_english.html. (SP1.2)

Tan, Amy. (2010). Mother Tongue. In Gross, A. et al. (Ed.), *Acts of Inquiry*. New York: Bedford/St.Martin’s. (SP1.1)

**Sequence 1:**

**Short paper 1.1: Reading Response to *Mother Tongue***

***Due date: 4 /4 (On Dropbox and bring a hard copy)***

Now that we have discussed about Tan’s essay *Mother Tongue* in class, we will begin our exploration of the course theme “language and identity.” Your first assignment is to write a **reading response to this essay**.

First, summarize Tan’s main argument, then write a response to the reading by reflecting on your own experience regarding language and identity issues: e.g. How does Tan’s argument relate to your life (or not)? How does language (include multiple languages and/or the varieties of one language you are using) impact your life or identity (or not)? How does language and identity intertwine in your life? You can use the one paragraph narrative you wrote on the Go-post, but be sure to analyze it and connect it well with Tan’s essay.

The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to apply the gist of a text in analyzing the life around you. Your engagement with the text and your own life will play as a basis for our future discussions on language and identity issues.

A successful paper will:

·      Address an academic audience (your peers, not just “friends”)

·      Identify the key arguments of the essay and summarize the text in your own words

·      Demonstrate thoughtful application of Tan’s argument in analyzing life around you

·      Proper formatting

Format: typed, 12 pt Times New Roman, double-spaced, 2-3 pages, 1inch margins, stapled.

Please refer to MLA formatting in *Everyday Writer* for other basics. On the first page, put your name, instructor, course, and date aligned at left margin (double-spaced). Put your last name and page number in upper right hand corner.

**Outcomes targeted**: #1 #2

**Short paper 1.2: Rhetorical Analysis**

**Due date: 4/11**

For your second short paper, write a rhetorical analysisof Patricia Ryan’s speech *“Don’t insist on English”* or Greg Lewis's article "*An Open Letter to Diversity's Victims*." For the speech you may use the “transcription” document on the website to quote her exact words. Make a claim about how the author’s argument works: how it’s put together, how it’s working on its reader, and whether you assess it as effective in its context.

**Guiding questions** *(you don’t need to follow them rigidly):*

∙   What is the rhetorical situation (context) of this text/speech? What’s its purpose and who is the audience?

∙   What is the evidence the author uses to support her argument? How convincing is the evidence?

∙   What are the author’s claims? How do they fit together to create an argument?

∙   How does this text/speech appeal to Ethos, Logos, Pathos?

*You can also refer to the guidelines and examples in Acts of Inquiry Chapter 3 and 4.*

**Keep in mind:**

∙   Begin with a brief overview of the argument, and your main claim that sets up the reader with your overall assessment of the text. (**Use the Précis handout to help you**.)

∙   Analysis: use specific and relevant passages from the text. Make sure you analyze your quotes/evidence for your reader and show how they are relevant to your paper.

∙   Conclude your essay briefly that synthesized your discussion.

∙   For this paper, you are writing for an academic audience.

*Notice: whether you agree or not agree with the argument doesn’t matter for a rhetorical analysis paper. You need to devote most of your attention to how well the argument works, even the one you dislike.*

**Format:**12 pt Times New Roman, double spaced, 2-3 pages, 1inch margins, stapled.

**Outcomes targeted: 1&2&3**

**Short paper 1.3 Group work: Interview Report in PowerPoint**

**All due in Canvas: Interview questions, interview notes and transcriptions, and PPT report: 4/23**

Using personal anecdotes, Amy Tan, a second generation Asian American immigrant, has reflected on her experience using different Englishes, which implies the intimate relationship between one's identity and language. Tan described how she felt when different English speakers were treated differently.  Similarly, from an insider's perspective, Morita has described the struggles and strategies multilingual students faced and used in participating in U.S. classrooms. She argued that English was not the only reason that affected the students' participation in a new academic community.  Nowadays when English has been enjoying the highest degrees of privileges, several teachers and scholars (e.g. Ryan, Cummins) have advocated for multilingualism in order to embrace diverse cultures and ideas, while others (e.g. Lewis) have argued for an English only policy in the U.S. to enhance immigrants' Standard English skills. These texts lead to further questions that remain unanswered:

*How to support multilingual speakers in the United States while still valuing their native languages and cultures?*

*Who should be responsible for their adaptation to the U.S.?*

*What language(s) should be taught in school in the U.S. as well as around the world?  Should we allow non-standard form of English in school and in the society?*

*What is the relationship between language and identity?*

For your MP1, you need to write an argument paper that answers the above question(s). In order to get at a complex claim for MP1, SP1.3 functions as a step for you to collect evidence from the perspectives of *the people that are involved in this debate.* Those are the steps you need to take for this project:

1. Work with 2 other classmates to conduct two interviews on the issue of multilingualism and identity. Depending on your research question, you can interview multilingual speakers (e.g. international students, immigrants, bilingual parents), school teachers or administrators, linguists, professors in different departments, social workers, translators, and etc. It is up to your group to decide who can be your interviewee for your project.
2. Design 5-7 interview questions based on the research question that’s listed above in italics (You can create your own research question, but check with me first). We will workshop on developing interview questions in class.
3. Schedule a time to do the interviews. Conduct the interview (20 minutes each) and record the conversation if you can. Take as much notes as you can, no matter if you have a recorder or not. Write up their answers as soon as the interview is done. Take pictures or bits of artifacts from their daily lives if you want.
4. Create a final report in a PowerPoint slideshow (10 slides maximum). Be creative in using multi-modal texts (pictures, recordings, video clips etc.) while still presenting your information clearly. In this report, tell us the perspectives of your interviewees: What’s their background and experience in the U.S.? What did they tell you that stood out as the most interesting and/or surprising? How do you interpret what they said? What are the other questions that emerged?
5. Present this group project to the class. Each group has 8 minutes, including a short Q&A section.

**Outcome targeted: 1&2&3**

**Report and Presentation guidelines (5 min presentation+3 min Q&A)**

1.   Brief introduction of your interviewees

2.   What are the most interesting or surprising findings?

3.   How do you analyze and interpret what they said to answer your research questions?

4.   What are the limitations of your study? (E.g. Is your evidence sufficient and relevant to answer your research question? You can think about how the educational/cultural​ background/discipline​e of your informants, their age and length of stay in the U.S., personality etc. have influenced your data. You may also think about how the interview and data analysis process - your interview language, your relationship with your informants, and your initial assumptions etc.- have influenced the data.)

**Major paper 1: Making an argument:**

**Due Date: 4/30**

**Idea draft (1page) due at the conference  (AI Ch9 will be helpful for outlining your paper)**

Now that you have had some experience engaging with texts on the issue of multilingualism and identity, you have also collected your own data through the interviews, it is your turn to join the conversation.

For your first major paper, you will need to make a **focused and thoughtful argument** on multilingualism and mult​iculturalism in the U.S., which responds to your research question: *how to support multilingual speakers in the United States while still valuing their native language and identity? (Who should be responsible for their assimilation? What language(s) should be taught in school in the U.S.? Should we allow non-standard form of English in school and in the society?... )*

Think about how your interview data contradicts, complicates, or supports the arguments in the essays we read. Use multiple evidence including both texts and your interview data to support your argument.

For this paper, **you need to choose to address a particular group of academic audience**: language policy makers and/or university faculty and/or international/immigrant students etc., an audience to whom you think your argument matters the most.

A successful draft will:

* make a focused and thoughtful argument
* use multiple evidence in strategic, focused ways (summarized, cited, applied, challenged) to support the goals of the writing
* address appropriately to an academic audience that you specify
* make appropriate use of work previously done in class, including use of feedback

**Format:** 12 pt Times New Roman, double spaced, 5-7 pages, 1inch margins, stapled.

**Outcome targeted: 1&2&3**

# Potential Assignments

As the above sequences show, there are a variety of ways to target the Outcomes for English 131. Below is a list of general types of assignments that will allow students to work toward creating a portfolio of written work to fulfill the outcomes for the course. These assignment ideas can be modified in large or small ways to fit the specific context of your class, and you are also encouraged to produce other types of assignments that will enable your students to meet the Outcomes.

Beneath the name of each assignment are key outcomes that the assignment targets. These descriptions are designed as possible springboards for your own assignments, and to successfully use these assignments in your class, you will need to write a full assignment prompt (including expected length, due dates, the specific nature of the assignment, and expectations for students) and distribute and verbally explain the assignment to your students.

## Major Assignments

### Revising for a New Audience

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4*

In this assignment, students are asked to write an argument-based paper relating to the reading(s) and topics in the course, then to revise that paper for a different audience. Audience here could be thought of in multiple ways (a different person? a different group? a different culture?). This could take the form of revising for an audience in a different academic discipline, or revising both audience and genre for a community outside of the university. This would entail previous short assignments involving researching various disciplines to learn what questions, genres, and rules such writers work with. The focus of this assignment is on comprehensive revision, meaning that students would make *substantial* changes to such things as the questions motivating the paper, the approach, the overall structure, the writing, and what counts as evidence.

### Using Interview or Survey Data

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4*

In this assignment, students are asked to return to previous assignments in the sequence to produce a new, comprehensive, argument-based paper. Students need to have written both a critical analysis of a reading assignment and conducted interviews or surveys (Canvas works well for the latter) earlier in the sequence. In the assignment, students create an argument using both the reading(s) and data they have gathered on the topic.

### Research Paper

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4*

In this assignment, students use their research skills (both online and with library materials) to research a topic closely related to the main reading for the sequence. For instance, students reading Loewen’s essay on heroification might research another historical or cultural event and its representation. Research papers should not be so focused on research that they do not involve complex arguments; instead, students should use research to allow them to develop their ideas on the topic. This type of major paper could be enhanced to involve revising for different academic audiences. A library orientation is suggested for this type of major paper assignment. You can arrange a library orientation for your class through this link: <http://www.lib.washington.edu/Ougl/instructors/instruct.html>.

### Focused Question and Application

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4*

This might be the most common type of major paper assignment—one that asks students to respond to a focused question and apply key concepts from the reading. For instance, if students read “Panopticism,” they might be asked to answer the question, “How can Foucault’s ideas be used to make sense of a particular educational setting?” Students would then apply some of Foucault’s ideas (discipline, control, power, surveillance, etc.) in answering that question. Students reading “Handicapped by History” might be asked to explore one of their own textbooks in a way informed by Loewen’s readings and concepts. In this assignment, students are asked to develop an original claim, work with evidence, revise, etc. Note: a challenge of this type of assignment can be getting students to go beyond simply and uncritically applying the concepts from the reading.

## Short Assignments

### Reading Response

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2*

Reading response papers are typically opportunities for students to summarize all or part of a text (particularly if the reading is long) and respond critically to one or two specific features or sections. These short papers (often 1-2 pages) can be used to respond to a reading in the class and, thus, prepare students for in-class discussion, or reading response papers can be required for outside sources students will use in their major paper assignments.

### Textual Analysis

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3*

In this short assignment, students are asked to focus on a particular aspect or feature of a text and analyze the argument, ideas, use of evidence, or other critical features. Note that the text could be written, visual, or both—an advertisement, say, or a film. As students often struggle with complex analysis, this type of short paper would help them develop complex ideas about a text.

### Analysis of Rhetoric and/or Rhetorical Situation

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3*

This short assignment shares a number of qualities with reading response papers but is geared more toward having students focus on the language and rhetoric of a text, exploring what we can learn about the writers, readers, and situation of which that text is a part. This type of work involves detective work. For instance, students might isolate particular phrases and references in Stanley Fish’s article to determine Fish’s values, what he expects his readers to know and care about, and the key features of the conversation Fish is responding to.

### Close Reading

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2*

In this short assignment, students are asked to closely examine and analyze a sentence or short passage from a complicated reading. Such a paper would probably begin with close scrutiny of the sentence or passage itself, then move on to make connections between the sentence or passage and larger aspects of the text. Students then move to arguing for the significance of both the passage and their analysis. Attention to language, sentence type, and the use of evidence can be valuable here.

### Dialogue between Texts/Authors

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3*

This type of assignment is used in various ways and is geared toward having students explore and analyze how ideas are debated in academic discourse. Students may be invited to imagine a conversation, inquiring into, for instance, how Ramamurthy and Fish see the meaning of texts as determined quite differently. Alternatively, students could put a reading from the course into conversation with an outside reading. In papers like these, students are encouraged to focus mainly on ideas (*culture*, *texts*, or *representation*, say), or to focus on the types of arguments made by the two authors and how those arguments are presented (in terms of language, style, genre, etc.).

### Analysis of Argument

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3*

This short assignment is a lot like other reading response papers, but focuses exclusively on the argument(s) in a text. Students are asked to describe the argument—identifying the main claims, subclaims, types of evidence, use of concessions, and warrants. Or students are asked to visually represent the argument, using boxes and connecting arrows, say. For extremely complex readings with multiple arguments, students might be asked to analyze just one argument in the piece and then present that aspect to other students in the class.

### Analysis of Genre(s)

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3*

Genre analysis can take several forms, all of which are aimed at getting students to be more aware of the larger contexts texts are part of. Students might analyze the genre of the book review, say, identifying key features of that genre and inquiring into what larger purposes and social structures the genre serves and represents. After analyzing such a genre, having students participate in that genre can be a way to utilize their knowledge in powerful ways.

### Analysis of Multiple Audiences about a Single Incident

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 3*

One way to teach students to be increasingly aware of the strategies writers use in different rhetorical situations is to have them produce different responses to a single incident. For instance, students could write short emails about the writing they do in their courses to a parent, friend, and as a letter to the editor of the *Daily*. This exercise would be followed by a short paper analyzing variations in language, style, structure, and ideas in their responses or those of other students.

### Analysis of One Audience About Different Incidents

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 3*

This assignment is similar to the one above, but targets how content and genre (not just audience) determine a lot about how writers compose and present information. Here, students are asked to write to the same audience (a parent or family member, say) about various events at the UW. For instance, students might be asked to write a letter about having broken their foot, an email apology for doing something bad, and a note arguing that the family member should read an article from the class. This exercise would be followed by a short paper analyzing differences between the texts.

### Dialectic Essay

#### *Possible Outcomes: 3*

One way to encourage students to develop complex thinking and writing is to have them write a formulaic short essay that embodies a dialectic. This means that they write from at least two points of view and develop a complex synthesis of those points of view at the end. In such an essay, students would: 1) argue on behalf of a prompt you give them, 2) argue against that position (citing evidence), and 3) conclude by synthesizing between the two points of view. (Note that a dialectic essay of this kind is required in the MCAT.)

### Personal Essay

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1*

While personal writing has been one of the more hotly contested topics in the field of Composition, your students may benefit from writing a short personal essay as part of one of your assignment sequences. If students were reading Loewen’s article, for instance, they could write a short piece reflecting on their own experiences with high school history courses. This would give students a text (of their own creation) to compare with Loewen’s argument. Alternatively, students might benefit from writing about their own cultural background (or other cultural knowledge that they have) if your major paper assignment asks them to explore cultural identity. But be careful: personal writing can be extremely hard to assess, and students who have experienced severe abuse and/or trauma may take this as an opportunity to write about it, putting you in a difficult position as an instructor.

## Activities

### Class Discussion

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3*

Class discussion can be used to support and inform student work at any stage of an assignment sequence (see Chapter 7 of this Manual for more detailed treatment of class discussion).

### Group Work

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4*

### Having students work in groups can be a very effective way to get them to explore multiple points of view on a subject, to understand and apply a reading more fully, to see connections between ideas, to scaffold class discussion, and to work toward greater complexity in their writing (see Chapter 5 for more about designing group work activities).

### Peer Review

#### *Possible Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4*

Peer review sessions can be orchestrated in numerous ways—using writers’ memos, formal rules for response, or informal written comments on the back of each essay. In peer review sessions, students both respond to texts and use feedback from their peers to revise their own papers (see Chapter 5 for more on using peer review). Tutors from the Odegaard Writing and Research Center are happy to come to your class to model and lead peer review sessions. Email Director Misty Anne Winzenreid at owrc@uw.edu to arrange an appointment.

### Writing Conferences

#### *Possible Outcomes: 4*

Writing conferences can also take numerous forms and happen at different stages in the writing process. Early conferences might focus on developing an argument, while later conferences would likely focus on revising that argument, working more effectively with texts, making the stakes of the argument apparent, and beginning to edit (see Chapter 7 for more on conferencing).

### Writing Center Visit(s)

#### *Possible Outcomes: 4*

Some of your students will not be able to get a 2.0 without regular visits to a campus writing center, such as the Odegaard Writing and Research Center (OWRC) or CLUE. Such visits can be required by you and something you assess at the end of the quarter (as part of the participation grade or as part of a major paper assignment). In these visits, students can focus on a range of tasks, from generating ideas to revising in order to create argumentative papers that matter in the academic context.

### Editing Workshop

#### *Possible Outcomes: 4*

While seldom a focus of most writing classes, you can devote class time or particular assignments to editing. Here, students would focus on correcting errors in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics that interfere with reading and understanding the writing (see Chapter 6 for more on grammar and editing).

# Activities, Outcomes, & the Textbook

In order to lead students through the types of assignments and activities listed above, it is important to consider how each assignment or activity needs to be scaffolded. Letting the outcomes drive both your sequence design and your assignment design helps ensure that students are prepared to not only write each major assignment but also to compile their final portfolio and effectively argue in the critical reflection how they’ve demonstrated each course outcome in their selected body of writing. We will briefly connect *some* of the practical reading, research and writing tasks with the outcomes that call for them. Under each outcome are examples of tasks that you could incorporate into a more fully developed assignment, assignment sequence, or in-class lesson. Of course, these are not all the possibilities, but hopefully these ideas can guide you towards developing the assignments you are most comfortable with and most invested in exploring with students. In addition, you might wish to consult the corresponding chapters in *Contexts for Inquiry*, which not only provide useful readings for your students but also in- or out-of-class activities and exercises applicable to the learning goals.

**Outcome 1: To compose strategically for a variety of audiences and contexts, both within and outside the university**

* Explicit reflection on students’ own strategies throughout the quarter
* Writing journals
* Reflection memos accompanying assignments
* Daily/weekly end of class reflections on lessons learned
* Writing in different genres

**Outcome 2: To work strategically with complex information in order to generate and support inquiry**

* Annotating
* Summarizing
* Close reading
* Critical reading/Reading against the grain
* Reading rhetorically
* Rhetorical analysis
* Applying theoretical concepts
* Quote integration
* Observing, making surveys, and conducting interviews
* Developing research questions
* Identifying “conversations” to enter
* Putting texts in “conversation” with one another
* Complicating readings through new evidence

**Outcome 3: To craft persuasive, complex, inquiry-driven arguments that matter**

* Understanding argument versus opinion
* Making concessions and counterarguments
* Complicating claims through increased and diversified forms of evidence
* Examining assumptions
* Introductions
* Conclusions
* Paragraph development as it follows a line of inquiry
* Adding stakes—the so what?

**Outcome 4: To practice composing as a recursive, collaborative process and to develop flexible strategies for revising throughout the composition process**

* Reflective memos
* Peer Review Workshops
* Writing that responds directly to feedback (rather than just passively incorporating it)
* Writing Center visits with reflective write-ups
* Rhetorical grammar exercises