

# Distance Learning Introduction Letter

Hi all,

Welcome to 182! Many apologies in waiting so long to get this letter to you all--we have a lot of ground to cover so I hope you'll bear with me. We're in a strange time, so please think of this course as something in flux. We'll change and adapt as necessary.

To help me plan for the possibilities of an online course, please respond to this email with answers to the following questions regarding your experience with and access to the following technologies:

- Do you have a reliable internet connection? Can you access high-speed Wi-Fi?
- Have you used Zoom before? If not, would you be able to install it on your computer or phone?
- How often do you have access to a computer? Does your computer have a camera?
- How often do you have access to a smartphone?
- Do you have any other accessibility concerns to share in the event we need to switch to an online course, whether for a few weeks or the whole quarter?
- **What is your time zone?**

Now, on to the course itself! Hello! My name is Dr. Sumayyah Daud and I am a PhD graduate from UW in English literature. Welcome to multimodal composition. This course is about comics: how we read them, how we write them, how we make them, and most importantly how we critically engage with them. Over the course of the next ten weeks we will read comics, analyze them, and create our own in class, in groups, and individually. The purpose of this course is two-fold: to broaden your understanding of what we mean when we say 'composition' and to offer you an opportunity to make meaning in a new mode (hence *multi* and *modal*) while engaging critically with that meaning-making.

Per the syllabus, *multimodal composition* is the practice of combining different modes of communication—linguistic, visual, aural, spatial, and gestural—in order to create persuasive 'texts' that can reach a variety of audiences. This class focuses on a particular form of multimodality—comics—to challenge students to think in various modes about how writers, artists, and designers compose texts and make meaning through multimodality. Our course will focus on critical reading and visual analysis of comics and following that take those skills to create your own short comic. This class does not require artistic skill, but it does require an ability to not only analyze comics but to self-reflexively analyze your own work, your writing choices, and the design and artistic decisions you will make throughout the quarter. This may sound really intimidating, but we will spend a *ton* of time in class going through the different aspects of designing and envisioning a comic, coming up with ideas, and world building! By the end of the quarter, you'll be well equipped to produce your own comic script.

This course scaffolds writing through four outcomes:

1. To demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that composers use for different audiences and in different contexts.
2. To read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support composition.
3. To produce complex, persuasive arguments that matter in a variety of contexts.
4. To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading compositions.

The course is split up into **two sequences**. The **first sequence**'s intent is to familiarize you, the creator/designer, with the comic book market, the comic book visual and linguistic forms, and culminates in the beginnings of a pitch for a short comic that takes market, context, form, and audience into account. The **second sequence** builds on the first and utilizes the skills and material you used to begin producing your comic. It includes two major assignments and will culminate in a comic pitch, a ten- to fifteen-page script, as well as a robust critical framing of your work, reflecting on how your comic engages with cultural discourses.

### **Setting Up for the Course:**

This course will be taught through Canvas and Zoom. As a UW student, you should already have Canvas, so you're already half-prepared. I will be using Zoom *through* the Canvas app. If you log on to the course page, on the left hand navigation you will see 'Zoom'. When you click through there a page will appear with scheduled class meetings, as well as personal meetings *and* your groups scheduled break out sessions. At present it might be blank, as we're still in the process of setting up. In addition to Canvas and Zoom you'll need Google Suite. If you haven't activated your UW G-Suite, [here is a guide](#) on how to do that.

### **Course Structure and Participation:**

Because this is an online course, participation is largely measured through group work. At the beginning of the quarter you'll be sorted in groups based on your time zones. You will be expected to attend the lecture section (once a week) or view the recording at your earliest available opportunity. This is the **synchronous** aspect of the course. For the remaining sections of the course you will be expected to meet with your group during your designated time zone to complete group work. This is the **asynchronous** aspect of the course. The completion and submission of this group work, in addition to the sequence assignments constitutes your 30% participation grade. Assignments will always be available on our course website and I of course will be available both during lecture and during your group break out sessions.

### **Late Work Policy:**

Assignments must be submitted by the due date on Canvas. Unless you have worked out a different arrangement with me due to extenuating circumstances, I will not give written feedback on any assignments that are turned in late. That said, I am always available during office hours to discuss late assignments. You will still need to complete late work, as your portfolio must include all assignments in order for it to receive a passing grade. Points will be deducted from your participation grade, but late work will not affect your final portfolio grade.

### **Reading List for the Quarter:**

We will read a number of comics for the quarter, and as you'll see below we start with a very short comic you can download from the course page. But starting with week two, you will need to acquire the reading material. I've listed some retailers below, but this is a great chance to support your local businesses. Many bookstores are now offering delivery and curbside pick up, and even more offer free delivery. My two favorites are [Brookline Booksmith](#) and [Old Firehouse Books](#). If you would prefer to support your local bookstore, [Indiebound.Org](#) can help you locate what is near you via zip code in the United States. All of these titles are also available online, via [Comixology](#). You will need an account with the vendor in order to purchase them (and can similarly purchase them through iBooks, Google Play, and Nook). Comixology has a web browser reader, as well as apps for iOS, Android, and Windows.

- *Uninhabitable* by Jed McGowan (PDF, available on Canvas)
- *The White Trees* by Chip Zdarsky and Kris Anka
- *Cosmoknights* by Hannah Templer
- *Prismstalker*, Issues 1 & 2 by Sloane Leong
- *Invisible Kingdom*, Issues 1 & 2 by G. Willow Wilson
- *Monstress*, Volume 1 by Marjorie Liu

### **The First Week:**

For the majority of the quarter the structure of the course will be the first two-hour block synchronous--that means any lecturing I need to get through, powerpoint presentations, and any questions you might have. The second two-hour block will be asynchronous--this is when you'll meet with your groups for discussion, group work, and peer review.

For the first week of the quarter, however, this will be flipped since we're still in a transition period. Your goal for the first session are as follows:

- ☐ Read *Uninhabitable* by Jed McGowan.
- ☐ On Canvas discussion, post a short introduction to yourself, as well as your timezone.
- ☐ On Canvas discussion, reply to the prompt about comics and *Uninhabitable*.

These responses will be due Tuesday afternoon, no later than 2PM PST.

### **Contacting Me:**

I am available by email at [dauds@uw.edu](mailto:dauds@uw.edu) and by appointment over Zoom. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns!

### **Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing--as long as you cite them. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece

of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review.

### **Concerns:**

If you have any concerns about the course or your instructor, please see the instructor about these concerns as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with the instructor or not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may contact the Director of the Expository Writing Program: Candace Rai.

### **Accommodations:**

If you need accommodation of any sort, please let me know so that I can work with the UW Disability Resources for Students Office (DRS) to provide what you require. This syllabus is available in large print, as are other class materials. More information about accommodation may be found at <http://www.washington.edu/students/drs/> .

### **Religious Accommodation Clause:**

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Faculty Syllabus Guidelines and Resources. Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form available at <https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>.

### **Zero Tolerance Policy:**

Racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination and bias are hurtful and unacceptable. There is no tolerance for words, speech, behavior, actions, or clothing/possessions that insult, diminish, demean, or belittle any individual or group of persons based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual preference, ability, economic class, national origin, language, or age. Academic freedom, freedom of speech, and freedom of discourse DO NOT protect racism or other acts of harassment and hate. Violations of this Zero Tolerance Policy may result in removal from the classroom and actions governed by the student code of conduct will be taken.

### **COURSE OUTCOMES:**

1. To demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that composers use for different audiences and in different contexts.

- The composition employs design, style, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
  - The composer is able to demonstrate the ability to compose for different audiences and contexts, both within and outside the academic setting.
  - The composition has a clear understanding of its audience, and various aspects of the composition (modes, inquiry, content, structure, appeals, design choices, etc.) address and are strategically pitched to that audience.
  - The composer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her design choices.
2. To read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support composition.
- The composition demonstrates an understanding of primary and secondary texts as necessary for the purpose at hand.
  - Researched texts are used in strategic, focused ways (for example: summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the composition.
  - The composition is intertextual, meaning that a “conversation” between texts and ideas is created in support of the composer’s goals.
  - The composer is able to utilize multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources (including library research, visual texts, interviews, observations, cultural artifacts) in order to support composition goals.
  - The composition demonstrates a responsible practice of documenting and citing sources.
3. To produce complex, persuasive arguments that matter in a variety of contexts.
- The argument is appropriately complex, based in a claim that emerges from and explores a line of inquiry.
  - The stakes of the argument, why what is being argued matters, are apparent and persuasive.
  - The argument involves analysis, which is the close scrutiny and examination of evidence and assumptions in support of a larger set of ideas.
  - The argument is persuasive, taking into consideration multiple points of view as it generates its own perspective and position.
  - The composition is user-friendly, utilizing a clear design/organization strategy to support its argument.
4. To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading compositions.
- The composition demonstrates substantial and successful revision.
  - The composition responds to substantive issues raised by the instructor and peers.
  - Small-scale errors of design and style are edited so as not to interfere with understanding the composition.