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ENGL 004-04 COMPOSITION

MWF 9:15-10:20am
Dante 117

Professor Yin Yuan
yy8@stmarys-ca.edu
Office: Dante 305
OHs: Mons and Weds @
11:40am-1pm

Course Resources





[SMC Moodle](#)

[G Drive](#)

[ENG 4 Master Doc \(Live\)](#)

[Course Schedule Overview](#)

[Course](#)

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or that form barriers to your inclusion, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies that can enable you to succeed in the course. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. I encourage you to visit Student Disability Services (SDS) to determine how you could improve your learning. There is also a range of resources on campus, including the Center for Writing Across the Curriculum (CWAC), the Student Success Office, and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).¹

¹ Language adapted from Anne-Marie Womack, "Teaching is Accommodation: Universally Designing Composition Classrooms and Syllabi," *CCC* 68, no. 3 (February 2017): 494-525.

ENGLISH 4 introduces you to college-level composition, and prepares you for **more advanced writing** in English 5, Collegiate Seminar, and other classes within your discipline.

Writing enables and extends thought—to write well is also to think more critically, more creatively, and more comprehensively. English 4 also develops habits of **classroom discussion**, where we learn how to converse articulately and respectfully with each other about our shared texts, and in so doing cultivate a learning community where we learn from different perspectives.

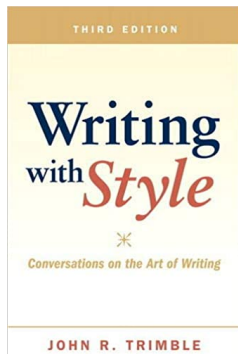
Our course centers around **rhetoric**, which sees texts not as static documents with inherent meanings, but as people, with motivations, who use writing to communicate with and persuade each other. We will practice **thinking and acting rhetorically** through reading, writing, and conversing with each other. This means not passively consuming the information around us but rather asking: what

claims does this information make on me? How does it make those claims? To what end? Are there implicit assumptions or hidden agendas? Do I bring my own assumptions and agendas? Are there alternative perspectives? How do I find out more about those perspectives? How do I communicate most effectively?

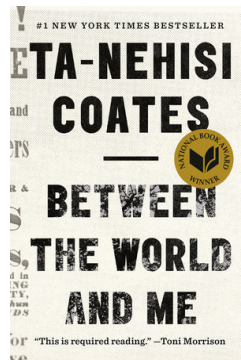
To cultivate these habits and skills, we will write in **a variety of modes and genres**. We will explore new ideas through **freewriting**; practice open-ended inquiry through **drafting and revision**; dialogue with others through **peer workshop**; test claims and examine assumptions through **rhetorical analysis**; gather and evaluate competing perspectives through **research**; and synthesize and respond to those perspectives by formulating sound, complex, and well-supported **arguments**. Both the processes and products of writing are fundamental to our learning.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Please check the ISBN number to make sure you get the correct editions. Books are available at the campus bookstore or through Amazon. Always bring hard copies to class so you can annotate them.



John Trimble, [*Writing with Style: Conversations on the Art of Writing*](#), 3rd ed.
ISBN: 9780205028801



Ta-Nehisi Coates, [*Between the World and Me*](#)
ISBN: 9780812993547



Course readers will be distributed in class. Additional readings available on Moodle.

COURSE OUTCOMES

- ❖
- ❖ Examine your own and others' **assumptions** and identify confirming and opposing evidence
- ❖ Analyze a text through **close reading**: identify a writer's thesis, style, structure, and rhetorical situation; critically evaluate sources
- ❖ **Investigate** a topic: ask meaningful questions; consider relationship between own thinking and writing and the larger community
- ❖ Engage in **systematic analysis**: originate plausible theses; seek
- ❖ Engage in **intellectual discovery** through the writing

- process: ask meaningful questions; originate plausible theses; seek and identify confirming and opposing evidence; synthesize evidence to draw valid conclusions
- ❖ Develop search strategies and use **library** databases to find relevant material

 - ❖ Recognize and compose **effective prose** characterized by: a specific and compelling thesis, strong evidence, purposeful organization, coherent paragraphs, and consideration of the rhetorical situation

 - ❖ Understand the concept of **intellectual property** and practice academic honesty, as evidenced by integrating and citing evidence appropriately.

 - ❖ Recognize **writing as a process** and develop flexible strategies for each of these stages: reading, brainstorming, drafting, research, feedback, revision

 - ❖ Recognize the **collaborative** and social aspects of writing

GRADING

Unit One: Personal Rhetorical Analysis	--- 150 points (15%)
Unit Two: Cultural Rhetorical Analysis	--- 175 points (17.5%)
Unit Three: Critical Personal Narrative	--- 150 points (15%)
Unit Four: Researched Inquiry	--- 175 points (17.5%)
Final Portfolio	--- 100 points (10%)
Informal Writing ("Write-to-Learns")	--- 100 points (10%)
Participation and Professionalism	--- 150 points (15%)

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

93-100% A	83-87% B	73-76% C	60-66% D
90-92% A-	80-82% B-	70-72% C-	< 60% F
88-89% B+	77-79% C+	67-69% D+	

Note: A grade of C- or higher is required to advance to English 5.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

The course is divided into **four** modules: **personal rhetorical analysis, cultural rhetorical analysis, critical personal narrative**, and **researched inquiry**. Each module culminates in an essay with its own distinctive style and rhetorical conventions. Your essays will go through at least **two drafts**, which you will revise based on feedback from your peers and from me. The draft that you will turn in for a grade is labeled the “graded draft.” At the end of the semester, you will turn in **a final portfolio** that documents your growth as a writer.

MODULE 1: PERSONAL RHETORICAL ANALYSIS (PRA)

Perform a rhetorical analysis of a memorable writing experience that you’ve **personally** had in the past. You will reflect on and analyze that experience and piece of writing by considering questions of purpose, exigence, context, constraints, audience, etc.

MODULE 2: CULTURAL RHETORICAL ANALYSIS (CRA)

Analyze the rhetoric surrounding a **particular cultural topic/issue**. You will choose a topic that you care about, identify a few rhetorical artifacts that pertain to that issue, and analyze these artifacts in relation to each other. You will make an **original and engaging argument** about how we should understand the rhetoric surrounding a particular cultural issue.

**MODULE 3:
CRITICAL
PERSONAL
NARRATIVE
(CPN)**

This is **part one** of a two-part assignment. In part one, you will write a **narrative essay** that explores the relationship between you and the world. You will identify an event/experience, describe that event/experience by drawing on appropriate narrative and rhetorical strategies we have seen in Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*, and move to a discussion of the wider cultural/social implications of your experience. This assignment introduces you to the Seminar method of shared inquiry by asking you to advance probing questions about a common text.

**MODULE 4:
RESEARCHED
INQUIRY (RI)**

This is **part two** of a two-part assignment. In part two, you will pose a question that your CPN has opened up for you, and formulate your own answer in the form of a well-substantiated argument. You will familiarize yourself with **library resources** and learn how to collect, evaluate, and synthesize sources.

**FINAL
PORTFOLIO**

Your portfolio documents your growth as a thinker and writer. It includes 1) materials you have created throughout the course; and 2) a final reflection. You will submit this portfolio as a Google Site. Please **keep all work you do for this class** in preparation for completing the portfolio.

PEER REVIEW WORKSHOPS

A key component of this class is drafting and revising our work in response to feedback from each other. Please make sure to save each draft of your work **separately**—"PRA draft 1," "PRA draft 2," etc.

As you will see, revision is not simply an afterthought, but rather central to the writing process itself. For peer review, you will take your classmates' drafts home with you, and you will annotate and respond to these drafts with concrete suggestions.

Missing peer review deprives you and your groupmates of valuable feedback. **For each one of the key tasks below that you miss, you will lose 2% of your overall paper grade:**

- ❖ If you do not attend a peer review workshop for a given paper
- ❖ If you do not exchange your draft with your peers by the stated time
- ❖ If your essay is not a "good faith" draft
- ❖ If you do not provide your peers with concrete suggestions (annotations on their drafts and completed peer response sheets). Lack of proper suggestions includes vague feedback, as well as feedback that consists only of praise.

CONFERENCES WITH INSTRUCTOR

There are three mandatory conferences scheduled for this class (in weeks 2, 7, and 14). Missing a conference constitutes a class absence. Please sign up for these 15-minute conferences through Moodle.

Additionally, you are always welcome and encouraged to come to my office hours or set up an individual appointment to address any questions and concerns.

PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONALISM

Writing is a collective and collaborative activity. This classroom is where we share and develop ideas, and where we will listen and respond to each other's voices. Therefore, it is vital that you come to class consistently, complete assigned work, participate actively in class activities, and respond to your peers during discussion and peer review.

Because our class follows the **seminar style**, your physical and mental engagement directly affects how effective this course is, not just for you but also for your classmates. Note that the discussion skills you practice here will be vital for success in all your other Saint Mary's classes, particularly for the **Collegiate Seminars**.

Here is the specific rubric I use to record and grade your daily participation:

Participation (Moodle Grade Acronym in Parenthesis)	Grade
Insightful comments that shaped our discussion (A)	A = 100%
Made more than one relevant comment (B+)	B+ = 88%
Made one relevant comment (B)	B = 85%
Did not speak (C)	C = 75%
Clearly distracted, unprepared, or disrespectful in your comments (C-)	C- = 71.5%
Absent (F) *Please see attendance policy.	F = 0%
Evidence of active participation in small group work will boost grade up by one level.	

Some class activities will require laptop use, and will be announced accordingly. However, during class discussion where active engagement with your classmates is key, laptop use is not permitted unless otherwise stated. Please always have **hard copies of readings** with you. Please speak to me if the **laptop policy** poses any challenges for you.

INFORMAL WRITING (“WRITE-to-LEARNS”)

In addition to the formal essays, you will also undertake **informal writing tasks designed to facilitate critical thinking and comprehension (“write-to-learn”)**, record your writing process, and build up toward formal assignments.

These may include: in-class freewriting and impromptu essays, homework reflections in response to a specific prompt, discussion questions for the day’s reading, and any proposals, outlines, and self-assessments that lead up to a major assignment. Write-to-Learns are typically **due on Moodle by the beginning of class time**, unless otherwise specified.

You should expect to have written work due for almost every class. This component of your grade is meant to help you: to stimulate thinking, to prepare for class discussion, to practice key writing skills that you will use in the formal assignments, and as a grade booster to those of you who consistently do the work. **Punctual work that meets all requirements will receive full credit**, but since these writing tasks are designed for specific class sessions, **late work** will strictly not be accepted and will receive a 0. You are allowed to miss a total of three WTLs without a grade penalty.

Please consult the **“English 4 Master Doc”** (link also available through Moodle) for work due at every class session. The document will be continuously updated.

REWRITING POLICY

You are allowed to re-write **one** paper this semester for a revised grade. The revised grade will not replace the original grade, but rather be averaged with the original. You can submit this rewrite at any time, but no later than **5pm on Dec 8**. Please consult the Rewriting Policy (available on Moodle) for detailed instructions.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

I am committed to helping us navigate this challenging time together. The specific policies below establish a procedural foundation for how the course will work, but please know that your well-being is of utmost importance to me. Please reach out if you face challenges meeting the requirements for this class. Here are my pedagogical values and commitments to you and our course:

- I will privilege care. Care for your well-being is my commitment to you.
- I welcome your feedback. I ask for your help to actively improve the quality and relevance of our course activities and assignments.
- I recognize that these are challenging circumstances, and I will be flexible with expectations. If you have questions or concerns about deadlines, requirements, details, norms, etc., please ask me.

COMMUNICATION For an overview of course readings and deadlines, consult **Live Course Schedule Overview**. For daily work, agenda, and work due, consult **English 4 Master Doc**. All course documents are available on **Moodle**. Important announcements will be sent out via Moodle to your **SMC email**.

You are always welcome to email me. On weekdays, I will respond within 24 hours. On weekends (Friday after 5pm), I will respond within 48 hours.

ATTENDANCE The regular Composition Program class attendance policy allows students to miss **no more than one week** of

classes in the course of a semester (i.e. 3 class sessions if the class meets on a MWF schedule). If you are a student athlete, you cannot miss class for practice, but you are allowed one extra absence without penalty for games. Arrangements to make up the work for game days should be made prior to the absence.

After the permissible number of absences, each additional absence will lower your final course grade by one half-step (from A to A-, B+ to B, etc). Repeated lateness will be counted as absence. While course grades will be based primarily on student writing, missing **more than three weeks of class** may result in a **failing grade**.

SHARING YOUR WORK

One goal of this course is to build a community through thinking and writing alongside each other. As such, any writing you produce in this class may be shared with other members, whether through peer review or anonymously in class workshops. If you have concerns about this, please come see me.

SUBMISSION OF FORMAL ASSIGNMENTS

All formal assignments must be formatted according to MLA guidelines. Graded assignments must be submitted to Turnitin before class. Turnitin can be accessed through our class Moodle site.

LATE POLICY

All formal assignment drafts are due at **the beginning of class**. Coming to class late on the day something is due means you turned it in one day late. Your work suffers a

half-step grade deduction for every day it is late (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.)

Late WTLs will not be accepted. You can miss up to 3 WTLs without penalty.

**ACADEMIC
HONOR CODE**

You must do your own work and correctly cite all sources you have used. You should not consult outside sources unless explicitly asked to do so.

SMC expects every member of its community to abide by the Academic Honor Code (see [Student Handbook](#)). If a reasonable suspicion arises that you have plagiarized an assignment, you will be referred to the Academic Honor Council for further review and necessary sanctions.

**INCLUSIVE
EXCELLENCE**

SMC recognizes that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. Because our class represents a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences, every member of the class must show respect for every other member. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from our learning community, please speak with me about your concerns and what we can do together to help you become an active and engaged member of our class and community.

COVID POLICY

At SMC, all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to wear masks while indoors. Please help protect our community and loved ones by keeping your masks over your noses and mouths in the classroom.

Please do not attend your in-person class if you have COVID-19, if you are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, if you have been in close contact with others who have symptoms, if you need to care for an individual with COVID-19, or have other health concerns related to COVID-19. Students who miss class due to the above conditions will **not** be penalized for their absence.

If you are unable to attend class, take the following steps.

- Notify me in advance of the absence or inability to participate, if possible.
- Participate in class activities online and submit assignments electronically, to the extent possible.
- Reach out to me if illness will require late submission or other modifications to deadlines.
- If remaining in a class and fulfilling the necessary requirements becomes impossible due to illness or other COVID-related circumstances, contact me to discuss other options.

Once you have contacted me about your situation, I will work with you to deliver and help you complete missed assignments and to reschedule missed exams if applicable. If you are too ill to participate in the class, please take care of yourself. Once you are well enough to participate, I will work with you to decide the best course of action for the rest of the semester depending on your continued health and the amount of work missed.

Facial Coverings Policy

The Bay Area county public health officers collectively announced an indoor mask mandate effective August 3 to help mitigate the spread of the Delta variant of the Coronavirus. This mandate requires all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to wear masks in public indoor spaces. Click [here](#) to read the entire [Contra Costa County Health Order](#).

Accordingly, at SMC, all individuals, ***regardless of vaccination status***, will be required to wear facial coverings while in public spaces indoors. Building signage reflecting the new county health order is in place and all persons on campus are expected to comply with this new mandate.

Masking outdoors is required for unvaccinated students, faculty, and staff, when in crowded spaces or where social distancing cannot be maintained. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear facial coverings outdoors, particularly if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised or at increased risk for severe disease, or if someone in their household is unvaccinated.

Saint Mary's is committed to creating a culture of masking. Students, faculty, and staff should feel comfortable wearing facial coverings whether they are vaccinated or not.

Saint Mary's College will be supplying N-95 masks to faculty and staff upon request. These can be obtained by contacting Public Safety or Facilities.