

WRS 106 and 107 – Spring 2023 Special Topic Descriptions

(Subject to change – Please check Canelink for current information)

All WRS 106 and 107 classes, regardless of the assigned topic, are first and foremost writing classes, and fulfill part of the Written Communication Skills General Education requirement. Students can expect to work on their writing in every class, specifically on composing essays and other multimodal projects that require: (a) textual analysis; (b) critical thinking; (c) sourcing and integrating secondary sources; (d) the kinds of inquiry that take place at a research university; and (e) an argument. Even though topics below give an idea of the focus in each WRS 106 section, students will nevertheless have the chance to write about a wide variety of issues regardless of the WRS 106 or 107 special topic class they are registered in. All sections of WRS 106 or 107 have the same learning outcomes regardless of the thematic approach.

WRS 107 (Writing for STEM) is an alternative to WRS 106 and is an option for students in the sciences or engineering, or for anyone with an interest in science writing. WRS 107 fulfills exactly the same Written Communication Skills General Education requirement as WRS 106. WRS 107 also focuses on writing, but the topics and writing genres are science-based. Students read and write about science, medicine, and technology, with the goal of learning to produce accounts of theory and research for a general audience, and to craft well supported arguments about topics in a variety of fields. Students work with scientific databases and peer-reviewed journal articles, and in assignments produce several different types of texts, including formal papers using appropriate scientific citations; informal online postings, such as wikis or blogs; and multimedia assignments, such as short videos or podcasts. **For a complete list of WRS 107 sections and schedule, please refer to Canelink.**

WRS 106 Special Topic Descriptions

(Subject to change – Please check Canelink for current information)

106 Section	Instructor	Description
O6 P6 R6 S6	Burley	Love 106: A Multidisciplinary Look at Love This section of 106 will focus on a multidisciplinary look at love. Through reading and analyzing texts from popular culture, feminist biology, cultural anthropology, and modern literature, we will explore how various disciplines respond to love. You will search your own discipline to write about how love affects it.
B5 C5 E5	Cash	Environmental Representations In this class, we will think and write about our relationship with our environment, focusing on media and textual representations of ecological concerns. In the first half of this course, we will analyze different environmental texts, including story, short videos, television shows, film and other modes, interrogating how we, as a society, represent our relationship with our environment. In the second half of the semester, you will select an ecological topic of significance to analyze and research for your final project. This class aims to help you make your written and multimodal communication more effective by strengthening and supporting your arguments through close analysis, lensing, and secondary source material. You will engage with primary texts and secondary research, formulate your own ideas and arguments, and communicate those ideas effectively to a given audience within a specific rhetorical context. To increase the effectiveness of your writing, this course will promote a cooperative learning environment to help you refine your writing strategies through in-class writing and drafting, discussion, workshops, and peer and instructor feedback.
O5	Christmas	Monsters This course will focus on representations of monsters. We will be attempting to answer the following questions: What defines a “monster”? How are monsters portrayed in various genres? How do these representations impact our understanding of monsters? How does the portrayal of the monster change between genres? Why does this shift happen? Along with the exploration of these questions, we will also be engaging with secondary research and developing writing strategies to improve the effectiveness of your writing.
F2 G3 H1 J1	Deveney	Churchill on War and Peace Winston Churchill was among the great war leaders of the 20th century. But he was also a prolific writer who, like Faulkner, Hemingway and Steinbeck, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. In this course, we will study and write about Churchill as a writer and a historian, examining how his writing propelled a political career that spanned the Victorian age to the Cold War. Churchill was a journalist, a novelist, the author of more than 50 books and the writer of great speeches that resonate to this day. As writers ourselves, what can we learn from his work? What lessons might Churchill's writing provide for us in terms of developing style and the ability to make persuasive arguments? A vast selection of Churchill's work, along with the work of other historians, will be the focus of our writing.
N2	Donabella	Disability This class will explore a range of contemporary media—such as personal narratives, film, poetry, and multimodal art—with an emphasis on the relationship between disability and society. We will examine how disability moves through different figurations in both creative media and literary criticism. While we might be conditioned to think of disability as a visible impairment, we will take disability here to encompass both visible and non-visible illnesses and impairments. To expand our understanding of

WRS 106 Special Topic Descriptions

(Subject to change – Please check Canelink for current information)

		disability and the scope of our analyses, we will also utilize the term <i>debilitation</i> , which refers to fatigue, disability, and illness that emerge(s) slowly as a product of myriad structural and economic factors (Puar 2017). Together, we will compare how disability is represented across creative genres and why those representations might look similar or different. We will ask questions such as: How do friends and family respond to the sudden onset of disability and illness? How are we conditioned to think about disability and illness in contemporary society? What do art and literature that highlight disability ask us to think about? How is disability sometimes produced by the state, modes of production, or a combination of the two?
D6 E6 G4 H4	Gautam	Belonging and Diversity This course will consider issues of belonging, migration, and individual and national/transnational identity in the context of the end of British Empire and the ensuing postcolonial condition in countries such as India, Pakistan, Israel, Palestine, Ghana, Burma, the Caribbean and the U.S. By examining various texts, writings, and literary works from these countries, we will analyze the complex issues of violent belongings, diasporic identities, nationality, and transnationality in the present world created mainly by the British Empire. We will use the texts as a springboard not only to our own writing, but also as a way to consider how we can make different kinds of meanings and understand various contexts by looking closely at the written words.
N4	Gordon	Writing About Caribbean Texts Building from WRS 105, this course will continue to develop your skill and confidence as a writer through textual and visual analysis. Whereas WRS focused on personal data and observation, this course will begin to expose you to research methods, citation styles and more complex argument strategies. In this section, we will be practicing these skills by exploring Anglophone Caribbean idiom. Through engagement with a variety of mediums and genres, we will unpack this term and trace moments in Caribbean cultural production.
N1 O1 P1 R4	Green	Writing Oneself
E4 F6	Hoffmann	Australian Culture This writing course will look at depictions of Australia as a springboard for exploring questions of personal and national identity. We will examine a range of genres and media, including short stories, film, novel excerpts, and advertising. In so doing, this course will help develop your skills as a writer who can make meaning by closely analyzing and interpreting a variety of representations, by using theory and scholarly articles as lenses of interpretation, and by doing independent research.
H3 J4 K1	C. Hoffmann	Migration, Refuge, and Asylum In this course, we want to explore social justice as it relates to people who are forced to leave their home countries because of poverty, violence, war, and persecution. Through individual and collaborative research and writing, we want to investigate how and why local, national, and global injustices displace people. By analyzing literature, films, music, art, and oral histories together, we will work as a community of researchers and writers to explore the representation of undocumented migration, refuge, and asylum through a human lens. How do silenced people claim their voices in the face of struggle? How can we hear their voices? How do their voices provide us with deeper insights into debates about national and global inequalities?
P2 R2 S2	Hood	Power What is it? Who has it? How do you get it? Why do you want it? This course explores the sources and impacts of power, the forms and feelings of it: picture power, physical power, personal power, political power. We will hear about it, read about it, talk

WRS 106 Special Topic Descriptions

(Subject to change – Please check Canelink for current information)

T2		about it, write about it with inspiration from TED Talks speakers, anthropologist and theorist Michel Foucault, social psychologists French and Raven, and contemporary journalist Malcolm Gladwell. Our conversation will focus on thinking and questioning critically, articulating and expressing ideas effectively, and making meaning through word and image.
B2 C2 D2 E2	Hospital- Medina	The Idea of I How real is the notion of a genuine self? Elizabeth Wurtzel states in her memoir, Prozac Nation, “I feel like a defective model.” In this course we will investigate the extent to which self-description is accurate by interrogating literary uses of the word “I” and the authenticity of self-expression. By reading or witnessing various materials with personal points of view, such as memoir, character-narrated film, first-person fiction and/or poetry with “I” as the speaker, we will encounter diverse perceptions of self-awareness, identity and self-examination. In addition to indulging in the intimacy of the works, we will examine the idea of “I” alongside theoretical material from writers, philosophers, and psychologists. We will dive into imagination and interpretation with a splash, use our critical thinking and, at the same time, practice the skill of cohesive, yet multifaceted writing. In a sense, our writing will be multidimensional, built from reader imaginings, empathy, as well as objectivity. To create these complex essays, we will master structured writing, argument validity and full-blown writing confidence.
U3	Jung	Universal Issues
A4 B4 C4 D4	Ly	Social Justice Today In this course, students will explore the various social issues affecting the United States. Students will explore how politicians, celebrities, organizations, and citizens have shaped ideas and notions of social issues through writing (e.g., Rogerian essays). Class will be built around discussions and analysis where students will examine how hashtags such as #blacklivesmatter, #sayhername, #metoo, #neveragain #whyIstayed, and #equality can serve as forums for spreading information to audience and for advocating for change. In addition, students will investigate the rhetorical effects that modes of communication (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, television, blogs) have toward building community and equity. Students will have opportunities to apply their rhetorical knowledge and creative skills through designing writings that seek to communicate a central message around a social justice movement and present their work to the class. Taking this course will help students acquire new perspectives on social issues, develop a more in-depth understanding of social justice movements within the U.S., and become a more informed and engaged participants in public life. Textbook: Writing Analytically by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen (8 th edition)
A1 B1 E3	McGrath- Moreira	The Civically Engaged Mind: What are the opportunities and impacts while at University? What drives students to become part of National Gandhi Day? Girl Up? UNICEF? And so many other community-based organizations connecting to UM students? English 106 – The Civically Engaged Mind – will focus on building your analytical reading and writing skills, while exploring the research examining the impact of motivations behind college volunteering as well as the trends, discrepancies and/or gaps. Most importantly, you will apply what you find in the research to a service learning organization of your choice. With over 171 organizations on https://orgsync.com/login/university-of-miami , you will survey and join an offline or online organization that may be a good fit for your academic and professional journey. This course is for the civically or non-civically minded student that is ready to become engaged and build their writing craft.
	McGrath- Moreira	Race, Class, and Mass Incarceration This course is designed to create a dialogue about prison writing and a platform where issues of incarceration and social justice can be addressed in a sustained way. Through a series of written exchanges with locally incarcerated writers, we will learn to question our assumptions and rethink the fundamental paradigms that have shaped our concepts of justice, criminality, and imprisonment. Our written exchanges with the prisoners at a Florida correctional institution—along with subsequent discussion,

WRS 106 Special Topic Descriptions

(Subject to change – Please check Canelink for current information)

		analysis, and feedback both sent and received—will improve our writing. We aim not only for eloquence and clarity in our writing, but for new understandings of ourselves, each other, and society. Possible texts include : excerpts from Michelle Alexander’s <i>The New Jim Crow</i> , Michel Foucault’s <i>Discipline/Punish</i> , Victor Frankl’s <i>Man’s Search for Meaning</i> , and the graphic works <i>Maus</i> and <i>Palenstine</i> ; David Foster Wallace’s “ <i>This Is Water</i> ,” Franz Kafka’s “ <i>In the Penal Colony</i> ,” and Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “ <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> ”; the films <i>Slam</i> by Marc Levine and Saul Williams, <i>13th</i> by Ava Duvernay, and <i>American Violet</i> ; episodes from the television series <i>Orange Is the New Black</i> ; and selections from <i>Razor Wire Women</i> and <i>Exit, Civilian</i> . Other possible authors could include Henry David Thoreau, Martin Luther King, Jr., Angela Davis, and Nelson Mandela.
U2	Moon	Afro-Asian Solidarity This course centers on reading and writing about the intimate relationship between the Black and Asian cultures in the US and beyond. Starting with the contemporary Blasian culture across the world (Hail K-Pop, but did you know there is Black culture that made it fav?), we will read, discuss, and write about the Black and Asian cultural collaboration in history, literary works, social media, film, and more. Course materials include Toni Cade Bambara, W.E.B. Du Bois, Alice Walker, Merle Woo, Nellie Wong, and Nicola Yoon. Participants are expected to craft essays in response to reading materials and a final research paper about the interminority intimacy.
D3 E3 F3	Musgrave	Water is Life This section will be an instruction in English rhetoric and essential expository writing skills with a thematic focus on humanity’s current position in a rapidly changing natural world, specifically in regards to water. It is not a science class. Our readings will investigate such questions as: Is access to clean water a fundamental human right? What does climate change actually mean? Why are scientists always so doom and gloom? Does Flint, MI have clean water yet or not? Put simply, this course will explore the ways that we relate to and interact with water culturally, economically, politically, and metaphorically.
J3	Northrop	Environmental Representations How do we relate to our environment? How do we interact with the landforms and life forms around us? How do we understand fluid ecological elements like air and water? This course tackles these tangled questions through a historical lens, looking back to archival photographs, many genres of literature written during the 1970s, and to more recent journalism and policy documents to analyze a range of Indigenous and settler perspectives. We will engage in discussion, peer review, workshopping, planning, and drafting to craft both multimedia and exclusively written projects, including an analytical essay and a research paper.
C3 D5 F5 G5	Pappas	Universal Issues This multi-disciplinary writing course explores a range of conditions, crises, and opportunities shaping our world. We will concentrate on thinking, discussing, and writing from different perspectives and through multiple lenses, using analytical, interpretive, and, hopefully, innovative strategies and techniques.
C1 D1 E1 F1	Phillips	Relationships in the Digital Age Is your phone a security blanket? Are you really friends with your "friends" on Facebook? Would you ever break up with someone online or via text? In this course, we will use multimedia sources to write about how relationships have changed in the borderless internet age. How has technology impacted relationships--among friends, enemies, potential partners, workers, video gamers, shoppers, teachers/students, family members, and others? Should filters (provided by websites, schools, parents or other authorities) be provided for digital relationships? What about privacy issues, or has new media transformed our relationship with privacy? We will discuss, read, and write about social networking sites such as Facebook, online dating sites, chat rooms,

WRS 106 Special Topic Descriptions

(Subject to change – Please check Canelink for current information)

		blogs, Craigslist and more. Do new media offer mostly positive or mostly negative changes regarding how we relate to one another?
H2 J2 K2	Pici	<p>Love 106: Understanding Love</p> <p>This course teaches techniques and core competencies of academic writing, analysis, and research by exploring the following thematic topic: the psychology of Eros (mate-bonding love) in the human animal. As you learn tools for reading and writing effective academic arguments, you will also learn to apply a biocultural lens to investigate the psychodynamics of human mate selection, pair bonding, and pair breaking. How do these artistically epic and species-typical phenomenon embed in the bodies, brains, and texts of homo sapiens? Does the human mind come pre-installed with evolved mechanisms for falling in (and out of) love? What do they mean to you? Assignments are designed to teach some basic literary-, visual-, and audio-literacy skills also: you will write critical analyses of paintings (static visual texts), film (non-static visual + verbal texts), short stories (verbal texts), and songs (musical-audition), putting these artistic visions of love in conversation with evolutionary/scientific theories.</p>
R5 S5 T3	Reid	<p>Belonging and Diversity (Searching for Peace of Mind)/Universal Issues</p> <p><i>"A divine dance appears in the soul and the body at the time of peace and union"</i> - Rumi. People are searching for peace of mind. They are searching for meaning in life. They are seeking security in times of turmoil. Many are pursuing peace by connecting in relationships. Others are seeking a way out of pain. This course will explore the topic of the human mind, both conscious and unconscious, on a quest for peace. We will engage with multimedia sources to write about this human experience, across time and cultures, organized through six fundamental life themes that contribute to our identification of self and search for peace: Love, Power, Personal Value, Truth, Justice, and Freedom. This course teaches techniques and core competencies of academic research, analysis, and writing. As you learn strategies for developing effective academic arguments, you will also apply a psychoanalytical lens to investigate our topic. Perhaps we will discover in our writing studies, that peace of mind is not something we do or find but rather something we cultivate and nurture within ourselves.</p>
R1 S1 T1 U1	Reyes	<p>Aspects of the Feminine</p> <p>This course will consider the Eternal Feminine as a psychological archetype and philosophical principle. We will use Carl Jung's Aspects of the Feminine as a lens to reflect on the collective unconscious and write about the psychology, philosophy, and mythology of women. Topics include Mother Nature, Aphrodite and Demeter, Eve and Genesis, Lolita, and Marilyn Monroe among others.</p>
N6	Rodrigues Barcelos Da Silva	<p>Getting Medieval</p> <p>Through this course, we're traveling back in time to look at unorthodox women and how they were represented as evil, hags, sorcerers, sinners, <i>loathly ladies</i> or witches. Our main goal is to develop a scientific look towards the selected texts, fostering critical questioning and hypotheses development in short academic essays. The course will consist of group discussions, workshops, alongside lectures. Above all, I aim at creating an environment of discovery and academic investigation.</p>
R9	Rogers	<p>Universal Issues</p> <p>Reading, thinking critically, researching, and writing at a university level--these form our ultimate objectives. To achieve these objectives, we focus on universal issues of violence, ways of seeing, identity, alternatives, and comparisons with the reality in our space and time. Writers from Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and North America create our chosen literature. Their writers include Tadeusz Borowski, Gabriel García Márquez, Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, Gao Xingjian, Derek Walcott, Svetlana Alexievich, and others. What does critical analysis reveal about their ideas? How do these ideas fit in our</p>

WRS 106 Special Topic Descriptions

(Subject to change – Please check Canelink for current information)

		changing world? How do we communicate our discoveries with clarity, vigor, depths, evidence, varied lenses, and persuasion in our individual writing voices?
O4 P4	Schonwetter	<p>Belonging and Diversity How do we create a sense of self in this ever-evolving and, at times , oppressive world? In what ways do power structures play a role in molding our concept of identity? Can we remove ourselves from this process and in doing so, truly live as diverse and ethical beings? This course aims to answer the above by examining the social construction of language, race, socio-economics, and gender in its relation to identity. Students will participate in close analysis of literary theory and literature, visual artifacts, and excerpts from film. Classes will also focus on the writing process, collaboration, critical thinking, and using theory as a lens to examine primary sources. Authors and theorists include: Michelle Alexander; Gloria E. Anzaldua; Judith Butler; Ta-Nehisi Coates; bell hooks; Jacques Lacan; Jhumpa Lahiri; Chuck Palahnuik; and Salman Rushdie.</p>
A2	Soriano	<p>To Boldly Go Speculative Fiction (or, Science Fiction) engages our ever-shifting individual, social, and philosophical presuppositions and asks us to reflect on <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> we throw ourselves into alternative futures and realities. Although these narratives may document and dramatize a future, these narratives are always directed from a contemporary moment. These futures speak to our presents. In Writing Studies 106, we will “boldly” embrace, grapple with, and critically reflect upon speculative futures—found in film, television, and short stories—that challenge our sensibilities, dispositions, and outlooks. In our discussions and writings, we will consider representations of politics, sexuality, gender, power, space, and utopianism/dystopianism and ask how speculative fictions invite us to critically destabilize these naturalized terms. “To Boldly Go” asks students to engage with a litany of transnational, transmedia, and interdisciplinary cultural productions to develop a more rigorous and textured analytical and reflexive writing practice. This course offers students a chance to become more sophisticated readers/viewers/listeners and writers through deep, critical engagement with 20th and 21st century representations of speculative futures.</p>
S9	Tobin	<p>Heroes and Villains An exploration of the qualities of heroism, both real and imagined, as well as the nature of villains and anti-heroes, using Joseph Campbell’s <i>The Hero with a Thousand Faces</i> as our anchor text</p>
A1	Vargas	<p>Universal Issues</p>
P5 S4 T4	Wafer	<p>Exploring Normalcy “The first thing I want people to know about me is that I think normal people suck, guys, they suck,”-- Jonathan Mooney This class introduces students to key concepts concerning the social construction of normalcy, and how those who have been riders on the symbol of what is not normal in American culture – the short yellow school bus, and those folks with any kind of perceived or real disability – serves as a social function. As one of the writers you will be reading in this course states: “The short bus polices that terrain; it patrols a fabricated social boundary demarcating what is healthy and sick, acceptable and broken, enforcing normalcy in all of us” (Mooney 28). We will examine, by reading academic scholars in the field of Disability Studies and then writing about the issues and ideas they raise - myths of who we are, who we should be like - that scholars suggest is actually created by categorizing people with disabilities. Michael Foucault suggests that “the judges of normality are present everywhere”. Want to explore a multi-cultural identity that has been the missing term in the Race, Class, and Gender Triad? Hop on board this academic bus. This intellectual ride is an eye-opener.</p>