

Spring 2025 – WRS 106 Special Topic Descriptions

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

All WRS 106 classes, regardless of the assigned topic, are first and foremost writing classes. Writing is our subject. Students can expect to work on their writing skills 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 section, students will nevertheless have the chance to write about a wide variety of issues regardless of the WRS 106 special topic class they are registered in. WRS 106 fulfills part of the Written Communication Skills General Education requirement.

WRS 107 (Writing for STEM) is equivalent to WRS 106 and is an option for students in the sciences or engineering, or for those with an interest in science writing. ENG 107 fulfills 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, please refer to Canelink.

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E3 F3 G4	Abraham	Adventures in Academic Writing: “Writing the Visual”
N3 O3 P3 R3	Bradley-Cousins	The Civically Engaged Mind What motivates student engagement with local and national organizations such as 500 Role Models and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and designated days of service such as MLK Jr. Weekend of Service and National Gandhi Day? WRS 106, The Civically Engaged Mind, is geared towards focusing on building your analytical and writing skills while comprehensively exploring the research examining the motivations behind college volunteering, as well as the existing trends, discrepancies, and/or gaps. Primarily, you will apply what you find in your research to a service-learning organization of your choice from the more than 200 organizations by visiting https://serveandlead.studentaffairs.miami.edu/get-involved/studentorganizations/index.html
A3 B3 C3 D3	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.
A5 C5 D5	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.
D6	Cisneros	The Idea of I In this class, we are dismissing the idea of “good” or “bad” writing. Instead, we are contextualizing writing within your specific personal experience— the way you have used it, the way you are using it, and the way you hope to use

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		it in the future. To this end, there is only “effective” or “not effective” writing. Like with any skill in life, writing must be practiced and honed in order for the writer to become more effective. In this class, we are embracing the process of writing, which means becoming comfortable with the imperfect first draft, and every draft that leads to your final product. The foundations of this class will be based on Simone de Beauvoir’s theories of literature, which will in turn inform the way we approach not only the pieces of literature that we study in this class, but also the way we approach our own writing.
N5	Cornick	<p>It’s so Miami</p> <p>Have you ever wondered about what makes Miami, well, "so Miami"? Dive into the heart of Miami’s unique culture, landscapes, and people in "It's So Miami." This course explores the vibrant diversity and layered stories that make Miami unlike any other place in the world. Through consideration of a variety of texts including narrative nonfiction, short fiction, and art, you’ll develop writing skills to bring Miami's iconic neighborhoods, hidden histories, and cultural dynamism to life on the page. Drawing inspiration from Miami's art, architecture, food, and languages, we’ll use writing to dissect what it means to live in “The Magic City.” Students will hone their voice, explore Miami, and create a portfolio of work that captures the essence of this extraordinary city.</p>
G2 HI2 J2 K2	Gautam	<p>Belonging and Diversity</p> <p>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.</p>
O5 P5 R5 S5	Green	<p>Science Fiction & Pop Culture: To Boldly Go</p> <p>Although science fiction is frequently associated with alien worlds, as portrayed in films like <i>Avatar</i>, and futuristic portrayals of Earth, such as depicted in <i>Looper</i>, the genre is really concerned with our own society of the present. Using exotic landscapes and future worlds for their settings, science fiction presents allegorical tales that question our morality over and understanding of real and relevant issues such as privacy, free will, and how we define our very identity. This course will look at selected works – both films and written stories – examining the ideas presented and the use of science fiction as a motif to explore these issues.</p>

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G3	B. Hoffmann	<p>Australian Culture</p> <p>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.</p>
P2 R2 S2 T2	Hood	<p>Power</p> <p>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 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.</p>
B2 C2 D2 E2	Hospital-Medina	<p>Humans and Nature</p> <p>In this engaging writing course, students will explore the profound connection between humans and the natural world. Through a lens of biophilia, we will delve into the ways our innate attraction to nature influences and helps us. With a blend of ecological studies, media and experiential writing exercises, students will develop a deep understanding of the human-nature bond and how it shapes our perspectives. We will examine various genres, from academic articles to song lyrics, as vehicles for expressing this connection and fostering environmental appreciation. By the end of this course, students will not only enhance their academic and rhetorical skills in preparation for careers in any field but also see the vast possibilities nature has to offer.</p>
HI3	Jung	<p>The Monstrous Other</p> <p>What is “monster”? These horrifying but fascinating creatures have roamed around us, touching our fears and desires. Under the banner of normalcy, these monstrous beings are always symbolic of “others” who are excluded and denied from “our” society throughout history. From Morgan le Fay, the power-desiring witch in Arthurian romances, to the mentally disordered Joker in Todd Phillips film, they have been differentiated based on religion, race, class, and gender. However, these symbolic “others” often challenge the dominant forces of ostracizing, erasing, and repressing them by posing a question about who the monster actually is. In this section of WRS 106, students will read “monsters” from Medieval romances to contemporary art and film texts and examine how they have been created, developed, and reiterated in those texts. Throughout the journey of exploring and writing about</p>

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		“monsters,” students will become more sophisticated readers and writers by focusing on textual analysis. Students will conduct close reading exercises, analyze primary and secondary texts, and explore how to apply texts to theoretical frameworks and how they engage in conversation with each other. Moreover, students will conduct academic research, learn how to build well-supported arguments, and continue to improve their writing through various writing-related activities.
HI4	Lipman	Rhetoric of Science Fiction This course enhances students' writing and research skills through the lens of speculative fiction from the Caribbean. Students will develop advanced approaches to multidisciplinary written and multimodal communication, emphasizing transferable skills in academic analysis, argument, and research. By engaging with diverse speculative narratives that challenge traditional boundaries, students will explore how these works address complex themes of identity, power, and societal change. The course will focus on developing critical writing skills through analysis of speculative fiction texts, enhancing research abilities by exploring interdisciplinary perspectives on speculative narratives, crafting persuasive arguments that engage with the rhetorical strategies employed in speculative fiction, and producing multimodal projects that demonstrate understanding of speculative fiction's role in reimagining historical narratives and envisioning alternative futures. Through this thematic framework, students will hone their academic writing and research skills, preparing them for advanced communication across various disciplines.
A1 B1 E5 F2 G1	Ly	Adventures in Academic Writing Through the Archives: The Rhetorical History of the University of Miami Archives can sometimes be the byproduct of heteronormative and patriarchal institutions. Understanding how archives are created and stored plays a role in determining which voices are heard and which are (un)intentionally left out. In this course, students will get to know their own university through a historical lens. They will review and analyze archives to learn how materials are circulated and how materials can create access points to different kinds of knowledge. Students will investigate how UM events and people can be archived to push certain perspectives while simultaneously silencing other perspectives, and this investigation will teach students about intersectional analysis and rhetorical situations. Students will experience research through the lens of an archivist, see the research process that takes place behind the scenes, and learn the politics and rhetoric of doing archive research. Some questions that will guide this course include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do representations of events and people evolve over time? ● How can we archive materials to accurately and truthfully represent all voices? ● What is at stake when we try to read archives for the representation of others? ● When does archiving become art or vandalism or erasure?

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C4 D4 E4 F4	Mahoney	21st Century Feminism This course will be informed by disciplines and topics within the overarching subject of 21st Century Feminism. Disciplines may include sociolinguistics, politics, sociology, and/or philosophy, and topics may include the male gaze, intersectionality, popular culture/media, identity, and/or rhetoric. Assignments will ask students to work with secondary sources, and may include rhetorical analysis, multimodal projects, pre-21 st century and 21 st century comparisons, and will allow for students to conduct examinations in areas of their interest.
N1 O1 P1 R4	McFarlane	Power Have you ever been influenced? Yes, of course; we all have, and whether positively or negatively, powerful rhetorical choices were likely involved in influencing you. Through the close reading of rhetorical messages, in common genres like advertisements, this class explores how language has the power to affect students in their everyday lives. In this course, we will analyze the power of rhetoric in different forms of media such as but not limited to texts, articles, speeches, postings, stories, and film, putting them in conversations with each other, and become more aware how others may use their own rhetorical strategies to influence or manipulate you. Through workshops, peer and instructor feedback, and in-depth discussions, this course aims to empower students' rhetorical choices using analysis, lensing, and secondary source material to develop, strengthen and support their arguments, making their written communication more effective.
J4	McGrath-Moreira	The Civically Engaged Mind: Opportunities and Impacts in College Collaborate with organizations like Mentoring America, Eco-Agency, CLEO, and STEP to build your core academic writing skills while exploring social change through community involvement to build your college level inquiry and writing skills. Though this course does have a civic engagement focus and tag, the fundamental goal is writing to model a college level discourse community that applies rhetorical analysis, critical thinking, research synthesis, and consideration of multiple perspectives to build awareness of the constructed nature of written discourse. Students will also create a multi-modal project that represents a semester of research and writing, which they may choose to share on professional platforms such as LinkedIn and Handshake.
E6 J3	Mejia	The Monstrous Other This course explores the concept of the "monstrous other" across diverse cultural, historical, and theoretical contexts. We will explore how monstrosity functions as a lens through which societies express fears, anxieties, and desires related to identity, difference, and power. Adopting a multidisciplinary approach, we will critically analyze literary texts, films, folklore, and contemporary media, focusing on how monsters—literal or metaphorical—both

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		reflect and challenge social norms. In doing so, we will uncover the complexities that shape our own processes of identity formation.
N2 O2 R7	Millard	<p>(Dis)ability</p> <p>WRS 106 will deepen your college-level writing, research, and critical thinking abilities with a thematic focus on disability. In this course, you will explore writing as a tool for accessibility, considering how effective communication can address diverse needs within disability communities worldwide. Through secondary research, multimodal writing and analytical lenses, you will examine texts and strengthen your understanding of the role of writing in inclusive discourse. Classroom activities will emphasize peer feedback, research techniques, and build on inquiry-based writing.</p>
P6	Pathak	<p>Migration, Refuge, and Asylum</p> <p>The global border crisis is all over our screens. Vulnerable migrants take pain-staking journeys to find safety for their families, yet they have to endure hostile immigration policies across the Global North. Immigrant and diasporic communities experience violent policing and othering across the US and Europe despite being citizens. In WRS 106, “Migration, Refuge, and Asylum,” students explore the complex narratives surrounding displacement, immigration, and diasporic being through critical thinking and writing.</p> <p>We will engage with primary sources like short stories, film and music videos, and secondary sources like academic articles to enhance the skills of close reading, lensing, critical thinking and research. You are here to connect with your authentic writing voice and discover a variety of rhetorical and stylistic manoeuvres to convey your ideas. Course assignments are designed to help students to use writing to work through complex ideas and formulate original arguments.</p>
C1 D1 E1 F1	Phillips	<p>Digital Age Relationships</p> <p>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, blogs, Craigslist and more. Do new media offer mostly positive or mostly negative changes regarding how we relate to one another?</p>

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N6 P7 S6	Reid	Universal Issues – Current Themes in America: In today’s fast-changing social, political, and technological landscape, understanding contemporary American issues is crucial for academic and professional success. This course examines pressing challenges, including social justice, economic disparity, environmental crises, and the evolving political landscape. Students will engage with diverse materials, including readings and multimedia, to explore these interconnected issues. Emphasizing advanced research, analysis, and writing skills, the course equips students to analyze and synthesize sources, crafting original and persuasive arguments through multimodal composition techniques. Collaborative communication and critical literacy are central to the curriculum, enabling students to articulate their ideas effectively in both academic and professional contexts. Through interactive lectures and varied assignments, students will develop a nuanced understanding of complex topics, enhancing their contributions to scholarly and professional discussions.
R9	Reid	The Civically Engaged Mind – Civic Engagement and Social Justice: Engaged democratic citizenship requires understanding societal issues and a commitment to community involvement. In this course, we will explore social justice and civic engagement through critical literacy, analyzing both fiction and non-fiction multimedia. Students will develop key academic research, analysis, and writing skills while reflecting on political, cultural, and social paradigms. By examining the connections between well-being, social justice, and diverse communities, we will foster a nuanced understanding of society. The course employs a flipped learning model, encouraging independent study before collaborative discussions in class. Additionally, students will participate in out-of-school, cross-cultural community engagements. Ultimately, the course culminates in multimedia projects that showcase our awareness and advocacy for civic engagement in a democratic society.
R1 S1 T1 U1	Reyes	Aspects of the Feminine 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.
A4 B4 C6	Ritchie	21st Century Feminism You might have seen that Ballerina Farm article go viral last year. Maybe Andrew Tate keeps popping up on your feed. Or maybe you call yourself a girl boss (ironically, of course). Whether or not you know it, you’ve come into contact with twenty-first century feminist rhetoric—or a reactionary response to it. In this course, we’ll cover the historical and rhetorical grounds for contemporary feminism, from Wollstonecraft to Roe v. Wade; the failures of “girl boss” feminism, and its relationship to capitalism; and the issues

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		<p>defining feminist discourse today, from tradwives and meninists all the way to the Dobbs case. Our goal: to develop a thorough understanding of the digital rhetoric driving feminist theory.</p> <p>Using the internet as our primary archive, you can expect to encounter a wide range of materials, from Judith Butler's <i>On Sex</i> to think pieces on "himpathy" all the way to Nara Smith TikToks. Accordingly, you can expect to do a <i>lot</i> of writing: three 3-5 page papers, three 1-2 page papers, and several discussion board posts in between. Along the way, you'll learn to use terms including: digital rhetoric; archive; artifact; public discourse; popular imagination; intertextuality; synthesis; dissemination; and lensing. After all... we've got a lot of ground to cover if we're going to join the discourse defining modern-day America.</p>
B5	Rodrigues Barcelos Da Silva	<p>21st Century Feminism</p> <p>Who's afraid of feminism?</p> <p>Feminism has triggered different emotions and reactions across time, but it has never ceased to be a pressing topic. In this course, we invite you to think about what feminism means and what it means to be a feminist - in the past and now. We will engage with primary and secondary sources that address feminism in its geographical and temporal diversity, using writing as a means for reflection and analysis. For example, we will reflect on questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should/Does feminism mean(s) something different for Africans, African-Americans, Asians, Europeans? • What is feminism fighting for, and what should it be fighting for? • How is feminism (not) seen/ addressed in social media and in the news? • Can feminism and religion sit together? <p>Throughout the course, you will develop effective written communication skills in relation to specific rhetorical tasks that address the questions above. You will be prompted to construct original, well-reasoned arguments using a range of materials (digital, archival, print), in addition to integrating and synthesizing appropriate and relevant primary and secondary sources in your writing.</p>
N4 O4	Schonwetter	<p>Belonging and Diversity</p> <p>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>

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P4 R8	Schonwetter	<p>The Civically Engaged Mind: Mindfulness, Literacy, and Civic Engagement</p> <p>Marginalized groups in Miami, and across the United States, face disproportionate economic, educational, and health challenges, both individually and collectively, due to deeply entrenched inequalities within the structures of our nation (Kallergis). Even before the construction of I-95 in Overtown, historically known as the “Harlem of the South,” and the displacement of over 40,000 Black Americans, Bahamians, and Black Miamians, Miami was recognized as one of the most racially segregated and economically divided cities in the United States (Aja et al. 14-17).</p> <p>In this civically engaged course, students will be led in mindfulness techniques to navigate discussions on trauma and oppression, participate in student-centered learning with multicultural texts and critical race theory, enhance their literacy skills through various assignments—including close readings, a lensing paper, a research paper, and a civic engagement component— ultimately empowering students to actively address inequality throughout Miami. Incorporating mindfulness practices with literacy-based instruction creates space for necessary and challenging conversations, empowers students with their own coping techniques as we dive into sensitive subject matter and literature, helps students integrate ideas and concepts from critical race theory in a transformative and embodied manner, and increases student interest, involvement, and engagement with writing and activism.</p>
T3	Tabora	<p>Power</p> <p>This course aims to maximize those crucial critical thinking skills initially fostered in WRS105. To do so, students shall be submerged into the magical world of Caribbean literature and undergo the following process several times throughout the semester: first, we will review and discuss excerpts from different works by feminist theorist bell hooks to solidify our understanding of how race and class operate in the U.S; then, we will investigate excerpts from different essays by Caribbeanist thinkers, such as Sylvia Wynter, to understand how social structures operate similarly/differently in the Caribbean; afterwards, we will examine different fictional Caribbean texts and analyze how the ideas of the aforementioned theorists are manifested. By the end of this course, students should leave feeling deeply familiarized with the oftentimes complex rhetorical analysis process and feel prepared, motivated, and inspired for the remainder of their academic journey.</p>
S7 T4 U2	Torres	<p>Sustainability</p> <p>This course explores the causes of climate change and actionable solutions for a sustainable future. Through a blend of readings and writings on sustainability, students will explore environmental issues from a social lens, emphasizing their impacts on human health and animal welfare.</p>
HI1 J1 K1	Wilson	<p>Surveillance and Power</p> <p>Using short works of science fiction as an entry, this class will examine surveillance and power in the world today. We will explore topics such as technology and the rise of the modern panopticon, image in the digital age, and dehumanization in the 21st century.</p>