

SPRING 2024 – WRS 106 SPECIAL TOPIC DESCRIPTIONS

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

WRS 106

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)

WRS 107 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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SECTION	LAST NAME	DESCRIPTION
A3 B4 C4 D4 E4	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 impact of 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/student-organizations/index.html
N3 O3 P3 R3	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.
B3 C5 D5 E5 F5	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

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		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.
N4	Gareeboo	<p>Power</p> <p>In this section of WRS 106, the theme is analyzing power, and the tensions between providing information and having an agenda. In practice, you will choose your own topics for the major assignments, but the prompts and examples will span references across novels, newspaper & academic articles, pop culture, folktales, and audio-visual creations. The goal of the course is to help students analyze other people's creations (both text & visual) by questioning how the creator's choices reveal the creator's interests and motivations. Students will have 4 assignments over the semester, starting with analyzing other people's works, before producing their own research in analyzing how soft power and power dynamics appear in topics of their individual interest.</p>
F2 G2 HI2 J3 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</p>

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		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.
N5	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.
O5 P5 R5 S5	Green	Writing Oneself
F3 G3	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.

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P2 S2 T2	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 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	Humans and Nature 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.
S4	Jung	Monstrous Others and Us 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 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

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		<p>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 “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.</p>
T3 U2	Kramer	Exploring Normalcy
A1 B1 D6 G1	Ly	<p>Adventures in Academic Writing</p> <p>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:</p> <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?

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is at stake when we try to read archives for the representation of others?• When does archiving become art or vandalism or erasure?
C6 D7 E6 F4	Mahoney	<p>21st Century Feminism</p> <p>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-21st century and 21st century comparisons, and will allow for students to conduct examinations in areas of their interest.</p>
N1 O1 P1 R4	McFarlane	<p>Power</p> <p>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.</p>

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C3 D3	McGrath- Moreira	<p>The Civically Engaged Mind: What are the opportunities and impacts at University?</p> <p>Mentoring America, Written in My Soul, Eco-Agency, Students Together to End Poverty (STEP), CLEO, Surfrider, PERIOD, and Kids and Culture are a few of the organizations you might choose to collaborate in this semester. How will this involvement in your chosen community impact your understanding of social change? How will proximity play a role in understanding systems of inequity, savior mentality, and the power of advocacy? This experiential writing course is designed to use inquiry through research, writing, and community service to become proximate to the communities you will write about. Though this course does have a civic engagement focus and tag, the fundamental goal is to study writing which emphasizes modeling a discourse community that applies rhetorical analysis, critical thinking, synthesis, and consideration of multiple perspectives to build awareness of the constructed nature of written discourse. We aim not only for eloquence and clarity in our writing but also for new understandings of ourselves, each other, and society.</p>
E3	Moseley	<p>What do you care about?</p> <p>"The theme of our WRS 106 section is What Do You Care About. Throughout the semester, you'll be using the methods of analytical writing that we discuss and applying them, using primary and secondary sources, to what you're passionate about—art that you love, stories that have moved you, studies that pique your interest, areas of your discipline that you want to know more about. This means much of the course material, including the subjects of your essays and documents for class discussion, will be determined by your interests. By the end of the semester, our objective is to help you learn how to think and write critically about the various, interdisciplinary interests that make you who you are."</p>

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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, blogs, Craigslist and more. Do new media offer mostly positive or mostly negative changes regarding how we relate to one another?
R6	Reid	Belonging and Diversity Human Experiences: Peace and Belonging <i>"A divine dance appears in the soul and the body at the time of peace and union" - Rumi.</i> People are searching for peace and belonging. They are searching for meaning in life. They are seeking peace and security in times of turmoil. Many are pursuing peace by connecting in relationships. This course will explore the topic of the human mind, on a quest for peace and belonging. We will engage with multimedia sources to write about the human experience, organized through six fundamental life themes that make peace and belonging possible or present challenges to attaining them: Love, Power, Personal Value, Truth, Justice, and Freedom. This course teaches techniques and core competencies of academic research, analysis, and writing. In conclusion of our experience in this course, we will present multimedia projects that reflect our awareness and advocacy. Perhaps we will discover in our writing studies, that peace of mind and sense of belonging is not something we do or find but rather something we cultivate and nurture within ourselves and our relationships with others.

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S6 T4	Reid	Social Justice Today Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusive Civic Engagement Engaged democratic citizenship requires knowledge and understanding of societal issues as well as a commitment to community engagement toward building strong communities. In this course, we will explore diversity, social justice, and inclusive civic engagement. We will use critical literacy to engage with both fiction and non-fiction multimedia. This course teaches techniques and core competencies of academic research, analysis, and writing. We will reflect on aspects of religious, political, cultural, and social paradigms, develop understanding of the complexity of society, and identify links between well-being, social justice, and diverse communities. This course employs a flipped learning style that involves independent learning prior to class in preparation for collaborative and discussion-based meaning-making in class. This course also includes out-of-school, cross-cultural community engagements for learning. In conclusion to our experience in this course, we will present multimedia projects that reflect our awareness and advocacy of 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 <i>Aspects of the Feminine</i> 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.
R7	Rogers	Universal Issues 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

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		<p>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 changing world? How do we communicate our discoveries with clarity, vigor, depths, evidence, varied lenses, and persuasion in our individual writing voices?</p>
HI3	Sanford	<p>Getting Medieval</p> <p>Though the medieval era is long since over, the echoes of its stories sound loud and clear in contemporary media. Tales of chivalrous knights, wondrous magic, and noble undertakings entertain us just as well today as they did centuries and centuries ago. It begs the question: What does it mean for those of us in our modern moment to “get medieval?” In our quest to answer this question, students in this course will hone their skills as writers by reading and writing about the relationship between the medieval and depictions of the medieval in the modern day. Students will the cultivate critical reasoning and research skills utilized by sophisticated writers covering interdisciplinary topics. By participating in lectures, group discussions, and writing workshops, students will be able to build on the lessons they learned in WRS 105, to continue developing into confident and effective writers who investigate, analyze, and devise well-crafted arguments through the writing of various academic essays.</p>
N2 O2 P6 R2	Santamaria	<p>Science Fiction and Pop Culture</p> <p>This course offers an introduction to the genre of Science Fiction while emphasizing analytical writing skills. Students will critically examine contemporary American popular culture and will explore thought-provoking themes, such as the definition of humanity, the emergence of cyborgs, avatars, artificial intelligence, robots, utopias, and dystopias. Through the writing process, students will investigate the transformative influence of technological change on both the human condition and societal institutions.</p>

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O4 P4 S7	Schonwetter	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, socioeconomics, 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.
HI4 J4	Terry	Migration, Refuge, and Asylum This section will be an instruction in rhetoric and essential expository writing skills with a thematic focus on undocumented migration, refuge, and asylum. Through individual and collaborative research and writing we will consider how and why one becomes a refugee or asylum seeker. We will analyze a variety of texts to explore and discuss the representation of people fleeing their home countries, and our readings will investigate such questions as: How do undocumented people claim their voice, and survive in a society without papers? How does the current political climate affect the treatment/mistreatment of those seeking a safe refuge in the US? Put simply, this course will allow you to explore the current issues affecting undocumented migrants through a human lens. Please note that despite the predominance of such texts in the readings, this is not a course on migration; rather, it is a writing course designed around texts that consider issues concerned with undocumented migration, refuge, and asylum (and your own writing will explore just what you consider those issues to include).

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P7	Tobin	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.
J2	Vargas	Monsters Monsters are exceedingly familiar in the contemporary moment, visible from cheap Halloween decorations to million-dollar blockbusters. When asked "what is a monster?" examples such as vampires, werewolves, or ghosts might quickly jump to mind. As easily as we can recognize monstrosity, though, we might turn and ask ourselves 'why'? Why are these creatures considered monsters in the cultural zeitgeist? Why did they develop into their contemporary forms, and what underlying fears and anxieties do they tell us about the societies they are perpetuated within? Exploring monsters from the English literary <i>Frankenstein</i> to the Japanese cinematic <i>Godzilla</i> , this course will seek to examine the different conventions and uses of "the monster" as a cultural object across space and time. With a focus on the continued development of academic writing skills such as lensing and rhetorical analysis, we will examine excerpts from short stories, novels, movies, and graphic novels in order to analyze the trope of 'the monster' as representations of marginalization and social anxiety through our writing.
HI1 J1 K1	Wafer	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

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		<p>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>
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