

University of Alaska, Fairbanks  
Spring 2017  
M 5-8pm  
Gruening 402

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## *Thesis Writing Workshop* **Arctic and Northern Studies** 3 credits

### *Course Description*

Provides an opportunity for students in and out of Arctic and Northern Studies to develop writing skills in a workshop context. By the end of the semester students will submit academic article length work that has been re-drafted and re-submitted several times. The goal is to understand writing as a complex social interaction between writer and reader, and to practice writing as a recursive process that involves drafting, revising, and editing, and to recognize and value the creativity, independent thinking, and intellectual risk taking involved in effective academic writing. *Prerequisites: Graduate standing or instructor approval.*

### *Learning Outcomes*

By the end of the semester students should know how to...

- Define a compelling and viable problem, question, or project
- Formulate an arguable thesis in response to the problem, question, or project
- Actively engage sources in an intellectual dialogue, always distinguishing one's own ideas from others
- Substantiate and develop ideas through the analysis of evidence and the critical use of sources
- Recognize and contend with counter-arguments and other possible objections
- Organize ideas coherently and compellingly
- Express ideas in clear, cogent sentences
- Insightfully critique their own writing and the writing of others
- Revise for clarity and cogency at every level, based on self-critique and critique from others

### *Course Mechanics*

Each class period two students will present drafts of their writing, which they will have circulated a week in advance of their presentation. After a brief presentation by the author, each student will critique the drafted work that has been submitted. In addition, student critics will bring well marked up copies of the draft to return to authors, as well as two page (single spaced) reader reports, which will be submitted both to myself and to the authors.

## *Course Requirements*

### 1. *Required Texts:*

The following texts will serve as a resource throughout the course. From time to time I will assign specific passages from these texts, which can be found on amazon, and elsewhere:

*A Rulebook for Arguments* by Anthony Weston (Hackett).

*Style: Toward Clarity and Grace* by Joseph M. Williams (Chicago).

*A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* by Bryan A. Garner (Oxford).

### 2. *Final Paper Assignment*

The final paper assignment will be to submit a paper, essay, article, thesis chapter, or other piece of graduate writing at least 30 pages in length, that reflects the high standards of academic rigor germane to graduate work. For details, see final paper prompt (to be distributed separately).

### 3. *Final Grade Rubric*

Final grades will be assessed according to the following rubric:

Reader Reports.....	20%
Participation / Attendance.....	40%
Final Paper.....	40%

### 4. *Grading Guidelines:*

I have established the following standards for the evaluation of written work in this course:

**A:** Excellent work, with clear, challenging, original ideas supported by sufficient, appropriate, logically interpreted evidence. The essay should engage the reader in the inquiry, convincingly answer opposing views, be well organized, and free of significant flaws. An 'A' paper should be not just good but outstanding in ideas and presentation.

**B:** Good to very good work, with a clear thesis supported by sufficient, appropriate evidence, organized and interpreted logically. The 'B' paper may have some outstanding qualities but be marked by significant flaws which keep it from being an 'A'; or it may be all-around good work, free of major problems but lacking the deeper insight necessary for excellence.

**C:** Satisfactory work, but not yet good. The 'C' paper meets the basic requirements of a thesis supported by interpretation of specific evidence, but it needs work in thinking and/or presentation. There may be a lack of clarity, the evidence may not always be sufficient and appropriate, or the interpretation may have logical flaws. The essay may have organizational or mechanical problems that keep it from being good. The 'C' paper may be good in some respects but poor in others, or it may simply be adequate but not noteworthy overall.

**D:** Barely passing work that shows effort but is so marred by serious problems that it cannot be considered a satisfactory paper. Papers without a readily identifiable thesis are liable to be graded 'D'.

**F:** Failing work—for example, a hasty, sloppy paper that shows little or no thought, effort, or familiarity with the text.

#### *Online and Distance Students*

This course can be taken online for credit as well. Distance students will be expected to circulate work for consideration, submit weekly reader reports, and submit final papers. Each week distance students will receive the work under consideration electronically, and will submit their reader's report by the time the live class starts (5pm, AK time), such that the instructor can read it out loud and present its findings. During the weeks when distance students are expected to workshop their work reader's reports will be emailed to them individually from student critics, along with my own feedback, which will also arrive electronically.

#### *Accessibility and Disabilities*

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is committed to equal opportunity for students with disabilities. Such students are encouraged to contact the coordinator of Disabilities Services at the Center for Health and Counselling. In addition to consulting with Disability Services, students with documented disabilities who may need reasonable academic accommodations should discuss these with me at some point during the first two weeks of class. Contact information: UAF Office of Disability Services, [Whitaker Building, Room 208](#) 612 N. Chandalar, PO Box 755590, University of Alaska Fairbank, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-5590; Phone: (907) 474-5655; Email: [uaf-disabilityservices@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-disabilityservices@alaska.edu).

#### *Academic Dishonesty*

High ethical standards are essential for maintaining credibility in the field of political science. Every course taught at UAF seeks to maintain these standards, starting with an emphasis on producing original and factual work. If you cite or quote from someone else's work, you must include a proper citation using an established style sheet (to be discussed in class). *Plagiarism is defined as appropriating passages or ideas from another person's work and portraying them as one's own.* Neither plagiarism nor fabrication will be tolerated. Any student found to have plagiarized or fabricated statements will

receive, at a minimum, an automatic “F” for the class. Further action, such as expulsion, will also be considered per UAF policy.

#### *Course Repeatability*

This course is repeatable for credit up to four times.

#### *Reading Schedule*

Where student papers are concerned, a reading schedule will be determined on the first day of class. Additional readings will be assigned to supplement the submission of drafts on an ad hoc basis.