

Course Info

Welcome! Let's gear up for an *intensive, interactive* online experience. Successful online writing course students are self-motivated, good at time management, familiar with Blackboard (Bb), and intentional about devoting 5+ hours per week to the course (including 2-3 hours online). This course requires interaction via Bb forums as well as careful reading of posted materials. Completing the online **orientation** during week one is essential. Please commit to staying actively involved rather than getting "lost in cyberspace."

Note: You cannot successfully take this course on a phone or tablet (though the Bb app for iPad/iPhone can be helpful); you must have regular and reliable computer/internet access.

Contact Info:

Office: Dunkle Hall 305-B
Office Hours: MWF 1:00-2:00;
Th 3:00 – 5:00;
and by appointment

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Blackboard (Bb):
<https://blackboard.frostburg.edu>

My English department page:
<http://www.frostburg.edu/dept/enql/dolly.htm>



Text: *The Academic Writer* (2nd ed, 2011), by Lisa Ede, Bedford/St. Martin's Press, ISBN 0-312-60319-3

Materials: Purdue "OWL" (free Online Writing Lab) + "any old" print handbook recommended. *Illuminate* (provided by FSU free of charge), **Activated library remote login number** (contact FSU Library, 301-687-4395)

Catalog Course Description: "Development of *advanced* skills in writing based on readings for social science audiences. Preparation of extended papers; attention to research tools and documentation. Students may receive credit for only one of the following: 308, 309, 310, or 312. Every semester. Core Skill 2."

Outcomes: This section of English 308 challenges you to develop one **main ability: to write effectively in any rhetorical situation, for any audience and purpose, in college and after.** To this end, our projects will give you "advanced" experience with **drafting, revising, and rhetorical skills**, specifically:

- Understanding and applying rhetorical situation
- Becoming familiar with social science genres
- Using online databases and other suitable research options
- Analyzing, synthesizing, and documenting using APA conventions
- Developing stylistic strength and flexibility
- Revising for content, clarity, conciseness, and correctness (+ outsmarting spell/grammar-check)
- Assessing writing processes and products both independently and collaboratively

Underlying philosophy: Writers can increase their *strength* and *flexibility* by “working out,” developing insights into writing process and content by giving and receiving input in a variety of rhetorical situations.

Course Policies

Engagement (including “virtual attendance”): Your online *engagement* can “boost or bust” your project grades and final grade. Anyone who engages *exceptionally* during the semester (completing online activities well and on time, helping his/her writing group run smoothly, participating actively, especially with a headset, in most Elluminate sessions, and consulting productively with me and with partners) can earn a final **+ 1 - 10 bonus**; anyone who does not contribute regularly and reliably may “pay” an additional **- 1 to - 10 point “fee.”** Your engagement depends mainly on posting actively (but not hyperactively) to class and group Discussion Board forums, logging on at least 3 - 4 times per week.

Assignments: Our **four major projects** will be based on social science issues, generally ones of each individual's choice (as long as suited to the project). Guidelines for each project will be posted on Bb. All assignments must be word processed using **Microsoft Word** (or saved as *rich text format*) – otherwise your files may not be “openable” or you may not see inserted comments. Assignments (ones to be graded) must be submitted online via Bb “Assignment Central”; only *drafts* or other *non-graded* items may be posted elsewhere in Bb (group forums) or emailed.

Due date/time is **midnight** (11:59 pm) for assignments and Class Forums, always with a 12-hour **grace period** till noon the next day. Projects are due in final form on Fridays, but you may take **two 4-day extensions** (midnight Tuesday except Monday for Project 4). Late projects lose 3-5 points per day, depending on explanation. You should submit or post during the grace period *only when truly necessary*; *habitually* posting/submitting during the grace period may lower your forum and engagement scores (unless you give a reason, such as work schedule, early in the course). Assignment details and day-by-day schedules for each project will appear on Bb. Comments/grades on projects will be returned via Bb Assignment Central (AC), usually within about 48 hours; comments will note strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for re-editing and/or revising. You must complete all 4 projects adequately to pass the course.

Why Extensions?

Extensions help both you and me. The option of taking **2 extensions** helps *you* work around other commitments and illness. It also helps *me* return papers to *you* in about 48 hours. You do not need to beg for an extension; just take one or two as needed!

Grace Period?

The grace period is not an extension, just a “buffer zone” allowing you to post or submit without penalty within 12 hours of any midnight deadline (noon the following day). However, *overuse* of grace periods will adversely affect scores.

“RE”: Re-editing & Revising: You must earn the **editing “ok”** for each project. Projects 1 - 3 may be **re-edited** (correcting sentence-level problems for the “ok” notation) and/or **revised** (content changes, for **+1-3**) within one week of return. If **revising**, you should request revision credit by listing “up front” (Bb Assignment Central Comment Box) the specific *major* changes for which you seek credit. Project 4 may be **re-edited by permission** (for “editing ok”) in cases where editing is on the non-pass borderline; in that case, an editing test during exam week may also be required. Those consistently earning scores in the C-/D range who choose not to revise/re-edit, or who have low engagement as well as borderline scores, will “come up short” at the end of the semester.

For a more graphic presentation/review of course information, see the **Course Orië PowerPoint** (narrated and non-narrated) posted on Bb (“Start Here/Orië”).

Virtual Classroom

Illuminate: We will use the *Illuminate* “virtual classroom” for online orientation and at least once during each project as a supplement to posted project guidelines and Bb discussion. Using a microphone or headset facilitates active participation, but typing short questions/comments instead is fine. Those unable to “attend” a real-time *Illuminate* session should listen to the recorded session. Active real-time participation in most sessions can contribute to a semester engagement bonus. For additional information on *Illuminate* (a.k.a “Bb Collaborate”), click below:



Training: <http://www.illuminate.com/Training/Documentation/Detail/88/?id=227>

Other commentaries: I will also post several 5-10 minute sessions using other virtual classroom software. Some are optional, but you should listen to most.

Course Activities

This online class functions as a writing workshop in which you receive input from classmates as well as from me as you plan, draft, and revise. Class materials are posted on Bb; some items (guides, schedules) you should print out but not most. Please read all assigned text and posted material before posting to class forums.

Class Forums: Most weeks (except “draft weeks”) you will participate in **2 Bb Discussion Board Class Forums (CF)**, ideally making **3-5 (+) substantive posts per forum** (one or more posts per *thread*) on more than one day and mainly during prime time. (Avoid “one-liners” or “I agree” type posts, which count for little.) Most CFs are open for **60 hours** with a **48-hour “prime time”** (noon M – noon W or noon W – noon F), closing at midnight, with a 12-hour grace period to follow; most CFs are available for a grand total of about 72 hours. You are responsible for knowing the content of each CF (reading most posts). **Missing 2+ CFs per project = 0/5; missing 4 CFs in a row = FX in the course** (except in case of serious illness). Anyone not posting to 6+ CFs total is likely to fall behind and not do well. For forum posting details, see the **Class Forum Guide** posted in Bb *Syllabus/Course Info*. If you truly have nothing to add/ask in a CF, post a clear summary of 2 threads.

CF Prime-Time Schedule

CF 1: Noon M ~ Noon W

CF 2: Noon W ~ Noon F

May open earlier;

Closes midnight W or F

(grace period noon Th or Sat)

Draft Weeks: One CF only

Prime time: Noon M ~ Noon F

(closes midnight F;

grace period noon Sat)

Writing Groups: You will participate in a Writing Group, based mainly on major; each member should help the group function smoothly. In addition to other group activities, each person must post drafts for **Peer Review** (see details on Bb) and respond in a timely manner to two partners’ drafts.

Communications & Conferences

Communication: Bb Announcements are posted/updated most weekday mornings. **Check announcements and FSU email** regularly. Reporting apparent inconsistencies or “functionality” problems via email can boost engagement. **I need to know if anyone is having trouble finding, opening, or understanding material;** please email me with any such concerns. If you have **personal or academic problems** that may affect your work, please let me know.

Conferences: Draft conferences (one per project) will be **in person** or, for those outside the Frostburg area, via **phone** (after sending your draft electronically and arranging a time) or, if necessary, solely via email. Sign up via the Bb link; if you

must cancel, email me or call in advance (no-show or “no call” affects score; do *not* call for a draft conference while driving!). Your questions allow me to address *your* concerns as well as mine, so you should prepare 3(+) specific *written* questions. Draft conferences focus on *rhetorical* and *content* issues, but if you ask specific *editing* questions I will address them. Draft conferences do not guarantee an A or B but usually ensure at least a C (assuming revision to address problems). A “good” (promising) *draft* is not the same as a good *final* document; any draft needs revision. **Additional conferences** (editing, etc.) are available (phone, office, or email).

Grading

Projects (50 points total) are evaluated on **process** (conference, peer review, CFs, etc.) as well as on **rhetorical, content, and editing** features. About 10% of points are earned *before* the due date. Each major project will be evaluated on key **features worth 5 points each** (categories modified according to project):

Process

- **Plan/Proposal, Draft Conference, Peer Review**, etc.
- **Class Forum Participation** (0/5 for 2+ missed CFs per project)

Content

- **Rhetorical elements** (audience appropriateness & related matters)
- **Purpose → Thesis/Focus** (achievement of purpose & relation to thesis)
- **Organization** (paragraphing, transition, arrangement of points, etc.)
- **Development/substance** (inc. appropriate detail/example)
- **Source use/documentation/references** (as appropriate to project)
- **Style, Clarity & Conciseness**, inc. voice/persona (approp. & consistency)
- **Other key content feature(s)** as appropriate to project

Editing* (see important note of warning below) :

- **Sentence-Structure** (variety/maturity; active/passive; parallel structure, avoidance of run-ons, comma splices, fragments, mixed constructions) --
- **Other editing & formatting features*** (usage, diction, punctuation, spelling, proofing, format, etc.)

TOTAL per project = 50 (additional +1-3 for revising)

***Note:** Earning less than 3.5/5 on **editing components** indicates a major editing problem; to **pass the course, you must earn “ok”** (C or above) on editing components **for all projects, including # 4. It is your responsibility to verify that your editing is adequate** | (“ok” in Bb Grade Center) **and, if not, to re-edit** within a week of the project’s return.

Project Scale: 50 - 45 (90%+) = A, 44 - 40 (80%+) = B
39 - 35 (70%+) = C, 34 - 30 (60%+) = D, 29 → = F

Points are more important than letter grade; in the long run there is virtually no difference between a 39 (C+) and 40 (B-) or a 45 (A-) and 44 (B+); someone with 39/50 (C+) on all projects could earn a B (160/200) in the course with revising and/or good engagement.

Final Grades will be determined by the number of points earned on the **200-point scale, including any engagement bonus or “fee”** (no “rounding”):

200 - 180 = A, 179 - 160 = B, 159 - 140 = C, 139 - 120 = D, 119 → F

(assuming “ok” editing for all 4 projects)

“CS” applies when virtually all work has been completed, “virtual attendance” is adequate, and a CS was not previously received for this GEP requirement; anyone earning a CS should take an equivalent course next semester. **Incomplete (“I”)** may apply when nearly all work has been completed adequately. **FX** results when anyone who has not withdrawn by the deadline “disappears into cyberspace” (missing 4 CFs in a row, except in case of serious illness or problem reported via email).

Feature Scale

Each element = 5 points:

5 = very strong (A)
4.5 = strong (A-/B+)
4 = solid (B/B-)
3.5 = adequate (C)
3 = borderline adequate (C-/D+)
2.5 & below = inadequate (D/F)
0 = not done

5/5 = genuine achievement, not mere “doneness” or “okayness”!

Notes, Warnings, Threats, & Promises

"What I want": My main expectation is for you to make good judgments about organization, style, and development . . . for *your* audience, to achieve *your* purpose. So, expectations for any two papers are not identical but rather involve (don't cringe) *thinking for yourself* within the context of your own rhetorical situation. While each project differs in format/content, many *principles* carry over from one project to another. I will gladly work "overtime" with anyone making a sincere and consistent effort, but I cannot continue pursuing those who disappear into cyberspace.

Academic Dishonesty includes "the presentation of written or oral material in a manner which conceals the true source of . . . material; or the presentation of material . . . in a way that the student appears to have done work which he/she did not, in fact, do" (*Pathfinder*). I may run papers through Bb "SafeAssign." English dept policy requires that cases of suspected plagiarism be referred to Judicial Board.

Course & Project Schedules: See schedules posted on Bb.

"CF" Counsel from Kendra . . .

I was very nervous about taking this English 308 online class. I am not a very strong writer but always try my best. Before the class started I talked to some of my friends that have already taken this course online. They all passed with A's or B's. One thing my friends said was that there were a lot of Class Forums. I have taken previous online classes and already knew what these were. They said that these forums were different and sometimes harder! At this point I wasn't sure what to expect. So when the first week began I told myself I would post to all of the forums, keep up with the work and never fall behind. I started out very well and ended well too.

Although some people say the Class Forums are too much work and that they do not always have time to "go to class," the forums ended up helping me earn an A in this class. I realized without the Class Forums everyone would have been emailing Dr. Dolly and asking her the same questions ten times. This way you could post questions to a forum and everyone could see the questions, responses, and advice. I am a shy person and do not talk much in class unless I have to, so for me the forums were great! I was not afraid to post questions, comments or concerns. No one knew who I was and I did not have to talk in front of people. The forums helped me survive and became very useful. Without the forums I would have been very lost and confused. If you fall behind in the class it was mainly because you were not keeping up with the forums. I was not worried about posting a certain number of times, I was more worried about "Ok do I understand the material? How can I help someone else? Can someone help me with my thesis?" I did not post three times because I had to; I posted because I needed help, or I had comments, or needed advice or wanted to help someone out. Do not focus on how many times you "have to" post to a forum. Look at the material and use the forums to help benefit you with your projects. . . . Good luck to everyone taking this class! ~ Kendra R.

Illuminate Note from Lauren . . .

Illuminate was a great addition to this online course. These sessions helped me particularly since I'm an auditory learner. I was extremely nervous taking this course since it was my first online one. Having Dr. D talk to us put everything into perspective and gave me a clear understanding. Also using my mike let me be more involved, which I enjoy. Everyone will benefit from attending all sessions or at least listening to recorded ones! ~ Lauren L.