

WRA 101: Writing as Inquiry

Course and Instructor Information

- Gabriela M. Morales Medina
- she/her/hers
- Email: moral156@msu.edu
- Class: Tuesdays/Thursdays 12:40pm-2:30pm EST (won't always meet synchronously)
- Office hours: by appointment

****Note:** This syllabus may change in response to the learning needs of students. Changes/updates will be discussed in advance via electronic or in-class discussion and will be posted to our D2L.

Course Description

"... joy and love could be capable of bridging difference, although not all difference at all times... for those of us who felt this joy, all we have wanted to do since then is to pass it on. And on"

-Frances Negrón-Muntaner 2019

Welcome to WRA 101: Writing as Inquiry! This course is an introductory non-fiction writing course designed for first-year students to reflect about the relationships they hold with themselves, with those around them, and with the communities they're a part of. We are living in unprecedented times, and it can be easy to become overwhelmed. It is my goal that this space can become one where we foster the idea of joy. In this case joy doesn't refer to the idea of unconditional happiness, but rather to the experience described above by Negrón-Muntaner; a joy that helps us make meaning and want to share it.

Because of this, we will think about writing/composing as a multitude of rhetorical choices dependent on the context. Rhetoric is a practice of considering the different ways we make meaning. This classroom is a space where we can get messy and figure out what we need to learn and know to grow as writers/composers: to figure out what brings us joy and how we make meaning out of it.

Course Goals

I hope this class becomes a space where we can:

- Respect one another and the things we create and share
- Reflect on and analyze your composing processes
- Communicate our needs and wants for the semester
- Practice processes of inquiry, reflection, and revision

- Increase your understanding of rhetorical situations and implement rhetorical choices in your own writing
- Engage with different genres, modes, and writing situations
- Create multimodal texts
- Expand your research literacies
- Gain comfort in experimenting with new composing situations

By reaching these goals, I hope that you will develop or begin to develop a meaningful connection to writing and other forms of meaning-making.

Accessibility Statement

Our classroom space is composed of all different kinds of people, each with their own set of abilities. In order to create a space that is empowering to all of us, we must think about how to create experiences that best attempt to validate all of our abilities. To best respect each other, please do not assume another's experience and please consider the accessibility of what we are asking each other to do. This might mean referring to someone by their preferred name and/or preferred pronouns. This might mean being thoughtful before you speak. This might mean listening for people's needs and/or asking if appropriate before acting/assuming. If you have any questions or concerns about accessibility in our classroom, please talk to me and/or each other.

For students with a documented disability, university resources are also available. Students with disabilities that may require assistance or who have questions related to any accommodation for testing, note takers, readers, etc., must inform the instructor and provide certification from the [Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities](#) (RCPD), 120 Bessey Hall, 517-353-9642 or TTY 517-355-1293.

Course Materials

- Computer with access to the internet
- MSU email
- [D2L](#)
- Access to [Youtube](#)

Accessibility Note: You do not need to purchase any books or additional materials for this course aside from your own computer or laptop. If for any reason you have trouble accessing any of the previously mentioned software, talk to me. I guarantee you that I have alternative options and if I don't, we can look for external resources.

Course Projects

This course will center around the five primary projects of the First Year Writing shared curriculum. Each project will have its own assignment sheet with all the details and information pertaining to that project. Here are the five assignments with a brief overview

Learning Narrative:

A self-centered narrative where you explore where you come from and how have you learned until now. The goal is to reflect about your personal learning practices and writing practices.

Disciplinary/Professional Literacies Project:

A research investigation where you dive into your chosen field of study and the narratives this field constructs about itself. The goal is to learn about what types of literacies you'll need to be successful in this field.

Remix Project:

A multimodal remix of one of your first two projects. The goal is to become familiar with different mediums of writing and practice remixing existing stories for new audiences.

Cultural Practices Project:

A multimodal project intended to get you thinking about the rhetoric of a specific cultural practice you identify with and practice. The goal of this project is to use the research, reflective and composing skills you've developed all semester to explain the rhetoric of a cultural practice to the class. A project to flex your rhetoric skills.

Final Reflection Essay:

Due during finals week, this assignment will take the form of a formal letter in which you respond and reflect on what you've learned and the stories you've come to know in this classroom. Another project to flex your reflection skills.

Your assignments require you to pursue a variety of writing activities that emerge from your interests. Consequently, most of your assignments will have five essential components as writing process:

1. Proposal
2. First Draft
3. Peer Review & Revision Plan
4. Final Draft
5. Reflection

Please Save Everything. I cannot stress this point enough. Save all drafts of your work to your convenient drive. Losing work due to computer malfunctions or not having it available for class will be your responsibility.

Note: In order to pass the course all five projects must be completed and turned in

Grade Assessment

<i>Grading Scale</i>	<i>Graded Work and Weight per Assignment</i>
95-100% 4.0	1. Learning Narrative Project (15% of your final grade)
89-94% 3.5	2. Disciplinary/Professional Literacies Project (20% of your final grade)
82-88% 3.0	3. Remix Project (20% of your final grade)
75-81% 2.5	4. Cultural Artifact Project and Reflection (20% of your final grade)
70-74% 2.0	5. Final Reflection (25% of your final grade)
65-69% 1.5	
60-64% 1.0	
0-60% 0.0	

Policies

Attendance and Participation

Attendance to synchronous lectures is not mandatory for this class, but it is highly encouraged. Asynchronous class materials will be available on our [D2L](#) and will be expected to be completed before our next class time.

Classroom Expectations

It is important that we can work together so that we collectively can develop as learners who are committed to using knowledge to make the world a better place.

To do so, I expect the following of students:

- Keep an open mind and listen actively—respect others in your thoughts and responses and respect others' viewpoints, which may differ from your own.
- Willingly engage in an examination of your own thinking and understand that it represents one of many ways of knowing. Understand that your own thinking is a product of a social system and challenging what you know and believe might be uncomfortable (and that is okay).
- Speak/Write/Engage from your own experience, content, or other forms of evidence instead of generalizing.
- Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions but refrain from personal attacks. The goal is not necessarily to agree but to gain deeper knowledge.
- Be conscious not to shift attention away from people and situations that are negatively impacted by systems of oppression by focusing on those who are privileged by them. The end goal of this course is to work toward justice and transformation for those who have been historically marginalized by and through systems.
- Racist, sexist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, or any other discriminatory comments will not be tolerated!

And you can expect the following from me:

- I support, acknowledge, and encourage a variety of Englishes³.
- I will respect your time, commitments, expertise, and experiences you bring to the classroom.
- I support your academic and professional goals in and beyond this course and semester.
- Design engaging learning experiences for you that are intentional and not busy work.
- Remain flexible and generous with the course, program, and students—technology sometimes malfunctions and that's okay!

Communication

Communication is necessary for this class to function. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything inhibiting your ability to learn and/or participate in this class. You can contact me through email. I usually respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them. If you have not received a response within three days, you are encouraged to send a follow-up email my way.

Confidentiality and Mandated Reporting

Though I hope you will find that this classroom is a safe environment for telling personal stories and speaking on serious topics, I would like to make several things clear:

- Please do not feel obligated to share stories that cause you distress or recall past traumas for the sake of “getting the grade.” You have the capability to write and create many things, all of which are worthy of reading and/or viewing—please do not limit yourselves.
- I will not disclose any information you share in the classroom unless it falls under one of the following criteria, of which I am mandatorily obligated to report. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with me:
- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child;
- Past or present allegations of sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual harassment; and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling and Psychiatric Services.

Plagiarism

MSU has a strict policy of what constitutes as plagiarism and cheating. I suggest you read the university's academic integrity policy at

<https://ombud.msu.edu/resources-self-help/academic-integrity> in your own time.

Adding or Dropping Courses

The last day to add or drop this course is the last day of the first week of class, September 9th. The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is September 28th. If you make any changes to your schedule, be sure to make a copy of your amended schedule to verify that you have added or dropped this course.

MSU and Community Resources

Writing Resources

- [Writing Center](#): An awesome center that provides students with one-on-one and group help with all sorts of writing tasks. We'll be meeting with them at least once this semester, so you'll have plenty of opportunities.
- [Main Library](#): The MSU Main Library is a great place for research, study spaces, quiet individual working spaces and group working spaces, not to mention the myriad of online and in-person university and research resources they house.
- [Purdue OWL \(Online Writing Lab\)](#): Contains all the information you might need regarding different citations manuals and their rules.
- [Computer Labs](#): MSU has many computer labs all over campus available for use and printing. You can also find many expensive programs you may not have on these computers like Photoshop and other image and video editing software.
<http://tech.msu.edu/computerlabs/>

Community Resources

Besides writing, please take care of yourself. Transitioning to college is not easy for everyone. I recommend checking out each of these resources as they may offer services and communities that enhance your personal health and happiness, making college a safer, better experience.

- [CAMP](#) (The College Assistance Migrant Program) is a support program for individuals with migrant or seasonal farm work backgrounds intended to help these students succeed
- [CORES](#) (The Council of Racial and Ethnic Students) is made up of four cultural communities: North American Indigenous Student Organization (NAISO), Black Student Alliance (BSA), Asian Pacific American Student Organization (APASO) and Culturas de las Razas Unidas (CRU). These orgs are great ways to get to know people, get to know yourself and get involved in the hard work of intercultural communication and understanding
- [Counseling Center](#): Free therapy for mental health of any reason, from the more serious to the very typical and understandable things like adjusting to college life. Their walk-in hours are M-F 10:00am-Noon & 1:00pm-3:00pm. Their crisis walk-in hours are: M-F 8:00am-5:00pm
- [ELC](#) (English Language Center): A center to empower international students to become full participants in the university community through instruction in language, cultural awareness, and study skills

- [Student Parent Resource Center](#): A center that offers childcare, eldercare, and many other services to help you balance your schoolwork with your personal life if needed
- [LGBT Resource Center](#): As the LBGTRC says, they are a center for everyone! They provide a family room that offers comfy spaces to relax, play games, study, heat up food, have a good cry, talk with others, make friends, and all kinds of other things.
- [MICCA \(Michigan Indígena/Chicanx Community Alliance\)](#): A grassroots group that organizes for Xicano-Indígena liberation in the Great Lakes region. MICCA provides support for anyone interested in continuing and contributing to the Chicanx, Mexicanx, Latinx, and Indigenous communities in (East) Lansing.
- [MRULE \(Multi-Racial Unity Living Experience\)](#): A fusion of faculty, staff, and students who are dedicated to intercultural work at MSU and beyond. They promote interculturalism via global services and opportunities, some of which are local such as working in Lansing to create a community garden
- [NSSC \(Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative\)](#): Made up of Student Academic Affairs and The Learning Resource center, the services here can help you with deciding a major, navigating your residential life (if living outside the residential colleges), and preparation for academic success.
- [OCAT \(Office of Cultural and Academic Transitions\)](#): Supportive cultural, social, and educational communities that actively involve students in learning. Here you can find support for cross-cultural experiences and opportunities to meet other students while also finding critical alliances with people, programs, and ideas throughout the university
- [Olin Health Center](#): A provider of outpatient medical and health education services to all students of MSU. (517) 884-OLIN
- [Recreational Sports and Fitness Services](#): Services promoting learning and life experiences through health, sport, fitness, and recreational opportunities. They have so many intramural facilities, arenas, and outdoor recreational field spaces
- [RCPD \(Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities\)](#): A service center that maximizes ability and opportunity for persons with disabilities to fully participate in campus life. They believe that disabilities do not prevent people from achieving their goals and dreams
- [Safe Place](#): A program that addresses relationship violence and stalking. They provide advocacy, emergency shelter, counseling, support groups, safety planning, information and referrals to survivors of violence and their minor children
- [Student Affairs and Services](#): Services such as the ones listed on this sheet and more resources. You can contact them if you need assistance with finding a service or program for any specific issue, curiosity, or assistance you may have/need
- [Student Life](#): A department that helps students engage in active learning, encourages scholarship, preparation for leadership roles within the University and in the world, promotes students' rights and freedoms, and provides outcomes regarding student life based on research
- [Student Veterans Resource Center](#): A center dedicated to promoting the educational, career, and personal advancement of service members and veterans at MSU

