

English 300, Connect: Advanced Writing

Course Description: As the capstone of the University Studies Program (USP) at UW Oshkosh, English 300 involves structured reflection about your experience of liberal education and integration of the USP's three signature questions in the context of real world problems. Writing will be your primary mode of inquiry in this course. You will undertake multiple, interconnected writing tasks to critically examine your education in the USP, connect issues you have studied to all of the USP signature questions, and apply your understanding of the relationships between these questions to a public problem you choose to investigate in more depth. In short, this course's purpose is to provide a place for you to think deliberately about what you have learned in the USP and improve your writing and research skills in the process.

The first part of this course will engage you in a broad discussion of the purpose of a liberal education through shared readings, class discussion, and reflective writing. We will begin by reading and discussing UW Oshkosh's core values, essential learning outcomes, and the USP as a whole. We will proceed by examining broader historical and contemporary perspectives about the function and value of liberal education in American life, particularly in relation to colleges and universities' efforts to promote responsible citizenship. This part of the course will then culminate in a two-part writing and reflection process. First, you will read and consider your previous work in USP Quest and Explore courses and create an electronic portfolio for presenting your work in these courses. Next, you will write a 1,000 word (four to five page) reflection on your USP experiences that inventories how you have (or haven't) encountered the program's signature questions and the university's learning outcomes. This reflection will also be featured in your e-portfolio.

The second part of the course will build on your critical thinking about your own experiences in the USP by immersing you in efforts to connect the three individual and community responsibilities at the heart of the USP's signature questions. Through shared readings, class discussion, and analytical writing, you will discover and examine how these responsibilities of sustainability, civic knowledge, and intercultural knowledge/competence are interrelated in many local, national, and global problems. In-class analysis of texts that model synthesis of these issues will help you then write two 500 word analyses that practice synthesis of the three signature questions. Each of these short essays will show how an issue that you studied from the perspective of one signature question in one of your Quest or Explore courses is related to a different signature question. These analytical pieces of writing will prepare you to connect the USP responsibilities in the context of an in-depth research project.

Researching, writing, and revising multiple drafts of a 2,500 word (nine to ten page) researched argument will comprise the final section of the course. This essay will tell the story of how your understanding of a particular local, national, or global problem has evolved through your work in the USP. You are encouraged to write about the same issue you examined in your analytical writing in the middle of the course, but you are not required to. You are required to clearly demonstrate how the issue relates to key aspects of at least two of the three responsibilities central to the USP: sustainability, civic knowledge, and intercultural knowledge/ competence. These relationships will be established through your interdisciplinary investigation of the issue, which may include participant observation, interviews, and study of published popular and

scholarly sources. Ultimately, your researched argument essay should advocate for a specific perspective about your chosen issue, based on your experiences in the USP and on your further research.

The final section of the course will conclude with structured consideration of the process of investigating and writing your researched argument. This will include revisiting the reflective essay you wrote on your experiences in the USP at the beginning of the course.

Course Goals: Connect: Advanced Writing will help students become effective, persuasive, and ethical writers. Process and revision are essential components of every section; students will incorporate feedback from their instructors and peers in order to produce final essays from earlier drafts. Essays should achieve a level of sophistication, creativity, and audience awareness well beyond that of first-year writers enrolled in WBIS.

As a culminating experience in the University Studies Program, Connect will also promote integrated learning demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

Specific aspects of these goals that students will develop are:

Rhetorical Awareness: Connect teaches students to approach the writing situation from the perspective of audience, purpose, and style. Students will learn to vary and adapt their language to meet the rhetorical and ethical demands of diverse situations, perspectives, and audiences.

Analytical Reading: Readings from a variety of genres and disciplines (professional journals, research papers, articles, essays, etc.) enable students to analyze, evaluate, and respond to another writer's arguments or ideas.

Synthesis and Judgment: Students will take a position on a given issue and advance that position into a coherent written product. Students will synthesize and organize ideas and information from various sources into new, more complex interpretations and relationships. They will judge the value of information, arguments, and methods. They will learn to craft a thesis that positions the writer's point of view within previous work on a topic. They will understand that arguments entail evaluating evidence and reasoning and analyzing the relationships between an essay and its intended audience.

Study of Craft: Students should understand that the writing process includes an understanding of grammar and mechanics and an ability to manipulate prose styles for the writing situation. They should recognize that their position as a writer further depends on adhering to professional standards of documentation and the ethical use of information (such as familiarity with MLA or APA formats).

Research: Students will identify a significant issue to research; analyze a variety of print, electronic, visual, and/or oral materials that enable them to answer questions and solve problems; and present their findings in at least one research-based paper. The Connect program endorses

the goals of the ALA's [Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education](#), which state that "an information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally."

Coursework: The writing assignments in Connect: Advanced Writing correspond with the following *Amount of Writing in Advanced Composition Courses* requirements approved by the UWO Department of English:

Students in each section of Advanced Composition, regardless of course number, will compose a minimum of 6,000 words per semester and submit at least 4,500 words to instructors for feedback (graded or ungraded).

This total word count must include at least one polished, research-based argument of at least 1,800 words about a significant topic or issue in the course subject area; this argument should be the culmination of a series of inter-related assignments and multiple drafts.

The remaining 4,200 words (or less) should include written work in multiple genres/formats, the majority of which synthesizes and/or responds to a variety of print, electronic, visual, oral, and/or experiential sources.