

English 125: Writing and Academic Inquiry
Living for the City
125.035
Fall 2016
MW 10-11:30
B834 East Quad

Sarah Mass
smmass@umich.edu

3063 Tisch Hall
W 12-1pm; Th 3-4pm; by appt

Course Description:

This class is about writing and academic inquiry. Effective arguments stem from well-formulated questions, and academic essays allow writers to gain deeper understanding of the questions that they are exploring. In this course, you will learn to create complex, analytic, well-supported arguments that matter in academic contexts. The course will also hone your critical thinking and reading skills. Working closely with your peers and instructor, you will develop your essays through workshops and extensive revision. Our course readings will cover a variety of genres and serve as models or prompts for assigned essays. The specific questions that you pursue in your essays will be guided by your own interests.

More specifically, this course focuses on the relationship between cities, language, and identity. How do cities generate questions, tensions, and new horizons in our individual and social lives, and how are these urban experiences translated into writing? We will reflect on these issues (and others) through the mode of written academic inquiry. By reading across genres—from personal memoir to policy documents—you will learn to pose meaningful questions, gather appropriate evidence, synthesize compelling arguments, and think self-reflexively about your identity as a writer, all through the prism of urbanism. In our reading and writing about a particular lived environment, you will gain a set of analytical tools for your career at Michigan and beyond.

Learning Goals for English 125:

- To produce complex, analytic, well-supported arguments that matter in academic contexts.
- To read, summarize, analyze, and synthesize complex texts purposefully in order to generate and support writing.
- To analyze the genres and rhetorical strategies that writers use to address particular audiences for various purposes and in various contexts.
- To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing of varying lengths.
- To develop strategies for self-assessment, goal-setting, and reflection on the process of writing.

Required Texts:

The readings for this course are divided into four pdfs available on our Canvas website. By our second class (9/12), you must have coursepacks 1 & 2 printed out. By our fifteenth session (10/31) you must have coursepacks 3 & 4 printed out. **Failure to bring the readings to class in hard copy will result in an absence for that meeting.**

Course Requirements:

I will determine your final grade according to the following rubric:

- **15% daily engagement:**
 - attendance
 - participation in class discussions and small group activities
 - low-stakes writing assignments

- **10% Essay #1 – Close Reading**
 - Rough draft due 9/30/16
 - Final draft due 10/7/16
- **20% Essay #2 – Open Letter**
 - Rough draft due 10/21/16
 - Final draft due 10/28/16
- **20% Essay #3 – Comparative Analysis**
 - Rough draft due 11/11/16
 - Final draft due 11/18/16
- **15% Essay #4 – Narrative-based Argument**
 - Rough draft due 12/9/16
 - Final draft due 12/20/16
- **10% Peer Review workshops:**
 - Annotated drafts and peer review letters
 - Complete drafts for workshops
 - Active participation in workshops
- **5% Reflective cover letters, reflective annotations, and informal self-reflections**
- **5% Cumulative Reflection Letter**
 - Due 12/12/16

All essays (drafts and final drafts) must be electronically submitted by 6pm on the due date.

Grading Standard:

- **The grading standard for the course will be as follows:**
 - “C” designates “average” work.
 - “B” designates “good” work.
 - “A” designates “excellent” work.
 - You will need to perform work that is consistently above average in order to receive a letter grade of “B” or “A” in the course.
- **I will hold your work to high standards for two reasons:**
 - I believe that it is crucial for you to learn to communicate your ideas clearly in writing. Most people find writing much more difficult than talking. Although I may know what you’re trying to say because I have heard you discuss your ideas during class or in office hours, I will evaluate your written work on the basis of how well the words on the page communicate your ideas.
 - Developing your abilities as a writer will help you to succeed in your remaining classes, in graduate or professional school, and in the workplace. You may not enjoy receiving rigorous feedback or a “B” or “C” on an assignment, but receiving honest feedback will enable you to improve your writing and achieve greater success in your post-college career.
- **I will grade your work using the following scale:**

	B+	C+	D+
	87-89.99	77-79.99	67-69.99
A	B	C	D
93-100	83-86.99	73-76.99	63-66.99
A-	B-	C-	D-
90-92.99	80-82.99	70-72.99	60-62.99

Attendance:

- Because our course foregrounds discussion, close engagement with the readings, and close engagement with each other's writing, attending class is crucial for your own success and for the success of the course.
- **You may miss two class sessions without penalty.**
- I will excuse your absence if you bring me a note from a doctor or health professional, a signed letter from a University team or program, or documentation of a family emergency.
- **Once you have reached your limit of two unexcused absences, I will lower your final daily engagement grade by one letter for each additional absence** (i.e., an "A" grade will become a "B").
- If you miss class, please ask another student to share his/her notes and tell you about what you missed.
- Please make sure to arrive on time for class. Arriving late causes you to miss important material and is disruptive to others. **I will count three late arrivals as one absence.**

Religious Observances:

- If a class session or due date conflicts with your religious holidays, please notify me so that we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but in accordance with UM policy on religious/academic conflicts, your absence will not affect your grade in the course.

Participation:

- The success of our course depends on each of you being prepared to participate.
- **Effective participation entails being an engaged reader.**
 - As you're reading materials for class, please adopt whatever strategies will enable you to stay alert and active as a reader, such as:
 - underlining or flagging important passages and key phrases
 - writing key words at the top of various pages
 - writing notes in the margins of pages or in a reading journal
 - jotting down questions that you want to raise about the reading
 - listing pages or specific passages that contain especially confusing or intriguing material.
 - Please make sure to **bring reading materials to class** on the day that we'll be discussing them.
- **Effective participation entails being an engaged listener and balanced contributor.**
 - If you tend to talk a lot in class, please try to leave room for other students to speak. If you tend to be quiet in class, please make an effort to add to our conversation.
 - Participation can take many forms, including:
 - offering a comment or reflection about the readings during class
 - posing a question or responding to others' questions
 - identifying a passage or section that you find difficult to understand
 - sharing an insight from your writing assignment
 - making links between our discussions and events in the wider world
 - listening carefully and respectfully to other students' contributions.

Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Laptops:

- Please be sure to turn off your cell phones and put all electronic devices in your bags before class begins. It will be distracting for all of us if you text or use an electronic device during class, so **I will mark you absent for the day** if you do so.
- If you expect a call during class (e.g., for a family emergency), please let me know in advance.

- Because our course revolves around dialogue and careful engagement with printed texts, I ask that you **refrain from using your laptop** in class. Laptops tend to make us far less attentive to each other and far more susceptible to online distractions. Please plan to take notes by hand. The four exceptions are our peer review workshops, where I will allow drafts and letters to be consulted in digital form. If you have any special needs or concerns related to technology, please come talk to me.

Sequence of Major Essays:

- Over the course of the semester, I will ask you to produce four formal essays, each of which will involve a **process of drafting, peer review, revision, and self-assessment**.
- Here is a brief description of each major essay. We'll discuss each of these assignments in much greater detail as the semester proceeds:

GENRE	LENGTH	AUDIENCE	TARGETED WRITING SKILLS	% OF FINAL GRADE
Close Reading Essay (an interpretive argument that is based on careful, detailed analysis of evidence)	3-5 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other students in your English 125 course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading like a writer • close reading (carefully unpacking and analyzing evidence) • formulating a driving question • building an argument from careful analysis of a text, object, or phenomenon • incorporating and citing evidence • articulating the “so what?” or broader significance of your argument 	10%
Open Letter (a persuasive argument that is addressed to a particular individual or group but is meant to be read by a broader audience)	4-6 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • readers who have an interest in—or may be affected by—the issue, text, or cultural phenomenon that you’re discussing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close reading • formulating a driving question • identifying your interlocutors; participating in a broader conversation • formulating a nuanced, debatable thesis statement • articulating the “so what?” or broader significance of your argument • analyzing, incorporating, and citing various kinds of evidence • using rhetorical appeals (ethos, logos, pathos) to support your argument • engaging with possible resistance to your argument; empathizing with counter-arguments • making concessions; acknowledging limitations 	20%
Comparative Analysis Essay (an argument that arrives at new insights by putting two texts or phenomena into conversation with each other)	8-10 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • readers with interests in one or both of the texts or phenomena that you’re discussing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structuring comparative analysis • creating a complex, nuanced argument that puts texts or phenomena into conversation with each other • analyzing, incorporating, and citing evidence from multiple sources • engaging with possible resistance to your argument 	20%

Narrative-based Argument (a narrative-based argument that illuminates an important insight you've gained from examining an experience)	6-8 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using writing as a tool for grappling with lingering questions, reflecting on personal development or change, and experimenting with new thinking • drawing on personal experience to create an argument that will matter to other readers • using one or more elements of narrative to craft an argument (sensory details, in-scene exposition, dialogue, character development, narrative time) 	15%
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Late Submission of Formal Essays:

- Unless you **notify me in advance** about extenuating circumstances that will prevent you from submitting your essay on time, I'll lower your grade for the assignment **by one-third of a letter grade for each day** that it is late. For instance, if you submit a "B" paper two days late, your grade will become a "C+."

Brief Writing Assignments:

- Throughout the semester, I will ask you to complete low-stakes writing assignments as preparation for our class discussions and as building blocks for your major essays.
- Most brief writing assignments will be a paragraph (350 word) response, but there is some variation. I will explain each in turn.
- These assignments will count towards your **daily engagement grade**, which is worth 15% of your final grade.
- These assignments, unlike essays, will be due at **8:30am the day of class**.
- **Late Submission of Brief Writing Assignments:**
 - If you miss class, please check our online course site for information about writing assignments.
 - If you cannot make it to class due to illness or an emergency, you can receive full credit for your assignment if you email it to me by 9 p.m. on the day it is due.
 - Otherwise, you will receive no credit for an assignment submitted after the class period or posting time when it is due.

Peer Review Workshops:

- Writing is a social process; both giving and receiving feedback about writing enables us to develop our abilities as writers. In this spirit, **peer review workshops will play a central role in our course**. By identifying what is working and not working in each other's drafts, you will help each other to clarify and strengthen your arguments. Commenting on others' work is also one of the best ways to improve your own writing; identifying strengths and weaknesses in your peers' drafts will heighten your awareness of strengths and weaknesses in your own work.
- We'll have a range of **different kinds of workshops** throughout the semester. For some of these workshops, I'll ask you to read each other's work during class and offer each other oral feedback. These workshops will focus on shorter pieces of writing such as your thesis statement, a paragraph that incorporates quotes from another scholar, or a paragraph that addresses counter-arguments.
- **For workshops that focus on the four formal essays**, I'll assign you to a particular peer review group and ask you to do the following:
 - Email a **complete draft** of your assignment to me and to your group members by the date and time specified on the syllabus. Drafts will be due **the Friday before the scheduled Monday workshop**.

- Before the workshop, read your group members' drafts and offer each group member **feedback in the form of an annotated copy of the essay draft and a letter**. We'll practice providing useful feedback during class, and I'll distribute guidelines for writing each set of peer review letters.
- On the day of the workshop, **bring a digital copy of each annotated draft and letter** to class.
- **It is crucial that you attend class on days when peer review workshops are scheduled.**
 - If you miss a workshop, you'll not only miss an invaluable opportunity to improve your own draft; you'll also deprive your group members of feedback on their drafts.
 - **If you miss a peer review workshop, you must arrange to receive feedback on your draft.** You can meet with a tutor at the Sweetland Center for Writing or arrange for another student to read your draft. You must then write a response to the feedback that you receive and submit your response with your final essay. **If you do not arrange to receive feedback on your draft, you will not receive credit for completing the draft.**
- **Please send a complete draft of your essay for peer review workshops, and submit those drafts by Friday at 6pm.**
 - A draft is a work-in-progress, and you'll be substantially revising your drafts based on the feedback that you receive. However, your peers can only offer you helpful feedback if you give them a **full-length draft** in which you have done your best to meet the requirements of the assignment. Furthermore, your peers will need adequate time for carefully reading and responding to your work.
 - **Except in cases of extenuating circumstances, if you submit your draft after the required submission time, you will not receive credit for completing the draft.**

Self-Reflection Assignments:

- Deepening your self-awareness as a writer is one of the best ways to strengthen your writing skills. Throughout the semester, I will ask you to submit some **self-reflection assignments that will help you to think about your writing process and your development as a writer**.
- These assignments will include reflective cover letters or annotations, which will be due with each of your formal essays, and some low-stakes reflections that I will ask you to complete at various stages of the drafting process.

Office Hours:

- I look forward to meeting with you individually during office hours. We'll meet for at least one required conference, during which we'll discuss a draft of one of your essays. I also encourage you to come to my office hours throughout the term. We can talk about your assignments, issues that we've been discussing in class, any difficulties that you're having, and/or your future plans.
- If your schedule conflicts with my weekly office hours, please let me know so that we can arrange to meet at another time.

Accommodations for Special Needs:

- The University of Michigan is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students, and I am committed to making learning as accessible as possible for all of my students. If you have a disability and need an accommodation to participate in this class or to complete course requirements, please ask Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to provide documentation of the accommodations that you need. Then, please share this documentation with me as soon as possible, preferably within the first few weeks of class. I will treat as private and confidential any information that you share.
- If you suspect that you may have a disability and would like to be tested, Services for Students with Disabilities can provide free screenings and referrals to low-cost diagnostic services.

- Here is the contact information for Services for Students with Disabilities:
 - location: G-664 Haven Hall
 - phone: 734-763-3000
 - website: <http://ssd.umich.edu/>

Mental Health Resources:

- As a student, you may experience challenges that negatively affect your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence, difficulty with eating or sleeping, grief/loss, and alcohol or drug problems. The University of Michigan offers several confidential services that you might find helpful for addressing such challenges, including
 - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 734-764-8312
 - Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) 24-Hour Crisis Line: 734-936-3333
 - Psychiatric Emergency Services: 734-996-4747.
- If you have a diagnosed mental health condition, you may also be able to register with Services for Students with Disabilities: see <http://ssd.umich.edu/mental-health-conditions>.

Sweetland Center for Writing:

- The Sweetland Center for Writing—located at **1310 North Quad**—is an amazing, free resource! If you would like additional feedback or assistance as you're planning, drafting, or revising your writing assignments, you can schedule an individual appointment with a Sweetland faculty member, drop in for a peer-tutoring session, correspond online with a peer tutor, or submit your work online to receive feedback within 72 hours.
- Sweetland faculty members and peer tutors will not edit or proofread your work, but they can assist you with understanding assignments, generating ideas, developing and organizing arguments, using evidence and sources, and clarifying your writing.
- For more information, please visit: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/undergraduate>.

Plagiarism:

- Building on others' words and ideas is an essential element of effective scholarship. However, we must give credit to those whose words and ideas we incorporate into our writing. Using someone else's words, ideas, or work without proper attribution is plagiarism, and such an act is considered a serious ethical violation within the university community.
- If you complete an assignment for one course and then submit that same assignment as original work for a different course, you are also committing plagiarism.
- We will discuss what constitutes plagiarism, but if you have additional questions about how to reference material that you find in books or online, please let me know.
- **If you commit an act of academic dishonesty in this course either by plagiarizing someone's work or by allowing your own work to be misused by another person, you will face the following consequences:**
 - You will fail the assignment and may fail the course.
 - I will report the incident to the Director of the English Department Writing Program.
 - I will also forward your case, with an explanatory letter and all pertinent materials, to the LSA Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.
 - The Dean will determine an appropriate penalty, which may involve academic probation and/or community service.
 - If you commit plagiarism while you are already on probation for plagiarism, you may be asked to leave the University.

UNIT ONE: CLOSE READING TEXTS AND CITIES		
DAY & DATE	MATERIALS FOR DISCUSSION	WRITING ASSIGNMENTS DUE
<i>Session 1</i> 9/7/16 Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course syllabus 	
<i>Session 2</i> 9/12/16 Reading like a Writer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mike Bunn, “How to Read Like a Writer” Grady Clay, “Introduction,” <i>Close-Up: How to Read an American City</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each essay, bring one passage that generated a question for you, and one passage that unlocked an key idea for you
<i>Session 3</i> 9/14/16 Modeling Close Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virginia Woolf, “Oxford Street Tide” Valeria Luiselli, “Relingos: The Cartography of Empty Spaces” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marked-up copies of readings
<i>Session 4</i> 9/19/16 Identifying Authors’ Motivating Moves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Motivating Moves” (handout) Le Corbusier, “A Contemporary City” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article summary ¶
<i>Session 5</i> 9/21/16 Formulating a Driving Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carl Nightingale, “The Segregation Paradoxes” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argument summary ¶
<i>Session 6</i> 9/26/16 Incorporating and Citing Textual Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.V. Savitch, “What Makes a City Great?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight the quotations; circle all the statistics and tables; star all the paraphrasing; underline the summarizing in the “4Cs in New York...” section
<i>Session 7</i> 9/28/16 Practicing Peer Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review Guidelines Jeremiah Chamberlin, “Workshop Is Not for You” 	
9/30/16 – CLOSE READING DRAFT DUE		
<i>Session 8</i> 10/3/16 Peer Review Workshop: Close Reading Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete drafts of your Close Reading Essays Annotated drafts and letters for each member of your group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotated drafts and letters for each member of your group
UNIT TWO: OPEN LETTER TO AN URBAN AUDIENCE		
DAY	MATERIALS	WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

& DATE	FOR DISCUSSION	DUE
<i>Session 9</i> <i>10/5/16</i> Entering the Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark Gaipa, “Breaking Into the Conversation: How Students Can Acquire Authority for Their Writing” MLive Letter to the Editor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close-read MLive Letter using Gaipa models ¶
10/7/16 – CLOSE READING ESSAY DUE		
<i>Session 10</i> <i>10/10/16</i> The Art of Persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jane Jacobs, “Downtown is for People” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion question
<i>Session 11</i> <i>10/12/16</i> Engaging with Resistance; Acknowledging Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Moses, “It’s going to be quite a town” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebuttal to Moses ¶
10/17/16 – FALL BREAK, NO CLASS		
<i>Session 12</i> <i>10/19/16</i> Creating a Nuanced, Debatable Thesis Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin Luther King Jr. “Letter from Birmingham Jail” Your thesis statements for your Open Letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MLK appeal summary ¶ Draft thesis statement
10/21/16 – OPEN LETTER DRAFT DUE		
<i>Session 13</i> <i>10/24/16</i> Peer Review Workshop: Open Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete drafts of your Open Letters Annotated drafts and letters for each member of your group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotated drafts and letters for each member of your group
<i>Session 14</i> <i>10/26/16</i> Analyzing, Incorporating, and Citing Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Angry Architect, “Open Letter to Mayor de Blasio: Don’t Destroy the Times Square Plaza” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate Moses and Jacobs into the body of the “Angry Architect” Open Letter
10/28/16 – OPEN LETTER DUE		
UNIT THREE: COMPARATIVE URBANISMS		
DAY & DATE	MATERIALS FOR DISCUSSION	WRITING ASSIGNMENTS DUE
<i>Session 15</i> <i>10/31/16</i> Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Patrick Leary, “Detroitism” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do the visual sources in Leary’s essay answer the question posed in his subtitle? ¶

Comparative Analysis		
<i>Session 16</i> 11/2/16 Structuring Comparative Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gregory Shafer, “Confronting Whiteness and the Flint Water Crisis” <i>Atlantic</i> Flint Photo Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match two sections of Shafer with two pictures and explain your reasoning ¶
<i>Session 17</i> 11/7/16 Developing a Complex Conversation among Texts or Phenomena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebecca Solnit, “Nothing was Foreordained” “New Orleans Here and Now: The Best Eva 1.5” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative essay worksheet
11/8/16-11/9/16 – INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS (NO CLASS 11/9) 11/11/16 – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS DRAFT DUE		
<i>Session 18</i> 11/14/16 Peer Review Workshop: Comparative Analysis Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete drafts of your Comparative Analysis Essays Annotated drafts and letters for each member of your group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotated drafts and letters for each member of your group
<i>Session 19</i> 11/16/16 Creating a Nuanced Thesis Statement about Two Texts or Phenomena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your revised introduction/thesis statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised essay introduction/thesis statements
11/18/16 – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ESSAY DUE		
UNIT FOUR: PLACE-BASED NARRATIVE ARGUMENTS		
DAY & DATE	MATERIALS FOR DISCUSSION	WRITING ASSIGNMENTS DUE
<i>Session 20</i> 11/21/16 Making an Argument in Narrative Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edward Wong, “Life in a Toxic Country” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the urban “problem” and at least two intended communities of readers¶
11/23/16 – NO CLASS		
<i>Session 21</i> 11/28/16 Exploring Elements of Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P.J. O’Rourke, “Anything Goes” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reverse outline: map the narrative structure

<p><i>Session 22</i> <i>11/30/16</i></p> <p>Working with Particular Narrative Techniques</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shafer (redux) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite a dialogue section of Shafer as first-person narrative ¶
<p><i>Session 23</i> <i>12/5/16</i></p> <p>Implicit vs. Explicit Thesis Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eula Biss, “Notes from No Man’s Land” • D.J. Waldie, “My Place in California” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify one question that Biss and Waldie generate in their writing, and explain how they go about answering it. ¶
<p><i>Session 24</i> <i>12/7/16</i></p> <p>Reflecting on Your Growth as a Writer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lizzie Widdicombe, “The End of Food” • Your DSP Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection ¶
<p>12/9/16 – NARRATIVE-BASED ARGUMENT DRAFT DUE</p>		
<p><i>Session 25</i> <i>12/12/16</i></p> <p>Peer Review Workshop: Narrative-based Argument</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete drafts of your Narrative-based Arguments • Annotated drafts and letters for each member of your group • REFLECTIVE LETTER DUE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotated drafts and letters for each member of your group
<p>12/20/16 – NARRATIVE-BASED ARGUMENT ESSAY DUE</p>		