

Fall 2023 WRA 101:045 **Writing As Inquiry**

instructor: Stephie Minjung Kang
office: Bessey Hall 274
office hours: Tuesday, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, and by appointment
email: kangmi23@msu.edu
meets: Wells B100, Tue/Thu, 8:00 am - 9:50 am

Note: This syllabus may change in response to the learning needs of students. Changes will be discussed in advance in class.

Indeed, while many scholars have argued that literacy education must account for diverse cultures and language practices in globalizing societies . . . , language and literacy scholars and educators must reimagine possibilities for a future in which the plural and hybrid nature of literacies is increasingly the norm.

— Kang, Gangopadhyay, and Hall, “Critical Collaboration”

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This is [an introductory writing course designed for first-year students](#) to utilize the practices of invention, arrangement, revision, and delivery in composition in order to support your successful transition to writing, reading, and researching in higher education. Not only will this course have you workshop your writing through various tasks and activities, it will also challenge you to develop research writing skills organically. Specifically, you will focus on drafting as a process, rhetorical and critical analysis of texts, peer reviewing, researching, finding sources, citing, and reflecting. By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- think rhetorically to analyze, compose, and reflect on texts by considering who the audience is and what the context and purpose of the text are;
- write as a social act to understand the social nature of composing, particularly the role of literacies at the local, national, and international level;
- write as a process to use multiple approaches for planning, researching, prewriting, composing, assessing, revising, editing, proofreading, collaborating, and incorporating feedback in order to make your compositions stronger;
- draw and identify aspects of your prior experiences, linguistic knowledge, and cultural practices as key resources in your writing;

- reflect to evaluate your development as a writer over the course of the semester and describe how inquiry on our experiences, culture, and discipline can be applied in other contexts to advance your goals;
- and research to use writing to examine your personal beliefs in the context of multiple perspectives and to explore focused research questions.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. Active MSU email: Email will be our main way of communication so please check your MSU email regularly and be responsive.
2. Access to Google Drive: All assignments must be submitted to our [class Google Drive folder](#).
3. Electronic Device: Come to class with an electronic device such as laptops or tablets to participate in writing workshops, discussions, and other activities.

WORK COMMITMENTS

1. **Proposal** (500 words or more): Every researcher forms a “narrative” of what they are trying to figure out, why, and how. Compose a research proposal in which you identify the context of the research topic, personal narrative, background, or motivation relating to the research topic, and a clear, angled research question. *Due Monday, Sep 11.*
2. **Cultural Review** (700 words or more): Researching the history and background of the research topic, find three sources that are not from academic spaces—hence, popular or “cultural” sources—and synthesize them. Your cultural review must feature highlights of key arguments, events, or/and figures in your research topic. *Due Monday, Sep 25.*
3. **Academic Review** (500 words or more): Find one study that concerns your research question—a study that helps you consider evidence into your research—from a published academic source and summarize the study’s context, method, and results/findings. Then explain how the study answers your research question. *Due Monday, Oct 16.*
4. **Concluding Report** (400 words or more): Now that you found out what you found out from two reviews, now what? Explain the findings, limitations and implications of your research and make suggestions for the future. *Due Monday, Oct 30.*
5. **Final Research Paper** (2,000 words or more): Compile four previous writings into one document. Focus on revising with foci of cohesion, need for additional information, and APA citation style. *Due Monday, Nov 13.*

6. **Final Presentation** (10 minutes): Communicate your research with the audience using various speech techniques and visual aids. *See schedule for presentation days.*
7. **Reflection** (500 words or more): Write an informal narrative on your experiences in this course; what have you learned and grown in and what would you take to your future writing situations? *Due Monday, Dec 11.*

WORKSHOP

If you want to improve your writing, the simple and the only answer is to write. A lot. WRA 101 is intentionally designed as a 4-credit class to embed workshop hours. Writing workshops are similar to what you would expect in a chemistry lab—you apply the (writing/scientific) method into practice to learn through trials and errors. I structure and conduct WRA 101 in ways to invite you to “practice” writing methods rather than “lecturing” about writing methods. With that said, I expect you to come prepared to write every class.

How workshopping works:

- The first 50 minutes of every class (8:00 am - 8:50 am) are dedicated for **individual workshops** unless planned otherwise. These workshops are drop-in basis, which means that you can show up after 8:00 am or not show up at all. You decide which day and when to show up early in order to workshop your writing based on your needs. Eventually, you will need to fulfill at least **9 hours** of workshop by the end of the semester to get 4.0. I will keep and share a separate time log that allows you to track your workshop hours at any point of the semester.
- After a 10-minute break, **the regular class starts at 9:00 am**. During the class, I invite you to sorts of activity, discussion, or analysis to get your research writing going. Specific daily agenda can be found in the Course Schedule. You must come to this regular class for attendance whether you were at the workshop or not.

ATTENDANCE

Because this course is workshop-based, attendance is important and expected. Please come to class prepared to write and with the intention to interact and learn from one another. You may miss up to 4 classes with no questions asked. Starting from the fifth absence, your grade will be affected.

GRADING POLICY

In this class, grades are determined based on your labor as opposed to your performance in relation to a standard. This means that points will simply be awarded for the completion of the above

described works on time. You will still get my feedback on your strengths and ways to improve your writing. This is perhaps very different from how you earn grades in other classes so let me explain.

This method of grading is called “labor-based grading” which was developed by [Asao B. Inoue](#), a rhetoric and writing scholar. In his book, Inoue (2019) shares:

I would have to justify each grade and that meant my stance as a reader would have to be one of looking for reasons why I didn't think the paper deserved a higher grade, or at best why I thought the paper warranted the grade I gave it—and I almost always knew the overall grade by the time I got halfway through each paper, which then turned my attention as a reader toward the markers in the paper that justified that grade, a self-fulfilling judgment practice. (p. 53)

Taking grades out of my reading of your work allows me to fully focus on the work itself for productive feedback instead of spending the time rationalizing what grade your work is ‘worthy’ of or what Inoue calls here as “self-fulfilling judgment.”

I have noticed the similar effect on the student-end, too. When grades are absent, students must redefine their motivation in class from getting a good grade to something else: Why do I want to improve my writing? How will it benefit me? Absence of grades opens up students to take more chances in writing because they know they won’t be scrutinized for grammar and other academic conventions.

Most importantly, because I know that everyone comes to this class with different literacy backgrounds and access to literacy education, removing numerical values on your work is also removing the likelihood that I am evaluating your work based on your prior experiences. Putting it more plainly, perhaps, you grew up in an environment where you were positively reinforced to read and write a lot. Perhaps, your high school offered you a rigorous small-group writing program where you learned how to write for academic purposes. Perhaps, you didn’t. Whatever your prior preparation is, the labor-based grading allows me to honor your background by focusing on your growth, not on faults, in your writing.

Here is how your labor will translate into grades:

Final Grade	# of absences	# of late work	# of missed work	# of workshop
4.0	4 or less	2 or less	0	9 hours
3.5	5	5 or less	1	less than 9 hours
3.0	6	6	2	less than 9 hours
2.5	7 to 9	7	3 or 4	less than 9 hours
2.0	10 or more	8 or more	5 or more	less than 9 hours

by “work” here, I mean everything listed under “Work Commitments” on page 2.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The work you submit must be produced originally for this class and cannot be used for another course in the same semester without my permission. You should also credit others' contributions to your work. It is perfectly appropriate for you to borrow graphics, to quote passages, and to use ideas from others. However, when you do so, follow appropriate credit-giving or citation conventions. Making mistakes in citation style is okay, but leaving no indication to borrowed words is plagiarism.

University information about academic honesty is included in the Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide.

GENERATIVE AI

ChatGPT and other Large Language Model AI can be used in several ways to promote learning. We might use them, for instance, to better understand genres or generate ideas. However, for some of the reasons we'll discuss and think about in our course, they can also complicate/short-circuit learning in a variety of ways. Namely, the use of ChatGPT and similar technologies bypasses practice altogether, reflects the data (and ideas) it was trained on, limits the availability of feedback, and turns over the decision-making process to algorithms. Practice, new ideas, feedback, and the ability to act are key ingredients in learning. So, I encourage you to think hard about the use of ChatGPT in your own life and learning. For the purposes of our class, I will treat the submission of LLM/ChatGPT-generated pieces of writing as a violation of the academic honesty policy as outlined above.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is **permitted** in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas
- Fine tuning your research questions
- Finding information on your topic
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
- Checking grammar and style

The use of generative AI tools is **not permitted** in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion responses
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class work

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic integrity and the Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge.

RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

I believe that the classroom is a sort of sacred space where we come together to ponder and discuss our world and our space critically. Keeping a democratic classroom, you need to be respectful and thoughtful while communicating with others. I encourage debate and discussion in the classroom, but I require respectful interactions as the joint responsibility of me and you all. By taking this class with me, you are agreeing to respect each other's individual uniqueness and complexity by abstaining from generalizations.

CONTENT WARNING

We will discuss topics that can make people feel uncomfortable because of their own experiences with the topic, how the topic makes them feel about themselves, or because it contradicts how they have thought about the world.

During the course of this semester, we may discuss historical or current events and may experience texts, images, and other compositions that may be disturbing or even traumatizing to some students.

If you suspect that the material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, if possible, please discuss your concerns with me prior to the class in which the subject will come up. Similarly, if we are discussing something in class and you feel the need to turn off your video/audio or to step outside during a class discussion, you may always do so without academic penalty.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

All students and campus employees must follow university health directives. If those directives change during the semester, I will be sure to share them with the class so we can discuss what the changes mean for our course. You can also follow MSU's COVID-related responses and messaging at <https://msu.edu/together-we-will/faqs/>

Masks are not currently required in classrooms or other teaching settings on campus, but please know that you are welcome to wear a mask if you wish.

If you test positive for COVID-19, have been directly exposed to COVID, or are not feeling well, please stay home. If you can give me a bit of lead time and if you feel good enough to join us for class on zoom, please let me know.

If you will miss class, please alert me immediately. I will keep you up-to-date regarding missed assignments and/or help you to catch up once you are well. We can also schedule a catch-up meeting with you, when and as you are able.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have 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. Please inform me as soon as possible and provide certification from the [Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities \(RCPD\)](#).

BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT

Any student in this class who experiences difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in our course, is urged to contact their academic advisor for support. You may also contact the MSU Food Bank (<http://foodbank.msu.edu>) for help getting access to healthy foods. Furthermore, if you are experiencing any other challenges with basic needs, you may also notify me, and I will work to connect you with any resources that I may have access to.

MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for students and for the campus as a whole. As a member of the university community, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination.

If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, please see <https://centerforsurvivors.msu.edu/>

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg–Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.

WRITING RESOURCES

- Writing Center: An awesome resource center that provides students with one-on-one and group help with all sorts of writing tasks. <http://writing.msu.edu>
- Learning Resource Center: <http://www.msu.edu/~lrc>
- 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. <https://www.lib.msu.edu/>
- Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- 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

- [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.
- [ELC](#) (English Language Center): A center for English as a second language learners 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 school work 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 Chicax, 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

Fall 2023 WRA 101:045 | Schedule

DATE	TOPICS AND INQUIRIES TO BE DISCUSSED
8/29	Intro to the course philosophy, tasks, and expectations : Why do writing courses exist in higher education? Why is this course mandatory?
8/31	Identifying a great research topic : What do you care about in this world? What are your interests? What would it mean for you to research <i>that</i> ?
9/5	Identifying a great research topic, part 2 : Beyond your personal interests, why should <i>we</i> care about your topic?
9/7	From a topic to a research question : What about the topic you want to focus on? What's the angle and purpose of your research? What is your research question?
	Proposal (500 words or more) due Monday, 9/11
9/12	Types of sources & finding cultural sources : What are different types of sources for research? What are “valid” sources? What is the purpose of having cultural sources?
9/14	Summarizing your sources : How do we strategically summarize?
9/19	Synthesizing your sources : What is a ‘synthesis’? How do the sources relate to one another?
9/21	Revising your research question based on sources : How do your cultural sources answer or not answer your research question? Do they inform you to revise your initial research question?
	Cultural Review (700 words or more) due Monday, 9/25
9/26	Academic Sources & using library databases : What makes a source “academic”? What is the purpose of having academic sources?

9/28 Dissecting an academic paper
: How do we read a difficult text? What does an academic paper consist of?

10/3 Instructor out of town—no class
(Spend time on finding one academic source that could answer your research question)

10/5 Summarizing the study
: What do the study in the academic source do? How? What does it reveal?

10/10 Forming argument based on the study
: So what? What does the study tell you about your research question?

10/12 Full workshop day—no regular class at 9am

Academic Review (500 words or more) due Monday, 10/16

10/17 Forming argument based on academic review + Organizing research findings
: What are the facts, evidence, arguments, key events, key figures, etc. from your sources that you've reviewed thus far?

10/19 Midterm break—no class
(Highly recommend meeting with me one-on-one if you are concerned about your performance in class)

10/24 Fall break—no class

10/26 Identifying research gaps
: What do your sources tell you collectively? What is still missing? What should we do more? What do you recommend/suggest whom to do what?

Concluding Report (400 words or more) due Monday, 10/30

10/31 Revising
: What are your experiences with revisions in your writing process? Compile all of your writing thus far into one document and then review; what do you notice?

11/2 Peer review on final research paper
: What's your role and responsibility as a peer reviewer? How does peer review really work? Does it even work?

11/7 APA citation
: Why does citation practice exist? Where does it come from? How important is it to me if I'm not going to be a professional writer or researcher in the future?

11/9 Communicating your research with audience
: Why do TED Talk speeches work so well? What are different purposes of sharing your research with others? How do you make an impactful and persuasive argument to your audience?

Final Research Paper (2,000 words or more) due Monday, 11/13

11/14 Creative tools for presentations
: What creative tools can you utilize in your presentation? How do you use multimodality (such as videos, slideshows, images, etc.) and audience participation (such as mock experiment, questioning, activity, surveying, etc.) effectively?

11/16 Organizing talking points
: How should your presentation flow to encapsulate your long research paper in ten minutes? What is the rhetorical effect?

11/21 Peer rehearsals
: What are my strengths as a public speaker? What is the best way to convey my argument in my own style?

11/23 *University Holiday (Thanksgiving)*

11/28 8 final presentations

11/30 8 final presentations

12/5 8 final presentations

12/7 Last day reflection
: What did you learn about research process? How would you take your experience in this class to your future writing situations?

Finals No classes or final exams during the finals week
(I still am available to meet for any questions or concerns on your final grade)

Reflection (500 words or more) due Monday, 12/11