

WRIT 201 College Writing II

Writing the Body: The Rhetoric of Health and Illness

**prerequisite C or better in 101 or direct placement into WRIT 201*

Instructor: Erik Norbie

Office: Via Zoom

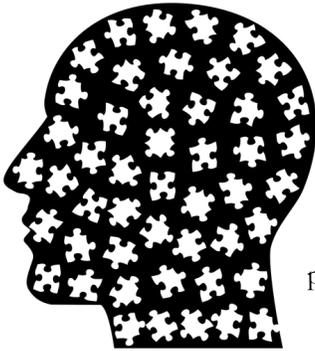
Phone: 406-243-5231 (main number for the English Department)

Office Hours: Via Zoom M 1-3, T 1-2 and by appointment

Email: erik.norbie@umontana.edu

Classroom: Online

Meeting days/time: Asynchronous



“[Writing] is as vital as the blood pressure or other soundings if we wish to fully witness the experience of medicine in our time.” Abraham Verghese

“Rhetoric is the faculty of discovering, in a given instance, the available means of persuasion.” Aristotle

Course Description:

From glossy magazine spreads touting the brain-boosting benefits of eating chocolate to urgent public health initiatives broadcast during times of crises, rhetoric shapes our understanding of health and illness. Everyday we are inundated with information—often accompanied by contradicting viewpoints—about our wellbeing, and we must make frequent decisions that have the potential for lasting impacts on our health. Making these decisions involves connecting data and expertise with language and lived experience.

Through careful reading, critical analysis, and persuasive writing we will explore how rhetorical communication offers powerful strategies for communicating complex information in meaningful and accessible ways. We will also examine how rhetorical perspectives help us understand the intersections of health, illness, race, environment, economics, and other social and cultural factors.

We will consider questions such as:

- What makes for ‘effective’ communication about topics related to health and illness?
- How can we translate research and data into persuasive arguments?
- How can we advocate or argue for a position even when uncertainty remains?
- What constitutes ‘legitimate’ information about health and illness? Who controls this information? Who should have access to this information?
- Who are the experts in communicating disease experiences?
- What kind of ethical issues do we face when writing rhetorically about illness?
- How are prejudices, biases, and inequities related to health rhetoric?

Much of your work in this class will involve different kinds of collaboration via our online interfaces. Because writing development is an important process that takes place over time and across different writing situations, all WRIT 201 classes use portfolio evaluation as a primary means of evaluation. By the end of the semester you should be able to accurately and subtly assess a given rhetorical situation and make effective rhetorical choices based your assessment in order to write a graceful, convincing, beautifully written argument.

Required Course Texts:

- *College Writing II: Rhetoric and American Cultures* by Erin Costello Wecker, PhD (available at the UM bookstore)
- Essays, articles, excerpts and other types of media (provided on course Moodle site)

What Does “Online” Mean?

- It means we will not meet at a regularly scheduled time together as an entire class in a classroom. Instead, we will engage with the course content and each other’s ideas using Moodle as our main platform, along with additional digital tools like Zoom to connect in small groups and individually at different times throughout the semester.
- It means that connecting during ‘office hours,’ over email, and through Moodle forums and activities will be essential to a successful class. It also means that you will need to get in touch with me and with the UM technology team right away if you have difficulty with technology, accessing Moodle, or other online tools. Here are a few resources:

UM Resources for learning online

https://umonline.umt.edu/keep_on_learning/tools_keep_on_learning.php

https://umonline.umt.edu/keep_on_learning/support_training_keep_learning.php

How Will We Stay Connected?

- **Email** I will send out regular emails with course updates. So that you can keep an eye out for them, I will start each email with the subject of “WRIT 201”
- **Recorded lectures** I will record short, typically less than 10 minutes, mini-lectures that cover important concepts and respond to forum posts and check-ins. Most weeks there will be at least two mini-lectures: One that introduces the content, assignments, and topics for the week. One that reviews and wraps-up concepts from posts and discussions.
- **Texts and media** Includes textbook chapters, PDF excerpts on Moodle, links to content on websites, videos, etc.
- **Forum posts and replies** You will complete short written posts, which most often will be viewable by your peers. You will respond to your peers to demonstrate participation, engage with the course topics, and to support a positive learning dynamic.
- **Assignments** Informal writing in response to prompts that are only viewable by me
- **Check-ins** You will submit these each week. They will typically consist of at least 1 success from the week and 1 question from the week. These will only be viewed by me.
- **Small group Zooms** Throughout the semester we will occasionally meet in small group Zoom sessions. You will sign up for times that work for you as we go.
- **Office hour meetings** You are required to meet with me at least 2 times throughout the semester via Zoom. However, feel free to schedule Zoom meetings with me as regularly as you find helpful.
- **Major Assignments** These are your major writing assignments for the semester. You will submit these to me, receive feedback from me, and have an opportunity to revise Major Assignment #2.

Respect:

It is imperative that you treat your peers with as much respect as you expect from them. I expect this course to be a supportive and respectful environment where everyone feels comfortable speaking without fear of being put down or embarrassed. If you fail to respect your classmates your grade will be affected.

In this course we will be discussing socially debated and, sometimes, conflict-laden issues. We will work as a class to create an environment that allows each member to share their ideas. This does not mean we have to agree with other’s perspectives. Part of your educational experience is learning that you will disagree, sometimes radically, with people and that honest discussion is a way to learn to respect and value those disagreements.

Although we are not meeting together in a physical classroom, we are still a community here at UM. Please keep in mind this community as you post to discussion forums and connect digitally. Learning involves taking risks, and sharing our thoughts and our writing can make us feel vulnerable. Be respectful and supportive of each other.

An Important Note:

Given the theme of this class we will be discussing, reading about, and writing about topics related to health and illness. Examples of topics include: sleep, nutrition, dementia, stroke, cancer, infectious disease and a variety of healthcare interventions. We will read and view scientific, technical, popular, and creative media, which range from empirical studies to patient experiences. Many of us have strong personal connections to some of these topics. These connections may make a reading emotionally overwhelming or distressing. If a particular topic causes you distress, please contact me and we will find an alternative reading. Also, please keep the following UM resources in mind throughout the semester: <https://www.umt.edu/diversity/resources/mental-health.php>

WRIT 201 Required Elements

I encourage you to talk with me at any time to better understand my comments or to discuss your overall progress and success in the class.

General Class Expectations:

- All reading assignments will be completed by the assigned date.
- All writing assignments must be turned in on time.
- **All major assignments must be typed. Please use 12 point Times New Roman font, double-space, and 1 inch margins on all sides.**
- Actively participate in online class discussions.
- Any individual assignments (including requests for conferences) will be completed by the assigned date.

WRIT 201 is an Intermediate Writing Course. The university learning outcomes include:

- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

What are the Deadlines?

Each week's deadlines are as follows:

- Forum posts are due by **Wednesdays at midnight.**
- Forum replies to your peers' posts are due by **Fridays at midnight.**
- Weekly check-ins and other informal weekly assignments are due to me by **Fridays at midnight.**
- Major assignment due dates are listed on the syllabus and on Moodle.

*The **first week** is an exception to these deadlines. You have until August 23rd to complete the shortened Week 1 of the course*

In general, late work will not be accepted, with the exception of major assignments. If a major assignment is turned in late, you will lose credit for each day the assignment is late.

How Does Grading Work?

*You must earn a C- in this class to be awarded credit

Participation	35%	(Scored holistically – please see attached rubric)
Writing	65%	
- MA #1	10%	
- MA #2	15%	
- MA #3	15%	
- Final Portfolio	25%	(Includes revised MA #2 and MA #4)

*Final Portfolio also includes additional evidence of your inquiry, revision, and progress – see assignment sheet for complete guidelines

you must turn in your portfolio and complete **all major essays by their deadlines in order to receive credit for this course.**

Grading Policy: Students enrolled in WRIT 201 are graded by the traditional letter grade A, B, C, D, F or are given NC for no credit. The NC grade does not affect grade point average. It is reserved for students who have worked unusually hard, attended class regularly and completed all assignments, but whose skills are not at a passing level at the end of the semester.

Major Assignments

Expect to write four major assignments and make major revisions over the course of the semester, in addition to other short writing assignments. I will give you a detailed assignment sheet as we begin each of these major assignments. You will have the chance to develop all of your major projects through a process of inquiry and drafting.

Major Inquiry Projects:

Assignment #1: Rhetorical Analysis

Assignment #2: Persuasive Researched Essay

Assignment #3: Topic Translation

Assignment #4: Publication Cover Letter

Participation. Participation includes taking part in online forums and discussions, completing informal writing and weekly assignments, viewing recorder lectures, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions excellent. It also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class. Please see *Participation Grade Descriptors* for more information.

Late Work.

Your work needs to be submitted on Moodle under the appropriate submission forum to be considered "on time".

- ★ Late homework does not receive credit.
- ★ Late formal essays/major assignments will not receive revision comments and will receive a grade deduction.

Attendance

Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class sessions may be required to drop the course. This is university policy and the reasoning behind it is that important groundwork for the semester is put in place in the first few class sessions. Students without that foundational framework are better served by taking the course when they can give it the attention it deserves. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies to permit other students to add classes. Students must drop the course through CyberBear to avoid receiving a failing grade.

More than one week without engaging with the online course will compromise your grade. More than three weeks not engaging with the online course will result in a failing grade. Here's the breakdown.

After one week: final grade drops one letter grade (for example, A drops to B)

After two weeks: final grade drops two letter grades (for example, A drops to C)

After three weeks: final grade is an F

Here's the reasoning behind the attendance policy. Without engaging regularly with the online course, you cannot perform your role as a student involved in learning, planning, inventing, drafting; discussing reading and writing; learning and practicing rhetorical moves and concepts; or collaborating with your instructor and classmates. Personal situations inevitably arise that may make difficult to engage with the course during a particular week. Remember, however, that's why a few absences are allowed; please reserve those for emergencies.

Students are expected to be active each week with our online course and complete all assignments for courses in which they are enrolled. I will excuse absences for reasons of illness, religious observance, cultural or ceremonial events, military service, public service (such as jury duty), or participation in a University sponsored activity only when students

provide appropriate documentation. (University sponsored activities include ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics.) Students who know they will be absent should contact me in advance. **In the event that an absence is excused, the student must make up any required activity and/or work that took place on the week of the absence. Failure to complete activities/work conducted on days when a student was absent will result in a grade deduction.**

Students in the National Guard or Reserves are permitted excused absences due to military training. Students must submit their military training schedule to their instructor at the beginning of the semester. Students must also make arrangements with the instructor to make up course work for missed days due to military service.

Cultural or ceremonial leave allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student's customs and traditions or to participate in related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student's attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor. Appeals may be made to the Chair, Dean or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students remain responsible for completion or make-up of assignments as defined in the syllabus, at the discretion of the instructor.

Make sure you talk with me in *advance* if you are worried about meeting a deadline.

Academic Conduct. You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism Policy. If I suspect that something a student has written has been plagiarized, in full or in part, intentionally or unintentionally, I take the following actions:

- I alert the student of areas of the text that are suspicious
- the student receives no credit on the paper, pending failure, and it is up to him/her to prove that he/she turned in original work
- each student is asked to provide me with hard copies of the research she/he used in writing the paper
- if the student cannot provide documentation of her/his research, the student will fail the paper

*these measures are also put into action when a paper is poorly cited. When a student brings his/her research to me I use the time to talk with them about citation and make sure that they understand how and when to cite in the future.

In the case that the student is unable to provide evidence of his/her original work, or in the case that I have evidence that the student has intentionally plagiarized his/her work:

- the student will automatically fail the given assignment
- the student may fail the course unless, at my discretion, I offer alternative assignments and/or conditions
- I may pursue a plagiarism citation unless, at my discretion, I offer alternative assignments and/or conditions
- the student may receive alternate assignments, etc. to avoid failure. In this instance, all conditions must be met. I need to see evidence of excellent work and effort, and work must be completed on time.
- all other previously established conditions in the class (i.e. attendance, participation, homework grades, etc.) still stand and can still cause a student to fail the course
- in the case of blatant or egregious offenses, I will not negotiate against course failure and will pursue a University Citation of Plagiarism

Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me

privately after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator. DSS at UM encourages "...students to request modifications early in the semester. Students are also advised by Disability Services to make an appointment with the instructor in advance...Retroactive modification requests do not have to be honored." https://www.umt.edu/dss/Faculty/Frequently_Asked_Questions.php

Participation in University Assessment (UPWA)

This course requires an electronic submission of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the writing program. Your papers will be stored in a database. This assessment in no way affects either your grade or your progression at the university.

The Writing and Public Speaking Center is online!

The Writing and Public Speaking Center provides one-on-one tutoring to students at all levels and at any time in the writing process. Visit now. Visit often. We're ready when you are. www.umt.edu/writingcenter.

Portfolio Grade Descriptors for WRIT 201

A Superior portfolios will demonstrate initiative and rhetorical sophistication that go beyond the requirements. A portfolio at this level is composed of well-edited texts representing different writing situations and genres that consistently show a clear, connected sense of audience, purpose and development. The writer is able to analyze his or her own writing, reflect on it, and revise accordingly. The portfolio takes risks that work.

B Strong portfolios meet their rhetorical goals in terms of purpose, genre, and writing situation without need for further major revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or style/ mechanics. The writer is able to reflect on his or her own writing and make some choices about revision. The writer takes risks, although they may not all be successful.

C Consistent portfolios meet the basic requirements, yet the writing would benefit from further revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or writing style/mechanics (or some combination) and a stronger understanding of rhetorical decision-making involved in different writing situations and genres. The writer composes across tasks at varying levels of success with some superficial revision. The writer has taken some risks in writing and exhibits some style.

D Weak portfolios do not fully meet the basic evaluative standards. Most texts are brief and underdeveloped. These texts show a composing process that is not yet elaborated or reflective of rhetorical understanding related to composing in different genres and for a range of writing situations. Texts generally require extensive revisions to purpose, development, audience, and/ or style and mechanics.

F Unacceptable portfolios exhibit pervasive problems with purpose, development, audience, or style/ mechanics that interfere with meaning and readers' understanding. Unacceptable portfolios are often incomplete. A portfolio will also earn an F if it does not represent the writer's original work.

Participation Grade Descriptors for WRIT 201

A Superior participation shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions and workshops through his/her verbal, electronic, and written contributions. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, thorough, specific, and often provide other student writers with a new perspective or insight.

B Strong participation demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to the discussion at hand. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, specific, and helpful.

C Satisfactory participation demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned readings and writings, and contributes to small group workshops and large class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful and prompt, but could benefit from more attentive reading and/or specific detail when giving comments.

D Weak participation demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared for class, and may contribute infrequently or unproductively to classroom discussions or small group workshops. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, suggestions to group members may be missing, disrespectful, or far too brief and general to be of help.

F Unacceptable participation shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late to class, regularly unprepared, and not able to contribute to classroom discussions or small group workshops. This student may be disruptive in class. Reading and writing assignments are regularly not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, the student has a pattern of missing, being completely unprepared, or being disruptive.