**English 1010-021: Seminar in Academic Writing**

**The Rhetoric of Childhood**

**Instructor: Rebecca Rowe**

**Pronouns: She/her/hers**

**Classroom/Hours: BOUS A105, MW 8:00 a.m. - 9:45 a. m.**

**Office: Austin 153**

**Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00-1:00, and by appointment**

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**Course Description**

The University of Connecticut’s [First-Year Writing](http://fyw.uconn.edu/) (FYW) seminars are characterized by collaborative, student-driven inquiry. As a [general education](http://geoc.uconn.edu/student-guide-to-gen-ed/) course, FYW prepares students for future academic work by asking them to use writing to enter into and contribute to active academic conversations. The instructor in an FYW seminar provides a site and offers contexts with readings, central questions, and directed discussion for the development of this ongoing work. Through cycles of writing, feedback, and reflection, students pursue writing projects in which they select and define places where they might advance the class conversation. Writing projects in this course will be grounded in a semester-long inquiry of a fairly specific topic.

**Course Inquiry**

This course explores how written, visual, and oral arguments engage with childhood as a rhetorical tool. We begin by making visual arguments about what childhood is. Can we find one image of childhood or is there a multiplicity of images? How does race, class, gender, nationality, or rhetorical situation affect how children are portrayed? We then consider childhood agency, examining moments in texts when agency was curbed and/or encouraged because of characters’ youth and the assumptions behind both of those moves. What does it mean to assume a child's youth equals incapability? Can children have too much agency? Finally, we research diverse topics surrounding childhood, such as helicopter parenting, video games, and youth sports, to examine how people talk about children. In considering these topics and others, we will deconstruct arguments made around childhood to examine how arguments in general are made.

**Course Outcomes**

By the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

* Practice composing and writing as acts of inquiry and discovery through written, aural, visual, and video texts.
* Identify yourself as a writer who can contribute to others’ knowledge and understanding.
* Analyze the context you are writing in along with other textual forms like video, infographics, respond to the situation with productive choices in approach and execution to deliver meaningful texts.
* Discover, analyze, and engage with others’ ideas in productive ways through readings of complex texts.
* Use others’ work responsibly and in a variety of ways, including as motivation for writing, as context to your own ideas, as a frame or method for analysis, as a way of moving your ideas forward, and as exhibits for analysis and interpretation.
* Extend your ideas to new ground in the context of others’ work.
* Develop methods and strategies for the conceptual, practical, and reflective work of writing.
* Determine and analyze conventions of the discipline; decide how to address the genre expectations of a discipline’s work, including how knowledge is created and how evidence is used to forward work in the discipline; includes the functional components of format, organization, document design, and citation.
* Use the principles of universal design to make your work accessible to the widest possible audience.

**Texts**

* Ede, Lisa. *The Academic Writer*, 4th edition, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2017.
* Various articles and book chapters uploaded to Google Classroom.

**Helpful websites:**

* [UConn’s First Year Writing Program homepage](http://fyw.uconn.edu/)
* [UConn library homepage](http://lib.uconn.edu/)
* [Purdue OWL for MLA citation](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)

### **Integrity and Respect**

In this class, you may come into contact, and perhaps conflict, with communities whose ideals and perspectives may differ radically from your own. This will be a topic of discussion and interest, but it may also be uncomfortable, and we will seek to find meaning in those uncomfortable moments. As a class, we will maintain a sympathetic and compassionate outlook and keep an open mind throughout the course.

Additionally, in accordance with UConn policies and Title IX, this course will be a designated safe space for all students, regardless of background, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. If you feel you have experienced discrimination or harassment at UConn, you can find support and resources at the Office of Institutional Equity. You may also contact Health Services, Counseling & Mental Health Services, and/or the Women’s Center. Please note that I am a mandatory reporter to the Office of Institutional Equity if I become aware of issues that may pose a danger to a student’s health or safety.

**Academic Integrity**

While studying and making use of the ideas and texts of others is central to the writing we will be doing in this course, this must be done in an ethical and appropriate way. Please review and abide by the University’s code on academic misconduct (plagiarism and misuse of sources), which will be distributed in class and can also be found on [the UConn Community Standards website](http://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/); you will be held responsible for understanding these materials. Plagiarizing the work of others—passing off someone else’s work as your own—is a very serious offense, and anyone found plagiarizing will fail the essay or the course. Please let me know if you have questions about what constitutes appropriate use and citation of other people’s work.

**The Writing Center**

The Writing Center employs tutors who work with students on their papers at any stage of the writing process—from brainstorming to reviewing final drafts to helping with specific difficulties you may have. This service is free and highly recommended for all students. You can sign up for an appointment on the [Writing Center website](http://writingcenter.uconn.edu/).

**Multilingual Scholarship**

This classroom is a multilingual and translingual space, and we speak and write across languages. I encourage you to speak to me about any concerns you have with language use (reading, speaking, and/or writing) in this course, and I encourage you to be respectful of your colleagues in this multilingual space.

**Disability and Accessibility**

The First-Year Writing program is committed to making educational opportunities available to all students. If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (Wilbur Cross 204, 860-486-2020). They will work with you to accommodate your needs and provide me with a letter describing those accommodations. All information and documentation is confidential. Please contact me as soon as possible in the semester so that I can also make the necessary arrangements for your comfort in our classroom.

### **Course Components**

### *Participation*

This is a seminar rather than a lecture course. Most of the learning in a seminar comes from the experience of making and doing rather than from “lessons provided by an expert.” Thoughtful discourse is an essential part of this class, and you will frequently work in groups of various sizes, which means you will need to be considerate of and attentive to others. It is your responsibility to keep up with the reading, to contribute to class conversation in the form of analytical comments or questions, and to attend class regularly and on time. See attendance policy below.

*Reading*

Although ENGL 1010 is described as a writing course, the writing you do here has a very close relationship to reading. Lisa Ede says that like writing, reading “is an act of *composing*, of constructing meaning through language and images” (16). The process of writing begins with careful reading of a situation, written text, or various media. You will be reading to find ways into the conversation in which an author or text is participating. Many of these texts are multi-layered and complex, and you should expect to read most texts more than once.

### *Writing*

You will compose four major projects of revised, polished prose in this course. In order to accomplish this, you will be doing ample writing along the way, including in-class writing, homework assignments, and drafts of these major projects.

### *Revision*

Each major writing project will go through a drafting process in which you shape your ideas and experiment with ways to best communicate this work. You should expect to put significant time and effort into the revision process and for projects to shift, change, and develop as you revise. Only the final projects will be assigned a grade, but all of your work may contribute to your final grade in the course.

### *Conferences and Peer Review*

Conferences and peer review are integral to the goals of this course. Through the drafting process of each major essay, we will use small group or individual conferences during, in addition to, or in place of regular class meetings. The quality of your involvement in these processes is a crucial factor in your participation grade in this course.

*Information Literacy*

ENGL 1010 provides the first stage of the University’s [Information Literacy competency](http://geoc.uconn.edu/information-literacy-competency/), including attention to university research and digital literacy. You should expect to use outside sources and scholarly research to inform your work throughout the semester. While all assignments will provide opportunities for developing Information Literacy skills, we will have at least one assignment that will be built with this specific purpose in mind.

*Reflective Component*

The reflective portion of the course includes any time spent on characterizing, reconsidering, or qualifying one’s work. Reflection happens throughout the semester, usually in ways that complement writing projects by providing opportunities for a writer to imagine alternatives or trace lines of thought or activity.

# **Grading and Evaluation**

Your final grade will depend on two things: your successful completion of the day-to-day work of the course (including drafts of all major writing assignments) and the quality of your work. **If you submit passing-level and on-time work throughout the semester, you will receive at least a B for the course.** If there is missing or insufficient work, your grade may fall below a B. Substantial amounts of missing work—or simply a failure to turn in all major assignments—will result in a failure of the course.

Every major assignment will be given a grade, though later assignments will have a greater influence on your grade for the semester, rewarding growth in writing and not punishing for lack of knowledge or skill at the beginning of the semester. Each assignment prompt will clarify priorities for high-quality work, but generally an A paper will

* respond energetically and creatively to the readings and the assignment;
* engage meaningfully with texts in a sustained manner;
* form a cohesive final project;
* contribute new formulations that successfully enter into conversation with others’ work; and
* demonstrate rhetorical awareness, including knowledge of and facility with genre conventions.

In short, while your consistent and successful completion of the day-to-day work of the course will suffice for a B, it is through the quality of your writing projects that you will be able to raise your grade above the B level. If at any point you have questions or concerns about how you’re doing in the course, please don’t hesitate to ask.

**Course Concerns**

If you have any questions about the course or your final course grade, please see your instructor as soon as possible. If that conversation is not productive, please see or contact an Assistant Director of First-Year Writing to further discuss the issues at firstyearwriting@uconn.edu or 860-486-2859.