**English 1010-004: Seminar in Writing**

**Fans and Fandom:**

**Writing In/About Participatory Culture**

**Instructor: Rebecca Rowe**

**Pronouns: She/her/hers**

**Classroom/Hours: Oak 401, TuTh 8:00-9:45**

**Office: Austin 153**

**Office Hours: Thursday 10:00-11:00, 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 compositions both within and outside of the university by asking them to use writing to contribute to active conversations across various media. The FYW instructor and student work collaboratively to compose through engagement with a semester-long inquiry, developing and asking questions around a shared course theme. Through cycles of creation, feedback, and reflection, students work on projects in which they select and define places where they might advance the class conversation. Your work this semester will introduce you to the kinds of processes, choices, and moves you will make throughout your life as a writer and creator of content. The work of this class will include reading and responding to those texts in substantive, thoughtful, thought-provoking, and productive ways through multiple modes of communication and representation.

**Course Inquiry**

We live in what Henry Jenkins calls a participatory culture where you can participate in pretty much anything online with people all over the world: you can write fiction or social media posts about your favorite (or least favorite) things; you can play Fantasy Football or Words with Friends; you can make and upload videos about anything (or nothing at all). This course will study participatory communication, particularly online fan cultures. After choosing an online fan community to study for the semester, you will move between working individually and collaboratively to not only study what a participatory culture is but also to create our own class-sized participatory culture. In the process, you will create an archive, a research essay, and a collaborative website, working with the same community and building your ideas from one assignment to the next. You choose what to study with the community you choose: are you interested in how they talk to each other? What methods they use to communicate? Who speaks and who listens? What kind of stories they tell? Everything about this class and your projects is decided by you; it is the ultimate form of participation.

**Course Learning Objectives**

* Approach Composition as a Complex Process
* Identify Yourself as a Writer
* Engage with a Conversation
* Critically Examine Different Ways of Knowing
* Use Technology Rhetorically

**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.

*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, all of which build on each other and one of which will be completed in collaboration with your peers. 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.

### *Discussion Board Posts*

Every week, you will engage with the Classroom discussion board, which will appear as a new assignment each week. You are required to make two posts and one reply to classmates a week, all of which is due the Sunday after the week is over. These posts/replies can be about the your homework, about something that came up in class, whatever. Your posts/replies must be substantive (i.e., more than “Agree”), adding something to the conversation. That being said, this is online communication, so part of this assignment is to distill what you’re thinking into a snapshot. Memes, emojis, gifs and other forms of internet speech that you can figure out how to use in GC are welcome (just keep it clean). This is a place for you to engage with each other and me as scholars and as people; use it as you will. You will receive a point for each substantive post/reply you make, so you should get three points a week. Each week will be graded on its own, so if you miss 1 post in a week, it can be costly. Make sure to make your posts every week.

### *Conferences and Peer Review*

Conferences and peer review are integral to the goals of this course. Through the drafting process of each major project, 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.

Each assignment prompt clarifies priorities for high-quality work, but generally an A project 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
* 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. Your assignments will count for the following percentages of your final grade:

Curating Your Archive 20%

Theorizing Your Fandom 35%

Blogging Fandoms 15%

Participating in Fandoms 10%

Discussion Board Posts 10%

Participation 10%

**Important note regarding COVID-19**: The current public health crisis necessitates moving our course online quickly to comply with CDC, Health Department, and UConn administrative directives. It's an abrupt move, but it's one designed to keep the healthcare system from being overwhelmed with more cases than it can safely handle. Our coursework will take place on Google Classroom, more or less following this course’s policy on what to do during winter weather. All class-wide communications will go through Google Classroom, though I may reach out to you on a personal basis by email and we will be completing two one-on-one and one classwide conversation over Zoom communications, which is a teleconferencing software (to download it for free and set up your own account, go [here](https://zoom.us/meetings)). The [course schedule](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dtb2_Ob_BlpntljpkA93QVKWChL1ahe6LDikIW6XBi4/edit?usp=sharing) is available on Google Classroom at the top of the Classwork page, as usual. At 8am on each remaining class day, I will post a short lecture on the Stream tab (in both writing and as a video) and at least one activity in the Classwork tab, under Daily Class Work. Each of these activities has their own due date/time, which I’ve attached to the activity and will continue to add to our calendar as I design them. Please keep these dates in mind, but, as always, your physical, mental, and emotional health comes first. Just as with in-person class, if something is going on, just let me know and we can figure out ways to work around it.

Stay well.