

FYEP 101 WRITING SEMINARS: FALL 2016

The sections described in this list are not restricted to particular first-year learning communities. Fall 2016 sections reserved for specific learning communities are listed in *Writing 101 Seminars for Cornerstones Program* and *Writing 101 Seminars linked to Residential Learning Communities*.

[Writing 101-03: Amanda Taylor](#)

Topic: The World of the Neandertals.

In this course, we will explore both the science and the mystery of the Neandertals, a fascinating group of hominids who lived in Europe and western and central Asia during the last Ice Age. Although they looked quite different from anatomically modern humans with pronounced brow ridges, large noses, and thick muscular bodies, they used sophisticated stone tools and participated in communities and cultural traditions. Exciting new genetic research suggests that Neandertals and early modern human interbred, but scientists still do not fully understand why they went extinct. Social scientists wonder what our world would be like if they were alive today. Through reading and writing about Neandertals, we will explore these topics and recent scientific breakthroughs on Neandertal adaptations to the Ice Age environment and interactions with ancient humans. We will also explore the role of Neandertals in contemporary imaginations of the past. This course will help students to strengthen writing skills for popular media, research papers, laboratory reports, and persuasive position papers. Classes will be interactive and dynamic, emphasizing strategies for research, peer-review and self-critique.

[Writing 101-05: Jenny James](#)

Topic: Water, Politics, Place

Today, societies across the globe are working to address the increasingly fragile and perilous state of our earth's water systems. This course will explore the environmental challenges that comprise our current global water emergency: re-evaluating our water use to combat scarcity, preserving the earth's aqueous ecosystems, promoting and learning from the sustainment of human cultures centered on water, and responding to the impacts of global climate change on our lakes, rivers and oceans. We'll work together to better understand the political and ethical dimensions of this ecological crisis, considering how power, privilege and belief shape humans' relationships to water and equitable management of water resources. Using an environmental justice lens in our reading and writing, we will explore how race, gender, class, sexuality and religion impact environmental preservation. In turn, we'll analyze water not simply as a resource for human use, but as a complex ecosystem necessary for the survival of all beings. As this course prepares students to learn the generic conventions and argumentative skills necessary for successful undergraduate writing, we will read scholarly sources about water and work to compose critical and reflective essays that respond to these intellectual conversations

and debates. Our interdisciplinary work will also include an off-campus field component in an effort to actively engage with our local Puget Sound waterways. This course would be a great choice for any student interested in majoring in Environmental Studies or Women's and Gender Studies, but is open to all!

[Writing 101-07: Callista Brown](#)

Topic: Perspectives on Violence and Peace

Special feature: This section is a linked course: Students who enroll in Writ 101-07 in Fall 2016 will also be registered for J-term 2017 FYEP 190-Engl 221 Research and Writing.

How do we define “violence?” How does violence relate to injustice? After a violent event, how can we restore peace? Can we take preventative action to keep violence from recurring? Can we choose non-violence? Is peace just the absence of violence or something beyond both violence and non-violence?

Using writing as a form of inquiry and reading as an opportunity to enter a conversation, we will examine 1) scenes of violence and peace in *We Need New Names*, this year’s Common Reading text; 2) cancer and environmental carcinogens; 3) mass incarceration; 4) the everyday violence that seeps into families, schools, and peer relationships; and 5) what it means to be a peace-keeper. We will discuss hidden forms of violence such as structural violence and micro-aggressions, and we will reflect on peace as a goal and as a practice. Readings will include personal memoir, scholarly articles and books, and literary journalism. Students will write problem-solution reports, book reviews, analysis, and reflective essays. Throughout the semester we will study the craft of writing as we address genre, structure, reader expectations, and citation conventions for college-level prose.

LINKED TO:

[FYEP 190-Engl 221 Research and Writing: Callista Brown](#)
[J-term 2017](#)

Building on readings and preliminary topic investigations completed during fall 2015 in Writing 101-07, we will work closely with PLU librarians to learn how to locate and analyze sources. Students will further develop their writing skills, completing a research paper, a literature review, and reflective writing on a topic related to violence or peace.

[Writing 101-09: Jason Skipper](#)

Topic: Counterculture.

The Beats. The Hippies. Punk Rock. DIY. All considered to be countercultural movements, but what does counterculture mean, particularly in relation to mainstream and subcultures? How does a countercultural group define itself? How do these movements come into existence? And what does it suggest when they are absorbed into the social norm? In this course, we will

critically consider these questions as we explore the many facets of counterculture, including various countercultural groups and movements that have existed in recent history, how they came about and if they held any lasting impact, and what counterculture – if it exists - looks like today.

[Writing 101-11: Michelle Urberg](#)

Topic: Perspectives on Immigration

The 2016 presidential election has brought the immigration debate to the fore again in our country. This FYE Writing seminar explores immigration from a variety of perspectives on immigration: in the news, in fiction, in memoir, in music, and in other media. Part of the class will be dedicated to understanding the current debates about immigration and part will be dedicated to exploring older representations of immigration to the United States. This class will help students develop their skills in: critical reading and writing; textual, aural, and visual analysis; argument construction; and research. In addition, this class will emphasize improving students' informational literacy with social media platforms, the Internet, and scholarly research. Expect class meetings to be interactive and dynamic, emphasizing discussion and collaborative peer-review writing projects.

This seminar focuses on writing, thinking, speaking, and reading. Students encounter writing as a way of thinking, of learning, and of discovering and ordering ideas. Working with an interdisciplinary theme, students practice the various academic conventions of writing. Students will write personal narratives, critical analyses, and research papers, as well as do a lot of informal writing, to demonstrate learning and to construct knowledge about issues generated in the course.

[Writing 101-12: Liam O'Loughlin](#)

Topic: The Function of University Education

What is the purpose of university education in the 21st century? What do students expect from the university? How does it—or should it—engage students in learning, prepare them for careers, or involve them in politics? Did students sitting in your seats 50 years ago think about their educations the same way you do? How is the university not simply a preparation for, but very much part of, the so-called “real world”?

In this course we will reflect upon the university as an institution—considering its history, narratives constructed about it, and our places within it. Course texts include fiction, scholarly essays, films, and testimonials. Students will hone their writing by working in multiple forms, including personal narrative, blog posts, analytical essays, reportage, and a culminating research essay.

[Writing 101-14: Liam O'Loughlin](#)

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[Writing 101-15: Jennifer Spence](#)

Topic: Advances in Genetic Technology: Debating the Risks and Rewards

Advances in genetic technology have benefited human health, improved food production, and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be human. These developments have been counterbalanced by controversies surrounding stem cell research, genetic testing, ancestry tracing, and genetically modified foods, to name just a few. In this course we will explore the issues that arise when people in contemporary societies encounter rapid and extensive advances in genetic technology. Students will complete multiple reading and writing assignments with an emphasis on planning, revising, and peer reviewing their written work. By the end of the course, students will have a working knowledge of genetic technology and its consequences for human health, subsistence, and identity. More importantly, students will be able to debate and make carefully considered arguments about the risks and rewards of advances in genetic technology.

[WRIT 101-16: Jane Wong](#)

Asian American Studies: Identity, Resistance, and Community Through Art

The term “Asian American” is often discussed as if it were both self-evident and immutably fixed. The question of authenticity or belonging is often raised: who counts? Who doesn’t? This seminar asks you to reconsider such static boundaries! We will engage the shifting place and status of Asians in America and their struggles for identity, representation, and civil rights. Where did the concept of “model minority” come from? How do Asian American artists address lineage and ideas of “homeland”? We will explore such questions through literature, art, history, and media. From the TV show *Master of None* to Marilyn Chin’s “How I Got That Name,” we will close read texts and weave in historical contexts, building an intimate yet contextualized understanding of a work. As writers, readers, and artists, we will add our own

unique stories and reflect on our process of responding to a text – honoring both self-awareness and engaged conversation in our communities! Writing assignments include response papers, blog posts, research projects, and personal narratives.

[WRIT 101-17: Jane Wong](#)

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[Writing 101-20: Terry Miller](#)

Topic: Your Values and American Values

You will discover how media presentations of American values influence your personal life. Is it your set of values or someone else’s set of values that dominates your life? You will assess what is being presented as America’s values and compare it to what you are experiencing. Literature, movies, radio, and television serve as the jumping point in discovering what you are being sold. Rhetorical analysis offers a wonderful way for you to develop strong writing skills.

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[Writing 101-22: Ron Byrnes](#)

Topic: The Art of Living

In this seminar we'll work together to improve as readers, discussants, and writers and create positive momentum for living meaningful and purposeful lives. Our readings, discussions, and writing overlap with the University's Wild Hope Project which challenges everyone to ask: What will you do with your one wild and precious life? We'll draw on history, philosophy, and social sciences to explore different philosophies of life. Guiding questions will include: Is self-understanding important enough to occasionally unplug and be introspective? What quality of life do you want? How important is material wealth? How important is friendship and family? Do you want to marry and/or have children? How important is religion and/or spirituality? Active participation and contending viewpoints will be encouraged.

Writing 101-23: Mara Nery-Hurwit

Topic: Inclusion and Equity: Closing the Gap for Health Disparate Populations

Is health a human right? Minority populations are disproportionately affected by poor health outcomes in the US, but why? How do stereotypes impact accessibility and health? What happens when health services and programs aren't accessible to certain groups of people? And how do we start to close the gaps in health inequalities for these communities? In this course, we will explore the answers to these questions, and examine the differences in health and access to services for minority (disability, racial/ethnic, gender, and low income) populations. This course will require students to reflect on their own beliefs and experiences of inclusion and equity, and critically think about how we shift as a community to promote health and wellbeing for all people. Students will further develop their writing skills through textual and visual analysis, constructing their own ideas around the topic, and developing clear arguments.

Writing 101-24: Cosette Pfaff

Topic: Business Writing in the "Information Age," for a "Knowledge Economy," delivered at the "speed of light."

Today, much of a business professional's communication is accomplished through writing (memos, emails, letters, reports, meeting agendas, minutes, marketing information, RFP/RFQ(s) and proposals, executive summaries, letters of intent, scopes of work, standard operating procedures, employee handbooks, training programs, press releases, etc.). Even the all-important resume and cover letter, which help launch the business professional's career, require special consideration and thought. Surveys show the most sought-after skill in business is: "the ability to communicate clearly, correctly, and concisely." Most people don't have time to read long, wordy memos or letters with grammatical errors. Business writing that leaves a powerful and meaningful impression lets others know you're an intelligent, competent business professional. Students will learn the essentials of business writing, the ability to write simple direct prose that says precisely what it needs to say, how to write well organized and grammatically correct communication, how to write for their reader/audience, how to empower their messages, and how to make their message stand above the noise and crowd in a busy world.

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Writing 101-26: Kaitlyn Sill

Topic: Scientific Literacy of the Media

In this WRIT 101 co-taught with a Chemistry Professor Andrea Munro, we will evaluate media coverage of science in light of journalistic norms and media motivations. Specifically, we will evaluate how scientists communicate with the media and how the media translate science for a general audience. Since the media are the primary conduits through which people become informed about important scientific innovations and discoveries, understanding the media’s ability to accurately convey this information is vital if we are to address global issues like climate change and develop solutions to improve global energy and food security.

Writing 101-27: Michael Artime

Topic: Conspiracy Theories

Do secret societies controlled the government? Is the military hiding the existence of extra-terrestrials? Did the CIA plan and implement the Kennedy assassination? These and countless other conspiracy theories have been a part of American political discourse since the nation’s inception. This seminar will explore the various reasons we create conspiracy theories and test the veracity of a number of these theories.

Readings will come from academics studying the phenomenon as well as conspiracy theorists themselves. Likewise, we will examine the way that television, film, and literature have served

as vehicles for delivering conspiracy theories to the American public. We will apply techniques in good, effective writing in the crafting of our own conspiracies and the debunking of theories posited by others.

[Writing 101-28: Jennifer Spence](#)

Topic: Advances in Genetic Technology: Debating the Risks and Rewards

Advances in genetic technology have benefited human health, improved food production, and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be human. These developments have been counterbalanced by controversies surrounding stem cell research, genetic testing, ancestry tracing, and genetically modified foods, to name just a few. In this course we will explore the issues that arise when people in contemporary societies encounter rapid and extensive advances in genetic technology. Students will complete multiple reading and writing assignments with an emphasis on planning, revising, and peer reviewing their written work. By the end of the course, students will have a working knowledge of genetic technology and its consequences for human health, subsistence, and identity. More importantly, students will be able to debate and make carefully considered arguments about the risks and rewards of advances in genetic technology.

[Writing 101-29: Michelle Urberg](#)

Topic: Music and the Soul

What is it about music that speaks to humanity? Why do writers from Plato, to Augustine, to Zora Neal Hurston, to George Harrison couple descriptions of music with language about the soul or spirituality? How is the soul defined in these discussions? This course explores these questions and others pertaining to music, the soul, and religious experience in the context of a FYE Writing Seminar. Texts, music, and film will be brought together in a variety of writing assignments, a research paper, and class discussion. This class will help students develop their skills in: critical reading and writing; textual, aural, and visual analysis; argument construction; and research. In addition, this class will emphasize improving students' informational literacy with social media platforms, the Internet, and scholarly research. Expect class meetings to be interactive and dynamic, emphasizing discussion and collaborative peer-review writing projects.

[Writing 101-32: Randi Voss](#)

Topic: Work

How do different people think about work? How do people's attitudes about work arise not only in relation to their particular kind of work (vocation, career, job, or profession), but also out of their background and historical circumstances? Why is it that today what a person does for a living seems to adhere to her identity? (You are what you do.) Has it always been that way?

In this seminar, we will explore some of the most prominent ideas about work in Western cultures from the Ancient Greeks to the present day. We will ask how different values about work originated and how they have changed in different eras. Most importantly, we will examine our own ideas and assumptions about work and observe and write about how they shift over the course of the semester. Our inquiries will draw on a wide range of sources, from scholarship in anthropology, sociology, and history, to personal narratives, to popular culture texts, such as films, TV, music, and fashion. Students will write different kinds of essays, including comparative analyses, reflection pieces, personal narratives, and more. One project will involve significant research on a topic of each student's invention. And these unique projects will in turn become readings for the class.

[Writing 101-33: Michele Dijkstra](#)

Topic: The Personalized Web: Shaping The Content We Read and How We Think

Eli Pariser's book "The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding from You" argues that personalized content and links in social media, news feeds and search results act as a echo chamber, artificially polarizing opinion and politics. He claims our interface to the web is "becoming a one-way mirror, reflecting your interests and reinforcing your prejudices".

In this course we will consider the extent that this claim is true or not, and whether our own online worlds are bereft of diverse voices and viewpoints. Through online discussions, research studies, TED talks, digital journals and podcasts we will explore and analyze whether web technologies are restricting what we view, who we interact with and any unintended consequences thereof. We will share what we find through through class discussions, visual media and a variety of written assignments including blogs, research and critical analysis, personal reflections and position papers. Finally, we will address the question of how and whether we should pop any filter bubbles we find.

[Writing 101-36: Patrick Moneyang](#)

Topic: Zombies across cultures

Today, zombies are everywhere: in movies, books, video games, music videos, television commercials, national headlines and even on the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) website. In cities and towns around the world, there are zombie walks, zombie (mud) runs, zombie flash mobs and other practices involving zombies. What does this global explosion of zombie mania suggest? Are zombies just a product of our imagination or could they exist in the actual world? Are they even "logically possible"? If yes, what are they? What do they want? Should we worry about them? In this course, we will explore contemporary representations of zombies in the US and in various cultures across the world. We will focus on texts and films that portray zombies, including *World War Z*, *The Walking Dead*, *Maggie*, *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, *The Horde (France)*, *The Dead (UK)*, *Juan of the Dead (Cuba)*, *Last*

Ones Out (South Africa), amongst others. Also we will investigate the significance of these representations by asking broader philosophical questions about our (post)humanity. By writing in different genres, including reviews, summaries and essays, we will make sure our answers follow the stylistic conventions of academic writing.

[Writing 101-37: Staff](#)

This seminar focuses on writing, thinking, speaking, and reading. Students encounter writing as a way of thinking, of learning, and of discovering and ordering ideas. Working with an interdisciplinary theme, students practice the various academic conventions of writing. Students will write personal narratives, critical analyses, and research papers, as well as do a lot of informal writing, to demonstrate learning and to construct knowledge about issues generated in the course.