

## Course Syllabus

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### Course Information

### Assessment

### Course Expectations

### Policies

## Course Information

### Course Description

"A writer is a person for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people."

-- Thomas Mann

Writing is so hard because it requires the clear communication of well thought out ideas. Spelling and grammar are the easy part. This class will help you master the hard as well as the easy parts of writing.

The skills you learn in this class are widely applicable and will help you improve your business and other writing. However, we will focus particular attention on writing to excel in SNL's writing-intensive curriculum. In this course, we will review and practice the essentials of good writing and improve your control over the mechanics and process of writing. Particular emphasis will be given to the process of revision as you learn to refine and develop your writing. You will receive individual feedback and guidance from the instructor, and you will learn to edit your own writing and give feedback to others. As a result, you will leave the class a more confident, effective and efficient writer. The class assumes a basic understanding of English grammar and carries four tuition credit hours.

### Course Learning Goals

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Use writing for college-level learning, thinking and communicating.
2. Understand that there are many different types of writing and is able to adjust to conventions of a variety of genres, audiences and purposes with a particular focus on the conventions of academic writing, including formatting, standards of evidence, appropriate tone and style, and use of sources.
3. Write to explain, summarize, synthesize, reflect, argue, persuade, analyze, link experience and concepts, and demonstrate competence.
4. Have control over grammar, syntax, and punctuation and can manipulate them to suit a particular rhetorical situation.
5. Understand writing as an iterative process and can apply a repertoire of strategies

for generating, organizing, drafting, revising, editing, and proof-reading papers that includes assessing and revising one's own writing as well as eliciting and using feedback from others.

6. Have a plan for continuous, ongoing improvement of writing that includes strategies for addressing problems, leveraging strengths, and mastering the writing genres related to one's focus area.

## Course Resources

To buy your books, go to <http://www.mbsdirect.net>

Hint: type DePaul for name of the school.

[Click here for help buying your books](#)

### Required:

1. Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *A Writer's Reference*, Seventh Edition, from Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. ISBN-10: 0312601433, ISBN-13: 9780312601430

Supplementing this textbook is an extensive website, *Diana Hacker's A Writer's Reference* (<http://www.dianahacker.com/writersref>). This website includes links to various sources and exercises. Students can tailor their work to address individual needs in grammar, composition, and documentation. Take a few minutes to look around the site and see what is available. If you decide or your instructor requires you to do some of the exercises available on this site, be sure to register and provide your instructor's e-mail address. Upon completing any exercises, e-mail your instructor as he or she will not necessarily get a notification when you complete your work.

2. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, Second Edition. WW Norton, ISBN number 978-0-393-93361-1
3. Assigned selections from *Writing Guide for SNL Students* at <http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html>
4. Additional readings available on e-reserve from the DePaul library, see <http://eres.lib.depaul.edu/eres/courseindex.aspx?page=search>

### Recommended:

1. If English is not your native language and you struggle with English as a Second Language (ESL) issues like article and pronoun usage, you may want to also purchase for your own use the ESL Supplement for *A Writer's Reference*, ISBN# 0312-45233-0, cost \$7.50
2. A college dictionary
3. If you would like to read more about the craft of writing, the following are both readable and full of useful tips:

Goldberg, Natalie. *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2005.

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor Books, 1994.

King, Stephen. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. New York: Pocket Books, 2000.

## Course Competence

In this course, you will develop the following competence:

Competence	Competence Statement and Criteria
L4	<p><b>Can use writing for college-level learning, thinking and communicating.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Understands there are many different types of writing and is able to adjust to conventions of a variety of genres, audiences and purposes with a particular focus on the conventions of academic writing, including formatting, standards of evidence, appropriate tone and style, and use of sources.</li><li>2. Can write to explain, summarize, synthesize, reflect, argue, persuade, analyze, link experience and concepts, and demonstrate competence.</li><li>3. Has control over grammar, syntax, and punctuation and can manipulate them to suit a particular rhetorical situation.</li><li>4. Understands writing as an iterative process and can apply a repertoire of strategies for generating, organizing, drafting, revising, editing, and proof-reading papers that includes assessing and revising one's own writing as well as eliciting and using feedback from others.</li><li>5. Has a plan for continuous, ongoing improvement of writing that includes strategies for addressing problems, leveraging strengths, and mastering the writing genres related to one's focus area.</li><li>6. Students demonstrate this competence through the Proficiency Exam or specific SNL courses. Students will continue to develop their writing skills throughout the program. SNL will not accept transfer courses for this competence.</li></ol>

### How the Competence will be Demonstrated in this Course

Students will demonstrate the competence through drafting and revising papers, discussion board postings, peer revision, a final portfolio with a writing learning plan and supplemental exercises as necessary.

### Course Structure

This course consists of ten modules. The estimated time to complete each module is one week. Please note that this is a four-credit class offered over ten weeks. You should expect to spend 10 to 15 hours a week on this class.

**To view the course schedule, click on the Schedule link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.**

[Back to Top](#)

## Assessment

## SNL Grading Policy for Lifelong Learning Courses

In certain SNL courses in the Lifelong Learning Area of the BA curriculum, instructors regularly use the pass/fail grading system. However, SNL also offers students the opportunity in several of these courses to select a "Grading" option where grades A through C- represent passing performance. The faculty member and the individual student together decide which system will best promote the student's learning in that particular course. With no exceptions, a student must obtain permission from the instructor to use the grade option by the beginning of the third week of the quarter. After the third week of the quarter the assessment style agreed upon, whether pass/fail or grading, cannot be changed. The instructor is required to provide the student the specific assessment criteria by which a grade will be determined prior to the student officially selecting this option. Grading criteria shall appear in the syllabus along with pass/fail assessment criteria.

Lifelong learning courses that already employ a grading system such as *Quantitative Reasoning* and *Collaborative Learning* will continue to use this system. The Lifelong learning courses *Learning Assessment Seminar*, *Foundations*, and *Summit Seminar* will continue to employ the pass/fail system exclusively. This policy applies to the other lifelong learning competencies and courses including, *Academic Writing for Adults*, *Critical Thinking*, *Research Seminar*, and *Externship*. The pass/fail policy and procedure of the university found in the student handbook should be followed where a student wishes to seek this option for a graded course.

## Course Grading Policies, Practices and Assessment Criteria

Academic Writing for Adults is designed as a Pass/Fail course. You may opt instead to take it for a letter grade, but if you wish to take it for a letter grade, then you must notify your instructor in writing of your wish to do so by the beginning of week three of the quarter.

In order to successfully complete this Pass/Fail course, students must:

1. submit all drafts in a timely manner (4 first drafts, 2 second drafts, and 2 final drafts);
2. receive passing grades on the two final drafts as per the [SNL Paper Rubric](http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/Rubric.html) (<http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/Rubric.html>);
3. participate meaningfully on the discussion board and in peer revision;
4. successfully complete the Writing Learning Plan and Portfolio Essay;
5. meet the criteria for the L4 competence as listed above.

While early drafts are opportunities to grope around and experiment and will not be as polished or well developed as final drafts, they should represent your best effort to write the paper and should not be stream of consciousness, a collection of notes or a half done essay. Every draft should be spell checked before you turn it in. Final drafts will be evaluated using the Grading Rubric for Papers at the School for New Learning (<http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/Rubric.html>).

At the end of the quarter, you will submit a Writing Learning Plan and a Portfolio. The Learning Plan addresses the fifth competence criteria and must include specific strategies for addressing your most common writing problems, equally concrete ideas for how to make the most of your strengths as a writer and a clear plan for mastering the writing genres related to your focus area. While the Learning Plan looks forward to set an agenda for your ongoing development as a writer, the portfolio demonstrates what you have learned and reflects upon what you have accomplished in this class. The

Portfolio should demonstrate that you have met or exceeded the criteria for the L4 competence.

[Back to Top](#)

## Online Discussion

### Discussion Boards

Discussion Boards are a forum for discussion and sharing information among students. Your instructor may create one or more discussion boards related to the topics you are studying each week.

At the beginning of the quarter, your instructor will set up three discussion boards. These three discussions will help you and your classmates get off to an immediate start on the course, by providing conversational spaces for necessary, ongoing social and administrative activities. These discussions are:

- Introductions
- Course Q&A
- Chat -- a social meeting space for discussion that is not directly related to course content.

The Q&A discussion is where the management and administrative tasks of the course are conducted, and where you can ask 'process' questions and receive answers. You will also find the schedule of specific dates for your course in this discussion.

The Chat discussion can be used freely for your own conversation (like setting up groups or teams, if these are used in the course).

Your instructor will add additional discussion boards as you move through the modules.

### Assessment Criteria & Guidelines for Online Discussion Participation

The discussion boards will be used for sharing ideas and drafts; learning about and trying out new writing strategies; reviewing grammar, sentence structure and composition rules; and giving and receiving peer feedback. Much of your learning in this class will happen as a result of your participation in the discussion boards. Failure to participate actively in the discussion boards is akin to absence from a face-to-face class and can be grounds for failure of the course.

A good discussion board post is like a short essay. It has a point that is supported with well-developed evidence. It is clearly organized and cites references to other sources. A comment upon someone else's post should not just be a simple agreement or disagreement. Your comment should say what specifically you agree or disagree with and why. You should give your own evidence for why you are in agreement, not just repeat what the previous poster has already said.

As with every writing task, remember your audience and purpose when crafting your discussion board posts. The tone and content should be appropriate to context of a learning community. Here is a summary of advice from SNL instructors on crafting successful discussion board posts:

The best posts are specific, responsive to other posters, polite, analytical, and supported by evidence from classroom discussions and/or the texts in question. The weaker posts are too general, unoriginal, rude, simplistic, off-topic, and supported with emotion rather than fact. Instructors focused on the need for reflection--as opposed to simple agreement/disagreement with previous posters--and the need for interactivity.

They suggested composing posts offline to avoid emotional outbursts or poorly thought-out posts, but they also emphasized that students must read their fellow posters' comments carefully and make sure to gear their responses to the topic.

[Back to Top](#)

## Course Expectations

### Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least four times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

### Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

### Your Role as a Student

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

View this brief demo [Taking SNL Online courses in D2L](#) to learn how to navigate through your course.

*If you're new to SNL Online see additional resources on the course home page under Student Resources/Getting Started.*

## Course Netiquette

Online discussions are an important part of your course experience. To ensure a positive learning environment, please follow the following minimum expectations. Use your common sense, as not all situations can be covered:

- Be polite
- Respect other participants' views or opinions
- Think before you write, and ask yourself if you would say the same thing in person
- Use positive phrases (i.e., "Good idea!" or "Thanks for the suggestions," etc.)
- Be sensitive to cultural differences
- Avoid hostile, curt or sarcastic comments
- No objectionable, sexist, or racist language will be tolerated
- Create a positive online community by offering assistance and support to other participants.

[Back to Top](#)

## Policies

### Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas.

Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your [Student Handbook](#) for further details.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a

instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

### **A Special Note on Plagiarism for Academic Writing students:**

In college, knowing why, when and how to cite sources is vital. By using sources appropriately, you participate in the scholarly community as you relate your ideas and experiences to those of others. When citations are lacking or incorrect, you weaken your paper by failing to clearly make those connections. You also leave yourself open to charges of plagiarism which can have serious academic consequences.

Part of the work of this class is to make sure that you understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, so be sure to ask if you have any questions about it. We will discuss how to cite sources and avoid plagiarism in the course. However, you can get a head start by looking at the sites indicated under "Help with Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism" (<http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/Writing%20Help.html#helpsources>).

### **For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussion will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact your instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week or two of the course). Please be sure to contact the following office for support and additional services:

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD)  
#370, Student Center, LPC, 773.325.1677

### **Description of Pass/Fail Grading Options**

Students have the option of taking all SNL undergraduate courses as Pass/Fail even if a class is initially structured for a letter grade assessment. In these cases a Pass is awarded when competence is demonstrated at a level that would otherwise earn a grade of C- or higher.

In deciding to select Pass/Fail grading students should be aware that competencies assessed in a course as Pass will earn credit hours toward degree completion but *will not* be included in computing grade point averages. Attempted competence demonstration assessed within a class as Fail will not only be recorded as credit hours attempted but *will* also be included in computing a student's grade point average.

For SNL students, competencies awarded for Independent Learning Pursuits and in the Lifelong Learning Domain do not count toward the university's specification that only twenty credit hours may be earned through the Pass/Fail assessment option.

**Please note:** *There are four SNL courses within the BA curriculum that are always assessed on a Pass/Fail basis: Learning Assessment Seminar (course number LL 102; competence L-1), Foundations of Adult Learning (course number LL 250; competences L-2 and L-3), Advanced Project (course number FA 303; competences F-11 and F-12) and Summit Seminar (course number LL 390; competence L-12). These classes may not be taken for a letter grade assessment. Therefore, work that might otherwise be assessed at grades A through C- will earn a Pass in these classes.*

*There are an additional four SNL courses within the Lifelong Learning Area of the BA curriculum for which instructors regularly use a Pass/Fail grading system which may,*

*instead, be taken for a letter grade assessment if this is a student's preference. These classes are: Academic Writing for Adults (course number LL 150; competence L-4), Critical Thinking (course number LL 155; competence L-5), Research Seminar (course number LL 300; competences L-8 and L-9) and Externship (course number LL 302; competences L-10 and L-11). In addition, SNL's undergraduate Writing Workshop (course number LL 140; competence H-3-J) regularly uses Pass/Fail although students may request a letter grade assessment. In these instances SNL offers undergraduate students the opportunity to request a letter grade assessment from their instructor. Students who need a letter grade for tuition reimbursement may wish to consider this option, as well as those who wish to raise their GPA. Students planning to attend graduate school may also prefer letter grades to Pass/Fail assessments.*

If a student wishes to switch the method of assessment, either to or from the Pass/Fail option, this must be requested from the instructor in writing during the first two weeks of the quarter. The assessment style may not be changed after this period, with no exceptions.

## Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>

Demonstrating the acquisition of competencies in this course can involve "interactions" —interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s). As such, these activities qualify as "research" with "human subjects" and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning's Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

- The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
- You assess and ensure that no "harm"—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
- The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
- If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an "informed consent" document. For information on creating an "informed consent document" see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>.

## Credits

This course was designed and produced by Michelle Navarre Cleary and staff at SNL Online at DePaul University.

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[Back to Top](#)