

ENGLISH W240: Community Service Writing

Leadership and Civic Engagement

ENG W240-25253 (MWF 10:10-11:00 a.m.) • BH 103 • Spring 2008

Instructor Information

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Course Rationale

Most people don't associate *writing* with visual intelligence and perception, or *research* with personal observation and ethics. However, fieldworking relies on the principle that how you take in information from the world around you does affect how you write. "Fieldworking," or ethnography, is the process of living and studying among other people in their own contexts. This research-based writing course asks you to use fieldworking as your investigative lens by taking notes, conducting interviews, doing observation, searching archives, and constructing visual representations of one local community agency where you choose to serve.

By completing an ethnographic study, you will learn how writing and research shape your own and others' views of culture. You will also learn the ins and outs of integrating community and academic research so that it results in stronger writing. And, you will learn how reading writing across several genres—including memoir, autoethnography, popular history, and theory—can help a community to question, formulate, challenge, and re-formulate its notions of what it means to "lead" and be "civically engaged."

Think of this course as an opportunity to develop your written communication skills, where you learn how to write for diverse audiences. Think of it also as an exploration of the different writing situations that face you as students at a major university and citizens in a larger community, where you respond to those situations by asking questions, conducting research, and composing your answers using relevant media. Finally, think of this course as knowledge *making*, not just knowledge reporting. It is less about expressing the "right" answers in the "right" format, and more about learning how to thoroughly investigate your ideas, and how to write them up in a way that is rhetorically sound.

Course Goals

As part of that process, this course will encourage you to:

- shape your writing for multiple needs and contexts.
- access, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources.
- move beyond summarizing facts to synthesizing complex ideas.
- understand argument as a way of explaining multiple perspectives, where those multiple perspectives act as means of persuasion.
- understand structure, language and style as ethical choices in creating credible public discourse.

Required Materials

- *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research, Third Edition* (at **IU Bookstore**)
 - *iX Visual Exercises* CD-ROM (at **IU Bookstore**)
 - Additional readings (from **eReserves**—you must print these and bring them to class)
 - Please note that you can “carry over” any unused printing balance from last semester by visiting <http://printing.stc.indiana.edu>
 - **Hardbound notebook** for fieldnotes (this must be hardbound and should be a separate notebook from the one you use to take notes in class since I will be collecting it periodically)
 - Access to the following software: Microsoft Word, Adobe Reader, a Web browser, and a working Indiana University e-mail account (**available on any UITS computer across campus**)
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Course Policies & Expectations

Unlike most courses you have probably taken at Indiana University, W240 is a Service-Learning course—a course that integrates community service into academic learning and vice versa. This course is also conducted much like a workshop, incorporating reading, discussion, and hands-on learning. Its success depends on your understanding the following policies and expectations:

SERVICE HOURS

You will be selecting one of five community agencies for your individual service hours and research project, and you will need to commit to spending a minimum of 20 hours over the semester at that agency (or 2 hours per week). These service hours will serve a double function: they will help you understand more about the ins and outs of the culture you are studying; and they will allow you to be an informed collaborator in creating something that you can give back to the agency, by way of your individual research project and collaborative writing project. You must satisfactorily complete all service hours in accordance with Community Partner expectations—including, attitude, decorum, and engagement—and you are expected to meet your weekly schedule and to notify your supervisor as soon as possible whenever you are unable to do so. Contact your agency’s ACE (Advocate for Community Engagement) as soon as possible in the first week of class to set up your orientation and get started filling out any paperwork that is required before you can begin your service.

ATTENDANCE

Classes like this are most successful when we build intellectual community. Undertaking a field research project involves several stages, which we will negotiate together as a class. For that reason, attendance is required. If you know you will have to be absent for an official university-sponsored event—or in the event of illness, religious holiday, military duty, or dire emergency—please contact me *in advance* so we can arrange for you to make up what you miss and to turn in what’s due. More than 4 absences will result in your final grade being dropped by 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional absence. Excessive lateness will also count as absences.

LATE WORK

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on the day they are due. I make every effort to post and distribute assignments well in advance so that there are no surprises. This means you should plan ahead to get them done, and you should make preparations to print them well in advance of class so that “computer crises” don’t prevent you from handing them in on time. If a severe illness or dire emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time,

you must contact me in advance of the due date to discuss your options. Late work is accepted only at my discretion and may incur a grade penalty.

PARTICIPATION AND PREPARATION

Participation means completing your assignments on time, arriving to class on time and fully prepared, and being attentive and engaged while in class. To be fully prepared, bring everything to class every day, but especially bring the reading or relevant materials that you know we will be covering. All reading assignments must be completed by the date for which they are assigned, and readings on e-Reserves must be printed and brought to class in hard copy on the day we are scheduled to discuss them. Over the course of the semester, I will call on you to lead discussion with one or two other classmates. This will not be a formal presentation, but rather an opportunity for you to act as respondent, pose certain questions to the class, or present your take on what we read. This is not meant to “put you on the spot,” but rather to allow you some ownership of what we discuss.

CLASS CONDUCT

Learning sometimes means admitting what we don’t know and being willing to ask questions when things aren’t very clear. Please get into the habit of asking questions early on—at least one other person in the class will probably always be glad that you did. As you share and evaluate ideas, be respectful of all members of the class, be attentive, and be open to learning from something they have to say, as you would want them to learn from you. While I want you to feel comfortable to initiate and facilitate great discussions in our classroom, please remember that it is, in a way, a performance space where we need to be committed to some good practices. Because our computer classroom is a shared space, the rules of conduct that you follow in a traditional classroom also apply here. Checking e-mail, instant messaging, playing games, Web surfing, falling asleep, doing homework for another class, or being otherwise disengaged or disruptive are not only unprofessional but will also lower your participation grade. Cell phones must be turned off while class is in session.

EVALUATION

Much of the semester will be devoted to building your fieldworking portfolio and working on your collaborative public document project. Here is how the points are distributed:

Assignments	
Fieldworking Portfolio (4 components)	600 points
Public Document Project and Presentation	200 points
Short Assignments and Fieldnotes	100 points
Participation and In-Class Work	100 points
	1000 points

Each assignment has specific evaluation criteria that we will go over in class, with the exception of short assignments and fieldnotes, which I will grade on the “plus” system. If your work shows considerable thought and exploration of the topic and satisfies length and quality requirements, I assign it a (+). If it demonstrates some thought and exploration of the topic but lacks in a certain area, I assign it a (✓). If it is lacking in many areas or is generally incomplete, I assign it a zero. Near the end of the semester, I’ll convert those to points. The final grade distribution is as follows:

1000-900 (A range) • 899-800 (B range) • 799-700 (C range) • 699-600 (D range) • 599 and below (F)

I treat grading as a conversation where I comment on your work. My comments are typically questions intended to make you think about purpose and audience; suggestions for improving some aspect of the writing (e.g., focus, development, organization, language, visual clarity, or “voice”); and reactions to

particular passages or prose. You should always feel free to meet with me if an assignment is unclear, if you get stuck, or if my first response on an assignment is unhelpful. You should also feel free to meet with me at any time if you are unsure of where you stand in the course.

REVISION

I encourage revision, particularly if a writer feels like they better understand the goals and aims of a project after having just completed it. If you choose to revise a project, you must meet with me to discuss your ideas for revision within one week after I have returned the project. You must then turn in the revised project within one week of this meeting. Please note that revisions must be substantial and of good quality (i.e., more than just minimal editing or reorganization) to improve the grade.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At IUB, we take plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity very seriously. Plagiarism literally means “the act of kidnapping” and involves representing someone else’s work as your own. Doing so “accidentally” is as problematic as doing so deliberately. As you get into more advanced writing, it becomes important that you read, take notes on, and incorporate sources productively and fairly. We will spend some class time discussing ways to avoid plagiarism, and learning about good source use in general. But please note that violations of academic integrity can result in automatic failure of the course. Always ask me if you are unsure about how to use a source fairly, and refer to the Code of Student Ethics for more information: <http://dsa.indiana.edu/Code/index1.html>.

WRITING TUTORIAL SERVICES

This class isn’t the only place at IU where you can develop as a writer. In addition to meeting with me in conferences, I highly recommend that you visit WTS (located in BH 206). The WTS consultants can offer you one-on-one feedback and a number of excellent do-it-yourself resources. Talking and thinking with others is extremely helpful at any stage of your writing, whether you are planning the project or editing the final draft. I still get feedback on much of what I do.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Disability Services and the Adaptive Technologies divisions of the Office of Student Affairs can arrange for assistance, auxiliary aids, or related services if you think a temporary or permanent disability might prevent you from being a full participant in the class. Contact them at <http://www.dsa.indiana.edu/> or 855-7578 with any individual concerns. Students with special needs must be registered with Disability Services before classroom accommodations can be provided.

Assignments and Projects

Please allow yourself ample time to draft and revise your writing—do not wait until the night before an assignment is due. Almost all assignments are scheduled in advance, but sometimes our class discussions will generate a short homework that needs to be completed by the next class day. That said, please build time into your schedule for preparation between one class day and the next. All writings for public distribution must be of professional quality. This means intelligent, thoughtful prose free of major patterns of grammatical or linguistic error. While this principle holds for any work that you submit to your peers in class, it holds even more for work that is circulated to your Community Partner or work that you do on their behalf. Plan to spend extra time substantially revising and editing that work.

PORTFOLIO

Positioning Essay (3-4 pages)

Analyze your own motives for community involvement with reference to the “service-learning” perspectives offered by Garbus, Franklin, or Hatcher. Bring those readings into conversation with your own ideas about what it means to do service learning and with what you are learning so far.

Verbal and Visual Portrait (4-5 pages plus visual component)

Interview and observe a key person (or “insider”) at your fieldsite, then compose a two-part portrait that creates a dominant impression of that person by addressing a critical issue from their point of view.

Bibliographic Essay (5-6 pages)

After an introduction that contextualizes your research, discuss and synthesize at least five (5) scholarly sources that can help you to shape your research project. Ethnographic research is multimodal and multivocal, so think of this as your Burkean Parlor experience, where you converse with the experts in order to understand how your issues relate and where their perspectives diverge.

The “Big” Ethnography (8-10 pages)

This *big ethnography* gives you the opportunity to synthesize what you have learned during your research in a provocative way. This is not a typical final paper—it is a research-based argument that provides a focused view of your fieldsite and subculture, in which you make a unique observation about how they embody “leadership” or “civic engagement” by drawing on various sources of information you have gathered all semester long.

Portfolio Construction (web-based)

Mid-semester, I’ll ask you to create a simple Web page that serves as a portfolio for you to collect all of your work, including any digital “artifacts” that you gather during your research. By the end of the semester I will ask you to link the major components of your portfolio to that page. This need not be flashy or complex but it should reflect the basic visual literacy and rhetoric principles we will be learning. It should also reflect what you have been learning about researching and writing community.

PUBLIC DOCUMENT PROJECT AND PRESENTATION (GROUP PROJECT)

In addition to creating your own research portfolio, you will work collaboratively with a group of your classmates on producing a public document, series of documents, or alternative text that will help your agency further its community mission. You and your agency will work together to determine the need, audience, genre form, content, and structure of that document or text. In the last week of class, you and your work group will have an opportunity to present the project in an informal showcase.

SHORT ASSIGNMENTS AND FIELDNOTES

As a way of helping you prepare for the major projects, I will assign several Short Assignments (SAs) over the semester. These may vary in scope, format, and method. I am less interested in your getting the “right” answers and more interested in seeing you take risks, develop skills, and learn new things. Sometimes these SAs end up being your most creative work, so you may choose to link them to your final portfolio. I will also ask you to keep regular notes based on observations you make at your community agency. Write down what surprises, intrigues, or disturbs you. This is more than just naturalistic observation—it’s an opportunity to raise questions that will keep your research going. These observation notes will be some of your most valuable information you gather, and I will collect them periodically during the semester. One hour of good observation can yield 5-10 pages of notes in a double-entry format—to be thorough, aim for 12-15 pages of observation notes each month you serve at your fieldsite.

Class Schedule – Spring 2008

This schedule may change during the semester. Please check our course website for updates.

Understanding Contexts

WK1	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
1-7-08	Course Introductions	
1-9-08	Introduction to Fieldworking and the Ethnographic Perspective	<i>Fieldworking</i> Chapter 1 (pp. 1-16)
1-11-08	The Rhetorical Situation of “Iowa 80”	<i>FW</i> Chapter 1 (pp. 25-44)

WK2	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
1-14-08	Perspectives on Service Learning	Garbus “Service-Learning 1902”
1-16-08	Perspectives on Service Learning	Franklin “Reading and Writing the World” and Hatcher “Moral Dimensions”
1-18-08	Taking Fieldnotes: Observations as Sources	SA #1 due <i>FW</i> Chapter 2 (pp. 74-77, 86-90, 93-103)

Negotiating Entry

WK3	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
1-21-08	☞ No classes on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day!	
1-23-08	Community Partner Roundtable: Girls, Inc. and Boys and Girls Club	Quinn “Need,” Dickens “Hard Times,” Brumberg “Body Projects,” and Kropf “Inspiring”
1-25-08	Community Partner Roundtable: Banneker Center	Moses “Algebra” or “Bouncing”

WK4	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
1-28-08	Community Partner Roundtable: Stone Belt Arc LLC	Taylor “Toxic Literacies”
1-30-08	Community Partner Roundtable: Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard	Husbands “Food Banks” and Bennholdt-Thomsen “Subsistence” (pp. 9-23)
2-1-08	The Four-Part Observation: People as Sources	Positioning Essay due <i>FW</i> Chapter 3 (pp. 140-143) and Chapter 5 (pp. 237-243)

(En)Visioning the Project

WK5	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
2-4-08	Verbal/Visual Portraits: The Next Step	<i>FW</i> Chapter 3 (pp. 130-132, pp. 148-155) and <i>FW</i> Chapter 4 (pp. 184-187)
2-6-08	Verbal/Visual Portraits: Creating a Dominant Impression	Trimbur “Profiles” Interview Consent Form due
2-8-08	Verbal/Visual Portraits: Thick Description & Embedded Language	<i>FW</i> Chapter 4 (pp. 232-236) and <i>FW</i> Chapter 5 (pp. 280-285, pp. 302-306)

WK6	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
2-11-08	Verbal/Visual Portraits: How Images Argue	SA #2 due <i>iX Visual Exercises 01, 02</i>
2-13-08	Verbal/Visual Portraits: Organization Heuristic for Purpose and Theme	<i>iX Visual Exercises 03, 05</i>
2-15-08	How Portraits Argue	Wilson “Embodied Rhetorics”

WK7	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
2-18-08	Verbal/Visual Portraits: Peer Review	Draft of Verbal/Visual Portrait due
2-20-08	Evaluating Sources, Web as Archives	<i>FW Chapter 7 (pages TBA)</i>
2-22-08	Academic Archives as Sources with Emily Okada and Louise Malcomb	Final Verbal/Visual Portrait due

Invoking Other Voices

WK8	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
2-25-08	Critical Bibliographic Essay: The Next Step	Freire “Pedagogy”
2-27-08	Bibliographic Essay: Heuristics	
2-29-08	Bibliographic Essay: Multivocal Research	Dworkin “A Woman’s Place”

WK9	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
3-3-08	Bibliographic Essay: Synthesis	SA #3 due
3-5-08	Bibliographic Essay: Organization	
3-7-08	Bibliographic Essay: Voice and Authority	

WK10	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
3-10-08	🔄 No classes – Spring Break!	
3-12-08	🔄 No classes – Spring Break!	
3-14-08	🔄 No classes – Spring Break!	

WK11	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
3-17-08	Looking Ahead: Heuristics for Purpose and Theme	Blume “Leadership and Followership” and Magalhaes “Leaders and Followers”
3-19-08	Academic Archives as Sources with Emily Okada and Louise Malcomb	Bibliographic Essay due
3-21-08	“Big” Ethnography: Triangulating Sources	<i>FW Chapter 4 (pp. 194-205) and TBA</i>

Making (it) Meaningful

WK12	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
3-24-08	“Big” Ethnography: Rhetorical Argument	Heilker “Rhetoric Made Real” and Tannen “Argument Culture”
3-26-08	“Big” Ethnography: Down and Up Drafting	<i>FW Chapter 8 (pages TBA)</i>
3-28-08	“Big” Ethnography: Organizational Plans and Thesis Statements	

WK13	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
3-31-08	Digital Portfolio: Workshop	<i>iX Visual Exercises</i> 04, 06. 08
4-2-08	Digital Portfolio: Workshop	
4-4-08	Digital Portfolio: Workshop	

WK14	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
4-7-08	No Class – Research and Writing Time	
4-9-08	No Class – Research and Writing Time	
4-11-08	No Class – Research and Writing Time	

WK15	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
4-14-08	“Big” Ethnography: Peer Review Workshop	First draft of “Big” Ethnography due
4-16-08	Community Writing Projects	
4-18-08	Community Writing Projects	

WK16	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DUE TODAY
4-21-08	Public Document Group Presentations and Reflections	Public Document due
4-23-08	Public Document Group Presentations and Reflections	
4-25-08	Public Document Group Presentations and Reflections	Final draft of “Big” Ethnography and Portfolio due on Tuesday.