

English 201: Intermediate Composition

Section Title: Emotions and Writing

Time, Days, Location: MWF, 1:20-2:10, HCW 6110

Instructor: Sharon Yam

Office: HCW 7171

Office Hours: MW 12:00-1:00 and by appointments

Course Description

Conventional wisdom suggests that emotions are dangerous and should be kept out of public deliberation—responsible and critical citizens, in other words, should communicate and rely solely on reasons and rationality. However, is such a negative conception of emotions in relation to public life really feasible or even productive? Recent research in cultural studies, political theory, and neuroscience has demonstrated that not only is public participation intimately connected to our emotions, we can also become more ethical and responsible citizens by paying closer attention to how our feelings influence judgments, social actions, and ways of communicating with others.

This course will investigate the followings:

- How emotions function and get deployed in various genres of public writing/communicative acts in particular rhetorical situations;
- How we use emotions and how emotions use us when we write and communicate;
- How can we account for both our and others' emotional responses when we engage in public conversations and deliberations; and
- What is the relationship between feelings/emotions and our role as an ethical and engaged citizen.

Objectives

English 201 is a 3-credit, intermediate-level writing course that satisfies the university's Communications B requirement for enhancing literacy skills, specifically writing. Over the course of the semester, we will pay close attention to the rhetorical nature of genres, and specifically writing, relevant to various forms of traveling and border crossing. Such attention will help us recognize the social dimensions and public consequences of literacy, particularly writing.

This course aims to help you develop the following skills and orientations:

- Ability to critically analyze and evaluate information and claims
- Increased awareness of your writing process, style, and strengths
- Understanding of how writing and speaking vary according to contextual factors such as situation, audience, a speaker or writer's purpose, and genre
- Strategies for adapting your communication skills for various contexts and substantiate your claims

- Effective and appropriate use of evidence and research in relation to the emotions of writing
- Understanding of how writing and other communicative acts are contingent upon your sociopolitical and cultural positions
- Enhanced ability to engage in constructive and mutually respectful dialogues with people who are from different backgrounds and hold different opinions

Readings Materials

Reading materials will either be posted as PDF documents on the course's Learn@UW site, or be available online.

Course Policies

Participation & Attendance. Much of class time is spent discussing course materials and working in groups to share and respond to each others' writing. These activities give you multiple ways to engage with others, formulate and express your ideas, and ultimately help you improve your ability to write, think, and communicate. Hence, your regular attendance and active participation in class is required.

In order to contribute constructively to class and group discussions, I expect everyone to have read the assigned reading prior to class and come with questions and responses. Because some of our discussion topics may be considered controversial, there will be disagreements in class. I encourage different opinions, but require that everyone be respectful of others.

You are allowed three absences for whatever reason with no initial penalty. There are times when nearly everyone must miss class for some reason: illness, deadlines, weather, travel, family issues, etc. This policy allows for such absences without penalty, though you should try not to miss class even once! However, each absence after three will drop your participation grade a full letter. **Missing more than four weeks of class for whatever reason will result in a failing grade for the course.** Missing a scheduled conference with me or coming to class excessively and frequently late will count as an absence. If your schedule may pose attendance problems, I recommend adding another section of English 201 or a different Com-B course.

Late Work. Assignments submitted late will be dropped a full letter grade for each day late. Assignments that are two days late will not be accepted. In-class assignments and activities missed because of absences cannot be made up.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

All of us at UW-Madison, students and instructors alike, have a responsibility to pursue our work honestly, acknowledging the sources and people who make it possible. Failures of academic integrity can lead to disciplinary action. The UW Administrative Code defines plagiarism, one common kind of academic misconduct, as “seek[ing] to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation; [or] us[ing] unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise.” See <http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>.

Unfortunately, despite the general abhorrence of plagiarism, the rules for source use are far from universal. It should go without saying that submitting an assignment you found online, ‘borrowed’ from a friend, or paid someone else to complete is a gross violation of academic integrity. If I have reason to suspect your assignment is so far out of line, I will follow University policy as outlined in the link above and alert the English 201 Program Director.

On more complicated questions, however, you might find yourself truly confused. Must you cite our class when you adapt material covered in a discussion? How different does language need to be to count as paraphrase? When does a piece of information become common knowledge? (after all, we don’t cite Lavoisier when we say that fire needs oxygen to burn). In what genres is it okay to appropriate material, and how much?

Overall, the conventions for academic source use rest on two pillars: the idea that others should be able to trace what you’ve done (think of one scientist trying to replicate a previous scientist’s experiment) and the idea that people should get credit for their ideas. If your work adheres to those two goals, you should be fine. If you are in doubt, over-acknowledgement is the safest approach. When you draw from a source (be it your mother, Wikipedia, or a book), include a reference to it. You can also check out the Writing Center’s guide to source use (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>), raise the question during class, or stop by my office hours.

Units and Graded Assignments

Our exploration of emotions and writing over the course of the semester will proceed in three units. For each, you will produce a portfolio of work consisting of assignments (completed in class or at home) and drafts of papers ranging from preliminary to polished.

Unit 1: Emotions in Public Deliberation

In this unit, we will investigate the role feelings and emotions play in public conversations on current social topics. Particularly, we will look at how emotions such as anxiety, sympathy, and anger influence the way arguments are structured, presented and received in public. Reading and writing assignments will familiarize us with key concepts and questions at stake, as well as the genres in which the issue is represented. The assignments in this unit are as follows:

1. Two-to-three page exposition/exploratory essay on a key concept of your choosing;
2. Five-page rhetorical analysis and comparisons of primary texts.

Unit 2: Personal Emotions in Public Lives

The second unit extends the inquiry on emotions we have begun in the previous unit: in particular, we will focus on cultivating an awareness of how our own feelings influence the way we make claims, communicate with others, and participate in public conversations. With a focus on research, you will also conduct primary and secondary research, sift through and synthesize data, and practice presenting your argument and findings coherently and persuasively. The assignments in this unit are as follows:

1. Five-page research-based essay on the discursive landscape of a public conversation of your choosing;
2. Five-page personal narrative on your positionality and emotional responses towards a key public issue;
3. Two-page letter addressed to your peer on their personal narrative.

Unit 3: Bridging the Public-Private Divide

In the last unit, we investigate what it means to actively participate in public conversations by analyzing and finally producing materials that address a consequential public issue. You will apply the research skills, self-reflexivity, and content knowledge you have gained in the first two units. In this unit, you will remediate your digital ethnography and present it to a new audience.

Resources

McBurney Center. Students with disabilities should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center for assistance: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/information/staff.php> . If you have a disability that affects your performance in this class, please come meet with me as soon as possible so we can make accommodations that will allow you to fulfill course requirements..

Writing Center. The Writing Center does not schedule appointments for students with English 201 assignments, but it offers a variety of useful resources, including handouts and writing classes. On occasion, we'll meet in the Writing Center's computer classroom or in adjacent rooms for writing workshops or presentations. For information, visit <http://www.writing.wisc.edu> .

English 201. For more information about English 201, visit <http://www.english.wisc.edu/201/> . You may also contact the English 201 program director—Dr. Christa Olson, christa.olson@wisc.edu—or the assistant program director—Neil Simpkins, nsimpkins@wisc.edu.

Portfolio Assessment and Grading

Since this class consists of students from different language experiences, cultural backgrounds, and academic disciplines, it is not fair to grade everyone based on one uniform standard. As such, in this course you will be evaluated not only by the quality of your written products, but also by the time and effort you have put into learning, improving, and taking risks in the course.

When you hand in the first draft of each assignment, I will give you marginal and end comments that suggest how you may revise to strengthen the text. Instead of a letter grade, I will give you an indication as to how much room for revision there is. You are encouraged to revise the assignments however many times you wish and resubmit them up to the end of each sequence.

At the end of each sequence, I will ask you to compile a portfolio which consists of a cover letter, all written assignments, and any free-writes, Google Doc postings (see below) of your choosing. The cover letter should explain to me the kinds of changes and rhetorical decisions you

have made throughout your writing and revision process; you may also want to explain to me what constructing those pieces and making those revisions mean to you: What's the most challenging and time-consuming? Why? Did you make some of the changes mainly because your peers or I have told you so? How does that feel to you as a writer? The goal of the letter is for me to have a better understanding of the amount of effort and time you have put into the strengthening your writing.

Your portfolio will receive a traditional letter grade. These grades will take into account your development as a writer, the effort you have put in, and your ability to meet course expectations, including the expectation that you will take part in writing workshops, participate consistently in other ways, and complete work on time. Unit portfolios will receive letter grades according to the university's point system as follows:

A	(Excellent) — 4
AB	(Intermediate Grade) — 3.5
B	(Good) — 3
BC	(Intermediate Grade) — 2.5
C	(Fair) — 2
D	(Poor) — 1
F	(Failure) — 0

Your final course grade will be determined by the following components:

- Portfolios
- Classroom participation in writing activities and discussions
- Participation on the Google Doc: whether you thoughtfully reflect on your own reaction and responsibly and respectfully engage with others

Class Google Doc

At the beginning of each week's class, I will provide you with a set of open-ended questions to solicit initial responses from the class regarding the readings and the topic of week. **Before the first class of every week, you are required to post a one-paragraph response on the Google Doc and read what others have written.**

The purpose of this Google Doc is for us to engage in conversation with one another, and practice being a sensitive, critical, and responsible writer and communicator even outside of the classroom. Given this goal, I do not want this project to be unengaging and one-directional, where you curmudgeonly write a short reflection to appease the sole reader—the instructor, me. Rather, this is a space for us—yes, myself included—to fully and openly take into account each other's' opinions and feelings, and respond ethically and sensitively with maintaining a critical and inquisitive attitude.

To facilitate the dialogic nature of this project, before the end of the week you will need to post at least one marginal comment in response to your peers' responses. Since your opinions will likely evolve from the beginning to the end of each week, you are highly encouraged to write any additional short responses underneath your original one (make sure you date each of your entries).

Course Calendar

Sequence 1: Emotions in Public Deliberation

Week 1: Introduction

Wednesday, 1/20: Introduction

Friday, 1/22: What do emotions have to do with writing and communication?

- ❖ Read Marcus's "Introduction"

Week 2: Identifying Feelings and Emotions in Public Conversations

Monday, 1/25: The Social Roles of Feelings and Emotions

- ❖ Read Kagan's "The Force of Feelings": <http://bit.ly/1N5uniA>
- ❖ Read Hoffman P. 16-21
- ❖ Preliminary Assignment due

Wednesday, 1/27: How do emotions function in public communication?

- ❖ Read the 2015 Harper's Index: <http://harpers.org/archive/2015/09/harpers-index-375/>
- ❖ Listen to "It's a Cry Shaming": <http://bit.ly/1ndKDUF>

Friday, 1/29: Preparing for Assignment 1 and the Drafting Process

- ❖ Bring your laptop

Week 3: Sympathy and Compassion

Monday, 2/1: The Persuasive Power of Sympathy

- ❖ Watch Invisible Children's Kony 2012 campaign video
- ❖ Read Fisher's "The Soft Bigotry of Kony 2012": <http://theatlntc.com/1J62lkw>

Wednesday, 2/3: The Ethics of Evoking Sympathy and Compassion

- ❖ Find an artifact (e.g. writing, poster, video, image) that you think evokes sympathy in an ethical manner.
- ❖ Assignment 1 due

Friday, 2/5: Conducting Rhetorical Analysis

Week 4: Anger and Anxiety

Monday, 2/8: Border Anxiety

- ❖ Skim Brader et. al's "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration?"
- ❖ Skim Huntington's "The Hispanic Challenge"

Wednesday, 2/10: Where Anger and Anxiety Intersects

- ❖ Read student samples
- ❖ Bring in two artifacts for Assignment 2

Friday: 2/12: Peer Writing Workshop

- ❖ Bring two copies of your Assignment 2 draft

Week 5: Anger and Bitterness

Monday, 2/15: The Revision Process

- ❖ Bring your laptop and Assignment 2 draft

Wednesday, 2/17: Bitterness from Marginalized Populations

- ❖ Read Kincaid's *A Small Place*: 1-19
- ❖ Assignment 2 due

Friday, 2/19: How is Anger and Bitterness Productive or Unproductive?

- ❖ Read Flores's "Stay in Your Lane": <http://bit.ly/1MznrST>

Sequence 2: Personal Emotions in Public Lives

Week 6: Fear and Panic

Monday, 2/22: Fear and Panic in Public Health

- ❖ Read Specter's "The Fear Equation": <http://nyr.kr/ZA3nRZ>
- ❖ Read Kotz's "Why Americans Have Irrational Ebola Fear": <http://bit.ly/1DMGgHo>

Wednesday, 2/24: How Public Fear Circulates

- ❖ Bring your laptop for an in-class practice session on tracing public conversations online and gathering primary data
- ❖ Sequence 1 Portfolio due

Friday: 2/26: Digital Ethnography Introduction

- ❖ Read Švelch and Václav Šetek's "The Coup that Flopped": <http://bit.ly/1ZLAA5d>
- ❖ Prepare a short statement explaining the discursive landscape you'd like to trace in Assignment 3
- ❖ Bring your laptop

Week 7: Writing and Research

Monday, 2/29: Integrating and Synthesizing Research

- ❖ Bring in at least three secondary sources (two must be scholarly) you have gathered thus far for Assignment 3

Wednesday, 3/2: Analysis and Writing

- ❖ Bring a draft (min. two pages) of your primary data analysis

Friday, 3/4: Research and Writing Check-in—Thesis and Organization

- ❖ Bring any drafts, data, and outlines you have for Assignment 3

Week 8: The Emotional and Political Power of Personal Narratives

Monday, 3/7: Peer Workshop

- ❖ Bring in two full drafts of Assignment 3

Wednesday, 3/9: Personal Narratives and Positionality

- ❖ Listen to Radio Lab’s “Yellow Rain”: <http://bit.ly/1UH8zLs>
- ❖ Read Yang’s response: <http://bit.ly/1y7Ya3t>

Friday, 3/11: How Personal Experience Intersects with Public Policy-making

- ❖ Read Vargas’s “My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant”: <http://nyti.ms/19G6kVU>
- ❖ Assignment 3 due

Week 9: Personal Emotions and Differences

Monday, 3/14: Free-writes and Drafting Assignment 4

- ❖ Bring in an outline/abstract of Assignment 4 and your laptop

Wednesday, 3/16: Dealing with Differences

- ❖ Read Blanda’s “The ‘Other Side’ is not Dumb”: <http://bit.ly/1ndMOaR>

Friday, 3/18: Invitational Rhetoric and Hands-on Workshop

- ❖ Read excerpts from Foss and Griffin’s “Beyond Persuasion”

Week 11: Cultivating Self-Reflexivity

Monday, 3/28: Free-write and Reflections

- ❖ Read Abdul’s “I Went to a Trump Rally in my Hijab”: <http://bit.ly/22ZUPAz>
- ❖ Assignment 4 due

Wednesday, 3/30: Pair Conversations Round 1

- ❖ Prepare an oral statement based on Assignment 4

Friday, 4/1: In-class Drafting

- ❖ Bring your laptop

Week 11: Translating Feelings into Actions*Monday, 4/4: Pair Conversations Round 2*

- ❖ Bring in a full draft of Assignment 5 to be shared with your partner
- ❖ Read assignment prompt for final project

*Wednesday, 4/6: Design Lab**Friday, 4/8: Software Training for Students (STS)***Sequence 3: Bridging the Public-Private Divide****Week 12: Writing with Public Stakes***Monday, 4/11: Brainstorming Session*

- ❖ Read Design Lab's "Smart Media" page: <http://tinyurl.com/hjaksxn>

Wednesday, 4/13: Student Samples

- ❖ University of South Florida: <http://bit.ly/1RiLNKX>

Friday, 4/15: Student Samples

- ❖ University of Kentucky: <http://bit.ly/1Zh6rdO>

Week 13: Making Emotions and Feelings Productive for Public Deliberation*Monday, 4/18: In-class work day**Wednesday, 4/20: Proposal Workshop**Friday, 4/22: Roundtable Sharing*

- ❖ Proposal due

Week 14: Workshop and Presentation*Monday, 4/25: Delivering Effective Presentations**Wednesday, 4/27: Individual Meetings**Friday, 4/29: Presentations***Week 15: Presentations and Wrap-up***Monday, 5/2: Presentations**Wednesday, 5/4: Presentations**Friday, 5/6: Course evaluations*

Assignments

Sequence 1

Preliminary. What is your relationship with writing and writing classes? Reflect on your language backgrounds—how do you use language and writing in your family, your everyday life, and when you were growing up? How do those experiences influence the way you feel about writing in a college classroom setting now? The goal of this assignment is not only for you to become more aware of how your experiences and backgrounds influence the way you use language, but also for me to have a better understanding of your position and feelings as a writer both in and out of my class. You may be as candid and reserved as you want with the information you share here.

(~3 pages; Due 1/25)

1. Write an exposition on a key term/concept we have discussed in this unit. Define the term/concept, and trace the conversations around it based on the readings and discussions we have done so far. Discuss the importance of the concept. **To whom** and **in what context** is it significant, and **why**? **Who** mobilizes this term? **What** can they accomplish using this concept?

You may also want to consider the following questions when structuring your paper:

- How do people deploy/use this term/concept?
- Do people always use the same term to refer to the same thing? If not, what are the different meanings and definitions you see at play?
- What questions do people ask using this term? What kinds of concerns do they have?
- What are at stake in those questions and concerns?

While additional research is not mandatory, you are more than welcome to use and cite outside sources.

This will serve as a foundation to contextualize and situate your long assignment, where you will use what you write here to make and support your own argument.

(~2-3 pages; Due 2/3)

2. Pick a public discussion of your interest; the conversation doesn't necessarily have to be a big, controversial one to warrant your attention! Select two artifacts from the conversation as your objects of analysis—when analyzed side by side, the artifacts should allow you to investigate deeper questions or illustrate something interesting regarding emotions and public communications. These artifacts may be essays, videos, websites, or posters. Analyze the respective roles emotions play in these texts in relation to their genres, medium, and rhetorical situations—purpose, context, audience, and stakes—and their respective effects on the reader. The intention behind this assignment is for you to explore how emotions function in public

writing, rather than asking you to form concrete opinions about the role of emotions—or even, whether emotions have a role at all—in these kinds of deliberation. You are encouraged to use course materials and discussions to supplement your analysis and comparison.

Consider the following questions as you analyze the artifacts; however, you are not required to answer all of them, nor are you expected to organize your essay accordingly:

- Why do you choose to compare these two artifacts? What do we learn by analyzing them side by side each other? The answer to these two questions will likely form your thesis statement.
- What similarities and differences are there between the two artifacts? How would you account for them, and what are their respective rhetorical effectiveness? Recall our discussion on the Kony 2012 and Save the Children campaign videos: while the two both evoke the innocence of children, the way they attempt to persuade the audience is very different.
- What kind of emotions are evoked or conveyed in these pieces? In the piece where emotions are less explicitly mobilized, do you nevertheless seem them playing a role in the author’s argument and ways of communication?
- As a reader, how do the two texts make you feel respectively? What effects do they likely have on their intended audience?
- How do the respective rhetorical situations and medium of the two artifacts influence the way emotions function? Think critically of the way emotions are likely to be perceived in each particular context.
- Be curious and investigative here: what further questions does this comparative case study raise about the way feelings/emotion function in public deliberation?

(~5-6 pages; First Draft Due 2/12; Final Draft Due 2/17)

****Portfolio 1 due 2/24****

Sequence 2

3. In the previous sequence, you have conducted a small-scale comparative study on a public conversation of your interest. Building upon that, this assignment asks you to expand your scope and analyze the larger “discursive landscape” of the conversation (think Storify). Before you write, first spend time surveying the conversation and gathering enough primary and secondary data to answer the following questions:

- Who are the key participants and stakeholders of the conversation? (Be observant: the two do not always overlap!) What personal and public significance does this topic serve to them, and how do you know that?
- Are there any key moments or events that shape the conversation or trigger alternative responses and modes of participation?
- The conversation may be occurring on multiple platforms (e.g. printed materials, Twitter, Tumblr, online forums, comment sections, etc.). Based on your observation, what are the most

prominent and least popular ones? What hypothesis do you have on why certain platforms are more utilized than others?

- What kinds of claims are being made? By whom? And in what genres and forms?

You are encouraged to use one of the questions you raised in the previous assignment to guide your analysis. In it, consider the followings:

- What role(s) do emotions and feelings play in this conversation? In the case where no feelings are explicitly evoked or provoked, why do you think this is so? What rhetorical effects does that serve?

- As an observer, what is the most striking/interesting aspect of this conversation to you? If you are a participant-observer, discuss using your insider knowledge as well. What are aspects of the conversation—particularly its emotional effects—that are not commonly known to outsiders?

- How does the discursive landscape you analyze here complicate, challenge, or cohere with our readings and discussions in class?

For this assignment, you are required to cite at least three scholarly sources based on secondary research.

(~5-6 pages; First Draft Due 3/7; Final Draft Due 3/11)

4. Write a personal narrative on your communicative practice regarding a public issue (or a few interrelated ones) that you care and feel deeply about. The goal of this assignment is for you to critically evaluate the ways your feelings, cultural background, social position, values and personal and familial histories and experiences influence how you participate—or not—in public conversations. Consider the following questions:

What do you see as the personal and public significance of this issue? What role does it play in your relations with others? What experiences do you have discussing this issue with a) people who share your views and passion; b) people who disagree with you; and c) those who are either unaware or apathetic?

If you have chosen to not actively participate in interactions/conversations on that topic, why not?

Critically analyze the kinds of emotions that are triggered in you in these scenarios, and whether/how these feelings influence the way you communicate and relate to others. You are encouraged to reflect on the experience you had during the Invitational Rhetoric Hands-on Workshop.

Your narrative must include the following elements:

- **Concrete illustrations/ descriptions of your big-picture statements.** (e.g. If you write that you generally avoid participating in conversations where you know your interlocutors would disagree with your view vehemently, you would need to describe a specific time when this has happened.)

- **Connections between your personal communicative practice with larger social, economic, political, or cultural structures and influences.** (e.g. “I tend to be very vocal about protecting labor unions because I am from a working-class background with parents who are both active members of their respective unions.)

- **Connections between your personal experience and practice with any course readings and discussions.** (As you write and reflect upon your narrative, do you notice any relationships between your experience and opinions and what we have read and talked about in class?)

(~4-5 pages; Final Draft Due 3/28)

5. Read a peer’s narrative. Write a letter to your peer addressing the following question: how does reading his/her narrative complicate, challenge, or reinforce your opinions on the role of emotions in public deliberation and participation? You are expected to integrate the concepts we have discussed in class about deliberating with difference

(~2 pages; First Draft due 4/4)

****Portfolio 2 due 4/11****

Sequence 3

Final Project:

For this project, you will build upon the digital ethnography you produced in Sequence II. The task is to transform (remediate) your current product—a traditional research paper with a limited audience—into a multimodal presentation that effectively convey the significance and implications of your research to a specific audience. You will first write a three-page proposal explaining your rhetorical situation and decisions, and then you will showcase your work to the class at the end of the semester during an oral presentation.

Below are examples of medium and formats you could adopt:

- Website (e.g. Weebly, Tumblr, WordPress, SquareSpace)
- Infographic (e.g. infogr.am, easel.ly)
- Podcast (e.g. Audacity)
- Video (e.g. iMovie)
- Graphic essays (e.g. Canva, Sway)
- Storify

Proposal due: 4/22

Final remediation project due: 5/6

****Portfolio 3 due 5/6****