**Writing 2: Academic Writing**

Fall 2020 | MW 8:00-9:50[[1]](#footnote-1) | Enroll Code: 50294

Drop Deadline: October 7, 2020 | Final Grades on GOLD: December 22, 2020

**Instructor:** [**Kristen Thomas-McGill**](https://www.history.ucsb.edu/graduate-student/kthomasmcgill/) **(she/her/hers)**

Email: [kthomasmcgill@ucsb.edu](mailto:kthomasmcgill@ucsb.edu)

Nectir and Twitter: @kthomasmcgill

Office: Normally in HSSB, but find me online this quarter

Student Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30, and by appointment at other times

Zoom Link: <https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/87399276599> (use both for Wednesday class and Student Hours)

**NOTE: The deadline to drop this course via GOLD is 11:59PM (UCSB time) Wednesday, October 7.** If you wish to drop the course after this deadline, you must file a late drop petition via the [College of Letters and Sciences Advising Office](https://www.duels.ucsb.edu/advising) which will be reviewed by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

**Welcome to Writing 2!**

Currently, first-year writing classrooms are more diverse than ever with students bringing with them

many cultural and linguistic resources. At the same time, students are increasingly asked to compose

across various media and genres. This means students like you are always making choices in order to communicate effectively with different audiences. This class aims to help you understand how to negotiate these choices while making fuller use of your own rhetorical resources in your writing and adding new knowledge and skills.

In order to work towards this goal, the course will focus on an approach called “writing about writing.” This means that writing in different forms will be the focus of our study. For our first project, you will find an academic article on a topic of your choice and then translate the article into a genre of your choice. For the second project, you will use a Writing Studies database to research an aspect of writing you are interested in investigating. You will then revise your projects and submit them in a final, electronic portfolio website.

**Course Description and Objectives:**

Writing 2 is students’ initiation to the foundations of academic writing in the university. The work occurs in a small classroom setting where teachers interact intensively and creatively with students. Students receive feedback on writing, learn strategies for engaging in critical inquiry, explore multiple genres, and develop their writing processes. After successfully completing Writing 2, students will have developed critical writing, reading, and analysis strategies that they can use in upper-division classes in the Writing Program and the university. Writing 2 satisfies the Area A1 requirement.

This class is designed to help you cultivate the tools needed to become a successful writer during your time at UCSB and beyond. To this end, we will be focusing on building knowledge about analyzing, understanding, negotiating, and executing any writing project. Students who successfully complete the course will demonstrate:

* Knowledge and understanding of the conventions and practices of the genre in which it is written
* Attention to the purpose and audience for the writing
* Analyses that reflect engagement with course readings, discussion, and other work
* Effective use of evidence that demonstrates careful attention to reading and to connections between the writer’s ideas and the evidence presented
* Use of effective processes for brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing (taking into consideration comments from class colleagues and me regarding all of these steps)
* Awareness of and attention to conventions of standard written academic English in the US, including sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling

**Weekly Schedule[[2]](#footnote-2)**

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| --- | --- |
| Mondays   * Asynchronous class: check GauchoSpace for activities/videos/etc. * Complete in-class activities by 11:59PM Monday * Homework reading & writing due by 3:00PM Monday * No Zoom meetings | Wednesdays   * Synchronous class: see you at 8:00AM! * In-class activities will happen during class time * Homework reading & writing due by 8:00AM * Meet on Zoom * REQUIRED Peer Reader Workshops on 10/21, 11/18, and 12/9 * No class 11/11 or 11/25 |

**Required Materials:**

I know times are extremely tough, and I have done my absolute best to minimize the materials costs for this class. There are two books that are required, plus one that is optional. I promise we will use both of the required books heavily this quarter so they’re worth your money. You do need these specific editions/versions of the required books, so please don’t buy one off Amazon or elsewhere; use the links below. *If you are unable to afford a book for this class, please contact me ASAP and I’ll find resources for you.*

* Online access to GauchoSpace, Zoom, Google Docs, campus Gmail, and Nectir
* REQUIRED: [*Starting Lines: An Anthology of Student Writing*](https://www.vitalsource.com/products/starting-lines-an-anthology-of-student-writing-writing-program-ucsb-v9781533929679) (19th edition, ISBN 9781533929679)
  + Costs $24.50
  + You MUST get this exact version of the book.
  + The cost purchases you a downloadable copy of the e-text that does not expire. It also includes one year of online access to the e-text.
* REQUIRED: [*Writing About Writing*](https://www.vitalsource.com/custom/9781319423360) (4th edition, UCSB version, ISBN 9781319423360)
  + Costs $16.99
  + You MUST get this exact version of the book.
  + The cost rents you access to the e-text for 180 days after purchase.
* OPTIONAL: [*A Pocket Style Manual*](https://www.vitalsource.com/custom/9781319382223) (8th edition, UCSB version, ISBN 9781319382223)
  + Costs $16.99
  + If you decide you want the *Pocket Style Manual*, you do NOT need this specific version of it; feel free to buy a different edition off Amazon or whatever.
  + The cost rents you access to the e-text for 180 days after purchase.
  + If you are looking for extra help with grammar/punctuation/style, this book might be helpful.
  + Remember, this book is OPTIONAL.

**Grading and Feedback:**

To calculate grades, I will use a contract grading method.[[3]](#footnote-3) The grade of at least B- is guaranteed if you do the following:

1. Attend all three Peer Reader Workshops.
2. Meet due dates (including extensions) and writing criteria for all assignments.
3. Participate in all synchronous and asynchronous exercises and activities.
4. Complete all informal, low stakes writing assignments (e.g. GauchoSpace/Nectir discussions and Journal Responses).
5. Give thoughtful peer feedback during Peer Reader Workshops.
6. Sustain effort and investment on each draft of all papers.
7. Make substantive revisions when the assignment is to revise—extending or changing the thinking or organization—not just editing punctuation or touching up.
8. Copy-edit all final revisions of main assignments until they conform to the genre conventions of standard written academic US English.[[4]](#footnote-4)
9. Attend conferences with the instructor to discuss drafts.
10. Submit a complete final online e-portfolio containing substantially revised writing projects plus a reflective letter.

You earn the grade of at least B- entirely on the basis of what you do—on your conscientious effort and participation. Beyond meeting the minimum requirements of the assignment, the grade of at least B- does not derive from my judgment about the quality of your writing. Grades higher than a B-, however, do rest on my judgment of writing quality. **To earn a higher grade, you must produce writing for your final portfolio I judge to be of exceptional quality. You need to turn in both writing projects and the portfolio to pass the class.**

Contract grading is freeing for both instructors and students, allowing us “to think more about writing and less about grades.”[[5]](#footnote-5) With less focus on the grade, we can all focus more on the feedback and the overall learning that happens when we write. I want you to be able to approach the class and its activities with a sense of curiosity, enthusiasm and excitement and with less fear and worry, allowing you to trust yourself and the process, let yourself make mistakes, take feedback into consideration, and engage in dialogue with me about your projects and writing.

Contract grading is probably new to you, and you may have questions or concerns about it. I’m eager to chat with you about why I think contract grading is a good idea, but I’ll also happily switch you to a more traditional grading system if you’re more comfortable with that. Please just let me know within the first two weeks of the quarter if you’d like to opt out of contract grading.

**Writing in this Course**

There are four kinds of writing in this course:

* Writing Projects (WPs): longer (4-6) page papers that we’ll work on over about 4 weeks each. You will turn in “Teacher Drafts” of these to me for comments and revise them for your final course portfolio.
* Project Builders (PBs): shorter projects where you will work on elements of the WPs. You’ll write these within the 4 weeks where we work on WPs and receive feedback that will help you develop the WP.
* Reflective writing: both informal, low-stakes writing and more polished, formal reflections throughout the quarter that will help you focus on your writing, reading, and analysis processes. There are two main types of reflective writing:
  + GauchoSpace/Nectir discussions that operate like an online forum
  + Journal Reflections (JRs) using Google Docs
* Final course portfolio: a cumulative, final product where you will revise your two WPs for a significant portion of your course grade.

**The Public Nature of Writing**

Since academic writing is writing directed toward an audience, you should consider the writing that you do in this course “public”—that is, writing that others will read. I will sometimes use student writing (only with your permission!) to demonstrate stellar examples of what we’re doing. (I will NEVER share student writing to shame or punish someone.) I will check in with you before sharing any of your work, so you can let me know if you’d prefer anything to be kept private.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately passes off another’s words or ideas without acknowledging their source. For example, paying someone to write a paper for you is plagiarism. If you plagiarize in this class, you will fail the assignment and your case will be passed to the Office of Student Conduct for additional disciplinary action. Universities and colleges in the US take plagiarism very seriously (we’ll talk about why in class) and expel offending students every year. Do not mess around with plagiarism.

Plagiarism is different from misuse of sources, occasions when a writer does not properly cite a source, misuses quotations, includes too much of an original source in a paraphrase or summary, or commits similar unintentional violations of academic protocol. If you misuse sources, we will work together on appropriately incorporating and/or citing the sources. Note that some audiences/instructors will consider misuse of sources to be plagiarism; for this reason, it is extremely important for you to identify the conventions associated with source use and citations in any class (or writing situation).

**Support and Resources**

You have a wide range of resources to support you in Writing 2 and in the other aspects of your life. Below is an incomplete list of places you can turn for help. Links to these resources’ and others’ websites are on the class GauchoSpace page as well.

* [Me](https://www.history.ucsb.edu/graduate-student/kthomasmcgill/)! I am available and excited to help you with your writing. Please stop by my student hours or e-mail me—I am happy to work with you in whatever way facilitates your work in this class.
* [CLAS](http://clas.sa.ucsb.edu/): Writing support is also available through CLAS, which offers individual sessions for students seeking to improve their writing. Keep in mind that CLAS is not an editing service; rather, peer writing tutors will help you to identify and improve aspects of writing challenging for you. Services are available on a walk-in or by-appointment basis. The writing lab is located in the Student Resource Building (SRB) 3231.
* [DSP](https://dsp.ext-prod.sa.ucsb.edu/): If you have a documented disability that affects your work in this or any other class, the Disabled Students Program is here to offer you support. Please get in touch with them and with me so that we can make accommodations for you. Call them at (805) 893-2668 or visit them on the second floor of the SRB.
* [CAPS](https://caps.sa.ucsb.edu/): Mental health services (including stress management) are available for all UCSB students on campus through Counseling and Psychological Services in the pink building across from Storke Tower. Reach them by phone at (805) 893-4411.
* [RCSGD](http://rcsgd.sa.ucsb.edu/): Under Title IX, university students are protected from harassment and discrimination based on gender and sex. UCSB’s Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity is available to advocate for and be a support to students. Their office is on the third floor of the SRB or you can reach them at (805) 893-5847.

**Sexual Harassment Policy**

The University of California prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, and such behavior violates both law and University policy. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, there are a number of avenues for reporting, and you have the right to determine which is the best choice for you. Some of these avenues are confidential, such as CARE. Others, such as the Title IX Office, are not confidential, and do not necessarily provide an advocate on your behalf.

You should be aware that many university employees, including almost all of your instructors, are considered “Mandatory Reporters.” As Mandatory Reporters, instructors are required by law to report any sexual harassment and violence that has occurred on campus to the UCSB Title IX Office. What this means is that I, as a Mandatory Reporter, am certainly willing to talk to you about sexual harassment or violence that you may have experienced. I will absolutely NOT gossip with my colleague about anything you choose to disclose to me. However, I AM compelled to notify a particular office at UCSB if you choose to disclose to me that you have been sexually harassed or assaulted on campus or by someone affiliated with the University.

UCSB’s [CARE](http://wgse.sa.ucsb.edu/care/home) office, in contrast, has the authorization to keep such disclosures private. For a confidential, survivor-centered resource that will help you determine the best way for you to move forward without automatically reporting to Title IX, you can contact the 24/7 CARE advocacy line at (805) 893-4613.

**On Learning in a Pandemic[[6]](#footnote-6)**

This is not, I think, where any of us hoped to be in late 2020. We are in the midst of a deadly pandemic, struggling against loneliness in a time of political uncertainty, racial reckoning, economic collapse, and climate change-induced natural disasters. Things feel bleak, and they are.

What’s going on outside of Writing 2 might limit your ability to participate fully in this class. You might not be at your best this quarter. That’s okay; it is okay to not be okay right now. I do invite you, however, to approach Writing 2 with an attitude of openness toward learning in a time of profound crisis. It is an act of radical hope to seek out new ways of knowing and being human even—*especially*—when everything is falling apart. Please take care of yourself and your community and let me know how I can support you. Let us be guided by patience and flexibility this quarter.

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*This course is taught by a unionized worker.*

*Your instructor’s working conditions are your learning conditions!*

1. Times listed in the syllabus and in all documents for this class are UCSB time. If you are in another time zone, [this](https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/) world clock can help you figure things out. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A full course schedule is available on the GauchoSpace Course Basics tab in the document titled “WRIT 2 Schedule F20.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This contract comes from Jane Danielewicz and Peter Elbow, “A Unilateral Grading Contract to Improve Learning and Teaching,” *College Composition and Communication* 61, no. 2 (2009): 244-68, with small edits. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I know that “standard written academic US English” is weird phrasing, but we’ll talk about what this means and how it’s different from “good English” or “correct English.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Danielewicz and Elbow, 249. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. With thanks to Sarah Ross and Dr. Mikki Brock. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)