

# STUDENT MANUAL

WRT 105

*Practices of Academic Writing*

ETS 142

*Narratives of Culture: Introduction to  
Issues of Critical Reading*



The Writing Program, Department of English and Textual Studies  
And Project Advance®

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## ***To the SUPA Student:***

**Y**ou are participating in a first year collegiate experience that includes a writing studio course (WRT 105) that all students on the campus take and a course in reading and interpretation (ETS 142) that freshman students may take as a part of their baccalaureate studies.

We hope that you will find this combination of college writing and English courses enjoyable, challenging, and useful. Through these two courses you can earn six college credits: three in WRT 105 and three in ETS 142. Remember that enrollment offers you *the opportunity* to earn these credits: enrollment does not itself guarantee credit.

For college credit at Syracuse or for transfer to another institution, please keep the following clearly in mind:

1. Usually, only grades of C or better can be considered for college transfer credit.
2. Credit and grades reported at Syracuse University become a permanent part of your academic record at Syracuse and will appear on your SU transcript, including any copies of the transcript sent to other institutions. Detailed explanations for recording and transferring credit are found in the appendix of this manual.
3. In transferring Syracuse University credit earned in these courses to another institution, you should consult your teacher and guidance counselor and make use of the official materials provided for this purpose.
4. Credit transfer is best negotiated by the transcript, an official document sent directly from Syracuse University to officials at your college, available only when credit has been earned.

Further information about grading, registration and other policies can be found on pages 24-26 of this manual and in *The Student Guide: Our Courses Your Classroom Project Advance* available as a pdf on our website at <http://supa.syr.edu>.

This manual answers many of the questions you are likely to ask about WRT 105 and ETS 142; some may arise, however, from the way your section has taken up the intellectual moves of the courses, and these questions are best answered by your instructor. This manual is your property and should be taken with you when you go to college. There it may be useful in explaining the course to college officials who may wish further information than the general description in the Syracuse University undergraduate catalogue. If you have specific questions not answered in this manual or in your course syllabus, you and your teacher may want to consult with Dr. Patricia Moody if your questions concern academics or with Dr. Christina Parish if they concern the administration of the courses. Our addresses and phone numbers are shown below. Representatives of the academic faculty and administrative staff visit your school and work with your teachers during the year. We hope we will meet you during a school visit.

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# WRT 105

## *Practices of Academic Writing*

# Goals of WRT 105

*WRT 105 focuses on the rhetorical strategies, practices, and conventions of critical academic writing.*

- Goal #1:** Students will compose a variety of texts as a process (inventing, drafting, revising, editing) that takes place over time, that requires thinking and rethinking ideas, and that addresses diverse audiences and rhetorical contexts.
- Goal #2:** Students will develop a working knowledge of strategies and genres of critical analysis and argument.
- Goal #3:** Students will learn critical techniques of reading through engagement with texts that raise issues of diversity and community and encourage students to make connections across difference.
- Goal #4:** Students will include critical research in their composing processes.

# WRT 105

## Practices of Academic Writing

Writing 105 is a course offered by Syracuse University's Writing Program in the College of Arts and Sciences. It is a required course for all incoming Syracuse students, and is the first of a 4-year sequence of writing courses. These courses are informed by the following principles:

- ◁ *Writing is expressive.* The courses help individual writers develop ideas, organization, style, and topics of inquiry. The courses offer individual attention to writers as they work with drafts in progress, as they develop arguments and claims, as they relate writing to larger ideas and issues, as they take stands in the world.
- ◁ *Successful writers are experienced in writing as a process,* not writing as a sudden, brief, unfathomable event. WRT 105 engages students in processes of writing—inventing, drafting, revising, editing.
- ◁ *Writing is a way of learning.* Writing is not merely a means of reporting what one already knows; it is a means of discovering and evaluating ideas and negotiating them with various audiences.
- ◁ *Writing is social, tied to identity, culture, social difference, and power.* Writing takes place in a social context and within social relations. Our classes address issues of genre, discourse communities, audience, and the social origins of language “rules.” They explore questions of writing and identity, language use and power asymmetries.
- ◁ *Writing is affected by its tools and contexts.* To write with a keyboard is to establish a different relation to text, writing, and oneself than writing with pen and paper. To write a narrative for a group of peers is to engage in a cognitively and socially different task than to write an analysis for a professor or a report for an employer. To write as a student in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to assume a different authorial persona, stance and authority than to write as a poet in the *New Yorker* or a chemist for an NSF grant. No two writings are the same, and no one writer is the same from one writing event to another.
- ◁ *Students are writers, not error-makers in need of correction.* A writing class is a site of constructive exploration of the writing process, not a drill in writing rules. Yet editing is part of the writing process, and students deserve to be mentored in their comprehension and application of conventions in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.
- ◁ *Academic writing matters.* In their college assignments (in our classes and in the others that our students take), students have an opportunity to make meaning—not only to learn assigned principles (about the Harlem Renaissance, plate tectonics, child language acquisition, etc.), but also to synthesize these principles with their other knowledge and experiences. We do our students a service when we teach them to take their academic writing seriously, to explore its potentials and problems.
- ◁ *Academic writing involves critical inquiry,* not just the digestion of assigned principles. Academic writers need to learn how to evaluate, question, synthesize, and apply what they are learning and what they are writing about. They need to learn how to extend and develop and qualify ideas.

*Adapted from the Writing Program Teachers' Manual, 2004*

## *What Kind of a Class is WRT 105?*

Your section of WRT 105 is a group of writers who meet together with the specific purpose of developing as critical readers, writers, and thinkers. Throughout the course you will learn strategies of critical academic writing in various genres, including analysis, argument, and researched writing. The course will help you develop ideas through the choices you make as writers—from invention to making and supporting claims to sentence-level editing to designing finished print and digital texts. The course will challenge you to understand that effective communication requires people to be aware of the complex factors that shape every rhetorical context, including issues of power, history, difference, and community. Effective writers understand the histories and knowledges that shape the positions from which they write, and that inform the perspectives of various audiences, and they recognize that writing as a communicative act may potentially change the perspectives of both the writer and audiences. Developing this understanding will help you perceive ways in which your work as a writer extends beyond the immediate requirements of the classroom and prepares you for effective engagement with issues in the workplace, local community, and global society. You won't do any of this important work alone or in isolation; in fact, the writing studio is a site of active learning where you have responsibility for your own progress and for that of your peers.

You may find that the kind of effort you must make in the writing course is new to you. You will be asked to think critically about questions that have no simple answers. Your writing will reflect the critical thought you give to these questions. Indeed, you may come up with more questions than answers as you work your way through the semester. These questions are important and form the basis of an inquiry-based reflective practice that is the hallmark of a Syracuse University writing class.

## *The Instructor and You*

In this class, the instructor does not simply present information for you to memorize and regurgitate on tests. Instead, the instructor will function as a co-inquirer. Sometimes the instructor may be writing when you are, struggling with the same problems that confront you as a writer. Sometimes your instructor will function as a mentor and consultant, helping you shape your text. Although instructors have been carefully selected for these courses based on their ability to write and to help others write, it would be inappropriate for the instructor to tell you what to write. Here your teacher will be helping you as you work to develop your ideas.

Your teacher is an expert reader whose advice and response to your writing you will consider and judge alongside advice and response from your classmates. In the final analysis, you will take the full responsibility for deciding what to put in your paper, but you will do well to consider carefully the comments from all your readers in making your decisions.



## *How to be a Helpful Peer Reader*

Part of your role as a class participant is to be an informed, constructive critic for others. Sometimes students complain about this responsibility at first, thinking that this is the work of the instructor, as it has probably been in most other writing classes.

You will soon discover, though, that the better and more perceptive a reader you are, the better a writer you become. Think about it. As you read the work of others, you wrestle with difficult passages in their papers, and in trying to discover the source of the difficulty, you learn something about the system of effective communication. Teachers of writing, similarly, become more knowledgeable and skilled as they respond thoughtfully to their students' papers. In becoming clearer about why writing works, or doesn't, you will find that you are more sensitive to the needs of your readers as you prepare your own texts. You are not taking over the teacher's work, but rather you are sharing the teacher's strategy for learning.

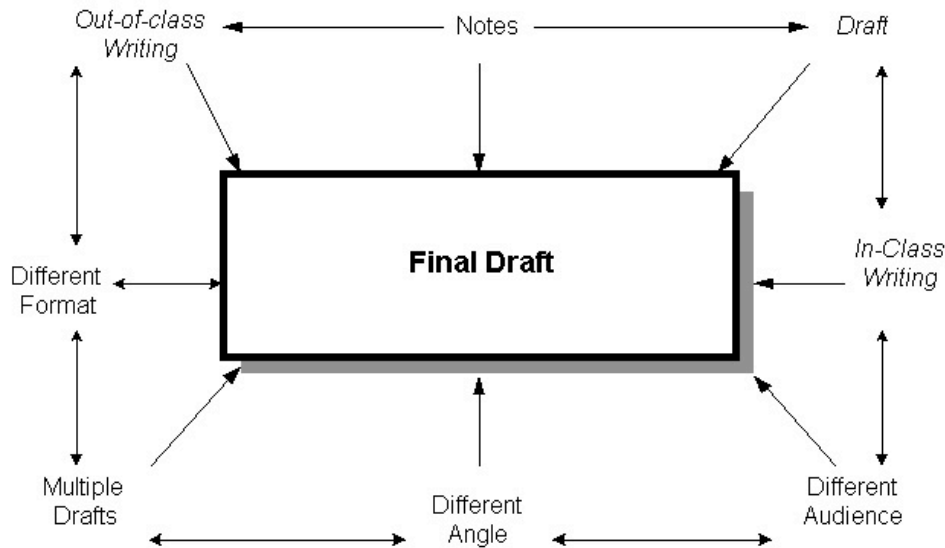
You may respond to your peers' writing in different ways throughout the course, and your teacher may provide one or more forms to use in structuring your response to classmates' papers (and their response to your work). You may even help develop a form or strategy for use in your class.

## *How Many Kinds of Writing Will We Do?*

Although the kinds of writing that you do will vary somewhat from one unit to another, we anticipate that you will try out many approaches to your topic. As the diagram on page 9 shows, you will have done a great deal of writing about your topics before you are ready to produce a final draft. Your final drafts, however, all will be expected to show evidence of analysis. This course teaches skills of analysis because you will use those skills most often throughout your college courses. Your formal papers for this course will most frequently use a form of discourse called argumentation because that form of writing is most frequently required in written assignments in college courses, from essay examinations to formal "term" or "research" papers, to formal analytical papers in history, philosophy, English, and similar courses. Learning skills of analysis and argumentation as a mode of discourse provides a useful framework within which to develop skill as a writer. In this course you are already learning first-hand what it means to be a knowledge-maker.

Your WRT 105 section will begin with a short "jumpstart" unit, introducing you to the level of thinking, reading, writing, and intellectual effort expected in college. The next unit will introduce skills of analysis as you thoughtfully and critically explore and explain some aspect of culture. You will then use what you've learned about analysis to write an argumentative essay—an argument that relies for support on evidence gleaned from research. At the end of WRT 105, you will be required to submit a culminating reflective portfolio of your work for the course.

In addition to writing formal papers, you will engage in a range of informal activities--what we call invention strategies or *heuristics*-- which are designed to give you experience with the variety of ways in which writers use writing to inquire, to learn, and to develop their ideas prior to composing a



formal text and between drafts en route to the final version of their work. Invention is a rhetorical term for finding all the available means of persuasion. In WRT 105, that might mean brainstorming a list of ideas, doing careful observation of a site or interaction, tracing out the many meanings of a keyword or metaphor, surfing the internet for the term “rhetorical invention,” diving into a library database, and/or talking an idea through with a friend over coffee. It also means deploying the resources that you and your peers bring to the classroom by generating and critiquing ideas together. Members of your WRT 105 section will try a number of planning strategies and practice a range of activities designed to help each other discover what to say, even when some may think they have nothing to say on a given topic. You may be asked to keep a journal and to write often in class. So, as you can see, the class affords many opportunities to practice expressing your ideas, to compose.

## *How Should You Write Your Paper?* **Personal Considerations**

Sometimes students are reluctant to share their writing with classmates perhaps because they are worried about allowing other people to see and critique their work. In WRT 105 we assume that the work produced is public writing in which we seek to persuade or argue our positions with regard to questions others are also considering. Such writing assumes and welcomes the scrutiny of others.

In fact, the University, in compliance with Federal guidelines, has adopted the following policy regarding student work:

*In compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, works in all media produced by students as part of their course participation at Syracuse University may be used for educational purposes, provided that the course syllabus makes clear that such use may occur. It is understood that registration for and continued enrollment in a course where such use of student works is announced constitutes permission by the student.*

*After such a course has been completed, any further use of student works will meet one of the following conditions: 1) the work will be rendered anonymous through the removal of all*

*personal identification of the work's creator/originator(s); or 2) the creator/originator(s)' written permission will be secured.*

## **How to Begin**

How you begin your unit papers depends on many factors, as writing is a very complex and disciplined activity. By using various pre-writing strategies in conjunction with all the resources available to you plus your own powers of analysis and expression, you will find that the way to write your paper begins to suggest itself to you.

## **Audience**

You will know what manner of audience you will address in your papers from assignment prompts and from class discussions. Your readers will help you to understand whether you have been successful in reaching that audience, or they may give you information that shows you where you have overlooked the concerns of the audience. As you grow more sensitive to the issues and interests of others, your paper will reflect that awareness by presenting your ideas in a way that is easy for readers to follow through a logical sequence of well-supported claims.

## **Structuring Your Essay**

While there is not a specific structure for the essays you will write, these texts must represent a framework that is appealing to your readers intellectually and emotionally. Like most structures, your analysis/argument needs to be sturdy, held together by a succession of examples, descriptions, analyses, and analogies that make clear how you came to believe the central assertion of your paper. As you move through successive drafts, you will polish your structure, cutting away the superficial marks of construction. That may mean cutting out something that seemed really clever and dramatic because it interferes with the flow of your argument, the real structure of a good essay. Listen to your readers, but in the end you must take the responsibility for your own decisions.

## ***How Will My Work be Assessed and Evaluated?***

### **“Informal” or Fragmentary Writing**

You may have noticed that some of the writing that you do will not be individually graded. For example, in preparation for your final papers, you may work on smaller essays in which you try out various ideas related to the topic that you are considering for the final paper. You may work closely with a shared reading, identifying, interpreting and extending key claims. You may reach into your own experience and write short narratives, or imagine a scenario that relates to the question. You may try describing a person or place or thing that illustrates the possibilities or products of particular problems or

solutions, and you will certainly write a paper in which you analyze the question or problem under consideration as you try to decide what your contribution to understanding it might be. Some of these preparatory efforts will find their way into your formal papers as part of the final drafts, but some may be set aside as not quite on target or of only minor, dubious importance to what you wish to argue or promote. Obviously, your teacher or other members of the class will read and comment on these papers, and they may become part of your portfolio, though each may not be graded as such.

As a group these "informal" papers will be considered in deciding your grade, and despite their not being graded each time, these are very important steps in developing strong papers. So are your preliminary drafts, but they usually will not be graded either because they are steps along the way to your final draft. Your teacher may not always read these intermediate drafts, but you can be sure that someone in the writing studio will read and discuss your work with you, just as you will be expected to read and critique the work of others. All of these exercises are important parts of your growth as a writer.

## **Determining Your Grade**

In this course, you will be graded on the final formal essays you write in each unit, on the informal writing you do, on your reflective portfolio, and on your participation as a member of a working studio. Mathematically, that produces the following point or percentage breakdown:

➤ **15% = Jumpstart Unit**

includes a brief formal paper (4-6 pages min.) worth 10% of the unit grade, & all informal writing and class participation worth the other 5% of the unit grade

➤ **30% = Analysis Unit**

includes a formal paper (6-8 pages min.) worth 25% of the unit grade, & all informal writing and class participation worth the other 5% of the unit grade

➤ **35% = Documented Argument Unit**

includes a formal paper (7-9 pages min.) worth 30% of the unit grade, & all informal writing and class participation worth the other 5% of the unit grade

➤ **20% = Culminating Reflective Portfolio**

## **The Portfolio Review**

As this course progresses, you will keep a portfolio of your work that will serve as a "window" to your development as a writer. Included in your portfolio will be exercises and informal writing that have helped shape your formal texts, drafts of your formal texts, and final copies of your formal papers. Also included in your portfolio will be written reflections on the processes you've used as you've completed writing assignments, and on your growth as a writer. These reflections are important texts that will help you understand and articulate your own learning progress.

At the end of the course, and perhaps also at completion of each unit or the midway point, you and your instructor will review your portfolio. Although all of the writing that you have done will be included in your folder, the portfolio itself will represent only those things specifically called for in the syllabus that your teacher gives you at the beginning of the course. It will include *at least* the formal, "final" drafts of your unit papers and a culminating reflective essay. Your portfolio may also include your informal writing, drafts that chart your progress to the unit papers, and peer responses to your interim drafts.

## ***What Will You Write About?*** **Using Strategies of Critical Analysis**

The first assignment you have in this course will be a “jumpstart” essay that is designed to help you understand and be able to bridge the gap between high school and college writing, reading, and thinking. This assignment will introduce you to (or review, for some of you) practices of analysis and techniques for using data to support your claim and for using the University library to do research informing your paper. It is designed to be diagnostic in nature, helping you and your instructor assess your writing, reading and thinking skill level.

The analysis unit teaches using analytic skills to develop and support a claim about some aspect of the culture around you. In this section of the course, you will learn techniques for reading a text, a problem, or a situation closely and critically, breaking it down into its component parts and examining its place in time and culture in order to understand it. You may be asked to examine a written text or a film, along with the rest of your classmates. You may be asked to study a contested space for your individual analysis project. You may be asked to examine a particular problem and analyze its components and its ramifications. You will be asked to do some research, learning about your issue’s history and exploring its impact in culture. You will, in effect, become an expert regarding your text, problem, or situation.

As you conduct your analysis, you will do many types of informal writing that will culminate in a formal paper in which you make a claim about your subject and support that claim using evidence you’ve discovered through the analytic process.

## **Documented Argument**

This unit of WRT 105 starts from the premise that argument, broadly defined, is important as a *critical stance, practice, set of skills*, and *inquiry* in academic writing, and that argument is based on analysis. You will draw on the analytic skills you learned earlier to help you develop an essay in which you make a specific argument supported by evidence you’ve gleaned from your research. In writing your

argument, you will focus on a question to which there are many possible answers, and no indisputable response. You might look, perhaps, at immigration issues, the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, LGBT issues in the military and/or a specific religious denomination, women in business or in sports, education issues, or other controversies that are currently being debated and discussed in our culture today. As you perform your analysis, you will again practice deferring judgment, identifying parts and how they are connected, looking for patterns, making the implicit explicit, and reformulating questions. However, unlike your analysis essay, your central purpose in the argument essay will be to persuade your academic audience to adopt the position that you recommend from the position of authority you have built with your research. Your argument will be based on and will emerge from your analysis of the controversy.

Your first task will be to identify a controversy and then to spend some time listening in on and analyzing the arguments that are embedded in that controversy. Who is saying what? What positions are the various participants taking? What are the ethical and social consequences of those positions? Who wins? Who loses? What is the history of this issue? What kinds of arguments are being constructed for what kinds of audiences? What seems to influence who takes what position? Who are the insiders? Who are the outsiders? Why are there insiders and outsiders? What is the scale of this controversy (local, regional, national, global)? Which positions seem to have the most power? What visual images (flags, soldiers, heroes, children, “family values,” etc.) do the various partisans deploy? You are going to, more or less, map out the opinions and implications surrounding your issue. In your final essay, you will construct an argument that positions you within the controversy. You will not simply argue for who is right and who is wrong—rather, you will argue for a particular way to understand the issue and, if appropriate, you will include a call for a certain kind of action from your audience as a way to resolve the controversy.

### *Library and Internet Research*

**Library Sources.** The sources you may be accustomed to using (encyclopedias and popular periodicals such as *Newsweek* and *Time*, for example) are not considered appropriate sources for college research writing, as they contain simple and distilled information. Instead, you'll need to look at scholarly journals, original sources, and scholarly books on the topic you've chosen, which provide a sufficient depth of information for academic inquiry.

**Internet Sources.** The Internet currently provides valuable sources of information. It can be a dangerous source of information, however, because there is often no oversight over who can contribute to the Internet or over what that contribution consists of. Therefore, we must all take care to evaluate Internet sources of information carefully. Internet sources must also be cited, just as other sources of information must be cited. The Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Psychological Association (APA), and others have established formats for citing Internet sources.

## *Primary Research*

Techniques of primary research may be new to you. As the author of an argumentative essay, you will be responsible for developing support for that argument—support that sometimes can't be found in books or periodicals, but that you see, hear, or experience and subsequently write about. This knowledge can be acquired from many different sources. You might interview an expert about the topic of your essay. You might develop and administer a survey that asks people to respond to questions that relate to your topic. You might find original source material such as contemporary news clippings or other primary data.

## *How to Gather Supportive Data*

**Note Taking.** The notes you make become an integral part of the research exercise. Note cards, voice recorders, notepads, or computer files are all easily managed and rearrangeable ways to go from observations or reading to writing. Your notes should record any relevant information plus the source of the information (author, title, name of informant, date of the interview, etc.)

**Focusing the Paper.** When all the notes have been recorded, you will study them and make some sense of them. What finding do your notes support? Remember, the only evidence admissible is in your notes.

You may find that the evidence you have gathered does not support your "gut" feelings or initial prejudices. As a result, you may well feel obliged to account for the difference, perhaps undertaking another project to learn if your explanation of the difference between your intuitive "knowledge" and the findings based on evidence is reasonable. On the other hand, the evidence itself may be so powerful that you recognize the weakness of your initial bias. In either case you will see that in persuasion unbiased evidence is essential.

**The Final Product.** In college, research is somewhat different than it typically is in high school in that the college research paper is an argumentative paper rather than the report that usually suffices for research in high school. That means that you will have to write your paper from a particular perspective and argue from that perspective. You will have an opportunity to discuss your project and your findings with others either in small groups or with the class as a whole.

The final draft of your paper should be a polished text in the sense that, at the time of submission, you have fully developed the ideas that control the paper. The manuscript should be clean (i.e. it should be free from grammatical errors), and it should conform to an accepted citation and documentation format. The manuscript should be one to which you are proud to attach your name, both for its content

and its appearance. It should be a publishable text, one that is interesting and that presents its ideas clearly enough to be understood by a reader outside the class. Your text should integrate what you've learned through your research, while carefully acknowledging your sources.

## *A Word about Plagiarism and Documentation*

The concept of intertextuality places our concern for academic honesty in an interesting context by suggesting that no text can be “new,” that all text is derived in a sense from traces of other precedent texts. Nonetheless, in 21<sup>st</sup> century capitalist cultures, ideas are regarded as material—property that can be owned and hence copyrighted. **The academy, including Syracuse University, maintains a high standard of expectation for academic integrity. In this context, intellectual honesty requires the writer to acknowledge indebtedness for ideas and words. We acknowledge our indebtedness through quotation, direct reference, or documentation. Not to do so represents a violation of the honor code that “intellectual honesty” requires, and carries severe penalties ranging from failure on the paper to University disciplinary action.** As a writer in this course (and in ETS 142) you must be scrupulous in giving credit to the ideas that make up your writing, acknowledging indebtedness to those who have gone before you all along the way. Your instructor will help you learn to use formats for proper documentation for writing in this course.



# ETS 142

*Narratives of Culture: Introduction to  
Issues of Critical Reading*

# Goals for ETS 142

1. Students will gain an expanded understanding of textuality; that is, through this course, students will examine the world as text. Thus “text” may include film, television programs, public spaces, buildings, clothing, the Internet, music, etc., in addition to novels, poetry, plays, and essays.
2. Students will learn to apply the language and methods of the discursive practice of textual criticism.
3. Students will develop a working knowledge of strategies and genres of cultural analysis and argument.
4. Students will gain a sense of how context shapes the production and reception of texts; that is, they will recognize that “truth” is a social construction, and that culture shapes meaning, dictates textual forms, and determines the conventions of reading and interpretation.

# ETS 142

## Narratives of Culture: Introduction to Issues of Critical Reading

*ETS 142 is a course offered by Syracuse University's English Department in the College of Arts and Sciences. It fulfills a humanities and a writing-intensive course requirement for students at Syracuse University.*

### *The Relevance of Textual Studies*

In a course in textual studies, unlike the traditional English course, one is asked to take up texts, whether belletristic or visual texts of culture, and examine the conditions under which they may be said to “have” meaning. Although you may not realize it (and in fact when culture is successfully doing its work we don't realize it) meaning is always being produced in culture systematically and in a variety of ways at several levels simultaneously. Meaning thus is not “natural” or “inevitable” and the most important work we can do in this course is to come to understand this important point. We can never finally figure out THE MEANING of any text of culture and because how we read any text of culture makes a difference, there is truly much at stake. Indeed, as you will come to recognize, texts do not contain meaning at all; rather, they are the sites where meanings are produced. “Text,” after all, has linguistic ties to “textile.” These ties make sense when we consider that just as textiles are threads interwoven to make a cloth pattern, so are texts made up of interwoven ideas and nuances. To summarize, Textual Studies considers how various texts, written or printed, visual, and oral are read and interpreted.

In most sections of ETS 142, the texts addressed are either printed or audiovisual. The print texts you will read will either be canonical (i.e., part of what we have been taught is the great literature of our culture) or they will have only recently been published as pointedly noncanonical. This latter group includes works, for example, by minority writers and women, or by people who have been excluded from serious consideration in the past, but whose work is now regarded as important, or works that are part of popular culture, and thus may contrast with what is regarded as “high culture.” How you, as a reader, make your decisions about how the texts you study are to be regarded is part of the work of examining the basis for reading and interpretation. You will also learn to read film and other texts that make up the culture in which we live.

## *About ETS 142*

In this course you will be taking up some of the major ideas about meaning and interpretive practice that have emerged during the twentieth century. The differing ideas among critical texts stem from lively debates about the nature of language, representation, subjectivity, and culture. These debates cross time and disciplinary boundaries, and you are encouraged to enter these debates as well. When you do, you will find that you are entering a complicated but important dialogue.

The texts you will read in this class may range from academic articles to billboards and TV ads. You may read full-length novels, poetry, short stories, or plays. You may even read t-shirts or bumper stickers. Film and television programs also may be a part of this course. Some of what you read may be readily recognizable as literature; some may not.

ETS 142 is organized by various major themes of contemporary criticism. Your class, for example, might examine the effect that the subject position of a character in a story, the author, or even you as the reader has on the meaning you make of the text. Your class might look at the historical situatedness of the text and determine how the text's, the author's, and the reader's place in history influences the meaning that is made. You might be asked to read the architecture of your school building to try to find out what the architecture says about the power dynamics present in the school. Your class might view a film and explore how various filmmaking techniques influence the class's reading of the film. By the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to appreciate what is at stake when we read and to understand how interpretive practice is shaped.

## *Writing in ETS 142*

ETS 142 is a writing-intensive course, and in it we use writing in a variety of ways, but mainly as a tool for thinking. You will probably be writing 8,000 to 10,000 words in this course, even though only about 6,000 are in the form of formal papers. You may be asked to write in forms you have not tried before, and you may well be asked to work on a collaborative teaching-learning project, in which note-taking, paraphrase, and summary will be important tools, even as accurate citation is important for the final paper you write. Whether in reading logs or thinking papers, you will be asked to take intellectual risks as you think ideas through in writing. In this informal writing, our concern is less about the formal correctness of your writing, and more about the thinking process your writing reveals. This informal writing will help you to understand the arguments of some fairly difficult reading and will give you confidence as you engage the arguments or begin to apply them to your own reading and interpretations.

## Reading Challenging Texts

This course will teach you techniques for reading difficult and challenging texts. Annotating texts and keeping track of your reading through reading logs or journals are techniques that work for many students. If your class requires that you keep a reading log, it may take the form of a dialogic journal. The journal is set up with two columns; the one on the left records summaries, quotes, or paraphrases of the text that pertain to your analysis. The right hand column is the place for your analysis or interpretation of the material in the opposite column. The right hand column can also be the space where you note unanswered questions or make comments about the material.

### Sample Dialogic Journal

#### “Arts of the Contact Zone,” by Mary Louise Pratt (from *Ways of Reading*, Sixth Edition)

<p>Pg. 605-613: Example of Pratt’s son’s baseball cards and the long example from Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala’s letter to King Philip III of Spain.</p>	<p>At first these two examples seemed irrelevant to each other, and I had to read this section a few times to make sense of what Pratt was trying to do here. But I think I see it. Just as Sam and Willie use adult logic and strategies to make sense of baseball cards (phonics, math, sorting, geography, history, etc.), de Ayala uses the strategies and logic of Spain—the more powerful entity in the Incan culture at the time—to explain and promote his own indigenous culture. Thus by using the language, religion, logic, and historical sense of the dominant culture, the marginalized culture strives to gain importance and recognition.</p>
<p>Pg. 607: “Contact Zone”— “Social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power...”</p>	<p>Contact zones define cultures much better for me than “communities” or “families” because rather than extolling the utopian qualities of the latter (harmony, cooperation, love), contact zones allow for the power dynamics that inevitably pervade any relationships. While loving and supporting one’s fellow community members is a laudable goal, the reality is that the various constituencies of any group are always vying for power of some sort. Recognizing that dynamic better helps me understand how human beings relate to one another.</p>
<p>Pg. 608: “Autoethnography”— “a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them”</p>	<p>I find this term interesting and want to unpack it. “Auto”—meaning self, as in autobiography—but instead of “biography,” Pratt calls it “ethnography”—writing about culture. So autoethnography then implies a self-explanation, sort of like an autobiography—but at a distance—an explanation of the self, but as an ethnographer would do that explanation—looking in from another place—in this case, the point of view of the dominant power structure in the culture. But I wonder if autoethnography implies the depth of analysis ethnography implies. Do people calculate their autoethnographic actions or do they simply use the practices and mores of the dominant culture instinctively? I suspect sometimes they do and sometimes they don’t.</p>

## Response Papers

In this course you will write at least six response papers. These are usually one-page informal papers that will comprise part of your unit grades. They are the papers where you try out the ideas you are learning as a rite of passage into the discourse community of contemporary readers and thinkers. You

try out the ideas you've been reading about, using necessary terminology to identify the ideas or concepts. As you use these ideas in your response papers, you will find that they provide the tools you need to create your own meanings of texts.

Just as your invention drafts and fragmentary papers did in WRT 105, your response papers and other informal writing will help you to prepare for the longer formal papers that this course requires. A question that you believe is crucial to understanding a specific text may go from a brief wrestling with the problem in your response paper to a full-fledged discussion in which you lay out more completely the basis for the problem in a formal paper. Similarly, your journal may lead you to an important insight, and to a paper that opens up a text to your classmates as well.

## **Topics for Formal Papers: What to Look for if It Isn't Theme**

Other English courses may have welcomed discussions of characterization, plot development, setting, and imagery as they relate to theme. Our work in ETS 142 would suggest that the more interesting question is why you should have selected those categories and what led you to interpret them as you do. When you were little you probably read "Hansel and Gretel." Do you remember what your interpretation of that fairy tale was? Do you have the same interpretation now? Why or why not? Has the text changed? How can a close examination of the text help you to explain your different readings—or why you still see the story in the same way? Were Shakespeare's plays interpreted in the same way 100 years ago or 300 years ago as they are now? Can you find out? What will your discovery of different or similar readings tell you? What is signified? How does the situatedness of the reader alter meaning?

Have you ever read *Huckleberry Finn*? What meaning might you make of the text if you considered it from the Jim's subject position in the novel? How about from the point of view of the power relationships in the novel? The book has been banned at different times as racist, for contributing to juvenile delinquency, and for other reasons. These differences reflect different interested readers and different historical periods. You might be interested in examining the text to discover how one of these readings came about.

As you learn about some of the concepts of critical theory, you will see other interesting questions that you want to pursue in your papers. Be sure to discuss your choice of topic with your teacher and your classmates. You will be assigned at least two formal papers for this course, in addition to a multimedia project or reflective portfolio at the end of the course. Whether you're writing a paper or working with your classmates on a semester-end project, please remember that you need to use these assignments to find out something you didn't know before. Approach them with an open mind and experience the joy of intellectual discovery!

## *Determining Your Grade*

Grades for ETS 142 are determined similarly to those in WRT 105, in that different activities are weighted according to their location on a continuum between work-in-progress and final products. The distribution is shown below:

- **Disorientation Unit**, a jumpstart unit that includes minimally 2 response papers and other informal writing, such as journals, fieldwork, research, in-class work, collaborative projects, etc.
- **Subjectivity Unit** includes a formal essay (~6-8 pages), minimally 2 response papers and other informal writing
- **Ideology Unit** includes a formal essay (~6-8 pages), minimally 2 response papers and other informal writing
- **Agency Unit** consists of *either* a final multimedia project *or* a culminating reflective portfolio

**Subjectivity Unit essay = 20%**

**Ideology Unit essay = 20%**

**Agency Unit project/portfolio = 20%**

**6 Response papers = 30%**

**All other informal writing & class participation = 10%**

All final papers here, as in WRT 105, are expected to conform to either MLA or APA standards for manuscripts. The response papers are short informal papers; although six are counted toward your grade, these may be selected from ten or more written during the semester.

## *Guidelines for the Multimedia Project and Portfolio*

At the end of ETS 142, you will be asked to produce either a final multimedia project or a culminating reflective portfolio. Both will allow you to revisit and apply the key ideas/practices from the course in a format other than a formal essay. For the multimedia project, for example, you may be invited to create an iMovie or powerpoint presentation in which you explore a particular concept in more depth. *For both assignments, you will be required to incorporate a written reflective component.* You may also be asked to work collaboratively on a multimedia project and/or offer a formal presentation of your work.

## *Reminders*

This manual describes in a general way the activities related to the courses and how your grades are determined. The information in the manual should enable you to understand your role as a writer and reader in these freshman courses. Specific topics, readings, and due dates for assignments are provided by the teacher from plans for WRT 105 and ETS 142 that identify *all* sections of these courses that are offered through the extended campus and some of the sections on the Syracuse campus. This information will be provided to you in handouts called the course **syllabi**. The syllabus is a very important document, so don't lose it! Syracuse University requires a syllabus to be provided every student in every course, and you will find your WRT 105 and ETS 142 syllabi useful tools as you attempt to transfer your Syracuse credits to other colleges and universities. Often colleges and officials ask to see a syllabus for courses you've taken elsewhere, to provide them with information crucial to their decision whether to accept or how to apply the transferred credit. You may be interested to know that at Syracuse University, WRT 105 is required of all freshmen. ETS 142 satisfies a core requirement for SU Arts and Science students and is a popular elective for others.

### **Some reminders that may help you for a successful year:**

1. The courses you study during this year are regular college courses. They can be expected to require more work and more difficult work on your part than do your high school courses. Expect to spend at least two hours of independent study for every hour of class.
2. The comments of instructors and peers provide you with a reader's perspective that will be helpful as you revise your text.
3. You may be directed to study materials that are not specifically identified as part of the course. Working with these materials will help you to overcome specific problems that your writing has shown.
4. If you were recommended for this early college study, and you commit yourself to the necessary effort, you should succeed in these courses. But remember that they require self-discipline in being prepared for class and submitting papers when they are due.
5. College instructors are required to prepare and distribute a course syllabus during the first week of class. This syllabus must be approved by the academic department, because it represents a kind of informal contract that obligates students and instructors to pursue the described course of study, although it may require minor amendment during the semester. Keep it with your student manual.



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## *Course Grading, Credit at S.U., and Credit Transfer*

At most colleges, each course carries a certain number of credit hours. Syracuse University's WRT 105, which is taught in the fall semester (in the high schools generally from September to January), carries 3 credit hours. ETS 142, which occupies the entire second semester (generally from February to June), also carries 3 credit hours. Writing standards applied in WRT 105 should be maintained in essays written during the second semester course. The credit structure is shown below:

<b>WRT 105</b>	Practices of Academic Writing	3 credits	A - F
<b>ETS 142</b>	Narratives of Culture	<u>3 credits</u>	<u>A - F</u>
	<b>Total</b>	6 credits	

Grades below C do not usually transfer; however, a D is passing within the university. You will, of course, not be likely to receive credit for the D if you attempt to transfer it. If you come to Syracuse, you may be able to repeat ETS 142 or WRT 105 if you believe you are ready to earn a grade higher than D.

For transferring your credit to another institution, you should find out exactly where the transcript must go and make use of the transcript request form which you can download from our website ([supa.syr.edu](http://supa.syr.edu)). If, for some reason, you do not have access to a transcript request form, you can follow the directions (#5) below to request your transcript.

## *Transferring Syracuse University Credits*

### **Procedures**

1. Do not send a Transcript Request Form to Syracuse University before the course is complete. Wait until you have received a Syracuse University grade before submitting a request for a transcript.
2. Find out from your college catalog, application, or admissions office specifically where and to whom the transcript must be sent.
3. When you have received your grade, you can either fax the Transcript Request Form to the Transcript Office at 315-443-7994 or send it to:

**Syracuse University Transcript Office  
109 Steele Hall  
Syracuse NY 13244-1120**

4. After a few weeks, check with your college to confirm receipt of your transcript. If you have questions regarding your transcript, contact the Transcript Office at 315-443-2422.
5. If you do not have a Transcript Request Form, you can go to the Syracuse University Project Advance website ([supa.syr.edu](http://supa.syr.edu)) and download our request letter template, or you may obtain a transcript by including the following information in a letter to the Transcript Office:

- Name under which you registered (maiden name, etc.)
- Social Security Number or Student ID Number
- Your address and phone number
- Semesters you took the Syracuse University course(s)
- Number of copies you are requesting
- Name and address of the person or office to whom the transcript should be sent
- Your signature and date

Only you may request copies of your transcript. In order to safeguard an individual's right to privacy, no transcript will be sent when the request is made by telephone, E-mail, or by any individual other than the student. The Transcript Office must have your official signature before a request to send transcripts can be honored.

**Note:** There is no charge for transcripts. Transcripts sent directly to employees, agencies, universities and other institutions are official. Personal student copies are unofficial. Your college will not consider your personal copy for transfer credit.

### **Recognition of Syracuse University Credits:**

Although Syracuse University credits have been widely transferable to many institutions, all colleges and universities do not handle these credits in the same way. A majority of schools have granted both credit toward degree requirements and exemption from similar required courses; others have been awarded credit or exemption but not both. College officials usually will not commit themselves to a decision before they have received an official Syracuse University transcript. Evaluation of any type of transfer credit is usually made on an individual basis in conjunction with the student's high school record and their collegiate program of study.

- I. Make available for review this student manual or syllabus and course descriptions from the University. A brief description of each course also appears in the official Syracuse University catalog.

- II. Make it clear that the course(s) you took are Syracuse University courses that you registered for as a part-time student.
- III. If, after you have followed these steps, any further information is requested by college officials, feel free to request assistance by writing to:

Director  
Syracuse University Project Advance  
400 Ostrom Avenue  
Syracuse NY 13244-3250

or emailing:  
[help@supa.syr.edu](mailto:help@supa.syr.edu)

Include the name, title, and address of the official who should be contacted and nature of his or her questions. Here are a few more tidbits of information and suggestions:

1. Keep the receipt that is sent to you from the Transcript Office. If there are any problems with your transcript, you will need to have a record of when your transcript was sent.
2. If you attend SU, grades reported for courses taken through Project Advance automatically become a permanent part of your record at SU. If you do not want your Project Advance grades to become a permanent part of your academic record, you have the option of dropping or withdrawing from the course prior to the submission of grades in keeping with procedures described below.
3. If you wish to drop a course, you must so inform your teachers in accordance with policies of Syracuse University. Refer to Registrar's calendar for deadline dates.

# Appendix A

## *Rubric for Grades – WRT 105*

The papers that you will write in WRT 105 and in the ETS 142 units will be evaluated by your instructors and assigned letter grades according to the guidelines listed below.

The superior paper (A) is written far above the minimum standards; it goes beyond merely avoiding error. It has a positive value and displays originality, imagination, vitality, and a feeling for words. Ideally, it should present fully and accurately a new idea or a new treatment of an old idea, though in practice a paper that does not quite attain this standard sometimes receives an A. The organization of the A paper should be not only logical but also natural. The superior paper should be forceful and appropriate in style, almost completely free of formal and mechanical errors.

The good paper (B) falls a little below the A standards. It too has a positive value that goes beyond avoidance of error, but it lacks one or more qualities that would bring it closer to an A-quality paper. It may develop an idea fully and accurately but lack elements of originality; it may have all the qualities of an A paper except naturalness of organization, or it may be marred by improper form, inappropriate style, or occasional obscurity.

The adequate paper (C) may not be developed fully; its logic may be unconvincing; its organization, paragraphs, or sentences weak; or it may be marred by obscurity or an unhappy choice of words. Frequently, a theme might rate an A or B in content and is given a C because it lacks coherence overall. Just as often a theme may be relatively correct in form, but its content may be uninspired and dull, thus warranting a grade no higher than a C.

The unsatisfactory paper (D) is largely faulty but does not warrant complete failure. It may contain little or nothing worth saying, or it may be full of gross formal or mechanical errors. It may fail substantially to meet one or more of the minimum standards listed above.

The totally unacceptable paper (F) fails even to approach minimum standards or fails totally to meet the requirements of the assignment.

## *Rubric for Grades – WRT 105*

	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Weak</b>
<b>Thesis/Claim</b>	Offers clear, insightful, original, and consistent thesis/claim throughout. Develops significance of claim.	Offers clear, interesting, and consistent thesis/claim throughout the paper.	Makes only the most obvious thesis/claim. May lack consistency and/or clarity.	Unfocused perhaps with no clear or consistent thesis/claim.
<b>Support</b>	Uses insightful support that makes compelling, coherent argument furthering the claim.	Uses appropriate support that makes a logical argument furthering the claim.	Some support is evident, but does not provide a compelling argument furthering the claim.	Lack of or inappropriate support that does not further the claim.
<b>Documentation</b>	Uses appropriate and credible resources to craft an argument and to create a dialogue between/ among sources and the writer's views.	Attempts to use appropriate resources to support argument, though resources may offer summative comments rather than create dialogue.	Resources may not be appropriate or used effectively to support argument.	Uses no resources or uses resources incorrectly or ineffectively.
<b>Organization</b>	Claim, support, and conclusion are artistically crafted to create a smooth, flowing, logical, interesting and compelling essay.	Organization is logical and appropriate to create an interesting and compelling essay.	Organization is illogical and/or inappropriate in some respects, but still works to create a logical essay.	Organization is generally illogical and/or inappropriate throughout the essay.
<b>Style/Voice</b>	Graceful, fluid, logical and mature writing that evinces the writer's original voice and engages the reader.	Mature and logical writing that evinces the writer's original voice and engages the reader.	Unoriginal or inconsistent writing that may lack the writer's own voice and/or make awkward or forced connections.	Exhibits major stylistic and/or voice problems.
<b>Technical Control</b>	Polished and free of errors in grammar, mechanics, or diction. Documentation is accurate and correctly formatted within the text as well as in works cited.	Polished and primarily free of errors in grammar, mechanics and/or diction. Documentation is somewhat accurate and correctly formatted within the text as well as in works cited.	Evidences adequate technical control, although persistent careless errors may be apparent. Documentation may be inaccurate or incorrectly formatted within the text or in works cited.	Persistent, pervasive, lapses in grammar, mechanics and/or diction. Documentation may be unclear, inadequate, or non-existent, or incorrectly formatted.

# Appendix B

## *Rubric for Grades—ETS 142*

	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Weak</b>
<b>Critical Concepts</b>	Uses critical concepts and text to create new meaning and insight in the reading of a text.	Uses critical concepts and text to create a strong and consistent reading of a text.	Indicates basic understanding of critical concepts. Makes obvious connections between critical concepts and text.	Omits critical concepts and ideas or simply overlays terms on texts. Exhibits little or no insight.
<b>Thesis</b>	Thread of clear and consistent purpose/controlling idea throughout. Develops significance of claim.	Offers clear and consistent purpose or controlling idea throughout.	Makes only the most obvious claims. May lack consistency and/or clarity.	Unfocused with no clear or consistent purpose/controlling idea.
<b>Support</b>	Uses insightful textual support that indicates close reading of texts and makes compelling, coherent argument to support claims.	Uses appropriate textual support that indicates close reading of texts and makes logical argument to support claims.	Textual support adequate but perhaps not sufficiently compelling support for paper's purpose.	Lack of or inappropriate textual support—perhaps relies on plot summary in lieu of support.
<b>Style/Voice</b>	Graceful, fluid, organized, and mature writing that evinces the writer's original voice and engages the reader.	Original, mature, and sophisticated writing.	Unoriginal or inconsistent voice. May make awkward or forced connections.	Exhibits major stylistic or voice problems. Level of diction may be inappropriate.
<b>Technical Control</b>	Polished and free of mechanical error.	Polished and primarily free of mechanical error.	Evidences adequate technical control, although some careless errors may be in evidence.	Lacks technical control. Persistent, pervasive lapses in technical control.