

At the moment the writing is the only thing that gives me access to some real silence and solitude. Also I find that it helps me to pray because, when I pause at my work, I find that the mirror inside me is surprisingly clean and deep and serene and God shines there and is immediately found, without hunting, as if He had come close to me while I was writing and I had not observed His coming. And this I think should be the cause of great joy, and to me it is.

■ Thomas Merton, *Echoing Silence*, p.14

The qualities of a first-rate writer cannot be defined, but only experienced. It is just the thing in him which escapes analysis that makes him first-rate. One can catalog all the qualities that he shares with other writers, but the thing that is his very own, his timber, this cannot be defined or explained any more than the quality of a beautiful speaking voice can be.

■ Willa Cather

The object of writing is to grow a personality which in the end enables one to transcend it.

■ Lawrence Durrell

ON WRITING (WHY WRITE? WHY SHARE?)

ALTERNATIVE TITLE: **ON WRITING**

WRI 101-P (Fall 2021)
MW 7:30-8:45 pm (CHAMB 1045)

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? (i.e., Course Description)

This course explores the various facets of writing: its origins, the nature of this medium of communication and its teleology and function (and even its theology). So why do we write and why *should* we? When did we begin writing and why? What *is* writing and how does it compare to other medium(s) of communication such as orality? What has writing replaced/displaced, and to what benefit or loss? Is writing indispensable? Is it a tool, and if so, a tool to what end? Why do we share what we write and *should* we? We will explore these questions by reading selections from prominent thinkers and authors, think through the questions together, and most importantly, learn *how* to write as we explore writing itself.

There are three units of study and associated writing assignments: 1) The medium of writing (what it is, its origins and its contrast to orality); 2) Why (or why not) write?, where after having listened to well-known authors you will articulate your own answer, and finally 3) Why share?

Our explorations of writing may also probe how writing has evolved across the centuries (from handwriting to the printing press and to the digital word) and the place of writing in our lives today. We may also probe whether there are ethics (even aesthetics) of writing and sharing.

THE ROADMAP

SEE MOODLE FOR CALENDAR OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

Disabilities: A student who requires accommodation for a documented disability of any type should see the instructor immediately to discuss modifications to course requirements. "Davidson College values the diversity of its community and is an equal access institution that admits otherwise qualified applicants without regard to disability. The college seeks to accommodate requests for accommodations related to disability that are determined to be reasonable and do not compromise the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact Beth Bleil, Director of Academic Access and Disability Resources, in the Center for Teaching and Learning by visiting her office in the E.H. Little Library, by emailing her at bebleil@davidson.edu, or by calling 704-894-2129. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive."

Honor (and Conscience): The College expects students to fully abide by the Honor Code. The instructor wonders also about the burdens of conscience and to what extent these two intersect.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

WRITING PROGRAM'S GOALS FOR WRITING 101:

Though nearly every section of Writing 101 takes up a different public issue, and each section (taught by nearly forty Davidson professors) emphasizes slightly different aspects of academic and intellectual writing, all of the sections of the course are anchored in four constituent learning goals. These are the key activities that you will learn to do well:

1. Read texts closely and critically for analytic and rhetorical purposes
2. Make fair and effective use of the work of others
3. Draft and revise arguments
4. Draw upon multimodal and archival resources (visual, auditory, textual, digital) to serve specific rhetorical goals

Each of these is explained in greater detail on the Writing Program's homepage.

INTELLECTUAL PRACTICES (i.e., Course Requirements/Assignments)

It is important to appreciate the interrelatedness of the various “Intellectual Practices” and how they are “building blocks” in service of *thinking* about the theme and subthemes of this course, i.e., writing itself.

Impromptu Writing (5 instances, 2% each)	10%
Homework I & II (7% each)	14%
Three Essays (20% each– includes drafts and the final revision)	60%
Participation (includes peer-reviews, class discussion, meeting with instructor)	16%

Online resource for writers

Davidson Writer: A Resource on Academic Writing for Davidson Students provides strategies for engaging with others' discourses, locating disagreements, formulating claims and reasons, revising prose, and citing sources. You may want to familiarize yourself with its many resources and turn to it when particular questions arise. I suggest that you bookmark its location.

Davidson Writer is available at davidsonwriter.davidson.edu.

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Email: rizamir@davidson.edu

- By appointment through email [In the email do mention your availability in the next couple of days]
 - If it is a brief conversation you can also speak to me right after the class. Always a good place to start a conversation and say hello.
 - On the weekends I keep electronic time to the bare necessary minimum.
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