

Bridgewater State University
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
English 280 The Journalistic Essay
Fall 2021

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Credits: 3
Prerequisites: English 102

By the last day of drop add on Wed 9/8 you must send me an email from your BSU account stating that you have read and understand the syllabus. **You may not send this email until AFTER we have discussed the syllabus in class on 9/3.** From that day forward you should check your e-mail at least once a day as I may send you important messages during the semester. E-mail is an easy way to contact me between classes--feel free to e-mail me about any concerns you have. This email will demonstrate your ability to meet deadlines in a timely manner -- a vital skill for college as well as your ability to access your email. **Every day the assignment is late, counts a 1/3 of a letter grade off your reading journal grade.**

Text Required:

No Textbooks required

Materials:

Notebook, folder, pen, bring laptop/tablet to class when asked, Zoom (if needed).

A Note About Current Conditions:

As we all return to campus together, many of you for the very first time as college students, I know your excitement is probably mixed with some anxiety and questions. The reality is there are no easy answers for any of us and each day truly has to be taken one step at a time. While I have planned our course for the semester with the assumption we will be in person, we have to be prepared at any time for things to change. With that in mind please know that I expect you all to have access to stable internet, a webcam, and Zoom. I have plans in place to transition our class over to a fully synchronous online format via Blackboard and Zoom if needed. However, that is a worse case scenario.

I hope to spend the entire semester with you in class face to face. For that to work in my classroom we will be following all guidelines set forth by the university. At this time, that means all students are required to be vaccinated, we are all mandated to wear masks indoors, and we will social distance in classrooms by 3ft. Please follow these guidelines so that we can enjoy this experience all semester of being Together Again. Finally, much of the work I do day to day in my classroom involves small groups or partners. Writing is a recursive process that needs a feedback loop and discussion. I believe we can still make this work safely. We will maintain a 3ft distance and wear masks as we partake in these activities. I also will utilize outdoor space when possible. Please do not hesitate to email me or speak to me privately with any concerns regarding health and safety or any other matter.

Course Description:

Students will write nonfiction prose with emphasis on developing characters, settings, scenes, and point of view. Projects may include travel essays, reviews, biography and other human interest pieces. The course also introduces students to the foundations of the writers' workshop.

Objectives:

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- Develop a working definition of "journalistic essay" and be able to distinguish between literary journalism and other forms of creative nonfiction and journalism.
- Contact potential interviews, conduct interviews in a timely manner, and take interview notes.
- Conduct site observations and take observation notes.
- Conduct background research using library, archival, and electronic resources and take research notes.
- Practice ethical journalism practices, including ethical research practices and citation, ethical communication with interviewees, and ethical representation of the people, places, and issues you write about.
- Take essays through multiple drafts, using a variety of work-shopping and revision techniques, and taking into consideration my feedback, as well as feedback from your peers.
- Develop journalistic essays that bring together journalistic research and literary writing techniques.

Course Policies

Successful Completion:

In order to successfully pass this course you must attend class, participate in class discussions, complete in class writings, outside readings, homework, and complete all formal writing assignments. Successful completion of the four formal assignments includes turning in all required drafts and attending workshops and conferences.

Attendance: What happens in class each day only works if everyone is here to participate as much as possible; therefore, I suggest you attend class. You will receive extra credit for attendance based on the chart below. **You may fail the course after 4 absences.**

0 absences = 5 points on final grade

1 absence = 4 points on final grade

2 absence = 3 points on final grade

3 absence = 2 points on final grade

4 absence = 1 points on final grade

*Points are added on to your final letter grade

Tardiness: I value the time we have together in class to accomplish our goals for the semester. I do not appreciate students that interrupt class by habitually coming in late. It is distracting to me and to your peers. Please come to class on time.

Participation: This course depends heavily on your readiness and willingness to contribute to class discussions and activities daily. I expect each of you to work with me and each other to make this a real community of learners. **Therefore, you must come to class each day fully prepared having done all assigned readings and work ready to participate in class.** Additionally, class activities are designed to build off of outside work; therefore, I will know if you are unprepared and your grade will reflect it.

In addition keep in mind:

- 1 **Being absent is not an excuse for turning in late work.** All assignments are expected to be turned in at the beginning of the class period they are due. If you are not going to be in class e-mail your work to me by the beginning of class time. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**
- 2 In class work cannot be made up so it would be wise to come to class prepared each day.

Format for Assignments:

All formal writing (except multimodal compositions) should be:

- 1 Computer generated/typed
- 2 Double-spaced in 12 point font
- 3 1 inch margins on all sides
- 4 Name, instructor, course, and date should be listed on the top left, double-spaced.
- 5 Do not double space between paragraphs
- 6 Do not include cover sheets unless specified
- 7 Documented using MLA Style

Classroom Behaviors:

- 1 Class time is not a time for private discussions amongst each other. Such behavior is rude and disruptive to the class. Please save such conversations for after class.
- 2 We live in a world of electronic devices. While I will not prohibit you from having your phones and computers out during class, I encourage you to stay off of sites that do not pertain to our class material that day. Remember the education you are getting is costing you money- make sure you earn every cent of it by paying attention in class.

Respect: Respect for others in our classroom is non-negotiable. We will be discussing many ideas and concepts that may challenge your current thinking. This is the fun of college! Have respect for one another and be open to new ideas. You do not have to agree with anyone but you must listen respectfully.

BSU Sexual Violence Policy: The BSU Sexual Violence Policy can be read in its entirety here <https://my.bridgew.edu/departments/affirmativeaction/Sexual%20Misconduct%20and%20Relationship%20Violence/Sexual%20Violence%20Policy%20for%20BSU%202015%203%204.pdf>. As a campus we are all responsible for upholding this policy and ensuring the safety and comfort of our community.

Plagiarism:

Presentation of someone else's work as your own is dishonest and unacceptable. **If I find out that you have plagiarized you will receive a zero for the assignment and, possibly, fail the course.** Be assured that I will find out if you have plagiarized, therefore it would be wise for you to do your own work and cite any and all material you take from other sources. Plain and simple-if it isn't your own words or idea than tell me where you found it. If you are ever unsure of whether or not you are committing academic dishonesty please come speak to me, and I will be happy to assist. I take academic honesty and integrity very seriously and will follow all steps outlined by Bridgewater State University if I find a student plagiarizing. This could result in a meeting with the Dean and possible expulsion from the University.

Departmental Writing Committee's Academic Honesty Policy (Approved Spring 2010)

Academic Honesty: Academic Honesty refers both to plagiarism and misrepresenting your work in other ways. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words or ideas without acknowledging the original source. Acts of academic dishonesty include the following:

- Turning in another student's essay as your own
- Turning the same essay (that you wrote) in for credit in two different classes. (Note: It is fine to write about the same idea in two courses, to branch off of a project to create a new one, or to push

an idea that you've started developing in one paper significantly further in another, but it is academically dishonest to turn in the same writing project in two courses.)

- Including information or ideas from a print or online source in your essay without including a citation to indicate the origin of the words
- Including phrases or sentences from a print or online source in your essay without using quotation marks to mark the words as coming from an outside source (even if you include a citation)

If you have a question about whether you need to cite a source, ask your instructor or writing studio consultant or simply take the safe route and cite the source.

The consequences of plagiarism are serious.

Course Requirements

Formal Essays:

For this class you will write three essays that vary in length outside of class. Each essay will require a draft that will be responded to by me and your peers. Assignments will be discussed throughout the semester as the time for each approaches. Detailed assignment sheets can be located on my website. Assignments are due at the beginning of class as stated on the course schedule.

Blogs:

You will be required to post in a course blog this semester. The blog will be a place for reflective writing based on the projects you are working on this semester.

In-class Writing:

During class time you will be asked to write on a variety of issues, ideas, and prompts that relate to readings and class material. These writings and quizzes will assist in class discussion and serve as a tool for both of us to reflect on the work you are doing.

Portfolios:

The best way I have found to help students understand and appreciate what it means when I say "writing is a process" is to include a portfolio component in my writing classes. At the end of the semester, you will be responsible for collecting and revising the work you've done in and outside class. You will turn in both formal and informal writing, some of it revised, some of it not. You will also include an introduction that discusses what you've learned and provide a self-evaluation of your writing. These portfolios will be returned with formal letter grades attached that evaluate the work in the portfolio as well as your success in the class.

Book Club:

Throughout the semester you will participate in a book club to learn about long haul journalism and complete a presentation of your findings.

Readings:

Outside readings will be assigned for each class period. They are listed on the schedule. It is vital to your grade that you complete all readings and come to class prepared to discuss them.

Conferences:

You will be conferencing with myself and your group for your formal essays three times throughout the semester to receive more individualized feedback. I will cancel class to accommodate these conferences. Missing your conference or showing up unprepared without your essay will result in an absence for each class. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT ESSAYS NOT SUBMITTED DURING YOUR CONFERENCE APPOINTMENT.**

Note:

All writing you do in this class-drafts, revisions, in-class writing, blogs-should be saved so you have a wide selection to choose from when putting together your portfolio. It is imperative that you save all your writing so you can see how you have developed as a writer throughout the course of the semester.

Evaluation and Grading Policies

In this course you will receive letter grades on formal writing drafts. However, it is expected that this work will be revised for your portfolio. You will be graded holistically on your portfolio. This means I will evaluate your work overall throughout the semester. Using this portfolio system of evaluation allows me the opportunity to give you credit for the things that grading individual papers does not: such as effort and revision and improvement. Although you will receive individual letter grades on each draft, again, you are expected to use the extensive comments and feedback from me to revise your work. Failure to revise will be detrimental to your portfolio grade. Portfolio grades will be based on the following criteria:

- 1 Meeting all of the requirements described above including turning in all formal and informal assignments.
- 2 The quality of your written work, including how successful your revision work is.
- 3 The quality of your effort in class, in workshops, in discussion, in groups, in conferences, and in general.
- 4 Your demonstration of a willingness to try new things, think in new ways, and explore different perspectives as both a reader and a writer.

My comments should provide you with a clear understanding of your progress in the class; if you ever feel as though you are unsure, come see me and we will discuss it.

Grading Percentage Breakdowns

Different assignments in this course require different levels of effort. The following breakdowns should provide you with an idea of the amount of time and energy needed for each.

1	Blogs	10%
2	Book Club Group Work and Presentation	10%
3	Formal Writing Assignments 3 essay Drafts (10% each)	30%
4	Portfolio w/final	50%

*Each assignment is worth equal weight except the portfolio which is worth half your grade.

Grading Scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59

Additional Resources:

Course Adaptations: In accordance with BSU policy, I am available to discuss appropriate accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for accommodations should be made during the drop/add period so that proper arrangements can be made. Students should register with Student Accessibility Services for disability verification and determination of reasonable academic accommodations.

Writing Studio: The BSU is a valuable source that you should take advantage of throughout the semester for all your courses and as you continue your studies at BSU. The Writing Studio is located in the Academic Achievement Center on the ground floor of Maxwell Library. You can make an appointment by stopping by the Writing Studio in person, calling 531-2053, or via email writingcenter@bridgew.edu. To learn more about The Writing Studio visit their website at <http://www.bridgew.edu/WritingStudio/>

Second Language Services: Are you a multi-lingual student? Would you like a second pair of eyes looking over your assignments? Second language Services in the Academic Achievement Center helps students become better readers and writers. Come see us today:

<https://my.bridgew.edu/departments/SecondLanguage/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) and Adrian Tinsley Program: The OUR and ATP provide BSU students with the opportunity to do scholarly research by funding projects, providing presentation forums through research symposiums, and publishing opportunities in the Undergraduate Review. The OUR is located in 200 Maxwell Library. To learn more about the OUR visit their website at www.bridgew.edu/our. On a personal note, I cannot speak highly enough of the opportunities the OUR and ATP provide to BSU students for enhancing your education while at BSU and providing you with skills that will make you competitive in both the job market and in graduate school.

Publication Opportunities: The Undergraduate Review- Published annually by the Office of Undergraduate Research, showcases student research and creative work done as part of a class or under the mentorship of Bridgewater Faculty.

The Bridge- A Creative journal that published by the English Department annually that showcases poetry, prose, and fine art.

Study Abroad Office: Assists students with a variety of travel programs including semester long and shortened trips to a variety of countries around the globe.

https://my.bridgew.edu/departments/StudyAbroad/SitePages/Home.aspx#_ga=2.50152614.1024953523.1534786572-1351288215.1527112497

Internships: [The internship office](#) can assist you in getting credit and, in some cases, pay for interning at a variety of companies.

Resources in Support of Excellence (RISE): Providing Resources for Students Experiencing Economic Stress. At BSU, we understand the impact that stressors outside of the classroom can have on your student success. We also understand the significant cost of higher education and the overall impact attending college can have on your availability to work and cover the basics.

<https://my.bridgew.edu/departments/SSD/RISE/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Other Resources on Campus: There are a wide variety of services available on our campus that you might want to know about but also might just be too inundated with information to remember you have access to, so I'm including links to a variety of places on campus that I think you might want to know about. First and foremost is probably the **counseling center** and the **wellness center**. Other places you can go if you want to connect with folks: the **Center for Multicultural Affairs**, the **Pride Center**, the **campus food bank**, [Academic Coaching](#), and **Commuter Services**. Making a connection to this campus is the number one way you'll get from day one to graduation.

The below information is in the event that we have to hold class virtually

Special Notes About Online Etiquette:

Remote learning is something most of us are not thrilled about, however we can make this a great class by following some basic rules:

1. During synchronous class cameras on. We all need to be able to see each other.
2. The same rules apply online that would face to face. Proper dress, no laying in bed or driving in a car (you will be removed from class), and be in a private space with no distractions.
3. Mute your mic until it is your turn to speak
4. If you wish to speak use the raise your hand function or raise your hand
5. No private, unrelated conversations in the chat.