



AUF

*The American  
University of Florence*

**SYLLABUS**

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Academic Affairs

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Florence University of the Arts (FUA) is an academic institution for study abroad in Florence, Italy. FUA collaborates with The American University of Florence (AUF), an international university offering US-style undergraduate and graduate degrees, in a cooperation to offer study abroad programs with a diverse breadth and depth of academic curriculum.

FUA study abroad programs may include AUF offerings, which are US-aligned in terms of higher education standards as per the university's institutional structure. Common courses offered by FUA and AUF have been jointly selected by both institutions as eligible for mutual recognition and delivery. As such, equal academic standards, credibility, and outcomes are vetted by the Academic Offices of the institutions for all courses and syllabi offered in the study abroad program.

## **SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS**

### **DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION AND CREATIVE WRITING**

#### **COURSE TITLE: FUNDAMENTALS OF WRITING**

#### **COURSE CODE: LACWWR101**

**3 semester credits**

#### **1. DESCRIPTION**

This course provides students with the writing skills necessary to engage in various genres, including academic essays, rhetoric analyses, podcasts, and reflection journals. Students will be reinforcing critical thinking and cultural competence through the assessment of different texts and they will rely on peer review as a means to enhance their ability to integrate and deliver constructive feedback. The entire writing process will be explored systematically, and students will have the opportunity to bridge theory and practice by working on a variety of writing projects aimed at strengthening their ideas and voices.

#### **2. OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

##### **Rhetorical Practices**

- Students write both to learn and to communicate what they learn.
- Students negotiate their own writing goals and audience expectations regarding genre, context, and situation.
- Students formulate and articulate a stance through and in their writing.
- Students reflect on their writing processes and self-assess as writers.

##### **Engagement with Critical Perspectives**

- Students explore diverse experiences, perspectives, and ideas—such as intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, language, and ability—in campus, societal, disciplinary, professional, or historical contexts.
- Students engage in activities that help them understand and critique systemic inequity to foster a commitment to justice at Northeastern and globally.

##### **Use of Sources and Evidence**

- Students generate and pursue lines of inquiry and search for, collect, and select sources that effectively support their writing projects.
- Students effectively use and cite sources in their writing.
- Students use multiple forms of evidence to support their claims, ideas, and arguments.
- Students practice critical reading strategies.

##### **Revision**

- Students provide feedback to their peers to help them revise.
- Students revise their writing using responses from others, including peers, teachers, writing center tutors, and community members.

#### **3. REQUIREMENTS**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

#### 4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, and projects. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, videos, slides, guided problem solving, and experiential and/or field learning activities where applicable.

#### 5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

- Broditsky, Lera. *How Does Language Shape the Way We Think?* Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKK7wGAYP6k>
- Everett, Michele. "Reflective Journal Writing and the First-Year Experience", *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. 25(2). Available here: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1016545.pdf>
- Forgasz, Helen. *Scholarly Writing*. Available here: <https://researchmgt.monash.edu/ws/portalfiles/portal/272022222/272022186.pdf>
- Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. Available here: [http://www.rhetorik.ch/Aktuell/16/02\\_13/frank\\_diary.pdf](http://www.rhetorik.ch/Aktuell/16/02_13/frank_diary.pdf)
- Hirsch, Joe. *The Joy of Getting Feedback*. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4zNEl7XgXI>
- Nature of Writing. *The Essay Format (MLA)*. Available here: <https://natureofwriting.com/courses/essay-writing/lessons/the-essay-format/topic/the-essay-format-mla/>
- Rittel, Horst & Webber, Melvin. 1973. *Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*. Policy Sciences, 4(2): 155-169
- Qaddour, Kinana. *The Use of Podcasts to Enhance Narrative Writing Skills*. 2017. Available here: [https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource\\_files/etf\\_55\\_4\\_28-31\\_title\\_the\\_use\\_of\\_podcasts\\_to\\_enhance\\_narrative\\_writing\\_skills\\_.pdf](https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/etf_55_4_28-31_title_the_use_of_podcasts_to_enhance_narrative_writing_skills_.pdf)
- Scott, R.F. *Journals: Captain Scott's Last Expedition*. Available here: [https://www.coolantarctica.com/Antarctica%20fact%20file/History/Scotts\\_Last\\_Expedition/scottslastexpedition\\_contents.php](https://www.coolantarctica.com/Antarctica%20fact%20file/History/Scotts_Last_Expedition/scottslastexpedition_contents.php)
- Smith, Cecil. *The Benefits of Writing*. Northern Illinois University. Available here: [https://www.niu.edu/language-literacy/\\_pdf/the-benefits-of-writing.pdf](https://www.niu.edu/language-literacy/_pdf/the-benefits-of-writing.pdf)
- *Writing a Critical Essay about Literature*. Available here: <https://www.sunydutchess.edu/assets/writcriticalessaylit.pdf>

The textbook is mandatory for successful completion of the course.

Where applicable, additional materials, handouts and/or notes will be provided by the instructor.

#### LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE

Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times of the university library. Also note that the library is for consultation only and it is not possible to borrow materials. The library is equipped with a scanner and internet access so that you may save or email a digital copy of the pages needed. Students may also utilize additional libraries and research centers within the local community:

##### BIBLIOTECA PALAGIO DI PARTE GUELFA

Located in Piazzetta di Parte Guelfa between Piazza della Repubblica and Ponte Vecchio. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

[http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca\\_palagio\\_di\\_parte\\_guelfa/](http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_palagio_di_parte_guelfa/)

#### BIBLIOTECA DELLE OBLATE

Located in via dell'Oriuolo 26. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:  
[www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it](http://www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it)

#### THE HAROLD ACTON LIBRARY AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FLORENCE

Located in Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Please consult the library website for hours of operation. This library requires a fee-based student membership. For information: [www.britishinstitute.it/en](http://www.britishinstitute.it/en)

### 6. FIELD LEARNING

Please consult your Official Registration for any mandatory field learning dates. Field Learning Activities cited in Official Registrations are an integral part of the course and also include an assignment that counts towards your final grade, details will be provided on the first day of class.

### 7. COURSE MATERIALS

No additional course materials are necessary.

### 8. COURSE FEES

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. The exact amount will be communicated by the instructor on the first day of class.

### 9. EVALUATION – GRADING SYSTEM

10% Attendance  
10% Participation  
15% Midterm Exam  
45% Writing Projects  
20% Final Exam

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 = 60-69%, F= 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

### 10. ATTENDANCE – PARTICIPATION

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are central to the academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

**Absences** are based on academic hours: 1 absence equals 3 lecture hours.

Two absences: 6 lecture hours, attendance and participation grade will be impacted.

Three absences: 9 lecture hours, the final grade may be lowered by one letter grade.

Four absences: 12 lecture hours, constitutes automatic failure of the course regardless of when absences are incurred.

Please note:

- The above hours refer to lecture hours. Please note that the contact / credit hour policy in the academic catalog includes additional distribution ratios according to delivery category. Ex: 1 absence equals 6 FL/SL/Lab hours or 9 EL hours.

- Hours may be distributed in different formats according to the academic course schedules.

#### LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DEPARTURE

Arriving late or departing early from class is not acceptable. Two late arrivals or early departures or a combination will result in an unexcused absence. Travel is not an exceptional circumstance.

TRAVEL (OR DELAYS DUE TO TRAVEL) IS NEVER AN EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS.

It is the student's responsibility to know how many absences are incurred. If in doubt, speak with your instructor!

**Participation:** Satisfactory participation will be the result of contributing to class discussions by putting forth insightful and constructive questions, comments and observations. Overall effort, cooperation during group work, proper care of work space and tools, responsible behavior, and completion of assignments will be assessed. All of the above criteria also apply to Field Learning and site visits.

## 11. EXAMS – PAPERS – PROJECTS

The **Midterm** exam accounts for 15% and the **Final** exam accounts for 20% of the final course grade. For exam time and date consult the course addendum. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.** Both the exams will contain open-ended questions and different writing exercises.

Throughout the course, students will work on a variety of **Writing Projects**.

**Writing Project 1:** This is a critical **rhetorical analysis** of a text assigned on Lesson 1 by the instructor and due before the Midterm. Students will be assessed based on the comprehension of the writing moves and styles of the text, together with the insights they can generate concerning mission, structure, characters, language, historical context, and ideas.

**Writing Project 2:** Group project. Students will develop and record a short **podcast** based on a relevant topic to be confirmed with their instructor. This will be listened and discussed by the class.

**Writing Project 3:** This is a first-person **reflection journal** where students track their growth, challenges, and ideas. The reflection journal should comprise a minimum of 10 days of reflection, each one with a minimum of 100 words.

**Writing Project 4:** This is a 1000-words **academic essay** assessing a real-life issue dating from the year of the course. Such a contemporary issue should be discussed in relation to both up-to-date and previous sources. Students are assessed based on accuracy, editing and formatting, and overall capacity to argument a research question with valid scholarly sources.

## 12. LESSONS

Lesson 1	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Why is writing important? The writing process: developing conversation, awareness, and criticism.
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify the key aspects of writing. Understand the various layers of the writing process. Gain knowledge about the various stages of the writing process, from planning to editing. Gain knowledge about the significance of cultural awareness in the writing process.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Text to be read during the first half of the course will be assigned.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Broditsky, Lera. <i>How Does Language Shape the Way We Think?</i>

## Lesson 2

<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Writing a diary or reflection journal: meaning, examples, value.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Identify the significance of a diary or reflection journal to track growth, changing patterns, and ideas.</p> <p>Gain knowledge about some of the most famous reflection journals.</p> <p>Become familiar with the characteristics of journaling, and its historical importance.</p>
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Practice writing an entry for the reflection journal.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Everett, <i>Reflective Journal Writing and the First-Year Experience</i>.</p> <p>Entries from famous journals and diaries, including:</p> <p><i>Journals: Captain Scott's Last Expedition</i>.</p> <p><i>Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl</i>.</p>

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	How to assess writing moves and styles in literature while being critical and culturally aware.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Be able to identify key writing moves and styles.</p> <p>Be able to generate and bridge ideas stimulated by writing pieces.</p> <p>Identify how to critically analyze literature, and which are the main focus points to understand literary works.</p>
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Read and analyze chapters of favorite texts.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Different typologies of texts, to be confirmed with the instructor.

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Peer review in different genres.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Recognize the significance of peer review.</p> <p>Be able to provide analytical feedback.</p> <p>Be able to evaluate and incorporate changes in your writing.</p>
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Engage in peer editing.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Hirsch, Joe. <i>The Joy of Getting Feedback</i> .

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Comparison and contrast in academic scholarly writing.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Understand the main pillars of academic writing.</p> <p>Identify how to structure an academic essay.</p> <p>Develop cultural competence as a means to enhance critical thinking and writing.</p>
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Find and discuss academic writing essays.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Forgasz, Helen. <i>Scholarly Writing</i> .

<b>Lesson 6</b>
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<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Introduction to citing: the significance of referencing and how to find academic sources.
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand how to cite in-text and in the bibliography. Identify the most common citation styles. Recognize why citations are significant. Identify how to choose appropriate sources.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	In-class revision of Writing Project 1.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Guide to Citing sheet.

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Midterm Exam
<b>Assignment</b>	Writing Project 1 due.

<b>Lesson 8</b>	
	Academic Break

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Analyzing a novel with a critical eye: bridging academic and creative writing.
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand how to write a critical analysis of a text. Be able to generate original ideas after reading. Recognize the difference between analyzing and summarizing. Be able to extrapolate meaningful points of a text in relation to its historical context, author, and arguments.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Discussion on text assigned.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: <i>Writing a Critical Essay about Literature</i> .

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Audio storytelling: a different approach to <i>telling</i> written sources.
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify the significance of audio storytelling and the increasing popularity of podcasts. Understand how to effectively bridge written materials with spoken voice. Identify how to use podcasts to enhance narrative skills.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Analyze various podcasts and divide yourselves in group to record a podcast for Writing Project 2.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Listen to: selected podcasts. Read: Qaddour, <i>The Use of Podcasts to Enhance Narrative Writing Skills</i> .

<b>Lesson 11</b>
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<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Developing an original academic essay.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Identify the various bodies of an essay.</p> <p>Understand what a thesis statement is and how it is addressed throughout an essay.</p> <p>Be able to subdivide a paper in different sections.</p> <p>Understand how to generate original ideas from real-life scenarios.</p>
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Discussion on contemporary critical issues.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Up-to-date sources to be chosen by students.

<b>Lesson 12</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Technicalities on how to format an essay.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Identify how to enhance the legibility of an essay.</p> <p>Understand how to use footnotes.</p> <p>Be able to properly cite both in-text and in the final bibliography.</p>
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	<p>Discussion on contemporary critical issues.</p> <p>Develop the final structure of your academic essay (Writing Project 3).</p>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Read: <i>Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning</i>.</p> <p>Read: <i>The Essay Format (MLA)</i>.</p>

<b>Lesson 13</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Revision and discussion of works through writing and talking: communicating new ideas, feelings, and outcomes.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Be able to successfully listen to, read, write, and share opinions.</p> <p>Further identify the significance of peer review.</p>
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	In-class peer review of group podcasts.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Listen to classmates' podcasts. Write and present a short report in class.</p> <p>Writing Project 2 is due.</p>

<b>Lesson 14</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<p>Final thoughts: why is writing important?</p> <p>Analyze how writing impacts on the self, from a personal and a professional perspective.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Identify the beneficial aspects of writing for individuals and their careers.</p> <p>Be able to interlink the multiple levels of the course.</p> <p>Understand how to employ different genres in different contexts.</p>
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Final Q&As.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Smith, Cecil. <i>The Benefits of Writing</i>.</p> <p>Writing Project 3 and 4 are due.</p>

<b>Lesson 15</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Final Exam

