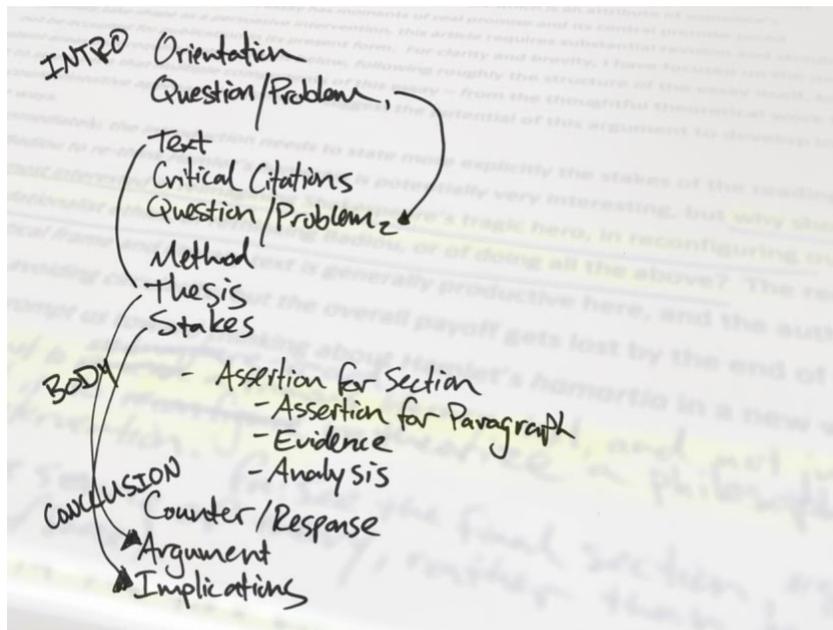




# ACADEMIC WRITING



## COURSE INFORMATION

*Instructor:* Jeffrey R. Wilson  
*Email:* [jwilson8096@andover.edu](mailto:jwilson8096@andover.edu)

*Class Meeting:* 8:30-10 am, M-F, Aug. 2-13  
*Location:* Oliver Wendell Holmes Library, Room 112  
*Course Website:* <https://canvas.andover.edu/courses/16302>

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course emphasizes essay composition as a craft and exposes students to different uses and combinations of rhetorical modes, including definition, description, narration, process, comparison, and analysis. Over the course of the program, students will practice constructing effective sentences and paragraphs to suit a variety of topics, audiences, and aims. By writing every day as well as reading and discussing the style and mechanics of published essays, students experience writing as a rewardingly rigorous, recursive, and creative process that involves brainstorming, planning, composing, editing, reverse outlining, and constructive peer review. Students will complete a baseline assessment prior to the start of the program, in order to ensure instruction can be best targeted to current strengths and areas of need.

## THE PILLARS OF OUR COURSE

*Writing is Thinking:* While “writing” is traditionally understood as the expression of thought, we’ll redefine “writing” as the very thought process itself. Writing is not what you do with thought. Writing is thinking.

*Writing is a Process:* Both the interpretation that forms the basis of an argument and the presentation of that argument in a paper need to be done in a sequence of steps, each phase building off the prior.

*We Write Best in Conversation with Others:* In contrast to the cliched image of the solitary writer sitting alone in their candle-lit study and solving all of the world’s problems, writing is best done with lots of input from others as ideas develop, are tested out, and strengthened.

## HOW THE COURSE WORKS

*The Major Assignments:* One way to familiarize yourself with our plans for this course is to look at the three main essays you’ll write: (1) a *Baseline Assessment*, written at the start of the course, and revised over the first week; (2) a *Group Essay*, created collaboratively by all the students during our two weeks together; and (3) an *Individual Essay*, developed in stages by each student through the homework assignments.

*The Baseline Assessment* has two main goals: first, to give you some experience approaching writing as a process that involves rethinking and rewriting; second, to allow us to identify your individual strengths and areas for growth early in our course.

*The Group Essay* will introduce you to the various stages in the writing process, and give you some practice developing the skills needed to do your Individual Essay.

*The Individual Essay* is where you’ll use the skills we’re working on in class to generate your own writing. You’ll select the topic you’re writing about, and work through the stages of interpretation needed to develop an argument, and the stages of writing the idea out as a paper.

*Class Time:* Our time together in class will involve a lot of student-led discussion of your Individual Essay projects, as well as some instruction from me on writing skills and strategies, some hands-on practice using those skills, and some in-class writing and revision.

*Homework:* In each class session, we’ll discuss some key strategies for each phase of the writing process. Then, your homework will be your opportunity to employ those skills to develop your Individual Essay project. You can plan to spend about one hour on your homework each night. All assignments are due on Canvas by 7 am on the morning of the next class.

*Getting Off Our Screens:* Eighteen months into this pandemic, many of us are realizing just how valuable it is to be able to gather in-person: we want to see our friends, to have conversations as a group, and to be able to adjust how we’re spending our time in class based on what the group needs and wants. As much as possible, our class time in this course will be spent doing the things that are difficult during remote learning—often group discussion and individualized attention.

## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

### Week One

- Aug. 2      Course Overview; Selecting Texts and Topics  
*Homework:* Select a topic and text(s) for your essay; read or reread if needed.
- Aug. 3      Identifying Problems and Asking Questions  
*Homework:* Write two analytical questions for your topic.
- Aug. 4      Gathering Evidence  
*Homework:* Make a timeline of evidence needed to answer your analytical question.
- Aug. 5      From Analysis to Argument  
*Homework:* Create a conceptual map of your argument for your essay.
- Aug. 6      How to Write a Good Thesis Statement  
*Homework:* Write two paragraphs of implications for your essay.

### Week Two

- Aug. 9      Doing Research  
*Homework:* Read and summarize three sources that address your topic.
- Aug. 10     Organizing an Essay  
*Homework:* Create a detailed outline for your essay.
- Aug. 11     Body (Paragraph) Building  
*Homework:* Write out your full essay.
- Aug. 12     Revision  
*Homework:* Revise your essay.
- Aug. 13     Presentation

## POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

*Materials:* There are no books to buy for our course. Copies of readings will be provided. Please bring a pen and notebook to class every day.

*Attendance and Tardiness:* In such a brief, intensive program, regular attendance at class (and active engagement when present) is essential. Missing a single day equates to missing 10% of the course; as such, more than two absences may result in withdrawal. Similarly, patterns of tardiness or early departure can also significantly impact your learning experience, and will be reported to the Director.

*Assessment:* At the end of the session, all students will receive narrative comments detailing their skills and progress over the two weeks. Andover Advantage students do not receive grades, and should instead focus in on desired skill development and mastery of course learning objectives. The major course assessments (baseline assessment, individual essay, and group essay) will serve as students' major opportunities to demonstrate their learning, supplemented by daily classwork and homework assignments, as well as through regular class discussions. Feedback on written work will be provided, and should be incorporated into subsequent drafts.

*Academic Integrity:* We will talk together in class about the importance of academic integrity, but from the start you should internalize and observe the following:

- Honesty is the basic value on which this community rests. Academic honesty is demanded by the very nature of a school community. Honesty in the academic area means claiming as one's own only that work which is one's own. All scholarship and artistic production builds upon the ideas and information of others; the honest person makes clear in written work exactly what the source of any borrowed information or idea is, whether it be library materials, a museum exhibition, the Internet, classmates, or family members.
- You are guilty of plagiarism when you present others' ideas as your own. This includes intentional and unintentional gaps in attribution; omission of footnotes to provide sources for data, concepts or facts that are not very general knowledge or the result of your own original research; and not making crystal-clear the assistance that a friend or relative has provided you. Any form of omission or outright deceit amounts to academic dishonesty.

In this course, you will not be in danger of dishonesty as long as you closely follow these guidelines:

- Aspire to the highest standards of rigorous, honorable scholarship. Decide now that that's the sort of student you want to be. Commit yourself. You can do it.
- Do not use any online, print, or other secondary source for any reading or writing assignments unless I have specifically instructed you otherwise.
- Make good use of the online primer, located on PAnet under "Academic Resources."
- Understand your responsibility not to plagiarize. When in doubt, cite a source.

Work must be current and accomplished specifically for credit in this course. It may not be used to secure credit in another course as it is unacceptable to submit one piece of work (e.g. photograph, video, note, paper, etc.) to more than one course without prior consultation with and written permission from all instructors involved.