

Communication and Inquiry

Communication and Inquiry Classes

INQUIRY 100: Modes of Inquiry

This course examines various ways of studying, knowing, and understanding information and experience. It focuses on the axiomatic (or formal deductive), philosophical, historical, observational (or empirical), imaginative expressive, and interpretive paradigms of discovery and understanding. As a result of taking this course, students will understand the assumptions that underlie the various ways of inquiring used within and across disciplines, understand that every mode of inquiry has its own strengths and limitations in the exploration of a given question or problem, be able to sustain a line of argument using one or more modes of inquiry, and be able to articulate the commonalities and/or differences among various modes of inquiry.

Units: 3

WRIT 101: Communication Skills

This course provides students with opportunities to practice a range of conventions, standards of proof, and ways of knowing that characterize language in the concentration areas that make up the SUA liberal arts education: the humanities, environmental studies, social and behavioral sciences, and international studies. In the process, students develop critical reading and thinking skills as well as competence in written and oral English so as to produce coherent, interesting, thoughtful, and largely error-free papers that are congruent with appropriate standards of academic discourse.

Units: 3

WRIT 301 and 305: (Advanced Communications Skills)

To satisfy the upper division writing requirement, students may select any WRIT 301 or WRIT 305 course that corresponds with their areas of interest. Although specific readings and writing projects vary by professor, all sections of WRIT 301 and WRIT 305 share learning outcomes and general course goals. Writing 301 and 305 courses provide students with opportunities to practice the kind of writing, research, and oral presentation skills that characterize topics and discourses related to particular concentration areas as preparation for graduate and/or professional work. Students develop a professional voice in writing and speaking while examining topical issues representative of the concentration areas at SUA. In addition, they use solutions to problems and new perspectives in concentration areas. Writing 301 courses are paired with a particular concentration, whereas Writing 305 courses are organized around broad, often cross-disciplinary topics (*see course descriptions below).

Units: 3

Prerequisites:

WRIT 101, with a grade of C- or better.

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: The Politics of Visual Rhetoric

This course will explore writing and communication through the broad conventions of “visual rhetoric.” Visual rhetoric has historically been found in a variety of disciplinary locations (art history, American studies, communication studies, English departments, rhetoric and composition programs, history programs, media and visual studies programs). In this course we will attempt to understand the political and ideological dimensions of visual rhetoric across a wide range of genres or media such as photography, graphic novels, works of art, architecture, films (fiction and documentary), advertisements, television, journalism, televised political speeches, and more. Students in this class may use selections from ancient rhetorical texts in conjunction with contemporary theoretical writings in their written work and oral presentations.

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: Writing Science, Gender, and Empire

In this course, students will explore trans-disciplinary connections between culture, empire and science around the ever-evolving concept of gender. Topics students may research and write about include: associations between “women” and “nature” that have informed intellectual, scientific, and cultural traditions; indigenous concepts of natural science and gender; female, trans, and indigenous bodies as collectible objects; notions of truth, science and gender; connections between gender, science, biopolitics and surveillance; feminist science studies, and more. We will consider a variety of written, visual and cultural texts in this course.

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: Women in Media

From the Hollywood “woman’s film” of the 1930s, to the “Third World” female subject of 1980s and 90s world cinema, to the current prominence of female directors in documentary film and video, this course prepares students to write about a range of issues related to understanding women in popular and alternative media. Examining film and media critically, through a feminist theoretical lens, we will explore the political benefits and/or pitfalls of positioning oneself as a subject of gendered cinematic discourse; survey a variety of films marketed as “female-oriented” or feminist (as well as films which may not have been intended specifically for female audiences), just as we will explore arguments that complicate some of the early texts of feminist film theory; and look at ways in which both feminist and queer film theory are problematized by issues of race, ethnicity, class and the postcolonial experience. Students will be encouraged to write in a number of contexts in this course: as film and media theorists, as critics, as creators and as producers.

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: Writing the Apocalypse

This course focuses on how “apocalypses” manifest themselves in various academic disciplines. Work in the course will analyze cinematic and literary representations of the apocalypse; interrogate whether or not societies have participated in end-of-the-world thinking throughout history; scrutinize how the politics of late capitalism and globalization drive such notions; and engage in how various discourses of race, gender, sexuality, class, nationality and trauma may lead to apocalypses of an internalized type. Students will be asked to examine texts and generate critical and/or creative responses to class discussions.

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: Writing the Body

Bodies as sites of meaning, modes of representation, political signifiers, and lived experiences are of central concern to work across the disciplines. Taking as its purview the production, regulation, and circulation of bodies in the context of late capitalism and globalism, this course considers how bodies are politically, socially, sexually, racially, culturally, metaphorically, and historically constituted, and promotes the invention of insurgent forms for reading and writing bodies that do not reinscribe the body in narrative myths and dualistic structures that dominate conventional understandings of bodies.

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: Writing Borderlands

What does it mean to live and write in the borderlands? This course examines and calls for writing in and about the borderlands; explores how writing from the borderlands resists, reshapes, and/or plays with dominant discourses and power relations; investigates the relationships among writing, ideology, hegemony, and the politics of culture; and situates the borderlands globally amidst materials conditions and the production of “others.”

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: Writing Race

What is race? How is race assigned, assumed, constructed, performed, and consumed? Aiming to develop complex understandings of the production of race and its effects, this course may explore the intersections of race with gender, sexuality, class, indigeneity, nation, citizenship, and other modalities of power; intercede into the racial politics of representation and public discourse; and generate theoretically informed critical/creative interventions that grapple with the vexed issues of race.

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: Writing about Travel

This course focuses on discourses around travel and tourism mobilities. Work in the course may consider the geopolitics of travel and tourism; scrutinize the disruptions and disjunctures engendered by late capitalism and globalization; inquire into how various kinds of travel produce and participate in diverse discourses around race, gender, sexuality, class, and nationality; examine texts about travel in various media; and generate critical and/or creative analyses and compositions on travel.

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: Archives, Ethics, and Activism

This course explores archives as sites for cultural interpretation, civic engagement, and social justice. We will explore a broad range of archives, including family archives, community archives, digital archives, and institutional archives. Drawing on feminist, rhetorical, indigenous, decolonial, and other perspectives, we will focus on what stories, social memories and public histories can be revealed through archival research, and just as importantly, what remains hidden, invisible, missing, absent, silenced, or excluded from archival collections. Students will learn how to engage in reciprocal and collaborative archival practices, reflect on questions of ethics and representation, and come to understand research as a lived process. Course projects may include exploring family and community archives, conducting oral histories, contributing to digital archives, and working with community organizations. Through this work, students will cultivate an appreciation for human diversity, one of SUA core values.

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: Environment and Sustainability

What does it mean to become leaders for the creative co-existence of nature and humanity? To gain an awareness of the interdependence of ourselves, others, and the environment? These questions, central to SUA's mission, will guide our course work as we explore questions of social and environmental justice, sustainability, and our relation with nature in the age of the Anthropocene. Students will go on self-guided field trips to natural settings to engage more deeply with environmental topics through lived experience. They will write about contemporary environmental challenges in a variety of genres. In particular, public/advocacy, natural history/science, and creative/nonfiction writing will be emphasized. Students will undertake an ambitious intellectual project, conduct extensive, in-depth inquiry and present their work to relevant audiences.

Units: 3

WRIT 305: Advanced Communications Skills: The Rhetoric of Performance

This class will explore a range of texts that address the broad topic of performance. Performance can mean many things. Some theorists, like Judith Butler, suggest that the simple act of getting dressed in the morning can be understood as a performance. Students in this class may interrogate the notion of performances in Greek drama, poetry, stand-up comedy, classical rhetoric, graphic novels, performance art, and contemporary gender and performance theory. We will question the distinction between authenticity and performance. We will look at the ways in which public space is often performative space in poetry, fiction and theoretical writings; we will explore gender as performance, and we will experience the power of laughter and performance to address notions of race, gender, class and identity in the work of stand-up comedians such as Margaret Cho and Chris Rock. Students will develop a research and writing identity that resonates with their academic interests and demonstrates sustained engagement with an evolving notion of performance.

Units: 3