

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

University of Montana Course Syllabi

Open Educational Resources (OER)

---

Fall 9-1-2020

### WRIT 201.02: Intermediate College Writing II - Exploring Rhetoric through Contemporary Music

William A. Doehring

University of Montana, Missoula, [willy.doehring@umontana.edu](mailto:willy.doehring@umontana.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

### Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

---

#### Recommended Citation

Doehring, William A., "WRIT 201.02: Intermediate College Writing II - Exploring Rhetoric through Contemporary Music" (2020). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 11329.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/11329>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Educational Resources (OER) at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana Course Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

# WRIT 201 College Writing II:

## Exploring Rhetoric through Contemporary Music

*\*prerequisite C or better in 101 or direct placement into WRIT 201*

**Instructor:** William (Willy) Doehring

**Office:** Corbin Hall 254

**Phone:** 406-243-5231 (main number for the English Department)

**Office Hours:** By Appointment via Zoom (guaranteed free time Tuesday + Thursday, 1:00pm-2:00pm)

**Email:** willy.doehring@gmail.com

**Classroom:** Forestry 206

**Meeting days/time:** Tuesday + Thursday, 9:30-10:50am

---

“**Rhetoric** is the faculty of discovering, in a given instance, the available means of persuasion.” Aristotle

“**Rhetoric** is the art of communicating thought from one mind to another, the adaptation of language to circumstance.”  
Sister Miriam Joseph

“**Rhetoric** is the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents.” Kenneth Burke

“Contemporary Music is not so much Art as it is Life” – John Cage, *Silence*

---

## Course Description

In this course, we will use contemporary music as a means of guiding our study of rhetoric. Music provides a window into the experiences and lives of artists and reflects the culture of the time in which it is produced. Rhetoric, our means of persuasion and expression, is important not only to musicians themselves (who use rhetoric to convey their emotions and experiences in their lyrics) but is essential to the wider discourses that contemporary music leads to. Our study this semester will focus on the way traditional rhetorical concepts are still powerful in contemporary American culture, and contemporary American music; you will have the opportunity to study these concepts through analysis of songs and essays, and apply them in your own writing throughout the semester.

Much of your work in this class will involve different kinds of collaboration, including group workshops and discussions that will take place in class. Because writing development is an important process that takes place over time across different writing situations, all WRIT 201 classes use portfolio evaluation as a primary means of evaluation. By the end of the semester you should be able to accurately and subtly assess a given rhetorical situation and make effective rhetorical choices based on your assessment in order to write a graceful, convincing, beautifully written argument.

## Respect

It is imperative that you treat your peers with as much respect as you expect from them. I expect this course to be a supportive and respectful environment where everyone feels comfortable speaking without fear of being put down or embarrassed. If you fail to respect your classmates your grade will be affected.

In this course we will be discussing socially debated and, sometimes, conflict-laden issues. We will work as a class to create an environment that allows each member to share their ideas. This does not mean we have to agree with other's perspectives. Part of your educational experience is learning that you will disagree, sometimes radically, with people and that honest discussion is a way to learn to respect and value those disagreements.

## Required Course Texts:

Readings will be available as PDF's via Moodle. For audio assignments, any music streaming platform should work but

I will provide YouTube links if you cannot access the songs otherwise. You will not have to purchase any books or other materials for this class.

### General Class Expectations:

- All reading assignments will be completed by the assigned date.
- All writing assignments must be turned in on time.
- **All major assignments must be typed. Please use 12 point Times New Roman font, double-space, and 1 inch margins on all sides.**
- All homework must be typed.
- Attend class.
- Actively, vocally, and appropriately participate in class discussions.
- Any individual assignments (including requests for conferences) will be completed by the assigned date.

### WRIT 201 is an Intermediate Writing Course. The university learning outcomes include:

- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

### WRIT 201 Required Elements

I encourage you to talk with me at any time to better understand my comments or to discuss your overall progress and success in the class.

### Grading -- you must earn a C- in this class to be awarded credit

Participation 35%

Final Portfolio 65%

**\*\*you must turn in your portfolio and complete all major essays by their deadlines in order to receive credit for this course.\*\***

**Grading Policy:** Students enrolled in WRIT 201 are graded by the traditional letter grade A, B, C, D, F or are given NC for no credit. The NC grade does not affect grade point average. It is reserved for students who have worked unusually hard, attended class regularly and completed all assignments, but whose skills are not at a passing level at the end of the semester.

### Major Assignments

Expect to write four essays and make major revisions over the course of the semester, in addition to other short writing assignments in and out of class. I will give you a detailed assignment sheet as we begin each of these major assignments.

You will have the chance to develop all your major projects through a process of inquiry and drafting. You'll compose papers in and out of class, alone and with your small group. All essays must be completed for you to pass the course. I will respond to these projects with written comments focused on suggestions for revision, but I will also mark them using a check system to help you know where you stand on a specific project.

### Major Inquiry Projects:

Assignment #1: Song Analysis

Assignment #2: Contemporary Album Review

Assignment #3: Response Essay

The final assignment of the course will be to revise one of these major assignments.

## COVID-19 Safety Guidelines

Starting a semester in the middle of a global pandemic is a first for us all. There is a fair amount of uncertainty about how this semester will unfold, so we'll have to be flexible. We may need to modify this course. I will update the course Moodle as needed, and we may be using Zoom to meet virtually. The health and safety of our class and community is a priority. Please follow these guidelines while in our class:

1. You're required to wear a mask while in the classroom
2. Each student is provided with a cleaning kit. You're expected to clean your personal work space when you arrive for class, and before you leave
3. Classrooms may have one-way entrances / exits to minimize crowding
4. You should not congregate outside the classroom before and after class
5. Specific seating arrangements will be used to ensure social distancing and support contact tracing efforts
6. Class attendance will be recorded to support contact tracing efforts
7. Drinking and eating food are strongly discouraged within the classroom since it involves mask removal
8. Stay home if you feel sick and/or if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, and please contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330
9. Up-to-Date COVID-19 Information from the University of Montana on the following websites:
  - [UM Coronavirus Website](#)
  - [UM COVID-19 Fall 2020 website](#)
10. Please help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 outside the classroom—practice social distancing, wear a mask, wash your hands thoroughly and often. This is for your safety and well-being and that of our community.

## Attendance

Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required to drop the course. This is university policy and the reasoning behind it is that important groundwork for the semester is put in place in the first few class meetings. Students without that foundational framework are better served by taking the course when they can give it the attention it deserves. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies to permit other students to add classes. Students must drop the course through CyberBear to avoid receiving a failing grade.

More than two absences from a TR class will compromise your grade. 5 or more absences from a TR class will result in a failing grade. Here's the breakdown.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> absence: final grade drops one letter grade (for example, A drops to B)
- 4<sup>th</sup> absence: final grade drops two letter grades (for example, A drops to C)
- 5<sup>th</sup> absence: final grade is an F

Here's the reasoning behind the attendance policy. Without attending class, you cannot perform your role as a student involved in learning, planning, inventing, drafting; discussing reading and writing; learning and practicing rhetorical moves and concepts; or collaborating with your instructor and classmates. Personal situations inevitably arise that make it impossible for you to make it to class. Remember, however, that's why a few absences are allowed; please reserve those for emergencies.

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and complete all assignments for courses in which they are enrolled. I will excuse absences for reasons of illness, religious observance, cultural or ceremonial events, military service, public service (such as jury duty), or participation in a University sponsored activity only when students provide appropriate documentation. (University sponsored activities include ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics.) Students who know they will be absent should contact me in advance. **In the event that an absence is excused, the student must make up any required activity and/or work that took place on the day of**

**the absence. Failure to complete activities/work conducted on days when a student was absent will result in a grade deduction.**

Students in the National Guard or Reserves are permitted excused absences due to military training. Students must submit their military training schedule to their instructor at the beginning of the semester. Students must also make arrangements with the instructor to make up course work for missed days due to military service.

Cultural or ceremonial leave allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student's customs and traditions or to participate in related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student's attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor. Appeals may be made to the Chair, Dean or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students remain responsible for completion or make-up of assignments as defined in the syllabus, at the discretion of the instructor.

If you must miss class, *you are responsible* for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class. Make sure you talk with me in *advance* if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

**Participation.** Participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, taking part in class discussions, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions excellent. It also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class. Note: Please come to class on time. Lateness will hurt your grade because it is an unnecessary interruption and because latecomers are likely to miss valuable information. Please see *Participation Grade Descriptors* for more information.

### Late Work.

Your work needs to be typed, printed, and in class with you to be considered "on time".

- ★ Late or handwritten homework does not receive credit.
- ★ Late formal essays/major assignments will not receive revision comments and will receive a grade deduction.
- ★ You are always welcome to complete assignments early if you will be missing class.

**Academic Conduct.** You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated.

**Plagiarism Policy.** If I suspect that something a student has written has been plagiarized, in full or in part, intentionally or unintentionally, I take the following actions:

- I alert the student of areas of the text that are suspicious
- the student receives no credit on the paper, pending failure, and it is up to him/her to prove that he/she turned in original work
- each student is asked to provide me with hard copies of the research she/he used in writing the paper
- if the student cannot provide documentation of her/his research, the student will fail the paper

\*these measures are also put into action when a paper is poorly cited. When a student brings his/her research to me I use the time to talk with them about citation and make sure that they understand how and when to cite in the future.

In the case that the student is unable to provide evidence of his/her original work, or in the case that I have evidence that the student has intentionally plagiarized his/her work:

- the student will automatically fail the given assignment
- the student may fail the course unless, at my discretion, I offer alternative assignments and/or conditions

- I may pursue a plagiarism citation unless, at my discretion, I offer alternative assignments and/or conditions
- the student may receive alternate assignments, etc. to avoid failure. In this instance, all conditions must be met. I need to see evidence of excellent work and effort, and work must be completed on time.
- all other previously established conditions in the class (i.e. attendance, participation, homework grades, etc.) still stand and can still cause a student to fail the course
- in the case of blatant or egregious offenses, I will not negotiate against course failure and will pursue a University Citation of Plagiarism

## Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me privately after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator. DSS at UM encourages "...students to request modifications early in the semester. Students are also advised by Disability Services to make an appointment with the instructor in advance...Retroactive modification requests do not have to be honored." [Link to the Frequently Asked Questions.](#)

## Participation in University Assessment (UPWA)

This course requires an electronic submission of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the writing program. Your papers will be stored in a database. This assessment in no way affects either your grade or your progression at the university.

## The Writing and Public Speaking Center

The Writing and Public Speaking Center provides one-on-one tutoring to students at all levels and at any time in the writing process. Visit now. Visit often. We're ready when you are. [www.umt.edu/writingcenter](http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter).

-----

## Portfolio Grade Descriptors for WRIT 201

**A** Superior portfolios will demonstrate initiative and rhetorical sophistication that go beyond the requirements. A portfolio at this level is composed of well-edited texts representing different writing situations and genres that consistently show a clear, connected sense of audience, purpose and development. The writer is able to analyze his or her own writing, reflect on it, and revise accordingly. The portfolio takes risks that work.

**B** Strong portfolios meet their rhetorical goals in terms of purpose, genre, and writing situation without need for further major revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or style/ mechanics. The writer is able to reflect on his or her own writing and make some choices about revision. The writer takes risks, although they may not all be successful.

**C** Consistent portfolios meet the basic requirements, yet the writing would benefit from further revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or writing style/mechanics (or some combination) and a stronger understanding of rhetorical decision-making involved in different writing situations and genres. The writer composes across tasks at varying levels of success with some superficial revision. The writer has taken some risks in writing and exhibits some style.

**D** Weak portfolios do not fully meet the basic evaluative standards. Most texts are brief and underdeveloped. These texts show a composing process that is not yet elaborated or reflective of rhetorical understanding related to composing in different genres and for a range of writing situations. Texts generally require extensive revisions to purpose, development, audience, and/ or style and mechanics.

**F** Unacceptable portfolios exhibit pervasive problems with purpose, development, audience, or style/ mechanics that interfere with meaning and readers' understanding. Unacceptable portfolios are often incomplete. A portfolio will also earn an F if it does not represent the writer's original work.

## Participation Grade Descriptors for WRIT 201

**A** Superior participation shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions and workshops through his/her verbal, electronic, and written contributions. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, thorough, specific, and often provide other student writers with a new perspective or insight.

**B** Strong participation demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to the discussion at hand. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, specific, and helpful.

**C** Satisfactory participation demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned readings and writings, and contributes to small group workshops and large class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful and prompt, but could benefit from more attentive reading and/or specific detail when giving comments.

**D** Weak participation demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared for class, and may contribute infrequently or unproductively to classroom discussions or small group workshops. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, suggestions to group members may be missing, disrespectful, or far too brief and general to be of help.

**F** Unacceptable participation shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late to class, regularly unprepared, and not able to contribute to classroom discussions or small group workshops. This student may be disruptive in class. Reading and writing assignments are regularly not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, the student has a pattern of missing, being completely unprepared, or being disruptive.