Writing for Success

University of Mary Washington

James Farmer Scholars program

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Course Overview

The main purpose of this course is to prepare students on the conventions of academic writing and critical thinking for college success.

Course Description

Students will learn how to organize and craft well-researched short academic essays that explores a topic of their choice on an issue that matters to them. Learners will develop an idea, expand and support it with evidence, articulate it by means of a carefully-structured argument, and conclude it with implications for further investigation.

Students will read and analyze academic writings, participate in group discussions, and share their work with their peers. They will learn to plan, draft, and revise their writing in response to group and instructor critiques and from further research, and they will identify and assess arguments made in source materials, engaging with and expanding the critical conversation on their chosen topic. Students will not only learn how to be better writers, but also how to be better thinkers on the topic of their choice.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will demonstrate the following skills:

- Demonstrate knowledge of common MLA/APA writing styles
- Develop a well-focused research topic
- Identify the types of sources necessary to support a researched argument
- Access and navigate a library and its collections, physical and digital
- Evaluate online scholarly resources
- Use source materials to strengthen an argument
- Document sources of information using MLA/APA writing style
Assignments

- Students will write one essay per month, not to exceed three doubled spaced pages with proper source citations.
- Complete UMW common application essay and submit during the November Saturday Session
- Complete and apply to the Virginia Black History Month Scholarship by the January Saturday Session.
- Critical Annotated Bibliography of at least 12 sources
- Complete class assessment

Required Materials

- Citation Style Charts (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/949/01/)
- Access to UMW library online
- A working email account to submit assignments
- Flash drive or other means (dropbox.com account, for example) of storing digital versions of the essays and other written material
- Regular internet access (additional readings available online)
- Access to a computer with a word processing program and a printer (assignments must be typed and printed)
- Ability to print 30 - 50 pages throughout the semester (funds, ink, paper, etc.)

Evaluation/Assessment

Students will be evaluated on the following metrics:

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<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Needs work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/Understanding</td>
<td>The presentation demonstrates a depth of historical understanding by using relevant and accurate detail to support the student's thesis. Research is thorough and goes beyond what was presented in class or in the assigned texts.</td>
<td>The presentation uses knowledge which is generally accurate with only minor inaccuracies, and which is generally relevant to the student's thesis. Research is adequate but does not go much beyond what was presented in class or in the assigned text.</td>
<td>The presentation uses little relevant or accurate information, not even that which was presented in class or in the assigned texts. Little or no research is apparent.</td>
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<td>Thinking/Inquiry</td>
<td>The presentation is centered on a thesis which shows a highly developed awareness of historiographic or social issues and a high level of</td>
<td>The presentation shows an analytical structure and a central thesis, but the analysis is not always fully developed and/or linked to the thesis.</td>
<td>The presentation shows no analytical structure and no central thesis.</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
<td>Conceptual ability.</td>
<td>Presentation techniques used are effective in conveying main ideas, but a bit unimaginative. Some questions from the audience remain unanswered.</td>
<td>The presentation fails to capture the interest of the audience and/or is confusing in what is to be communicated.</td>
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<td>Attendance/Class participation</td>
<td>The student arrives to class regularly and on time. Student participates in class regularly.</td>
<td>The student generally attends class and/or arrives as scheduled. Student participates in class.</td>
<td>The student does not attend class regularly and/or does not arrive on time. Student does not participate in class.</td>
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### Class Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
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| **September 12, 2015** | “How to Write a Personal Essay” Handout Kwasi Enin’s Essay  
**Assignment:** Begin rough draft of personal essay for college applications. |
| **October 17, 2015** | **College applications**  
**College essays due**  
**Begin Virginia Black History Month Scholarship**  
**November 21, 2015** | **Virginia Black History Month Scholarship application due**  
Select thesis topics  
Planning to write a thesis statement  
Developing the essay  
Plagiarism  
Analyzing Academic Sources  
Critical Literature Review  
Source citation MLA/APA styles  
**Assignment:** Select thesis topic and write an essay of not more than 3 pages due 1/23/16. Submit via email.  
Write 3, one paragraph CAB’s and submit via email.  
**January 23, 2016** | **Choose thesis topic**  
**Critical Annotated Bibliography (CAB)**  
**Methods and Theories**  
**Reliability and Validity of sources** |
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<tr>
<td>February 13, 2016</td>
<td>Persuasive language</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment</strong>: Select thesis topic and write an essay of not more than 3 pages due 2/13/16. Submit via email.</td>
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<td>Write 3, one paragraph CAB’s and submit via email.</td>
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<td>March 19, 2016</td>
<td>Ethics, Social relevance</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment</strong>: Reflection paper on this class not more than 3 pages due 4/30/16. Submit via email.</td>
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<td>April 30, 2016</td>
<td>Wrap Up &amp; Class assessments due</td>
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