

**UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
RIO PIEDRAS CAMPUS
COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

Course Title: Writing as Discourse, Reflection and Reasoning: the Essay

Course Code: ESGE 3038

Hours/Credits: 45 hours/3 credits

Prerequisite: Completion of first-year English.

Course Description:

Using the Writing Process Approach (WPA), this course takes a critical look at dominant discourses, those uses and practices of language that hold ideological leadership and powerfully influence our perception of *reality*. The purpose of this analysis is to unmask the relationship between language, cognition and social practice. It is an interdisciplinary course that integrates literature, linguistics, cognitive sciences and other disciplines in order to pursue discourse analysis. The WPA leads students to reflect upon writing as a process of refining thinking through conscious awareness of the social discourses underlying their language practices. Students will be required to document all sources used (print and electronic) that are cited in their papers.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the course, students will write academic essays, which demonstrate:

1. an awareness of the effects of dominant discourses and their power to maintain, perpetuate or challenge the status quo;
2. an appreciation of the WPA as a means to construct, refine and share knowledge;
3. the conviction that editing and rewriting are processes that require reflection which in turn leads to more critical and rigorous thinking;
4. their ability to produce coherent and critical interdisciplinary essays on a work in their area of which sheds light on how these discourses function to reproduce or challenge dominant discourses that perpetuate inequality;
5. their ability to interrogate received ideas and determine which help or hinder social

- justice;
6. ability to foster the inclusion of classmates with disabilities;
 7. demonstrate their capacity to efficiently search for information and effectively and ethically use and manage information.

Content Outline and Time Distribution:

Each professor will choose the particular discourse to be examined (e.g. family, school, gender, etc). Although the conceptual threads are intricately woven together, the professor will focus on teasing them apart through a critical look at the basic concepts and language that constitute the discourse. The following example focuses on the discourses of education. The same can be done with the discourses of race, gender, social class, the criminalization of the poor, etc. The purpose is to help students understand how their “reality” is constructed in social discourses (the language practices that construct knowledge) and is perpetuated through social institutions.

- I. Language and cognition
10 hrs.
 - A. Narrating/writing our personal worlds
 - B. Language, culture and power: What are naturalized concepts?
 - C. Cognitive sciences: Discourse and perception
 - D. Experience and memory
 - E. Discourse and the cognitive unconscious
 - F.
- II. Education’: What are common education metaphors? What do they mean?10hrs
 - a. Education metaphors and lived experience
 - b. Manufacturing consent
 - c. Narrating/writing experience
 - d. The academic essay on education: experience vs. official discourse
- III. Discourse analysis: Do the texts challenge or reproduce of dominant discourses?
10 hrs

- a. Readings and analysis of fictional accounts of schooling
- b. Writing: constructing alternate worlds

The students will be instructed in and practice the WPA in units I, II and III. These constitute preparatory writing. The skills and analytical frame will be applied to a text (essay or fiction) connected to their area of interest. Therefore, they will work independently in the workshop in Unit IV and periodically give brief oral reports on their progress.

IV. WPA writing workshop

15 hrs

- a. Essay structure and outline
- b. The central question
- c. Producing ideas: brainstorming, graphic organizers

For the same reason, the focus could be the discourse of “criminalization” to analyze the metaphors employed to criminalize and naturalize the criminalization of the poor and construct social consensus on the need for tough crime fighting measures in these communities. An analysis of these discourses, images of the poor and their relation to law and order could demonstrate how these serve as the foundations for popular support of political repression.

- d. Sharing the first draft
- e. Revising, editing and proofreading
 - 1. meaningful content
 - 2. choice through grammar
 - 3. academic and writing conventions
 - 4. documentation skills for print and electronic sources (MLA or APA style).
- f. Final essay

Instructional Strategies:

- a. Brief explanations/lectures
- b. Critical readings that are nested to progressively improve critical analysis

- c. Guided discussion
- d. Oral collaboration/sharing
- e. Peer evaluation
- f. Individual conferencing on written work

Required Student Resources:

Classroom and board uprrp.edu data bases Electronic platform for communication.

Evaluation Strategies:

Attendance and participation	10%
Unit I writing	20%
Unit II writing	20%
Oral collaboration/sharing	20%
Critical essay in area of major	30%
Total:	100%

Rights of Students with Disabilities:

The University of Puerto Rico complies with all state and federal laws and regulations related to discrimination including “The American Disabilities Act” (ADA) and Law #51 from the Puerto Rico Commonwealth (Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico). Every student has the right to request and receive reasonable accommodation and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). Those students with special needs that require some type of particular assistance or accommodation shall explicitly communicate it directly to the professor. Students who are receiving VRS services shall communicate that to the professor at the beginning of the semester to facilitate appropriate planning and the necessary equipment according to the Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (Oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimentos [OAPI]), administered by the Dean of Students Office. Any other student requiring assistance or special accommodation shall also communicate directly with the professor. Reasonable accommodations requests or services DO NOT exempt the student from complying and fulfilling academic and course related requirements and responsibilities. Differential evaluation will be provided to students with special needs who have been duly certified by OAPI. (See Circular Núm. 9 de 2002–2003.)

Academic Integrity Policy:

The University of Puerto Rico promotes the highest standards of academic and scientific integrity. Article 6.2 of the UPR Students General Bylaws (Board of Trustees Certification 13, 2009-2010) states that academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: fraudulent actions; obtaining grades or academic degrees by false or fraudulent simulations; copying the whole or part of the academic work of another person; plagiarizing totally or partially the work of another person; copying all or part of another person answers to the questions of an oral or written exam by taking or getting someone else to take the exam on his/her behalf; as well as enabling and facilitating another person to perform the aforementioned behavior. Any of these behaviors will be subject to disciplinary action in

accordance with the disciplinary procedure laid down in the UPR Students General Bylaws.

Gender and Sexual Identity Discrimination Policy:

The University of Puerto Rico prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in any of its forms, including that of sexual harassment. According to the Institutional Policy Against Sexual Harassment at the University of Puerto Rico, Certification Num. 130, 2014-2015 from the Board of Governors, any student subjected to acts constituting sexual harassment, must turn to the Office of the Student Ombudsperson, the Office of the Dean of Students, and/or the Coordinator of the Office of Compliance with Title IX for an orientation and/or a formal complaint.

Grading System:

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59-0

Electronic References:

<http://biblioteca.uprrp.edu>

<http://www.discourses.org>

<http://www.paragraphpunch.com>

<http://www.umbral.uprrp.edu>

Suggested Texts:

The fiction and essays used in this course will vary according to the type of discourse chosen for analysis.

For example, for the discourses of education, the following novels may be used: Erna Brodber, Mval; Charles Dickens Hard Times; Patrick Chamoiseau, School Days. The following plays may also be used in the discourse of gender: Neil Labute's The Shape of Things, Medea Redux, Iphigenia in Orem, A Gaggle of Saints and August Strindberg's The Creditors. The following short stories may also be used: Kate Chopin's "The Story of An Hour," Joyce Carol Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?", Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark," Junot Diaz's "Drown," and J. D. Salinger's "A Perfect Day for Bananafish."

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Research. 2/e. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1995.

Femstein, Linda A. "Writer Identity and ESL Learners: Critical Discourse Analysis Provides a Way to Study Power Relations and the Embedded Ideologies that Shape How Second Language Students Come to Understand Who They are as Writers." Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy 52, 1 (2008):44-56

Lakoff, George. Don't Think of an Elephant. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green, 2004.

McClanahan, Lauren G. "Practicing What We Preach: Using Reflective Writing as an Indicator of Learning." Studying Teacher Education 4,2 (2008).

Schnitzer, Marc and Mark Pedreira. "A neuropsychological theory of metaphor". Language Sciences 27 (2005):31-49

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- Michael-Luna, Sara. “Todos Somos Blancos / We are All White: Constructing Racial Identities Through Texts.” Journal of Language, Identity and Education. 7,3/4 (2008):272-293.
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Updated by Brenda A. Camara, June 2019.
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