

ResEcon 303
Writing in Resource Economics
Fall 2019
Section 1 M/W 2:30 - 3:45
Section 2 M/W 4:00 - 5:15
Section 3 T/Th 4 - 5:15
Section 4 T/Th 2:30 - 3:45
301 Stockbridge Hall

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Overview

ResEcon 303: Writing in Resource Economics satisfies the Junior Year Writing requirement for UMASS students majoring in Resource Economics. This course is designed to further your writing ability by identifying the basic elements of writing and applying them in a variety of contexts.

A note about the course and its instructor:

The course will begin with an introduction and overview of *Classic Style* writing.

Then we will *loosely* organize the course around the idea of economics and the environment. I've chosen this idea because it is multi-faceted, broad, arguably interesting, unarguably relevant.

But first let me be clear: I am not an expert in economics or the environment; indeed, far from it. My educational and professional background is in philosophy, literature, and what is known at UMASS as Composition and Rhetoric (and elsewhere as "writing"). I do not plan on teaching you anything about Economics. In fact, part of your task in this course is to teach me about Economics. Whatever knowledge you might gain about the discipline will come from each other and the readings and films provided by the course.

So you might be wondering what purpose I serve, other than reducing you to a letter grade at the end of the semester.

Well, I'll tell you.

Using material I have spent hundreds of hours collecting, around which I've curated exercises and activities, I will channel the flow of ideas with the goal of arriving at newer and bigger thoughts;

I will also ensure that you have ample opportunity to receive constructive feedback on your writing;

I will also indicate to you when your ideas are coming across clearly and when they are not;

I will also show you good writing and attempt to explain why it's good;

I will also challenge you to make your writing even better;

I will also tell you when I think it's great;

and I will often tell you when I think it could be better.

Course Goal

It should come as no surprise to you that your task in this course is to write better, more precisely, with courage, competence, and clarity. *My* task is to encourage you to write better, with courage, competence, and clarity. The process by which you achieve the goal of writing better, with courage, competence, and clarity is to *WRITE* (and to *READ*) (*AND TO THINK THINK THINK*), which you better do a considerable amount of (hanging prepositions be damned) if you expect a good grade.

There will be regular low-stakes (read: ungraded) writing exercises, freewriting time, and a series of writing assignments that vary in length and account for the bulk of your grade. All the writing you do in this course will serve the purpose, directly or indirectly, of achieving the goal of writing better, with courage, competence, and clarity.

Texts

This semester we will read *Greening The Global Economy* by Robert Pollin. I have arranged for you to purchase a copy of the book at Amherst Books. Please buy your copy there.

In addition there will be other reading assignments, some of which will be significant in length and depth; others will be shorter, though ideally no less significant in depth. These readings will be posted on Moodle or distributed as photocopies in class.

Laptops

Please bring your laptop to class if you have one. We will use them mainly for accessing Moodle and writing. When the class is in discussion, don't use your laptop. Please respect that. It is very obvious to me when you are using your laptop for something other than class-related purposes, and I will call you out on it.

Class Policy

You are expected to actively participate in every class. Unless you have one of the typical legitimate excuses (sickness, family emergency, religious observance), **any absence will count against your grade**. If you have more than six unexcused absences, it will be nearly impossible for you to pass the class.

A note about attendance and participation:

In this class receiving credit for attendance is conditional that you also participate. Sitting mute and unengaged in the back (or middle or front) of the classroom, frequent tardiness, disruptive behavior, or demonstrating a keener interest in your virtual social (media) life than our actual class guarantees you nothing other than a very mediocre grade *at best*.

This does not mean I expect everyone to be talkative all the time. Engagement with class content takes many forms: body language, personal presentation, attentiveness and diligence during exercises and activities, and overall quality of work.

Moodle

We have our own Moodle course, which is an integral component of the class and a good resource for keeping track of the semester in order to manage your time effectively. Readings and assignments will be posted here. I will also regularly create forums to which you will be expected to contribute ideas. Participation in these forums (posting brief write-ups about assigned texts) will be graded on a "check/check-minus/no-check" scale and factored into the class participation portion of your final grade.

Academic Honesty

Don't cheat. Don't be a scoundrel. By now you should be well aware of the Academic Honesty Policy at the University of Massachusetts. It lays out caveats and penalties for any student who, for whatever reason, tries to cut corners. Find a great thesaurus and look up all the synonyms for cheating. That should give you a general idea of what isn't acceptable. Instances of academic dishonesty will be resolved at my discretion, either formally or informally. A complete overview of the policy can be found here: <http://www.umass.edu/honesty/>. Any form of dishonesty in this class will be taken very seriously. If for whatever reason you are struggling to complete an

assignment or otherwise meet the expectations of the class, it is in your best interest to bring the issue to me without delay.

An overview of the policy's lexicon:

- Cheating - intentional use or attempted use of trickery or deception in one's academic work
- Fabrication - intentional falsification and/or invention of any information or citation
- Plagiarism - knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work
- Facilitating dishonesty - knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty

Disability Statement

Each student has equal right and access to the same education and experience as every other student. Students with disabilities who have conferred with the Office of Disability Services will receive reasonable accommodation to support their success in this course. It is the student's responsibility to communicate their situation with Disability Services and the instructor in order to receive appropriate accommodation. The University's full policy can be found here: <https://www.umass.edu/diversity/data-policies/policies>

Inclusion and Diversity

From the the University's Diversity page:

The University of Massachusetts Amherst prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment. Furthermore, university policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

<https://www.umass.edu/diversity/data-policies/policies>

Writing Assignments

There are three graded writing assignments: two shortish ones and one longish one. You will submit each piece of graded writing to your own drafting process: note-taking, generative writing, outlining, meditation, etc. You will be expected to submit a draft of each assignment for workshop. While there are workshop deadlines throughout the semester, the deadline to submit final versions of all your assignments is the last class of the semester (12/11 for sections 1 & 2,

12/10 for sections 3 & 4). However, it's in your best interest *not* to wait until the end of the semester to revise all your drafts; a more effective time management strategy would be to submit revised final versions for a grade as soon as you can after each workshop. Submit final drafts to Moodle and hand in your peers' reviewed drafts in class or my office.

A note on workshop:

It is a verb as well as a noun. There are two workshops this semester, where you will workshop your writing in a peer group. For each workshop you must submit a **complete draft**. One week before the workshop, you'll email your writing piece to your peer group. It's expected that you will have read and commented on your peers' writing during the week prior to the workshop. This means you will in turn receive four copies of your draft with comments from your group members.

Office Hours

Meeting with me in my office is not required. However, since I do not give written feedback on drafts (I couldn't possibly get to everyone's in a timely fashion), I encourage everyone to meet with me at least once during the semester to discuss your writing. Please plan in advance by emailing me your draft at least 24 hours before you meet with me.

Grades

As mentioned, the bulk of your grade will be determined by your writing. Attendance and participation will round out your grade. Here is the breakdown:

Short writing assignment: 15%

Short writing assignment: 20%

Longish writing assignment: 35%

Participation: 30%

min. 3 Moodle posts

2 complete sets of workshop notes

Attendance: Two unexcused absences are allowed. Each additional unexcused absence will dock half a letter grade.