

ResEcon 303: Writing in Resource Economics

Spring 2020

3 credits

Section 1 M/W 4:00 - 5:15

Section 2 M/W 2:30 - 3:45

Section 3 T/Th 2:30 - 3:45

Section 4 T/Th 4:00 - 5:15

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Office hours: by appointment

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, irrefutably relevant.

But first, a clarification: I am not an expert in economics or the environment, 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.

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 thought with the goal of arriving at newer and bigger thoughts;

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

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

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

I will challenge you to make your writing even better;

I will tell you when I think your writing is 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 & READ & THINK & READ & THINK**), which you better do a considerable amount of (hanging prepositions be damned) if you desire a good grade.

...which is to say, you are at a university: expect a lot of work. This work will include regular low-stakes writing exercises, constant reading, quizzes, and longer writing assignments that will account for the bulk of your grade. Everything you do in this course will serve the purpose, directly or indirectly, of achieving the goal of thinking more and writing better.

Texts

This semester we will read *Greening The Global Economy* by Robert Pollin, on which you will be regularly quizzed. I have arranged to have copies of the book available for purchase 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), **absences will count against your grade**. If you have more than six unexcused absences, it will be quite difficult 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 post weekly forum prompts to which you will be expected to contribute ideas. You are required to post a minimum of 3 responses for the semester. Prompts will be posted on Monday and due by the end of the day on Friday. There will be 12 prompts total. To get credit for a forum response you must post it on the week it is assigned. Each additional response above the minimum is worth half a percentage point toward your final grade.

Academic Honesty

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the

University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

Accommodation

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Inclusion and Diversity

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>

Graded Essays

There will be two graded essays. Each essay will undergo a thorough drafting process. Rough drafts will be submitted as paper copies to peer workshop groups. Final drafts will be submitted as paper copies with peer-edited rough drafts appended at the end.

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

Writing assignment 1: 25%

Writing assignment 2: 35%

Quizzes: 15%

Moodle posts: 15%

Participation: 10%