

This is a sample 39A Syllabus. Your syllabus may be different based on your instructor.

Writing 39A / Introduction to Writing & Rhetoric Syllabus
Summer 2017 / Section C (33020)
Jens Lloyd / jblloyd@uci.edu

What is this thing you're reading?

This syllabus is our guide for the next 10 weeks. In composing it, I've focused on objectives, assignments, and expectations, while also trying to provide you with a sense of who I am and how I am approaching this online course. After reading it, I hope you have a mostly clear sense of what we'll be doing this summer. I ask that you familiarize yourself with it and, if something is unclear, bring any questions or concerns to my attention.

What is 39A?

According to the [UCI general catalogue](#), 39A focuses on "the writing of expository essays, principles of rhetoric, paragraph development, and the fundamentals of sentence-level mechanics." That's the institutional definition. To me, 39A is an opportunity to think critically about yourself as a writer, particularly in academic situations. While this course is labeled as introductory, I think you've already been introduced to quite a lot when it comes to writing in academic situations. Your personal history of writing instruction is extensive. It's my hope that, over the next 10 weeks, you can build upon this history by engaging in a deep and thorough consideration of your abilities (the abilities you currently possess and the abilities you want to develop) and your flexibility (your flexibility to respond effectively to any writing situation you might encounter).

I've designed this course with some objectives in mind. You will be asked to carry out substantial revisions of your writing and, in conjunction with this, there will be frequent opportunities for reflecting on your writing process. Beyond this personal focus, I also want you to perceive writing as a social activity that always involves other people. For this course, your writing will always involve your peers and me. We are the readers you are trying to persuade. We are the audience you are trying to inform, entertain, or convince. At times, we will be your thoughtful critics and, at other times, we will be your ready collaborators.

Another objective is practicing reading and writing rhetorically. Rhetoric features prominently in lower-division composition courses at UCI. In 39A, rhetoric will help advance our understanding of writing as a social activity. Also, I encourage you to make the most of this online course. Find ways to make the virtual, networked nature of this course support your learning. Lastly, 39A is about gaining confidence for future writing situations, especially those you'll encounter in 39B and 39C, the other two lower-division composition courses.

What are we doing over the next 10 weeks?

Each 39A course is designed around a distinct question that informs the reading and writing assignments. Our question is: How do writers construct ethos? You might recognize that word, ethos. If you do, great! If not, don't worry about it. We'll be reading and writing about it for the next 10 weeks.

Reading is one of the main things you will be asked to do in this course. The connection between reading and writing is a solid one: the more you read, the more you have a sense of the possibilities available to you as a writer. For our major reading assignments, I've selected academic articles by writers affiliated with UCI. We'll read an article by a History professor, an article by an Asian American Studies professor, and an article co-written by members of the School of Social Ecology. All the articles deal with California or Southern California. While the content of these articles is important, what is more important is how the writers construct ethos. That is what you'll want to pay attention to as you do the reading for this course.

Writing is the other main thing you will be asked to do. Your writing in 39A will come in the form of three major writing projects and a handful of smaller exercises. The Reading & Writing Exercises (RWEs) will be a chance for you to engage with our reading assignments, to experiment with specific abilities, and to develop greater flexibility. You will post these exercises to Canvas (our online home for the quarter) and, sometimes, you will be prompted to respond to your classmates' posts. The Writing Projects (WPs) are designed to offer more complex, sustained opportunities for working on your abilities and flexibility as a writer. They are also a chance for you to engage fully with your writing process (brainstorming, drafting, getting feedback, revising, polishing, etc.).

Prompts for the WPs will be posted in the Assignments section of our Canvas class page, but let me give you a sense of what to expect. WP1 and WP2 involve you experimenting with ethos by creatively giving voice to UCI through social media and press releases. For WP1, you will select a UCI-affiliated Twitter feed to analyze and then imitate. For WP2, you will study some press releases from the UCI publicity office and then, with these examples serving as models, you will compose your own entirely fictional press release.

WP3 asks you to compose an analysis-driven argument in response to a focused version of the class question: How do the writers we read this quarter construct ethos? This project should engage with our major reading assignments and it should reflect the abilities and flexibility you've cultivated this quarter. WP3 will also provide you with an opportunity to work on organizing an extended piece of academic writing.

All projects will involve mandatory drafts and peer response activities.

What are some other expectations for this course?

In addition to reading and writing, I ask that you also do the following:

- Have reliable access to Canvas. Having reliable access to Canvas is absolutely essential. Also, during some weeks, you will be required to meet with me and/or a few of your peers via Canvas. These meetings will be a critical time for discussing our reading and writing assignments.
- Invest time in reading and writing. Given that this is an online class, you will need to be extra aware of deadlines and your own ability to manage your time.
- Participate. It's been my experience that online classes require a large amount of self-generated motivation on the part of the students. Find ways to participate and contribute to all of the activities we do on Canvas. Don't let the online nature of the course prevent you from participating.
- Turn in all assignments on time. To keep us all on schedule, I think it's best to operate on California time. So, if it's 9am in Irvine, it's 9am for our course. Given the constraints of the course, I cannot accept late work and submitting late work may result in you not passing the class. I will not comment or provide feedback on late work.
- Get help when you need it. If you feel stuck, do everything you can to get unstuck. Every week, I'll post my schedule for office hours. I'll hold virtual office hours via Canvas. I suggest making office hours a regular habit. I'll also be available as needed by appointment; just email me to schedule an appointment.
- Avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism can really screw things up in terms of your academic progress. As an instructor, I am responsible for reporting it. Please read [the university policy on academic integrity](#). Oftentimes, plagiarism is unintentional. What I ask is that you cultivate an awareness of proper academic citation methods and, if in doubt, ask for help.

As the instructor, here is what I will do:

- Clearly articulate course assignments and expectations.
- Create a fair, active, and responsive virtual learning environment. This is my fifth time teaching a course online. If you have comments about how the class is being organized or conducted, please get in touch with me.
- Comment on your writing in a constructive, timely manner. In addition to getting feedback from your classmates via peer response, I will often respond with individual feedback. Also, office hours are an invaluable opportunity to meet with me and discuss your writing.
- Facilitate discussion and group work. My teaching style relies heavily on collaboration. This is not a lecture course. Instead, I want to take advantage of our online class to explore the networked nature of learning. I recognize that I am an authority figure (that I give grades, choose readings, etc.), but I will look for ways to let you take charge of your own learning throughout the quarter.

- Respond to student emails. I check email regularly. The best time to reach me is between 9am-9pm.

Is there anything else you are expecting from me as the instructor? Please, let me know!

How will the things that you do be evaluated?

All 39A courses, and most UCI composition courses, use the portfolio method for evaluating student progress. Throughout the quarter, you should be collecting, revising, and arranging an electronic portfolio on Canvas (you will receive full instructions for creating this portfolio). Essentially a comprehensive archive of your 39A experience, your portfolio is anchored by the major writing projects, but it should also include the RWEs and any other writing you've done. The portfolio is prefaced by a cover letter wherein you reflect on your progress. I will provide a prompt for the cover letter later this quarter.

You will receive only one grade in this course and that is the grade for the portfolio. Instead of grading individual finished products, the portfolio forces me (and you) to focus primarily on process, on how you've gone about your work this quarter. Here is the rubric I am planning to use to evaluate your portfolios:

Superior (A): A distinctive expression of the writer's development in 39A. It fulfills the objectives outlined in the syllabus and it reflects the writer's ability to personalize these objectives. It demonstrates an ability to carry out substantial, purpose-driven revision. Arrangement of the portfolio is insightful and accessible, and comprehensively demonstrates the writer's understanding of his or her own writing process. The cover letter contains thorough and specific reflection. The final draft of Writing Project 3 reflects a strong ability to successfully apply the conventions of academic writing in an extended essay form.

Good (B): Definitely the work of an individual writer that was committed to their development in 39A. It fulfills the course objectives and it reflects the writer's ability to personalize these objectives. Revision is substantial, but might be lacking the clear purpose of Superior portfolios. Arrangement is accessible and demonstrates the writer's understanding of his or her own writing process. The cover letter demonstrates mostly thorough and specific reflection. The final draft of Writing Project 3 reflects an ability to successfully apply the conventions of academic writing in an extended essay form.

Competent (C): The work of a writer who put in the effort and considered their development, but was perhaps not persistently engaged. It fulfills course objectives, but does not necessarily reflect the writer's ability to personalize these objectives. Revision is evident; however, the writer does not demonstrate an ability to carry out purpose-driven revision consistently. Arrangement is somewhat accessible and partially demonstrates the writer's understanding of his or her own writing process. The cover letter demonstrates reflection, but it lacks

thoroughness and/or specificity. The final draft of Writing Project 3 reflects an ability to somewhat successfully apply the conventions of academic writing in an extended essay form.

Non-Passing (C- or below): The work of a writer who didn't consistently find ways to make the most of their experience in this course. The portfolio does not engage with course objectives. Revision, where evident, is not substantial. Arrangement is difficult to comprehend and does not readily demonstrate the writer's understanding of his or her own writing process. The cover letter contains minimal reflection on the writing contained in the portfolio. The final draft of Writing Project 3 does not reflect an ability to successfully apply the conventions of academic writing in an extended essay form.

Participation is a major factor in my assessment of your performance this quarter. I've designed this course in a way that necessitates interaction because I think this will be best for achieving the objectives I've identified in this syllabus. I will assess your participation every week on a Complete/Incomplete basis. During a given week, if you complete everything that needs to be completed, you will receive a Complete. If you don't, you will receive an Incomplete. At the end of the quarter, I'll tally up your weekly participation grades. If you have 9 or 10 completes, I'll look very favorably on your participation. If you have 7 or 8, I'll look favorably on your participation. If you have 6 or less, you will be at risk of failing the course. I hope that this is a straightforward way to keep track of participation.

For all UCI writing courses, final grades of C or above satisfy the writing requirement. If you earn a final grade of C- or lower, you will need to retake 39A.

Some other important info...

Enrollment and Grading Policies: The last day to drop this course or change your grading option is Friday, July 7th. Visit [the UCI Summer Session website](#) for complete info. Requests to drop Writing 39A after the second week will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Writing Center: The Center for Excellence in Writing and Communication, located in the Ayala Science Library, offers support services to all enrolled UCI undergraduates. The writing center staff is focused on promoting consistent, long-term writing improvement and providing models for revising and editing. The writing center is not an editing service. To find out what services will be available during summer, you can visit [the writing center website](#).

Counseling Center: If things become rocky for you at any point and for any reason, or if you would just like someone to talk to—about feeling stressed out or overwhelmed, for instance—there are great people available at the UCI Counseling Center. You can contact them at 949-824-6457 or visit [their website](#) or [their resources page](#). You can also contact me, and I can connect you to the resources best suited to your concerns.

Disability Services Center: Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Center at 949-824-7494 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

When are we doing these things?

The following calendar, which is subject to change, gives you a sense of the overall plan when it comes to assigned readings and the major writing projects:

<p><u>Week 1 (June 26):</u> Syllabus; Jasinski, "Ethos"</p> <p><u>Week 2 (July 3):</u> Wasserstrom, "Hotel California"</p> <p><u>Week 3 (July 10):</u> WP1</p> <p><u>Week 4 (July 17):</u> Vo, "Constructing a Vietnamese American Community: Economic and Political Transformation in Little Saigon, Orange County"</p> <p><u>Week 5 (July 24):</u> WP2</p>	<p><u>Week 6 (July 31):</u> Revisit WP1 and WP2</p> <p><u>Week 7 (August 7):</u> Houston, Basolo, and Yang, "Walkability, Transit Access, and Traffic Exposure for Low-Income Residents with Subsidized Housing"</p> <p><u>Week 8 (August 14):</u> Work on WP3</p> <p><u>Week 9 (August 21):</u> Finish work on WP3</p> <p><u>Week 10 (August 28):</u> Cover letter draft; Portfolio due 9/1 at noon</p>
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All readings will be available through our Canvas class page. Also, this calendar above is only meant as a general overview. In the Modules section of the Canvas page, I will post week-by-week reading and writing assignments. Make it a habit to check Canvas routinely.