

Intergenerational Writing

WRTG 3020, 077 Fall 2023

TU/Th 3:30-4:45 PM

VAC 1B88

Who knows only his own generation remains always a child.
-George Norlin (adapted from Cicero)

Writing is never just writing.
-Linda Adler Kassner

Wisdom begins in wonder.
-Socrates

Course Description

In this class, we will investigate different perspectives about the American Dream by considering how our identities interact with cultural mythologies that we live out across generations. Our class incorporates Boulder community partners from the Baby Boomer (1946-64) and Silent Generations (1925-45) to facilitate a richer and more nuanced conversation between generations.

We will read articles about the writing process and ways of using writing to interrogate, reflect upon, and communicate ideas. We'll also read, discuss, and write about perceptions and realities of the American Dream as experienced by people from a wide range of identities.

You will workshop each of the major writing assignments in class at least once. During workshops you'll share your writing with classmates for feedback and suggestions. I can't emphasize enough how valuable workshops can be, and I urge you not to discount your classmates' input. As your readers, they can provide invaluable feedback and insights for improving your ability to organize and articulate information meaningfully.

We will also develop effective research and citation strategies—essential skills for your academic career. Written assignments in this class will require you to compose and present in a variety of formats about diverse topics directed at various audiences. This will best prepare you to meet future interdisciplinary challenges of writing in various academic fields and professions.

Participation in discussions and workshops is ESSENTIAL to your grade and success in this course.

Class Readings and Materials

All class readings and materials are available on the course Canvas site. To access the readings and agenda for any given class meeting, use the course calendar or the modules page.

Student-Community Member Pairs

During the third week of class, each student will be paired with a community member. This pairing will last throughout the semester and is intended to facilitate intergenerational exchange of ideas and collaboration on class projects such as the Profile Essay. Pairs will be randomly assigned unless the student indicates a preference via email by no later than midnight Monday, September 10th. Pairing will be announced in class on Tuesday, September 11th.

Mutual Mentorship: This class operates on the concept that every one of us brings valuable life experiences and insights that we can all learn from. We collaborate as equals who share a love of learning and conversation.

Coursework

Response Papers

You will write periodic papers responding to issues raised in readings and class discussions. Prompts and evaluation guidelines will be provided in Canvas. These papers will typically be about 2-3 pages long (about 500-750 words, dbl. spaced) and are expected to **demonstrate not only understanding of the text, but thoughtful responses and criticisms of the content and its rhetorical delivery.**

Profile Essay

You will interview a community partner and then write a thoughtful and engaging profile about that person. I will provide a list of suggested questions and examples of past profiles. The essay is 5-7 pages (1250-1750 words, dbl. spaced). It is expected that you produce multiple drafts and can articulate changes you made in the process of writing your papers.

This assignment will help you practice:

- creating one unifying focus by synthesizing and/or eliminating disparate points;
- supporting your focus by presenting evidence (in this case, showing instead of just telling);
- incorporating pathos (appeals to the readers' emotions, personal experiences, or most deeply held values) into your writing;
- identifying and eliminating words, sentences, and paragraphs that do not help you achieve your purpose; and,
- using strong verbs, precise wording, and concision to craft sentences with more punch.

Research Analysis

You'll start by developing research questions about topics and issues that you and your community partner are personally AND academically interested in. Your research will require gathering and reading scholarly and popular articles, and investigating civic sources, case studies, and interviews. As you explore topics and issues, you will consider the relevance your generation's experiences and aspirations.

Your objective is to articulate an original research question that identifies a gap or shortcoming in your current knowledge and then write a paper that fills this gap in an original and engaging essay.

You'll complete a rhetorical analysis questionnaire for each of eight sources that will help you to summarize and analyze the information you've gathered.

This assignment will help you practice:

- using the library resources to find scholarly and popular articles;
- experiencing research as a curiosity-driven enterprise;
- recognizing that academic and civic writing are part of an ongoing conversation;
- identifying the main point of a scholarly or popular source and determining whether it is argumentative or strictly informative;
- describing and critiquing the rational reasons and evidence the author presents (logos);
- investigating an author's credibility and an argument's validity (ethos); and,
- articulating how a specific source fits into the bigger picture of your topic and argument.

Research Presentation

Just before you move from the research phase to writing the investigative essay, you and your community partner will give a short presentation (**about 10 minutes**) that provides an overview of your research and that outlines your upcoming essay. Presentations will contain visual and/or auditory elements that help you to articulate your topic and argument. Ultimately, your purpose is to pitch your paper to me and the class by convincing us of its relevance and importance.

This assignment will help you practice:

- coordinating and writing a presentation with a partner;
- selecting appropriate multi-media to help your audience understand your topic and research question;
- editing your content to be concise, interesting, and memorable; and,
- speaking in front of a group—a skill that will always come in handy.

Investigative Essay

You will build on your research project by taking an informed position and writing an argumentative essay (**about 7-9 pages; 1750-2250 words dbl. spaced**) incorporating your research. Community partners should assist with locating research and responding to student drafts.

This essay will help you practice:

- applying the skills (pathos, brevity) you developed in the Profile Essay to a more academic context;
- maintaining your grasp of the narrative skills you gained in the Mythology Essay as you complicate the essay form by adding research;
- understanding your own academic writing as contributing to an ongoing conversation (in this case, the conversation you investigated in your research and summarized in your presentation); and,
- referencing scholarly and popular journal articles to support your rational reasons (logos) and to establish credibility (ethos).

American Myth Essay

You will write a **1000–1250-word double-spaced essay (4-5 pages)** that describes your personal experience with a myth of the American Dream. In this context, a “myth” should be thought of as a recurrent theme in the American dream that’s rooted in a strongly held belief or assumption that America struggles to realize. A famous example of this would be Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech where he challenges America to live up to its promise that “All men are created equal.” He reflects on the inherent righteousness of this belief and describes the disenfranchisement of African Americans who have waited for centuries to see this promise upheld.

This assignment will help you practice:

- applying narrative skills you gained from the profile essay;
- using logos (logically laying out rational reasons and presenting evidence in the form of examples) to support your argument;
- refining your grasp of the nuts and bolts of a standard essay (intro, thesis statement, topic sentences, conclusion, etc.); and
- identifying and addressing alternative and dissenting points of view.

Portfolio

At the end of the semester, you’ll survey your writing and evaluate your progress as a writer and thinker. Therefore, I ask you to **complete multiple drafts and save all your work**.

You’ll write an essay (**2 pages; 500 words, dbl. spaced**) responding to a prompt about the writing process and course goals to demonstrate how your writing fulfills these objectives. As

your evidence, you'll demonstrate your revision process using annotated drafts of the American Myth essay. This assignment will help you demonstrate the writing skills and strategies we've learned in our class.

Assignment Weighting and Grading

Coursework	Percentage of Semester Grade
Critical Response Papers	10%
Profile Essay	10%
American Myth Essay	10%
Research Analysis	10%
Research Presentation	10%
Investigative Essay	15%
Portfolio	20%
Participation and attendance (discussions, workshops, group work, and in-class assignments)	15%

Grading and Evaluation

A = 92-100%

A- = 90-91.9%

- o Excellent content, form, and style
- o Original, precise, persuasive, clear, and free from mechanical errors
- o Significant critical challenges of assumptions and attention to differing points of view

B+ = 87-89.9%

B = 82-86.9%

B- = 80-81.9%

- o Very good content, form and style, without major flaws
- o Original, with above-average thought and expression

C+ = 77-79.9%

C = 72-76.9%

C- = 70-71.9%

- o Basic fulfillment of the assignment
- o Adequate or reasonably competent
- o Uneven: mixture of strengths or weaknesses

D+ = 67-69.9%

D = 62-66.9%

D- = 60-61.9%

- o Inadequate to fulfill assignment
- o Poor content, form, or style
- o Disorganized, illogical, confusing, unfocused, or containing pervasive errors that impair readability

F = 0-59.9%

- Incoherent, incomplete, or late, plagiarized, or never submitted

Class Policies

Office Hours

My Zoom office hours this fall are from 1-2 PM Mondays and Fridays (and by appointment): <https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/2309488357> . I strongly recommend taking the time to meet with me at least once early in the semester to personally introduce yourself. Office hours are intended to be a time for asking questions and seeking support for your class work. I love working one-to-one with students and encourage you to visit.

Late Work

If you're concerned about a deadline or having difficulty with an assignment, I'm here to help you, but it's your responsibility to reach out to me **BEFORE** the deadline for an extension. **If you should miss class for any reason, you must arrange to submit your work on or prior to assignment deadlines.**

Make-up Work: I only permit you to make up work missed due to absence **if** we've arranged it beforehand in via email. Such an arrangement is at my discretion and requires that you contact me in writing **BEFORE** the absence (or as soon as possible if the absence resulted from an emergency).

Workload and Available Assistance

Expect to spend between 4-9 hours per week outside of class working on readings, writing assignments, and meeting with your partner. I provide extensive written standards for every major assignment and will grade your submissions based on your performance of these explicit criteria. This class, like all writing classes, requires a significant amount of your time for reading and writing. If you suspect that you might be over-extended, I strongly advise taking the course another semester.

My role is to provide you with all the tools and support you need to do well if you put in the time and effort. Your peers will give you written and oral feedback on your drafts and you'll have frequent opportunities to meet with me for feedback and advice. In addition, I strongly recommend that you **visit the Writing Center early and often.**

Attendance Policy

You are responsible for regularly attending our class. In-person attendance of class meetings is required as part of participation credit in the course.

Absences

You may miss up to four class meetings without penalty to your participation grade if you provide written notice beforehand.

Points will be deducted from your attendance and participation grades for absences without notice and absences exceeding the stated limit. You will also be prohibited from making up work from such absences. **Missing more than eight class meetings will result in a failing grade in this class.**

Please plan ahead: I suggest sharing contact information with at least one classmate so you can catch up on what you missed if you must be absent from class. In case you get very sick, it's a good idea to keep a list of your classes and instructors' contact information somewhere that your roommate or family will be able to find it. That way, you can have them contact me immediately, so I can work with you to keep up in the class.

I realize that it's occasionally necessary to miss class if you're ill, observing a religious holiday, participating in a CU-sponsored athletic or academic activity, have jury duty, military service, or simply need a personal day.

However, it's your responsibility to communicate with me and classmates IN ADVANCE so you keep up with coursework (reading, assignments, group commitments, etc.).

When you're absent, you'll miss

- graded in-class assignments and quizzes; these cannot be made up unless you've arranged that with me BEFORE the absence;
- class discussions and exercises designed to prepare you for your assignments;
- graded workshops, which are a very important opportunity to get feedback that will help you improve your papers (these cannot be made up); and,
- opportunities to earn participation points by contributing to class discussions and activities.

Scheduling Conflicts

Students formally affiliated with curricular and extracurricular University-related activities are required to communicate in writing with the instructor about potential conflicts within the first week of class or as soon as the student learns of a conflicting event. This deadline is established to provide students with time to change their course schedule if necessary. Instructors are not obligated to accommodate any potential conflicts, but may, at their own discretion, allow reasonable accommodations for these absences.

In this class, you are required to notify me in writing of any scheduling conflicts as soon as you are aware of them. Notification must be made BEFORE the absence. I will work with you to stay caught up in class.

Emergencies

Special consideration is entirely at my discretion and will only be possible if **you**

- **contact me ASAP to explain the absence,**
- **keep in touch if you miss multiple classes,**
- **provide documentation promptly, and**
- **submit missed work by agreed upon deadlines.**

Failure on your part make these arrangements will result in losing any opportunity to earn points for this work and may lead to failure in the course.

Academic Integrity

We will discuss appropriate citation techniques and how to acknowledge your sources. It is your responsibility to make sure you understand how to integrate your research into your papers without plagiarizing. If you suspect you may need more explanation than is offered in class, I will be happy to meet with you during office hours. The Writing Center and reference librarians can also assist with citation questions and online resources like [Purdue OWL](#).

Often, students plagiarize because they feel overwhelmed and doubt their ability to complete work on their own.

- Start early.
- If you're feeling overwhelmed or confused, please talk to me. If you let me know early and you're willing to work hard, there's very little we can't accomplish.

If you submit plagiarized work, you will fail the course and will be reported to The Honor Code Council for non-academic sanctions.

Generative AI Technologies

Generative AI technologies (GAI) are any artificial intelligence technology that can produce or summarize digital content (e.g., text, images, video, audio) from a prompt. Current examples include ChatGPT, Bard, Perplexity, the Google Docs "Help me write" feature, Dall-E, and Midjourney.

Development as a writer requires personal investment and practice. GAIs are tools that good writers may rely on in some situations. Part of your development as a writer entails critically considering different occasions and developing a rationale for the appropriate use of AI writing tools. It is important to be aware of the limitations and ethical issues surrounding the use of GAIs:

- GAIs work by predicting what text is most likely to follow previous text based on the information it has been "trained" on. Therefore, they can often return incorrect or

false information. For example, they may cite nonexistent academic references or completely make up facts.

- GAI's can generate biased text, including racial, ethnic, or gender bias present in the training data.
- The output may not fit the style or genre you are writing in and may compromise the development of your own voice. Frankly, most text that GAI's produce is pretty boring!
- GAI's will likely use your work as subsequent training data if you ask them to edit your work, which is a privacy and intellectual property concern.
- If you do use a GAI as a tool in your writing process, **you are ultimately responsible for the work you turn in under your own name.**

In this class, do not use verbatim text from GAI's. We will be learning how to join academic conversations, and you cannot "converse" with GAI's since they are not intelligent – they do not make their own claims. Furthermore, if you turn in an AI's work as your own, you are making the argument that you can do no better than AI and are thus replaceable by AI. Why would any employer hire you if you can't outperform AI?

In addition, **do not use GAI's for peer review**, since submitting another student's work to GAI's violates their privacy and deprives them of the human reaction they are expecting.

The following are cases where it is reasonable to use GAI's on your formal assignments:

- brainstorming or generating ideas/questions/topics
- planning or tweaking the organization of your assignments

If you use GAI's in this class in any way, you are required to write a few sentences at the end of your assignment explaining which app you used, how you used it, and where in your assignment one would see its contribution (which, again, should NOT be verbatim text). It's always a good idea to keep screenshots to document GAI technologies you use for academic work. Such documentation is especially useful if you are accused of plagiarism.

Using verbatim text from GAI's, or failing to disclose your use of GAI's, will be treated as a form of academic dishonesty akin to plagiarism or cheating, reportable to the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution and punishable with a zero on the assignment.

Request to re-evaluate a graded assignment

I strongly encourage you to visit my office hours or arrange an appointment so we can discuss your grades and performance in the class. I especially recommend that you visit with specific questions **before assignments are due**. I evaluate your coursework based on how well you've met written criteria on my assignments.

If you believe that a piece of your work has not been evaluated according to the written criteria of my assignment description, please

- Write an email or letter explaining why you believe your grade warrants reconsideration.

- Support your reasoning with examples from your paper and attach the graded paper in question. These may be submitted electronically (scan the graded paper), or in hard copy.

I will respond in writing after I've had an opportunity to review the work and consider your request. Grade re-evaluation requests must be submitted within 14 days of receiving the graded paper.

Campus Resources and Policies

Requirements for Infectious Diseases

Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all public health orders to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

The CU Boulder campus is currently mask optional. However, if masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class. Students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. Students who require accommodation because a disability prevents them from fulfilling safety measures related to infectious disease will be asked to follow the steps in the "Accommodation for Disabilities" statement on this syllabus.

For those who feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, please stay home and follow the further guidance of the Public Health Office. For those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to stay home.

In this class, if you are sick or quarantined, you must contact me via email as soon as possible to alert me that you will be missing class due to illness. You are protected by FERPA student privacy laws and are not required to state the nature of your illness when alerting me. You do NOT need to submit a doctor's note or quarantine verification for classes missed due to illness or quarantine; campus health services do not provide "doctor's notes," appointment verifications or quarantine verifications.

Classroom Behavior

No recordings of any kind are permitted without written consent from the instructor. Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the [classroom behavior](#) policy, the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation

Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

Mental Health and Wellness

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.

Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through Academic Live Care. The Academic Live Care site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found on the [Honor Code website](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination and harassment, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these policies, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of any issues related to these policies regardless of when or where they occurred to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and resolution options. To learn more about reporting and support options for a variety of concerns, visit [Don't Ignore It](#).

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Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance.

In this class, I require that you contact me in writing BEFORE the class you will miss to let me know that you will be observing a religious holiday.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Writing Center FAQs

Why should I visit the Writing Center?

- Free one-to-one tutoring sessions with professionally trained writing consultants
- Objective feedback and advice in an encouraging conversational setting
- Individualized guidance at any writing stage from brainstorming through final revisions
- Time-saving strategies to improve your clarity, organization, citation, and self-editing

What sorts of writing can I bring into the Writing Center?

- We welcome writing in any academic subject at any level and at any stage of the writing process. In fact, you do not need to have started writing yet. Some of our favorite sessions are those where we help students to plan their papers. We also help with resumes, cover letters, personal statements, and other application materials.

When can I visit the Writing Center?

- Appointment hours are M-TH 9PM-6PM MST, F 9AM-3PM MST, and SUN 1-9 PM MST.
- Drop-in hours are in Norlin E111 M-Th 12-5 and Friday 12-3

What types of sessions are available?

- **In-person Sessions** are 50-minutes long and take place at Norlin E111. Reserve a session using the QR Code below.
- **Remote Synchronous Sessions** are 50-minutes long and are hosted on Zoom (camera optional). You and your consultant will discuss your writing while sharing screens. Reserve a session using the QR Code below.
- **Drop-in Sessions** are 25-minute in-person meetings that do not require a reservation. Sessions are first-come, first-served.

What if I'm having difficulty making an appointment or have other questions?

- Please contact us at writingcenter@colorado.edu . Appointment times book up quickly, so be sure to make reservations a few days in advance.

