



ENG 333-1HE: Advanced Writing: Nonfiction (Honors)

Fall 2024

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. Ashanka Kumari (she/her/hers)

Office Location: David Talbot Hall 225

Office Hours: 12–2pm Thursdays or make an appointment at tidycal.com/ashanka

Email (preferred communication mode): ashanka.kumari@tamuc.edu

Communication Response Time: 24 business hours

COURSE INFORMATION

In this class, you will engage in an intensive study of the principles of nonfiction composition through the analysis of examples from modern writings and practice in the application of those principles. Through the themes of identity and culture, you will explore and consider rhetorical practices and organization within the techniques of narrative and expository writing. You will devote much time to writing your own work.

Prerequisites: ENG 1302 and sophomore standing (with honors college approval)

Materials—Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

- Nezhukumatathil, Aimee. (2020). *World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments*. Paperback Edition. ISBN: 978-1-63955-056-2
- Wilkerson, Isabel. (2022). *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. Paperback adapted for young adults edition. ISBN: 978-0-593-42797-2.
- Additional course readings available via our D2L course shell
- Adobe Creative Cloud (free for TAMUC students)
- A valid, working leomail email address that you check often (everyday)
- At least two storage methods such as cloud storage, flash drive, folder, etc.

Student Learning Outcomes

Through a mixture of reading, writing, and discussion throughout the semester, you will:

1. Analyze nonfiction texts and create a sustained project on a topic of your choosing.
2. Engage multiple perspectives exploring real-world situations and problems.
3. Compose nonfiction in multiple modalities.
4. Demonstrate revision throughout your composing process while taking into account peer and instructor feedback.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

General Overview of Required Work

As a student in this class, expect to write every day on an informal level, drafting short pieces that you might (or might not) share with your classmates and me, with the goal of moving from these frequent drafts to longer pieces of writing intended for several different kinds of audiences. As the semester progresses, you'll get feedback on your writing, and you'll have the chance to continue to develop and revise those pieces based on that feedback.

Both informal and formal writing assignments will be centered on learning about writing nonfiction. You will engage multiple types of sources, genres, and modes, and projects will have multiple drafts to encourage the revision process. One ultimate and important goal of our class is to help you see your writing through the eyes of other people, to listen to what they have to say about your writing and ideas, and then make revisions that meet your readers' expectations in the next draft.

Weekly Deadlines and Expectations

In brief, you'll work through the following each week (details in Course Schedule):

Lecture & Discuss	Tuesdays & Thursdays from 2-3:15 pm in SS 309. During this time, we will engage in discussions about assigned texts and relevant ideas surrounding nonfiction writing.
Read & Compose	Ongoing. You should read assigned course texts ahead of each class; after week 1, you will also have regular writing assignments that you might share in class.

While I hope this structure assists with building routines as you acclimate to college life, I know life happens. On top of the typical challenges, I recognize that many of you might be dealing with technical issues, grief, uncertain childcare, serious viruses and their variants, classes in different formats, financial precarity—and so am I.

So this is what I promise you: I will strive to make each week interactive and useful for you. I expect you to log on regularly, and your participation will be self-assessed in reflection moments throughout the semester. I understand that participation and contribution can look and mean something different to each of us, but ultimately, to do well in this course, you should contribute to discussions, raise questions, respond to classmates, and share insights in ways that keep conversations moving forward in meaningful, generative, and generous ways.

Assessments*

- Weekly writing—Processing Journals
- Learning Goals & Histories Essay
- Policy Investigation Project
- Wonder Essay
- In-Class Writing and Group Work
- Course Reflection Project

Grading

I thoroughly believe that grades are technologies of surveillance and control. I never liked grades, and I have always felt they limit the learning process, create nasty habits designed to “get the A,” and cause more anxiety than they are worth. However, I also realize that grades are important data points for you—your scholarships, majors, future jobs, and ability to graduate are all tied up in the grades you earn.

To balance my distrust of grades with the requirements and expectations of academic spaces, we will work on a **feedback and revision model**, and we will discuss these expectations together throughout the semester. Regardless, you will receive (a lot of) feedback from me and your peers throughout the semester with the expectation that you use that feedback to continually revise, rethink, and remix your work.

On individual assignments, your work will be marked as FULL CREDIT, HALF CREDIT, NO CREDIT, or EXCUSED in D2L, which break down as follows:

- **Full Credit:** the assignment was fully completed following the assignment prompt and guidelines and is turned in on time. Strong effort is evident and only minor revisions would be beneficial.
- **Half Credit:** the assignment has incomplete elements and/or the project was not turned in on time. Some effort is evident, but major revisions would be beneficial. *For assignments marked Half Credit, you are encouraged to revise and resubmit toward Full Credit.*
- **No Credit:** project wasn't completed and/or wasn't turned in promptly.
- **Excused:** project is incomplete due to uncontrollable circumstances that you have clearly communicated (within reason) to Dr. Kumari

However, this course is not “gradeless” because I, begrudgingly, have to enter a midterm and final course grade. At the end of the semester, I will review your work, my various responses to your work throughout the semester, your attempts to compose something of quality, and your general fortitude and determine a final grade using the standard TAMUC grading scale. You may always meet with me to discuss your progress in the course (though don't expect me to give you a “grade”).

ACCESS, NAVIGATION, & RESOURCES

I recognize that our classroom is made up of an array of learners and am happy to make any reasonable accommodations to make sure every student has an equal experience in my class. For example, you may prefer to process information by speaking and listening; or you might feel more capable of participating via individual assignments rather than discussion threads online.

Please talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them. If you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services including the Counseling Center are available to all students. I recognize that disabilities can be visible and invisible, and I am dedicated to ensuring that all students succeed in my courses.

Students with Disabilities—ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm. 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

Learning Management System (LMS)

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements:

- [LMS Requirements](#)
- [LMS Browser Support](#)
- [Zoom Video Conferencing Tool](#)

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903-468-6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace (D2L), please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: [Brightspace Support](#).

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. You should have *at least* two storage methods such as a flash drive, cloud storage, folder, etc. to back up all your class materials. You should also have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems such as the local library, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

A Note on Learning

As we pursue learning together, I strive to keep the following guiding principles (inspired by the Chronicle of Higher Education):

- Put people first. As we learn human-centered philosophies and methodologies in this course, I hope we practice empathy and be cognizant of how our own realities (day-to-day lives) can be imposed upon others whose lives may differ drastically from ours.
- Stay informed. We will keep ourselves educated about any public health and safety situations and make informed decisions about our personal, social, and professional lives.

- Communicate early and often. Even when we are physically and socially apart, we can remain connected through various communication platforms. Always reach out if you need anything necessary to support your learning and your own well-being.
- Celebrate accomplishments. Any achievements, major or minor, during this time are a testament to your dedication and perseverance. We will enable a culture of celebration in this class. So, feel free to share with me your successes (and failures when you attempt something), and I will acknowledge them however you prefer.
- Take care of yourself. Get enough rest, food, movement, and anything you need to keep you in a positive mood and good health. If you don't feel well, do not force yourself through the coursework. Let me know so we can work out alternatives together.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding the Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Communication

Communication is a key part of success in this course. I am available via email (ashanka.kumari@tamuc.edu) from 9am-4pm weekdays or by appointment (email me to set up a time) to discuss assignments and other course-related concerns. I also have walk-in office hours on Thursdays from 12-2pm in Talbot Hall Room 225. Please note that I may not respond to emails between 8pm and 7am. Please include a proper opening, clear message and subject line, and closing salutation in emails. Here's an example:

To: Professor (English.Instructor@tamuc.edu)

From: Jane Student (jstudent13@leomail.tamuc.edu)

Subject: Jane Student. CID 2301-01W. Office Hours Question.

Good morning Professor [Last Name],

I would like to meet with you to discuss my thesis statement for the rhetorical analysis essay. I cannot make your office hours. Can I set up an appointment? I am available to meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday after 3:00 p.m.

Thank you,

Jane Smith

Accountabilibuddy: Write down the contact information for one or two other classmates below. If you are absent, contact one of these classmates to ask about what you might have missed, provide one another support—we're all in this together! These classmates might be the first ones you turn to when you are confused, have a question about what's due/when it's due, or are running late to class.

Name	Email Address	Phone Number

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress or weather, may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced immediately.

Grievances

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another medium, should then schedule an appointment with Dr. Sharon Kowalsky, by emailing her (Sharon.Kowalsky@tamuc.edu). Before an appointment is scheduled, the student must provide clearly documented and explained issues as to why the meeting is being requested. The student must also state when they discussed the issue in person or via phone (not email) with the instructor already. Where applicable, students should also consult [University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 \("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation"\)](#).

Respect & Student Conduct

Each class is made up of diverse individuals with a variety of backgrounds and beliefs, so we won't always agree with one another on every issue. You will probably feel uneasy, uncomfortable, or challenged at some point in this class. In fact, those moments can often lead to greater insight and understanding. However, rudeness and insults will not be tolerated. Our classroom should be a respectful space where we all feel comfortable and safe sharing our thoughts, and professionalism and boundaries are very important to me as a professor.

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Inclusion Policy & Nondiscrimination Notice

Your value as a member of this course and university community at large is vital to me, regardless of social identity factors. While at times, the topic of class discussions, readings, and other activities may take you out of your comfort zone, or even go against your individual perception of the world, you are expected to keep an open mind and evaluate claims based on fact and knowledge, rather than preconceived notions alone. For questions, concerns, and problems related to discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, nationality, gender identity, sexuality, religion, veteran status, or other social or personal identity factors, please come talk to me.

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race,

color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In order to measure the level of compliance with the university's Institutional Effectiveness guidelines, throughout the semester, I will collect some of the ungraded texts you produce. The texts will be part of a portfolio created on your behalf and will be measured to ensure that our program "promotes practices that result in higher student academic achievement; an enhanced student experience; aligned and transparent decisions; and readily available information for improvement, accountability, and accreditation." This is solely an assessment of program effectiveness and in no way affects students' course grades or GPA.

Writing Center

The Writing Center offers writers free, one-on-one assistance. We currently offer 45min, face-to-face or online sessions that writers can book from our website:

www.tamuc.edu/writing-center

We welcome all writers, majors, and disciplines—undergraduate and graduate students alike (faculty and staff too!). Research shows that all workers benefit from sharing their work with a focused reader. The Writing Center staff is trained to support writers in any stage of the writing process (from the blank page to polishing sentences), and we work with writers to verbalize writing goals and to stay on track with larger writing projects. We work with any form of writing (academic and nonacademic). The writers with whom we work usually bring projects like important emails, weekly writing assignments, midterm and final essays, and theses and dissertations. Contact us with any questions here: writingcenter@tamuc.edu.

Library

The Velma Waters Library supports the research, learning and teaching interests of students, faculty and staff. Connect with a librarian, explore our research and course guides, and attend workshops.

- Chat with a Librarian! Get immediate assistance with our [chat service](#) on the main Library page: <https://www.tamuc.edu/library/>
- Email ask@tamuc.libanswers.com. We will respond to your email within 24 hours, often much sooner.
- Text your question to 903.225.2862.
- Call the Waters Library at 903.886.5718 or contact the librarian for your college/department to discuss your research needs.
- Meet With Us! Don't stay up all night searching Google. Schedule a one-on-one consultation held in-person or via Zoom with the librarian for your college/academic department.
- Visit Us! We'd love to meet you in-person!
 - Waters Library Research Office: Second Floor, Room 213
 - Waters Library University Archives: 4th Floor, Room 406A
 - A&M-Commerce at Mesquite Metroplex Center: Second Floor, Study Room

Academic Integrity & Honesty

Here is the official word on plagiarism and academic integrity from TAMUC:

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

Basically, plagiarism is any attempt to pass off someone else's words or ideas as your own, but also not giving credit where credit is due. As your instructor, I want to know YOUR thoughts, YOUR ideas, and what YOU have to say—and it doesn't have to be perfect the first time. If you are struggling with an assignment, please come talk to me, and I will help you in any way that I can. Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

TurnItIn

I promise to never use turnitin.com or other proprietary tools like it because these programs make money off your work without compensating you. Here's how it works: A university pays turinit.com for its services (with your tuition dollars). Teachers place student papers in the program's "bank," and the program compares that paper with other papers existing in the bank. At that point, the student's paper becomes part of the bank. Therefore, turnitin.com and other tools are making money from this bank full of papers written by uncompensated students. For more information on this issue, see this article from the journal *Hybrid Pedagogy*: <https://hybridpedagogy.org/resisting-edtech/>.

AI use in course

I anticipate that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be a topic of conversation this semester, and you may even choose to research it or use it to enhance your own writing process. I highly suggest that you carefully consider the ethical and privacy implications of employing any kind of composing or AI-generative technology. You should *absolutely never* input the intellectual property of others into any AI system without expressed permission; that is, do not input course readings or other materials into AI. I'm happy to discuss further if needed.

Here's the University's policy (as of August 2023) regarding AI:

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructor's guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Civil Rights Protections and Compliance

[The recent law](#) that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.