

ATCM 3301 | Writing for ATEC | Spring 2025

Course Information

ATCM 3301.002.S25
Class/Course No. 24595 / 000820
Meeting Time: MW 2:30 – 3:45 pm
Classroom Location: ATC 2.101
Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisite: RHET 1302

Contact Information

Instructor: Audra Heaslip (please call me “Professor” or “Ms. Heaslip”)

Pronouns: She/her

Email: audra.heaslip@utdallas.edu

Please format and address all emails regarding the class professionally, include the course information in the subject line, and allow up to 24 hours for responses (and longer for weekends)

Office Phone: 972-883-7587

Office Location: ATC 3.609

Student Hours: By appointment on weekdays, in person or MS Teams. I do not receive eLearning messages; please use regular email or Teams chat

Course Description

This writing intensive course focuses on the genres of writing associated with arts, technology, and emerging communication. ATCM 3301 trains students in the process of writing about media (animation, design, games, and so forth) for a variety of audiences. Writing assignments and oral presentations prepare students for the types of writing that are common in the media and cultural industries including formal analysis, interpretation, the personal or artist’s statement, and project proposals.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- Improved writing skills
- Demonstrated ability to write in various modes (reflective, descriptive, argumentative, generative)
- Evaluating the student’s creative work and that of others
- Communicating to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- Engage in constructive feedback and iteration

Required Textbooks and Materials

- Various articles and chapters, all available through online resources. Those not listed in the syllabus are available in a shared Box folder (link on eLearning).
- Students are required to bring to class their own laptop or tablet, or borrow one from the ATEC Open Lab, especially on peer review and workshop days. A mobile device alone is not sufficient for this course.

Assignments Overview

Participation (15%): (Includes Think Pieces/Quizzes/Short Writings) Participation is not just about being present, but coming to class on time, prepared, and ready to contribute to class discussions and in-class activities. Think pieces are short written responses (150-200 words) that address a question or problem posed for that day’s assigned readings/topic and are submitted in eLearning.

Essay 1 – Artist Statement (10%): A short artist/work statement (approx. 300 words) providing a general introduction to your creative work. The Artist Statement focuses on enhancing the way a viewer understands your work by providing some context. This statement will be revised for the student’s final portfolio submission.

Essay 2 – Media Analysis (20%): A formal/technical analysis and interpretation of a media object (1,200 – 1,500 words) from a list of suggested works. This assignment will be written in multiple drafts and will receive written instructor/TA comments.

Essay 3 – Self Media Analysis (15%): A formal/technical analysis and interpretation (1,000 – 1, 250 words) of one piece of the student’s own creative works. Written feedback on draft from instructor/TA available only on written request.

Essay 4 – Proposal (20%): A conceptual essay (900 – 1,200 words) that proposes a future project for a specific audience. The proposal will discuss the background and overview of the piece, provide a description of the process and work itself, and argue for its significance. This assignment will be written in multiple drafts and will receive written instructor/TA comments.

Presentation (10%): A short talk presentation lasting between 3-5 minutes over your proposed project from Essay 4. The presentation will be given in class for a non-specialist audience, followed by a Q&A session. Presentations are scheduled during the final three weeks of the course.

Final Writing Portfolio (10%): Revise and submit the Artist Statement and one other paper assignment to the eLearning class portfolio system. The portfolio must also include notes about what changes were made in each paper, and a short written reflection.

*Full assignment descriptions and grading rubrics can be found on Box.

Course Policies

Grades

Course grades are based on a 100-point scale. Final grades fall on the following ranges: A+ = 97-100, A = 94-96, A- = 90-93, B+ = 87-89, B = 84-86, B- = 80-83, and so on. There is no curve. There are no individual extra-credit or re-take options.

A Range: Excellent	B Range: Good	C Range: Fair	D Range: Needs Improvement	F Range: Failing
Original, exceptional work, excellent performance, demonstrates mastery of material, surpasses expectations, often inventive	Strong, above-average work, achieves goals of assignment in a thorough fashion, solid grasp of course materials and concepts	Satisfactory, meets assignment requirements and demonstrates adequate grasp of course materials and concepts	Assignment requirements and expectations not met, below average, demonstrates misunderstanding of material	F grades are given to students who fail to meet the expectations and requirements of an assignment, who submit AI-generated or plagiarized work (see below), or who fail to submit assignments altogether
A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D+, D, D-	F

Accommodations and Academic Support

Students with disabilities are encouraged to utilize the on-campus resources at the [Student AccessAbility Resource Center](#) (ARC). You can contact the office at 972-883-2098 or by email: studentaccess@utdallas.edu

Their office is located in the Administration Building, Room 2.224. They can provide documentation and details for accommodations to address your individual needs.

If you need any special accommodations to complete this course successfully, please provide me with this information as soon as possible, so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Additionally, the information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students. Please go to: <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>

If you learn a bit differently but do not qualify for, or have the resources to seek, an accommodation, there are still ways I can support your success. Be sure to let me know so we can creatively approach your experience in this class.

Classroom Conduct

It is our responsibility to work together to produce a classroom environment where everyone can share, discuss, and question the materials at hand as well as contribute their own work respectfully and productively. Conflicting perspectives are unavoidable. To ensure that participants feel comfortable contributing a diverse set of thoughts, comments, and views, we will not use oppressive or harmful language, tolerate harassment, personal attacks, and other actions that unduly distract from the educational mission and inflict emotional, physical, or psychological harm on those involved.

Part of the role of encouraging a diverse learning environment is acknowledging that individuals should feel safe and respected to contribute to the classroom in good faith. This involves not only allowing everyone opportunities to contribute their thoughts but to be mindful of how we recognize and address others. Do not assume things about others' identities, backgrounds, or experiences—whether that is age, race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, etc. Address people by their names, pronouns, and other identifiers that they disclose. Avoid insisting on imposing identity markers onto others. Allow people to self-identify as they feel comfortable.

What you share with and create for this class reflects not only you as both a student and a civic subject, but it also reflects on me as your instructor, the class as a learning community, and UT Dallas as an academic institution.

Please discuss with me any concerns you have regarding an unsafe or hostile classroom environment, particularly if something arises that causes distress.

Note on Recent Changes to Texas Laws

Texas Senate Bill 17, the recent law that prohibits diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and activities at public universities in Texas, does not in any way apply to academic course instruction. Students should not feel the need to self-censor or limit their participation in academic courses pertaining to topics of race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion, and related topics.

Content Warning

Our classroom provides an open space for the critical and civil exchange of ideas. Some readings and other content in this course will include topics that some students may find offensive and/or traumatizing. I aim to forewarn students about potentially disturbing content, and I ask all students to help create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity.

Attendance

Attend class regularly and in full, provided you are well enough to attend.

Absences: Please do not share personal health details or doctor's notes; simply **email** to notify me you will be absent due to illness/family emergency/etc.

Excessive absences with no explanation, lateness or leaving early, or failure to prepare for class may impact course grades. Discuss upcoming potential absences with me to make appropriate arrangements.

Students are advised to stay home and limit contact with others **if you feel sick or have symptoms of a contagious illness**. Staying home when sick will **not** negatively affect your grade.

It is helpful to wear a face mask in class if you are well enough to attend but are coughing, sneezing, etc. Everyone is encouraged to practice good hand hygiene. Please see the guidelines for [Community Health](#) at UTD.

From the Office of Institutional Risk and Safety: UTD “community members are highly mobile and interconnected. It is your responsibility to learn more about total well-being, infectious diseases and health protection practices that may impact your health and the health of those around you.”

Vaccines, tests, basic medical care and other services are offered in the [Student Health Center](#) (SSB4.700).

Turnitin.com

All essay assignments, including drafts, will be submitted through eLearning’s Turnitin system. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm submission of their work. Essay feedback from the instructor or TA will be available inside Turnitin.

*Turnitin is notorious for requiring multiple clicks to properly submit an assignment. Make 100% sure it has fully submitted and that you receive a receipt of submission before you move on!

Late Work and Grace Period

For assignments due at 11:59 pm, there is always a grace period until 8:00 am the next day. Please note that this grace period **does not include** assignments due at the beginning of a class.

Late work will be penalized 10% (a full letter grade) for each 24-hour period beyond the grace period and will not receive written feedback by default. For written feedback on a late assignment, please send an email request. If you need an extension, let me know in advance so we can make arrangements.

Help Desk

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The [eLearning Support Center](#) includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service.

Class Materials

The instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course; however, these materials are for registered students' use only.

Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center (ARC) accommodation. Additionally, unless the ARC has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course.

Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Classroom Technology Policy

Laptops and tablets can be used in the classroom solely for purposes directly pertinent to the activities and discussions at hand. Phones and other devices should be kept silent and not disruptive to anyone else in the class. Excessive misuse of technology in the classroom may result in a request to leave the lecture.

During **workshop time** only, students may use private audio devices (such as headphones) in the classroom while they work.

Academic Dishonesty

All work must be original for this class. Plagiarism is using the words and materials of others as if they were your own. It is a serious offense with consequences. Use proper citation to indicate the use of other people's work to strengthen your own. All suspicions of Academic Dishonesty will be investigated.

Please consult <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/dishonesty/>

A Note on AI

One of the most important skills we develop in this class is the ability to use your own language to express yourself authentically. Writing is just as much about thinking and organizing ideas as it is about composing sentences. Relying on another person or a tool to speak for you undermines you as a thinker. It outsources your brain, diminishes your capacity for invention, and contributes to the degradation of human creative work.

AI may prove to be useful in certain circumstances, and generative writing tools are not necessarily inherently negative. However, in this class, we will pursue the honest goal of developing each person's distinctive writing voice, and therefore:

***The inclusion of text produced by generative AI is prohibited for ALL class work.**

Use of generative AI will be considered work that is not your own and will incur a **grade of zero** on the assignment. Generative AI includes apps such as Grammarly and Notable, paraphrasing software, and "make this sound more academic" tools. If you are not sure whether a writing tool uses AI or will be an issue in this class, please ask me.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

University Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please review the sections regarding the credit/no credit grading option and withdrawal from class. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for information.

Disclaimer

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor. Please see eLearning announcements for any updates.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Not all assignments and details are listed here. Always check the weekly modules on eLearning for updates

Legend:

IN-CLASS WORKSHOP DAY

Class meets as normal and uses the course period to work on assignments for this class. Please bring a charged laptop or tablet and whatever tools you need to work effectively. Students may use personal headphones/ear buds while working. Quiet talking is fine, but please be careful not to disrupt others. The purpose of in-class workshop time is to give you a chance to write, collaborate with your peers, and get feedback or other help from the Professor.

NO CLASS MEETING

Class will not meet. Students are expected to continue working on class assignments on their own. Please feel free to schedule a meeting with the Professor during these times if you have any questions.

Unit I: The Artist Statement

Week 1 January 20-26

Prior to first class: Log into eLearning and explore our class site

M 1/20 *No classes – UTD closed in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Day*

W 1/22 Using eLearning, Box, and MS Teams – make sure you have access to the Student Area in Box
Self-introductions
Syllabus reconnaissance, course overview

HW for next class:

Log into eLearning and read everything in the “Start Here” folder

Read and download the course syllabus

Read Artist Statement Guidelines (in shared Box folder Student Area → Assignments)

Week 2 Jan. 27 – Feb. 2

M 1/27 This class’s approach to writing, common misconceptions about the rules of writing
Activity: Understanding audience
Overview of Essay 1: Artist Statement

HW for next class: Read Hotchkiss, “How to Write an Artist Statement” (Box → Course Readings)

W 1/29 Brainstorming Activity – What makes a strong Artist Statement?
Strategies for drafting your Artist Statement
Descriptive writing
Review sample Artist Statements

HW due by the beginning of next class:

- Submit Think Piece #1 (in eLearning, weekly module) due **before** class begins. Instructions on eLearning

HW due Sunday: Writing Self-Assessment (eLearning)

Week 3 Feb. 3 – 9

M 2/03

IN-CLASS WORKSHOP DAY

Work on Essay 1 first version

HW due Monday:

- Submit First Version of Essay 1: Artist Statement (by 11:59 pm in eLearning, weekly module))

W 2/05

How to Do Peer Review

Using Turnitin PeerMark

Tips for Effective Peer Review – providing and receiving feedback

In class: Work on peer reviews

HW:

- **Due Wednesday:** Two peer reviews for classmates' Artist Statements by 11:59 pm
- **Due Sunday:** Submit Revised Version of Essay 1: Artist Statement (to eLearning, weekly module by 11:59 pm)
- **For next class:** Read Essay 2 - Media Analysis Assignment Prompt. ***Look over the list of media toward the end of the prompt. You will need to make your choice of media object for Essay 2 no later than Sunday 2/16).

Unit II: Media Analysis

Week 4 Feb. 10 - 16

M 2/10

Video *content warning: excerpt of horror film implying child in danger (no on-screen violence)

YouTube: "[Semiotics analysis for beginners! | How to read signs in film | Roland Barthes Media Theory,](#)" *The Media Insider*

Lecture - Introduction to Semiotics

Practice analyzing an image

Essay 2: Media Analysis Overview

HW for next class:

- Read Chandler, "Signs" from [Semiotics for Beginners](#)
- Submit Think Piece #2 (in eLearning, weekly module) **before** class begins. 150-200 words range. Choose one work from an artist or creative practitioner in your field of interest. Apply at least three concepts from the Chandler reading to describe the work's form and content. (Form and content are defined in the Essay 2 guidelines.) Your writing should not merely mention the Chandler concepts, but integrate them in a way that shows you understand them.

W 2/12

Discuss Chandler readings

Semiotics in various mediums

Practice: Using description and deduction to begin media analysis process

HW due Sunday: Choice of media object to analyze for Essay 2 (submit in eLearning)

Week 5 Feb. 17 – 23

M 2/17 Why do we do media analysis?
Using Step 3: Speculation to develop an overall critical “take” on the chosen media object
Discuss difference between Description & Deduction vs. Interpretation

HW for next class: Preproduction #1 (to eLearning, weekly module, by beginning of next class)

W 2/19 Developing strong thesis (main point) statements, including the “so what?”
In class: Work on Preproduction Exercise #2

HW due by Sunday night: Submit Preproduction #2 (to eLearning, weekly module)

HW for next class: Read ONE of the following media articles based on the category/medium of your chosen media object for Essay 2. All articles are available in Box in the Course Readings folder.

- Audio-visual media: Amy [Villarejo](#), “The Language of Film”
- New media/digital art: Hope and Ryan, “Introduction” to Digital Arts: An Introduction to New Media
- Games: Flanagan and Nissenbaum, “Groundwork for Values in Games” and “Understanding Values at Play,” from Values at Play
- Animation: Furniss, “Animation and Digital Media” from Art in Motion
- Sound: Sterne, “Sonic Imaginations”
- Apps: Hobbs, “Propaganda in the Age of Algorithmic Personalization”

THEN: Submit Think Piece #3 (in eLearning, weekly module) **before** class begins

Week 6 Feb. 24 – March 2

M 2/24 Discuss Trimble, Openers and Thesis Statements
In-class activity

HW for next class: Submit Think Piece #4 (in eLearning, weekly module) **before** class begins.

W 2/26 **NO CLASS MEETING**
On your own: Continue working on Essay 2

HW due Sunday: Polished First Draft of Essay 2: Media Analysis (to eLearning by 11:59 pm). This essay must be full-length and meet all the requirements from the essay guidelines.

HW for next class: Read Essay 3 Guidelines (Box → Assignments)

Unit III: Self Media Analysis

Week 7 March 3 – 9

M 3/03 Discussion: Essay 3 Guidelines, how to write about your own work
Review samples of Essay 3 – Self Media Analysis
Practice a brief description-deduction-interpretation activity on a work of your own
Work on Peer Reviews of First Draft, Essay 2 – Media Analysis

HW for next class:

- Submit Think Piece #5 (in eLearning, weekly module) **before** class begins.

W 3/05

Show and Tell: share your favorite work from Think Piece #5 (prepare the file to project it in class and explain what you like about it)

HW for Sunday night: submit two peer reviews of classmates' Essay 2 drafts

HW for next class: Bring to next class two paragraphs of your own writing from previous classes that you think is wordy and could be improved. (Please select from nonfiction prose, such as that found in college essays.)

Week 8

March 10 – 16

M 3/10

Concise writing and in-class exercises

Be sure you have decided by this class which creative work of your own you will write about for Essay 3. Make sure your choice fits all the requirements based on the Essay 3 guidelines.

HW due Monday: Choice of Self Media Object for Essay 3 (eLearning, by 11:59 pm)

For next class:

- Read Stanford Writing Center, "[Top Twenty Errors in Undergraduate Writing](#)"

W 3/12

NO CLASS MEETING

On your own: Revise Essay 2 based on feedback from instructor and peer reviews. Work on first draft of Essay 3 following the same description, deduction, interpretation model as with Essay 2. Check to be sure you have a strong opener and a clear thesis statement.

HW:

- By **Sunday** night, submit Revised Version of Essay 2: Media Analysis (to eLearning by 11:59 pm)

March 17 – 23 Spring Break – No Classes

Week 9

March 24 – 30

M 3/24

TBA: activities for Essay 3 development

HW due Monday night 11:59 pm, Submit **First Draft of Essay 3:** Self Media Analysis (to eLearning. *Please note: this draft will not receive written instructor/TA feedback unless you specifically request it in writing no later than the time you submit your first draft.

W 3/26

IN-CLASS WORKSHOP DAY

Peer Reviews of First Draft - Essay 3: Self Media Analysis. Revise and continue

improving your own Essay 3 draft.

HW:

- By **Wednesday** night: Submit two Peer Reviews for Essay 3 First Draft
- By **Sunday**: Submit Revised Version of Essay 3 – Self Media Analysis (to eLearning by 11:59 pm)
- **For next class**: Read Essay 4 - Proposal Assignment Prompt

Unit IV: Project Proposal and Presentation

Week 10 March 31 – April 6

M 3/31 Overview of Essay 4: Proposal and Presentation
Due by the end of night: Think Piece #6, 150-200 word range.

HW due Monday by 11:59 pm: Think Piece #6

W 4/02

IN-CLASS WORKSHOP DAY

Begin making notes, outline, or other preproduction writing for Essay 4.

HW for next class:

- Read Rees, "[Effective Design Communication Skills](#)" from *Toptal*
- Read Reynolds, "Introduction" and "Preparation" from *Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery* (Box folder: ATCM 3301 Readings)

Week 11 April 7 – 13

M 4/07 Quiz on Rees and Reynolds
Incorporating advanced audience awareness into your Essay 4 – Proposal
Making sure you have a strong central argument for your project idea in Essay 4

HW for next class:

- Read Reynolds, "Design" and "Delivery" from *Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery* (Box folder: ATCM 3301 Readings)

W 4/09

Workshop Day: work on Essay 4 draft, Peer Reviews

HW due Wednesday: Submit Polished First Draft of Essay 4 by 11:59 pm (in eLearning weekly module)

- **Due Sunday:** Submit Peer Reviews of Essay 4: Proposal (by 11:59 pm)
- **For next class:** Read Portfolio Assignment Prompt

***Presentation sign-up for Weeks 13-15. You must sign up for a presentation day/time no later than **Monday night, 4/14** or otherwise be assigned a day/time.

Week 12 April 14 – 20

M 4/14 View sample video presentations, group evaluation
What makes a good presentation?
Overview of Final Writing Portfolio requirements

***HW due Monday 11:59 pm:** make sure you have signed up for a presentation time online

W 4/16 **NO CLASS MEETING**

On your own: Review Essay 4 feedback from instructor/TA (also review peer reviews you received)
Workshop: Revise Essay 4 – Proposal based on feedback from instructor and peer reviews

HW due Sunday night: submit Revised Version of Essay 4 (to eLearning, weekly module, by 11:59 pm)

Week 13 April 21 – 27

M 4/21 Discussion: Tips for Final Writing Portfolio, revision vs. editing
Work on preparing your presentation: visuals, talking points, etc.

W 4/23 Student Presentations (Day 1 of 5)

*For all class days with scheduled presentations, **presenters** should arrive prepared at the beginning of class. (For any last-minute emergencies that require re-scheduling, contact me ASAP.)

Non-presenting students should attend as supportive audience members, arrive on time, and be prepared to participate in the Q&A and offer encouragement to the presenters.

Week 14 April 28 – May 4

M 4/28 Student Presentations (Day 2 of 5)

W 4/30 Student Presentations (Day 3 of 5)

Week 15 May 5 - 11

M 5/05 Student Presentations (Day 4 of 5)

W 5/07 Student Presentations (Day 5 of 5)

Finals Week May 12 – 18

There is no final exam in this class.

Final Writing Portfolio: due Tuesday, May 13 by 11:59 pm.