**Course description and goals:**

In this course, we will closely examine the cultural discourse—popular, academic, and medical—around the experience of living in a human body.Examples of ways in which language shapes, reflects, expands, limits or dictates our bodily experiences include: the language around the “obesity epidemic,” the metaphors commonly used in illness (i.e. “fighting a courageous battle with cancer), the experimentation with language taken by women and people of color to try to reflect their experiences outside the “dominant tongue,” and the ways in which creative writers (novelists, poets, memoirists) attempt to bridge the gap between language and extreme experiences such as violence, sexual ecstasy, disability, and even death. You will develop critical thinking and analytical writing skills in the process of composing three short writing projects based on aspects of this topic that hold particular interest to you. You will apply these skills more comprehensively in a final, lengthier research paper, thus inserting your own voice and argument into the larger cultural conversation about these issues. You will compose a Summary Paper, a Research Proposal, a Literature Review, andafinal Research Paper that will go through several drafts. The topic of “the body” and how language is used to express it is a broad one and you will work to find a manifestation of this topic that speaks to your academic interests, so that your final research paper is a meaningful one to you, forming a foundation for future academic inquiry.

**After completing English 161, you should be able to:**

1. Conduct academic research drawing from multiple sources in multiple media.
2. Read texts in a variety of disciplines and genres, using critical reading strategies.
3. Defend a position in relation to the range of ideas surrounding a topic
4. Construct a logically supported argument.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision.
6. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness.

**Required texts:**

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2014. Print.

Greene, Stuart and April Lindinsky. *From Inquiry to Academic Writing: A Practical Guide*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010. (2nd ed. FITA)

\*You are required to own a grammar/punctuation text such as Longman, *Strunk and White,* or *Eats, Shoots, and Leaves*. It is not dictated which book you must use, but there will be days when you are to bring in these texts for discussions and presentations. We will also be using Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> for in-class exercises and discussion.

**Other texts:**

A wide array of reading material will be available through links and pdfs on Blackboard. Please understand that work posted to Blackboard (or emailed to the class) is every bit as “required” as that in your textbooks, and that the bulk of many early assignments in this course will pertain to work you are able to read online. This is an effort to keep costs down for students, and not because this work is “less important.”

# WRITING PROJECTS & GRADING SYSTEM:

In this course, you will complete four **major** writing projects. Detailed descriptions of each project are included in the appendix of this syllabus. Your final writing project, the Research Paper, will be the culmination of the critical thinking and writing skills you develop over the course of the semester. A *complete draft* of each writing assignment should be submitted for peer and instructor review. Your *final draft* will be assigned the final grade, though a portion of this grade is based on your performance and effort with the first draft. We use the standard final grading scale for first-year courses: A = 90% and above, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, F = 59% and below. The

Writing Project 1: Summary 15% of grade.

Writing Project 2: Literature Review 20%

Writing Project 3: Research Proposal 15%

Writing Project 4: Research Paper 35%

 Journal Responses/Quizzes 10%

 Class Participation 5%

It is important to note that this is an English course, not one in statistics or biology. We don’t have multiple choice tests (or, in fact, any exams) and grading in courses where writing forms almost the entirety of the grade will always be less of a “hard science” than courses in which there is simply a right/wrong answer.

**Class participation:** It is crucial that you come to class prepared for discussions responding to your assigned readings and/or the issues under consideration during a given week. You should be willing to contribute your own unique ideas as well as listen to those of your classmates. I will expect you to participate respectfully and cooperatively in pair and group work, including class debates, peer review, etc. At the semester’s end, I will give you a qualitative grade based on the overall merit of your contributions in class. The rough percentage of 5%, however, is not absolute. In the cases where a student may show particularly extraordinary effort and commitment, it is possible for your participation to have a higher impact on your grade; likewise, slacking off and putting in minimal effort (or showing an attitude of disrespect to peers by, say, constantly looking at your iPhone in class) can lead to an overall lower grade than the hard 5% might indicate. The 5% is based on a “norm,” barring exceptional circumstances.

**Small Group Work and Peer Review:**

You will be working in small groups throughout the semester, for discussion, group research and peer reviews. It should be noted that failure to meet the requirements of being a full participant in your group may lead to members of your group asking to remove you from the group, so as to not negatively impact their own performance. Repeated absences, failing to communicate with group members outside of class when necessary, or not holding up your end of agreed-upon workloads, may result, in persistent cases, in a radically lowered grade even if you are a strong writer, as your small group performance impacts not just your “participation” grade but also the quality and protocol of written and presented work for the course.

**Journal Responses:** You will turn in periodic “journal responses” that are typewritten, printed out, and generally 2-3 double spaced pages in length. The purpose of your journal responses is to engage in active readings of the assigned texts, practice critical thinking skills (summary, analysis, etc.) and evaluate our course materials. These journal responses will prepare you for class discussions and greatly assist in the development of ideas for your writing projects. Journal responses do not receive letter grades but are recorded, and help me to understand your technical writing skills and critical thinking skills. Journal responses may be much more informal in nature than the other writing assignments and do not need to cite sources in MLA format, etc. Think of them a bit more like an “op-ed” on the material we read.

**Grades and Rewriting Papers:** Grades are based on the standard A, B, C, D, E scale (A = 90-100%, B = 80-90% C = 70-80%, D = 60-70%, E = 59% or below). Each writing project will be reviewed in a peer review workshop in class before the final draft is due. I will read your first drafts and offer recommendations for revision. You are required to make further revisions and submit a polished final draft for a grade.

**Mid-term grades:** You will be given a midterm grade, posted and available to view in Week 9. This grade informs you of the evaluation of your performance halfway through the semester. It will not appear as a part of your final grade. Your ultimate grade for the course can (and often will be) different, especially in 161, where a large percentage of the evaluation is based on the final project.

# First-Year Writing Program Add/Drop Policy:

Students enrolled in First-Year Writing courses may add, drop, or switch their FYW classes during the first week of each semester. *After the first week, however, students may neither add nor switch classes*.

### First-Year Writing Program Attendance Policy:

### Students are allowed five absences without penalty (with a M/W/F schedule). Each additional absence will reduce a student’s final grade by one letter. For example, a student earning a B at the end of the semester with six absences will receive a C. Students who miss nine class periods will fail the course. Students who are more than ten minutes late to class will be given one-half of an absence.

**Note:** There are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences in this course. You can miss class five times for any reason—no questions asked and no excuse necessary. However, going beyond thefive allowed absences will impact your course grade significantly, as detailed above. Habitual tardiness will also have a negative effect on your grade.

**Religious Holiday Observance Policy:**

Students who wish to observe their religious holidays must notify the instructor by the tenth day of the term that they will be absent unless their religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day. In such cases, the student shall notify the instructor at least five days in advance of the date when he or she will be absent. <http://oae.uic.edu/docs/ReligiousHolidaysFY20152017.pdf>

**Late Work:**

This course moves at a very quick pace. No late homework, such as Journal Responses, will be accepted. Late drafts of the four main Writing Projects will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late. For example, if your project is one day late, the highest grade you can earn is a B; if it is two days late, the highest grade possible is a C, etc.

**Electronic communication:**

Given that there are 75 students total in my 161 roster, I cannot accept assignments as e-mailed attachments**or posted on Blackboard**, as the burden on me to print, keep track of emails, or carry my computer everywhere with me to grade 75 research papers, etc., would be excessive. Please hand hard copies of assignments to me in class or, if necessary, place them in my mailbox in University Hall on the 20th floor.

**iPhones and Laptops/Tablets:**

The use of laptops and tablets is permitted in class and will be integrated into our course time for things like group research. It is understood that some students may not have a laptop/tablet, and may need to look up material on iPhones. However, iPhone usage (and use of electronics in general) is acceptable ONLY when the class as a whole is online. You are not to sit in class just “on your phone,” or with your laptop continually open and your face buried in it without classroom engagement, as this is extremely rude to other students who are participating actively. In some classes, it may become necessary to ban electronics, if students cannot adhere to a reasonable practice of their usage. If I see you abusing the use of electronics in class, I will almost certainly begin calling on you more often at random, and if the problem is not corrected I may email you individually to restrict your personal usage.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

A student who submits work, at any stage of the writing process, which in whole or part has been written by someone else or which contains passages quoted or paraphrased from another’s work without acknowledgment (quotation marks, citation, etc.), has plagiarized. In addition, a student who submits work for an FYW course that s/he has also submitted for other courses has plagiarized. Maintain your integrity when completing assignments and give credit where it is due. If you are ever unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, ask me. Students who are found to have plagiarized may be subject to various disciplinary actions, including a failing grade on a particular assignment or failure of the entire course; I may also file an incident report with the Office of the Dean of Students. For more information about violating academic integrity and its consequences, consult the website of the UIC Office of the Dean of Students at <http://www.uic.edu/depts/dos/studentconductprocess.shtml>.

**Disability accommodation:**Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Please contact the DRC at (312) 413-2183 or visit <http://drc.uic.edu>.

**UIC RESOURCES FOR WRITERS:**

**The Writing Center,** located in Grant Hall 105, offers one-on-one consultation with student writers who need help developing ideas, or need advice, guidance or additional instruction on any aspects of writing. The Writing Center serves all student writers, not just students in the First-Year Writing Program. Tutors are prepared to spend fifty minutes per appointment, and there is no limit to the number of tutoring sessions you can have each semester. Make an appointment and be on time! Bring the paper on which you're working, as well as any related drafts or notes, and information about the assignment. For an appointment, call the Writing Center at (312) 413-2206, or stop by room 105 of Grant Hall. Visit the Writing Center website at [www.uic.edu/depts/engl/writing](http://www.uic.edu/depts/engl/writing) for more information.

## Public Computer Labs are available throughout campus where you may write and/or print out your work. For a list of labs and the hours they’re open, go to <www.accc.uic.edu/pclabs>. NOTE: Do not wait until the last minute to print out papers. Sometimes labs have long lines of students waiting for access. This is the number one reason that students request to email assignments. Please be aware that it is up to you to plan ahead.

**The Academic Center for Excellence** can help if you feel you need more individualized instruction in reading and/or writing; phone (312) 413-0031.

**Counseling Services** are available for all UIC students. You may seek free and confidential services from the Counseling Center <www.counseling.uic.edu>. The Counseling Center is located in the Student Services Building; you may contact them at (312) 996-3490. In addition to offering counseling services, the Counseling Center also operates the InTouch Crisis Hotline from 6:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. They offer support and referrals to callers, as well as telephone crisis interventions; please call (312) 996-5535.

**The Campus Advocacy Network** provides confidential, anonymous, free services to UIC students, staff, and faculty who have experienced sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, and hate crimes. Visit the CAN website at <http://wlrc.uic.edu/campus-advocacy-network>, email can-appointment@uic.edu, or call (312) 413-8206.

 \*\***Writing Project 4: Research Paper**

 (9-10 pages, minimum) 15 pages max

# Readings/Resources:

# \*\*The sources you identify through your research (at least 10 sources).

*They Say/I Say*, a necessary and invaluable tool in the development of your paper. In addition, refer to the FITAW selections noted in class. The UIC Library and the Writing Center should also be visited at least once during the writing of your paper.

**The Situation:**

You will utilize the writing skills you have developed throughout the semester, namely, summary, analysis, and synthesis as well as further develop critical thinking and research skills that will serve you through the rest of your academic career. The research paper is a large part of your final grade, and it must be successfully completed to pass English 161.

**Your Task:**

You developed your topic focus in your research proposal; now you must pursue that investigation with increased rigor and expand your ideas in greater detail. You will formulate a thesis that is core to your overall argument and thoughtfully engage other critical sources that address the same topic. You will *summarize* these sources, *analyze* the efficacy of their arguments, and *synthesize* the work of others in the course of making your claims. As a legitimate participant in this larger cultural conversation, you should demonstrate a thorough understanding of your topic and contribute a unique, cogent argument all your own. Your paper should cite at least ten sources; no more than 5 should be assigned readings for this course, though fewer than 5 assigned readings can be used (to be clear, *none* of the sources need to be from our assigned reading).

The research paper requires you to form a specific argument based on the areas of inquiry of our course. While our broader questions may have been things like: *How is language used to express the physical realities of the human body, and what are its limits in doing so? How do the words used to describe or discuss certain physical experiences impact public perception, dialogue, and even policy around those experiences? To what extent is the gap between language and experience an unbridgeable one? How does the dominant discourse impact the experiences of marginalized populations, and what efforts have been made by the oppressed to reclaim language to tell their stories or for activism?*, these broad stroke types of questions will now be applied to a more *specific* topic, such as “Race and Language Surrounding the Obesity ‘Epidemic,’” “Medical Narratives and the Dying Author,” “Portrayals of Sexual Abuse in Contemporary Literature,” “Breaking the Silence Around Mental Illness,” or “Why Is Cancer a ‘Battle?’”

**Evaluation Criteria:**

Your paper needs to be well-organized and designed around a clear, cogent thesis.

Your paper needs to address a specific inquiry regarding one aspect of the relationship between language and bodily experiences. This inquiry will insert your voice into a “conversation” already taking place, and position you as part of an ongoing, inter-generational dialogue that extends to academia, popular culture, medicine, the media, the law, and almost all areas of society.

You need to evaluate and question claims and offer in turn your own counter-claims.

You need to demonstrate a comprehensive mastery of summary, analysis, and synthesis, using each element to support a unique, persuasive argument.

You should demonstrate a thorough understanding of your subject matter.

You need to use proper grammar throughout your paper.

You must use correct formatting. **\*\* Double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins all around.**

You must use secondary sources in a meaningful way (one that supports or clarifies your argument), and **your citations must follow MLA or other approved format**.

**Relevant Learning Outcomes**

* Conduct  academic  research  drawing  from  multiple sources  in  multiple  media.
* Read texts in a variety of disciplines and genres, using critical reading strategies.
* Defend a position in relation to the range of ideas surrounding a topic
* Construct a logically supported argument.
* Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process
* Demonstrate sentence level correctness

# Deadlines

**Working Half-Draft** (4-5 pages with clear thesis and persuasive/analytical direction): Fri, November 10

**First Complete Draft (for peer review alone):** Friday, November 17

**First Complete Draft (turned into me):** Wednesday, November 22 (in my mailbox)

**Returned w/ final Comments/Suggestions:** Wednesday, November 29

**Final draft due:** Friday, December 8 (last day of class)\*

\*There will be no final exam in this course.