



## ENG 333 (1HE): Advanced Writing – Nonfiction

COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2019

### INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Dr. Ashanka Kumari, Assistant Professor of English (she/her/hers)

**Email:** ashanka.kumari@tamuc.edu

**Office Location:** 229 Talbot Hall

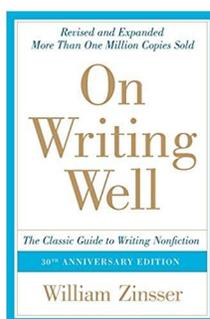
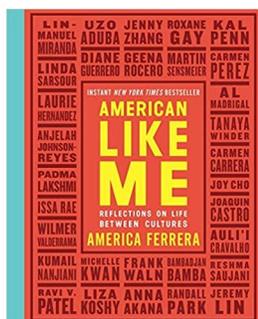
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-3 p.m. or by appointment

**Office Phone:** 903-886-5260

**Office Fax:** 903-886-5980

### COURSE INFORMATION

#### Required Texts & Materials:



- *American Like Me*. Ed. America Ferrera. Gallery Books, 2019.

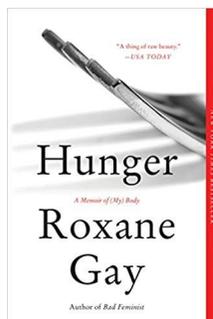
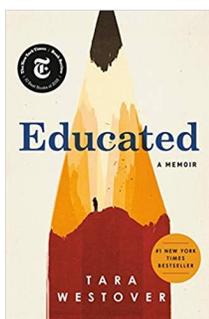
- *Educated: A Memoir*. Tara Westover. Random House, 2018.

- *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*. Roxane Gay. Harper Perennial, 2018.

- *On Writing Well, 30th Anniversary Edition*. William Zinsser. Collins, 2006.

- A valid, working email address that you check often (everyday)

- Regular internet access (additional readings available online)



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- Access to a computer with a word processing program and a printer + funds for printing
- At least two storage methods such as a flash drive, cloud storage, folder, etc.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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. This course emphasizes rhetorical organization and the techniques of expository writing. You will devote much time to writing and editing your own work. Prerequisites: ENG 1302 and sophomore standing.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

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

1. demonstrate the skill of composing nonfiction in multiple modalities.
2. demonstrate revision throughout your composing process, by taking into account peer and instructor comments.
3. analyze nonfiction texts and create a sustained project on a topic of your choosing.

## **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 from your classmates and me, 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.

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## When Your Grades Are Based on Labor

Read more at [tracigardner.com/labor](http://tracigardner.com/labor)

Your grades are based on your labor—on the time and intensity you put into your writing. Here's how to approach your projects.



### Focus on Ideas

Focus on your ideas, on what you're trying to say. Forget about the pressure to be perfect. Focusing on perfection can distract writers from developing their ideas. Because you are graded on labor, mistakes won't undermine your grade.



### Write for Yourself

You're studying the kinds of writing that are important in your field and developing a sense of what makes that writing effective. Don't worry about impressing me. Write what will make you successful in the workplace.



### Take Risks

Try kinds of writing that stretch your abilities and help you learn new things. There's no need to play it safe. After all, the safe, easy route doesn't push you improve your writing.



### Have a Do-Over

If you take a risk and it doesn't turn out, you can always try again. Just as in a game, you have unlimited do-overs. Making mistakes is part of the learning process. As long as you are trying to improve your work, you can't fail.



### Put In the Effort

You will write, rewrite, start over, and try again. All this work counts, as long as you listen to feedback, incorporate what you hear, and reflect on how to improve.

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## GRADING

I thoroughly believe that grades are technologies of surveillance and control. I never found grades productive for learning, and I have always felt that they limit the learning process, create nasty habits designed to “get the A,” and cause more anxiety than they are worth. Much research suggests the limits of grades and the benefits of going “gradeless.” 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 of the university, we will work on a feedback and labor model, which will be codified in a grading agreement we negotiate at the beginning of the semester. This means 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. For the most part, the only “grade” you will receive during the semester will be:

- **full credit:** project was completed, turned in promptly. Strong effort.
- **half credit:** project wasn't complete and/or prompt but effort was evident.
- **no credit:** project wasn't complete and/or prompt.
- **excused:** incomplete project due to uncontrollable circumstances.

However, this course is *not* “gradeless” because I, begrudgingly, have to enter a final course grade at the end of the term. 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

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determine a final grade using our grading agreement and 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").

## Assessments

- **Composing Journal** — Each week, I will provide questions for you to answer and practice various nonfiction writing genres. This composing (drafting, research, brainstorming, etc.) and the revision you do with these ideas, will be an extensive part of our classroom discussion. I and your peers will offer feedback on these periodically throughout the semester. I will also ask you to revise specific prompts or develop your writing with specific prompts.
- **Pop & Personal Nonfiction Essay** — For this project, students will compose an essay, in an approved format of their choosing, that explores your relationship with a given pop culture phenomenon. The goal of this project is not for you to provide your entire life story, but to instead reflect on how your interaction with a specific pop culture text has shaped you, your identity, or your views in some way.
- **Professional Documents Mini-Unit** — Students will complete a series of short workplace writing pieces including an Email Package, Resume, and Cover Letter to practice workplace genres. Students will have the opportunity to participate in the 2nd Annual Career Day on October 3rd when an Industry Professional will come chat with the class about industry trends students need to know.
- **Final Nonfiction Project** — In consultation with Dr. Kumari, all students will develop an extended nonfiction project. This can take a variety of forms and research. It might include interviews, memoir writing, archival work, journalistic work, podcast script writing and development, etc. These choices are up to you. But the full project must include a
  - Proposal with Timeline and Research Plan
  - Research Description and Summary
  - Draft
  - Final Composition
- **Course Reflection Essay** — For the final project in English 333 (detailed assignment sheet forthcoming), students will develop a reflective project, in an approved format of their choosing, that thoughtfully explores their experience in the course.
- **Participation** — To do well in this aspect of the course, you should contribute to class discussion, raising questions, responding to classmates, and sharing insights in ways that keep the conversation

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moving forward in meaningful, generative, and generous ways. I understand that participation and contribution can look and mean something different to each of us. Here are some examples of good participation in English 333:

- Active and respectful listening such as looking at a person when they are talking.
- Your contributions should demonstrate your careful reading of all assigned texts and preparation of any additional assignments.
- Wherever possible, connect your ideas to the text and concrete examples.
- Being prepared for class, meaning that you have downloaded/printed and read readings and remembered to bring any assignments due with you and available to access during class time so you can have your notes on hand as we discuss them.
- Participating in group work and peer workshops.
- Arriving to class on time and not leaving early.
- Using cellphones and social media during class ONLY when appropriate.

- **In-Class Writing & Group Work** — See General Overview of Required Work above.

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

I recognize that our classroom is made up of a diverse 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, so that some of the written handouts I provide may be difficult to absorb; or you might feel more capable of participating in discussions online or in small groups rather than during class. 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 Writing Center and 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 course. Please also see the **Course and University Resources/Procedures/Policies** section below and course webpage for additional support services.

### **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

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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

Gee Library- Room 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

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

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### **Accessing the Course Website**

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](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

### **Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

**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 of your class materials.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY RESOURCES/PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Communication**

Communication is a key part of success in this course. I am available to meet during my office hours (Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-3 p.m. in 226 Talbot Hall or by appointment to discuss assignments, questions, and/or issues. I also check my email several times a day ([ashanka.kumari@tamuc.edu](mailto:ashanka.kumari@tamuc.edu)), so this is the easiest way to contact me outside of class. Please note that I may not respond to emails between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. See the Respect section for details on sending respectful emails.

I often send clarifications about assignments via email, as well as notifications and any emergencies or changes to class meeting times. I also post the syllabus, schedule, readings, and major assignments to our course D2L site which is available for your to access at any time.

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*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**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

### **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 communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Director of Writing, Dr. Jessica Pauszek, by emailing her. 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 their 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. These respect guidelines also apply in feedback and email correspondences we

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will have with one another. Emails should include a proper opening and closing salutations and a clear message.

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](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).  
<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

### **Inclusion Policy & Nondiscrimination Notice**

Your value as a member of this course community and the 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.

### **Military and Student Veteran Accommodation**

I recognize the complexities of being a military student or a student veteran. If you are a military student or student veteran, please inform me if you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursements, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with other university staff who are trained to assist you.

### **Attendance**

I understand that illnesses and emergencies happen in everyone's life, but this class is designed to be interactive and participatory. You can't participate if you aren't here. However, you are allowed 4 absences without penalty. After that, I

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will discuss with each student the reasons for the absences and how we might work together to find other options for participation. Please let me know if something is going on.

Tardies are unacceptable. We have only 75 minutes together each day of class day and will begin promptly at the scheduled course time. You will be counted absent if you sleep, are preoccupied with your phone or other electronic device during an inappropriate time during class, or if you miss 15 or more minutes of class. If you have an issue, please contact me *as soon as possible*.

### **Use of Electronic Devices/Technology**

Computers, tablets, mobile devices are welcome in this classroom, and, in many ways, expected. You will need technology to produce writing, review assigned readings, search library databases, and find quick answers to issues brought up in class. With that being said, there is a difference between productive and distractive technology use. You are expected to only use your technology to productive ends, and if it becomes distracting to me or your classmates, I will ask you to refrain from using it in the future.

### **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 GPAs.

### **Writing Center**

The Writing Center (or the "Communication Skills Center") offers writers free, one-on-one assistance. We welcome all writers, majors, and disciplines—undergraduate and graduate students alike. In fact, we work from the premise that all writers, no matter their ability level, benefit from the feedback of knowledgeable readers. The Writing Center staff is trained to provide writers with just this service. In short, we are here to help you help yourself. In order to ensure the most effective session possible, we offer visitors the following suggestions: (1) Get started on your writing project early, and visit the Writing Center at least one day before your final draft is due. You will need time to work with the ideas and suggestions generated in your tutorial sessions. (2) Bring a written copy of your assignment, any relevant readings, and one or two specific questions or concerns you would like to discuss with us. We are located in the Hall of Languages, Room 103 (903-886-5280).

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## **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

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>”

Basically, plagiarism is any attempt to pass of 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.

## **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.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

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.

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## COURSE OUTLINE / SCHEDULE

**ALM** = American Like Me

**OWW** = On Writing Well

**D2L** = Course Website

Week	Date	Main Focus	Readings Due	Writing Due
<b>1</b>	T 8/27	Welcome & Introduction to Course materials		
	R 8/29		-Review Syllabus -Bunn (D2L) "Introduction: Analyzing Popular Culture" (D2L)	-Syllabus Quiz , -Pre-Semester Questionnaire, -"Who Am I" Slide/Collage all uploaded to course D2L
<b>2</b>	T 9/3	Discussion of Pop & Personal project + readings	-Review Pop & Personal Assignment Sheet -Educated Prologue-p. 53	-Any questions you might have about Pop & Personal essay -Reading response in Composing Journal
	R 9/5		-OWW Introduction-p. 5 -Educated p. 54-111	-Reading response in Composing Journal
<b>3</b>	T 9/10	Discussion of readings + peer workshop	-Educated p. 112-150 -OWW p. 6-23	-Reading response in Composing Journal
	R 9/12			-Pop & Personal essay draft due in class for peer workshop
<b>4</b>	T 9/17	Discussion of readings	-Educated p. 153-206 -OWW p. 24-45	-Reading response in Composing

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				Journal
	R 9/19			-Pop & Personal essay due
<b>5</b>	T 9/24	Professional Writing	-Review Professional Writing Assignment Sheet -OWW p. 165-177	-Any questions you might have about professional writing mini-unit
	R 9/26			-Email Package due
<b>6</b>	T 10/1	Professional Writing		-Resume/CV draft due
	R 10/3			-Cover Letter due
<b>7</b>	T 10/8	Discussion of readings and final nonfiction project	-Review Final Nonfiction Project Assignment Sheet -AML Introduction-p. 56	-Any questions you might have about final nonfiction project -Reading response in Composing Journal
	R 10/10		-AML p. 58-115	-Reading response in Composing Journal
<b>8</b>	T 10/15	Discussion of readings	-AML p. 116-162 -OWW p. 49-66	-Reading response in Composing Journal
	R 10/17		-AML p. 164-217	-Reading response in Composing Journal
<b>9</b>	T 10/22	Discussion of	-AML p. 218-267	Final Project

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		readings and project proposals	-OWW p. 67-91	Proposal with Timeline and Research Plan
	R 10/24		-AML p. 268-end	-Reading response in Composing Journal
<b>10</b>	T 10/29	Discussion of readings and research summaries	-Hunger p. 3-45	-Research Description and Summary due
	R 10/31		-Hunger p. 46-92	-Reading response in Composing Journal
<b>11</b>	T 11/5			Final nonfiction project draft due for in-class peer workshop
	R 11/7		Class Cancelled for Student Conferences - come meet with Dr. K during scheduled conference time.	
<b>12</b>	T 11/12	Discussion of readings + independent research time	-Hunger p. 93-177	-Reading response in Composing Journal
	R 11/14		Independent Research & Writing Day (Dr. K at Feminisms & Rhetorics Conference in VA)	
<b>13</b>	T 11/19	Discussion of readings	-Hunger p. 178-231	-Reading response in Composing Journal
	R 11/21		-Hunger p. 232-end	-Reading response in Composing Journal

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<b>14</b>	T 11/26	TBA		Final Nonfiction project due
	R 11/28		Thanksgiving Break - No Class	
<b>15</b>	T 12/3	Wrapping Up	-Final Reflection Project assignment sheet	-Any questions you might have about final reflection project
	R 12/5			
Finals Week: Final Reflection Project due during Finals Week – TBA				

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