

Writing 1: Writing through Genre: Manifestos, Music, and Comics

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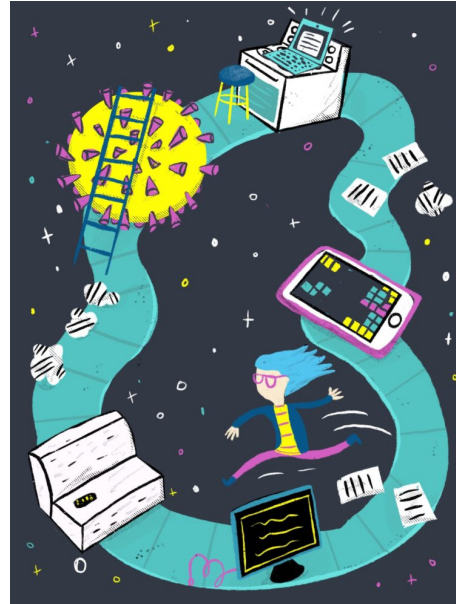
Teaching Professor, Writing Program
University of California, Santa Cruz

[Tu/Th 1:30-3p \(on Zoom\)](#)

Office Hours:

- [3:30-4:30p Tuesdays and by appt on Zoom](#)
- After class by appointment (sometimes I have a meeting)
- Office Location: Zoom, in my guest room/office

avidali@ucsc.edu (email is the best way to contact me)



Welcome to Writing 1, which almost half of all UCSC students take. **I wish all students at UCSC had the opportunity to take this course**, because two quarters of writing courses (Writing 1 and Writing 2) is better than one writing course (Writing 2), and 20-30 weeks of writing instruction is typical at most universities. I believe that those who take this course will be more prepared for Writing 2, and I'm excited to get to know you all as you move toward being better writers.

But, I realize you may not be as excited about this course as I am. You may feel like it's a required course and you want to "get it over with." Or, you may feel like College 1 was pretty hard and you're worried about what's going to happen in this course. (Or you may feel both of these things.) For now, you'll just have to trust me: this course is going to teach you about writing and I think you're going to be glad you took it.

For every Writing 1 course, there are expectations of what you should be able to do at the end of the course. They are as follows:

- Identify and use rhetorical concepts (such as audience, purpose, context, or genre) to analyze and write about a variety of texts.
- Use strategies such as response, analysis, interpretation, or critique to produce writing that draws connections between texts and student writers' perspectives.
- Support their ideas through the use of examples, personal experience, observations, and/or appropriately cited source material.
- Compose projects through multiple drafts by revising for focus, quality of content and/or coherence.
- Implement strategies to edit their work according to genre and disciplinary conventions such as arrangement, language use, mechanics, or documentation style.
- Reflect critically on their processes for writing and analysis.

Put another way, this course will teach you *about* writing (in addition to *how* to write more effectively), how to study texts, and how to argue. It will also teach you how to draft and revise and how to know your strengths and weaknesses as a writer. It's a lot for one quarter, but you'll continue working on these issues in Writing 2.

This course is oriented around the theme of **genre**. In writing, genre loosely equates to a type of text, such as academic papers, billboards, cereal boxes, tweets – the list is endless!

The course is oriented around this concept because there are many genres of writing you'll need to master while in college (and beyond), so our goal is to learn how to approach and become proficient in new genres. This course is **not** focused on literature or literary analysis (though these are interesting and important pursuits); instead, we'll read a range of texts and write in various genres. I encourage you to toss aside the five-paragraph essay, embrace the "I" in your writing, and care about what you write. Further, this is not a grammar course. As we'll discuss, [studies](#) consistently show that the explicit teaching of grammar – such as worksheets and teacher comments in red pen – is ineffective (and super-boring). That said, if I see something going on in your writing at a mechanical level that I can help you address, I'll let you know.



Life on Zoom

We're all getting used to taking classes on Zoom - and also fairly tired of taking (and teaching) them. I get it. Please know that my Zoom policies are based on research and my experience teaching online the last few quarters. So here's what I ask:

- [Keep your camera on, except one day](#). Class just goes better with it on, though of course, you can turn it off for a minute to grab a snack, etc. Let's all agree that our appearance on Zoom is not important and show our pets as much as possible. On one class day, you can have your camera off and still participate.
- [Help a professor out](#). If my connection is bad, if I think I'm screen-sharing and I'm not, if I send to you a Google doc you can't open, please let me know.
- [Jump in or raise your electronic hand](#). If it's fairly quiet, you can try just jumping in with your comment or question. Or you can raise your electronic hand.
- [Use and flag the chat](#). The chat is a great place for ideas and questions. But sometimes I don't see them if I'm going through slides, so feel free to say "question in the chat."

Disability and Accessibility

Disability and access are at the center of my scholarship, teaching, and service. As such, I am dedicated to creating classroom spaces where all students can succeed, including students with disabilities or other needs. I work to make this classroom as accessible as I can, but I need your input about how you learn and how the class is working for you. *If you have a disability or think you have a disability and need accommodations to succeed in this course, I encourage you to contact the [Disability Resources Center \(DRC\)](#) **and/or** speak with me as soon as you can.* (The DRC is located in 125 Hahn Student Services building, by phone at [831-459-2089](tel:831-459-2089) or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.) While I do not require that you have documentation from the DRC, I do recommend that you speak to them about what they can offer you.

My access request: I'm somewhat famous for not remembering things I don't write down, so please don't hesitate to remind me (that I'd email you, bring you a resource, etc.) if you don't hear from me or don't see me write down your request. Lastly, I identify as someone with anxiety and depression, which may or may not come into play.



Assignments/Projects

This is a project-based course. This means that you'll do many smaller assignments - called **Prep Work** - that are low-stakes, culminating in bigger projects. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to do well on the projects without completing the Prep Work..

1. **Manifesto:** It's time to claim our voices and ideas in the form of manifestos. This unit is all about approaching a new genre (manifestos), studying it, and producing it. The idea is that you can replicate this ability with genres in the future (such as specific projects in other courses, workplace writing like memos and reports, etc.).
2. **Musical Genre Analysis:** This is an academic analysis on a genre of your choosing, and we'll talk about how to avoid formulaic writing, be persuasive, and not lose your voice. You'll also produce a revised sample of the genre - in response to your critiques - that is more effective and engaging.
3. **Graphic Genre Translation:** After giving the manifesto a little time to rest, you'll pick it back up and translate it into a photo essay or audio essay in a specific venue of your choosing (such as a photo essay for *The New York Times*).
4. **Plotting Metacognition:** In this end-of-term assignment, I'll ask you to plot a graph (with x and y axes) that reflects where you are as a writer. More on this at the end of the course!

Writing Groups

Throughout the quarter, you'll be working with the same group of students in a writing group (WG). (You'll have a chance to switch groups mid-quarter if you want). The other students in your group will be the folks who you'll talk with as you discuss concepts, write drafts, workshop your writing, revise, and proofread. Your WG is there to cheer you on and to tell when you're falling short, for jokes and for complaining. They don't need to become your dear friends, but ideally, your WG members will be supportive, generative, and sometimes challenging folks in the sometimes bleak terrain of remote learning. [More details are available.](#)



Metas

As we'll discuss in class, loads of research shows that in order for what you are learning to really stick, you have to stop and think about what/how/why you're learning (metacognitions). Otherwise, you'll move out of this class and what you have learned will be wiped off your brain like pen off a dry board.

To do this, I'll regularly be asking you to write and reflect in Metas. Take it seriously. At the end of the course, you'll review your entries and plot your successes and what's left to learn in the Plotting Metacognition assignment.

My Style & Meeting with Me

This is my 21st year of teaching (gasp!), and I ran a writing program for eight years before I came to UCSC. However, this is only my third year at UCSC, so while I know a lot about writing and teaching writing, I'm still getting to know what students are like here. For this reason, you'll find that I'll ask a lot of questions. I also want you to come to me with questions. I work to maintain a comfortable classroom atmosphere, but I expect students to work hard, and I will reciprocate with feedback and support.

I believe in climbing big mountains with small steps (what Anne Lamott calls taking it bird by bird), so there will be many small assignments in this course. You should expect to do reading and/or writing for

every class period. If you feel like you're struggling, it's best to come see me early – don't wait until you're in crisis.

Finally, I understand you all have lives beyond my course, and I encourage you to be in touch with me when your life and our class are not in harmony. That said, I have less patience and flexibility for students who aren't in touch with me and simply skip class with no warning or follow-up. Respect the time and effort I put into this course, and I'll do the same for you.



Contract Grading

This will be my fourth class where I use “contract grading.” Let me explain how it works.

My experience is that traditional grading is not only horrible for me (as I have to regularly sort and rank students), but that it reinforces existing inequities among students and makes students resistant to taking risks and learning new things. Equally important, traditional grading systems don't line up with what I know about the teaching and learning of writing (which is informed by a *lot* of scholarship), which is that becoming a better writer is about learning a process, not mastering a product.

Contract grading addresses these issues by making a list of course tasks that must be completed to get a B. This takes the haggling over grades out of things, it honors all the work you are doing (which will make you improve), and it lets you focus on what you need to work on, not “everything to get an A.” This type of grading is not harder or easier than traditional grading. It's just different. For weaker writers, it more clearly rewards all the work the course requires - and this is the work you need to do to improve as a writer, so the B is earned! For stronger writers, it pushes you to go further and really develop new skills, rather than leaning on previous knowledge.

The basic rule is this: ***if you do everything in the “contract,” which I am calling “The List for a B Grade” (or The List), you'll get a B in the course.*** The same list, and a chronological version, are at the end of this syllabus for you to track your progress.

THE LIST FOR A B GRADE (chronological version)¹

MANIFESTO

- Prep Work 1A
- Meta #1 (required)
- Writing Group 1A
- full draft
- final draft
- Prep Work 1B
- Meta #2
- Writing Group 1B
- Prep Work 1C
- Meta #3
- Prep Work 1D

MUSICAL GENRE TRANSLATION

- Prep Work 2A
- Meta #4
- Writing Group 2A
- attend required conference
- full draft
- final draft
- Prep Work 2B
- Meta #5
- Writing Group 2B
- Prep Work 2C
- Prep Work 2D
- Prep Work 2E

GRAPHIC GENRE TRANSLATION

- Prep Work 3A
- Meta #6
- Writing Group 3
- final draft
- Prep Work 3B
- Prep Work 3C

PLOTTING METACOGNITION

- Writing Group 4
- final draft

○ Have no more than one *unexcused* absence

**Complete eleven of twelve Prep Work assignments

**Complete all full and final drafts

**Complete all Writing Groups

**Submit five of six Metas

IMPORTANT:

- Everything will be marked as followed:
 - Complete. (Read my comments.)
 - Incomplete - Resubmit: Read my comments and resubmit in 48 hours on Canvas.
 - Incomplete - Not Submitted: You have 24 hours to submit. Don't make it a habit.
 - Excused: You're not required to complete this assignment. (Rare.)
- To get credit on "The List," you need to meet the expectations for each assignment. If you don't, I'll ask you to resubmit. An "incomplete" is not a fail - just resubmit! If I ask you to resubmit more than twice (either the same assignment or two different ones), you'll need to come meet with me to talk through expectations (so you'll pass the course).
- Because I won't be constrained by "justifying a grade," the feedback I give will give you will be **direct** and give you a clear sense of how you're doing.
- To track your grade, make sure everything in the Canvas Gradebook is marked with "complete." Or, make a copy of the list above and check each item off.

¹ A version organized by type of assignment is at the end of the syllabus.

Above and Below a B

If you don't meet the requirements on The List for a B grade, your course grade will be a C+ or lower and is at my discretion. This includes the assignment of non-passing grades (C- or lower). My assessment for those who do not meet the requirements on The List will be based on my holistic appraisal of your writing in the course according to the Writing 1 course outcomes (see page 1 of this syllabus) and whether I think you need to take the course again to be successful in future college writing.

That said, I will automatically assign a D or F grade if you do not submit a full and final revised draft of each major assignment. (Cases of academic dishonesty will follow my plagiarism policy.) Further, any student who has more than four unexcused absences (20% of the course) will receive a D or F grade. To be clear, these are not the only ways to receive a non-passing grade in this course, but they are surefire ways!

To receive a grade higher than a B, you must meet all the criteria in The List, as judged in Week Nine. You will translate your manifesto into a persuasive essay, based on everything you've learned in the course. I will assess the project and assign a B+, A-, or A by considering the Writing 1 course outcomes (see page 1 of this syllabus) and your ability to exceed expectations articulated on the assignments.



Being Respectful

I find that most students come to class with great ideas and are respectful to other students and to me. But occasionally students get a little over-excited or are disrespectful. If necessary, I'll refer to university policy on student conduct, but mostly, I'll contact you privately if an issue arises. Should you feel uncomfortable or unsafe in our course, please tell me immediately (during class or after). There is NO room in this course for disparaging anyone in our class or engaging in hate speech.

Attendance and Late Policy

There are two types of absences: excused and unexcused. Excused absences are typically negotiated with me in advance (or as soon as possible in case of emergencies). In the case of excused absences (including absence as a DRC accommodation), I will accept the work due in class for that day and/or allow you to make up work (sometimes through alternate assignments). Note that a work schedule that conflicts with this class is not an excused absence – it's best to wait and take the course when you can attend.

Unexcused absences are days you miss class for reasons you choose not to discuss with me, or for reasons that aren't likely excused (you're tired, feel like surfing, etc.). Unexcused absences will make it hard to do well in this class. For unexcused absences, work due that day receives no credit, and in-class work cannot be made up.

You must be present in class for the entire day you submit assignments to receive credit for them (except excused absences). Work that is more than a week late, without any arrangement, will not receive a complete.



Writing Resources! (You Already Paid for Them!)

- ✓ UCSC has several Writing Centers, and everyone should go:

- o [Westside Writing Center](#) (in Oakes but serving all)
- o [Kresge's Writing Center](#)
- o [Crown Writing Center](#)
- ✓ [Learning Support Services](#) offers writing support! You can sign up for individual session, work in the Writing Studio (a free-form writing space), or drop-in.
- ✓ [The National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness](#) and [other sources](#) note that many (if not most) college students do not get enough to eat at some point in their college careers. There are many [food pantries on campus](#).
- ✓ There are several [campus options for mental health support](#). Some are confidential and some are not.
- ✓ [Hate and bias incidents](#) can be reported to the Dean of Students. Again, keep in mind that most university staff are “mandated reporters,” so ask about confidentiality up-front.
- ✓ The [Lionel Cantu Queer Center](#) offers many resources, from a clothing closet to crisis resources.
- ✓ [The First Generation Initiative](#) seeks to create inclusive environments for first-generation students (of which there are many on our campus!).
- ✓ Visit: [African American Resource and Cultural Center](#), [American Indian Resource Center](#), [Asian American/Pacific Islander Resource Center](#), and [El Centro: Chicano/Latino Resource Center](#).



Plagiarism & Academic Misconduct

If you're struggling with how to incorporate the ideas of others into your writing, or you're so stressed that you're considering taking someone's work and turning it in as your own, **come talk to me and we'll figure it out**. If I suspect that you have plagiarized, I'll begin with a private conversation with you. In many cases, we can figure out what went wrong and you can take another swing at it. In other cases, I will charge

you with plagiarism and formally write you up, following UCSC's [Academic Misconduct guidelines](#). For more on what constitutes plagiarism, talk to me.

SCHEDULE

You should follow along in **Canvas Modules or Syllabus**.

WEEK ONE

Tue, 1/5 Introductions: Why are we here?
 Thu, 1/7 What is genre?
 Prep Work 1A (introductions); Meta #1

WEEK TWO

Tue, 1/12 What do manifestos do?
 Prep Work 1B (studying manifestos)
 Thu, 1/14 Why do things devolve into grammar debates? How do we teach grammar?
 Prep Work 1C (teaching and shaming grammar)

WEEK THREE

Tue, 1/19 Why do we shame people for their grammar?
 Prep Work 1D (linguistic discrimination and privilege)
 Thu, 1/21 Writing Group 1A (topics)

WEEK FOUR

Tue, 1/26 Writing Group 1B (manifesto workshop); Meta #2
 Thu, 1/28 What's an academic essay? Does it exist?

Prep Work 2A (introductions)

WEEK FIVE

Tue, 2/2 What does it mean to analyze?
Prep Work 2B (analysis); Meta #3
Manifesto final draft due (at the latest)
Thu, 2/4 What makes a good academic argument?
Prep Work 2C (argument)

WEEK SIX

Tue, 2/9 Writing Group 2A (analyzing your musical genres)
Thu, 2/11 Time for a new writing process!
Prep Work 2D (observations + arguments)

WEEK SEVEN

Tue, 2/16 Why use sources? How?
Prep Work 2E (using sources)
Thu, 2/18 TBD

WEEK EIGHT

Tue, 2/23 Writing Group 2B (workshop); Meta #4
Thu, 2/25 Why write in comics?
Prep Work 3A (comics); Meta #5 (in class)

WEEK NINE

Tue, 3/2 How can you read difficult academic articles?
Prep Work 3B (academic reading)
Musical Genre Analysis final draft due (at the latest)
Thu, 3/4 How can you translate one genre into another?
Prep Work 3C (article outline)

WEEK TEN

Tue, 3/9 Writing Group 3 (workshop); Meta #6
Thu, 3/11 Writing Group 4 (idea generation)

final: Tue, 3/16 @ 4p

Graphic Genre Translation final draft due (at the latest)

Plotting Metacognition final draft due (at the latest)

Above a B Project due (optional)

THE LIST FOR A B GRADE (by type of assignment)

Eleven of Twelve Prep Works

- Prep Work 1A
- Prep Work 1B
- Prep Work 1C
- Prep Work 1D
- Prep Work 2A
- Prep Work 2B
- Prep Work 2C
- Prep Work 2D
- Prep Work 3A
- Prep Work 3B
- Prep Work 3C
- Prep Work 2E

Six Writing Groups

- Writing Group 1A
- Writing Group 1B
- Writing Group 2A
- Writing Group 2B
- Writing Group 3
- Writing Group 4

Five of Six Metas

- Meta #1 (required)
- Meta #2
- Meta #3
- Meta #4
- Meta #5
- Meta #6

Four Final Drafts

- manifesto
- musical genre analysis
- graphic genre translation
- plotting metacognition

- attend required conference
- Have no more than one *unexcused* absence