

Making Arguments about Music

a.k.a. Foundations of College Writing

DR. DAVID WILSON-OKAMURA ENGLISH 1100 SPRING 2018 EAST CAROLINA UNIV.

- | | | | Aims |
|-----------|----------|--|--|
| Jan. 8 | M | Is music something you can argue about productively? How should our class handle obscenity in song lyrics? | 1. Practice articulating what you observe. |
| 10 | W | About College I. Bring a <u>typed list</u> of three songs that you would like to discuss this semester. For songs 1 and 2, write (a) which concept from <i>Every Song Ever (E.S.E.)</i> it illustrates; (b) the artist's name and the song's full title. The third song can be anything. Also, please check that both songs are available on YouTube. = 1 reading quiz. These lists will be compiled into a master schedule and emailed to all members of the class. | 2. Practice arguing.
3. Practice responding to arguments from other people. |
| 12 | F | Discuss ch. 1 of <i>E.S.E.</i> (repetition) and two songs. (Which ones? See emailed schedule from Jan. 10.) <u>Prep sentences due.</u> | |
| 15 | M | Martin Luther King holiday | |
| 17 | W | About College II. <i>Writing with Sources</i> , pp. 29–44: “Plagiarism.” (On days with reading, we’ll also discuss one song from the list that we compiled on Aug. 23; look for the schedule in your email.) | |
| 19 | F | Meet in lobby of Joyner Library. At the previous class, I will assign you a library book to find and check out before today’s meeting. Bring this book and show it to me, with the checkout slip, at the beginning of class. = 1 reading quiz | |
| 22 | M | Discuss ch. 2 of <i>E.S.E.</i> (slowness) and two songs. <u>Prep sentences due.</u> | |
| 24 | W | <u>Essay #1 due.</u> (The assignment for each essay is detailed below. Minimum length for all essays is 900 words; maximum length is 1,200.) | |
| 26 | F | About College III. <i>Writing with Sources</i> , pp. 1–14: “The Role of Sources” | |
| 29 | M | Discuss ch. 3 of <i>E.S.E.</i> (speed) and two songs. <u>Prep sentences due.</u> | |
| 31 | W | Bring a <u>typed list</u> of three sources that will be useful for essays on popular music. Say why each is authoritative. = 1 reading quiz. | |
| Feb. 2 | F | Discuss ch. 4 of <i>E.S.E.</i> (transmission) and two songs. <u>Prep sentences due.</u> | |
| 5 | M | <i>Writing with Sources</i> , pp. 45–60: “Citation Styles” | |
| 7 | W | <u>Essay #2 due.</u> For this and all subsequent papers, use one of the citation styles from <i>Writing with Sources</i> , pp. 45–60. | |
| 9 | F | Discuss ch. 5 of <i>E.S.E.</i> (quiet/silence/intimacy) and two songs. <u>Prep sentences due.</u> | |
| 12 | M | <i>They Say/I Say</i> , pp. 19–29: “Starting with What Others Are Saying” | |
| 14 | W | Discuss ch. 6 of <i>E.S.E.</i> (stubbornness, the single note) and two songs. <u>Prep sentences due.</u> | |
| 16 | F | <i>They Say/I Say</i> , pp. 30–40: “The Art of Summarizing” | |
| 19 | M | Discuss ch. 8 of <i>E.S.E.</i> (sadness) and two songs. <u>Prep sentences due.</u> | |
| 21 | W | <u>Essay #3 due.</u> | |
| 23 | F | <i>They Say/I Say</i> , pp. 42–50: “The Art of Quoting” | |
| 26 | M | Discuss ch. 9 of <i>E.S.E.</i> (audio space) and two songs. <u>Prep sentences due.</u> | |
| 28 | W | <i>They Say/I Say</i> , pp. 55–67: “Three Ways to Respond” | |
| Mar. 2 | F | Discuss ch. 10 of <i>E.S.E.</i> (endless inventory) and two songs. <u>Prep sentences due.</u> | |

4-11 Spring Break

- 12 M *They Say/I Say*, pp. 68–75: “Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say”
- 14 W Discuss ch. 11 of *E.S.E.* (wasteful authority) and two songs. Prep sentences due.
- 16 F *They Say/I Say*, pp. 78–90: “Planting a Naysayer in Your Text”
- 19 M Essay #4 due.
- 21 W Discuss ch. 12 of *E.S.E.* (density) and two songs. Prep sentences due.
- 23 F *They Say/I Say*, pp. 92–100: “Saying Why It Matters”
- 26 M Discuss ch. 13 of *E.S.E.* (improvisation) and two songs. Prep sentences due.
- 28 W Bring a typed draft of your introduction for Essay #5. = 1 reading quiz.
- 30 F State Holiday**
- Apr. 2 M Discuss ch. 14 of *E.S.E.* (closeness) and two songs. Prep sentences due.
- 4 W Bring a typed revision of your introduction for Essay #5. = 1 reading quiz.
- 6 F Essay #5 due. We haven’t been reading *They Say/I Say* recently, but check out the “Index of Templates” on pp. 293–309. Among other things, it includes eight templates for introducing the “standard view,” ten for introducing quotations, and four for making concessions while still holding your ground.
- 9 M Discuss ch. 15 of *E.S.E.* (loudness) and two songs. Prep sentences due.
- 11 W *They Say/I Say*, pp. 105–18: “Connecting the Parts”
- 13 F Discuss ch. 16 of *E.S.E.* (discrepancy) and two songs. Prep sentences due.
- 16 M Bring a typed draft of your introduction for Essay #6. = 1 reading quiz.
- 18 W Discuss ch. 18 of *E.S.E.* (linking) and two songs. Prep sentences due.
- 20 F Bring a typed revision of your introduction for Essay #6. = 1 reading quiz.
- 23 M Essay #6 due.
- 24 T Give an ECU student some advice about writing research papers. Bring a typed list of four suggestions. = 1 reading quiz. **Final, absolute deadline for all coursework.**
- 27 F Exam-period activity (11:00–1:30)

TEXTBOOKS

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *“They Say/I Say”*: *The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 3rd edn. Norton, 2014. ISBN 978-0-393-93584-4.

Harvey, Gordon. *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students*. 2nd edn. Hackett, 2008. ISBN 978-0-872-20944-2.

Ratliff, Ben. *Every Song Ever: Twenty Ways to Listen in an Age of Musical Plenty*. Picador, 2016. ISBN 978-1-250-117991.

OFFICE HOURS, PHONE, EMAIL

Office: Bate 2137. Office phone: 252-328-6714

Office hours: MF 2:00–4:00, W 2:00–3:00. If you need to contact me on days when I don’t have office hours, you can phone me at home. Google knows my number. Please: no calls after 9 p.m.

Email: david@virgil.org. I use email every day, but instead of exchanging messages, let’s have a conversation during office hours.

UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

Where can you get help outside of class? The first place is in my office, during office hours (see above). The second place is the University Writing Center in Joyner Library 1015. Walk-ins are accepted, but it’s better to make an appointment at ecu.mywconline.com or by calling 252-328-2820.

GRADING SCALE

A = 94–100, A- = 90–93, B+ = 87–89, B = 84–86, B- = 80–83, C+ = 77–79, C = 74–76, C- = 70–73, D+ = 67–69, D = 64–66, D- = 60–63, F = 0–59. Decimals $\geq .5$ are rounded up.

REQUIREMENTS

All written assignments are due at the beginning of class and must be typed.

Prep sentences and Reading Quizzes (25%). On days when there's a reading from *They Say/I Say* or *Writing with Sources*, there will usually be a reading quiz at the beginning of class. Reading quizzes are open-note but not open-book.

On days when there's a reading from *Every Song Ever (E.S.E.)*, we will also discuss two songs; I'll email a schedule of which songs after the class decides on them. On these days, we'll have prep sentences instead of reading quizzes. What are prep sentences? Prep sentences are what will keep our arguments about music from degenerating into a crossfire of mere opinion. Instead of shooting from the hip, everyone will come to class with some thoughts prepared beforehand, in the form of three sentences. The formula for these three sentences will be the same every time:

1. Copy a sentence or two from *E.S.E.* that defines the chapter's main concept. The concept of each chapter is given in the title: e.g., repetition, slowness, transmission. The words are all familiar, but to grasp how the author is using them you'll need to read the chapter. While you're reading, look for a sentence or two that defines the concept. Copy it out, word for word, as sentence one. Be sure to use quotation marks and indicate the page number in parentheses. For example, here's a sentence that defines the subject of chapter 20, a perfect moment: "It is the song blushing: an unplanned or perhaps only semiplanned occurrence in which the music suddenly embodies its own meaning" (228).
2. In one sentence, apply the concept from this chapter of *E.S.E.* to the first song that's on the schedule for discussion that day.
3. In one sentence, apply the concept from this chapter of *E.S.E.* to the second song that's on the schedule for discussion that day.

Prep sentences should be numbered and are due at the beginning of class. Allow some time for printing. If you take a bus, allow time for that too. Late or untyped prep sentences will not be accepted.

Attendance is not recorded, but there will be no make-ups for missed reading quizzes or late prep sentences. Don't panic, though, if you miss one or two. Over the whole semester there will be a combined total of at least 27 reading quizzes and prep sentences; and since they are worth 25% of the course grade, that leaves 2 extra points. Think of those 2 points as a pair of free passes. If you miss a couple of reading quizzes or a couple of prep sentence assignments, you'll still be responsible for the material we discuss in class, but it won't harm your grade. You can use these free passes when you're sick, for an emergency, or to care for a sick relative. Because the system is based on numbers, you don't need to explain why you missed class or even tell me, "I'm using my free pass today"; the math will take care of it automatically.

In the interest of fairness, no one will be granted a third free pass.

Essays (75%). Over the course of the semester everyone will submit six essays; topics are specified below.

- The minimum length for each essay is 900 words. The maximum length is 1,200 words.
- Include a word count on the first page. Do not count long quotations or list of works cited.
- Number pages.
- Staple pages. You don't need a cover sheet or folder.
- Double-space.
- Use 12 point Times Roman (or a similar font of the same size).
- Use spell-check. If you need to review some punctuation or grammar, I recommend *Grammar in Plain English* by Harriet Diamond and Phyllis Dutwin.
- Everyone gets a **48-hour extension on two essays**; you choose which ones. You don't need to ask me ahead of time. Instead, when you hand in your paper at the next class, attach a separate sheet of paper with the date and your name on it that says, "I'm taking my first (or second) extension on this paper." In the interest of fairness, no one will be granted a third extension.

Topics for Essays 1–6:

1. Pick two well-known songs from two different decades and make an argument about them. For example, let's say you pick "Beast of Burden" (1978) by the Rolling Stones and "Gold Digger" (2005) by Kanye West. You might argue as follows: "Comparing the lyrics of these two songs shows that stereotypes about women haven't changed: they always seem to want money." Or you might argue the other side: "Comparing the lyrics of these two songs shows that things have actually gotten worse; at least Jagger addressed the woman directly, whereas West talks about his gold digger in the third person." Or you could ignore the lyrics and focus on the music: "Comparing the two songs musically shows that, no matter who's singing it, popular music is still based on black forms" (in "Beast," the blues; in "Gold," gospel). Or: "Comparing the two songs musically illustrates a shift from guitar-oriented rock in the 70s to synth-oriented hip hop in the 00s." As you can see from the examples, I'm not looking for a particular viewpoint. Pick your own songs and think up your own argument.
2. Pick a song from any decade, and find two articles about it from writers who have the respect of serious listeners. (This is why we made the list of authoritative sources earlier.) State their position fairly and then take your own. If you disagree, why? If you agree, what can you add that they haven't already said? My advice is to write your introduction last, after you've figured out your own position, so that you can state it clearly in the first paragraph.
3. Find three written accounts of the same concert or tour. It could be a famous event from five decades ago, or one that just happened. Compare the accounts. If they agree, point out what they agree on; that will be your argument. If they disagree, make an argument about what really happened.
4. Pick a new song that most people haven't heard yet. Offer a judicious appraisal of it, anticipating the criticisms of listeners who are just as thoughtful as yourself. (This is what Graff and Birkenstein call "planting a naysayer.") Since the song will be so new that nothing has been written about it yet, incorporate concepts or facts from two articles on related subjects: for example, the song's genre, production techniques used in the song, previous songs by the same artist, or previous versions of the song by other artists.
5. Pick an album from at least ten years ago. Find three album reviews that were written when it came out. What did reviewers agree about? What did they disagree about? What did the album's original reviewers miss that you notice when you listen to the album today?

6. Music has been the subject of considerable scientific research (including some here in the ECU physics department). Pick a feature of music that you'd like to explore scientifically. (For example: does a drum machine sound more human when you add random variation?) Find two reliable, authoritative sources in ECU's research databases, and read them carefully enough that you could explain their findings to someone on the bus. Then write an essay in which you apply those findings to a song of your choosing. Does the science in this case change how we think about the song, or confirm something we already knew?

Essays are due at the beginning of the class period. Allow time to print; don't assume that a printer will be available five minutes before class. If you arrive late, the essay is late. Essays delivered after they are due will receive a lower grade according to the following schedule: an A- essay that is delivered up to 24 hours late will receive a B+, an A- essay that is delivered between 24 and 48 hours late will receive a B, etc. Every 24 hours, the grade goes down by one third of a letter. I don't accept essays by email, but you can put them in the plastic folder on my office door (Bate 2137).

Essays will be graded according to the following characteristics:

Characteristics of an F essay	Characteristics of a D essay	Characteristics of a C essay	Characteristics of a B essay	Characteristics of an A essay
No word count or too short.	No word count or too short.	Word count \geq assigned length.	Word count \geq assigned length.	Word count \geq assigned length.
More opinion than fact.	Facts are disorganized.	Facts are organized.	Facts are organized and form a plausible argument.	Facts are organized and form a challenging, persuasive argument.
No sources.	Research doesn't extend beyond a casual Google search.	Draws on reliable, authoritative sources.	"Plants a naysayer" who is not merely a straw man (see Graff and Birkenstein, ch. 6).	Persuasively responds to the naysayer's objections.
Sources are acknowledged, but sloppily: the reader can tell that you used a source, but not how or for which points.	Sources are acknowledged, but sloppily: the reader can tell that you used a source, but not how or for which points.	Sources are acknowledged using the correct format. Original points are clearly distinguished from points that your sources made.	Your argument shows an awareness of current debates in the field.	Your argument contributes to a current debate in the field, at a level appropriate for an undergraduate research paper.
Misleading quotations that mean something else in their full context.	Unnecessary quotations or misquotations.	All quotations are accurate and advance the argument.	All quotations are accurate and advance the argument.	Quotations are properly "sandwiched" (see Graff and Birkenstein, ch. 3).
If your admissions essay had been written like this, you would not have been accepted to ECU.	Numerous errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation distract from content; reads like a first draft.	Essay is written in complete sentences. Some mechanical errors, but not more than one a paragraph.	First paragraph is an introduction to the paper as a whole. The last sentence of each paragraph is linked to the first sentence of the next paragraph.	The writing is finely crafted, elegant as well as clean.

Midterm and Final Exams. There will be no midterm or final exams in this course. However, the university does require an activity during the final exam period. We'll decide how best to use that time when we get closer to the end of the semester.

Please turn off your **cell phone ringer** before class begins. **Smart phones, laptops and tablets** might be helpful in some courses, but not this one: please put them away before class. If you need to monitor your phone during class, please tell me about it privately before class starts.

No work will be accepted after the **last day of class**, Apr. 24.

PLAGIARISM

If you plagiarize another person's words or ideas, expect an F for the course. All plagiarism will be reported to the university. If you have questions about plagiarism, ask them before the assignment is due. If versions become an issue, the version that was submitted for a grade will be considered final.

ACCOMMODATIONS

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 (Voice/TTY: 252-737-1016; Email: dssdept@ecu.edu).

EMERGENCIES, UNIV. CLOSURES, CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION

If classes are postponed for any reason, I will give instructions by email. If email is not available, follow the schedule of readings in the syllabus until email service is restored.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

The requirements of this course are impossible to fulfill if you don't attend class. But I don't take roll or require that students participate in class discussion. I might invite you to comment, but I won't insist.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Q: What if I stop coming, but turn in everything the last week of class: can I still earn a D-?

A: No.

COURSE OUTCOME GOALS

The following goals are uniform for all sections of ENGL 1100:

1. Discover significant questions to explore and address via writing.
2. Explore the many different purposes of writing, including writing to reflect, analyze, explain, and persuade.
3. Practice drafting and revising.
4. Increase your awareness of organizational strategies and your ability to apply them.
5. Become attentive to how audience and purpose affect content, tone, and style.
6. Incorporate sufficient and appropriate details and examples both from your experiences and from secondary research.
7. Express your ideas with clarity and with effective syntax and punctuation.
8. Gain competence in using computer technology in the writing process.
9. Schedule and meet deadlines.

WRITING INTENSIVE (WI)

ENGL 1100 is a writing intensive course in the Writing Across the Curriculum Program at East Carolina University. This course will focus on the development of writing skills. Upon completion of the course students will:

1. Use writing to investigate complex, relevant topics and address significant questions through engagement with and effective use of credible sources.
2. Produce writing that reflects an awareness of context, purpose, and audience, particularly within the written genres (Including genres that integrate writing with visuals, audio or other multimodal components) of their major disciplines and/or career fields.
3. Demonstrate that they understand writing as a process that can be made more effective through drafting revision.
4. Proofread and edit their own writing, avoiding grammatical and mechanical errors.
5. Assess and explain the major choices that they make in their writing.

This course contributes to the twelve-hour WI requirement for students at ECU. Additional information is available at the following site: <http://www.ecu.edu/writing/wac/>.

UNIVERSITY WRITING PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT

As part of campus writing assessments, you will submit one major writing project, along with a description of the assignment for that project and brief responses to four questions about your writing, near the end of this course. These materials will be uploaded to your "University Writing Portfolio," which you will access and create (if you have not already done so in a previous WI course) through the "student portfolio" link in Pirate Port (<https://pirateport.ecu.edu/portal/>). Instructions for creating your University Writing Portfolio and uploading your materials are available online (www.ecu.edu/QEP) and in person at the University Writing Center (www.ecu.edu/writing/uwc), located in Joyner Library.