# Rhetoric 233: Language and Writing in the University
## (affiliated w/ the Ethnography of the University Initiative)

Fall 2009
MWF 10:00-10:50
Room 152 Henry Administration Building

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## Class Texts

**Required—Course Packet:** A packet of readings will be available at Notes-n-Quotes (on John St. between 5th and 6th) by the end of our first week. Additional required readings will be provided online or distributed as handouts.

**Recommended—Handbook:** You should have a reliable reference for grammar and documentation issues. If you don't have a handbook already, I'd be happy to recommend a good one. If you'd prefer to use an online resource, I recommend the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), which I will link to on our Moodle site.

## About This Class

In Rhetoric 233, you will build on the knowledge you gained in previous writing classes. You will not only continue to refine your writing style and skills but also learn to work with and produce a wider variety of more sophisticated academic texts. We'll work on increasing your awareness of what the conventions are in different writing contexts, how you can adapt your writing to those conventions, and when and why you might choose to work outside those conventions.

Under the title of "Writing and Language in the University," this course will center on two interrelated topics: language, including variations in dialects and registers and the ideologies surrounding those variations; and academic writing, including its many genres and disciplinary differences. As we read, write, and talk about these topics, we will explore how writing and language can vary and what makes us consider a way of speaking "standard" or a way of writing are more "correct" or "appropriate" in university contexts than others. We will then move on to apply these concepts to our campus by exploring how writing and language are used at UIUC.

Each of you will identify a specific aspect of writing and/or language at UIUC to focus on for your in-depth research project. You might, for example, look at the range of writing genres used within your major; compare and contrast the academic writing expectations of different teachers, classes, or majors; explore the speech or writing experiences of a particular language or cultural group on campus; or examine current trends in student language use such as texting or slang. In your research, you will pull from a wide range of scholarly sources including advanced academic articles and books as well as your own original ethnographic research. At the close of the course, you not only will have produced a polished final research project, but you will also have the option to share your research with the wider university community through presentation and/or online publication.

## About EUI and Ethnographic Research

As part of the EUI (Ethnography of the University Initiative), this class will give you the opportunity to create original scholarly research based on your firsthand experience with people, texts, and places on campus. In addition to traditional academic sources, your final research project will include several interviews, observations, surveys, and/or analyses of University texts. If you haven't done ethnographic research before, don't worry—we'll work together to make you a skilled, thorough, and responsible ethnographer.

EUI shares my belief that undergrad students can make important contributions to scholarly conversations. As a student in an EUI-affiliated class, you will be using the work of other EUI students among the sources for your research. At the end of the semester, you will have the option of archiving your own work (under your name or anonymously) so that students in future classes might read it and cite it in their papers. EUI also creates a professional scholarly experience for you in its Student Conference, where you can see other EUI students present their research work and, if you like (and I hope you will!), present your own. **The Student Conference is on December 3, 2009,** and I expect you all to attend at least part of it; I'll give you more details later in the semester on how to propose a presentation.


## Work Required

Your work in this class will consist of the following:

*Weekly online writing, comment group responses, and other homework.* You will have a variety of homework assignments this semester. In the weeks before our ethnographic research starts, you will have a brief writing assignment to complete and submit online by the end of each week. As we begin working on research strategies, you will have several homework assignments that will allow you to practice different types of research. Once research reporting begins, your main homework assignments aside from the reports will be responses to the reports of others in your comment group. Each homework assignment will be graded out of a possible 10 points, and good grades typically reflect a thorough effort meeting all requirements, rather than any one "correct" response to the question or task.

*Research reports.* You will be asked to show four stages of work on your research for the final project. One of these stages will be an annotated bibliography of published articles and previous EUI research that you're drawing from; the other three will be your choice of ethnographic research results—archive findings, text analysis, interview data, survey data, or observation notes (you must do at least two different types). You will receive more detail on the research and report requirements in a few weeks.

*Final research project.* Your final research project will bring together all of your research work into an approximately 15-page paper that answers your research question. You will receive more detail on this later in the semester.

*Research reflection and Moodle entry.* Once your final project is completed, I'll ask you to write a reflection on your research process over the course of the semester. Then you will transfer all of your research work to the Moodle database template in order to make it ready to be an

archived and searchable scholarly source for future students. (Note: Even if you choose not to have your work archived, you will still need to move it into the Moodle template for my final evaluation.)

*Participation and classwork.* We will frequently do informal writing, group discussions, and other activities in class, and some of these activities may carry over into homework. You will receive daily credit for your completion of in-class activities and for your participation in class. For the most part, everyone who's attentive and involved for the full class period will get full credit for that day. In addition to missing class, things like being mentally absent (i.e., sleeping, texting, doing other work), arriving late, or being unprepared for class will affect your participation grade negatively.

The above work will make up your final grade according to this percentage breakdown:

Homework (including weekly online writing
        & comment group work):        35%
Research reports (4 @ 7% each):        28%
Final research project:        20%
Research reflection and Moodle entry:    7%
Participation and classwork:        10%

## Class Policies

*Attendance:* I expect you to attend class regularly. Being in class will be essential to your understanding of the material, and you'll receive daily credit for your work and participation that you can't get if you're not there. Your presence also adds depth to your classmates' experiences and will be vital to your comment group members later in the semester. *Exception:* If you're seriously ill, please stay home instead of sharing your swine flu/pinkeye/plague with me and your classmates. I'll allow you to make up participation credit by discussing things with me over email or in office hours, or in another way that we agree demonstrates your engagement with the material you missed. (Your ability to make work up may occasionally depend on the mercy of your peers, and I reserve the right to stop offering this option to anyone whose absences get excessive.)

*Due dates:* I expect you to turn in your assignments on or before the assigned due date. Late assignments will lose 1/3 of a letter grade (or of a point, for homework) for each calendar day late. The first calendar day late begins as soon as the due date's class ends (i.e., for lateness purposes, 10:51 on Monday is the start of Tuesday). If you know in advance that you will have to be absent on the day something is due, make arrangements to submit it to me before the due date. If you find at the last minute that you can't be in class, you can email me the assignment that's due instead of submitting it on paper, but the due date/time still applies, so send that email *before* rushing out of town or heading back to bed to nurse your cold.

*Note*: Because life happens, and because I don't enjoy having to judge what counts as an "emergency" or a "good excuse," *I'll allow you to take a no-questions-asked extension on assignments twice this semester.* This means that you have two extra calendar days to submit

the assignment and I won't deduct points. These extensions can apply to anything except comment group work, since a late assignment there inconveniences more people than just me. Please either send me an email or make a note on the assignment letting me know that you're taking one of your extensions. After these two extensions, I will give absolutely no leeway on due dates unless I have a letter from the Emergency Dean, so use them wisely. If you have any extensions left unused at the end of the semester, they'll each be worth .5% extra credit toward your final grade.

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism, defined in UIUC's Student Code as "representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic endeavor," is a serious offense in any academic setting. You should have learned about proper source use in previous classes already, and we'll review a bit, so I don't expect any problems. However, if I find evidence that you have deliberately committed any form of plagiarism, such as obtaining a paper from an online paper mill or fraternity file, having someone else write a paper for you, or paraphrasing or copying from an outside source without acknowledging the source, I will penalize you according to University policy, which usually means a failing grade for either the assignment or the class.

*Classroom conduct:* Many ideas will be shared in our classroom, and I want each person to feel that his/her contribution is respected and valued. Therefore, disruptive and inconsiderate behavior will not be tolerated, especially personal attacks on other students and language or behavior exhibiting prejudice—racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. We may have strong opinions about some of the topics we discuss, and we won't always agree with each other or the material we're discussing—that's fine. Just please think before speaking and make sure that you are prepared to stand behind any statement you make.

## Resources for Students

*Disability accommodations:* If you would benefit from any disability-related accommodations or assistance in this classroom, let me know as soon as possible and I'll do everything I can to help. Also, if you haven't already, you should contact UIUC's Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office at 333-4603.

*Writers' Workshop:* The Writers' Workshop, located in room 251 of the Undergraduate Library, provides free one-on-one writing tutoring by graduate and undergraduate students. If you'd like feedback and suggestions on your work beyond what you get from your classmates and me, I *strongly* recommend that you take advantage of this service—it can only improve your writing. To make an appointment, go there in person or call the Workshop at 333-8796.

# Course Schedule

Please note that this is a tentative schedule; changes may (and likely will) be made during the semester if we discover that they're needed. If this happens, I will give you ample warning and a revised printout of the affected days' schedules. The homework listed each day is what you should be working on for the next class period. Please make sure to bring the readings to be discussed with you to class. **All readings on this schedule are in the coursepack unless otherwise specified.**

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### Week 1

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Monday 8/24
Introductions; discussion of class and syllabus
HW: Enroll on course Moodle site:
https://courses.las.illinois.edu/course/view.php?id=245 (use your NetID, Active Directory password, and the enrollment key **nhuj89**)

Wednesday 8/26
Introduction to language, writing, and ethnographic research
HW: Read "Interrogating the University" article (handout); begin browsing EUI and IDEALS sites (links on Moodle)

Friday 8/28
Introduction to language, writing, and ethnographic research continued
HW: Read "The Death of English (LOL)" and "The Power of Slang" (online—links on Moodle)
**Online writing assignment due on Moodle by 5pm**

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### Week 2

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Monday 8/31
Intro to language variation/attitudes and youth language
HW: Read Carmen Fought, "African American Groups" and "Latino Groups"

Wednesday 9/2
Intro to ethnic and class variation in language
HW: Read Fought, "Are White People Ethnic?" and "Interethnic Communication and Language Prejudice"

Friday 9/4
Continue discussing language, ethnicity, and class
HW: Read Lisa Ede, "Thinking about Communities and Conventions"
**Online writing assignment due on Moodle by 5pm**

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### Week 3

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Monday 9/7
**Labor day—no class**

Wednesday 9/9
Intro to genre and community variation in writing
HW: Read Charles Bazerman, "Speech Acts, Genres, and Activity Systems"

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| Friday 9/11 | Genre continued, intro to textual analysis<br>HW: Read Bazerman, "Intertextuality"<br>**Online writing assignment due on Moodle by 5pm** |

## Week 4

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| Monday 9/14 | Textual analysis continued<br>HW: Read Connie Eble, "Culture" |
| Wednesday 9/16 | Discuss college slang, language change, and archival research<br>HW: Read Primary Source Village (online—link on Moodle) |
| Friday 9/18 | Visit to Student Life and Culture archives (tentative—date to be confirmed)<br>HW: Review documentation (links on Moodle)<br>**Online writing assignment due on Moodle by 5pm** |

## Week 5

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| Monday 9/21 | Wrap up archival research discussion; review documentation styles<br>HW: Read IDEALS articles on AAVE-speaking and Chinese-American students (links on Moodle) |
| Wednesday 9/23 | Discuss IDEALS articles<br>HW: Work on archive research practice assignment |
| Friday 9/25 | Research ethics, consent procedures, and EUI/IDEALS archiving (with EUI guest speakers Jason Romero and Hee Jung Choi)<br>HW: Read Rosina Lippi-Green, "The Standard English Myth" (coursepack) and John Fought, "Gatekeeping" (link on Moodle)<br>**Archive practice assignment due on Moodle by 5 pm** |

## Week 6

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| Monday 9/28 | Discuss ideas about language correctness<br>HW: Read Thaiss and Zawacki, "What's Academic? What's Alternative?" |
| Wednesday 9/30 | Discuss ideas about academic writing<br>HW: Read about interviewing (online/handout) |
| Friday 10/2 | Discuss interview strategies and questions, preview Nelson reading<br>HW: Read Jennie Nelson, "Reading Classrooms as Text"; work on interview practice assignment |

## Week 7

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| Monday 10/5 | Discuss student experiences with academic writing<br>HW: Read Thaiss and Zawacki, "Students Talk about Expectations, Confidence, and How They Learn" |
| Wednesday 10/7 | Academic writing continued; discuss survey research methods<br>HW: Finish interview practice assignment; work on practice survey |
| Friday 10/9 | **Interview practice assignment due in class**; discuss interview results and research question proposal/plan assignments<br>HW: Create practice survey; read about observation (handout) |

## Week 8

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| Monday 10/12 | **Practice survey due in class**; discuss surveys and observation techniques<br>HW: Read Vershawn Young, "Your Average Nigga"; work on research question proposal |
| Wednesday 10/14 | Discuss Young and intersections of language ideology and academic writing<br>HW: Finish research question proposal |
| Friday 10/16 | Library research workshop (location TBA); **research question proposal due in class**<br>HW: Begin reading Suresh Canagarajah, "The Place of World Englishes in Composition"; work on research plan |

## Week 9

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| Monday 10/19 | **No class meeting—attend individual meeting Monday or Tuesday**<br>HW: Finish Canagarajah and research plan |
| Wednesday 10/21 | **Research plan due in class**; discuss research report assignments and Canagarajah/language & academic writing<br>HW: Work on research |
| Friday 10/23 | Comment group meetings<br>HW: Work on research |

## Week 10

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|---|---|
| Monday 10/26 | Documentation and library research continued<br>HW: Work on research & comment group responses<br>**Research Report 1 due on Moodle by 12 am Tuesday** |

| Wednesday 10/28 | Comment group meetings/research discussion |
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| | HW: Work on research & comment group responses |
| | **Comment group responses to RR1 due on Moodle by 12 am Thursday** |

| Friday 10/30 | Discuss final project requirements and EUI student conference |
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| | HW: Work on research |
| | **Research Report 2 due on Moodle by 12 am Monday** |

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### Week 11

| Monday 11/2 | Field writing, part 1 |
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| | HW: Work on research & comment group responses |
| | **Comment group response to RR2 due on Moodle by 12 am Wednesday** |

| Wednesday 11/4 | Comment group meetings |
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| | HW: Work on research |

| Friday 11/6 | Field writing, part 2 |
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| | HW: Work on research & comment group responses; prepare presentation |
| | **Research Report 3 due on Moodle by 12 am Saturday** |

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### Week 12

| Monday 11/9 | **In-progress presentations, part 1** |
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| | HW: Work on research & comment group responses; prepare presentation |
| | **Comment group response to RR3 due on Moodle by 12 am Tuesday** |

| Wednesday 11/11 | **In-progress presentations, part 2** |
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| | HW: Work on research & outline |
| | **Research report 4 due on Moodle by 12 am Friday** |

| Friday 11/13 | Comment group meetings |
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| | HW: Work on research & comment group responses; finish outline |
| | **Comment group response to RR4 due on Moodle by 12 am Monday** |

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### Week 13

| Monday 11/16 | **Final Research Project Outline due in class for peer review** |
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| | HW: Work on rough draft |

| Wednesday 11/18 | Discussion, workshopping, group meeting, or other activity as needed |
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| | HW: Finish rough draft |

| Friday 11/20 | **Rough draft of Final Research Project due in class for peer review** |
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| | HW: Work on revisions; enjoy your break |

## Week 14
## Thanksgiving Break—No Classes

## Week 15

Monday 11/30    Comment group meeting/final project check-in
HW: Work on project, prepare for individual meeting and EUI conference

Wednesday 12/2    **No class meeting—attend individual meeting Tuesday or Wednesday**
HW: Work on project, prepare for EUI conference

*Thursday 12/3*    *EUI Student Conference, 3-8 pm*

Friday 12/4    **No class meeting—attend Student Conference instead**
HW: Complete Final Research Project

## Week 16

Monday 12/7    **Paper version of Final Research Project due in class**; debrief on conference
HW: Work on final reflecting and Moodle entry

Wednesday 12/9    Last class meeting (location TBA): Moodle troubleshooting/work day, course evals

*Friday 12/11*    *Final Research Project due on Moodle by 5 pm*
*Have a great break!*