

LinC101-V: First-Year Seminar
Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics
Fall 2012

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Content and approach

As its title is meant to suggest, this Seminar will examine a variety of untruthful uses of language – including images, sounds, and numbers as well as words – as they are used *rhetorically*. Students will identify and study the manipulation of language to persuade people, to “induce cooperation” (in Kenneth Burke’s terms), in readers, listeners, and viewers. Students will analyze and practice such deceitful communication in order to strengthen themselves as rhetors and as consumers of texts as well as to develop and enhance critical thinking abilities.

Learning outcomes for this Seminar are as follows; by the end of this course you should be able to:

- Articulate an understanding of liberal education as it affects one’s life now and prepares the individual for the future.
- Use writing as a way to discover new information and insights, in short, to learn.
- Demonstrate a process approach to writing.
- Demonstrate competency in writing including framing questions, posing problems, and synthesizing information to write an academic paper.
- Demonstrate an ability to write effectively for a variety of audiences.
- Gather information for assignments through the use of appropriate technology and evaluate the credibility of sources needed to write an academic paper.
- Read critically and comprehensively to integrate others’ ideas with their own.
- Demonstrate behaviors for successful learning including effective study habits, time management, goal setting and coping skills.
- Collaborate with faculty and student advisors to engage with the college community.

To achieve these outcomes, you will

- read a number of serious discussions of “lies and lying”
- engage in your own discussions with classmates and instructor
- maintain a journal of informal writing
- complete four projects of academic writing
- assemble a portfolio of your semester’s work

Four writing projects will be developed through your individual work in and out of class and through small group workshops in class. Most projects will use information from published sources and will document that information in formal academic style. At least one will require you to locate and use source material through library research. Portfolios are semester-long projects in which you will *collect* much if not all of your writing, *select* what is best and most profitably revised in the way of that writing, and *reflect* on what that writing means in terms of your academic development.

Many of our class meetings will be workshops, in which you will be both giver and receiver of advice about writing. In workshops, writers will help other writers. This approach should gain you greater awareness and control over your own writing, greater sensitivity to writing problems and their solutions, and a heightened sense of the power of the writing process.

At least one writing assignment should involve substantial use of Reeves Library. You will improve your information literacy as you learn to develop and investigate a research topic. By the time you complete FYS, therefore, you should be proficient in the following “**basic competencies**” of information literacy:

- Define a research need
 - Formulate a research topic
 - Determine an information need
- Plan and execute a search for information
 - Identify key terms and concepts
 - Identify the most appropriate sources of information
 - Use Boolean operators and truncation where appropriate
 - Impose limiters (e.g., scholarly vs. popular, date, language)
 - Modify the search based on search results
- Know how and where to find the sources discovered in the search process
 - Determine which sources the library owns or provides access to and retrieve them
 - Request material not owned by the library on Interlibrary Loan
 - Locate material faculty may have put on reserve in the library
- Understand the obligation to credit sources and be able to do so in an appropriate citation style

Writing as a Process

Writing is more than simply a report of what you know and see; it’s also an important way of exploring a subject. Developing a finished piece of writing through time and involving the recursive process discussed below can deepen your understanding of the world and yourself in a way that reading and thinking by themselves cannot. By practicing writing in this way, we hope that you can eventually become your own teacher/editor and be able to use writing as a way of learning. Here is a brief overview of the usual process, based on what we know about how successful writers actually work.

Prewriting (or planning) is the work you do before composing and includes those important early decisions about purpose, audience, and style to. Prewriting also means reading, taking notes, talking to others, outlining, or freewriting—in other words, gathering together your information and thoughts.

Writing (or drafting or composing) those first words on a blank page is sometimes the most difficult step, often preceded by procrastination and anxiety that the writing will not work and that you might fail. Beginning writers should remember that it is neither natural nor possible for the words to come out just right the first time. Trying to make each sentence perfect before going to the next is one of the worst things to do. Writing takes time and often trial and error to become exact. The process we follow at Moravian allows time for your unique mind and your store of language to work together.

Therefore, writing the first draft should be the fastest part of the process. You should write freely and without concern for style or mechanics in order to probe your ideas and let the act of writing help you discover what needs to be said. This first draft should be an open conversation between you and the writing. But for this conversation to move forward, you the writer must continue to put words on paper and respond to those words by writing more. Most any words will do to start the ball rolling, to set up this dialogue between you and the page. You are simply using writing to make yourself think in a

sustained way about your topic. You aren't even sure yet what you wish to say. What comes out may surprise you. But at least give yourself a chance to let your thoughts flow in writing without trying to make each sentence correct before going to the next.

Revising is the crucial stage. Indeed, it has often been said that good writing is rewriting. It is through multiple drafts that a piece of writing is developed to fulfill the writer's purpose for a reader. You may add paragraphs and sentences while deleting old ones, or restyle flabby sentences and sharpen word choice now that the ideas are clearer. You may even trash much of what you've written in a first draft as your purpose and your sense of yourself in relation to your audience becomes sharper. Always ahead in revision are several opportunities to improve what you are working on.

Final editing and proofreading occur as you approach completion of a writing project. For the first time the writer becomes a police officer, inspecting and verifying the grammar and spelling and punctuation. Good writing is much more than good grammar, but for most academic essays, the two go together. So writers at this point become concerned that no spelling or grammatical blunder will interfere with a reader's ability to understand and enjoy what was written.

You won't always have as much time as you would like for every essay. All of us, students and teachers alike, must learn to live within the limitations of this special version of life called college. But you can still practice this process of writing, learning to anticipate each stage and the writing problems that are a part of it. Someday your success will almost certainly depend, at least in part, on your ability to write meaningfully and to write with style. This semester is the time to start to get ready for that moment.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center, on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall, is there to support the efforts of all writers at Moravian College. The tutors there are students who are good, experienced writers and who are professionally trained to help you improve your writing. They will go over an essay draft with you and guide your understanding of how you might improve that draft. You could also drop by to pick up some of the free handouts on virtually every part of writing: getting started, writing a thesis, developing paragraphs, eliminating wordiness, using commas, and the like. The Writing Center is generally open Monday-Thursday afternoons and Sunday evenings during the semester. The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.

Learning Services Office

If you have a learning disability and believe you may require accommodation to succeed in this course, you should contact the Learning Services Office at 1307 Main Street. Its phone number is 861-1510. Do this as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Any student who wishes to disclose a disability and request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for this course first **MUST** meet with either Mrs. Laurie Roth in the Office of Learning Services (for learning disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD) or Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center (for all other disabilities). Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Policy on Academic Honesty

Moravian College expects its students to perform their academic work honestly and fairly. A Moravian student, moreover, should neither hinder nor unfairly assist the efforts of other students to complete their work successfully. This policy of academic integrity is the foundation on which learning at Moravian is built.

The College's expectations and the consequences of failure to meet these expectations are outlined below. If at any point in your academic work at Moravian you are uncertain about your responsibility as a scholar or about the propriety of a particular action, consult your instructor.

Guidelines for Honesty

All work that you submit or present as part of course assignments or requirements must be your original work unless otherwise expressly permitted by the instructor. This includes any work presented, be it in written, oral, or electronic form or in any other technical or artistic medium. When you use the specific thoughts, ideas, writings, or expressions of another person, you must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source. Direct quotes from any source (including the Internet) must be placed in quotation marks (or otherwise marked appropriately) and accompanied by proper citation, following the preferred bibliographic conventions of your department or instructor. It is the instructor's responsibility to make clear to all students in his or her class the preferred or required citation style for student work. Student ignorance of bibliographic convention and citation procedures is not a valid excuse for having committed plagiarism.

When you use the specific thoughts, ideas, writing, or expressions of another person, you must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source.

You may not collaborate during an in-class examination, test, or quiz. You may not work with others on out-of-class assignments, exams, or projects unless expressly allowed or instructed to do so by the course instructor. If you have any reservations about your role in working on any out-of-class assignments, you must consult with your course instructor. In each FYS and in the Writing Center, we try to establish a community of writers who can review and provide helpful criticism of each other's work. Although no students in your class or in the Writing Center should ever be allowed to write your paper for you, they are encouraged to read your work and to offer suggestions for improving it. Such collaboration is a natural part of a community of writers.

You may not use writing or research that is obtained from a "paper service" or that is purchased from any person or entity, unless you fully disclose such activity to the instructor and are given express permission.

You may not use writing or research obtained from any other student previously or currently enrolled at Moravian or elsewhere or from the files of any student organization, such as fraternity or sorority files, unless you are expressly permitted to do so by the instructor.

You must keep all notes, drafts, and materials used in preparing assignments until a final course grade is given. In the case of work in electronic form, you may be asked to maintain all intermediate drafts and notes electronically or in hard copy until final grades are given. All these materials must be available for inspection by the instructor at any time.

Plagiarism

A major form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism, which we define as the use, whether deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment; an "outside source" is defined as any work (published or unpublished), composed, written, or created by any person other than the student who submitted the work (adapted from *Napolitano vs. Princeton*). Instructors often encourage—and in the case of research essays, require—students to include the ideas of others in their writing. In such

cases, students must take care to cite the sources of these ideas correctly (in other words, to give credit where credit is due). *MyCompLab* provides guidance in using several systems for documenting sources.

At Moravian, if a FYS instructor suspects plagiarism, the student will be asked to show the notes and drafts contributing to the final version of a paper. The instructor also has the right to see any books or periodicals that were used. The grade for the paper will be suspended until these materials have been reviewed. An instructor who suspects a student of violating the policy on academic honesty with regard to an assignment, requirement, examination, test, or quiz will consult with the Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, using a blind copy of the work in question, to verify the violation. If the charge is verified, the instructor will, in almost all cases, assign either a grade of zero to the academic work in question or a failing grade in the course in which the violation occurred. The student must be informed in writing of the alleged violation and penalty; a copy of this memo must be sent to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

A student may appeal either a charge of academic dishonesty or a penalty as follows:

First, to the course instructor.

Next, in the case of FYS, to the Chair of the FYS Steering Committee.

Next, to the Academic Standards Committee, chaired by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Responsibility and attendance

For the workshops and discussions to benefit you, your regular and prompt attendance is crucial. Please be on time to class each day with your day's work readily accessible. You are responsible for all material assigned or covered in any class you miss, whether the absence is excused or not. Whenever possible, contact me in advance if you are going to miss class.

Grades and requirements

To try to keep the attention on your writing, I prefer to use a grade contract for FYS. This means that a semester grade of B is achieved by *doing all assigned work in the class and doing it on time*. It also means that I will not evaluate any of your work through the language of letter grades – until the end of the semester. In order to earn a B for the semester you must:

1. Post to the class blog, as assigned.
2. Complete, on time, all (4) **writing projects**. Each of these projects will include, at a minimum
 - some prewriting committed to paper
 - a first or rough draft of an essay
 - at least one revision plan
 - at least two significantly and substantively (or deeply or globally) revised drafts, one of which is to be prepared “clean” for editing
 - a neat and correctly formatted final draft, a copy of which is to be submitted electronically
 - a piece of reflective writing
 - some further writing in response to your final draft reader’s evaluation.

(The preliminary drafts in each project will normally be accompanied by notes and reviewers’ comments. All components of each project must be ready at the beginning of class as assigned.)

3. Participate actively and constructively in class discussions.
4. Participate actively and constructively in small-group workshop sessions.
5. Have at least one reviewing session with a Writing Center tutor.
6. Attend a bibliographic instruction session in Reeves Library.

7. Miss no more than 3 class meetings, unexcused, and no more than 5 total, excused and unexcused. (“Excused” means your absence from class is accounted for in writing by a responsible authority.) **Each unexcused absences beyond 3 will cost your semester grade 1/3 letter.**

This method seeks to take grades and grading out of the way of our attention to your writing – up to the level of B. It’s simple: do all assigned work, completely, and on time, and you will earn a B for the course.¹

You may exceed a B grade by demonstrating superiority in your attention to the writing process; in your cooperation with classmates, especially in writing groups; in your evident grasp of the importance of revision; and in the quality of your writing when submitted in your semester portfolio. On the other hand, you will lose your eligibility for a B if any of the writing projects is not complete, if you fail to do other assigned work on time, if your portfolio is improperly organized or does not demonstrate real revision of your writing, or if you exceed the maximum number of permitted absences.

Books and other materials

Bean, John C., Virginia A. Chappell, and Alice M. Gillam. *Reading Rhetorically*. 3rd. ed. Boston: Pearson-Longman, 2011.

LinC101-V Course *Readings Packet*.

MyCompLab www.mycomplab.com

I encourage you to do your written work on a computer; the campuswide network has word processing applications that you may access from various sites on campus, and anyone who wishes a short demonstration session may arrange one with me. If you do work in the electronic environment, of course, store your work on flash drive or in your own folder on the X drive on the campus network.

Enrolling in the online writing environment *MyCompLab* is required for this seminar. If you bought the right version of *Reading Rhetorically*, you should find an access code packaged with it.

I maintain a website that has pages for FYS. I will routinely post assignment details here. You must register on the site in order to use its interactive features. <http://www.joelwingard.com>

Your teacher’s role and responsibility

The primary role of all FYS teachers is or should be that of facilitator. That is certainly the way I see myself in this class: I am here mostly to help you write better, to help you write – and think – in ways that will prove helpful to you as you move on in your college career. That is one reason for my approach of deferred grades, contract grading, portfolios, and reflective writing. Ultimately, I cannot avoid the role of “judge” or grade-giver, but I see that as an official role in the academic world, nothing more. I want to help you improve. If you think you are a “weak writer,” I want to help you gain confidence; if you think of yourself as a “strong writer,” I want to help you get even stronger. This course is structured for student success. The rest is up to you.

¹ Assigned work includes your contributions to your classmates’ thinking and writing, especially for each of the writing projects.

Assignment schedule (Boldface indicates assigned work due; underlining indicates dates for Student Services programming sessions)

Week I
M 8/27 – F 8/31 Course introduction
Questionnaires; “biopoem”; register on website, enroll in *MyCompLab*
Reading Rhetorically: Chapter 1; *Readings Packet*: essay by Butler

Week II
T 9/4 – F 9/7 *Reading Rhetorically*: Chapter 2

Week III
M 9/10 – F 9/14 *Readings Packet*: essay by Orwell; *Wikipedia* entry on “truthiness”
Workshopping first writing project

Week IV
M 9/17 – F 9/21 **Workshopping first writing project (continued)**
First writing project due; reflective writing

Week V
M 9/24 – F 9/28 *Reading Rhetorically*: Chapter 3
Readings Packet: chapters from Luntz

Week VI
M 10/1 – F 10/5
(mid-term) *Readings Packet*: essays by Eubanks & Schaeffer and Fredal
Reading Rhetorically: Chapter 4
Questionnaires; Conferences²

Week VII
W 10/10 – F 10/12 **Workshopping second writing project**

Week VIII
M 10/15 – F 10/19 **Workshopping second writing project (continued)**
Second writing project due; reflective writing³

Week IX
M 10/22 – F 10/26 *Readings Packet*: essay by Best
Course Packet: chapters from Seife

Week X
M 10/29 – F 11/2 **Workshopping third writing project**

² Conferences will be held Tuesday – Thursday in Dr. Wingard’s office: Zinzendorf 304. Class will not meet Wednesday, 10/3.

³ Approximately half the class will have the final draft of this project read and evaluated by a Writing Center tutor.

Week XI **Third writing project due; reflective writing** ⁴
M 11/5 – F 11/9 *Readings Packet*: chapter from Shermer
 Readings Packet: article by Perlstein & Brodner

Week XII *Reading Rhetorically*: Chapters 5 & 6
M 11/12 – F 11/16 Bibliographic instruction – Reeves Library
 Research work: collecting resources

Week XIII **Workshopping fourth writing project**
M 11/19 – T 11/20

Week XIV **Workshopping fourth writing project** (continued)
M 11/26 – F 11/30 **Fourth writing project due; reflective writing**

Week XV Conferences ⁵
M 12/3 – F 12/7

Final Exams **Portfolios due** ⁶
M 12/10 – Sa 12/15

⁴ Approximately half the class will have the final draft of this project read and evaluated by a Writing Center tutor.

⁵ Conferences will be held Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in Dr. Wingard's office: Zinzendorf 304. Class will not meet Monday or Wednesday this week.

⁶ Each student's portfolio will be due by 5 p.m. one week from the date of his conference; in other words, Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, 10, 11, or 12 Dec.