

Fall 2019
English 4602: Advanced Composition
Online

Dr. Joseph Jones

You have probably composed different types of writing that have been called “essays.” To be sure, the essay is a flexible genre. For this course you will write a particular type of essay, an ethnographic essay. Ethnographic essays are written in many different academic disciplines: English, communication, journalism, anthropology, education, sociology, etc. Furthermore, an ethnographic essay allows—indeed, encourages—the writer to use an array of writing strategies (description, exposition, narration, analysis), a range of research strategies (direct observation, interviewing, library and archival research), and other media (photographs, artwork, audio).

The ethnographic essay you compose may be among the longer papers you have written (20-pages or so), but all of the writing completed during the course of the semester contributes to it. You will be able to practice different types and styles of writing, get feedback about your work as it progresses, and learn how to arrange what you have written into a unified, substantial essay.

The writing requires and rewards both creativity and analysis. According to previous students, the projects they have completed have proved to be among the most interesting and personally satisfying writing they have ever done.

Identifying a writing course as “advanced composition” assumes that those enrolled are writers who have previously demonstrated competence in academic contexts as well as writers who have little trouble with the “mechanics” of writing (spelling, punctuation, usage, etc.). If you are such a writer, you are prepared for richer stylistic and rhetorical considerations for your writing. You are also ready to enlarge your understanding of “research” by recognizing that it refers not only to already published material but also to the creation of new knowledge. Finally, you are a writer capable of identifying and pursuing your own line of inquiry, and you are interested in sharing your discoveries with readers.

Required Text

Sunstein, Bonnie Stone, Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater. *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*. 4th Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2011. (ISBN: 978-0-312-62275-6)